



Sustainability in Packaging Conference 2010

An “Eco-Friendly” World:
Negotiating the Fine Lines Between “Green”
Claims and Verification

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Who We Are

- World's largest retailer of natural and organic foods. 280 stores in the U.S., Canada and the U.K.
- Mission-driven. Our motto is "Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet".
- Leaders in the movement to sustainability, in all aspects of our business.



Why We Are: Our Mission

- We believe companies, like individuals, must assume their share of responsibility as tenants of Earth.
- We are a grocery store. Within that context, we act on our vision of the future by working within the constraints of what a grocery store can do.
- We believe it is our duty to work towards a goal of zero waste.



Our Fifth “Core Value” is about caring for our communities and our environment. We call this our Green Mission.





“If you are a business claiming to be ‘green’, unless you are completely transparent, you are walking around with a target on your back.”

- Jeffrey Hollender, Founder and President of Seventh Generation



The Issues and Challenges

- Whole Foods, like most other retailers in the “green” world, receives thousands of unsolicited product claims a year. Wal-Mart receives thousands every month!
- In the 80’s, there were so many unsubstantiated “green” claims that the F.T.C. drafted a set of green marketing guidelines, know as the Green Guides, released in 1992.
- Interest in “green” products waned until Al Gore and “An Inconvenient Truth” in 2006.
- Consumer interest in “green” products grew by 28% to 22 billion dollars between 2004 and 2006.



- In a survey of 1,000 consumer products making a total of 1,753 environmental claims nearly all committed subtle forms of “greenwashing” (TerraChoice, Nov. 2007).
- The F.T.C.’s “Green Guides” (16 C.F.R. Part 260), specifically written to help protect against “greenwashing”, have not been revised since 1998.
- Because the Guides are not legislative rules, they are not enforceable regulations, nor do they have the force and effect of law.



Consequences of “Greenwashing”

- Well-intentioned consumers are misled in purchasing decisions.
- Products with illegitimate environmental claims take unfair market share.
- May create cynicism and doubt about all environmental claims.
- This could eliminate financial incentives for green product innovation.



Six “Sins of Greenwashing”

(TerraChoice Environmental Marketing, Inc., 2007)



“Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off”

“Green” claim based on a single environmental attribute, overlooking other more significant environmental impacts.

PITCH VS. REALITY



**POLAND SPRING
ECO-SHAPE BOTTLE**
Environmental claim:
Uses 30 percent less
plastic than similar
products.

What's not said: Large
amounts of energy
go into creating and
transporting bottles and
many end up buried in
landfills.



CHEVY TAHOE HYBRID
Environmental claim: Named Green
Car of the Year, but gets about 20
miles per gallon.

What's not said: Smaller hybrids
can get better gas mileage.

**SIMPLE GREEN
HOUSEHOLD CLEANER**
Environmental claim:
Nontoxic, the "safer
alternative" to other
cleaners.

What's not said:
One key ingredient
is butyl cellosolve
— the same toxic
solvent that is found
in some traditional
all-purpose cleaners.





“Sin of No Proof”

Environmental claim can not be substantiated by easily-accessible information, or reliable 3rd party certification.

证 明

山东省境内及周边地区未曾种植过转基因玉米。

山东巨能电力集团金玉米开发有限公司生产的淀粉是由在中国种植的非转基因玉米加工而成的。

特此证明！

Certification

It is hereby certified that there have not planted the
GMO-Corn in ShanDong province and surrounding region.

The corn starch of

is made out from the NGMO-Corn that have
been planted in China.

Hereby certificate!

山东巨能电力集团金玉米开发有限公司

二〇〇五年六月八日

技术部



“Sin of Vagueness”

Claim so poorly defined that real meaning is misunderstood by consumer.

“Chemical-free”

“All Natural”

“Non-toxic”

“Eco-friendly”



“Sin of Irrelevance”

Claim is true, but completely unimportant.

“CFC-Free”



“Sin of Lesser of Two Evils”

Claim may be true but distracts consumer from larger environmental picture.

“Organic Cigarettes”



“Sin of Fibbing”

Environmental claim is simply false or can't be verified. Claims to be certified but is not listed with certifying agency.

e.g. “biocompostable”



What Whole Foods Is Trying To Do About It

- Business-NGO Working Group for Safer Chemicals and Sustainable Materials
- Industry Forum on Responsible Packaging
- Whole Foods Market Global Green Mission Purchasing Specifications Task Force
- Exploring partnership with Rainforest Alliance



