

Organizational Leadership, Ethics and the Challenges of Marketing Fair and Ethical Trade

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ABSTRACT. This article critically evaluates current developments in marketing fair trade labelled products and “no sweat” manufactured goods, and argues that both the fair trade and ethical trade movements increasingly rely on strategies for bottom-up change, converting consumers “one cup at a time”. This individualistic approach, which we call “shopping for a better world”, must, we argue, be augmented by more collectivist approaches to affect transformative change. Specifically, we look at the concept of mission-driven organizations pursuing leadership roles in developing affinity relationships to promote fair and ethical trade and developing ethical spaces. Increasingly, a range of organizations are restructuring their operations, so that their mission is reflected in ethical practices throughout their operations, including product sourcing and product sales. First, ethical purchasing policies operated by non-profits and public agencies represent markets through which fair/ethical products reach end consumers. The efforts discussed to create ethical spaces through direct democracy and electoral mandate build on a broad-based affinity with the principles of fair and ethical trade. Second, we explore the potential for “mission-driven” non-profit organiza-

tions, such as zoos and aquaria for merging their mission of conservation education with their marketing activities through the operation of their shops and cafés. Interesting initiatives to link the conservation message to food choices is being undertaken by a number of zoos and aquaria, while there is scope for increased linkages in the giftware sold in their shops.

KEY WORDS: affinity marketing, ethical leadership, fair trade movement, marketing ethics, no-sweat movement, zoos, aquaria, sweat shops, ethical purchasing, virtue ethics, conservation

ABBREVIATIONS: ECRA: Ethical Consumer Research Association; EPP: ethical purchasing policy; ETI: Ethical Trade Initiative; FLO: Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International; ILO: International Labour Organization; USAS: United Students Against Sweatshops

Introduction

This article critically evaluates current developments in ethical production and consumption. In particular, we examine the trends in fair trade labelled products and “no sweat” manufactured goods.¹ This article suggests that as the fair trade movement’s marketing strategy has evolved to “mainstream” products through commercial distribution channels (see Goulding and Peattie, 2005), it increasingly relies on strategies for bottom-up change, converting consumers “one cup at a time”, as Levi and Linton (2003) have said of the fair trade coffee market. The market for a range of ethical products, including “sweat-free” clothing and footwear promoted by the anti-globalization movement, has also relied on

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individualized collective action (to use Micheletti's (2003) terminology). Smith (1990) suggests that boycotts have increasingly become a tool of individualized, decentralized (rather than organized and collective) anti-corporate protest. This individualistic approach, which we call "shopping for a better world", must, we argue, be augmented by more collectivist approaches to affect transformative change. In a world where progress towards social justice and environmental sustainability is slow and filled with U-turns, there is scope to shift the focus from individual consumers acting through the market towards organizations taking a lead in promoting fair and ethical trade.

The theme of collectivist alternatives, which we develop here, is built around a concept of "ethical leadership". Specifically, we look at the concept of mission-driven organizations pursuing leadership roles in developing affinity relationships to promote fair and ethical trade and in developing ethical spaces. Ethical spaces, as we conceive them, are geographical or virtual (as in internet sales) spaces in which the ethical choices or sourcing of goods is not one of many possible choices, but is the dominant choice. An organizational solution is based on virtue ethics, where organizations pose the question: What sort of organization do we want to be? Increasingly, a range of organizations are responding to this question by restructuring their operations so that their mission is reflected in ethical practices throughout their operations, including product sourcing and product sales. We look at a variety of different contexts in the non-profit and public sectors which have potential to build on "affinity" with concepts of social and environmental justice as an alternative means for growing fair and ethical trade sales.

This article proceeds by addressing:

- a) fair trade and ethical trade within the wider ethical consumer movement;
- b) ethical dilemmas in fair and ethical trade;
- c) the marketing of fairness – how fair trade products are marketed;
- d) the anti-marketing of ethics – how no-sweat products are marketed;
- e) how affinity marketing can build ethical spaces.

