



## Social Sustainability

### Museum of Brands Self-Guided Tour

Social Sustainability is about respecting human rights. For brands, this means running a business that is ethical, limits waste production, and has a positive impact on health. Brands have been working towards becoming environmentally sustainable through the types of packaging they use, but becoming socially sustainable is equally important. In the past few decades, it has become more important to consumers to know where their products are coming from and to provide an inclusive and safe working environment for all those connected to the brand.

In this worksheet you will explore how some brands have worked to become socially sustainable and ensure that human rights are incorporated into their work.

## 1. Water Purification

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shares that everyone has the right to a standard of living that is adequate for health, including food, housing, and clothing. Clean drinking water is a necessity of this right as it is required for survival, and developing ways to clean and purify water is crucial to avoid severe illnesses. Today in Britain households have their own supply of clean water straight from the tap, but this has not always been the case.

In the Victorian and Edwardian era, water purification could be done at home with the use of a ceramic container filled with charcoal. Water was poured into the top of the container and would run through the charcoal rocks, clearing out any impurities and dirt. This method was popular and, in some cases, sand would be used instead to produce a similar effect.

Take a look in the Victorian era display to see a Mawson purifier.

Why might people have wanted their own water purifier at home?

What are other household items that are important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle?

## 2. Disney

In 2009 Disney made a commitment to becoming carbon neutral. This move towards environmental sustainability has evolved into a push for social sustainability also. In their 2021 corporate report, Disney detailed changes they want to make to help diversify their workplaces and increase their commitment to the community. Within the social responsibility department, operating in a sustainable way has included tracking an ethical supply chain and ensuring an inclusive environment that follows international labour standards.

Disney also made changes to acknowledge how older movies and shows presented different cultures in a negative or misleading way. Due to increased appreciation of cultural differences and awareness of this, there are now statements made before movie screenings and on their website about changes in the way cultures are depicted.

Take a look at the display in the 1930s to see some of the original Disney products.

Why do you think it is important for brands to acknowledge cultural differences?

What factors do you think are important for maintaining good social sustainability?



## 3. World Wars

During World War I and World War II food was rationed to ensure that the army was receiving enough supplies. International trading was also minimised and stopped during this time, causing imported brands to become limited.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was developed in 1948 by the United Nations to establish the rights and freedom of human beings. It was written in response to WWII as a promise to not allow humans to be treated the same way as they were during the war. These rights helped brands to begin re-evaluating the way they treated workers and how they were sourcing their products.

Look at the displays in the 1940s era. You can see examples of rationing in both the packaging and in the ration forms that were handed out to citizens about what food was available and how much.

How did rationing affect packaging? How might this have affected quality of life?

How does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights support brands in moving towards social sustainability?

## 4. Lego

Lego is a brand that works to create a safe and inclusive work environment, while also advocating for a healthy environment for future generations. Maintaining a socially sustainable workplace involves ensuring it is diverse and inclusive and inspiring for future generations to continue promoting inclusivity. This has been reflected in both the company's policies and the creation and expansion of the Lego people and building sets.

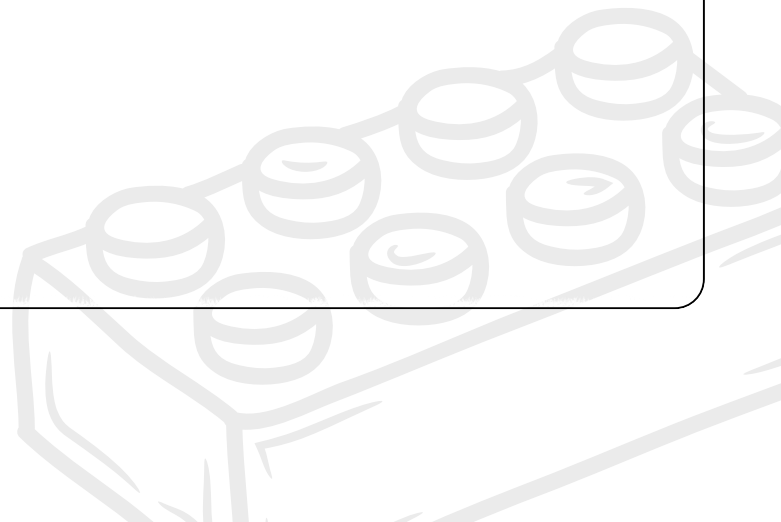
The brand developed 12 Responsible Business Principles to use as guidance for all suppliers and partners to adhere to, to maintain their ethical sourcing. These principles set the expectations for both social and environmental sustainability for the brand to ensure they remain ethical. These also help to identify areas of improvement necessary in the workplace or with suppliers and partners during third-party evaluations.

In the end display of the 1950s, you can see some early Lego sets and creations.

How might social sustainability help brands look towards the future or benefit future generations?

Imagine you are helping to develop a set of business principles, what might you want to include?

Write down some statements or key words below to include.



# 5. Tony's Chocolonely

Tony's Chocolonely is one of the leading brands in producing 100% ethically sourced, fairtrade, slave free products. Tony's chooses to work positively with farmers and workers in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, which are known for having poor working conditions and child slavery. Choosing to work with farmers in these countries decreases the amount of unfair work occurring and gives back to the communities and their local economy. With the money earned, farmers have been able to provide water pumps and schools for their villages.

Working directly with farmers, Tony's brand is able to track the cocoa beans being used and share with customers that they are ethically sourced. Ethical sourcing is important for companies, as it reassures consumers that their production is legal and fair. Tony's Chocolonely is working to help encourage other brands to follow in their footsteps and produce their products using slave free and fairtrade methods.

In the final display of the Time Tunnel, you will see the packaging for a Tony's Chocolate bar. In the top left corner you will see a label stating that the chocolate is 100% slave free.

Why is it important for brands to include a label about their ethical sourcing on the packaging?

Does knowing that a brand uses ethical sourcing make you more or less likely to purchase their product? Why or why not?

# 6. Summary

Based on what you have learnt from this worksheet and your prior knowledge, bullet point why you think social sustainability is important for branding.