Business-NGO Working Group on Purchasing Specs for BioBased Products

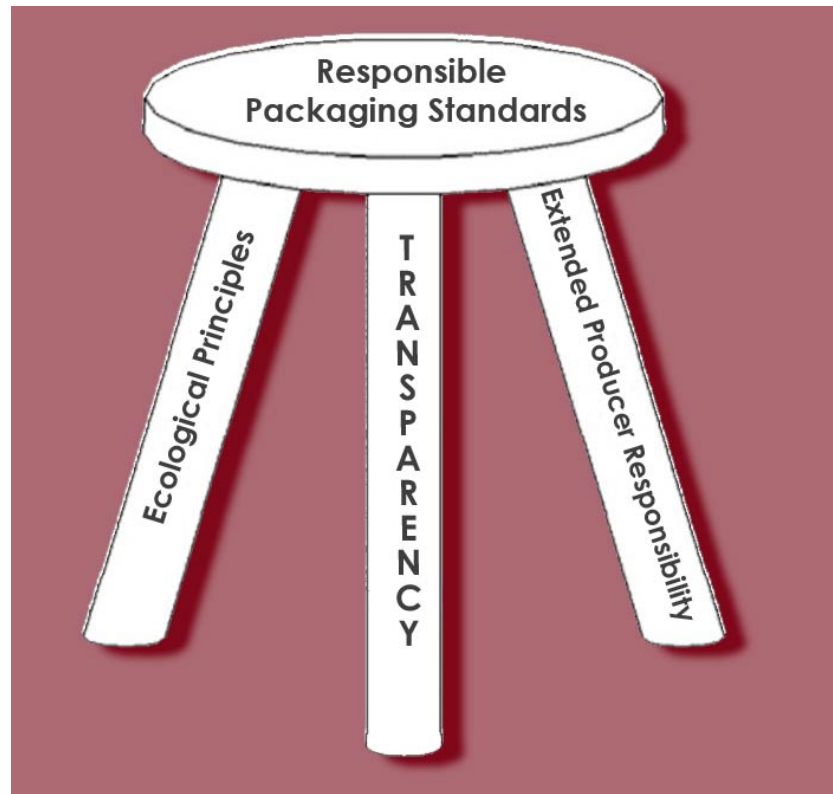
- Baseline sustainability criteria include: 100 percent biobased organic carbon content; no highly hazardous additives; no engineered nanomaterials added to the product; no chlorine or chlorine compounds used for bleaching, sanitization, etc.; no organohalogen based chemicals. At end of life, product must be certified compostable or recyclable. Use GMO-free feedstock or GMO offset program
- Beyond baseline sustainability criteria include: meet all baseline criteria, plus be GMO-free; feedstock and final product produced in North America; for products with agricultural feedstock, sustainably grown with preference for non-food such as perennial biomass crops and sustainably harvested residues.



Industry Forum on Responsible Packaging

- Co-sponsored by a number of key players in the natural products industry
- Focused on solutions and opportunities
- Exploring innovations; particularly excited about advances in research and development of biobased materials
- Trying to push the focus upstream

Responsible Packaging Standards' Three Legs



Extended Producer Responsibility

(EPR) is the extension of the responsibility of producers for the environmental impacts of their products and packaging to the entire product life cycle -- and especially for their take-back, recycling, and next life. EPR is based on the 'polluter pays for true costs' principle.

Responsible Packaging Guidelines' Three Legs

There are three legs to the dialogue concerning Packaging Guidelines:

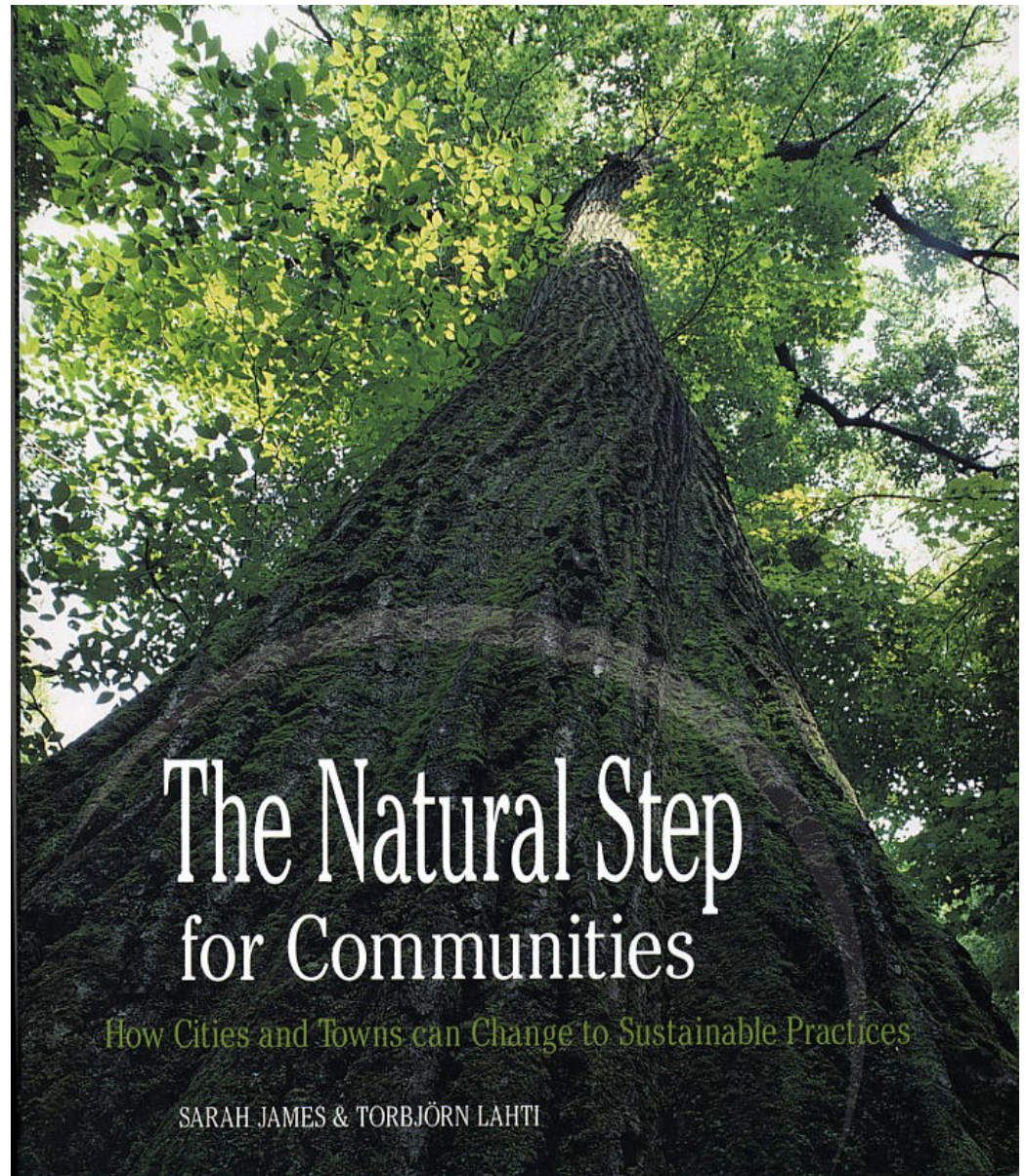
1. **Transparency** of content and process in determining these guidelines, and which materials and inputs are preferred.
2. **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** -- a strategy designed to promote the integration of environmental costs associated with products throughout their life cycles into the market price of the products
3. **Ecological Principles** drive the definition of “what is”. e.g. either recyclable as a **technical nutrient**, or compostable as a **biological nutrient**.

Environmental Identity

*“The significant problems
we have
cannot be solved
at the same
level of thinking
we were at
when we
created them . . .”*

-- Albert Einstein

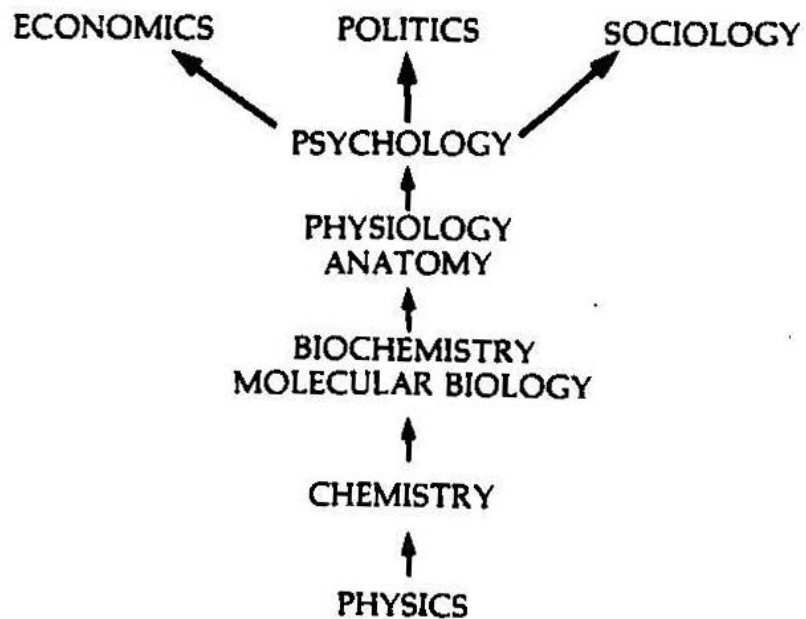
**The Natural
Step for
Communities
by
James and
Lahti**