The ethical consumer movement

Both the fair trade movement and the anti-globalization anti-sweatshop movement are part of a wider impetus to promote concern for human, environmental and animal welfare in social relations of production and exchange. The ethical consumer movement has been in existence for at least two centuries and encompasses a number of landmark boycotts and "buycotts" (Cowe and Williams, 2000; Lang and Gabriel, 2005; Micheletti, 2003). Hilton notes that from "the late-eighteenth century women arranged to boycott slave-grown sugar and, in the nineteenth, they acted as regular customers to pressurize local shopkeepers to support such political campaigns as Chartism" (2004, p. 1). Early ethical consumption emphasized both the rights of consumers to affordable and safe necessities (such as the Rochdale-based consumers' co-operation) and the right of workers to safe, non-forced employment paying a living wage (such as campaigns to improve the working conditions of women and children in New York textile factories).

Modern ethical consumption encompasses an expanded idea of "personal consumption where the choice of a product or service exists which supports a particular ethical issue – be it human rights, the environment or animal welfare" (Cooperative Bank, 2003, p. 7). Sales of ethical products are now considerable across the developed world. In the United Kingdom, for example, ethical consumption was estimated to have reached almost £20 billion by 2002 (Cooperative Bank, 2003) and individual ethical products have garnered significant market share. Free-range eggs account for 27% of UK production, Cafédirect coffee in the United Kingdom controls 10% of the roast and ground market, and fair trade certified bananas account for 50% of the Swiss market.

A distinctive feature of the modern ethical consumer movement is the shift in focus from creating political change at the level of the state (labour laws, environmental regulations and trade policies) to campaigning for internal changes within business. As Freidberg says:

It is worth noting that much of the original pressure for ethical trade standards came from NGOs The fact that these groups focused their campaigns on

supermarkets rather than states reflects corporate retail capital's growing power to regulate not merely the quality of products, but also the conditions of the production process. (2003, p. 15)

Concomitant with this change has been a shift from collective politicized programmes of action for social justice to a diluted notion of individualized "shopping for a better world" (Low and Davenport, 2006). The idea that the individual consumer has the power to move markets has a long history. In 1907, Fetter equated market relationships with voting behaviour by saying that the "market is a democracy where every penny gives the right to vote" (quoted in Dickinson and Carsky, 2005, p. 25). Consumer sovereignty has also long been considered a central feature of capitalist markets. While the interplay between demand and supply determines what is available on the market and at what price, the rules of arbitrage ensure that producers respond to consumer demand by spotting a profit-making opportunity, and hence the consumer is king. In contrast, Micheletti (2003) develops a contemporary discussion of the market as an arena of individual political activism. This market-led approach is seductive to both business and consumers. It suggests that rather than regulation, it is voluntary changes in the corporate world in response to individual consumer decisions to buy one product rather than another that painlessly and almost effortlessly creates social change through ethical consumption.

Change towards a new "market equilibrium" where ethical considerations are the norm is slow at best, and may be no more than ephemeral. The term "ethics gap" – the percentage of consumers who *say* they would buy ethical products and those who *actually* buy – is used to describe the belief-action dichotomy that bedevils the market for ethical products. Tallontire et al. (2003) point out that consumers taking part in surveys do not cite ethical concerns as a central part of their decision-making unless the surveys directly prompt them about the issues. Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) and Shaw et al. (2006) argue that the traditional motivations of price, quality, brand and convenience over-ride ethical concerns, even where consumers are aware of the ethical issues. Carrigan and Attala (2001), after reviewing the literature, go so far as to suggest that the ethical consumer may be a "myth".

The contradictory survey evidence suggests that strategies to transform the social relations of production and consumption that rely on individuals to "do the right thing" are highly problematic. Seyfang has cogently argued that if, in place of regulation, we rely on "the summation of many small acts of atomized consumer sovereignty to shift the market", we are faced with an unequal and unwinnable battle in which individuals are pitted against "global institutions to solve global problems" (2004, p. 7).

