



Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Love it or hate it, everyone knows Walmart, but everyone may not know just how massive the grocery and retail chain actually is. Measured by profits in 2010, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. is the world's largest public corporation. Stores operate in every one of the 50 United States, in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, and the United Kingdom.

Current American assets owned by Walmart include Wal-Mart Discount Stores, Wal-Mart Supercenters, Wal-Mart Neighborhood Markets, Walmart.com, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart Transportation LLC, Distribution Centers and Transportation Offices, Wal-Mart Realty, Wal-Mart Vacations, and Claims Management, Inc. It seems that Walmart provides nearly any service a customer could need. Founded in 1962 by Sam Walton as a single store in Newport, Arkansas, there are now 3,765 individual Walmart assets in the United States, and outside of the United States Walmart owns more than 4,205 individual units. Net sales have increased only 1% in the last year, small compared to the 7.3% and 8.4% of the years prior; however, 2010 still totaled \$405 billion with an operating income of \$24 billion.

Besides the significant financial effect Walmart has, it also affects millions of people. Over 2.1 million people are employed as associates worldwide, with 1.4 million of them working in the United States. Weekly, Walmart serves over 200 million customers globally. Largely, Walmart acquires so much business because it sticks to its evolving slogan, "Save money. Live better." It has been reported that the stores' customer base is principally politically conservative with a below-average income, though the chain has made efforts to appeal to the liberal community as well.

Being the largest corporation in the world, though, comes with its share of criticisms. It has been argued that Walmart draws customers away from smaller businesses which sometimes leads to the closing of those businesses in small towns. Often, the announcement of a new store will result in protests by labor unions, religious groups, environmental organizations, and others. Specifically, predatory pricing, the marking down of goods to drive out competition, has become an issue for the chain. A new store, however, may save a working class family more than \$2,500 a year and can provide hundreds of new jobs in an area, but may also result in the loss of jobs as other retailers close in the years following a Walmart opening.

Currently, **Walmart careers** can be obtained in nearly any field. They are hiring drivers, associates, and corporate employees as well as optometrists and pharmacists who are contracted



workers. However, an even larger concern than predatory pricing for Walmart may be the chain's alleged treatment of its employees. The chain has been accused of locking in night associates in high crime areas which has led to dangerous situations. Similarly, Walmart's anti-union stance has resulted in below minimum wage payment to its employees and pay raises to occur very slowly. Almost 70% of employees leave within a year, suggesting dissatisfaction with the corporation. In fact, Wal-Mart Watch was born in 2005 to "challenge the world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart, to become a better employer, neighbor, and corporate citizen," and includes project Wal-Mart Speak Out where current and former employees can tell their stories of mistreatment. Often, it is cited that the average Walmart employee makes less than \$20,000 annually while the owning family, The Waltons, is the richest family in the United States with more than \$70 billion to the family name.

The Walmart Foundation, however, may be the chain's saving grace. The foundation provides grants for education, military families and veterans, those affected by natural disasters, the disabled, and "traditionally underserved groups." Typically, the foundation will present grants to the communities new stores operate in or by associate-driven suggestions. Walmart's latest endeavor is Fighting Hunger Together to help end poverty-induced hunger in America, donating more than \$2 billion over the next five years. Hopefully Walmart's relationship with its employees will not result in associates relying on the very food banks to which the Walmart Foundation is donating.

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