

Letter

Amazon should be a labour practices leader

From **Lauren Compere**, Managing Director of Boston Common Asset Management, Boston, MA, US

Amazon celebrated becoming the second US company after Apple to top \$1 trillion in value on Tuesday, a day after Labor Day in America, honouring the American Labor Movement. While crossing the once unimaginable line should be more than enough reason to keep the party going, the company's labour practices are nothing to celebrate.

Amazon has a chequered past of class-action lawsuits on wages and working conditions, and repeated strikes by Amazon workers in Germany and other countries. Few Amazon workers have the collective bargaining means to prevent the abuse of Amazon warehouse workers who must compete with each other and against the average time for fulfilling an order to avoid penalty points and dismissal. Amazon has

been successful in circumventing unions in most countries since it was founded in 1994.

Countless news stories and interviews have documented the anxiety and exhaustion-inducing conditions of working in Amazon's distribution centres. It seems Amazon's business model depends on its own warehouse workers paying the price for faster deliveries and lower prices, while the company also continues to gain a reputation of being unresponsive to shareholders on labour issues.

Amazon has clearly cemented itself as a global retailing leader. Now it needs to sell itself as a leader in labour practices.

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