

My wife and I have worn Bamboosa clothing since the founding of the company. We became aware of their products through a long-time friend who is one of the founders of the M Group; Mindy Johnson. Mindy is an extraordinary person with a depth of character that is rarely seen. We have watched her triumphs over single-parenthood, which resulted in the success of rearing a son into an outstanding young man, and her valiant struggle against a particularly vicious form of cancer. While undergoing these trials, she had the remarkable courage to start a business. Her equally strong ideals regarding environmental issues were an important factor in the shaping of Bamboosa's standards of quality and merchandising. She and her partners also have a vision of revitalizing an economically depressed area in our state which has an unemployment rate of nearly 12% as of yesterday. Many of the employees of Bamboosa, like Mindy herself, are struggling single moms. Not only is Bamboosa generating much needed cash in the area of Andrews, SC, it has helped to make life a dignified pursuit for many who would be trapped in a dependent status with little hope.

I know that this may seem to have little to do with the specifics of the complaint but I believe it has much to do with a determination of what probable intent there could be in any alleged misleading merchandising claims you are citing. In our 14 years of close association with Mindy Johnson, we can think of no circumstance in which she would knowingly misrepresent anything - especially in the area of environmental or "organic" issues. Mindy and I rarely agree on these issues. She is an environmental activist of the first water with a passion that I have trouble addressing. It would not occur to me to question her sincerity no matter how much I might disagree with her views.

In short, if you are searching for culpability in misrepresenting the fiber content of the viscose involved or, for that matter, any of the claims you have found objectionable, may I suggest you develop a healthy skepticism regarding the country of origin: China. They have strongly demonstrated a lack of concern over accurate disclosure or even the safety of our children and pets. Their record vis a vis stated quality standards is abominable - to the point of it being obvious that they have no concern for truth in advertising, in my view. To put it simply: the Chinese - from the government to the manufacturers - have a proven record of being reflexive liars. Mindy Johnson, on the other hand, has a well-established record of integrity. Should there be proof offered that the fiber Bamboosa purchased as a 'bamboo' derivative has been adulterated, I believe to my core that Mindy and her partners would be horrified.

As far as your complaint goes, there seemed to be a distaste for the manufacturing process of Rayon. To be sure, the process involving both caustic soda and hydrogen sulfide is toxic. To what extent it is noticeably polluting the environment seems unclear. The manufacturing process has been in use for over 130 years and would have been loudly protested in the current politically activist climate were it an excessive pollutant. Your article also suggested that Rayon derived from bamboo isn't bamboo anymore. (?)

We hold both Mindy Johnson and Bamboosa in the highest regard. Is it not possible that you are causing more harm than good by focusing on this small company rather than investigating claims made by their suppliers? If what I suspect is true regarding the Chinese origins of the basic commodity in the product, what you are doing could easily resemble the prosecution of Matel and several pet food manufacturers over the untruthful "certifications" by the Chinese in recent years.

Isn't it possible that your agency could accomplish more by giving Bamboosa some good findings of fact generated by rigorous testing that small companies simply cannot afford? Knowing the people involved and the high standards they aspire to, I believe they would move Heaven and earth to correct any problem without threat of sanction.