Purchasing Greener Products with Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

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What is Environmentally Preferable Purchasing?

“selecting products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.”

- Executive Order 13101 (September 1998)
EPP’s History

- The Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 requires EPA to "identify opportunities to use Federal procurement to encourage source reduction."
- The EPP Program started in 1993 with Executive Order 12873
- Incorporated in the Federal Acquisition Regulations Part 23.703
  - Federal Agencies must "Maximize the utilization of environmentally preferable products and services (based on EPA-issued guidance)".
How is EPP Different than Traditional Purchasing?

- Looks beyond what traditional purchasing decisions are based on
- Promotes social, economic or environmental objectives
- It can distinguish a company from its competition
When does EPP Click?

• When:
  – Customers are interested in “environmentally friendly” products
  – Businesses can differentiate themselves
  – Costs are reduced
  – There’s an industry trend
Why Should You Consider EPP?

- There are links between greener products and services and human health and the environment
- Buying greener products stimulates the market for all purchasers
- Greener purchasing can help the bottom line, and might reduce some risks
- To demonstrate how your business is addressing the environmental and social issues
How to Pick EPP Products

• Identify specifications, standards and ecolabels
  – Purchasers aren’t necessarily an expert in all the products and services they buy
  – Technical requirements change over time
  – Labels help easily identify greener products
  – There is a structure to assess the product and conformance to the standard
EPA’s Guidelines

- EPA has guidelines for assessing environmental performance standards and ecolabels for federal procurement
- The guidelines:
  - Identify the development process
  - Evaluate environmental effectiveness of the standard
  - Review conformity assessment processes
  - Management processes of the label
- [https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts](https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts)
ENERGY STAR®

• A voluntary partnership that helps businesses and individuals protect the environment
• The focus is on superior energy performance for homes, products, and commercial and industrial buildings.
• Builds on strong brand recognition
• Offers guidance, tools and resources at no cost
• www.energystar.gov
WaterSense

• WaterSense labeled products:
  – Perform as well or better than their less efficient counterparts
  – Are 20 percent more water efficient than average products in that category
• It can be specified as easily as including language requiring 'Watersense' products in your purchases.
• https://www.epa.gov/watersense
Sustainable Facilities Tool

• The Sustainable Facilities Tool (www.SFTool.gov) is a one stop website for all sustainability:
  – Planning
  – Designing
  – Procurement needs
• A place to learn about efficient, healthily buildings and environmentally-responsible purchasing
• Highlights best practices, case studies, and relevant regulations
• Simplify’s sustainable building practices
EPA's Sustainable Marketplace

• EPA's Sustainable Marketplace: Greener Products and Services webpage, https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts, provides information to identify and purchase greener products and services.
  – Helps purchasers consider the full array of impacts associated with their supply chains
  – Throughout the entire life-cycle of the product.
Evaluating Marketing Claims

- Look for products and services verified to meeting product standards or ecolabels that:
  - Cover the key hotspots
  - Cover the life cycle
  - Were issued or supported by organizations widely respected and trusted.
  - Are managed or recommended by EPA
  - For claims not verified by a third party certifier and/or label, make sure they meet the Green Guides requirements
Federal Trade Commission’s Green Guides

• The FTC Green Guides:
  – Help ensure that environmental terms in advertising aren’t confusing
  – Provide guidelines about how unfair or deceptive acts or practices in environmental marketing claims can be pursued
  – Apply to all forms of product and service marketing to the public
  – More details at: https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/media-resources/truth-advertising/green-guides
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