

A professional headshot of a man with dark hair, wearing a grey suit jacket, a light blue dress shirt, and a red, white, and blue striped tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light grey.

INNOVATE

How  
To Be  
Sure  
Your  
Factory's  
Not A  
Sweatshop

by Susan Bender Phelps



INNOVATE

*ou've created a fabulous new design that will be the next big thing and a gamechanger for your business. Now, you have to find a factory that can produce it to your specifications and at a cost that allows you to make a healthy profit. There's a good chance you're going to look in Asia or South America. Why and how do you select a factory that is socially responsible or socially compliant?*

**“The moral case is that nobody should die making cheap clothes for people. If that's not compelling enough, then we make a powerful business case,”** says Avedis Seferian, CEO of Worldwide Accredited Production (WRAP) **“using a factory that is socially compliant protects your brand.”**

Avedis' organisation is internationally known as a sweatshop watchdog. They work to make apparel and shoe factories around the world legal, humane and ethical places to work and source from. **“We make it very clear to factories what they need to do to be certified by us. If you go to our website, there's a facility assessment document that anyone can download for free.”**



The factories that take it seriously, that have actual management systems do well,” says Avedis. “The ones that approach it as sort of a checklist let’s make sure we get to this and then we’re done - do poorly because it’s not a one-time exercise. The single most common story line at WRAP is of a company that didn’t make the first cut, but then worked really hard to become compliant and made it.



WRAP conducts extensive audits of thousands of factories each year. One third of those that apply for certification don’t qualify.

There are currently 1,954 WRAP-certified factories worldwide employing 1,746,876 people.

If you want to find good factories, just go to their website ([www.wrapcompliance.org](http://www.wrapcompliance.org)). There’s a little map on the right hand corner you can click on and it’ll give you a list of certified factories.

WRAP also partners with on-line platforms like Panjiva (<https://panjiva.com/>) and TradeGood (<http://www.tradegood.com/>) that help you find factories in a variety of different industries. You can search by product and their capacity to make specific quantities. You can specify the country. You can also add that you want them to be socially responsible, that they are WRAP certified.

“If you already have a factory that you want to work with, perhaps you’ve been working with them for a while, or you have some other connection to them, quite frankly, as the buyer, you have a certain amount of leverage,” says Avedis. “You can say, ‘I want to place an order, but before I can do that you have to get WRAP certified.’”

You can protect your business, protect your brand and do the right thing when you do business with suppliers who are socially compliant.

**INNOVATE**



**Susan Bender Phelps** is a speaker, trainer and author. Her book, *Aspire Higher*, tells compelling true stories of career and business mentoring success. [www.odysseymentoring.com](http://www.odysseymentoring.com).