

Green Marketing 101: A Beginner's Guide to Eco-Friendly Claims

More and more companies use environmental claims in marketing. But, what are the laws surrounding these claims? How can you talk up your product's green initiatives without misleading customers? Read on in this guide.



checklist

#1 Sound Specific

Avoid broad claims like "eco-friendly" or "green" that are hard to back up. Be specific. Say exactly what makes your product environmentally beneficial.

#2 Clear It Up

Put clear and prominent qualifiers on any claim. Explain what your claim means and any limitations. For example, note if green features apply only to certain components.

#3 Where's the Proof?

Make sure you have solid proof to support every claim. Get scientific evidence and analyze product lifecycles to consider any tradeoffs. Don't highlight small or irrelevant benefits either.

#4 Disclosure is Everything

Disclose to customers if there are limited options for recycling or composting your product. Don't exaggerate how "green" something is if facilities aren't widely available.

#5 Transparency = Key

Use plain language like "made with solar power" instead of vague terms like "renewable energy." Be transparent so customers understand what you're saying.



categories

Compostable

Check for **safety** and **timeliness**. Are the materials in the product or package able to break down (or become part of) usable compost safely? Can it be broken down in about the same time as normal compostable material?



Non-Toxic

Check that the product is safe for both **people** and the **environment**.



Renewable Energy

Watch out for claims based on **energy from fossil fuels** — does your organization purchase renewable energy certificates (RECs) to match energy use? Minimize misunderstanding by being clear about the **type of renewable energy** used (wind, solar).

Recyclable

Make sure that **recycling facilities** are available to at least **60%** of consumers or communities where the product is sold. If recycling access is low, emphasize that there is limited availability for recycling the product.



Free-Of

Check that the product: (1) doesn't have more than **trace amounts** of the substance; and (2) the amount of substance **doesn't cause harm** that consumers may associate with the substance, and (3) the substance wasn't added to the product **intentionally**.