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NEXUS PRODUCTS SCREENING PROCESS

Philosophy

The Green Roundtable's (GRT) mission is to mainstream green building and sustainable design. But if total sustainability is the goal, then the building industry is still somewhere near the beginning of the journey. In order to someday reach our goal, we must transform our marketplace and culture. This will not happen overnight, but step by step, company by company, individual by individual.

The NEXUS Samples Library and Showroom exhibit an array of products that have one or more green attributes. Given the current marketplace, very few products have every green attribute. If we only accepted products with perfect environmental records, we would unfortunately have nearly empty shelves. Thus, our philosophy is to accept products that have one or more of the following attributes, without having any other egregiously unsustainable quality (the latter are listed under Further Screening Mechanisms). By educating designers and consumers about available green products, we hope to move toward a sustainable building industry step by step.

Green Attributes

- Low or non toxic/low or no VOCs (volatile organic compounds)
- High recycled content
- Highly recyclable
- Efficient in energy and/or water use
- Efficient material use in manufacturing process
- Low embodied energy
- Insulating properties
- Locally (within 500 mile radius) extracted and/or manufactured
- Durable
- Ecologically and socially responsible manufacturing process
- Reclaimed or uses reclaimed materials
- Contributes to optimal indoor environmental quality
- Harvested or mined responsibly

Primary Screening Mechanism

Building Green is the primary screening mechanism for the NEXUS Samples Library and Tradeshow. Building Green publishes *Environmental Building News*, *GreenSpec Directory*, and www.buildinggreen.com.

If a product is listed on www.buildinggreen.com, it is *likely* that NEXUS will accept it. Building Green screens products based on a comprehensive list of environmental considerations, outlined in *Building Products: What Makes a Product Green* (EBN Volume 9 Number 1, updated January 2006). For detailed criteria for each product type, please see the paragraphs above each list of products on www.buildinggreen.com.

Further Screening Mechanisms

In addition to Building Green's criteria, NEXUS operates under the "precautionary principle"* regarding the materials listed below. NEXUS does its best to avoid these "worst in class" materials. However, alternatives are not yet available in certain applications; in such cases these chemicals may be allowed in NEXUS in limited quantities. Meanwhile, The Green Roundtable encourages innovation that will make the following materials obsolete:

1. PolyVinylChloride/Vinyl/PVC
2. Arsenic
3. Formaldehyde (*with the exception of products that meet GREENGUARD standards for low-emitting materials*)
4. Halogenated Flame Retardants
5. Appliances that contain HCFC's and do not meet the standards referenced by LEED.

LEED Standards

If a product does not contain any of the above substances and it is not listed on www.buildinggreen.com, GRT screens it based on the appropriate standards currently referenced by the LEED Rating System (www.usgbc.org/LEED). You can view the LEED Reference Guides on any of the NEXUS cyberlounge computers.

Further Considerations

As technology and innovation rush ahead in the transforming marketplace, a product that was considered comparatively environmentally responsible last year may be outdone by a new, more sustainable alternative. NEXUS reserves the right to remove samples from its inventory as better alternatives become available. Similarly, it reserves the right to reject samples that pass its basic criteria but do not align with GRT's philosophy.

Ask Questions!

If you have any questions or concerns about GRT's screening process for the NEXUS Samples Library or Tradeshow, please ask us or put enter a form in our suggestion box. Thank you!

* Precautionary Principle: "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof." - Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998