



## Engaging Retail Store Managers Guide and Talking Points

### How to get a meeting with a store manager

You can ask to meet the store manager as an individual, but she/he may be more agreeable to meeting with a group of people rather than an individual. Even two or three people requesting a meeting is more likely to yield a positive result than just one person. However, keep your group small in number (three to five people is ideal), or there may not be enough room in the manager's office and the manager may find a large group intimidating.

### Arrange the meeting ahead of time

Here are two ways to arrange a meeting with the manager:

- Ask a store clerk or an employee at the store's customer information desk for a meeting with the store manager. If you are asked why you want to meet with the manager, tell the employee you are a regular shopper at the store and have an ethical concern about one (or some) of the products that are being sold by the store.
- Phone the store and ask to speak with the manager. If the manager is not available, ask to speak with the manager's assistant to arrange an appointment, or ask to leave a message on the manager's voicemail. When arranging the meeting, make sure to specify how many people will be coming to the meeting, and suggest possible dates and times.

### Preparing for the meeting

Create a short agenda for yourself or your group (you don't need to share it with the manager). Such an agenda could include:

1. **Introductions:** Introduce yourself. If you are a regular shopper at the store, make sure you state this at the outset.
2. **Purpose of the meeting:** State why you have asked for this meeting: that as a consumer, you want to make ethical choices when shopping, that you have a concern about one or more of the products being sold in the store, and that you want to discuss this with the manager.
3. **Product information:** Provide information about the products that are of concern and why. Use the talking points below and the relevant company fact sheet provided at [www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/unsettling-goods/choose/resources](http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/unsettling-goods/choose/resources).
4. **Your request:** Be clear about what you are asking the store manager to do. Have a written letter prepared with your request to leave with the manager. Use the sample letters on [www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/unsettling-goods/choose/resources](http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/unsettling-goods/choose/resources) or adapt them. Also leave a copy of the United Church fact sheet on the relevant company or companies producing settlement goods.

5. **Follow-up and thank you:** Go through the follow-up steps you will be taking and ask that the manager get back to you by a certain date. Make sure you leave contact information such as a phone number and e-mail address. Expressing appreciation for the meeting is important.

### Talking points

- The action to avoid purchasing certain products stems from the goal of contributing to a lasting and just peace between Palestinians and Israelis. Emphasize that economic action such as a boycott is a time-honoured, non-violent consumer response to addressing human rights violations and unethical practices.
- The illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory are a significant obstacle to peace. The settlements are illegal under international law. The Canadian government identifies the settlements as “a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.” (The Fourth Geneva Convention defines protections for civilians in armed conflict and when their territory is militarily occupied. It is illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention to transfer your own civilian population into the territory you are occupying. There are over 200 settlements in the West Bank, with 500,000 settlers living in them.)
- While purchasing goods produced in an Israeli settlement does not violate Canadian or international laws, doing so provides support to and profit for the companies that are operating in the settlements, which are illegal. Point out that churches around the world, as well as European states, have or are considering boycotting settlement goods.
- The retail chain you are visiting likely has a Business Code of Conduct and/or a Supplier Code of Conduct. Download and print a copy, and bring it with you to the meeting to use as a reference point. See the codes for Canadian Tire (<http://corp.canadiantire.ca/EN/JoinOurTeam/Suppliers/Pages/SCBC.aspx>), The Home Depot (<http://ir.homedepot.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=63646&p=irol-govHighlights>), The Bay ([www3.hbc.com/?s=supplier+code+of+conduct](http://www3.hbc.com/?s=supplier+code+of+conduct)), and Walmart (<http://corporate.walmart.com/global-responsibility/ethical-sourcing>).
- State that you will not buy settlement or settlement-related products from the manager’s store.

### Options for action

Explore these options for action by the store manager and ask that the manager commit to one or more of them. Note that you will be following up with the manager within a given time period to see what action has been taken.

- Ask the manager to stop ordering these products from the company that produces them. If the manager states that this decision is not his or hers to make, ask the manager to take up the issue with those who are responsible for making this decision.
- Ask that the store manager send a letter to the company producing settlement goods asking that they label their products accurately because he/she has had Canadian customers tell him/her that they want to make informed choices about the origin of goods they choose to buy.
- Ask the manager to take up the issue of settlement products with senior managers of the retail chain his/her store belongs to.

**The General Council Office would like to hear about your meeting with a store manager.** Send your e-mail to [unsettling-goods@united-church.ca](mailto:unsettling-goods@united-church.ca).

### Important points to consider

- Be polite and respectful in your conversation. Remember to thank the store manager for taking the time to meet with you.
- The person you are talking to may have little knowledge of the occupation, Israeli settlements, and related human rights issues. Use simple language, and be prepared to explain unfamiliar concepts that may be second nature in your own experience.
- Make sure you know which products are found in the manager's store you are visiting. Not all retail outlets carry the same products. Most websites allow you to search the products of a particular outlet. If possible, print out a list and take it with you to the meeting.
- Either before the meeting or at the outset, establish how much time the store manager has to talk with you. If you are not able to cover all the issues in one meeting, arrange another one and continue the engagement.