

Green or Greenwashing? ...and why should I care?

Janne K. Flisrand

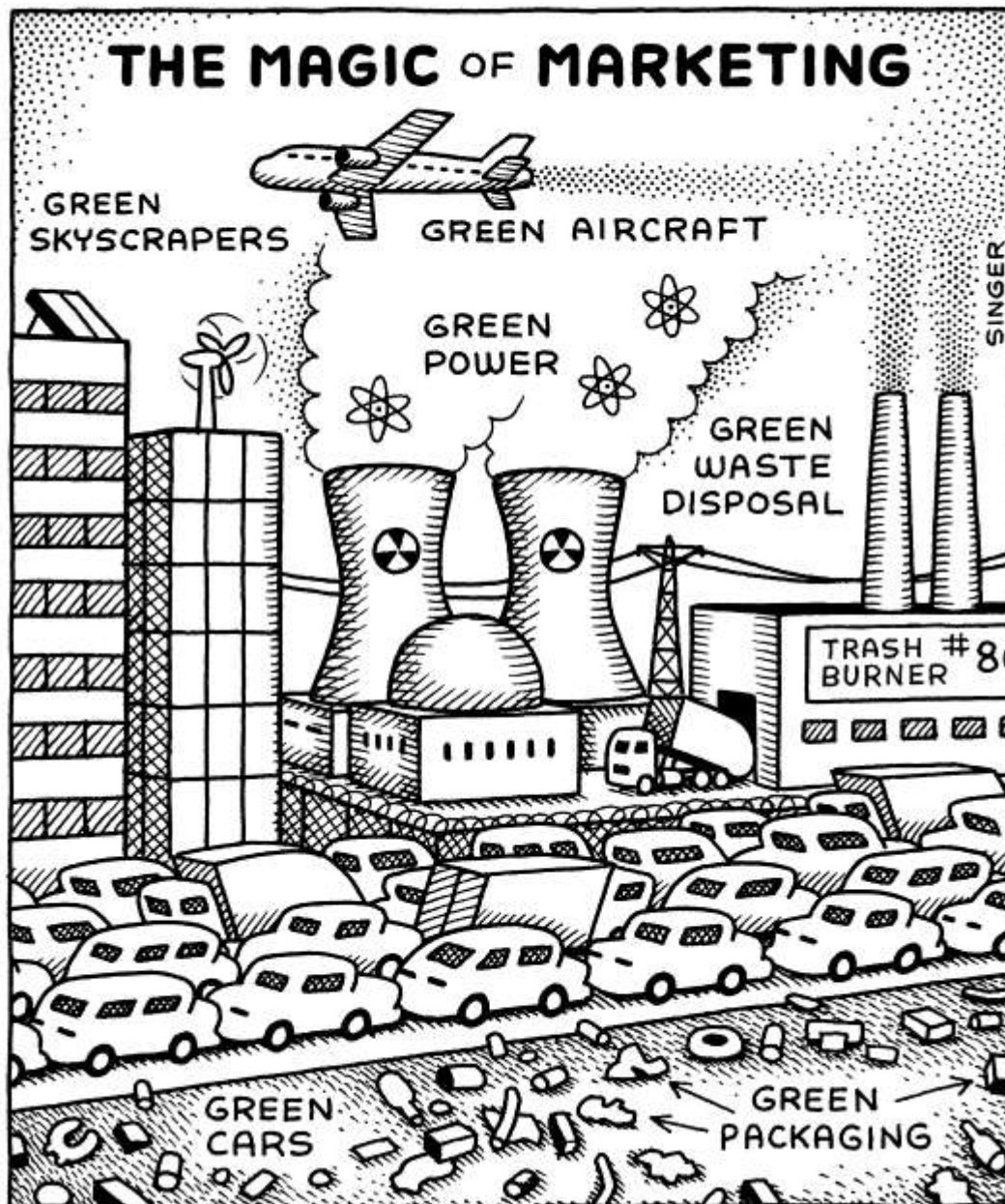
Flisrand Consulting & The Greenwash Brigade

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Duluth Energy Design Conference

March 10, 2009

- Why does greenwash matter to us?
- Define the Six Sins of Greenwashing
- Building product examples
- Tips to green marketing
- Builder-specific marketing tools that avoid greenwash
- Your example – got one?



Quiz

Green-wash – verb: the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service.

TerraChoice Environmental Marketing

Why should we care?

- avoid being take for a ride
- keep customers happy
- get credit for what you're doing (you can be green and still greenwash)
- growing consumer “green fatigue”
 - Shelton Group poll: energy efficiency "important/extremely important" fell from 72 to 67 percent

Green Fatigue

“We are drowning in so many vague, dubious or breathlessly hyped assertions that sometimes it's easier just to throw the sticky peanut-butter jar away.” (Susan Greenberg)



Report from TerraChoice (November 2007)

- 1) Hidden Trade-off
- 2) No Proof
- 3) Vagueness
- 4) Irrelevance
- 5) Fibbing
- 6) Lesser of Two Evils

Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off

Suggesting a product is “green” based on a single environmental attribute without attention to other important, or perhaps more important, environmental issues.



Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off

Green Building and LEED® - Sustainable Design Opportunities



Daylighting is a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly "green" design solution. There's no better way to illuminate interior spaces than with the natural light that surrounds us every day.

www.majorskylights.com



Sin of No Proof

An environmental claim that cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information, or by a reliable third-party certification.

Sin of No Proof



Sin of Vagueness

A claim that is so poorly defined or broad that its real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the intended consumer.



Sin of Vagueness

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Sin of Vagueness



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Sin of Irrelevance

An environmental claim that may be truthful, but which is unhelpful and irrelevant. It often serves to distract consumers.



