

EcoLogo & The Trend Toward Green

North American Eco-label Shows Growth In The U.S. Marketplace

By Scot Case, vice president
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Marketing.

Environmental issues are on just about everyone's radar these days. Not surprisingly, there has been a significant increase in the number of products and companies making green claims. To the untrained eye, it's difficult to identify truly greener products amongst those that are making false or misleading environmental claims (also known as "greenwashing").

Third-party certification helps to eliminate the confusion around green products, as it provides buyers and manufacturers with a clear understanding of what is and is not a green product. Certification not only confirms that the manufacturer has met the goal of producing an environmentally preferable cleaning product, but it also helps distributors rest assured that the products they are marketing to clients are safe, effective and green.

In North America, the most established and largest certification program is EcoLogo^{CM}. Kruger, SCA, Rochester Midland, Enviro-Solutions, Cascades and JohnsonDiversey are just a few of the manufacturers of EcoLogo-certified products in the U.S. In the maintenance industry, other leading certifiers include the



Chlorine Free Products Association (CFPA), Green Seal and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Both EcoLogo^{CM} and Green Seal take into account every phase of a product's lifecycle, which includes the environmental impacts of the raw materials, the manufacturing process, the product itself, its distribution and its ultimate disposal.

For cleaning chemicals, this means considering the environmental and human health impacts of the ingredients individually;

how they interact to make up the formula; the energy burden and possible waste created through the manufacturing process; the packaging and shipping impacts; the health effects on the user/janitorial staff and the ultimate disposal of the used cleaning solvent into wastewater systems as well as how the packaging is disposed of itself.

For tissue products, this means considering the amounts of energy and wood fiber being consumed as well as the discharge of carcinogens chemical oxygen demand (COD), aquatic toxicity and generation of solid waste, which can all have effects on human health.

EcoLogo^{CM} is also the only program in North America to have been approved by the Global Eco-labeling Network, an international association of eco-labeling

programs, as meeting the ISO 14024 standards. EcoLogo^{CM} certifies environmentally preferable products and services in more than 120 product categories (more than 7,000 products are currently certified), and thereby helps buyers identify products and services that are less harmful to human health and the environment.

EcoLogo Activity In The U.S.

The EcoLogo^{CM} team has offices in both Chicago and Philadelphia and is busy spreading the word across the United States about the benefits of green purchasing, conducting educational seminars and presenting at conferences. Jan/San purchasers from California to New York are turning to EcoLogo^{CM} for green certainty.

The Fight Against Greenwashing

In November 2007, TerraChoice Environmental Marketing released its Six Sins of GreenwashingTM study, which found that more than 99 percent of a total 1,018 products surveyed were found to be making potentially false or misleading environmental claims. Since its release, GreenBiz.com has reported that the Six Sins study was one of the major environmental stories of 2007. Online coverage was astounding and radio and television was quick to follow. The global reach has been observed in articles published in India, Australia and across North America. People around the world are buzzing about products on the "green" market.

CNBC, CBS News, *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, CNN International, GreenBiz.com, *The Economist*, *Reader's Digest* and *Men's Health Magazine* are just a few of the

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major media outlets that have recently covered environmental marketing claims.

As the study struck a nerve and underscored the need for honest and effective eco-marketing, the EcoLogo™ Program garnered a lot of media attention as a credible, third-party environmental certification.

EcoLogo Partners With CFPA

While certification from a reliable, trusted third party can help with the confusion around green products, hundreds of eco-labels have popped up over the last few years (308 eco-labels, at last count). Unfortunately, as the number of eco-labels continues to rise, purchasing professionals are becoming more and more confused about which standards they can trust.

In response, steps are being taken to create a more simplified eco-labeling landscape. Most recently, the

Chlorine Free Products Association (CFPA) and the EcoLogo™ Program announced a partnership that will mean greater harmonization of standards and certifications. This partnership also represents additional benefits for environmental leaders, including discounted audit/verification and licensing fees for clients who seek both certifications as well as a single audit for both certifications.

Moving toward the standardization of these two certifications will mean easier decision-making for purchasing professionals and greater sustainability in the working environment.

Statistics Paint A Greener Picture For The U.S.

TerraChoice Environmental Marketing publicly released its EcoMarkets 2008 Summary Report in July 2008, informing clients, partners and public

audiences about the attitudes and practices of North American buyers toward environmentally preferable purchasing.

The report summarizes research conducted in 2007 and 2008 in partnership with the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation and with the Responsible Purchasing Network at the non-profit Center for a New American Dream. More than \$78 billion of purchasing dollars is represented in this study.

The EcoMarkets 2008 findings include: Sixty-eight percent of North American organizations increased their green purchasing in the past 12 months and 91 percent of purchasers believe they will become more active green purchasers over the next two years.

Also of note was that the majority of survey respondents (72 percent) believe eco-labels contribute to better purchasing decisions. Certification continues to play a

key role in making our industry, as well as many others, green and environmentally responsible. The reason is simple. Certification sets up credible and reliable parameters and standards, which are accepted throughout the industry.

The EcoLogo™ Program is busy at work in the United States and, with its new partnership with CFPA, should see even more growth in the future.

The full EcoMarkets 2008 report can be found at www.terrachoice.com.

TerraChoice Environmental Marketing is North America's premiere environmental marketing firm. TerraChoice has been the official management, certification and delivery agent of the EcoLogo™ since 1995. Emphasis on customer service is a key component of TerraChoice's delivery of the EcoLogo™. Companies going through the certification process are assisted at every stage. In the final stages, applicants are visited by a third-party auditor who conducts a final verification audit.

For more information, visit www.terrachoice.com.

A Sustainable Future

For those manufacturers that have products certified by third-party, multi-attribute eco-labels – there is good news. They are positioning themselves well in the marketplace and will benefit from increased profits and greater respect for their efforts.

For those manufacturers that are lagging behind – it's time to catch up. Companies and consumers are already moving toward greater sustainability and this trend is here to stay.

About the Author

Scot Case is Vice President of TerraChoice Environmental Marketing. TerraChoice also manages, certifies and delivers the EcoLogo™ program.

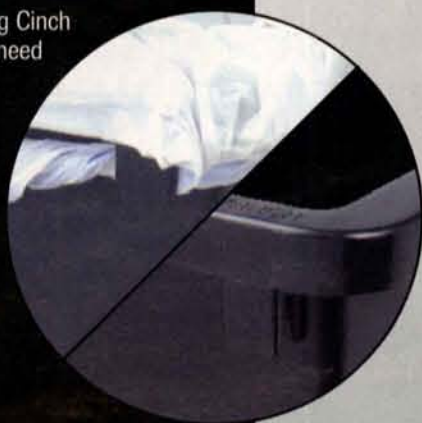
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