ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & COMPLIANCE CONFERENCE 2009
Best Practices in Product Chemicals Management in the Retail Industry

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Yve Torrie
Lowell Center for Sustainable Production
University of Massachusetts Lowell
“Today, retailers are finding themselves in uncharted waters requiring them to understand much more about the ingredients of the products they sell then 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
  - 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
## Analysis of case examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Company Level</th>
<th>Sector Level</th>
<th>Retail Industry Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Substance List</td>
<td>Boots, Green Depot, REI, Whole Foods</td>
<td>Footwear &amp; Apparel: AFIRM</td>
<td>None yet identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Evaluation System</td>
<td>Boots, Green Depot, Staples, Whole Foods</td>
<td>Textile: Bluesign (Patagonia, REI) Outdoor: OIA Eco Working Grp Cleaning: DfE</td>
<td>GreenWERCS (Walmart) GDSN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Design Strategy</td>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>None yet identified</td>
<td>None yet identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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.
For further information:

Yve Torrie
Yve_torrie@uml.edu
978.934.3121
www.chemicalspolicy.org
www.greenchemistryandcommerce.org