

Simplifying Consumer Selection of Responsibly Sourced Products

For years, much has been publicized about *sweat shop* working conditions in manufacturing environments around the world. In recent years, there has been significant press on *Blood Diamonds* and *Conflict Minerals* which may be mined or sourced using inhumane practices including slavery, unsafe work environments, sexual abuse and child labor. These practices are not limited to Africa, but impact people on every inhabited continent. There are also widespread concerns about the impact of industrialization and over harvesting on the environment of our planet.

Over the past several decades, manufacturing supply chains have gone from more local in nature (think Detroit) to global, driven by factors such as the desire for lower cost labor, requirements for exotic materials and the increasing complexity of distributing finished products to end markets. While this globalization has raised the standard of living for many people, it has also raised the possibility of abuse by unethical actors.

... globally, 66% of consumers are willing to spend more on a product if it comes from a sustainable brand.

— Forbes, Mar-2017

Companies around the globe are investing money, time and effort to assure their supply chains and business processes operate ethically, humanely and with transparency. Many companies have teams of people focused on myriad aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability. The breadth of topics covered by the CSR umbrella continues to grow, driven in part by customer and investor expectations as well as government requirements and regulations.

For all this investment by industry, most consumers don't know which brands have responsible supply chains and corporate operating policies. Many consumers would like to make the "right" decision to buy responsibly sourced products, but find it difficult to obtain information to make that choice.

Responsible Brands Initiative (RBI™) is working to create a simple means for consumers to tell which companies are responsible in their sourcing and policies. RBI is an industry association and our members are working to define what is a "responsible" company, and also developing an objective framework of metrics against which to assess organizational performance. RBI also operates as a 501(c)(6) nonprofit corporation and is independent an single corporation, or government agency.

The Involvement of subject matter experts from member companies and a broad range of manufacturing and service industries will assure the performance metrics and weighting parameters are objective.

Companies that meet the required level of performance, according to RBI member-approved metrics, will be eligible to apply to use the RBI Compliant™ logo and related brand elements. This logo and other brand elements will make it simple and straightforward for a company to communicate its achievements and commitment to consumers and stakeholders while simplifying identification of desired products by consumers.

Responsible Brands Initiative™

Consumer education will make buyers aware of the significance of the RBI Compliant logo and the substantial process for a company to gain approval for its use. Consumers can be confident that companies displaying the RBI Compliant logo and brand elements have met high standards of responsibility and are doing their part to make the world a better place.

In summary, the Responsible Brands Initiative will:

- work with a broad range of corporations and organizations to develop metrics, criteria and policies that define Responsible Brands™ compliance
- establish an independent and respected board of directors to provide oversight and guidance to the initiative, and create advisory boards and working groups to provide inputs in specific areas
- develop a branding program that features a recognizable logo for use by companies that meet Responsible Brands criteria
- encourage participation by public and private companies of all sizes
- motivate companies to strengthen their efforts in CSR and Sustainability
- educate consumers so they are more confident about trusting companies that display the Responsible Brands logo without having to understand the underlying compliance details
- provide additional education that both informs consumers and motivates them to improve the world through their decisions to purchase products from Responsible Brands compliant companies

We need your help, now. The success of Responsible Brands Initiative requires involving myriad people and entities. Topic experts are needed for working groups to define compliance requirements, branding elements, and promotion programs to activate consumers.

As you make plans for implementing programs that meet CSR objectives for your company or organization, consider investing resources in Responsible Brands Initiative. This is a simple way to increase the impact of what may already be in your annual budget. By supporting RBI, your company will gain additional recognition and credibility with the growing audience who favor products which are produced in a responsible manner.

More information about how you can help is available on our website; please visit:

<http://responsiblebrands.org/> <add UTM tag>

**Take Affirmative Action
Today**

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www.responsiblebrands.org <add UTM tag>

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Responsible Brands Initiative is a corporation registered in the State of Oregon and operates according to IRS 501c6 requirements. Additional legal information is available at: ResponsibleBrands.org. Donations to Responsible Brands Initiative are not tax deductible by individuals.