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Starting from late November 2012, during the holiday season, over 500 Wal-Mart workers from various locations organized a series of strikes. The strikes were a part of an on-going Wal-Mart employees' campaign for better working conditions and freedom to express their concerns publicly. Wal-Mart workers claim that the biggest US employer retaliates for taking part in strikes or demanding better schedules, medical benefits and wages. The retail giant has several methods in its disposal: moving "problematic" employees to different departments, cutting their wages and shuffling working hours. As Alice Hines and Kathleen Miles reported on November 23, 2012, in the Huffington Post article "Walmart Strike Hits 100 Cities, But Fails To Distract Black Friday Shoppers":

"According to strikers, one reason that so few of their colleagues among Wal-Mart's 1 million hourly store workers came out with them is that the company intimidates anyone who considers joining a labor group. At the Paramount store, three workers who were not on the job and not participating in the strike told The Huffington Post that they share the strikers' concerns about low wages, lost benefits and retaliation for speaking up, but they did not strike for fear of losing their jobs. Wal-Mart, for its part, says it never retaliates against workers."

I believe Wal-Mart violates the basic worker's right to have comfortable and fair working conditions, which affects not only employees but their families as well.

Another aspect about Wal-Mart I want to talk about is environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability has become an essential factor for doing business successfully. As the world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart's

behaviors has a lot of power to make its customers have a better life and help ensure a better world for generations.

According to the company's 2015 Global Responsibility Report it spares no effort to become a financially stable and responsible role model. (2015 Global Responsibility Report, n. d).

In reality, Wal-Mart's business model is far from being environmentally friendly. It involves long-distance transportation and selling exorbitant amounts of products with short expiration period. Large stores that takes acres of land force the customers for lots of driving. The company does very little to address these issues and re-design its business model.

Wal-Mart positioned itself as an environmentally aware business that is concerned about its impact on the climate change in 2005. However, the company has very little to show for this claim. Kate Sheppard in her 2013 article “ Walmart's Sustainability Results Don't Match Promises, Report Finds” indicates that Wal-Mart's annual greenhouse gas emissions have increased from 18. 9 million metric tons in 2005, to 21. 5 million metric tons in 2011. The reported emissions decrease in 2012 by about 1. 3 percent were not different from the industry average and were caused by the mild winter weather, not any specific efforts. The data was provided by CDP (previously known as the Carbon Disclosure Project), a British nonprofit organization that deals with corporations on the reduction of environmental impacts. (Sheppard, 2013).

Few people put Wal-Mart on the biggest corporate polluters list, when, in fact, it is among the “ leaders” in this area. This fact is further aggravated by the fact, that the company is capable of changing its business processes to

decrease greenhouse gas emissions. “ From 2005 to 2011, the total square footage of Wal-Mart stores and facilities increased 40 percent and sales increased 44 percent, but its greenhouse gas emissions grew only 10 percent” (Sheppard, 2013).

The industry benchmark analysis indicates that high greenhouse emissions in large retail business can be addressed successfully. The amount of pollution per one million U. S. dollars factor shows, that CDP data on Wal-Mart for 2012 shows 45. 16 metric tons of greenhouse intensity, while competitors such as Target and Costco had much lower figures - 41. 9 metric tons and 16 metric tons, respectively” (Sheppard, 2013).

About deceptive advertising issue, Wal-Mart does not have good image in this area and there are a lot of cases and complaints about false advertising. With more than two million employees, Wal-Mart is the largest retail outlet known for its low prices and is definitely the world’s largest private employer. The Wal-Mart Corporation claims that its main mission is “ to make money by saving its customers money.” At Wal-Mart, everything they do is driven by the goal of saving people’s money so they can live better. Wal-Mart's mission that claims to " save customer’s money" was critically analyzed by Al Norman in his 2009 article “ Wal-Mart Pulls Misleading Adds – Again”. According to Norman, National Advertising Division qualified Wal-Mart’s cost-saving ads as “ unsupported". The NAD case that was published in 2009 analyzed radio and TV ads that declared a potential average savings of \$700 per annum on groceries. The agency declared, that the claim “ was not based on any evidence in the record”. The TV ads included short disclaimers that excluded most types of groceries from the list. The NAD

study further disclosed that Wal-Mart claims of savings for its customers was based on a 2007 Global Insight, Inc. study, paid by Wal-Mart itself and greatly criticized by economists as “ deeply flawed” and “ unreliable” (Norman, 2009). Norman provides one more interesting fact in his article. Based on the Global Insight findings, Wal-Mart has introduced savings calculator on the corporate website, that the corporation was forced to remove after the document received a lot of criticism.

