

2021

Mindful Consumerism with Shell It Out (Episode 3)

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Mindful Consumerism with Shell It Out:
Podcast Transcript

Annie Jones 00:11

This is an episode of the OtterPod from CSU Monterey Bay. We're Shell It Out. Today, we're going to have a three-part discussion of the impacts of shopping small. My name is Annie Jones.

Cianna Fullen 00:26

I'm Cianna Fullen.

Seryna Bonacorso 00:28

And I'm Seryna Bonacorso.

Cianna Fullen 00:31

When you buy a product from the store, or have it shipped to your door, do you ever wonder how it came to be there?

Annie Jones 00:37

Do you wonder how the purchase will impact your own community?

Seryna 00:42

Every single purchase holds significance, and shopping small and or locally can greatly reduce the negative impacts which result from our industrialized, capitalistic system.

Annie Jones 01:01

California is known for its high sales tax. The California Department of Tax and Fee Administration states that the "Total Statewide Base Sales and Use Tax Rate is 7.25%". As high as this percentage may be, sales tax goes directly back to the community

where the business is located. Let me break down how the base 7.25% sales tax is distributed, as explained by the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration. Under state jurisdiction, "3.9375% goes to the State's General Fund, 0.50% goes to Local Public Safety Fund to support local criminal justice activities, 0.50% goes to Local Revenue Fund to support local health and social services programs, and 1.0625% goes to Local Revenue Fund 2011. Under local jurisdiction, 0.25% goes to county transportation funds and 1.00% goes to city or county operations. The additional tax rate, or tax rates higher than 7.25%, can vary depending on district jurisdiction." "Counties, cities and towns in California may impose one or more district taxes. Those district tax rates range from 0.10% to 1.00%. Taxes collected shall be transmitted to the districts." Some sales tax rates can be as high as 10.500%. An example of a district in Monterey County is a 0.125% tax rate for the Monterey-Salinas MST Special Transit District (MSTD). For those who are not familiar with the Monterey area, the MST is a public transit bus system in Monterey County.

Shopping locally instead of from online shops such as Amazon puts the tax directly back into your community rather than the sales tax going back to the state you live in. When shopping on Amazon they explain, "the tax rate applied to your order will be the combined state and local rates of the address where your order is delivered to or fulfilled from." While Amazon does have to comply with state and local tax rates in 43 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico due to the Marketplace Facilitator Act, shopping locally is more personal. It puts money directly into the pockets of your community members rather than putting money into the pockets of billionaires or other multi-million dollar companies. In a smaller business, a smaller amount of money goes much further compared to large corporations. Shopping locally is especially important right now due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses, especially small businesses, are struggling to stay open and local funds are likely lower than normal.

Sales tax can help keep businesses open, help community members

survive, and give your community the funds it needs to keep your community healthy. Local shopping relates to the geopolitical theme of sense of place. Actively helping to support local businesses can improve one's sense of community. One may feel their place in their community space is to improve their personal well being and the wellbeing of their community. I would like to add that shopping in person might not be an option for everyone, especially during this global pandemic. The safest option for someone could be to shop online rather than risk going to the potentially crowded store in person. In food deserts and places with limited store options, some products may be unavailable in stores, so online options might be the only accessible choice for certain products. Additionally, time is money in America under capitalism; leading a busy lifestyle can make it difficult to have time to go shopping and having Amazon Grocery and other delivery services can help one still be able to get their necessities on a tight schedule. When shopping locally is an option, it is more beneficial to you and your community to make that decision rather than choosing to shop online. Speaking of benefitting your community, here's Cianna talking about local food products.

Cianna 05:08

Why shop local you may ask? Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic Development states that, "Spending money with local retailers helps keep the local community alive". The places where we eat, shop, and have fun all have the potential to make a community feel like home. 'One-of-a-kind' is what they call it. You may still wonder, well why shop local? Luckily, I was able to conduct a quick interview with local Temecula honey farmer, Tom, owner of Tom's honey, however due to the copyright music playing in the background I recreated this interview with Jesse Fullen. I'm here with local farmer Tom of Tom's honey to talk a little bit about his local business, so let's get into the questions.

Cianna Fullen 05:52

Has this pandemic affected your local shop? And have you noticed any drastic changes?

Tom 05:59

Well it's been a little tough, we're out here working as hard as we can and uh we've been getting alot less people.

Cianna Fullen 06:05

I'm sorry to hear that and uh just out of curiosity, how long have you been selling your honey as a local small business owner?

Tom 06:13

Probably been selling for about 4-5 years, not too long but we come out here every weekend on Saturdays.

Cianna Fullen 06:20

Hmmm, and what have been some of the biggest challenges of selling your product at a local farmers market?

Tom 06:28

It's pretty small out here so I guess selling hasn't been too difficult. But we don't have enough people buying our product since you can easily get it at the store, or you can have it delivered by amazon, you know, but we're making it work.

