

GREEN GOOD HOUSEKEEPING SEAL CASE STUDY

A Multi-Attribute Approach to Defining Sustainability Performance

OVERVIEW

The Green Good Housekeeping Seal (GGHS) was developed by BWK Sustainability Consultants in collaboration with Good Housekeeping Magazine and the Good Housekeeping Research Institute as an extension of the Good Housekeeping Seal to define a green product. Using a multi-attribute approach, the seal used criteria including life cycle aspects of a product, environmental performance during production, and CSR performance of the brand.

APPROACH

The criteria established for the Seal were customized for individual product categories to account for life cycle aspects of environmental performance. For example, appliances include energy performance in use and end-of-life considerations, whereas products like cleaners focus on toxicity and biodegradability. We worked side-by-side with the Good Housekeeping staff to develop this criteria, in addition to environmental experts, NGOs, and trade associations.

DELIVERABLES

The GGHS application used a 0-100 points scale, with individual sections such as water, waste, energy and more weighted for relative environmental importance in the particular product category. While the criteria covered aspects of the full life cycle of products, it did not require a full LCA, which although not in widespread use, is increasing in industry.

Good Housekeeping set a single minimum threshold on the scale for which the GGHS was awarded.



We structured the application to require a product to perform reasonably well across nearly all criteria areas. If a product was only strong in one criteria area, it was not likely to receive the GGHS.

To increase the efficiency of the application process, we helped Good Housekeeping create an online application whereby the applicant provides all required information for the product they are submitting. Once the applicant submitted all necessary data, the Good Housekeeping staff verified and validated the responses. Once validated, the response was assigned the appropriate amount of points and added to the overall score of the product. The system eliminated manual calculation errors, identified for the applicant and the Good Housekeeping staff questions that remained unanswered, and allowed the applicant to see exactly where the product did well and where it needed improvement.

CLIENT SUCCESS

While fairly time intensive, the application process often became a learning opportunity for brands, where information is shared internally and where opportunities to improve environmental and social responsibility performance were identified.

Categories for the Green Good Housekeeping Seal included cleaning products, beauty products, paints and coatings, appliances and electronics, paper goods, and food and beverages.

Good Housekeeping evolved their product sustainability ranking system beyond the GGHS, creating the Good Housekeeping Sustainable Innovation Awards, where our team assisted in the development of the Awards criteria.



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