

Better Leather Consulting

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
Gianna Esho	Junior	Cybersecurity/ Accounting
Jacob Yonan	Junior	6-Year Law
Joey Mansour	Senior	Finance/Int. Business
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Advisor(s): Evan Peterson, J.D., Ph.D., Joseph Walsh

Topic Title: Hidden Horrors of the Hide: Sustainable Leather Tanning for Zara

Audience: Zara Board of Directors

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG #12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Executive Summary

Raja, a leather tannery worker, learned that his 16-year-old daughter had developed kidney stones severe enough to require surgery and leave school for a year. The cause was drinking chromium-contaminated water. This case reflects the ongoing health and water contamination crisis affecting millions in Tamil Nadu, India, largely driven by fast-fashion companies using traditional chrome leather tanning. Tanneries use excessive amounts of chromium, a toxic chemical that endangers workers' health, and nearly 40,000 liters of freshwater per ton of hide, generating an average of 250,000 liters of wastewater daily that is continuously discharged into nearby rivers, leaving locals without access to clean water. Remaining the world's fourth-largest leather tanning producer, Indian villagers and workers alike continue to suffer the consequences of this unsustainable practice. These challenges have created an ethical dilemma for the industry and demand a sustainable alternative.

Zara is a premium international fashion retailer that aims to exhibit social responsibility throughout its supply chain. To advance this commitment, our firm presents an impactful proposal for the board of directors to implement the new CleanTan technology at the company's leather tannery in India. This waterless tanning system uses a compressed carbon dioxide process to reduce excessive chromium use and eliminate wastewater, promoting sustainable production. We believe Zara can drive meaningful change in this sector by adopting our solution, which directly addresses the health and environmental issues caused by traditional chrome leather tanning and responds to the demands of all critical stakeholders.