

Lauren Orosz
Clemson University
lorosz@g.clemson.edu
10/6/17
12:15 pm EST.

For the Day 6 greener challenge, “Organic”, I chose to find items within my local convenience store, POD market, on my college campus. These items used “greenwashing” tactics. These tactics allow a company to appear as environmentally conscious, when in reality the production of their products has an overall negative environmental impact.



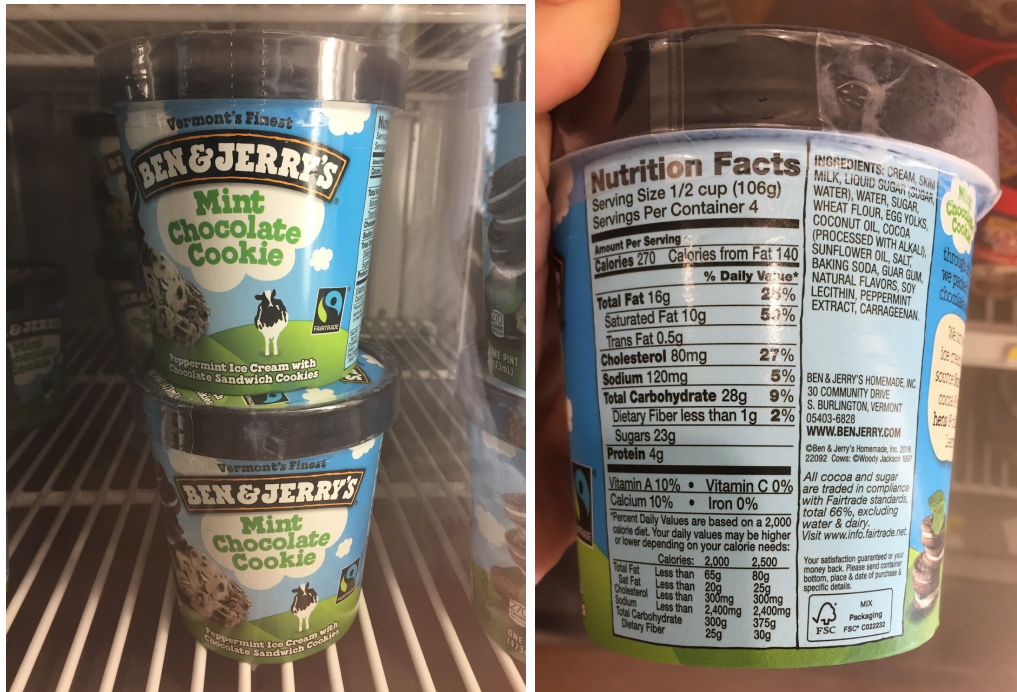
These shampoos advertise a clean and tropical appeal, incorporating images of fruits and vibrant green shades. They highlight the fact that their shampoo/conditioner is paraben free, and incorporates ingredients such as Moroccan oil to give the product an exotic, natural image. In reality, the ingredients list features many different chemicals, dyes, and fragrances that would render the hair product's image as untrue. One of these chemicals is sodium lauryl sulfate, used in many personal care products like shampoo and toothpaste. It is a concern because in some circumstances, it has been found to contain a contaminant known as Dioxane, which is a classified carcinogen. Studies also have linked this ingredient to cause hormone imbalance and other symptoms. There is a large sulfate-free movement occurring to combat this issue; I have pasted a link below with more info. The bottom line is that the ingredients list reveals that the hair product is more chemical-based than it tries to advertise upon initial view. This fits the definition of greenwashing.

<http://slsfree.net/>



This is an example of greenwashing in a household item. This particular Glade air freshener uses words such as “freshens air” as well as a scenic image of lavender to illustrate its smell. However, the smell of lavender created by this product is far from natural. Shockingly, there is no ingredient list on the back of the can! But after doing some research I have found that the company that owns Glade, SC Johnson, discloses the ingredients list online. The contents of Glade fragrances include over 1,500 ingredients, and does not detail what chemicals appear in which products so that consumers have no way of knowing whether or not to avoid one of their products if they have allergies or small children. The back of the air freshener can also lists “environmental facts”, boasting that the steel can is recyclable and that the filling process uses 30% renewable energy. This is countered by the fact that the product itself exposes numerous (and potentially toxic) chemicals to the air that we breathe in. According to one article, ingredients used in air fragrances include phthalates, which are linked to male reproductive system birth defects and hormone disruption. The fact that there is no ingredients list makes using this product quite scary. This is a serious case of greenwashing.

<http://www.ewg.org/research/greener-school-cleaning-supplies/greenwashing#.WdfbUGiPLb0>
http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/the_green_lantern/2010/09/smells_like_green_spirit.html



This ice cream brand presents its product as “green” by incorporating images of a clear blue sky and a green field in which a cow roams freely and happily. This is designed to make the buyer feel good about what their purchasing, as they feel as though they are supporting a brand with a positive and fun message. On the back I found that Ben and Jerry’s abides by FairTrade standards, which are designed to ensure that small-scale farmers in developing nations can make it in the ultra competitive market. This is a positive aspect about the brand; however, the product includes dairy, which is an environmentally destructive product.

Millions of farmers worldwide tend to approximately 270 million dairy cows to produce milk. These cows contribute substantial amounts of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere and to the transformation of natural habitat to agricultural land due to the need for feed crops (corn, alfalfa, and soy) to feed the animals. Water pollution and soil degradation can also occur as a result of poor manure and crop production management.

On the bright side, Ben and Jerry’s does offer non-dairy ice cream. I think that this product is different than the others in that Ben and Jerry’s is a more conscious brand. However, they still participate in greenwashing.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/industries/dairy>

Alternative

As an alternative to the Garnier shampoo, one could use one of Acure’s organic hair products. I actually came across Acure through a sample given out by one of Project Green’s representatives at my college and fell in love with its effect! They are a company founded on sustainable principles that promote organic and truly natural personal care with no harsh chemicals.



VS



Who will win?

Acure:

- Organic product
- Contains natural ingredients
- Incorporates sustainability
- Lives up to the natural image it portrays
- Modern and sleek design
- Effective shampoo
- **More expensive**

Greenwashed shampoo:

- **Not organic**
- **contains various chemicals and unnatural dyes**
- Contains natural ingredients
- Presents a sleek and tropical image
- Effective shampoo, **but has potential health effects**
- Less expensive
- **Misleading advertising**

This comparison has really exposed me to the benefits of organic products. Next time I am at the grocery store or drug store, I will be sure to pay close attention to the ingredients and where my purchase is coming from in order to minimize my environmental effect. In addition, I will also live up to the lessons I learned from the previous challenge by not buying unnecessary items.