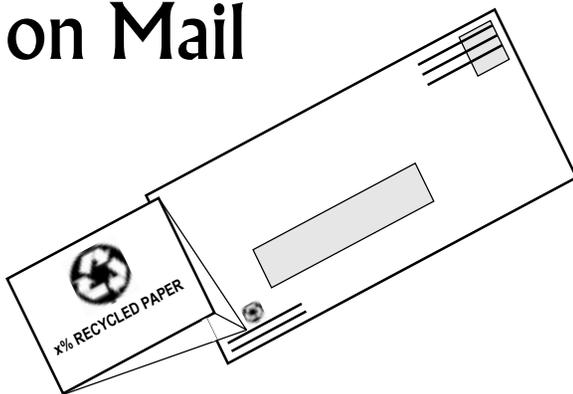


Facts for Business

Making Environmental Marketing Claims on Mail



Jointly produced by the
Federal Trade Commission
and the U.S. Postal Service
November 1998



The environment makes a difference to your customers:

- ◆ More than 75% of the public will switch to a brand associated with the environment when price and quality are equal.
- ◆ Nealy 60% of the public favors organizations that support the environment.

Source: *The 1997 Roper Green Gauge Reports*

You can help the environment by reducing waste, promoting recycling, and conserving resources—just by the way you design your mail.

The U.S. Postal Service wants to prevent waste, improve recyclability, and increase the recycled content of mail. This brochure tells you how to make truthful environmental claims about your mail so your customers who care about the environment will know you care and so your claims won't interfere with USPS mail processing. The tips are based on the Federal Trade Commission's *Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims*.

Make Environmental Claims Specific

Be specific. Avoid implying significant environmental benefit if the benefit is slight. Vague claims, such as environmentally friendly, earth friendly, or environmentally safe may lead consumers to believe that the product has environmental benefits it doesn't actually have. Qualify those terms to clarify the environmental attribute you are claiming.

Be clear. Use words that consumers understand. If the words are industry jargon—or if they can be misinterpreted—don't use them.

Be definitive. Your claim should specify whether the environmental benefit refers to the mailpiece, its contents, or both.

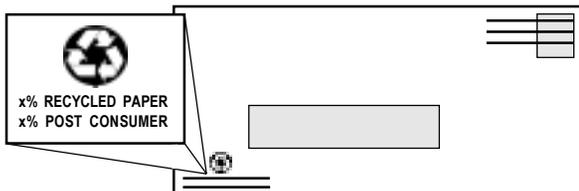
Define Environmental Symbols

Symbols can help communicate environmental messages to your customers, but it's important to explain them.

For example, the three-chasing-arrows symbol means that the mailpiece is both recycled and recyclable. If you want to indicate only one of these claims, say which one.

When you use the three-chasing-arrows symbol for a recycled content claim, disclose the percentage, by weight, of the recycled material if it is less than 100 percent.

You may include the term "postconsumer" content—paper recovered after consumers have used it—if you can substantiate it. Your paper supplier must be able to substantiate your claim.



If you use the three-chasing-arrows symbol to indicate that the product is recyclable, you should be able to substantiate that recycling collection programs for the particular product are available to a substantial majority of consumers or communities. If not, qualify the claim with an appropriate statement like "recyclable in towns with mixed paper recycling."

Consider the Overall Message

- ◆ Make sure that your message—the symbol you use or the statement you make—is not misleading.
- ◆ Even if the exact claim is correct, the claim may be deceptive if you omit essential information or present facts in a misleading way.
- ◆ A claim may be misleading if it implies something that is not true.

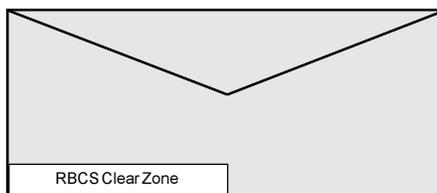
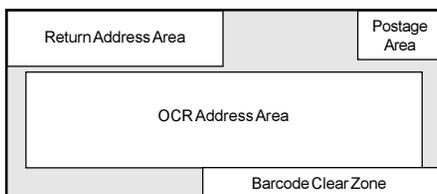
Verify Claims in Advance

Before you make an environmental claim, make sure it is correct and can be substantiated.

For example, if you claim that a mailpiece is recyclable, you must make sure that it can be collected for recycling by a substantial majority of consumers who receive it. Otherwise, you must qualify your claim with an appropriate statement like "Collection sites for recycling this mailpiece have been established in a dozen major metropolitan areas."

Place Claims in Proper Location for Mail Processing

Place your claim on the mailpiece so it meets U.S. Postal Service requirements for mail processing. Keep it out of the postage, return address, and optical character reader address areas as well as the barcode and remote barcode clear zones. On the back of the mailpiece, keep it 5/8 inch or more above the bottom. If placing it on the front of the mailpiece, put it in the far lower left-hand corner, no more than 5/8 inch above the bottom.



For More Information

To learn more about the FTC's *Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims*, visit www.ftc.gov on the Internet.

Or contact:

Consumer Response Center
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580

Or call toll-free:

1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357)

For help on putting an environmental claim on your mailpiece, call the U.S. Postal Service Customer Service Center, 1-800-275-8777, and ask for the Postal Business Center nearest you. Or locate nearby Business Centers at www.usps.com under Business. Click on Business Service Centers.