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Better Living at Walmart?

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[Global Responsibility Report](#)
[2013 Annual Report](#)

Arguments for an Increased Minimum Wage

[National Employment Law Project](#)
[Economic Policy Institute](#)
[Business for a Fair Minimum Wage](#)

Arguments Against an Increased Minimum Wage

[American Enterprise Institute](#)
[US News](#)
[Forbes](#)

Better Living at WalMart?

Just before Thanksgiving this past year, stories started circulating through [media](#) outlets (and especially social media) about how a WalMart store manager in Canton, Ohio had put out bins asking employees to contribute food items so that other “associates in need can enjoy Thanksgiving Dinner.” The following week, [another store in Ohio was reported](#) running the same type of food drive for associates.



This series of events added fuel to the fire for critics of WalMart and other large companies who employ many minimum wage employees. At a time when WalMart is recording record profits, running food drives asking employees to support each other during the holidays is a black eye, even though the store managers who initiated these events probably did so with the best of intentions. Minimum wage activists now have a definitive event at which to point demonstrating that “WalMart is setting up bins because employees don’t make enough to feed themselves and their families.”

Now, facing increasing pressure and criticism from groups such as the [National Employment Law Project](#) and others who advocate for an increase in the national minimum wage, WalMart finds itself in the familiar position of defending its employment and labor practices.

Coincidentally, WalMart started a [public relations/advertising campaign](#) in November that features associates talking about the great benefits and opportunities that WalMart represents for them.

WalMart’s global responsibility goals are both aspirational and inspirational. They include goals around the environment, buying US made goods, empowering women globally, hunger and nutrition, diversity and inclusion, veterans and military families, and ethical sourcing.

Even WalMart’s most outspoken critics must admit that as the largest employer in the US (1.3 million US workers – 2.2 million globally), WalMart has the ability and the potential to make significant impact on how business gets done. They are taking the initiative to do this in many aspects of their business, and the results are being seen on a global scale.

Your group has been asked by the senior leadership of WalMart to analyze the current situation, research possible courses of action, and make a recommendation for how the organization can move forward in a way that is in alignment with their values and consistent with their social and economic objectives.

You have the next 71 hours to develop your presentation to the panel of judges who will represent the management of WalMart. You will have 10 minutes to make your presentation and to convince the panel that your team's recommendations represent the best course of action at this time. The judges will then have 10 minutes to ask you questions about your recommendations. Be prepared to defend your position in a professional manner.

You may use any publicly available information about WalMart, the retail industry, and trends in corporate social responsibility, sustainability and/or human rights issues. You may not contact the company, or any other organizations for additional information.

This case provides you an opportunity to use your knowledge and research skills to explore the issues related to corporate social responsibility, social impact, environmental and social sustainability and multiple other related topics.

The scope of your work should include WalMart's human resources, employment, salary and benefits policies. You should consider the economic ramifications of your recommendations as well as the reputation and public relations implications. You can look at this from a strategic perspective as well as a tactical perspective, but be clear about why you are making the recommendations and what you think the short and long-term implications will be.

This case description and the attached links are presented solely for the purpose of case study discussion. It is not intended to serve as an illustration of effective or ineffective management.