

The Fairware 'Guide to Sustainable Purchasing'

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product with purpose

About Fairware

- Launched in 2005
- Vancouver based, 40% sales in US
- Specializes in socially and environmentally responsible promotional and custom branded products.
- Our expertise is in working with ethical and 'green' brands and environmental + social campaigns.





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Overview

- Rethinking Promo Products & Purchasing
- What is Sustainable Purchasing?
- Where do you start?
- Cheat Sheets: Terms and Definitions
- Resources



RE-Thinking Promo Products

- If your brand is on it, it represents your company regardless of what it is or what it costs.
- Don't put your brand at risk with last minute purchases that don't reflect your values.
- Consider the 'story' of the supplier and consider communicating it to your customers (*e.g. this was made by a organic cotton farm cooperative in India*).
- Consider the 'story' of the product and link it to your campaign or outreach strategy (*e.g. put water conservation tips or facts on how your company has reduced water consumption on your water bottles*)



What is Sustainable Purchasing?

- Sustainable purchasing addresses the environmental and social factors in buying.
- It is also about looking at whether a purchase needs to be made at all
- The intent of sustainable purchasing is to shift spending away from goods and services that negatively impact the environment and society towards products that are more environmentally sound and socially beneficial.



Where to Start

- Determine your priorities and where you might make trade offs
- Review what you and others in your company are buying, identify high volume products and high volume suppliers.
- Engage these key suppliers in an initial conversation (or survey) regarding sustainable purchasing.



Questions to Ask

- Does this supplier have a Social or Environmental Code of Conduct and how do they ensure compliance;
- Do they have a community investment program; do they provide benefits to employees, etc?
- Is the premium is made out of what your supplier is claiming (organic cotton, recycled plastic, certain kind-of plastic, etc.)?



Cheat Sheet – Recycled

- Using waste as material to manufacture a new product.
 - **BEST**: Post-Consumer Content where in-pur materials are from products collected after they've been used by consumers (e.g. newsprint from blue box programs).
 - **OK**: Pre-Consumer Content where input materials are 'scraps' from manufacturing that are re-cycled into new products off the 'shop' floor (e.g. plastic shavings that are re-melted and molded).
 - **BE WARY**: Of 'recyclable' claims. Many products are technically recyclable, but don't have easily accessible infrastructure to do so (e.g. Polystyrene #6).



Cheat Sheet – Bio-Degradable & Bio-Polymers

Biopolymers are a class of polymers (a building block of plastics) produced by living organisms such as corn or other agricultural products. They are frequently referred to as bio-degradable.

Positive attributes:

- They are made from naturally renewable resources (unlike oil based plastics). They are compostable in commercial applications.

Cautions:

- Many US sourced Bio-Polymers contain genetically modified organisms (GMO's)
- Generally not suitable to compost in home/backyard composters
- There is significant debate about using food based feed-stocks to create plastics. There is also debate regarding the life-cycle energy impacts of bio-polymers.



Cheat Sheet – PLASTICS

*sources = CND Cancer Smart 3.0 Consumer Guide; Greenpeace Plastics Pyramid

Plastic #	Name	Common Uses	Rating	Issues
1	PET - Polyethelyne Teraphthalate	Pop Bottles	Good	Antimony (Heavy Metal)
2	HDPE - High Density Polyethylene	Milk Jugs	Best	
3	PVC - Polyvinyl Chloride	Plumbing Pipes	Bad	Dioxins (known Carcinogen)
4	LDPE - Low Density Polyethelene	Grocery Bags	Best	
5	Polypropylene	Yoghurt Cups	Best	
6	Polystyrene	CD Cases, Styrofoam	Good	Difficult to find recycling services)
7	Other	Polycarbonate Water Bottles	Bad	Bisphenol A (BPA) an endocrine disrupter



Cheat Sheet – WATER BOTTLES & MUGS

- Plastic – Refer to plastics table. Avoid Polycarbonate bottles (#7); Consider #2 and #5 plastics instead.
- Aluminum – Often touted as a ‘safe’ alternative. However, Aluminum bottles have a plastic based film lining that often contains BPA – the same chemical additive in #7 polycarbonate bottles.
- Stainless Steel: The preferred alternative as they contain no plastic lining.



Working with your supply chain

- Pick strategic partners
 - Create a survey or engagement tool to inform decision making – start by asking not telling.
 - Begin a dialogue, share resources.
- [Forced Labour](#)
 - [Child Labour](#)
 - [Harassment or Abuse](#)
 - [Non-discrimination](#)
 - [Health and Safety](#)
 - [Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining](#)
 - [Wages and Benefits](#)
 - [Hours of Work](#)
 - [Overtime Compensation](#)
 - [Environmental Responsibility](#)



Resources

- www.buysmartbc.com – Sustainable purchasing Network – has a GREAT resource section with tools.
- www.greenbiz.com – General reference site, toolkit area is quite good.
- www.fairlabor.org - Fair Labor Association one of the leading standards for worker and human rights in factories.
- http://www.terrachoice.com/files/6_sins.pdf - Six Sins of Greenwashing - A great, recent study on what NOT to do.