Sin of Irrelevance

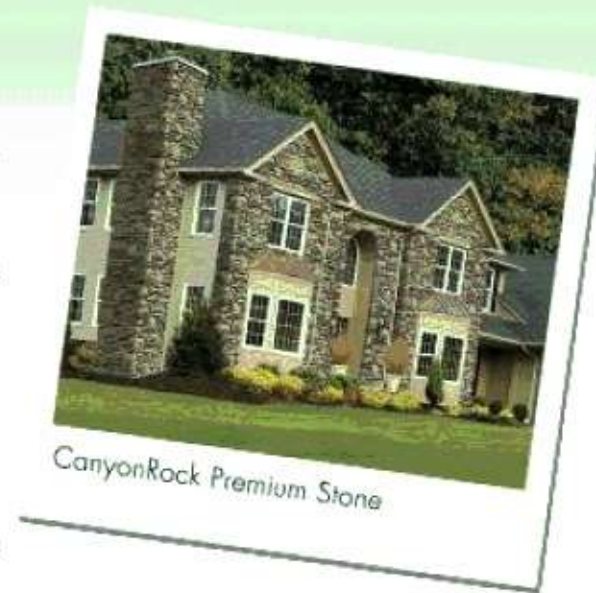
Decorative Stone

Building on our proud tradition of innovation and excellence, the newest addition to our building products family is CanyonRock™ Premium Decorative Stone.

Adding decorative stone to your home or property is one of the best ways to improve its curb appeal and even increase its resale value!

CanyonRock™ Premium Decorative Stone is your best and safest choice because:

- It meets or exceeds national building code standards, certified by an accredited, independent testing laboratory
- Available in the most popular styles and colors, which were developed in conjunction with one of the industry's leading color experts
- Features the industry's best warranties, including a lifetime ltd. warranty against manufacturing defects
- Unlike many other brands, even includes environmentally-friendly packaging!



Sin of Irrelevance

FEATURES and BENEFITS

GALDEN® SV and H-GALDEN® ZV exhibit a wide range of boiling points: from 55°C to 130°C, and they are:

- Safe
- Non flammable
- Non toxic

Therefore, they can be used for cleaning operation where solvents are:

- Applied to hot components
- Heated prior to application
- Pressure sprayed onto components

GALDEN® SV and H-GALDEN® ZV have Zero Ozone depletion Potential (Zero ODP): they do not contain Chloro-Fluoro-Carbons (CFCs) chlorine, bromine and Iodine. They do not require particular safeguard precautions or use-restrictions and they are fully compatible with all metals, and a wide variety of rubbers and commercially available elastomers and plastics.

Sin of Lesser of Two Evils

“Green” claims that may be true within the product category, but that risk distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole.



Sin of Lesser of Two Evils



www.ecosmart.com



Sin of Fibbing



Environmental claims that are simply false.

Sin of Fibbing



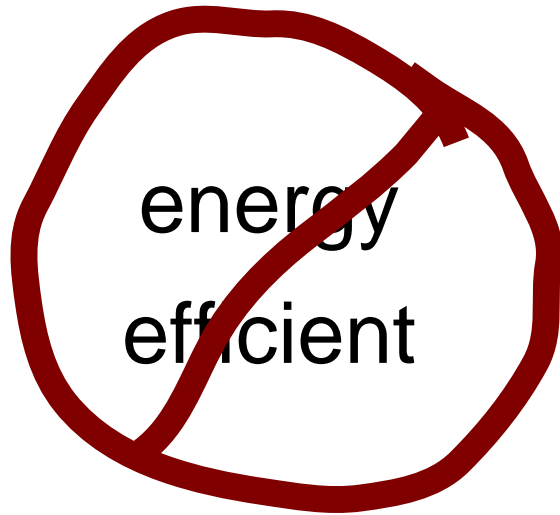
Acqua Liana
15,000 SF
“LEED Certified”
Oops! Guess not.

www.frank-mckinney.com

Tips for Green Marketing

- Be specific
- Make it transparent, and easy to verify
- If it isn't self-evident, explain
- Show differences
- Use eco-labels or 3rd party certification
- If it is questionable in value, skip it

Be Specific



Energy
Star



Transparent, Verifiable



1.3gpf
toilets




Self-evident, or Explain

HERS
Rating of
68



Home Energy
Rating of 68
on a scale of
1-100 where
100 is best



Show How You're Greener

~~ventilation
fan in
bath~~

Low-Noise,
Energy Star
fan in bath ✓

Use (or Get) Eco- or 3rd Party Labels

- published and precise criteria
- for a given product type
- with credible certification



When Possible, Let Someone *Trustworthy* do the Homework

- **GreenSpec**
- **Some Stores**
- **Green Building Criteria/Certification Companies**
- **Scores (HERS, SRI)**
- **Standards/Manuals developed by Professional Associations (ANSI, ASHRAE, ACCA)**

If Questionable in Value, Skip It

Recyclable!*

Compostable!*

(when industrial composting isn't widely available)



Gives you an insight on branding



Claims that are product relevant

Lots of specific details



A recognised third-party label

Significant and major green commitments

Whole Building-Specific Standards

There are many nationally.
3 are common in Minnesota.

Minnesota GreenStar



Energy- or Product-Specific



Use Eco- or 3rd Party Labels -- **Carefully!**

Many are controversial!
Do your homework!



Exercise: Blue

Identify credible claims - and explain why they are credible

Identify incredible claims – and explain why they are incredible

Suggestions to improve the sheet?

www.move2blue.com



blue

The First privately-Funded Green
apartment complex in Minneapolis



greco PROPERTIES

Exercise: Your Projects

Volunteers?