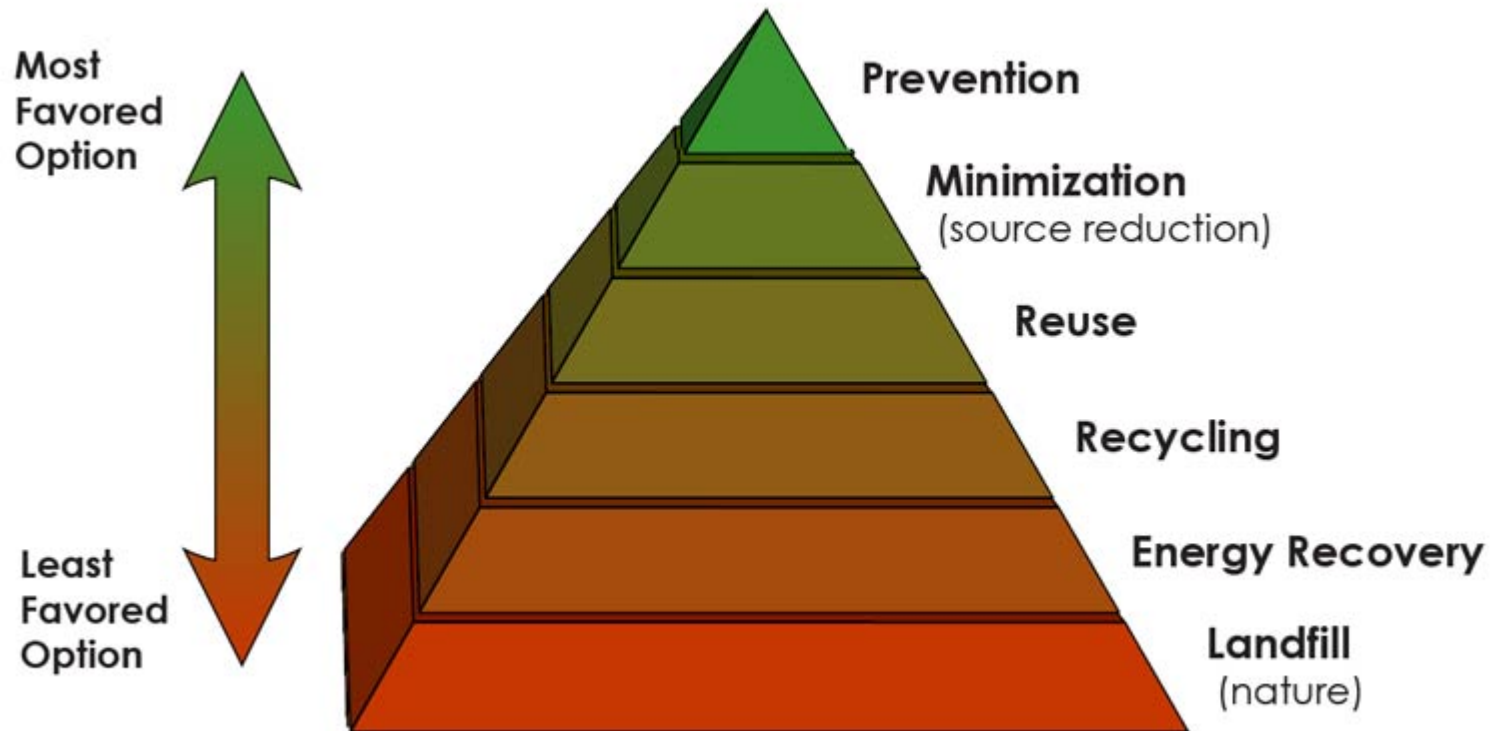
The Oak Tree



THE NEW BIOLOGY



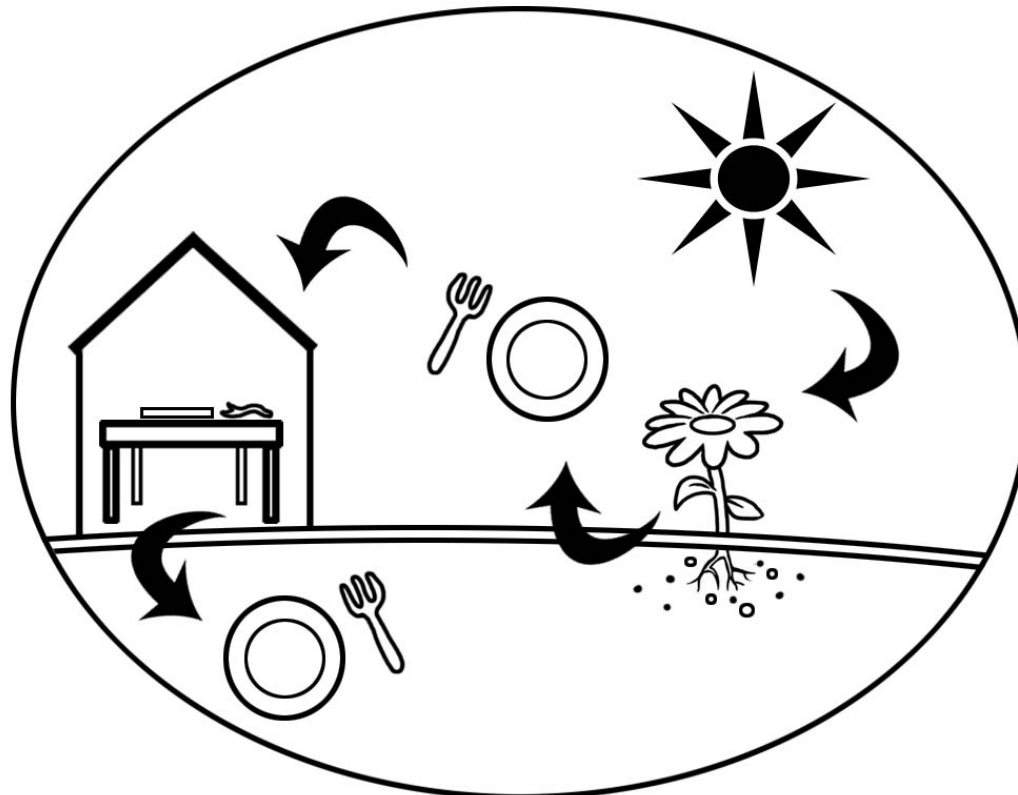