Another case, related to advertising, is ads about assault weapons. I believe this is a serious issue and I suggest that Wal-Mart has to declare a ban on assault weapons.

Buglino, a teacher of elementary school, grade 4, states that when he got to the Wal-Mart circular they had many deals and sales, one item that was a " Black Friday Special" was an assault weapon. It was priced at \$897. 00. This is disturbing to say the least. Wal-Mart is making it easy and appealing to purchase an assault weapon. Assault weapons cause mass murder and should be left for law enforcement and military (para. 3). Sometimes, newspapers are filled with colorful advertising of various deals and sales and savings. However, I think people do not really need to have any assault weapons in their homes.

As we know, advertising is something that creates wants and needs. To create a want for such a weapon only promotes violence. I think that it is necessary to stop advertising assault weapons in Wal-Mart circulars. What people are trying to do is to tell Wal-Mart to stop making such weapons desirable by placing them on sale. People in a safe society definitely do not need semi-automatic weapons, nor do they need them in their homes and

around their children. We want to live in a society that does not promote violence through advertising. Therefore, Wal-Mart needs to stop this advertising and take actions to stop false advertising.

Al Norman in his 2009 article “ Wal-Mart Pulls Misleading Adds – Again” indicates, that advertising regulating and controlling agencies like NAD and NARB have investigated and accused Wal-Mart of false advertising on many occasions. However, the company simply converts to more deceptive and misleading ads. Sam Walton, the company’s founder established the Wal-Mart’s 'always low prices' philosophy in 1962, when he opened the first store. The company is “ trapped” by this slogan and tries to follow it despite the numerous competitors’ challenges. Unfortunately, the slogan is no longer supported by the real data and, according to Norman, “ American shoppers have been manipulated into believing not only that Wal-Mart will save them money, but also that the retailer can even quantify how much.” According to my research, it seems that Wal-Mart has serious requirements on product safety, especially for the fresh product like food and beverage. Lisa Lupo describes the situation with the food safety at Wal-Mart in her 2013 article “ Walmart Drives Food Safety Standards”. She states, that “ for the food and beverage retailer, food safety is on the focus and concern, with the end goal being that of providing safe, non-contaminated, properly labeled product to the consumer” (Lupo, 2013). Lupo indicates in her analysis that there are two major players when it comes to the issue of food safety: the producers of food and the retailers. The safety issue does not solely lie with the store that sells the goods to the consumers. High safety standards should also be introduced at the

production facilities. For food manufacturing companies the issue is more complex because they have little interaction with those, who consume their products.

The food service and retail stores, on the other hand, have a very close connection with the customers, who consume the products. The retailers are ultimately responsible and accountable for the safety of the products they sell because they actually transfer the goods into the customers' hands.

Any customer that enters a groceries store automatically expects that all the products that are offered for sale are safe. This simple concept means that not only the store, but the entire supply chain of Wal-Mart, or any other retailer, should have what Lisa Lupo calls “ a culture of food safety”.

According to Lupo, Wal-Mart has more than 200 million customers each week in more than 10 000 retail stores in 27 countries around the world. This is a huge leverage point when dealing with the suppliers. Wal-Mart has “ what is likely the most stringent standards in the industry” (Lupo, 2013). However, the suppliers are willing to accept such a strict product safety system because of the volume of the market they gain access to via Wal-Mart retail network. Due to the number of customers that walk through the doors of the stores every day Wal-Mart was able to raise the food safety standards. “

When we say that 140 million customers walk through our stores in the U. S. in one week, and 200 million do globally, we mean that we can make a difference,” Frank Yiannas, Wal-Mart Vice-President of food safety, said. “ We have the ability to have a large impact on food safety and health” (Lupo, 2013).

Consumers, regulators and competition has made a significant additional

impact on food safety standard at Wal-Mart, a top priority for the company since its inception. As stated in Wal-Mart's Report on Food Safety 2013, " We operate in an era of transparency, when advancing technology is erasing boundaries between individuals, nations, and organizations." Modern world and technological advances has made every business and issue more transparent. The customer awareness has increased and this put additional demand on Wal-Mart to be up to the challenge with the safety program.