



SEEING *the* **FOREST *for*** ***the* TREES**

Many shipping solutions claim to be “green,” but how do you know which ones are legit?

By Cordelia Baumeister





ou see the “green” messages everywhere. They’re in ads and articles, on store shelves and websites — and even on signs at gas stations. Nationwide, companies are increasingly telling the public about ways their organizations or products are helping to protect the environment. Many of these statements are valid, as businesses and consumers are clearly taking more steps to reduce their impact on our Earth. Unfortunately, all of us have also read about corporations making hollow claims about their environmental friendliness in the name of profit. This “greenwashing,” as it is often called, should not discourage eco-conscious consumers and companies from acting on their commitment to making choices that promote sustainability. However, it does reinforce the importance of making sure any environmental claims are genuine before they become the basis for a purchasing decision. That doesn’t have to be complicated or time-consuming. In fact, it might be as easy as checking for a certain symbol on packaging while you

Watchdogs such as Internet bloggers can make or break a company’s environmental initiative, and if they detect a misleading claim, their efforts can spark a consumer boycott. Additionally, third-party verification provides you and your customers with peace of mind and the certainty that your service fees are contributing to legitimate environmental projects. In Global Mail’s case, the small fees we charge for GOGREEN shipments help fund clean energy initiatives recognized by the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). By using a verified service, you and your customers can be confident that you are making a sound investment in climate protection.

So what kind of certification should you look for when seeking a greener shipping solution? As an example, Global Mail’s GOGREEN service is verified by SGS according to the principles of ISO 14064, a set of guidelines for initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases. SGS (Société Générale de Surveillance) is a global inspection, verification, testing and certification company based in Switzerland. We submit our calculations on the carbon

Above all, you want to protect yourself – and your customers – from greenwashing tactics. You also need to consider your reputation. Watchdogs such as Internet bloggers can make or break a company’s environmental initiative, and if they detect a misleading claim, their efforts can spark a consumer boycott.

are shopping. When it comes to offering your customers a more eco-friendly shipping service, it means working with a provider that operates an independently verified program.

The Importance of Green

Mail order and e-commerce companies know that a growing number of consumers are demanding greener delivery options for their purchases. In response, shipping companies have begun adding carbon-neutral services to their portfolios, and e-tailers are offering them on their websites.

How do these carbon-neutral services work? It’s fairly simple for the shipper. First, shipping companies calculate the carbon emissions — considered a leading cause of climate change — produced during the delivery process. This information determines the small fee that participating shippers pay. Using these fees, shipping companies offset the emissions associated with shipments by contributing to projects that help protect the environment.

If you decide to give your customers the choice of a greener delivery option, there are several reasons to make sure the service you choose has been independently verified. Above all, you want to protect yourself — and your customers — from greenwashing tactics. You also need to consider your reputation.

emissions generated at each step of the value chain based on historical data, and SGS reviews and validates the information. However, SGS is not the only company that performs this type of work. Others include DNV (Det Norske Veritas) and TÜV SÜD. Additionally, there are other types of worthy environmental projects besides those recognized by the UNFCCC that receive funding through carbon offsets. They may be registered with Climate Action Reserve or the Voluntary Carbon Standard Association, to name just a couple organizations.

If you aren’t offering your customers a greener shipping option yet, chances are your company will in the near future, given the growing consumer demand. Checking to verify the services you are using are independently verified is not a lengthy process, but it is important for your business. Subsequently, you and your customers can not only feel good about your contributions, but also be confident they are being put to good use.

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