



ESPRIT INTERNATIONAL
(ABSTRACT)

For more than a decade, WRI's Sustainable Enterprise Program (SEP) has harnessed the power of business to create profitable solutions to environment and development challenges. BELL, a project of SEP, is focused on working with managers and academics to make companies more competitive by approaching social and environmental challenges as unmet market needs that provide business growth opportunities through entrepreneurship, innovation, and organizational change.

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Lynda Grose, head designer for the Ecollection clothing line, walked down the halls of the Esprit headquarters, admiring the Amish quilt collection that had been a hallmark of the San Francisco offices during her twelve years with the company. The intricately-woven quilts reminded her of the qualities on which the Esprit Corporation had been built: cultural awareness, social responsibility, and “free-spirit”. In contrast, the sales figures that she held in her hand represented the reality of working in the highly competitive, and in recent years, somewhat depressed, fashion industry.

Grose entered Esprit’s conference room, a converted old greenhouse, to find Dan Imhoff and other key members of the Ecollection department waiting to discuss the first season’s performance of Esprit’s new environmentally sensitive women’s clothing line. The following week, Birgit Kelley, President of Esprit International, would be presenting these Ecollection results at a Division Head meeting. Although Ecollection was supported by the founders of Esprit, the Division Heads, who had bottom line responsibility for all Esprit goods, were skeptical of the manufacturing and marketing processes. The Ecollection group needed to come up with a plan for the fall season to bring Ecollection in line with Esprit’s overall marketing strategy.