



Summersault Vendor Relations Policy

Preamble

Summersault is a company centered around ethical and just business practices; we have particular corporate values with regard to sustainability, community building, integrity, and respect for persons. We recognize that we have the opportunities to do business with and seek the services and products from other organizations that may or may not to some degree share those values, and that, in some cases, may engage in activities contrary to those values. We acknowledge that, due to the complex nature of the world in which we do business, our purchasing decisions cannot always be pure. And so we have established this Vendor Relations Policy to guide us in our decision making about the use of vendors in question, that we may seek to make the most ethical purchasing decisions possible within that complex framework.

Priorities

In developing this Policy, we recognize the following priorities:

- A. We wish to avoid sending our money to companies or organizations that derive any significant portion of their revenues from the sale of alcohol, tobacco, gambling, armaments, or other services or products that we recognize as in conflict with our own corporate values or as contributing to various social problems present in our society.
- B. We wish to avoid sending our money to companies that we believe are responsible for serious or repeated instances of discrimination, pollution or other significant environmental destruction, labor or human rights violations, health or safety violations, or unlawful political activity.
- C. We wish to avoid sending our money to companies that violate our own sense of their social responsibility, even if their conduct is lawful. For these purposes, violations of applicable laws are not necessary to trigger our response, although in some cases they will suffice.

In what follows, “harm” means harm or wrongdoing of the kinds on our priority list.

Specific Principles and Guidelines

1. Summersault will avoid subsidizing harm. If a vendor is directly engaged in harm, then we will respond. If a vendor is not directly engaged in harm, but
 - a. is owned by a company or individual engaged in harm,
 - b. acquires a significant portion of its goods and services from a vendor directly engaged in harm, or

c. acquires a subsidiary directly engaged in harm,

then we will respond. We will not generally respond to a vendor if the harm arises from a vendor's owner's vendors, a vendor's vendor's owners, a vendor's vendor's vendors, or other parties two "layers" or more beyond the original vendor.

2. We aspire to avoid enriching those who profit from harm, even if our money does not subsidize the harm.

When a vendor has a wholly-owned subsidiary directly engaged in harm, then we will respond under the following circumstances: (1) the vendor makes one-third or more of its revenues from the subsidiary, and (2) the subsidiary makes one-third or more of its revenues from harm.

When a vendor is owned one-third or more by a company or individual who substantially benefits from harm, then we will respond. One "substantially benefits from harm" when one makes one-third or more of one's revenues from harm or has a wholly owned subsidiary directly engaged in harm.

When dealing with a vendor would make us complicit in this kind of harm, rather than the kind described in the first principle above, then our response should usually fall short of ceasing to do business with the vendor.

3. It is more important to avoid doing harm than to advance good causes.

It would be convenient to do both, and we should do so when we can. But we fear that making both tasks obligatory would strain our resources. We would need two sets of criteria: first, for what is harm, and how much complicity in harm is too much, and second, for what is good, and how much participation in good is enough. This would make the policy roughly twice as complex, and implementation roughly twice as difficult.

4. We hold many values simultaneously. One is to avoid subsidizing harm. One is to avoid enriching those who profit from harm. Another is to ensure the thriving of Summersault.

When all available vendors of a certain product or service are unacceptably complicit in harm, then we must ask whether we are willing to do without or to produce it from our own labor. Often we will not be willing to do either. Buying from one of those vendors can be an ethically acceptable outcome when the loss of the vendor's product or service (for example, electricity) would significantly compromise the company.

5. It is not always enough for a vendor to comply with all applicable laws.

Alcohol, tobacco, and armaments are legal products. But we do not want to profit from them through our investments, or subsidize them through our purchases.

Monitoring Compliance

In general, we will detect problems and monitor continuing compliance through our interactions with vendors in the normal course of business. We will trust vendors to give accurate and honest statements about their compliance unless we have some reason to withdraw trust.

If the possibility of non-compliance is raised, either through the interactions described above, or in some other form (through employee statements, third party statements, etc), Summersault will investigate the compliance of the vendor in question and will make a decision about continued use of that vendor in light of the principles of this document and a factual inquiry into the relevant vendors and alternatives. This investigation and decision-making should happen reasonably soon after the possibility of non-compliance has been raised.

Notes

If you are a vendor and have questions about these principles or doing business with Summersault, please contact Principal Chris Hardie.

Portions of this policy are derived from the document “Earlham College Vendor Relations Principles,” <http://www.earlham.edu/policies/vendor.html>.