

*[Received by email 19/8/11]*

Hello, my name is mike Johnson, I am a member of the SDA and was also a shop steward for many years. I have also worked as a store person with much customer interaction for over 27 years in the retail sector. I am writing a quick email to you after reading about the national retailers association trying to lower our wages and conditions in this sector.

Firstly let me say this, these retailers constantly complain about productivity in stores and yet the wastage and poor decision making processes at senior management levels are where the most money is wasted, and after this long in the game I can attribute to that. The problem is the culture of “yes “men (and women) whom are not questioning enough of decisions made that reflect poorly in stores performance, also what these companies continually fail to see is that their staff when truly experienced are a asset to the company yet the trend to casualising the workforce with ever younger and cheaper staff (so much for age discrimination) with high turnovers, produces poor training , poor customer skills and poor work ethic and merely lead to a race to the bottom where customers are so tired of no service - they go online, and in fact I’m sure that is one day where all these retailers will end up if this current productivity application continues - there will be no jobs for *management* or workers. I put it to these companies that instead of monopolising the local market with store saturation ,they should have looked to Asia and America and Europe to broaden their base, perhaps a better choice of ceo’s in the past would have brought about more vision for the future?

Finally the facts are these, you and I know this wage is below the poverty line - its a bit hard to look good for work when your living in your car –is this the image retailers want? They have taken everything off of us now, perhaps its about time the productivity commission investigated managements roll in poor performance, also embracing technology for conferencing and communication and adding quality Australian (not just labels) made lines that are really green minded such as garments and products from sustainable forests and plastics that are free of biphesphenols *or* preferably no plastics at all, then perhaps they just might find there are still customers out there willing to support them (us), how about advertising they support unions and local community, all the stores do in country Queensland is parasite off the community - why not take a leaf out of Bendigo banks book - fund local Landcare groups, local footy clubs and the like instead of million dollar football clubs in melbourne. They say when you have a big problem the first place you should look is in the mirror - well look in the mirror retailers - our future rests with you, that is your jobs and ours. Stop playing blame games and start preparing for a greener more intelligent world, perhaps the jb hi fi model, good product, good price, good customer service and knowledge, good staff moral...its up to you...

regards

Mike Johnson - somewhere on the poverty line in Queensland.