



Purchasing Pup e-News

Do you know when you're being green washed?

One way to find green office products is to look for **eco-logos or labels**. Eco-logos allow you to quickly decide if the product is environmentally friendly without having to put in a lot of time on research. Unfortunately, there are many labels that make environmental claims with no factual basis. Some companies even make up logos that look legitimate but have no environmental benefits to back them up. The plethora of bad logos can make green purchasing confusing. **Look for these —**

- ♣ **Independent organization.** Be skeptical of eco-logos that are affiliated with a company or industry. The best logos are from independent or third party organizations.
- ♣ **Multi-attribute.** The best logos evaluate a product at each stage of its life cycle and use multiple criteria to make sure a product is truly better for the environment. Cradle to Cradle, EPEAT and Green Seal are good examples of multi-attribute logos.
- ♣ **Verification.** Do the logos audit or verify a product's or company's environmental claims? A good logo will conduct an ongoing audit to make sure the organization is keeping up with the logo's certification requirements.
- ♣ **Avoids green washing.** Some products slap the words "natural," "eco-friendly" or "100% recyclable" to mislead consumers. A good eco-label uses fact-based evidence to certify a manufacturer's environmental statements.



LOOK FOR THE REAL DEAL

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Cradle to Cradle: These products are environmentally sustainable and safe for human health at all stages of its life. This

label ensures that a product has low manufacturing impacts, is made in a socially responsible manner and can be reused or recycled at the end of its life.



SaferChoice: This EPA logo identifies products with safer chemical ingredients that work well and are less toxic—products that are safer for people, pets, worker's health, fish, and the environment.

The label also includes standards for packaging, performance, pH, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The SaferChoice label will be available in major nationwide retailers and other stores in Spring 2015.



EcoLogo: Like, Cradle to Cradle, this logo verifies sustainability claims at every stage of a product's life cycle including energy and material use, manufacturing and operations, consumer health, social responsibility and product performance. The logo is administered by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and covers a wide variety of products.



Energy Star: Another certification backed by the U.S. government. This label is put on appliances and electronics that are energy efficient.



EPEAT: The EPEAT program certifies computers and displays that meet several environmental standards. Products are rated gold, silver or bronze and judged on design, production, energy use and recyclability.



Forest Stewardship Council (FSC): Indicates paper and paper products are made from wood that has been harvested from well-managed forests.



Green Seal: A Green Seal means a product is environmentally friendly at every stage of its life.

The Green Seal organization evaluates a variety of products on raw materials extraction, manufacturing, use, and re-use or disposal.



Processed Chlorine Free and Totally Chlorine Free (TCF): Used on paper products that do not use chlorine or chlorine compounds during the manufacturing process.

