

Johnson & Johnson's Sustainability Strategy Includes Avoiding Greenwashing

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When you hear the name Johnson & Johnson, you might think about baby oil, baby powder and band-aids—and not necessarily think of them as leaders in sustainability. At a speaker panel at the Net Impact Conference on Friday, several J&J company leaders spoke to how the company's Credo is the backbone of its sustainability strategy and how they have avoided greenwashing as they implement their "Healthy Planet 2010 goals."

During the talk, Al Iannuzzi, Senior Director of J&J's Worldwide Environmental Health & Safety unit, told a story of his early days as an environmentalist in the 1970s who believed that "corporations are evil." He resisted working for big corporations until he read J&J's Credo—which upholds its responsibility to its employees, the environment and communities—and found an interesting job within the company. He's been with J&J now for nearly 30 years and wants everyone to know how J&J is using business for good.

"If we're not saying anything, people assume we're not doing anything," said Iannuzzi. So J&J wants people to know what their doing—but they don't want to greenwash, either.

J&J has not always been vocal about its socially and environmentally responsible

efforts, even so it has gotten attention for its sustainability strategies, including being #3

on Newsweek magazine's Green Rankings List of green companies.

Some interesting facts about J&J: it's the second largest producer of solar panels in the U.S., it's the largest corporate user of hybrid vehicles, and it gets 30% of its energy from renewable sources. It's also done a lot to reduce its water footprint, reduce PVC content in products, sell waste as raw materials, and use recycled paper in product packaging.

Despite all this good work, J&J wants to make sure it doesn't overstate its efforts. Specifically, it wants to make sure it adheres to the following:

- **Don't Say Something You're Not:** Don't put yourself out there as the end all and be all, because most likely that's not true. Products can be "greener," but cannot always be 100% green because of the nature of consumer products—so don't say you are.
- **Be Specific:** Use LCAs to know the exact sustainability measures of your products. Provide your consumers with real numbers that inform and empower them.

- **Transparency:** Partner with NGOs that can hold your products accountable and add credibility to your business. Follow the 7 Sins of Greenwashing and check yourself before you go to market.

J&J wants people to know about their commitment to sustainability, and they plan to inform people in a way that's honest and not misleading. That strategy is very much in line with its famous Credo.