Ethical dilemmas

What is the would-be fair trade or no-sweat consumer buying when she or he purchases a cup of Fairtrade coffee or a pair of no-sweat sneakers? The answer is not just coffee or shoes: the physical products and their associated services are instrumental – the means to an end (Crane, 2001). As Levi and Linton put it, while "Fair Traders do offer a tangible market product, what they are essentially trying to sell is the norm that people in prosperous countries should factor global social justice into their buying decisions" (2003, p. 419).

The approach that has been developed over the last 15 years in the fair trade movement has been to mainstream certified and branded food products into supermarkets (Low and Davenport, 2005b; Nicholls, 2002). The philosophical underpinning of this increasingly dominant strand of the Fair Trade movement is that of encouraging and pressuring the mainstream commercial production, manufacturing and distribution channels to source Fair Trade products. Thus, for example, it was considered a significant victory when Starbucks, one of the world's largest specialist coffee roasters, agreed to source a small percentage of their coffee from fair trade labelled sources, and indeed Starbucks has subsequently made a commitment to ultimately source 10% of their product from fair trade sources. Nestlé, one of the four largest coffee retailer/manufacturers in the world announced in 2005 that it would develop a Fair Trade product range. This was a more contentious arrangement for the Fair Trade movement, in general, as Nestlé has been the subject of continuing consumer boycotts over their baby

milk products, and unlike Starbucks, has not made any commitment to sourcing a particular percentage of their product from labelled fair trade sources. The fundamental question here becomes, how ethical is it for a company such as Nestlé to source (a small) amount of product on fair trade terms and for the rest of their coffee – and other product – sourcing to remain “business as usual”? (see Goulding and Peattie, 2005; Johnson, 2002). In the context of the Fairtrade labelling initiative, does it matter who sells Fairtrade certified coffee as long as sales continue to grow at the impressive 30–40% rate per annum of the last couple of years?²

The enormous volume of coffee that even 1% of Nestlé sales represents (if it were to be Fairtrade labelled) misses the point that the fundamental goal of the movement has always been the transformation of global relations in production and consumption. It is timely therefore to remind ourselves of Johnston’s critique of mainstreaming: “Would fair trade heaven have descended to earth if, say, fair trade Nescafé were sold by a financially responsible Wal-Mart?” (2002, citing Ransom, 2000, p. 11).

The suggestion that the quest for a “fair” Nestlé is a direct parallel to the struggle for an “ethical” Wal-Mart reflects the “overlapping networks and coalitions of activists and NGOs” (Buttall and Gould, 2004, p. 39) that comprise the “anti-globalisation movement”. The fair trade movement intersects the anti-sweat movement and vice versa, often under a broader rubric of corporate social responsibility as well as of ethical consumption.

The boycott approach has been used by no-sweat advocates to apply pressure for changes to corporate practice in the clothing and footwear industry: living wages, no forced overtime, no child labor and improved occupational health and safety. Anti-sweatshop campaigns have been a key factor in the adoption of “codes of labour practice” by many major U.S. and EU retailers and marketing brands (Jenkins, 2002; Smith and Barrientos, 2005). However, codes of conduct have varied widely in their effectiveness and implementation (Jenkins 2002; Ross, 2004) and have not been translated into recognized ethical labels in the shops. In a review of clothing retailers in the United Kingdom, the Ethical Consumer Research Association (ECRA) said this about the large multi-stakeholder initiative, the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI), aimed at bring-

ing about ethical supply chain standards and practices:

The main aim is to identify and promote the effective implementation of codes of labor practice ... to include monitoring and independent verification. Whilst positive steps are being made, with some company members demonstrating real willingness to engage with the challenge, *5 years later, the consumer appears no nearer to receiving the guarantees of fair standards that he or she seeks.* (Ethical Consumer Research Association, 2002, emphasis added)

Connor (2004) suggests that the “diffuse and uncoordinated nature of the anti-sweatshop campaigns has undermined their ability to achieve policy change” and persuasively argues that in order to affect policy change the movement must concentrate effort on “a widely recognized process by which the progress of companies can be measured” in order to signal change to consumers and thus lead to more informed buying choices. Outside of a limited number of small-scale ethical retailers, consumers who wish to buy clothing that has not used exploited labour remain confused as to what to buy as opposed to what to avoid or actively boycott (Shaw et al., 2006; Michelletti, 2003).

