



Newsflash

Business Achievement Award - The Canadian American Business Council has selected **Virox Technologies Inc.** and **JohnsonDiversey Inc.** to be awarded the prestigious **Business Achievement Award** for their collaboration in developing and distributing a safe and environmentally-friendly hydrogen peroxide based disinfectant.

50th Business Anniversary - S.K. Sanitary Specialties, Vancouver, British Columbia, has reached their 50th business anniversary. " This is a landmark Anniversary that will never come again. We intend to celebrate it with

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Trust Through Clarification

Trust Through Clarification *By Scott McDougall*

A survey taken in November 2003 found that many building owners, facility managers and others involved with building design, operation and maintenance were confused about the term *Green* when used in an environmental context. According to the report, 81 per cent of those surveyed believed Green is not clearly defined; 47 per cent indicated they did not understand what Green is; and more than a third said they were never certain if

pride."
Congratulations !

WFIM - Entrepreneur of the Year Award - **Debra Bradshaw**, technical consultant at **Zep Manufacturing**, has been presented with the **Woman in Food Industry Management's (WFIM) Entrepreneur of the Year Award**.

Scott Paper Renamed to Kruger Products -

Kruger Inc., with operations across North America and more than 10,000 employees has announced that it will be re-naming its **Scott Paper division to Kruger Products**. The announcement is the culminating highlight of a three year, re-branding initiative conceived to create an entirely new and all Canadian banner - Kruger Products.

CanClean 2007 (May 2-3) - **CanClean 2007**, at the **Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto**, will attract professional cleaners, facility managers, health care, hospitality and institution personal to two day trade show." Educational seminars are going to be outstanding

a product was *really* Green or if they could trust labels making this claim.

Fortunately, programs such as the EcoLogo^M Program and others have helped end much of this confusion. This survey was taken just before the use of environmentally preferable products – from cleaning chemicals and paper products to hand soaps, and building materials – was front and centre, and on nearly everyone's radar screen. So it is hoped that these statistics would be more favourable if the same survey were taken today.

However, many facility managers and cleaning professionals may still be unsure what all the Green terminologies really mean. For instance:

- If a product is "environmentally friendly," does that mean it is also "environmentally preferable"? And, to what "environment" is it friendly?
- What does the term *sustainable* mean?
- How can you trust that a product is Green?

Because Green cleaning products play such a major role in the cleaning

"says Diane Gosling, Show organizer and Executive Director of the Canadian Sanitation Supply Association. Mark you calendars - MAY 2 & 3. On line info at cssa@cssa.com or call 416 620-9320

industry today, this is an opportune time to define these terms – especially for building service contractors and other end users who will likely be working with the products every day.

Friendly or Preferable

When the Green movement first started to grow roots in the early 1970s, consumers were introduced to a number of new expressions. Some of these included *all-natural*, *biodegradable*, *ecological* and *recyclable*.

Unfortunately, misunderstanding about these terms emerged almost as soon as they were introduced. This is because many products were self-declared safe for the environment by their manufacturers, with little substantiation. The different claims and terms confused consumers, and for many, this confusion led to doubt and mistrust about Green products.

The term “environmentally friendly” was first introduced about 25 years ago. It usually refers to goods or services that are considered to inflict little harm on the environment, and is often added to product

advertising or packaging to promote sales.

However, who makes the decision to call a product environmentally friendly?

Does the term refer to certain ingredients or to all ingredients used in the product? And does this include how the product is packaged, its usefulness, its performance, and eventually how it is discarded or disposed of?

These questions point out the complex issues that arise when a product claims to be “environmentally friendly.” In its publication *Complying with the Environmental Marketing Guides*, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission suggests that the term *environmentally friendly* can be deceptive if it leads consumers to believe that the product has environmental benefits that the manufacturer cannot substantiate. As a result, it is appropriate to use this term only when it is accompanied by language that elaborates on the claim, such as: “This cloth bag is reusable and is made from 100 per cent recycled fibres.”

The term *environmentally preferable*, on the other hand, is less subject to misunderstanding and is generally more conducive to clear communication.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has defined *environmentally preferable* precisely, stating it refers to “products and services that have a -lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared to other products and services that serve the same purpose.”

Sustainability

Unlike the terms and expressions mentioned earlier, *sustainability* became a buzzword in the 1980s. However, like other terms, various people, governments and organizations often had different meanings for the term. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development created by the United Nations defined the word *sustainable* to mean “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This means that in a sustainable world, we would not use renewable resources – such as forests, soils, waters, fish and game – faster than they would be replenished. We also would not use non-renewable resources –

such as fossil fuels, minerals, ores and other products – faster than renewable substitutes would replace them.

In addition, we would not release pollutants and contaminants into the earth's atmosphere faster than they could be processed and made harmless in the atmosphere. The term *sustainable* also has come to be understood as requiring the simultaneous achievement of environmental, social and economic objectives. This is the “triple bottom line” agenda.

For many years, people in North America had a hard time dealing with the concept of sustainability. Many believed it meant sacrifice and hardship. Some governments and manufacturers believed it translated into increased costs to produce goods and services that could affect profits and jobs.

Today, we are beginning to realize that a sustainable world would likely be a better, healthier world for our children. New sustainable technologies are already opening doors and creating new opportunities that were not envisioned just a few years ago.

Trust and Verification

As I discussed in my most recent column, when a product is certified by the EcoLogo Program, it may use the EcoLogo mark in packaging, advertising and marketing materials.

Because we (as well as some similar certifying organizations) are totally independent, this validation protects the consumer – as well as the marketplace – and helps build trust.

A significant part of the certification process includes follow-up audits, which allow the certifying organization to ensure the product is still being manufactured according to the established criteria.

This surveillance can include both announced and unannounced visits by the certifying entity. The manufacturer is aware of this and agrees to the procedure.

EcoLogo has recently expanded this program to cover many more product categories, manufacturers and industries. The expansion is not the result of an increase in manufacturers failing to meet compliance. In fact, we have rarely had such problems.

Instead, it is being done to better protect the consumer, to help clarify what Green really means, and to build trust. For the Green movement to expand and produce the many benefits we believe it can and will provide, the consumer must be assured that a Green-certified product is indeed safe, healthy and sustainable and has minimal impact on the environment.

Scott McDougall is President of the EcoLogo Program. He may be reached by e-mail at scott@ecologo.org.

Survey Source: Reed Research Group.

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