Waste Hierarchy Protocol



Waste Hierarchy Protocol

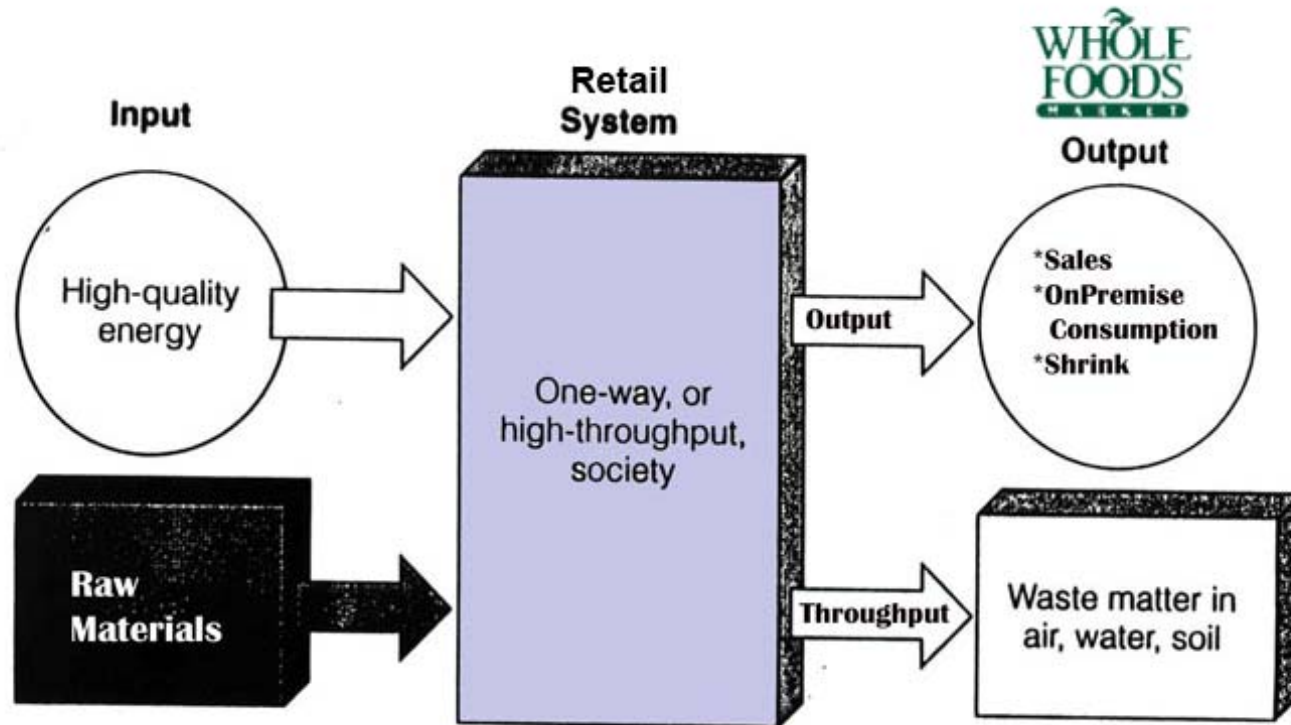
“Zero Waste” from packaging is the goal.

