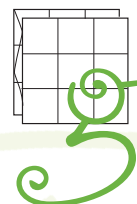


MARCH 2011 PRODUCT CERTIFICATION AND VERIFICATION



Building and construction technology can be very complicated and many times product manufacturers make unsubstantiated claims regarding their product's ability to guarantee credit points. So, as designers and specifiers how do you protect yourself from greenwashing and prevent projects from falling short of accreditation goals? **greenscreen®** asked sustainability expert Heather Gadonniex of MindClickSGM for a couple of ideas on how to guard against being taken to the sustainability cleaners. Also, **greenscreen®** provides additional resources on how green facade wall technology might be able to boost your project's point totals in areas that you might not have considered before.

Product claims by product manufacturers regarding LEED™ credits can either be confusing or even worse, unsubstantiated. Typically, designers and specifiers are looking for certain products to achieve specific point credits. Most points in LEED 2010 are based on the EA (energy & atmosphere) section and are based on recycled content, regional manufacturing and VOC offgassing. **greenscreen®** understands the need to achieve certain certification levels, but our look into LEED™ credits looks more at possibilities in addition to just points. While there is available a thorough review of potential credit contributions using vertical greening available on the website, we also wanted to look at the bigger picture and how we could initiate a more holistic dialogue. To start the discussion, we also took a look at the *Sustainable Sites Initiative™ Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks* because there is a need to bring about awareness of the larger issues of sustainable design, green infrastructure and policy development. Please take some time to carefully read the peer reviewed **greenscreen®** Sustainable Sites Initiative™ Credit Contributions to gain insights into the possibilities a "big picture" discussion can bring about. We would enjoy hearing your thoughts and please make sure to stop at our booth at the AIA National Conference and Design Expo in New Orleans to talk with us. Our hope is that this discussion will continue well past the first GreenBuild ever held out of the United States!

In the interim, **greenscreen®** wants to help you wade through some of the sustainability issues circling about to keep your mind and projects moving forward, so we asked our good friend Heather Gadonniex of MindClickSGM to provide you with a few suggestions.

gs: What is the best way for the A/E/C industry to protect itself from greenwashing?

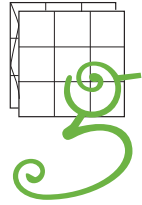
Heather: The best way is for designers and specifiers to do their homework. Any single claim verification should come from a third party or be backed up by substantial documentation. Also, make sure that claims match a project's specific design requirements, including achievement of certain LEED credits. If a designer is looking to increase post-consumer recycled content or create a healthy indoor environment through improved indoor air quality, seek out products that have verified claims. Do the necessary research, and always ask for back-up documentation.

gs: What is one of the most important sustainability issues on the horizon?

Heather: Product Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) will be the next big A/E/C plug in. A life cycle assessment is a quantitative assessment of a product's environmental impacts from raw material extraction through disposal. An Environmental Product Declaration is a type of eco-label that discloses product life cycle impacts, in addition to relevant product and corporate sustainability information. Eventually, these tools will only add to the increased importance and capabilities of BIM modeling by allowing designers to import product sustainability information directly into a working design.

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gs: What is the most important consideration when looking at LCA's and EPD's?

Heather: The number one most important consideration of any type of sustainability claim is third party verification or peer review. This means that the product manufacturer has had an outside source examine, scrutinize and verify the data and processes involved used to gather the data and determine conclusions. In the case of EPDs, it is critical for the EPD to be registered by an accredited EPD Program Operator.

gs: Anything else that designers/specifiers and contractors should be watching for?

Heather: A wise man once said, "you can't sell green products from brown companies". Increasingly, the A & D community is seeking to align their purchasing and specification criteria with their internal sustainability goals. Sustainability is moving beyond products to encompass all aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Keep your eyes open for third party validated assessments of companies' corporate sustainability claims including sustainability policies and practices, environmental benchmarks and reduction goals..

As the leader in green facade/green wall technology, **greenscreen®** is committed and motivated to promote corporate sustainability practices that foster an understanding of the LCA process within interdisciplinary design professions and to share that knowledge with interested stakeholders in order to establish product standards and consistencies going forward. There will be much more information regarding the **greenscreen®** CSR initiative and product Life Cycle Assessment coming out in 2011. The goal of this focus is to blend transparent, accurate product information with certification programs to provide the highest valued product for your projects.

Additional links: <http://mindclicksgm.com/>

