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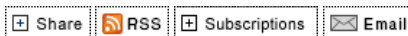
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Penny Bonda

Crypton: It's All About the Hierarchy

February 19, 2010



Crypton says it's all about the fabric, as well it should. This manufacturer of engineered textiles delivers stain, water and microbial resistant antimicrobial fabrics for a wide variety of uses.

Its latest product, however, is not a textile but rather a pyramid that represents the hierarchy of green product claims. Developed to help counter greenwashing, it organizes manufacturer's claims into three levels.

As described by Crypton, at the base are manufacturer's claims that are vague, lack relevance, or are unsubstantiated and possibly non-existent. Always go to the certifier's website, the company advises, to see if the product in question is listed. Crypton encourages purchasers to obtain the certificates before buying.

In the middle of the pyramid are levels of reliability and relevance. Reliability increases when parties other than the manufacturer support the claims. First-party claims are the claims made by a manufacturer. Second-party verification means another organization, such as a customer or trade group, has taken steps to have the manufacturer justify its claims. Third-party certification means an independent organization has ensured a manufacturer satisfies its criteria.

Relevance increases when more than one attribute is considered - emissions, material safety, and resource utilization, for example - and the body that establishes the criteria is made up of all industry stakeholders. Also, a standard is more relevant when it is written for a specific product, and more faith can be placed in a standard when it is written according to **ANSI** (American National Standards Institute) guidelines.

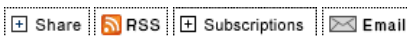
At the top of the hierarchy are claims based on product-specific ANSI standards established by volunteers from industry, government, and users. It is much more difficult to establish a product-specific standard when all stakeholders have to be represented, but it usually results in a fair and balanced tool for measuring relevant sustainability attributes. To ensure the standard is open to all companies, not just those that can afford third-party assessment, ANSI insists on allowing first-party, second-party, and third-party claims.

On one of the sides of the pyramid are the companies that collect, disseminate, and rate products as "green" with their own set of criteria that tends to be universal, not product-specific, so that a variety of products can be included in the database.

Crypton believes customers should reserve their highest esteem for those claims that are third-party certified according to an ANSI Standard and continues to work with all industry stakeholders to develop an ANSI-based standard for commercial furnishing fabrics. Stay tuned.

Posted by [Penny Bonda](#) on February 19, 2010 | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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