



**FAIRTRADE**  
AUSTRALIA  
NEW ZEALAND

INTERVIEW WITH

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FROM BNZ

# FAIRTRADE AT WORK CASE STUDY



# BNZ IS ONE OF NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST BANKS EMPLOYING OVER 5000 PEOPLE NATIONWIDE. IN 2010 THEY MADE THE SWITCH TO FAIRTRADE COFFEE, TEA AND SUGAR.

## WHY FAIRTRADE?

We know that we are a big player in the market and we can make a difference. Moving to Fairtrade for BNZ was about our commitment to corporate responsibility, we like our actions to speak and we made the change because it is the right thing to do. We saw it as a positive message to be able to send out to our suppliers, customers and staff as well as visitors who come into our stores and corporate offices. It is about using our purchasing influence to create a positive impact. Fairtrade has the dual advantage of both having a positive benefit on society whilst giving people their daily cup of tea and coffee.



## HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT IMPLEMENTING FAIRTRADE?

We knew there was no difference in taste, as other workplaces had already done blind taste tests that confirmed this. So the first step for us was to work out the difference in costs which were minimal. A business case was prepared and approved at a senior level. We communicated the change to our people making them aware that from now on the tea, coffee and sugar supplied by BNZ would be Fairtrade. The way it works for us is that employees go to our online procurement system and choose from a selection of Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar which we know our supplier can deliver. We had the benefit of having a centralised purchasing mechanism that probably not all companies will have, this gives us the ability to actually lock-down what people buy.



## WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES WHEN IMPLEMENTING IT?

As with anything new it took some people time to adjust, we had a few comments around the tea and coffee not tasting as good, and a few economists who said 'it is messing with the free trade marketplace'. At the time of launching Fairtrade across our business about 70-80% of our staff response was really favourable. This percentage would be much higher now that we are three years in.





## HOW DID YOU GET PAST THE CHALLENGES?

We communicated that ‘this is what we are doing, this is BNZ, we have committed to doing it, and it is a part of a wider strategy’. We focused on emphasising the positive benefits that come out of it as well. It is not just about you getting tea and coffee, but it is also about the fact that what you are paying for that tea and coffee is going to benefit communities. We also stressed that the quality is just as good as any other quality non-Fairtrade product that you would get. All of that helps calm people down and as time goes on the approach gets entrenched and it becomes a part of what we do and what staff know.

## WHAT FUTURE GOALS IS BNZ WORKING ON WITH REGARD TO FAIRTRADE?

From a procurement perspective, we consider when we are going out to procure goods and services whether specific sustainability considerations should be taken into account – in addition to compliance to our minimum Sustainability Principles. Often as well, we are working on things like reducing paper and thinking about what improvements can we make in how we run our business to reduce the amount of impact we have on the environment and improve the impact we have socially.

## HOW HAS FAIRTRADE IMPACTED ON YOUR BUSINESS?

The Fairtrade system is always a useful example to cite when using or completing things like the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and similar corporate indices where CSR is measured. It is a really concrete example where we can say ‘we have actually put our money where our mouths are and we are willing to commit to it’, so that has been a really useful thing.

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR A WORKPLACE WISHING TO SWITCH TO FAIRTRADE?

Do it! It’s great! Communication and engaging your staff in the process is really important. Having some sort of launch, getting people excited about it and getting them talking about it definitely helps. Fairtrade Fortnight is a really good reminder to people. We often have events over this time or even messages on our ATM’s and on our screensavers in the office to reiterate to people the benefits of Fairtrade and why we do it. I think that constant reminding is a really good thing and it helps people think ‘oh that’s right, that is why we did it’.



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