

DECIPHERING SUSTAINABLE CERTIFICATIONS IN YOUR JOURNEY AS A CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

PRACTICAL TACTICS FOR NORTH STAR SUSTAINABILITY



www.veerless.com

COMMON PRODUCT CERTIFICATIONS TODAY

More and more certifications enter the marketplace every year, some focused on the environment, others more focused on social impact and community development. It's difficult to know which of these logos has real meaning and

which might simply be marketing greenwashing. The three logos below represent some of the most respected processes for certification, annual or bi-annual recertification, and data-driven processes to ensure compliance with the organization's goals.

Certified



Corporation

B Corp Certification has grown significantly since its launch in 2006, becoming one of the most recognized responsible purchasing logos globally.

The B Corp Certification is a positive screen, giving companies points for actions they proactively take.

Today, more than 7,000 companies worldwide are recognized as B Corps, certifying their impact in key areas including:

- **Governance:** Ensures a company has policies in place to build an ethical mission, vision, long-term accountability and transparency.
- **Community:** Reviews the contribution a company makes to the economic and social well-being of the communities where it operates.
- **Environment:** Details how the company is improving its overall environmental stewardship.
- **Customers:** Accounts for the value a company creates for its direct customers and the consumers of their products or services.



FOR THE PLANET

Companies involved commit to giving at least 1% of annual sales to environmental organizations. They are required to certify those donations annually.



CLIMATE NEUTRAL

Ensures a company measures their carbon impacts from cradle to customer and is actively working to reduce emissions and contribute to global net-zero. Provides a carbon and clean energy marketplace to offset emissions.



Certifies individual products, not companies. Focuses on social, environmental and economic standards including safe working conditions and investment in community development.

Certified Supply Chains

A company's internal sustainability programs matter, but what's often more important are the practices of their suppliers. As you consider purchases this holiday season, ask yourself the following questions:

01 What does good look like in this industry?

If the product is made of paper or wood, does it have an FSC certification? If the product is electronic, does it have ENERGY STAR? Look into other industry-specific certifications for major purchases.

03 Is the company calculating Scope 3 emissions?

Look at a company's Sustainability or ESG Report. Do they calculate emissions? Do they calculate Scope 3 emissions that account for the emissions across their supply chain? A yes is a strong litmus test for a strong understanding of the company's supply chain sustainability.

02 What's the biggest sustainability problem this product might have?

Use common sense to think about a product's most common sustainability issues. Large products like exercise equipment or appliances should consider sustainable shipping. Small products might think more about recyclability. Beauty products consider chemical makeup of their products. Identify the problem and check their website - are they working on it? Do they know it's an issue?

04 Do they care about diversity in their supply chain?

Most companies have some type of program to promote diverse suppliers (women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Veteran and other minority-owned enterprises). How much is the company spending every year on diverse suppliers? Do they have a program in place to bring more small businesses into their supply chain? How do they measure the success of those programs?

"Beige Flags" to Consider in Online Shopping

Companies including Wayfair, Pottery Barn, West Elm, Anthropologie, Amazon, Walmart, and others have jumped aboard the sustainable shopping bandwagon by allowing customers to filter online options as "sustainable." But beware of greenwashing across some of these tactics.

In some cases, "sustainable" may mean using Fair Trade Certified or ENERGY STAR Certified products. These certifications have rigorous processes to achieve

certification and keep that certification current. But others may be using "pay for play" certification schemes as a part of their sustainable shopping sites.

How can you catch the difference between green and green washed? Consider these "beige flags" as you're shopping this holiday season:



If a company allows you to search by sustainability, but doesn't have a clear web page outlining what certifications are included in that set of products.



If the certifications the company is promoting are more about consumer comfort than sustainability. For example, some companies certify their products allergy free. There's nothing wrong with that, but it might not be a litmus test for long-term sustainable impact.



If a company is offering "sustainable" products, but you can't find a sustainability report or information about their internal practices, chances are they're greenwashing.