Conventional marketing sells products on intangible qualities, such as their being essential to participate in a particular lifestyle, or as an ephemeral “indulgence” (Goulding and Peattie, 2005). The additional twist to marketing fair trade and ethical products is that a central feature of the transaction is altruism – by buying this product over another the consumer is contributing directly to the well being of others, rather than purely benefiting him- or herself. While balancing this complex relationship – buying goods and “doing good” – has been at the heart of efforts to market fair and ethical trade goods, the two movements have adopted different approaches to convincing consumers to do the right thing.

Marketing “fairness”: using labels to sell fair trade goods

Goulding and Peattie argue that the fair trade movement’s marketing strategies have shifted over the last twenty years from being primarily “product

oriented” to become more “sales oriented” (2005, p. 156; cf. Andreasen and Kotler, 2003, p. 41). The early focus was to sell what Southern producer organizations could offer, not what Northern consumers wanted. We argue that fair trade organizations, in line with a general trend amongst non-profits (Docherty and Hibbert, 2003, p. 378), adopted mainstream marketing principles, “particularly the concept of market segmentation and targeting”, to define and reach its “target markets”. Goulding and Peattie (2005, p. 156) outline three phases in fair trade marketing:

1. goodwill selling – selling to a committed demographic based on appeals to charity or solidarity;
2. commercialization – selling clearly branded FT products through mainstream and alternative channels;
3. new marketing to increase market size.

Low and Davenport (2006) similarly suggest that a variety of marketing approaches have been used to sell fair trade goods, however they suggest a series of discontinuous and concurrent processes rather than a more traditional linear view of “stages”. The approaches have included:

- a) charity trade;
- b) development trade;
- c) equal development trade;
- d) solidarity trade;
- e) environmental trade;
- f) fair trade labelling and branding.

Fair trade certification and labelling was essential for the commercialization of the movement’s food products because labels offer consumers a guarantee that the product conforms to specific standards for production. This guarantee created a niche product, just as with certified organic foods, that European and North American supermarket chains could feel confident about stocking. From the first fair trade label, Max Havelaar coffee, established in the Netherlands in 1988, has grown an international organization, FLO (Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International), established in 1997 to standardize the certification efforts from all the developed countries.

This marketing strategy has been very effective in growing the Fairtrade market but it has not been

without criticism, as already suggested above. For example, Low and Davenport warn of the potential for “clean-wash” (2005b), marketing messages used by commercial interests to appropriate the positive associations consumers have of fair and ethical trade to create a halo effect that carries across to its other operations.

Marketing “ethics” – demarketing to sell ethical trade goods

The no-sweat movement starts from an anti-corporate message with very strong ideas about what *not* to buy – the brand bullies, to use Klein’s (2000) terminology. The anti-corporate message is appealing to diverse elements that make up the anti-globalization movement: counter-cultural rebels, environmentalists, voluntary simplifiers, and anti-capitalists among them. The two primary weapons used by the no-sweat movement have been “anti-marketing” or “de-marketing” (Kotler and Levy, 1971) – messages about what not to buy, allied with calls to action such as postcard campaigns (Micheletti, 2003) – and “culture-jamming” – subverting mainstream marketing through a mix of anti-brand sloganeering and post-modern satirization of commercial marketing messages (Klein, 2000; Heath and Potter, 2004).

