

Introduction

Over the past several years, interwoven in the broader movement toward sustainable, healthy, and environmentally friendly business practices, the personal care and cosmetics industry has vigorously invested in and launched an expanding stream of new “green” products. According to the Natural Marketing Institute, the natural and organics industry sector of U.S. sales reached \$4.9 billion in 2005, a 22% increase over 2004. In August 2008, *Packaged Facts* cited that U.S. sales of these products went from \$2 billion in 2002 to \$6.1 billion in 2006 and projects sales to reach \$10.2 billion in 2012. Few product markets today offer such long-term double-digit growth.

The words “natural,” “organic” and “green” have become major buzz words within the personal care industry. Fueled by consumer demand for more environmentally friendly products, this trend has become prevalent in the cosmetics sector with the continuous launch of new products. However, much confusion about these products abounds. That confusion begins with terminology. The word “green” has been in use as a universal umbrella term for all things natural, organic and/or environmentally friendly. But what constitutes “organic” or “natural?” And just what kind of friendly qualifies as “environmentally” friendly?

The recent and growing spate of legislation, regulation, and certifications confirm that the words “natural” and “organic” cannot be mere buzz words. In order to realize the growth potential of this sector, “natural” and “organic” need to be words that convey to consumers verifiable information about the sourcing, safety, functionality, and efficacy of ingredients, formulas, manufacturing, packaging, and disposal of the products bearing those words on their labels and in their marketing claims. What regulations, both domestically and internationally, apply to your products? How do you maintain a high level of innovation while complying with regulations and standards?

What private industry certifications give substance to your marketing campaigns?

The philosophy and practice of environmentalism has greatly evolved from the active management of natural resources for optimal human use (i.e., economic development takes priority) of the early days to a new realization that no economic growth could be made totally environmentally benign. A cost-effective, greener growth (a.k.a. Sustainable Development) had to be considered via a well-designed environmental framework addressing the entire product lifecycle, taking into consideration the balance between human economic growth and the entire ecosystem. Furthermore, the term Sustainable Development carries a built-in conflict: in a world of finite reserves of natural resources, how do we ensure a major allocation of resources so that the rich and developed nations can sustain their standard of living, while the poorer, developing nations can pursue economic growth?

None of these are easy questions and none come with easy solutions. So, what should a person do?

This book was designed to serve as a practical handbook for formulators, marketers, and business decision makers looking to negotiate a smooth sailing over each of the major areas of scantily charted “green” (sustainable) waters. Fundamental technical concepts and guidelines for tracking developing information are presented for each of the following topics:

1. formulation of green ingredients and ingredients selection/sourcing
2. regulatory trends, labeling, claims and marketing
3. certification programs
4. green packaging options
5. sustainable business practices
6. sustainable manufacturing practices

Let's begin ...