In nature there is no waste, what appears as ‘waste’ is actually ‘food’ for another organism. . . A “closed loop system” needs to be mimicked.



Input Output Throughput

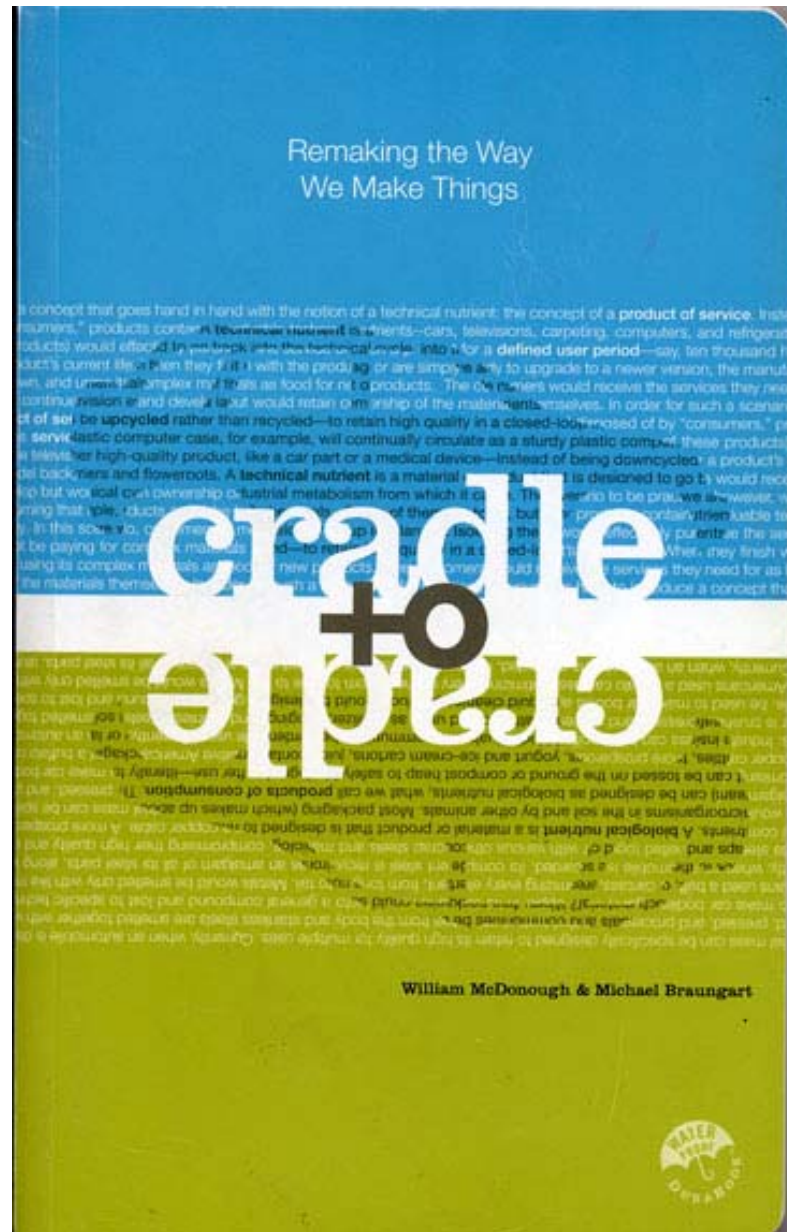
All stores and facilities have energy and material input, output and throughput (often what we call “waste”).



Waste matter in air, water and soil needs to be food for something!