Cianna Fullen 06:43

Alrighty Tom, here's my last question, What can you say to anyone that may be listening, that may encourage them into shopping local?

Tom 06:51

I'd say go out there and support Local businesses, we need your

help more than ever, I mean my biggest fear is not being able to keep this business going, so I think it would be great if anyone can come out and support.

Cianna Fullen 07:05

Well thank you so much for your time Tom, I truly appreciate it, and I wish you nothing but the best!

Tom 07:11

Thanks, appreciate it!

Cianna Fullen 07:14

Well there you have it! I know Tom surely changed my perspective on shopping local, and after taking a trip to my local farmers market, it was certainly an experience I'll never forget! Now on to Seryna talking about the Fast Fashion-Industry.

Seryna Bonacorso 07:29

So far, you've heard about shopping local and or small, and the positive effects that those purchases have on your community. But, what if I told you that your purchase can also take a stand against the poor treatment of workers across the globe, and even for our planet earth? Before this episode comes to a close, I am going to discuss the impacts that larger clothing companies have on people and on our planet. I'll end with some tips, big and small, that you can use to vote with your dollar, inspire other consumers around you, and to hold your ground against damaging corporations. The fast fashion industry revolves around constant change and in turn, a constant need for cheap labor and resources. Whether these resources are destructive to our environment and whether these practices are destructive to the human workers, well, these questions aren't the high priorities of the fast fashion industry as a whole; profit is the main priority. According to a BBC article by Christine Ro titled, "Can fashion ever be sustainable," approximately 10% of carbon

emissions and 20% of wastewater comes from the clothing industry, making it one of the biggest contributors to our climate crisis. Ro states that, "While most consumer goods suffer from similar issues, what makes the fashion industry particularly problematic is the frenetic pace of change it not only undergoes, but encourages. With each passing season or microseason, consumers are pushed into buying the latest items to stay on trend". Ro also discusses the unsustainable materials that many companies use, such as synthetic material and polluting additions including dyes. She also discusses the large amount of clothing waste made by the fast fashion industry when a product cannot or will not be sold. The amount of waste is unfathomable, especially when considering the countless people who can't afford clothing. The effects on workers is also an issue within the industry. In his article for the *Journal of Business Ethics* titled "Exploiting Injustice in Mutually Beneficial Market Exchange: The Case of Sweatshop Labor", András Miklós discusses the injustices present within sweatshops, in countries such as Bangladesh. Miklós sheds light on the workers' necessary willingness to partake in these workplaces, places which are cruel and intensive and would not even be allowed in most Western countries. This is, of course, beneficial to an industry which values cheap and efficient labor. He states that, "Such labor arrangements are mutually beneficial compared to the status quo ante but would likely not be so in a just world where inequalities in life prospects are reduced because resources are distributed more equitably". These references are just a brief look into the injustices many workers face globally, specifically low income women of color, who the fashion industry exploits most of all. Now, I'll briefly discuss those tips I mentioned earlier. I would like to preface this by saying that many people cannot afford to ditch fast fashion, and in our society these are often the only affordable options for them. The point of these tips isn't to judge anyone who buys from fast fashion companies, they're not the problem. What we want is to feel empowered in our purchases if we have the means to consider these things; we want to know the hidden costs of our products and to support companies that are transparent and

following a solid moral compass. First and foremost, we can have conversations with each other about these issues, and spread our growing awareness to others around us. This form of activism is free! And who knows what sort of interesting connections you can make. You can also go thrifting, but make sure to be aware that low income consumers rely on these stores, so I don't recommend reselling nicer thrifted items for marked up prices online. You can also shop locally and online to buy from companies that align with your ethical and environmental standards. Oftentimes, these brands are more expensive than what you would expect from a typical clothing company. The higher price is due to better practices and materials, as well as proper pay for the workers! If you are able and willing to support these kinds of companies, they are a fantastic alternative, and their products are often better quality, meaning they'll last longer. I encourage anyone listening to do research on these issues on their own time, you'd be shocked at some of the things you may learn, and some of the amazing brands that you'll find.

Cianna Fullen 13:05

In this episode we outlined some of the benefits of shopping local, and we hope you enjoyed our discussion. We're Shell It Out, thanks for listening, and remember to be a mindful consumer!

Cianna Fullen 13:17

Executive producers of the OtterPod are Dr. Sara Salazar Hughes and Liz Zepeda, with theme music by Eric Mabrey. Our hosts were Annie Jones, Cianna Fullen, and Seryna Bonacorso, with audio mixing by Cianna Fullen and Seryna Bonacorso. Producing by Cianna Fullen, script writing by Annie Jones, Cianna Fullen, and Seryna Bonacorso. Special thanks to Jesse Fullen for reenacting the interview.

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