This approach to marketing the no-sweat message results in a fundamental contradiction, as suggested in the section above on ethical dilemmas: an anti-marketing message does not imply the creation of options about what can be bought that is a positive alternative. One prominent example highlights the potential contradiction of culture-jamming. A young man attempted to use Nike’s own promotion of putting customized messages onto its sports shoes to try to get the word “Sweatshop” emblazoned on a pair (Micheletti, 2003). The company refused. This story was picked up by the press and circulated on the Internet as an example of the cultural and commercial hegemony of the big brands. However, the act of subverting the company effectively required the purchase of the very shoes being protested against.

In the absence of reliable information about the social conditions under which clothing products in major retailers/brands are produced, consumers

concerned about human rights abuses make purchasing decisions based on inconsistent or incomplete cues. These include country of origin labels (with an assumption that EU or North American manufacture signifies an acceptable standard of labour practice); brand reputation (often based on lack of negative publicity); and, third-party consumer research such as Ethical Consumer magazine (Shaw et al., 2006). Notable examples of no-sweat alternatives do exist, including the high-profile fair trade organization People Tree, which has established a fair trade concession in the designer section of Selfridges in the United Kingdom; the ethical retailer Marks and Spencers is offering its own label fair-trade jeans (Finch and Adams 2006); and “No Sweat”, a company selling sneakers that are guaranteed to be produced only in unionized factories in Indonesia.

However, just as in fair trade marketing, we argue that any initiative to promote shopping for human rights in the mainstream clothing industry must aim to make the dominant discourse the adoption of no-sweat principles (making fashion ethical), and must be wary of the discourse of appropriation (making ethics fashionable).

Affinity marketing

Goulding and Peattie suggest that rather than relying on “the principles of conventional marketing to make FT products more commercial”, the alternative “is to look towards the discipline of social marketing as a means of preserving Fair Trade’s social mission while also contributing to its commercial success” (2005, p. 159; see also Low and Davenport, 2005b; Taylor, 2005). We suggest a variation on the idea of “affinity marketing” as the means to grow ethical consumption. A comprehensive definition of affinity marketing refers to “a unique exchange process, in which value-expressive products and services are marketed to reference groups with cohesiveness, common interests, and/or values, usually in return for the group’s endorsement, as marketing leverage to its individual members of constituency” (Macchiette and Roy, 1991).

Thus, affinity marketing involves “customers who already have sympathy to one brand (be it commercial, not-for-profit or another membership organization)

being sold another service, by another organization, with the endorsement of the affinity organization and using its channels of communication” (Mintel, 2000). The critical feature of affinity marketing is that “products or services are targeted at an identifiable group of consumers who have an emotional or psychological bond with a particular cause or organization” (Laing et al., 2004, p. 215).

We suggest that the fair trade and ethical trade movements can use this strategy to build business-to-business (B2B) affinity relationships that take us out of the realm of individualized shopping for a better world and into a sphere of mission-led policy and practice. For example, ethical purchasing policies operated by non-profits and public agencies represent markets through which fair/ethical products reach end consumers. In some instances, end consumers are made “ethical by default” – when fair trade coffee is served at meetings or when “no-sweat” uniforms are worn by municipal staff (see below). In other instances, which we explore through research conducted in 2006, the affinity market is engaged because consumers wishing to buy goods to support an organization or cause will be buying the fair/ethical products on offer in, for example, shops and cafés at zoos and museums.

Affinity and democracy

The scale of public sector spending means that public organizations offer many prospects for developing affinity marketing relationships with fair and ethical trade organizations. Mastny estimates that in “industrial countries, public purchasing accounts for as much as 25% of GDP”, with all levels of government in the United States spending roughly USD \$350 billion annual on goods and services, *excluding* military spending (2003, p. 12). The New Economics Foundation has published a report that values U.K. public sector spending on goods and services at £125 billion annually. Also in the United Kingdom, the National Health Service is Europe’s largest single employer, rivaling Wal-Mart’s world-wide labour force of over one million (NEF, 2005, p. 4).