Cradle to Cradle: Rethinking the Way We Make Things

-William McDonough and
Michael Braungart



Tomorrow's “Cradle to Cradle” System





Nutrient Cycles: Key Ecological Principle

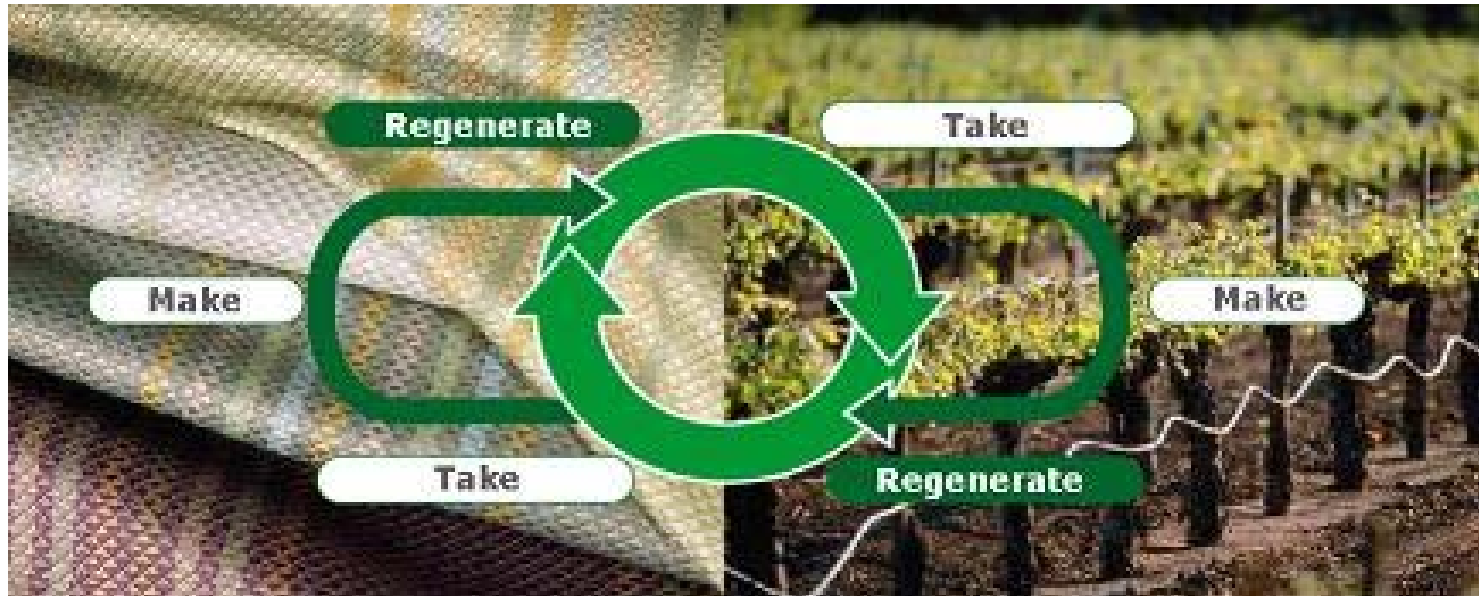
Cradle to Cradle Design distinguishes between two types of products depending on their behavior during use:

- Products of Consumption
- Products of Service

Bill McDonough

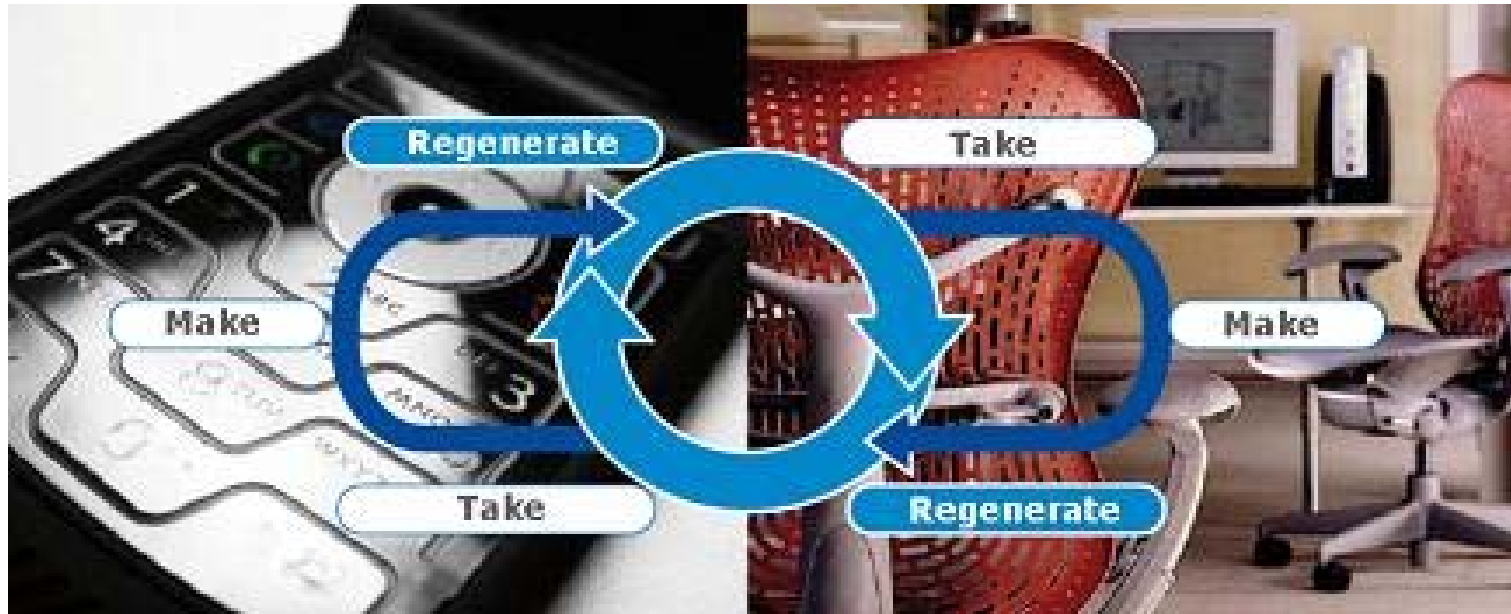
“There are two fundamental frameworks for metabolism: biological and technical nutrients. So we ask a company, ‘Are your materials safe and healthy for human and ecological systems? Do you have reverse logistics – do we know where this stuff comes from, where it goes, and how to get it back and it onto closed, zero-waste cycles?’”

