

# Master Print Communications

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## Green Guide

*A resource courtesy of the Industries of America*

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## Chapter 1 - Why Green Printing? Why Now?

There's no denying that sustainability - going "green" - has become one of the hottest topics in the business world. Brands, government agencies, and major institutions are turning increasingly toward sustainable policies and practices, both to bolster and protect their reputations and because sustainability is a clear path to improved business performance.

According to a 2008 survey of 175 CEOs and CFOs at leading U.S. corporations in the banking, forestry, manufacturing, and energy sectors prepared by CFO Research Services in collaboration with the money-management firm, more than 50% believed their companies will see increased revenue, better employee retention, and higher returns to investors through sustainability.

(A free download of "The Role of Finance in Sustainability Efforts" is available at [www.cfo.com](http://www.cfo.com).)

In a second study of 99 U.S. corporations conducted by the management consulting firm, A.T. Kearney, companies committed to corporate sustainability practices were shown to achieve above-average performance in financial markets, even during the current economic slowdown.

(The study can be downloaded at: [www.atkearney.com/images/global/pdf/Green\\_winners.pdf](http://www.atkearney.com/images/global/pdf/Green_winners.pdf))

As designers, brands, governments, and institutions shift toward increased sustainability, they have created pressure on their supply chains to move along with them. Product and service vendors are being caught up in the shift toward sustainability.

While price and quality remain powerful decision drivers, the ability of a business to deliver product on recycled paper or with a certification eco-label is, with increasing frequency, the tipping point in a customer's decision to go green. Going green allows you to align yourself with your customers' expectations, to brand your company as a leader, and to become an indispensable resource for your customers and community.

There's no way around it. Green is a hot issue, and it attracts business.

### Industries of America's "The Green Guide"

Growing and Profiting through sustainability is designed to help you understand what it takes to become more sustainable and to turn your environmental performance into a competitive advantage. In the chapters that follow, you'll find ideas and tools to help you:

- Green-up your business
- Assess just how green you really are
- Turn your green attributes into a market position
- Make appropriate and credible green claims
- Issue periodic reports on your green progress
- Better-understand third-party certification and eco-labels
- Communicate effectively with customers, prospects, and other stakeholders
- Prepare news releases about your green business
- Identify and take advantage of green marketing opportunities in your community

If you're new to sustainability this guide can be used to help you put your best green foot forward in your market. If you've been on the green scene for a while, dive in at any chapter to pick up some fresh insights or hone your marketing skills.

## Chapter 2 - Opportunities for Greening Your Company

It's important to remember that "green" is a journey, not a destination. It is a process of continuous improvement through which you will reap ongoing rewards in the form of cost reductions, process improvements, and branding your company as a leader. There always will be something you can do to be a little (or a lot) greener. In fact, a commitment to continuous improvement is synonymous with a commitment to being green.

Companies that have been successful in implementing sustainability programs have embraced a process that involves a series of actions, executed in an organized fashion, which engage the entire workforce in the effort. The involvement of all employees allows for a greater acceptance of the green vision and goals. Experience has shown that a greater number of good suggestions are made by those employees who are engaged and empowered, so being inclusive should result in the identification of more green opportunities to be explored.

The opportunities for becoming more sustainable fall into three categories:

- Conservation measures
- Process improvements
- Choice of input materials

### Where to Start

Everyone needs a jumping-off point, and one of the more effective approaches is to begin with the "three Rs": reduce, reuse, and recycle.

The power of the "three Rs" is found in their ability to drive a company's focus toward understanding and justifying why an activity, process, technology, or particular chemical is necessary and by forcing a company to ask the question, "How can we reduce, reuse, or recycle an input material or a waste product?"

The answers to these questions will drive innovation and will point you toward actions that will lead to the reduction of waste, process improvements, or elimination of input materials.

### Conservation Measures

At the heart of the sustainability movement is the conservation of natural resources. Conservation of natural resources delivers a multitude of benefits and results in a triple-win at environmental, social, and economic levels. For companies the primary area on which to focus initial efforts is on reducing a facility's consumption of electricity, fossil fuels (natural gas, heating oil, etc.), and water. Reducing energy and water consumption is good for the environment, it benefits all the inhabitants of the planet by making more resources available, and it is great for your bottom line, because it cuts costs.

