

Defining Green

Buying Green not “Greenwash”

Presentation for Coalition for Healthier Schools

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helping grow the world's
most sustainable companies



Environmental Claims are Growing

- Eco-safe
- Environmentally friendly
- Earth friendly
- Earth smart
- Environmentally safe
- Environmentally preferable
- Essentially non-toxic
- Practically non-toxic
- Made with non-toxic ingredients
- Degradable
- Biodegradable
- Non-toxic
- Environmentally safe
- CFC-free
- Ozone friendly
- Recyclable

**According to the FTC:
FALSE CLAIMS**



Seven “Sins” of Greenwashing

- **Sin of Fibbing** – Misleading customers about the actual environmental performance of their products.
- **Sin of No Proof** – Also known as the sin of “just trust us,” some manufacturers are unable to provide proof of their environmental claims.
- **Sin of Irrelevance** – Factually correct, but irrelevant, environmental assessments (e.g., “CFC-free”)
- **Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off** – Focusing on one or two environmental facts, but ignoring other significantly more important environmental concerns.

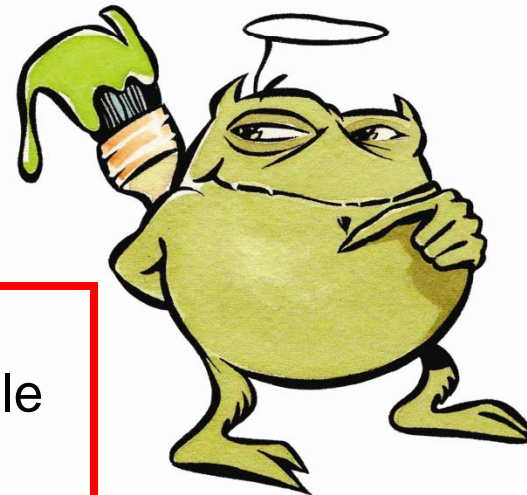




Seven “Sins” of Greenwashing

- **Sin of Vagueness** – Broad, poorly defined environmental claims (e.g., “100 percent natural”)
- **Sin of Lesser of Two Evils** – A product can be the most environmentally preferable product in its class, but still be an inappropriate choice (e.g., “organic cigarettes”)
- **Worshipping false labels** – a product that through words or images gives the impression of third-party endorsement where no such endorsement actually exists; fake labels, in other words.

The Seven Sins of Greenwashing report, released 4/15/09, is available at www.sinsofgreenwashing.org





To Avoid Greenwashing...

The environmental standards most widely recognized by green purchasers:



www.ecologo.org

- Founded 1988
- 100 standards
- 6,500 certified products



www.energystar.gov

- Founded 1992
- 50 standards
- “Thousands and thousands” of *registered* products



www.greenseal.org

- Founded 1989
- 30 standards
- 2,000 certified products

Comparing Eco-Labels

WARNING:

Not All Environmental Claims Are Created Equal

Learn to ask about:

- Validity of the standard
- Standard setting process
- Verification process





Recommended Contract Language

- “Products purchased under this contract must provide demonstrable proof of meeting the _____ standard. The _____ standard is available at <_____>.”
- “Products purchased under this contract must provide demonstrable proof of meeting the **Energy Star** standard. The **Energy Star** standard is available at <www.energystar.gov>.”
- “Products purchased under this contract must provide demonstrable proof of meeting the **EPEAT** standard. The **EPEAT** standard is available at <www.epeat.net>.”

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Recommended Contract Language

“Products purchased under this contract must be EcoLogo certified or provide demonstrable proof of meeting the EcoLogo standard and certification requirements. The EcoLogo standard and certification requirements are available at <www.ecologo.org>.”





Recommended Contract Language

“Products purchased under this contract must be EcoLogo or Green Seal certified or provide demonstrable proof of meeting the EcoLogo or Green Seal standard and certification requirements. The EcoLogo or Green Seal standard and certification requirements are available at < www.ecologo.org and www.greenseal.org >.”



Questions?

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