

While Gucci is already well known for its quality, creativity, and Italian artisanal craftsmanship, corporate social responsibility is increasingly recognized as yet another fundamental value for the brand.

Gucci believes in the importance of responsibility toward people, the environment, and the communities in which we operate. Corporate citizenship is an essential part of our mission and our operating philosophy.

All of our products destined for customers – with the exception of watches and fragrances – are made in Italy. The “Made in Italy” label is a vital facet of the Gucci brand that defines who we are and what we represent. Our customers see that label as a guarantee of quality and Italian craftsmanship. It is a unique part of our legacy and one that we are committed to preserving.

In 2004, Gucci went far beyond the requirements of Italian law in protecting its employees – in terms of both salaries and security – when it became one of the first companies in its field to launch a voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility (SA8000) certification process throughout its entire production chain in Italy. In August 2007, Gucci earned official SA8000 certification for its leather goods and jewelry supply chain, becoming the first luxury goods company to do so. This certification covers ethical values, respect for people and workplace health and safety, as well as workers’ rights and equal opportunities, in line with ILO (International Labour Organization) standards, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In the years since certification was first earned, it has been extended to the supply chains for shoes, ready-to-wear, and silks, the logistics hub, and, most recently, Gucci stores in Italy.

Gucci today provides work directly or indirectly to approximately 45,000 people in Italy (7,000 of them working in the leather goods district around Florence), most of them employed by small family businesses. Those families have been working with Gucci for generations. Since its foundation, the company has been committed to building strong and vital relationships in its local area, with particular emphasis on people and sustainability.

In recognition of the importance of those relationships, in September 2009, Gucci signed an agreement with local authorities and organizations with which it committed to enhancing and promoting the production chain even further. That agreement – the first of its kind in Italy – gave rise to creation of a policy committee for the supply chain. That committee is tasked with identifying best practices and promoting the adoption of social responsibility standards. This agreement is just one part of Gucci’s ongoing commitment to nurturing its supply chain.

Indeed, in December 2013 when a tragic fire involving a completely unrelated company broke out in Prato, Gucci was cited by authoritative institutions and media sources as an example of best practices in the industry, due to its longstanding commitment to monitoring the quality of its supply chain on a continuous basis.

Gucci remains deeply committed to ensuring that our suppliers and sub-suppliers – who are all based in Italy – respect those principles. To guarantee that, more than 2,000 independent audits and inspections are performed annually. Each audit covers different monitored areas, including administrative practices, quality of production, delivery indexes, corporate social and environmental responsibility indexes, technical features, and security inspections.

Suppliers are paid under the terms of the relevant national collective bargaining agreements. During unannounced inspections of company suppliers, auditors also verify that such payment is handled properly by examining payroll and work records, as well as by speaking directly to workers themselves.

Indeed, input from workers – either directly or via unions – is also part of those inspections. There are also opportunities for private meetings with small groups of workers, and the information exchanged during those meetings is kept confidential.

When an audit does turn up any kind of irregularity, the involved supplier is informed immediately and asked to take corrective action quickly. If the supplier fails to do so, services are suspended or the relationship is severed. These conditions are laid out in the supplier contract alongside the sustainability principles.

The union is kept apprised of such action on an ongoing basis so that it may be involved as appropriate. For this purpose, an SA8000 Committee has been formally created under a 2004 agreement between Gucci and union and industry representatives. That committee's purpose is not only to oversee SA8000 provisions, but also for its members to share information and to consult with each other regularly in order to establish priorities for action and adopt modern and innovative solutions provided by both internal specialists in the area and other specialists outside of the company.