Energy consumption is an area in which there are plenty of opportunities to conserve resources and money.

Due to the overall increase in the cost of energy and the potential for regulation of carbon emissions, energy management is quickly becoming an important subject. Energy management involves focusing on three main areas: power factor, peak demand, and actual consumption. Power factor refers to the efficiency of use for electricity being bought. Peak demand is the amount of electricity used at any one time with prices being higher during the day. Consumption is the actual amount of energy used.

A company can realize savings through more efficient use of electricity, optimizing scheduling to take advantage of lower pricing during off-peak hours, and reducing consumption.

Among the many other simple, low-cost, energy-saving steps that any company can take are:

- Increasing or decreasing the thermostat one degree in either the summer or winter
- Using compact fluorescent light bulbs to replace incandescent bulbs and replacing incandescent exit signs with Light-Emitting Diode (LED) fixtures

- Installing motion-detecting light switches in bathrooms, meeting rooms, and other areas where continuous occupancy is not required
- Using the energy-saving functions on computers, servers, and other enabled office equipment
- Purchasing EPA Energy Star-compliant equipment to replace obsolete computers, servers and other office equipment
- Training staff to turn off equipment, lights, and other devices that continuously drain power, as well as unplugging cell-phone chargers, client-lounge TVs, microwave ovens, and other sources of “ghost” power consumption when they are not being used.

Any appliance with a clock or a standby setting is a “ghost” power consumer. Power-cord “cube” transformers waste 50%-90% of the power they consume, drawing power even when no phone or appliance is attached to them.

A simple solution is to plug these devices into a power strip and to turn off the power strip at the end of the day or when the equipment is not needed.

Water is another precious resource that needs to be conserved, and reducing water consumption should be a major focus of a company’s sustainability efforts. Simple but effective approaches for water conservation include:

- Inspecting plumbing systems for leaks and repairing them
- Reducing the flow from bathroom faucets by using faucet aerators. Many traditional faucets have a flow rate of about 2.2 gallons per minute, which is almost the same rate as that of water used to take a shower. Bathroom faucet aerators can reduce the water flow to as low as 0.5 gallons per minute. At a cost of \$2-\$3 per aerator, the water use from bathrooms can be reduced by 50-75%.
- Installing flow restrictors on shower facilities if you have them
- Replacing old toilet fixtures with modern low-flow or dual-flush models. You might also consider replacing conventional urinals with waterless models.
- Rethinking your landscaping and watering schedule, making sure that any water you use for landscaping goes on the plants, not on the street or sidewalk
- Capturing rainwater and using it to water plants and other vegetation
- Process Improvements
- In addition to evaluating your production areas, take a look at all of your support functions, including the front office, lunchroom, and shipping and receiving. And don’t forget about ways to improve facility and equipment maintenance. Following are just a handful of ideas:
- Rethink the way your facility handles its solid waste. Look for ways to minimize the amount of waste you send to the landfill. Recycling and reuse can save you money on disposal costs while reducing the burden on the planet’s resources necessitated by making new products.
- Make sure you are recycling as many types of waste as possible. Do you have a source for recycling obsolete computers and other toxic equipment?
- Don’t forget to look at the front office and the maintenance of your facility. Consider using recycled paper towels and bathroom tissue. What cleaning products does your janitorial staff use? Are these safe for the environment? If your facility has a lawn or landscaping, consider instructing your groundskeepers to implement pesticide-free practices and reduce the use of fertilizers—both of which can be toxic to humans and animals.

As you examine your operation for improvements, think about ways you can further reduce pollution. Can you improve the way your facility manages its storm-water runoff? What are you doing to reduce the pollution created by your company vehicles, vendor vehicles, and employee vehicles?

## Choice of Printed Materials

There are a growing number of choices you can make about the materials consumed (such as inks and coatings) and the paper and other substrates on which you print. Making greener choices can help you and your company move down the path toward greater sustainability. Following are a few ideas:

- Consider using lower-VOC and lower HAP-containing inks and coatings, opting for those that have higher renewable-resource content (such as vegetable oil). Water-based coatings and UV-coatings have lower VOC content than conventional varnishes. But be aware of the environmental trade-offs (i.e., UV-coated matter is not easily recyclable).
- Consider on lighter basis-weight stock. Using lighter stock extends the fiber resource and can save them money on paper and postage.
- Consider using post-consumer-waste (PCW) recycled paper to your customers. Consider PCW recycled paper as a house sheet.
- Use FSC certified paper as a means of supporting responsible forest management.
- Become a green resource to your customers and help them make better choices that will lead to more efficient use of materials and a smaller impact on the planet.

