

**case 8-761-888**

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Andrew Hoffman

## Patagonia: Challenging Consumerism through Refusal to Co-brand Apparel

“The Zen master would say if you want to change government, you have to aim at changing corporations, and if you want to change corporations, you first have to change the consumers. Whoa, wait a minute! The consumer? That’s me. You mean I’m the one who has to change?”<sup>1</sup>

Yvon Chouinard, *Let My People Go Surfing*

It was May 2023 and Maia Garcia Vasquez,<sup>i</sup> vice president for global sales at Patagonia, sat in her Ventura, California, office as she waited to receive the latest quarterly sales and impact results. She and her team had been tasked by senior executives to develop a sales strategy based on the impact of the company’s recent implementation of its refusal policy; a policy that said Patagonia would no longer embroider any corporate or other organizational logos on Patagonia apparel, in order to ensure its clothing had longer life and less impact on the environment.

In April 2019, her company decided to stop co-branding apparel with companies and organizations in certain industries, including financial services.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, she had been part of lengthy discussions about pushing this policy to the next level. These discussions ended with the company’s decision, in April 2021, to no longer allow any companies’ logos to be embroidered on Patagonia clothing.<sup>3</sup> This move shut down a steady revenue stream for Patagonia that competitors could pick up. Nevertheless, the company’s aim was to achieve an environmental benefit: stopping production of products that would be discarded, because of the co-branded logos, prior to the end of their useful lifespan.

Maia Garcia Vasquez was accustomed to navigating the tension between financial performance and Patagonia’s values of environmental responsibility. Refusing corporate logo embroidery was just one of many similar groundbreaking actions Patagonia had taken by 2023.

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<sup>i</sup> Maia Garcia Vasquez is a fictional character.

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