Products of Consumption are Biological Nutrients in the Biological Cycle. (e.g. compostables become soil amendment)



Products of Service are Technical Nutrients in the Technical Cycle

For example, plastics and metals





Anticipatory Design

“Significant competitive advantage lies with those organizations and individuals who anticipate well in turbulent times.”

- Peter Drucker



Whole Foods Market Global Green Mission Purchasing Specifications Task Force

- Composed of Global V.P.'s of Purchasing, Products, Shipping, plus Regional Green Mission Specialists
- Able to “get things done” due to authority, eco-literacy, and budget.
- Focus has been on developing purchasing criteria for entire supply chain, including our own private label. (Rainforest Alliance would help us certify all tree-derived items.)
- Branded “Green Mission”



A Simple Questionnaire We've Developed

1. What is product made out of? An ingredient statement.

Please be specific, if it is a starch include plant source of the starch.

Please provide proof that plant source of the starch is not grown from GMO seed.

Please identify any colorings and coatings and what they are made out of.

2. How is it Made?

Please provide as many details as possible in terms of the steps involved, added ingredients, heat used, water used etc.... where is production?

3. What is the Life Cycle claim? Please identify third party that has certified claim.

If the claim is "recyclable", how does that occur? If "compostable", according to whom?

4a. If compostable, please provide source of claim as well as proof of testing.

Who else carries the products that utilizes industrial scale composting?

4b. If recyclable, please provide source of claim as well as proof of testing.

Who else carries the products that utilizes industrial scale recycling?

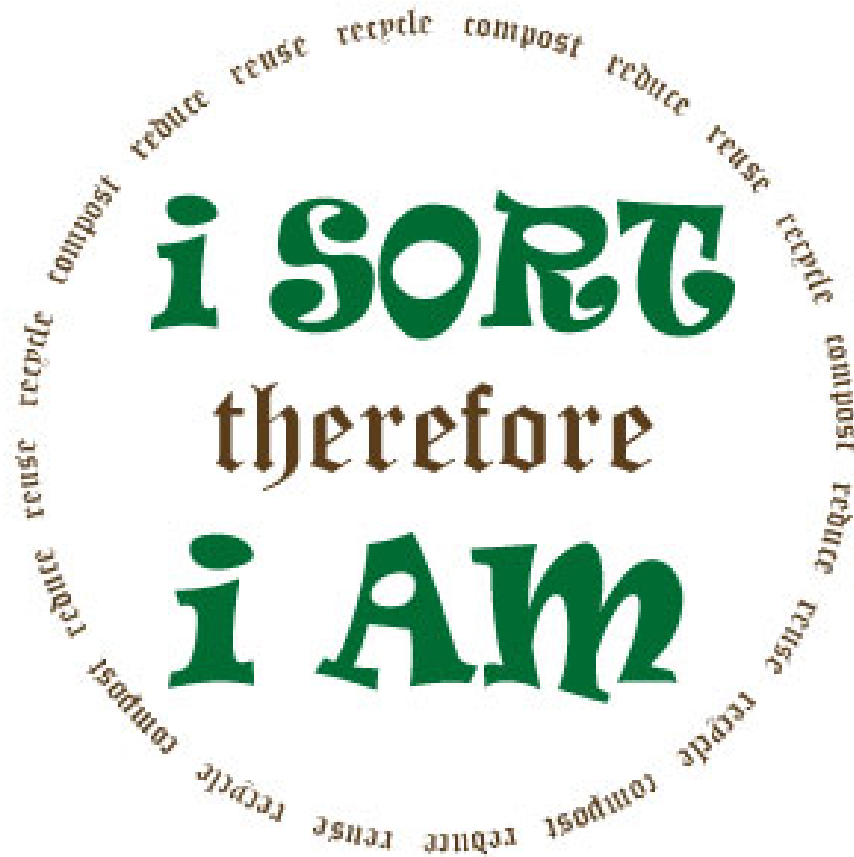
4c. If reusable, please provide source of claim as well as proof of testing.



R. Buckminster Fuller

- “You never change things by fighting the existing reality.”
- “To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

We all have the choice.





Thank You!