## The Next Step

Obviously, the list of ideas presented here is not exhaustive, and there are many more areas in which processes can be improved and costs reduced. The best advice is to start small. Take a series of small actions that will demonstrate the effectiveness of a green approach. Small, successful actions will build momentum to take larger actions and will demonstrate the savings that can be realized through more ambitious projects.

Regardless of your approach - testing the waters or jumping-in with both feet - the important thing is to get a green program under way. Whether you are a newcomer on the path to sustainability or a veteran traveler, you surely will want to start talking to customers and other stakeholders about your journey. The next chapter will help you take an in-depth look to see how green you really are.

## Chapter 3 - Positioning Your Green Business

It's important to define a "defensible niche" position in the marketplace to differentiate your business from the competition. So where should you start?

### SWOT Analysis

One of the simplest tools for organizing your thoughts is called "SWOT Analysis." SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, and SWOT Analysis is a simple technique that lets you take a snapshot of your company from all four perspectives at the same time.

SWOT Analysis is a technique for examining your facility's strengths and weaknesses, looking at opportunities that you may be able to exploit, and identifying any threats facing your business.

SWOT Analysis is most valuable when it is used as a focusing tool. It can help you crystallize your thoughts about your business, uncover opportunities that might otherwise have been overlooked, and better prepare to manage competitive challenges.

Drawing on the information gathered in your Environmental Profile Assessment, together with what you know of your competition and market, a "Green SWOT Analysis" can help you define a unique niche position and can serve as a platform upon which you can build goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics for marketing your green attributes and benefits to customers.

Tips for a Successful Green SWOT Analysis:

- Be specific. Don't generalize. For example, don't just state "we recycle" - that is being too general. Instead, state what and how much you recycle.
- Be realistic about your green strengths and weaknesses. Use the answers you gave on the Environmental Profile Assessment. Don't embellish and make any green attribute seem more important than it really is. At the same time, don't discount your green achievements. You are moving down the path toward greater sustainability, and that is commendable.
- Recognize that SWOT is subjective and reflects your knowledge and thoughts at one point in time. As situations change, you will want to re-analyze. For example, the presence of a new competitor in your market might be a good reason to take another look at your SWOT matrix.

### Talking the Talk

With your defensible niche market position well defined, you're ready to create the messages you will use in communicating with customers, prospects, and other stakeholders. In the next section, you'll learn about making credible claims and how to avoid the pitfalls of "greenwashing."

## Chapter 4 - Making Green Marketing Claims

If you've worked through the previous sections of this Guide, you should have a pretty good idea of your green attributes and green market positioning. Now, it's time to talk the talk. But just what should you say? And, more importantly, how should you say it?

Should you use the phrases, "We're sustainable", "We're an environmentally responsible company", or "We're eco-friendly"? What do these phrases really mean, and do they clearly describe a company's actions? Just where does the range of appropriate green claims end and "greenwashing" begin?

"Greenwashing" is a relatively recent term that is used to describe unsubstantiated claims being made regarding environmental attributes. Greenwashing is defined by the non-profit Center for Media and Democracy ([www.sourcewatch.org](http://www.sourcewatch.org)) as:

*"... the unjustified appropriation of environmental virtue by a company, an industry, a government, a politician, or even a non-government organization to create a pro-environmental image ..."*

In some instances, greenwashing is intentional. It is done to mislead a company or consumer about a product or service. In other instances, the claims can be factual, but not relevant, such as when a company states that their aerosol products don't contain any chlorofluorocarbons. The claim may be true, but is of little relevance, as this is the case for every other aerosol product on the market today—the use of chlorofluorocarbons in aerosol products was banned by the Environmental Protection Agency many years ago.

Quite often, however, greenwashing is the result of a marketer being over-zealous about a company's green attributes by inflating claims, not taking the time to understand the specifics associated with the claim, or not understanding that green benefit claims need to be substantiated. No matter what the motivation for greenwashing, it is a poor practice that can actually get a company into legal trouble and is something to be avoided.

