



Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2008

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About Bourgeois Bohème

Bourgeois Bohème is an ethical fashion company that produces and retails ethical and animal-friendly footwear and accessories.

We opened our online 'doors' in 2005 and have since then developed a strong e-commerce and mail-order customer base. In June 2008, we opened London's very first compassionate, fashion retail-showroom in Richmond, London.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is at the very core of our business: Bourgeois Bohème was created in order to provide an animal-friendly, ecological and ethical alternative to traditional fashion.

By selling high-quality and reasonably priced animal- and eco-friendly alternatives, Bourgeois Bohème aims to facilitate an attitude of compassion towards animals, humans and the environment.

Our Suppliers & Manufacturers

Bourgeois Bohème produces an exclusive range of Bourgeois Bohème labeled shoes and accessories. We also stock products from small ethical businesses and wholesale labels.

Bourgeois Bohème Label

All our suppliers and manufacturers are selected according to fair and ethical production criteria and we have personally visited and selected our partner factories in the Philippines and Portugal according to our **Ethical Production Criteria**, which encompasses:

- Animal-friendly production: no animal products, by-products or products tested on animals may be used in the production of our products.
- Fair and safe working environment: workers receive fair pay, no child-labour is employed, and health and safety regulations are implemented.
- Preference to suppliers and manufacturers that provide eco-friendly alternatives and are eco-aware in the running of their businesses.
- Preference to small family-owned factories: we make an effort to support independent business for even wealth distribution.

We visit our factories in Portugal bi-annually and work closely with the factories in the design and manufacturing of our products. Our constant and personal interaction with the companies and their workers allows the opportunity for regular criteria assessments.

Our Suppliers

We stock products from several suppliers.

All our suppliers are evaluated to make sure that they meet our Ethical Production Criteria.

Wherever possible we source wholesale products from ethical and animal-friendly brands.

A selection of our products is manufactured by suppliers who produce both animal-friendly and leather products. In each case we ensure that the company meets our Ethical Production Criteria and that all the products we purchase from them are animal-friendly.

Our Customers

We believe in the consumer's voice; by providing compassionate fashion alternatives we hope to educate consumers that their conscious choice of an ethical product does make a difference in how people, animals and the environment are treated in the commercial world.

Through efficient customer services and excellent value-for-money products we aim to encourage faith not only in our business but also in animal-friendly products as being easily accessible, long-lasting and fair-priced.

Our **Golden Rules** of customer satisfaction and interaction:

- **At your service:** each customer is treated as an individual; we pay attention to individual requests.
- **Shop-ability:** we aim to make our customers online shopping experience enjoyable through visually pleasing design and an easy navigation.
- **Near-to-real:** easy to view 360 degree images, zoom functionality, and detailed product descriptions make the customers online shopping experience as near-to-real as possible.
- **Safety-first:** we offer safe and secure online payment systems and alternative payment methods.
- **Something for everyone:** we offer products in a broad mid-market price range.
- **Made to last:** we produce high-quality products that are made to last across the seasons.
- **Fashion-conscious:** our range includes styles that reflect the latest trends in fashion as well as classic wardrobe staples.
- **Eco-aware:** we provide fashions in eco-friendly fabrics and in biodegradable leather alternatives.
- **Transparency:** we handle enquiries with regards to our business and products with transparency.
- **Part of the community:** we encourage community interaction through social networking (Facebook and MySpace), online blogging, and providing tips on living an ethical lifestyle through our online "Community" pages and in-store leaflets.
- **We're all ears:** we encourage feedback from our customers and provide easy communication options such as email, telephone and annual customer surveys.
- **If we don't get it right:** customer complaints are met with an attitude of helpfulness. We view customer complaints as constructive feedback, which allows us to improve our products and services and better meet our customer's needs.

"This morning I received the shoes I ordered. You are great; I didn't expect such fast delivery! ...shoes and boots are delightful and the size is perfect!"

