

**WEPSI Design Subgroup
Minutes 10/23/01**

Conference call, Tuesday 1-2PM

Participants on the call:

Holly Evans, EIA

Patricia Jatczak, WA Dept. of Ecology

Vicky Salazar, EPA Region X

Cate Gable, Global Futures

David Stitzhal, Northwest Product Stewardship Council

Wayne Rifer, WEPSI

David started with a review of the purposes of the design subgroup and the relationship of our process to the NEPSI dialogue. NEPSI is a national dialogue; WEPSI has the advantage of creating a forum with a more specific focus. Ideas that are generated from the WEPSI process may feed into the NEPSI dialogue.

We briefly discussed the Confidentiality (now called the Discretionary) Policy document. It was pointed out that especially in government organizations (given the Freedom of Information Act), we cannot guarantee that emails are confidential. Any other comments about this policy should be directed to Wayne Rifer. No other comments or concerns were raised on during the call.

David proposed that, for the purposes of this subcommittee, we see design as a tool for improving end-of-life management. We discussed the ideas considered during the recent WEPSI meeting in Portland, i.e. How does information get back to the OEMs from government & regulatory agencies, NGOs, recyclers? And how can we develop a mechanism (like a survey) that could enhance these communications channels?

Holly Evans stated that the direction of the design group and feedback channels looked good but that the feedback loops don't exist and even if they did they may not impact design decisions. She referred to a sentiment expressed in the industry that the only way design changes will happen is if consumers (individual or institutional) demand design changes with their purchasing power. This would compel 'marketing people' to pay attention.

We then discussed different aspects of what consumers might be willing to do to affect EOL-aspects of design. Are they willing to pay more? It was suggested that our subcommittee consider examining the consumer end of the equation. Holly also posed the question: How do we choose the right 'green metric.' The group also noted that while eco-labels can be controversial, they are effective at sending messages. It was clear that, whether this subgroup takes on the investigation or not, we need to know more about what consumers want, or steered toward wanting, and can be informed about. Additionally it was stated that perhaps consumers can help to create a feedback loop to OEMs.

We discussed the example of coated plastics (which provide for the colored plastic housings now popular with consumers.) A question was raised about whether consumers demanded that or whether it was simply offered as a choice to consumers. Clearly once the option was available and market share grew for the OEM providing this option, others joined the bandwagon.

David asked the question, Should we as a design subgroup be focused on consumer education? How would we develop a consumer feedback loop?

We conducted an open-ended brainstorming on this topic:

Consumer education brainstorming ideas:

- Perhaps we could identify 3-5 criteria for consumer education that are non-function specific. OEMs feel that 'functionality' issues are out-of-bounds. (Holly)
- What consumer demands have been successful? Should labeling standards be considered? (Patricia)
- Not TCO. Not Green Angel. (Holly)
- How was Energy Star created? EPA mandated it and then it was picked up and utilized by consumers for purchasing information. (Vicky). It was not originally customer driven (David).
- EIA would not favor a labeling standard. OEMs view the labeling space as valuable real estate for their own marketing (Holly)
- Craig Hirschberg and Andrew Canar (spelling?) of EPA might be willing to be subject matter experts for us re: Energy Star (Vicky will send an Energy Star history). Holly volunteered to contact these individuals if we feel it would be worth having them present to the subgroup.
- Create PR choices for introducing consumers to the issues. This could be done via the EIA's consumer program, or via state generated fact sheets (Holly).
- Cost allocations solutions -- charge-back to OEMs at higher rate for less easily-handled (as far as EOL) machines (Vicky).
- What are the cost incentives that could affect the purchasing/design decision? For the consumer? For the OEM? Would OEM product takeback (e.g. Xerox) drive cost incentives? (Vicky)
- Perhaps if more easily recyclable products were cheaper than their less recyclable competition consumer demand would increase.

- Explore whether Renee St. Dennis can speak with us about aspects of EOL issues from her perspective as a recycling facility manager and an OEM (Cate).

To Do List:

1. Contact Epson and Sharp: remind them about report back from the first meeting re: how their designers make decisions - David
2. Contact Renee to speak to our group - Cate
3. Circulate Energy Star history– Vicky via David
4. Next calls:
 - Wednesday November 14th 1-2 PM
 - Wednesday Dec 5th 1-2 PM
 - Wednesday January 2nd 1-2 PM

Notes to Other Subcommittees

Market Drivers:

Our discussions touched considerably on the issue of labeling approaches to driving and/or reflecting design changes. These discussions should be coordinated with the assessment methodology direction your subcommittee is taking.

Recycling:

Clearly our strong theme of exploring lines of communication and feedback loops between OEMs and recyclers should be coordinated with your evolving work scope.