Advancing Safer Chemicals In Products

The Key Role of Purchasing

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Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council

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The Lowell Center for Sustainable Production Mission

Mission

Develop, study, and promote systems of production and consumption that are safe, healthy, environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially accountable.
Purpose of Project:

To help purchasers move the market towards products with safer chemistries
Six Cases

1. Kaiser Permanente
2. Seattle City Light
3. Perkins+Will
4. Coop
5. The National Institutes of Health
6. Oregon Environmental Council
Cases Include:

- Program Overview
- Drivers
- Chemicals Targeted
- Partnerships
- How Keep Up With Changing Science
- Tracking Progress
- Lessons Learned
Supplier Sustainability Scorecard

Chemical disclosure on infant skin care products and mattresses

Multi-disciplinary Safer Chemicals Working Group

Target products based on known chemicals of concern (e.g., fragrances in infant care products) and/or the potential for exposure (e.g., DEHP in IV bags).
Seattle City Light

- Policy to reduce the use of hazardous substances, phase out the use of products that pose human health or environmental risks, and increase the use of less harmful alternatives
- Avoids carcinogens, ozone depleting, reproductive hazards, global warming gasses, etc
- 9-step process for choosing products with safer chemistries
Publicly available and searchable “Transparency” website

Site includes Precautionary List of 25 substances of concern common in building and design products, describes why they are of concern, identifies safer alternatives

Materials Health Task Force, comprised of architects and interior designers, maintains List and website; advocates for and represents company efforts
Coop

- Works with suppliers to eliminate endocrine disruptors and other chemicals of concern in products sold in its stores
- Covers all 3,000 products in company’s three private labels as well as brand named products
- Goals include securing the highest level of safety for the consumer and environment, and maintaining Coop role as first mover in the market
The National Institutes of Health

- Developing automated process to screen for 350 SOCs and make purchasing safer products easier
- Covers products purchased directly or that are contained or released by a service or product anywhere throughout its life cycle
- Part of larger effort in federal Sustainable Acquisition

Lowell Center for Sustainable Production
Oregon Environmental Council

- Coordinates Healthy Purchasing Coalition—governments, universities, ports, businesses, and nonprofits
- Focus on integrating human health, chemical hazard, and safer alternatives into purchasing decisions that influence buildings and indoor environments
- Participants agree to a 6 element framework, including pilot project and metrics
Common Themes:

- Understanding potentially harmful substances in the products purchased, and setting priorities;
- Creating strong policy based on these priorities, from which specifications flow;
- Setting goals and tracking progress;
- Encompassing a broad range of chemicals and products;
- Focusing on reducing exposures;
Common Themes, continued:

- Understanding the marketplace and engaging suppliers;
- Engaging employees/users;
- Committing resources:
  - Taking a broad view of costs and risks;
  - Recognizing that this is an ongoing process;
- Building a broad network.
Thanks to:

- Advisory Committee
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  Mary Dickinson, Perkins+Will
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  Chris Geiger, San Francisco Department of the Environment
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  Theresa Leland, National Institutes of Health
  Sarah O’ Brien, Green Electronics Council
  Jason Pearson, Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council
  Joel Tickner, UMass Lowell
  Julia Wolfe, Massachusetts Operational Services Division

- Case Study Interviewees
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Discussion:

At your tables:

- Name and organization
- Where are you trying to drive innovation in your organization and what are your barriers?
- How can people in this room be of help?
- How can SPLC be of help?