Ariella, Bourgeois Boheme customer

*"Hi, My brother ordered a pair of boots from you as a gift for my birthday. Just to say they arrived safely, and were wrapped very well. I even had a hand written note saying 'Happy Birthday Suzanne!' on the order slip. The boots are lovely and I am VERY pleased with them, and would recommend your company to anyone.
Thank you. :-)"*

Suzanne, Bourgeois Boheme customer

Our Products

Our entire range contains neither animal materials nor materials tested on animals. At Bourgeois Bohème animal welfare and environmental impact go hand in hand.

Our Ethical Selection Criteria:

- **Eco-friendly:** we choose to use the best quality faux leather microfibres which are 80% bio-degradable. We do not use Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) in the production of our ranges. The process of producing leather is damaging to both the environment and to leather industry workers and surrounding inhabitants.
- **Organic:** our range includes the use of organic hemp, organic cotton and natural rubber and sisal soles for footwear. We continue to strive to expand our organic range of products.
- **Recycled materials:** our range includes products made with recycled materials and we continue to research recycled materials which we may include in our range.
- **Fair-Trade:** The organic cotton we use is fair-trademarked and our product range includes fair-trademarked products.
- **Tran-seasonal:** We manufacture and stock products that last through the seasons. It is important to us that we discourage the culture of throw-away fashion.

The production and content of our products is clearly communicated to our customers.

We are Vegan Society and Vegetarian International Voice for Animals! (VIVA!) certified. All the cosmetics we stock are British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) certified.



Our Team

We believe that a business is only as healthy as its employees are happy. Employees are one of the key stakeholders for any business and we aim to attract and retain the best people to ensure long term success. We presently employ three fulltime staff members and one part time staff member.

Working Environment

Each team member is passionate about animal-friendly and environmental issues. We strive to engender a creative and relaxed working environment in which all members of the Bourgeois Bohème team can learn and grow. We have an annual review process and we maintain an open-door policy in the company for open communication at all times.

Skill Diversity

Whilst each staff member of Bourgeois Bohème has set roles and responsibilities we involve all staff in the creative aspects of the business; in doing so we not only garner valuable input but also cultivate a sense of team work and personal value.

Pay and Incentives

We offer progressive employment contracts and flexible working hours to accommodate time for the development of personal interests.

Training and Development

We continue to invest training and development in our staff, so they are better equipped to both develop the business and develop with the business. We involve our staff in a variety of office tasks that are not within their job description in order to develop a practical understanding of the general running of an online fashion retail business. We include staff in the visiting of fashion and retail trade-shows and factories in order to develop their awareness of the greater fashion retail marketplace.

Equal Opportunities

Our policy is to treat our staff and job applicants fairly and equally regardless of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, age or disability.

Benefits

We offer holiday and sick pay above statutory entitlements. Other benefits include generous discounts on our range of products and we give staff first choice on any discount sale items. Our staff also benefit from factory and supplier samples.

Health and Safety

We are committed to providing a safe working environment and to promoting health and well-being of our team.

Community

Nothing exists in isolation and we aim to both involve and be involved.

Fundraising Events

We work with large animal organisations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in organising funds raising events for that organisation.

Charitable Support

We regularly offer support to charities, associations, and local groups and support at least 15 events per year with product, monetary and gift voucher donations.

Donation of Stock

Damaged or imperfect stock is donated to charities such as People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) who uses them in fund-raising.

In addition, we encourage our customers to place used and unwanted shoes in marked shoe charity bins or to donate them at their local charity shop.

Community Support

We support and promote fellow vegan companies through link exchanges, recommendation, cross-promotions and special offers.

We use social-networking resources such as Facebook and MySpace to encourage networking and sharing within the local animal-friendly community and host events, which allows our customers the opportunity to meet one another. Through our online "Community" pages and in-store leaflets, we provide tips on living an ethical lifestyle.

Environment

Considering environmental impact is a key factor in our decision making processes both in product and material choices and in the general running of our office.

Our Products

Bourgeois Bohème believes that non-leather products are an important first step towards more eco-friendly footwear production.

