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**Patagonia First Assents:
Finding The Way Toward Quality of Life and Work**

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Abstract

In-depth Case Example of Patagonia's pioneering environmental work. Follows Patagonia's 30 year history of concern for the environment, highlighting their more recent focus on aggressively integrating environmental considerations into business strategies, products and processes. Includes the stunning video presentation comparing agri-business cotton with organic cotton growing that was used to enroll suppliers into Patagonia's choice to convert to all organically grown cotton. Presentation and discussion focus on tough issues of strategy and implementation.

Managers from Patagonia are humble about representing what they are doing as sustainable industry, yet they provide an inspirational example of a company openly facing the environmental consequences of their business products and processes, and actively doing something about it. From their revolutionary purpose statement, to the commitment to use only organic cotton in their products, Patagonia has put into action the vision of more sustainable industry.

In an effort to duplicate for their employees and suppliers the emotional impact of walking the fields where "modern" methods of growing cotton are used, Patagonia produced a powerful video (14 minutes) comparing the environmental impacts of modern vs organic cotton. This video serves as a backdrop for presenting Patagonia's strategies

and actions, and as a stimulant for discussion.

The presentation highlights Patagonia's journey and accomplishments, describing:

- The Historical Roots of Patagonia's Environmentalism
- Patagonia's Ultimate Purpose & Core Values
- Realities Of Market Demand
- Patagonia's Strategic Rationale for Environmental Sustainability
- Life Cycle Analyses and the Impacts of Raw Material Choices
- Taking a Stand: Organic Cotton, Renewable Energy, Eliminating PVC's
- Working with the Entire Value Stream
- Environmental Impact Of Dyes
- New Products & Businesses Stimulated By Environmental Efforts
- People Centered Workplace

Discussion will center on a frank analysis of the difficulties of achieving anything close to sustainable business practices, and on Patagonia's struggles to openly and honestly find their comfort level with the concept of sustainability. Additionally, we will discuss parallels between the Quality movement and Sustainability -- for example, environmental performance becoming part of standard customer expectations (at no extra cost), the power of integration in design phases, and implementation pitfalls. Finally, the group will discuss actions and learnings at Patagonia that can be applied in other industries.