

SuGoPetite: The Sourcing Decision¹

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Abstract. This female protagonist case concerns alignment of operational processes with product maturity – a classic example of the well-known “Product-Process Matrix”. The decision maker has designed a new product: dresses for petite women made from environmentally conscious materials. She now must decide on the contract manufacturer. Two choices are presented: a low cost, high volume oriented assembly line manufacturer in a distant country, and a high cost, low volume, craft production domestic manufacturer in the same city where the designer lives. The decision maker must decide between the competing priorities of cost, response time, and quality. This is a case meant to be read and discussed during class, and takes roughly 30 minutes of class time.

Keywords: protagonist case, product-process matrix, outsourcing production, mini case.

Susan Gomez, founder of SuGoPetite, had a decision to make: source in her birth country of Guatemala, or in her adopted country of the US.

Background

Susan is the daughter of a couturier (custom fashion designer) and was born in Guatemala. She grew up with garment development in her blood, and was always interested in fashion, getting a degree in the subject. She moved to Houston in 2006 and joined the corporate world, but the desire to design did not leave her. In 2015 she started a fashion blog for petite women: www.sugopetite.blog. She perceived the opportunity to serve a niche market that mainstream fashion designers seemed to ignore – clothing made specifically with petite women in mind, not clothing made for taller women that were “shrunk” to fit petite sizes. She wanted to combine this with a manufacturing twist: creating clothing that followed an environmental bent. Following the supply chain, it is claimed that the fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global carbon dioxide emissions², and requires enormous amounts of both pesticides and water to grow and manufacture cotton fabrics.

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1. Case prepared by Professor Richard Metters, Mays School of Business, Texas A&M University.
 2. Li, J. (2024), “Fast Fashion and Emissions: What’s the Link?” Earth.org. <https://earth.org/fast-fashion-and-emissions-whats-the-link/>. August 23.

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