We use only high-quality microfibre, a man-made fibre that is 80% bio-degradable. We never manufacture using PVC. We are incorporating more eco-sustainable materials such as sisal and natural rubber soles and organic fair-trade cotton and hemp into our ranges.

As a way of opposing the throwaway culture of today's consumer society, Bourgeois Bohème is committed to creating products that last throughout the seasons both in terms of style and quality.

Our Office

Our company is run with a minimal use of resources.

Our packaging is bio-degradable and reused wherever possible. We also recycle all our packaging waste, and use recycled paper for every day office operations. We provide paper bags to our store visitors and never use plastic. We reuse plastic packaging from any outsourced products.

We try to reduce energy consumption by using electricity only when necessary; we always keep our office equipment shut down when not in use.

The everyday office operation and store administration processes are online-based and our online and mail-order systems are virtually paper-free. We reuse shoe boxes and cartons where possible. Our product boxes and presentation are all produced from recyclable material.

We make use of Richmond Council's recycling facilities for daily waste such as packaging boxes, paper, plastic and glass.

Finances

Bourgeois Bohème banks with The Co-operative Bank, an ethical bank that champions the causes of concern of its customers such as labour rights and ecological sustainability. They also produce chequebooks in 33% recycled paper and chlorine free and 100% recycled paper from post-consumer waste.

What we have achieved...

Over the past three years Bourgeois Boheme has become one of the UK's most recognised animal-friendly and ethical brands. With sales doubling in the second year and a further 50% growth in the third year, we are proud to be able to provide stylish ethical products to our loyal customer-base of over 5000 people.

Our Label

From tireless research of materials, designs & manufacturers, we have developed our very own Bourgeois Boheme ranges of shoes and accessories.

Awards

As part of Global Entrepreneurship Week 2008, Alicia Lai owner of Bourgeois Boheme was announced as a Future 100 young entrepreneur winner.

Bourgeois Boheme has been acknowledged as a market leader by the some of the worlds most active animal-friendly groups: we have received a Vegan Society "Best retailer 2006" award and received a PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) Proggy Award for three consecutive years:

- 2006 PETA Proggy Award - "Best cruelty-free purses and wallets"
- 2007 PETA Proggy Award - "Best cruelty-free shoe retailer"
- 2008 PETA Proggy Award - "Best Cruelty-free online retailer"
- 2006 Vegan Society "Best cruelty-free online vendor"

Retail Showroom

In May 2008 we opened London's very first animal-friendly footwear and fashion retail-showroom location.

Ongoing Objectives

Bourgeois Boheme is still a very young company. Our key objectives are to:

- Increase Brand awareness & presence
- Increase Sales
- Increase Product selection, including more eco-alternatives
- Ensure Bourgeois Boheme remains a Fun & Great place to work

Wholesale Opportunities

Within the last half of 2008, we have secured 4 wholesale accounts internationally. We are conscious not to expand too quickly but are confident that with a measured approach we will be able to offer Bourgeois Boheme labeled products to an increased number of ethical retailers globally.

More Eco-range

Our 2008 trans-seasonal range of footwear is Bourgeois Boheme's first range of fair-trade and organic cotton and hemp footwear. We aim to develop a greater selection of products in natural, fair-trade and organic materials and continuously invest resources in the research and development of new eco-alternatives.

Where we stock products from other suppliers, we aim to minimise sourcing from non-vegan suppliers and from less sustainable businesses. In aspiring to exclusively stock ethical brands we hope to circulate more business to small ethical retailers.

In addition, certain ethical/animal-friendly companies use PVC as a leather alternative. PVC is not bio-degradable and therefore environmentally inferior to micro-fibre; we aim to minimize the number of PVC products and eventually stop sourcing them entirely.

Retail Showroom

In May 2008 we opened London's very first animal-friendly footwear and fashion retail-showroom location. We are conscious that a more centrally located premise would be preferable for our customers and we aim to achieve this within the next year.