

Greenwashing

What measures should we implement to avoid & minimize greenwashing in the green building industry?

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Definition / Benefits	Constraints / Challenges / Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definition: False or When a company or organization spends more time and money claiming to be “green” through advertising and marketing than actually implementing business practices that minimize environmental impact. It’s whitewashing, but with a green brush.• 6 type of Greenwashing called Sins:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sin of Hidden Trade-Off: Looking at one single attribute without taking into account other more important attributes that have a greater effect on the environment.Sin of No Proof: Absence of any supporting information.Sin of Vagueness: A claim that is poorly defined or very broad that its true meaning might be misunderstood by consumers.Sin of Irrelevance: Environmental claim that might be truthful however it is not important or unhelpful for consumers.Sin of the Lesser two Evils: Highlighting one element that is not very important to distract consumers from the attributes that are truly harmful for the environment.Sin of Fibbing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do companies use Greenwashing?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet consumer demand for environmentally friendly goods and services.• Repair the public perception of a company.• To increase the company's profit.• This affects:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The environment: as consumers will buy products that are actually harming the environment instead of truly environmentally friendly products• The users: as they are being laid to! And they stop believing in environmental products/services• The businesses: Greenwashing is hurting the reputation of businesses that are truly environmental!

A claim that is simply false	
Best Practice / Solutions / Tools	Resources / Local Availability
<p>How to avoid Greenwashing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at further information to understand the entire chain of manufacturing and environmental impact • A product should always direct you where to look for more information i.e. website • If the info is vague than try to look what they mean by eco* or green* • Make sure what has been promised or advertised for in initial design has actually been incorporated into the product or building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online websites that helps the user/consumer to verify whether a product is truly environmental: Greenwashingindex.com • Check for certified labels on products such as FSC, Energy Star, FAIRTRADE, EPAWaterSenseetc...