Two examples of cities enacting an ethical purchasing policy (EPP) are the City of Vancouver and the city of Los Angeles. While Vancouver was the

first Canadian municipality to ensure a procurement policy that does not support child labour, forced labour and other violations of fundamental labour rights, in the United States over thirty municipalities have adopted such policies. Los Angeles passed a Sweat-free Procurement Ordinance in 2002 applying to any contract over USD \$25,000, lasting at least 3 months and which would apply to goods that “would be of concern to anti-sweatshop advocates” such as uniforms and other apparel. Under the LA Ordinance, all suppliers, including overseas contractors, are required to adhere to “applicable workplace laws” and the “payment of a procurement living wage”. In order to enforce the Ordinance, \$50,000 is set aside to fund independent monitoring (Fujioka, 2003, p. 1).

A major impetus behind the Vancouver EPP was the objection of the local fire-fighters union to uniforms made in Myanmar. The contracted company offered assurances that the factories supplying the uniforms were not sweatshops (personal communication with Vancouver City, 20 December 2005) but this ignored widespread concerns about the generally repressive nature of Myanmar: the suppression of democracy and the jailing of the opposition leader, for example. Union pressure coincided with the election of a left-leaning mayor and city council.

The immediate impact of the EPP was the switch to purchasing fair trade certified coffee. The net result has been no overall increase in cost because, while the social services division now paid CDN \$9.00 per pound rather than \$6.00, other departments such as the Parks Board had been paying \$12.00 per pound (personal communication with Vancouver City, 20 December 2005). It has taken over a year to introduce policy guidelines to govern the City’s purchase of apparel items, building on CERES principles and ILO standards (personal communication with Vancouver City, 20 December 2005). Tendering specifications in requests for proposals have been issued for future suppliers of City of Vancouver clothing items. The policy will ultimately affect about 1,500 staff, between one-fifth and one-sixth immediately, as worn-out uniforms are replaced with no-sweat alternatives.

Interestingly, all public service organizations in Canada source apparel from just ten suppliers (personal communication with Vancouver City, 20

December 2005). One could suggest that this offers scope for a group of like-minded public sector organizations to leverage its buying power to promote ethical supply chain management amongst these suppliers. However, despite the hope, or expectation, that other Canadian cities would follow Vancouver’s lead, to date none have done so. No other municipality has experienced the same combination of internal and external pressure for fair/ethical trade aligned with a political mandate for socially responsible policy. Since the new guidelines were introduced, Vancouver has elected a new right-leaning mayor and council which, so far, appear to support the EPP within a wider drive to promote sustainability (personal communication, 20 December 2005).

The genesis of the EPP in Vancouver and Los Angeles can be contrasted with the citizen-led democratic process used to create fair trade towns in the United Kingdom. Garstang, Lancashire, voted virtually unanimously at a public town meeting in April 2000 to become the world’s first fair trade town. In order to become a fair trade town/region, five goals must be met:

1. The local council must pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at its meetings and in offices and canteens.
2. A range of Fairtrade products must be readily available in the area’s shops and served in local cafés and catering establishments (targets are set in relation to population).
3. Fairtrade products must be used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers, etc.) and community organizations (churches, schools, etc.).
4. The council must attract popular support for the campaign.
5. A local Fairtrade steering group must be convened to ensure continued commitment to Fairtrade Town status.

Seventy-seven towns and regions have so far declared themselves Fair Trade spaces, with a further 175 pending applications for status as fair trade zones. Related programmes have created over 30 fair trade university/higher education campuses (Siegle, 2006). The number of fair trade and no-sweat

campuses is also increasing across the United States and Canada, as a result of student-led initiatives by groups such as United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS).

The efforts to create “ethical spaces” through direct democracy and electoral mandate discussed above build on broad-based affinity with the principles of fair and ethical trade. The creation of these ethical spaces addresses the challenge of moving beyond individuals making choices within the ethical niches offered by mainstream commercial channels.

