Modern Slavery Act – is it at the core of your business?

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According to the Modern Slavery Index issued by risk analytics company Verisk Maplecroft, modern slavery is common in 58% of countries. In fact, there are 45.8m people in the world enslaved today. Given the global nature of the food industry, the risk of modern slavery somewhere in the food supply chain is high.

Businesses will have to be rigorous to make sure they and all of their suppliers are conforming to the agreed legislative standards. Complete supply chain transparency beyond the traditional 'one-up one-down' will help demonstrate this or identify potential issues.

While the Modern Slavery Act only requires larger UK businesses (turnover of £36m or more) to issue annual slavery and human trafficking statements, it will affect every member of the supply chain. This is because these larger businesses will have to make sure that they and ALL of their suppliers (down to raw ingredients suppliers) conform to the agreed legislative standards.

Consequently, many smaller businesses may feel pressured by their larger customers to adopt certain trading principles, perhaps without really understanding their significance. In order to tackle modern slavery, businesses up and down the supply chain need to work together to conform to the legislative requirements. Complete supply chain mapping will help do this and identify potential issues. In complex, intricate supply chains, it can be easy to lose sight and control of the working conditions of each employee. As a result, larger chains regularly request that their direct suppliers apply their own global sourcing principles and are able to demonstrate compliance when required.

The Authenticate IS system can help you comply with your customers' demands. Our new advanced audit and assessment tool enables you to easily conduct ethical self-assessment surveys. With the ability to build your own self-assessment and audit templates, the module has been designed to save time with features such as an integrated supplier database, real-time data and results and built in reminders and notifications.

Whilst adhering to a code of conduct may seem unnecessary to smaller suppliers, larger retailers and manufacturers may offer support and assistance in making adjustments so that smaller businesses can comply. By doing so, it helps them make sure they are working within a fair and transparent

environment with high ethical standards.

Many blue chip companies have already agreed standards with their suppliers as part of their commitment to bringing fair sourcing principles to all stages of the supply chain. Many large businesses have adopted elements of international codes such as the **Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code**, which includes these elements:

- Suppliers' responsibility to achieve and maintain required standards within their own supply chain
- Transparency of suppliers' standards and management systems
- Workforce and human rights, complying with all local and national laws and regulations as well as the global sourcing principles
- Production sites to be agreed in advance and all products to be labelled with country of origin
- Regular assessment by suppliers and customer
- Environmental responsibility in line with local and national regulations
- Extending these principles throughout the supply chain

Adopting these principles within your business will arguably present you as a desirable, easy-to-manage supplier to customers and, indeed, is a prerequisite for supplying many larger companies.

By using software such as Authenticate IS to map your entire supply chain, you can concentrate on your own compliance, making sure your processes are aligned with the needs of your customers. This collaborative cloud-based platform does all the hard work for you by tracking suppliers up and down the supply chain and providing real time information as you need it.