

Proposal for Product Chemicals Management System Online Resource for Retailers

Introduction:

The Drivers of Innovation and Marketing Safer Products working group started engaging retailers around product chemicals management systems and conducting research in this area for their report: *Best Practices in Product Chemicals Management in the Retail Industry*. This report was introduced at the Retail Industry Leaders Association's (RILA) Sustainability and Compliance Conference in October 2009 and released in December 2009. It is clear that most retailers are at the beginning stages of seeking ways to identify chemicals of concern in products and transition towards safer alternatives. The working group believes retailers are in an important position to make significant changes in the supply chain to support green chemistry application and hence are interested in building on their work with retailers to date. They are proposing the development of an online repository of information about product chemicals management systems currently in use by retailers or currently under development. As retailers begin to recognize the importance and potential of these systems, new ones are being developed and existing systems are continuously under improvement. This repository would endeavor to keep track of these important changes and provide a mechanism to encourage efforts to implement safer chemistry in supply chains.

Other Resources:

The information repository we propose is different from existing and recent efforts being undertaken by other organizations responding to the growing role retailers are playing in shaping environmental policy, in making significant changes within supply chains and in educating consumers. Some of the resources available to retailers, which focus primarily on broad sustainability efforts (mainly energy, packaging, etc.) include:

- In March 2010 Five Winds International launched a new webpage for consumer goods companies to help them respond to retailers' sustainability requirements. Top retailers like Tesco, Walmart, Carrefour, and Marks & Spencer are asking their suppliers to report on sustainability programs and provide consumer products that are "greener" and more sustainably sourced. Five Winds' research shows this is part of a growing global retail trend, and the result is a rapidly evolving set of product requirements and supply chain standards for consumer goods manufacturers and suppliers. A three-part white paper series, <http://www.fivewinds.com/english/retail/retail-stocking-the-shelves-with-green.html>, summarizes the research and provides strategic guidance and tactical steps for consumer goods suppliers.
- Walmart Canada's ShareGreen Website <http://sharegreen.ca/?p=217> was inspired by the Walmart Canada Green Business Summit, held in Vancouver on February, 2010. The Summit demonstrated that businesses could work together to accelerate change for more environmentally, and economically, sustainable models. The website – a “best practices” in green business hub – features case studies of current, successful, green business practices that show the direct or indirect return-on-investment (ROI) of sustainable business practices in any of the

following categories: Energy, Waste & Material Management, Green Products & Solutions, and Green Employee Engagement. Industry sectors highlight case studies in the following categories: Food and beverage, Government, Manufacturers, Professional services, Resource extraction, Retail, Tourism, Transportation

- The Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) made a commitment to driving leadership in environmental sustainability. The central force is the Retail Sustainability Initiative (RSI) <http://www.rila.org/sustainability/Pages/default.aspx> which is dedicated to environmental sustainability. Its membership is committed to advocating for standards of environmental protection that work for the environment as well as for the retail industry.
- The US EPA’s Retail Industry Portal provides access to many programs and resources available to help prevent and resolve environmental issues at retail establishments. The resources fall into two categories: compliance resources which help retailers meet regulatory obligations; and sustainability resources which help retailers voluntarily go beyond regulatory obligations to protect the environment. This is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/retailindustry/>

Product Chemicals Management System Resource

In order to develop an online repository of information about retailers’ product chemicals management systems the drivers working group and those interested in the topic will need to discuss the parameters of the repository, the kind of information to be captured, how to capture that information, and how to use the repository to effect change in retailers’ practices. We are proposing that this discussion start in the working group break out session at the GC3 Roundtable.

Some questions that will need to be discussed include:

- How can this repository be used to leverage the purchasing of safer chemicals and products by retailers, and for more consistent and across the board consideration of chemical safety?
- What kind of information do retailers need in reviewing / considering product chemicals management systems?
- What is the most useful way for retailers to access this information: in the form of a descriptive case study (as in the *Best Practices* report) or in the form of a table of information (example below)?

Company Name	
Specialty	
Size	
Employees	
Age	
Revenue	

Change Agent	
Product Chemicals Management System Explained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key Elements ○ Provider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Third party ○ Company ○ Government ○ Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restricted substance list ○ Chemicals evaluation system ○ Product design strategy ○ Other ○ Level of Operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Company level ○ Sector level ○ Retail industry level 	
Challenges	
Benefits	
Future Plans	
Consumers	
Lessons	
Best Practices Identified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership commitment ○ Supplier chemicals management ○ Stakeholder partnerships ○ Customer support ○ Project management ○ System selection process ○ Other 	