Affinity in aligning mission and marketing

Low and Davenport (2005b) have argued that while “Values-driven Businesses may willingly engage in selling the product and the message of fair trade, mainstream businesses are much more likely to be worried about their own market share than they are about promoting the transformative message about international trade reform”. In the following section, we explore the potential for “mission-driven” organizations to merge their ethical mission(s) with their marketing activities so that their operations reflect their values.

We have been studying zoos and aquaria as exemplars of mission-driven organizations. Since the first public zoo opened in Vienna in 1782 and the first scientific zoo in London in 1828, the mission of zoos has evolved beyond the display and scientific study of exotic animals. Some might suggest that legitimacy theory explains this shift as public opinion has turned away from ephemeral experiences of the exotic towards conservation. While zoos still have their displays, increasingly the purpose for their existence has been defined as the breeding, study and conservation of specific species, and conservation education connecting people to nature. For example, Santa Barbara Zoo in California states its mission as “the preservation, conservation and enhancement of the natural world and its living treasures through education, research, and recreation”. The interface between the conservation mission of zoos, aquaria, and wildlife parks and their commercial operations has not been subjected to in-depth analysis but should be of interest as these organizations increasingly rely on revenue from concessions (sales of

goods and ancillary services) to fund operations. As Miller et al. say:

If a collection-based institution has a mission of conservation, then that mission, should be an integral *raison d'être* for the entire institution. A mission implies more than simply taking green actions when they are convenient... the corporate paradigm may provide room for green actions so long as such programs do not interfere seriously with profit. On the other hand, most collection based institutions are not for profit organizations. Although not for profit organizations obviously need income to keep afloat, the purpose of the income is to perform the public services inherent in their missions. (2004, p. 88)

This is reflected in the statement made by The Aquarium of the Pacific, based in Long Beach, California: “Every purchase made at the Aquarium helps support our mission to instill a sense of wonder, respect, and stewardship for the Pacific Ocean, its inhabitants, and ecosystems”.

Our research shows it is the catering facilities at zoos and aquaria that are currently leading the way in merging mission and marketing with respect to conservation messages and internal operations. All eight zoos and aquaria visited as part of a scoping study at the end of 2005 and early 2006 offered shade grown and/or fair trade certified coffee. In particular, Whipsnade Wild Animal Park in the U.K. is setting an example of how a zoo can radically change its food services to integrate the organization’s mission of conservation education. All coffee and tea is fair trade, and despite a small price increase to accommodate this change, the Park has not experienced any drop in sales of hot drinks (personal communication, 7 November 2005). Its menu promotes healthier eating options – all chicken and eggs are free-range and organic options are available. Sustainability concerns are addressed by: buying locally grown in-season produce to reduce food miles and promote diversity; offering only fish deemed to be caught in more sustainable ways; and, eliminating disposable plastic cutlery. New signage is being developed that makes the message of conservation and sustainability explicit, and draws the link between the educational message in the exhibits and the food options available through Whipsnade catering.

Another example of merging mission and marketing is the aquaria and zoos in North America which are

partners in the Seafood Watch programme. Monterey Bay Aquarium first developed a list of sustainable seafood as part of its 1997–1999 “Fishing for Solutions” exhibit, in anticipation of visitor questions about making better seafood choices. The programme promotes sustainable seafood, which is defined as coming “from sources, either fished or farmed, that can exist over the long-term without compromising species’ survival or the health of the surrounding ecosystem” (Monterey Bay Aquarium, n.d.). The restaurants at zoos and aquaria participating in Seafood Watch commit to serving only sustainable seafood. Seafood Watch has also developed pocket guides that help consumers make sustainable choices whilst out shopping; these are available when visiting a partner aquarium or zoo. Through another Seafood Watch initiative the menus of participating restaurants are reviewed to help phase out unsustainable fish species and to highlight menu option where fish are caught using more sustainable methods.

