



**FAIRTRADE**  
AUSTRALIA  
NEW ZEALAND

INTERVIEW WITH

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FROM RICOH

# FAIRTRADE AT WORK CASE STUDY



# SINCE ITS INCEPTION, RICOH HAS PARTNERED WITH ITS CUSTOMERS TO PROVIDE INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES



## WHY FAIRTRADE?

Being part of a global company, we strive towards a more sustainable and ethical future. As such, we want to bring suppliers in who have the same ethos as us. Therefore, when the Fairtrade at Work initiative was introduced to us, it was just an automatic 'Yes, of course' — it just made perfect sense for us to bring Fairtrade certified products into our company. Also, Fairtrade at Work fits so well with everything else that we've been doing regarding staff engagement and in promoting sustainable living, not only in the workplace but also at home.

## HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT IMPLEMENTING FAIRTRADE?

The process was very easy. Fairtrade walked us through what products were available to us and we decided to start with coffee and tea. We ran a price comparison on those products and then tested the samples at the head office. While a few of the products cost more, the majority were actually cheaper or came in at the same price point as the conventional brands.

We didn't want to get any pushback from our employees, so we made sure we still had our regular tea and coffee available as well. We brought in a new canister for Fairtrade coffee but at first, we didn't label it Fairtrade. We saw it being used and so we started replacing the previous brand with new, Fairtrade certified and labelled brand. Nobody questioned it or provided negative feedback.

Within a month, all seven branches, including our warehouse had three-plus Fairtrade certified products available. The variety of brands that have Fairtrade products is big enough to suit the different needs of our branches.



## WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES WHEN IMPLEMENTING IT?

We expected that people being 'creatures of habit' would be the biggest one. Some people have been working at Ricoh for more than 20 years and they've had their coffee routines for the whole time. Surprisingly, there wasn't any of that! We were prepared to explain the switch to people, but we honestly didn't have to. We have really amazing employees here who know what is right or wrong and they already knew the values that Fairtrade follows and so we didn't need to convince anyone. When something makes sense and it is easy to do, it is hard to find challenges. The whole process was just so easy and smooth, we didn't even have to change the supplier



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

We would like to bring in carbon neutral products as well as Fairtrade certified fruit for our offices. We strive to ensure that the people we deal with have the same values as we do. We have a sustainability section in our procurement policy that everyone we work with must follow. We look out for certain certifications and we are considering including Fairtrade.

We want to be a champion in the market and inspire consumers to ask questions about the products and services they use: where those products come from; how were they made; who were they made by; is the entire process audited; et cetera. We want to keep working with Fairtrade and together communicate this both internally with our employees and externally with all stakeholders in the market.

## HOW HAS FAIRTRADE IMPACTED ON YOUR BUSINESS?

Communicating to our staff the fact that we support Fairtrade made them more curious about other ideas for improving our behaviour regarding sustainability. Not only do our staff now understand that we are open to ideas, they also see how easy it is to be part of the change. It is a bit hard to measure things like this but it did increase our staff engagement. We've received many questions as well as new ideas from our employees for further improvements and innovations in area of sustainability.

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

Do it! There's nothing to be scared of! People will inevitably pushback on change if they are not eased into it. We didn't have any pushback because people were able to realise that there isn't really a difference between what they were used to and Fairtrade—but with Fairtrade products you are supporting such an amazing organisation, working in so many different areas. Your staff are going to experience a wonderful 'feel good' factor just by drinking their cup of coffee every morning. What a positive start to a working day!



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