



BUILDING CARE

Caring for their community. That was the initial driver that sparked Construction Specialties' decades-long commitment to manufacturing healthy products.

The company's environmental story began in 1990, when a local newspaper reported that a hazardous waste incinerator was to be sited as its neighbor. This environmental reality initiated a larger discussion on the use of hazardous chemicals and inaugurated C/S' longstanding drive to protect the environment and manufacture healthy building products. C/S worked to keep its community clean from an incinerator, and by 1995 the siting permit

was denied. This marked the beginning of a deep exploration of the company's own manufacturing impact on people and the planet.

Vice President of Construction Specialties, Howard Williams, heard William McDonough and Michael Braungart speak and after an inspiring talk, he read Cradle to Cradle. Shortly after, the USGBC offered an innovation credit for the C2C certified products and Williams championed adoption of the Certified Product Standard. Meanwhile, Construction Specialties customers were trumpeting Cradle to Cradle Certified, so this proved to be not only

a wise investment but also a prescriptive path to environmentally responsible behavior, all under the watchful eye of the third-party certifier.

“We had a proverbial wake up call,” says Williams. “We had the means to act and the support to do so. Cradle to Cradle Certified was and still is the best solution to meet our environmental and business goals. Cradle to Cradle Product Certification works well for us because it holds us accountable over time.”

By having C/S products Cradle to Cradle Certified, the company was able to score big projects with leading institutions and feel good about providing safe building materials to its customers. C/S increasingly invested in the process across its portfolio, and today boasts over five certifications covering 39 product groups and hundreds of options for product variations, offering many LEED® v4 compliant selections. In 2013, Cradle to Cradle Certified products represent approximately 75% of its Interior Division’s multi-million dollar revenue.

C/S launched its first PVC-free (polyvinyl chloride) Acrovyn® 3000 product in 2004. Since then, C/S has re-engineered its entire Acrovyn® line of products and modified its polyester formula to contain no persistent bioaccumulative toxins, no bisphenol A and no halogenated fire-retardants. It’s been a major feat to identify and eliminate chemicals of concern from the Acrovyn® 4000 line and develop various models to reach Cradle to Cradle Certified

Gold and Silver.

The Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute has given C/S a platform on which to stand, enabling the company to drive its own environmental legacy.

C/S thinks big about sustainability and has taken to heart designing products for reuse or recyclability. Not only does C/S recycle up to 75% of the total solid waste from its facilities but it also allows customers to recycle C/S products. To address recycling solutions and provide consumers the information and resources necessary to conveniently recycle, C/S launched the first commercial building products recycling locator, which can be found at c-sgroup.com/corporate/recycling.

“We define sustainable not as static, but as one of a number of dynamic structural elements supporting our worldview,” says Williams. “The extent to which we value and attend to these structures is the extent to which we set our course and that of future generations. It’s not so much that this raises our responsibility, but that it also raises our opportunity.”

The Cradle to Cradle methodology has defined Construction Specialties quality of work, and the certification represents the company’s commitment to enhancing peoples lives by making buildings better. C/S has taken a number of risks over the years to innovate safe and healthy building products, but by investing in the multi-attribute certification they saw sales climb and revenue soar.

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Howard Williams, Vice President, Construction Specialties