While programmes, such as Seafood Watch make the link between human activity and environmental degradation explicit, purchasing policies operated by the gift shops visited during our scoping study as yet reflect a lower level of integration between mission and marketing. Though gift shops at zoos and aquaria are now looking at how to incorporate the mission of the organization through the products on offer, the challenges are significant. The products on sale typically include plush animals, branded apparel, and plastic/wooden toys and novelties. A majority of these of these products are currently primarily produced in China and South East Asia, and while country of origin alone is not a reliable indicator of standards of production, it is positively correlated with poor environmental and labour standards. Zoo and aquaria buyers face the challenge of sourcing products with acceptable environmental and labour standards but the major companies who manufacture products for sale in zoos and aquaria as yet provide very little publicly available information on environmental and labour standards in the factories that they use, nor the raw materials that are used. Zoos and aquaria also currently offer a range of other retail items that promote use of materials from sustainable sources (for example the wood used in wooden items), items that directly support income generation in biological hot spot areas, and “tie in” products with special exhibits, but as yet this “affinity” market

is not well developed and has proved difficult for zoo and aquaria buyers to access.

Conclusions

Low and Davenport (2005a, b) have argued, with respect to the fair trade movement, that an “Alternative High Street” is needed to counter corporate appropriation of the convenient elements of the movement and the “Clean-washing” of its transformational message in order to create a valuable market niche. Initiatives on the Alternative High Street offer ways in which the movement can reach consumers and ensure that the message of trade reform and social justice is sold alongside the product. By contrast, an “ethical space”, as we conceive it here (see also Low and Davenport, 2006), is an environment in which the paramount concerns include some, or all, of the following: social justice, human and animal rights, and environmental welfare. In these environments, ethical sourcing/products do not simply constitute one choice amongst many, but instead they supplement the individualized approach of shopping for a better world being pursued elsewhere.

This article has attempted to address what happens when organizations pose the question: what sort of organization do we want to be? (see Barnett et al., 2005 for a discussion of virtue ethics.) The response by some organizations, especially in the non-profit and public sectors, is to adopt positions of ethical leadership where the values they espouse are reflected in their own internal practices including the types of products they choose to source and sell (in cases where they rely on commercial activities for funding).

Our scoping study of zoos and aquaria shows that giftware lines offer a great deal of scope for the no-sweat and fair trade movements to develop affinity relationships, especially by drawing a link between the products and income generation projects to aid in conservation efforts. Poverty is a major reason that people in developing countries either over-exploit natural resources or turn to mining and forestry rather than maintaining traditional land management. While United Students Against Sweatshops (and others) has worked hard to convince university administrations to adopt no-sweat sourcing policies on campus, there is no similar movement

working to bring similar products to potential affinity partners such as zoos and aquaria.

Finally, a major challenge facing efforts to expand on ethical spaces through affinity relationships in public and non-profit sectors is an ingrained culture of financial management that adheres to a narrow concept of “value-for-money”. For example, in the United Kingdom:

under the 1983 National Audit Act, the National Audit Office can examine and report on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of public spending:

- a. Economy: minimising the cost of resources used or required – *spending less*;
- b. Efficiency: the relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them – *spending well*; and
- c. Effectiveness: the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending – *spending wisely*. (National Audit Office, n.d., original emphasis)

The current understanding of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in managing public and donor funds focuses on maximizing volume of purchases from a given budget subject to acquiring an acceptable level of quality. The concept of quality is only slowly being extended to include concerns about social justice and environmental welfare as sustainability gains acceptance as a policy goal. Shifting the ground of debate further in this direction is a matter that merits attention in the wider realms of public policy and nonprofit management.

Notes

¹ For a recent discussion of the distinctions between fair and ethical trade, see Smith and Barrientos (2005).

² See Barnett et al. (2005) for a general discussion of consequentialism, and Low and Davenport (2005b) for a wider discussion of ethics in fair trade marketing.

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