

The Social Seal Initiative

Instituted in 2005, Bema'aglei Tzedek's "Social Seal" initiative expands the idea of kashrut certification, which is so widespread in Israeli society, to include a "Social Seal," a certificate of approval that is issued to businesses (whether or not they are kosher in the traditional sense) that commit to deal with people – staff and customers, Jews and non-Jews alike – in accordance with the laws of the State of Israel and with the ethical values of Judaism.

The criteria for obtaining a certificate are based on Israeli law and Jewish values stressing the need to preserve the basic rights of workers. Although eateries and catering halls are not yet required by Israeli law to be handicapped-accessible, such accessibility is also a prerequisite for receiving the "Social Seal."

Piloted in Jerusalem merely two years ago, the project has already certified over 250 restaurants and catering halls across Israel.

Every month, thousands of Israelis use different internet search engines to find out about socially-certified eating establishments spread throughout 5 different cities: Jerusalem, Kfar-Saba, Maale Adumim, Beer-Sheva and Tel Aviv.

The amazing success of this program stems largely from consumer pressure exerted by thousands of normal Israeli citizens who take ethical concerns into account when choosing where to eat on a day-to-day basis.

In awarding the "Social Seal" to businesses that conduct themselves in an ethically "kosher" manner and by calling on the public to refrain from patronizing businesses that do not have the "Seal," Bema'aglei Tzedek aspires to greatly improve the conditions of workers who are mistreated and educate the general public about its power to affect change in society and better the world. The total cost of running this project in the five cities listed above is \$180,000. We are currently seeking a remaining \$65,000 to fund this project in the 2007 fiscal year.

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The certificate



Giving the certificate to the Knesset buffet



Alon, one of the volunteers



Spreading the word



The logo-"the social seal because it is our business"