

WHAT IS GREENWASHING?

Greenwashing is where a company lies or exaggerates the sustainability of their product or service.

There are many types of greenwashing:

- Greenlabelling is a marketing technique where mislabelled claims imply a product or service is more sustainable than it is. This may involve using deceptive descriptions and buzzwords.
- Greencrowding is when multiple companies adopt a group initiative but then move at the speed of the slowest participant.
- Greenhushing occurs when businesses deliberately under report their sustainability goals and performance to evade scrutiny.
- Greenlighting occurs when companies spotlight a particular green feature of a product while failing to disclose its overall environmental impact.
- Greenrinsing refers to when a company constantly changes its sustainability targets before they are achieved.
- Greenshifting happens when companies imply consumers are at fault for poor sustainability and shift the blame on to customers.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK OUT FOR TO AVOID GREENWASHING?



POSITIVES ONLY

Companies may exaggerate the positives of their product while conveniently ignoring the negatives.



VAGUE LANGUAGE

Companies may use unclear buzzwords such as 'natural', 'green' or 'eco-friendly' - these words do not have an official definition.



EMPHASISING NEW CHANGES

Companies might make changes that appear sustainable on the surface but are detrimental to the environment.



NATURE IMAGERY

Environmental images, such as trees or animals, can imply sustainability and escape scrutiny.



DUBIOUS CERTIFICATIONS

Pay close attention to what certifications are used. Companies have been known to create their own certifications. More on certifications on the next page...

CERTIFICATIONS: WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR



TRUSTWORTHY LABELS AND CERTIFICATIONS



VAGUE, MISLEADING LABELS AND FAKE CERTIFICATIONS



These are just a few examples. Just because something claims to be 'eco-friendly' or 'natural' doesn't automatically mean that it is or isn't - but trustworthy certifications will be backed up by clear standards.

WHY DO COMPANIES GREENWASH?

There is big money to be made in sustainability – the green market is worth an estimated £41 billion and with 61% of British consumers believing in the importance of sustainability, consumers are adopting more and more practices to reduce their carbon footprint. Despite cost-of-living pressures, Fairtrade sales increased in 2023, with British shoppers spending £13 million pounds on Fairtrade products. Businesses therefore use these claims to appeal to environmentally aware customers - and not always honestly!

Businesses might not even realise they are greenwashing. Lack of information about supply chain can lead to businesses committing 'involuntary greenwashing.' An organisation can believe they are being completely transparent with their claims, but their efforts are less effective than they claim. Evidence suggests that businesses have an average error rate of 30% to 40% in their emissions calculations.

HOW TO REPORT GREENWASHING

There are two main avenues for reporting greenwashing:

Advertising Standards Authority	Communications and Utilities Regulatory Authority
<p>If you're concerned about potential greenwashing, one option of reporting is the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). You can submit your concerns to them via their website (https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html) or via telephone (020 7492 2222).</p> <p>You will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of the advertiser; • Time, date and medium in which the advert appeared; • Name of the product/service in the advert; and • A copy or brief description of the advert. 	<p>CURA is responsible for ensuring local radio stations adhere to Manx advertising and sponsorship standards. CURA advises raising complaints with the broadcasters in the first instance. However, if you aren't happy with their response, you can also report your concerns to CURA.</p> <p>You will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name/title of the advert; • The date and time of the advert; • The radio station on which it was broadcast; • A description of the advert and reason for the complaint; and • Contact details