



Greenwashing is slowly washing away

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The goal is to deter companies from greenwashing – disingenuously promoting products or services as “green” - while still promoting green product development, and it seems to be working. Companies are still churning out greener products while slowly reducing their greenwashing claims. The first “Sins of Greenwashing” study on the environmental marketing of consumer products was published in 2007 by TerraChoice, an environmental marketing and consulting firm. Their 2010 report is called “The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition,” and surveys cleaning, housewares, and health and beauty products, among others.

Environmental Leader highlighted the study, which considers claims about the environmental practices of the company as well as the environmental benefits of the product or service. It seems that categories of products that have grown up with environmental claims, like building, construction, and office products, tend to have a smaller percentage of offenders than

categories that are new to making environmental claims, like toys and baby products.

Greenwashing has decreased slightly since 2009, as shown by the rising numbers of products that aren’t misleading customers- up from just 2% in 2009 to 4.5% in 2010. TerraChoice refers to this 4.5% as “sin free,” based on their “Seven Sins of Greenwashing” list. Even products that have third-party certification often have false green claims, and though specialty green stores may tout their superiority, they usually carry a smaller percentage of certified products than larger generic retailers.

TerraChoice has recently become part of the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) global network. The UL family of companies serves customers in 102 countries, and is one of the largest independent testing and certification organizations around the globe. TerraChoice will now be able to use the resources of UL Environment, one of UL’s fastest growing companies.