The strength that you will have in the marketplace as a green operation is based completely on your credibility, which is supported by messages that are honest, specific, transparent, and relevant. With the power of today's communication tools, losing your credibility can happen almost instantly and will certainly negate any good will, market position, or reputation that you have built with your customers, community, and employees.

### How to Frame a Credible Green Claim

When formulating a green claim, subject it to the following four tests:

- Is it Honest?
- Is it Specific?
- Is it Transparent?
- Is it Relevant?

If your green claim falls short in any of these areas, chances are it is greenwashing.

#### Is It Honest?

When making green claims, one should tell the truth. That seems simple enough. And the truth of a green claim is part of the test of honesty. But it's not the only part.

A green claim needs to tell the whole truth, not just selected pieces of the truth. And a green claim should never stretch or bend the truth. Omitting, fibbing, or fudging the facts to present a greener picture is greenwashing, plain and simple.

To pass the test of honesty, a green claim should never focus attention on a particular green benefit if there are environmental detriments associated with the same product or process.

## The FTC and Green Claims

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has the authority to regulate how green claims are made and stated. Under Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, the FTC has the power to challenge deceptive and unsupported claims, and the FTC has taken actions against companies making false or misleading claims.

To help marketers stay on the right side of the law, the FTC has issued a set of “Green Guides” (Federal Trade Commission Act 16 C.F.R. § 260 [2007] Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims) that are worth reviewing by anyone involved in making environmental claims about a product or service. The current Green Guides are available at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/grnrule/guides980427.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/grnrule/guides980427.htm).

Due to the proliferation of claims being made over the past several years, the FTC is revisiting its Green Guides in the interest of evolving them as green marketing evolves. In 2008, the FTC held two Green Guide workshops on topics of interest to companies. The first of these focused on the emergence of carbon-related claims (carbon offsets, renewable energy credits or “RECs”). A transcript and webcast are available at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/workshops/carbonoffsets/index.shtml](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/workshops/carbonoffsets/index.shtml).

The second workshop focused on the range of claims marketers use to tout that their product packaging is “green”, such as recyclable, biodegradable, compostable, and sustainable. Visit [www.ftc.gov/bcp/workshops/packaging/index.shtml](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/workshops/packaging/index.shtml) for the transcript and webcast of this workshop.

The FTC also has published a booklet, “[Complying with the Environmental Marketing Guides](#)”, that provides an overview of environmental marketing claims and the Green Guides. It is available at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/business/energy/bus42.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/business/energy/bus42.shtm) and a PDF version of the booklet can be downloaded from the website. Following is a brief look at some of the guidelines.

### Substantiation

All marketers making express or implied claims about the attributes of their product, package, or service must have substantiation, that is, a reasonable basis for their claims. When it comes to environmental claims, a reasonable basis often may require competent and reliable scientific evidence, which is defined as tests, analyses, research, studies, or other evidence based on the expertise of professionals.

### Specificity

An environmental marketing claim should specify whether it refers to the product, the packaging, or both, or just to a component of the product or its packaging. Environmental claims should not exaggerate or overstate attributes or benefits.

### Eco-Seals, Seals-of-Approval, and Certifications

Environmental seals-of-approval, eco-seals, and certifications from third-party organizations imply that a product is environmentally superior to other products. Because such broad claims are difficult to substantiate, seals-of-approval should be accompanied by information that explains the basis for the award.

### The Next Step: Green Reporting

In addition to promotional messages that communicate your green attributes and benefits to customers and prospects, you will want to report on your continual green progress to these audiences and to employees, vendors, and other stakeholders.

In the next section, you will learn valuable tips on keeping stakeholders up to date on your journey along the path to greater sustainability.

## Chapter 5 - Mining the Green Opportunities in Your Community

There is nothing wrong with a little shameless self-promotion. In fact, it is very hard to succeed - even in the green world - if you keep your light under a bushel. But green isn't for everyone (at least, not yet), and it may feel like you are swimming against the current with your green sales pitch.

The good news is that growing awareness about sustainability has created many new and exciting opportunities for you to position your company as a green leader within your community - enabling you to forge new relationships that will open doors and translate into new business. When you look around, you are sure to find many like-minded community businesses and organizations, and who are willing to support those who share the same values and goals.

