

Welcome to this **Dunod podcast** to help you with your studies. Today, we are going to talk about **greenwashing**.

The term “greenwashing” was coined by New York environmentalist Jay Westerveld in a 1986 essay about the hotel industry and the decision to put little notes in bedrooms encouraging guests to reuse their towels to “save water and the planet”. It refers to the practice of conveying a false impression or giving misleading information regarding a company’s products and services and presenting them as environmentally friendly. That means a company is making unsubstantiated claims to deceive consumers into believing that its products or services are not offered at the expense of the environment or that they have a greater positive environmental impact than they actually do. Greenwashing is a deceitful marketing gimmick used by companies to exaggerate their environmentally friendly actions and intended to mislead consumers who prefer to buy goods and services from environmentally aware and responsible brands.

How can you spot greenwashing?

A company will use all kinds of tricks to hide certain aspects of its business, make unsubstantiated claims and declare that their products are environmentally safe or provide some green benefit. This is done essentially to capitalise on the growing demand for environmentally friendly products. Indeed, as consumers are increasingly aware of and worried about the environment and the planet, they have become increasingly selective, and are willing to pay more for a product reflecting their values and expectations.

You may have noticed the following tricks or gimmicks used by companies all over the world to look “greener.”

- Changing the name or label of a product to remind consumers of the natural environment (even if, paradoxically, the product contains harmful chemicals).
- Multimillion-dollar advertising and marketing campaigns that portray highly polluting energy or chemical companies as eco-friendly and committed to protecting the environment today (even if that is far from being the case).
- Offering misleading information about recycling possibilities, waste, gas emissions and the carbon footprint, sustainability.
- Falsely representing products, packaging, the impact on the environment, the climate, etc.

Companies which offer genuinely green products or services back up their claims with facts and details, which they are not afraid to give.

How do you avoid falling for greenwashing?

Here are a few tips to help you make informed decisions as a consumer:

- Do your homework! Search for reliable information about the company’s environmental practices and claims.
- Check if they have certifications and certain labels from reputable and independent organisations or if they provide transparent information about their sustainability efforts and environmental standards.
- Check these websites which name and shame the companies which indulge in greenwashing to deceive customers and shamelessly make even more profits.
- Read labels and packaging carefully: pay attention to the specific claims companies make, and do not take them for granted. There should be specific details and evidence to support such green claims. Be cautious regarding vague or general statements that lack specific information, evidence, official reports.
- Think about a given product and its life cycle and assess its impact from production to disposal. Choose companies which prioritise sustainable sourcing, use renewable materials, and have sound recycling or take-back programmes.
- Compare products and brands: you might realise some claims match industry standards or that some companies actually stand out as exceptional and “green leaders.”
- Beware of green imagery: do not fall for images of nature and green colours on packaging, or of cute animals and beautiful landscapes in advertising campaigns. Look for concrete evidence and specific details about a product’s environmental benefits.
- Stay informed: keep up with news and developments in sustainability and environmental issues. Thus, you will be aware of new practices, certifications, or controversies related to greenwashing.

In a nutshell:

A company promotes its products’ sustainability and “green side” often to overshadow or hide the fact that it contributes to damaging the environment. By following the tips just given, you can make more informed choices as a consumer, support companies that genuinely prioritise sustainability and environmental responsibility, and boycott or discard those which do not.

How to **Spot** green washing

There are a few common tricks that you can watch out for to make it easy to spot greenwashing and dubious sustainability claims:

VAGUE 'GREEN-SOUNDING' LANGUAGE:

Look out for words that sound good at first but have no concrete meaning legally, like 'farm fresh' or 'conscious'.

IRRELEVANT CLAIMS:

Making a big noise about one tiny green attribute on an otherwise totally anti-green product.

BADLY THOUGHT-OUT BIG GESTURES:

A classic one when an idea has come from a marketing team instead of experts.



MISLEADING NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES

REBRANDING TO INCLUDE 'natural' PACKAGING

Products that change their look to apply the veneer of sustainability, but without actually changing anything.



MAKING THE PRODUCT PACKAGING GREEN

At its core, greenwashing is all about misdirection.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE BE LOOKING OUT FOR TO KNOW IF A BRAND IS FOR REAL

Accountability

Ironically, truly sustainable brands are transparent about how they're affecting the environment.



Accreditation

Don't just take brands' words for it. Look for companies that are audited or accredited by third parties.



Clear labeling

Sustainable products should include simple language labels about exactly what's in a product.



Traceability

Some forward-thinking brands have been helping buyers track their products' sustainability using helpful tech.



COMMUNIQUER SUR DES SOLUTIONS HYPOTHÉTIQUES



COMMUNIQUER SUR DES ACTIONS SYMBOLIQUES



NE COMMUNIQUER QUE SUR LES PROBLÈMES RÉSOLUS



COMMUNIQUER SUR DES CHIFFRES SANS RAPPORT AVEC L'ACTIVITÉ



COMMUNIQUER SUR LE RESPECT D'UNE OBLIGATION



COMMUNIQUER VIA UNE COMMUNAUTÉ POSITIVE



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TECHNIQUES DE GREENWASHING : COMMUNIQUER

SKETCHNOTE : VALÉRY PERNOT - @180DEGRESUP

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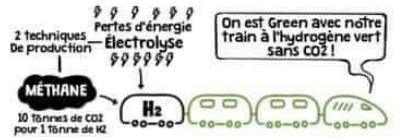
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POUSSER UNE RÉGLEMENTATION AFIN DE LA DÉVOYER



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LANCER DES PLANS ÉCOLOGIQUES CONTRAIRES À LA STRATÉGIE



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