



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & COMPLIANCE CONFERENCE 2009



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Best Practices in Product Chemicals Management in the Retail Industry

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“Today, retailers are finding themselves in uncharted waters requiring them to understand much more about the ingredients of the products they sell than was required in the past.”



Overview

- Green Chemistry and Commerce Council
- Best Practices in Product Chemicals Management report goals
- Influences on today's retail industry
- Eight case examples
- Analysis of case examples
- Best practices





Green Chemistry and Commerce Council

- Formed 2005 – now 85 firms dedicated to advancing safer chemicals and products
- Committed to green chemistry and Design for Environment (DfE) approaches as a way to transition to safer alternatives
- Focused on sustainable supply chain management
- Believe retailers can be a key player in moving green chemistry and the DfE approaches through today's complex supply chains

Best Practices in Product Chemicals Management report goals

- To encourage retailers to include product chemicals management as part of their larger sustainability goals
- To encourage retailers to gauge how their product chemicals management practices match up to the industry
- To provide retailers with best practices / key success factors when embarking on, enhancing or changing their own systems
- To engage retailers in discussions about safer chemicals and materials



Influences on today's retail industry

- Legislation and regulation
 - EU's RoHS, REACH, US states, CPSIA
- The growing “green” market **“green”???**
 - Labeling (and role of FTC), greenwashing, websites providing ratings on “green” products
- Product recalls
- Consumer and media attention
 - Flame retardants, mercury, lead, BPA, phthalates
- Ingredient disclosure



The New York Times

BPA -A Hard Plastic Is Raising Hard Questions

April 22 2008

Eight case examples

- Apple 
- Boots 
- Green Depot 
- Patagonia 
- REI 
- Staples 
- Walmart 
- Whole Foods 

Glue




Analysis of case examples

Approach	Company Level	Sector Level	Retail Industry Level
Restricted Substance List	Boots, Green Depot, REI, Whole Foods	Footwear & Apparel: AFIRM	None yet identified
Chemical Evaluation System	Boots, Green Depot, Staples, Whole Foods	Textile: Bluesign (Patagonia, REI) Outdoor: OIA Eco Working Grp Cleaning: DfE	GreenWERCS (Walmart) GDSN
Product Design Strategy	Apple	None yet identified	None yet identified

Best practices

*Defined as key success factors identified
in the eight case examples*

- Leadership commitment
 - Supplier management
 - Customer support
 - Project management
 - Chemical management system selection
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Leadership commitment

- Secure a commitment from leaders in the organization. Adopting a product chemicals management system is complex and requires significant financial and time resources so this commitment is essential.
 - Coastwide Laboratories (Staples)
 - Boots



Supplier management

- Communicate with suppliers about new chemical reporting protocols/requirements and explain why system was developed
 - Patagonia and REI
- Collaborate with suppliers as they work to conform to new protocols/requirements
 - Green Depot
- Protect confidentiality of suppliers proprietary information
 - Bluesign and GreenWERCS



Customer support

- Communicate clearly with customers by providing safety and chemical information they require on products
 - Apple
- Make the purchase of safe products easy for consumers
 - Green Depot



Project management

- Establish a baseline of current conditions by evaluating: existing products being sold, EH&S information available; and supplier information
 - Whole Foods
- Start product chemicals management system on reasonable and flexible timeline
 - Patagonia
- Understand that any system requires continuous improvement
 - Boots



Product chemical management system selection

- Evaluate potential systems adopted by other retailers as well as areas for collaboration to determine a “best fit”
 - Walmart
- Adopt a system that is simple for retailers, suppliers and consumers to use
 - Green Depot
- Adopt a system that develops useful criteria to evaluate, compare and rate products
 - GreenWERCS



*The project is a first step in engaging
retailers in discussions about safer
chemicals and materials with today's
complex supply chains*



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