This chapter offers some tips on where and how to prospect for green customers in your community.

### Where to Prospect

In virtually every community, there are individuals, companies, and organizations that are interested in demonstrating their commitment to a better environment. These potential (and existing) customers are the "low-hanging fruit" for green companies, and competition for their business may be stiff. Your ability to talk fluently about the environmental benefits delivered by your green practices will help set your company apart from other competitors in your service area.

### Become Part of the Green Community

Whether you are new to green or have been running a green operation for years, you have a lot to share with other like-minded businesses and organizations in your service area.

Consider participating in a public-private partnership initiative that promotes resource conservation, pollution prevention, and waste minimization. See [www.greenbiz.ca.gov](http://www.greenbiz.ca.gov) for one California-based example. If your community doesn't have such an initiative, consider working with your city or county government to start one. The leadership position you could take would be an excellent marketing platform.

You might also consider raising your green profile by having your staff take an active role in "green" community activities, such as river or beach clean-up projects, street-tree planting projects, Habitat for Humanity home-building efforts, or roadside cleanup actions (which could result in the placement of a sign on the side of the road stating, "Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup by Fictitious Litho" - think about the number of people who will read that sign every day).

If your green business operates on a regional or national scale, consider taking part in larger environmental and responsibility initiatives, such as the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership ([www.epa.gov/grnpower](http://www.epa.gov/grnpower)), Business for Social Responsibility ([www.bsr.org](http://www.bsr.org)), or CERES ([www.ceres.org](http://www.ceres.org)).

### List Your Company in "Green Directories"

Consider listing your company - using a line-listing or an appropriately worded ad - in your local green business directory. If your service area is regional or national, also consider listing your green business in directories targeting other green-minded businesses. If you elect to run an ad in the directory, be sure to include the certification marks and eco-labels that your shop is authorized to use.

### Become a Resource to the Business Community

Members of the business community are interested in how your products and services can help strengthen their reputations and save them money. Your knowledge of the benefits of green and your ability to transfer those benefits to your clients can help satisfy your customer's need to be seen as doing the right thing. Your ability to advise customers on your products and services' impact can help them address their fiscal concerns.

In addition to making the benefits of green part of your regular sales presentations, consider becoming an “ambassador for green” in business circles. Join a speaker’s bureau and seek out opportunities to make presentations at civic-organization meetings and local or regional conferences.

Become the “go-to” person in your area for green ideas and insights. Publish a green newsletter that covers green topics of interest to your business audience and positions your company as the source of green solutions to their needs. Offer information, insight, and opinion of value to your local media outlets, to trade media, to government agencies, and to the trade associations to which you belong. Becoming the quoted source of green information will increase your marketability to potential clients and enhance your company’s position in the marketplace. (Remember that it is essential to communicate information that is true and accurate, or you could lose any credibility or good will that you have created.)

Spend a few minutes each day reading articles on sustainability and green trends in your industry. Trade journals are a good source of input on sustainability, as are Internet sites such as [www.greenbiz.com](http://www.greenbiz.com), [www.sustainablebusiness.com](http://www.sustainablebusiness.com) and [www.metafore.org](http://www.metafore.org).

### Get to Know the NGOs

Getting to know key players in the local and regional environmental organizations in your service area is a smart strategy - whether or not it leads to a sale. By understanding the agendas of these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and letting them in on your company’s vision and values, you can work to build lasting alliances that may help you when you face an environmental challenge or need stakeholder support for a permit or an expansion. The NGO community also can become a source of referrals, as they are looked upon as trusted entities when it comes to environmental matters. Building relationships with NGOs also can position you as a valued source of information that they would not otherwise have been able to access. Having you as a trusted resource will be of benefit to them as well as to your company.

### Be Infectious with Your Employees

Marketing the environmental benefits of your green efforts to your employees is as important as marketing them to customers and prospects. Share your environmental vision with everyone in your facility and let them share in the authority and responsibility for its evolution and implementation. When your employees have ownership of your green program, they will become enthusiastic ambassadors for your company—greatly extending the reach of your green message into the community.

#### Industries of America



200 Deer Run Road,  
Sewickley, PA 15143  
[www.printing.org](http://www.printing.org)

#### Master Print Communications



8310 Miramar Road  
San Diego, CA 92121  
[www.mp4print.com](http://www.mp4print.com)