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2008: CSP™ New Initiatives.

EVERYTHING IS

Green

AND IT'S NOT EVEN *Spring!*



Have you noticed all of sudden how “Green” is in? Green everything, save the planet, save energy, save money, save your health, green your pet—just everything. AL Gore’s movie has really started something. Well, contrary to what “Kermit the Frog” said—apparently, it IS easier than you think, to be green.

Hippies and flower children of earlier times are today’s aging baby boomers but it must make them proud to finally see the “greening” awareness rise so much in peoples’ consciousness. While it maybe easier today to make small changes to your lifestyle and help the environment, there are some with a concern that there is so much publicity now that people will tune out the message, just like white noise, and eventually become “de-sensitized to the real issues.

Green encompasses everything from turning lights off to recycling and reducing your carbon footprint. When a business claims to have green credentials, how do you know they are actually true and/or worthwhile? Retailers are spending millions promoting their green credentials; but is it a genuine effort to become green, or a marketing ploy to attract savvy consumers like you? Can profit driven companies actually be beneficial to the planet? Or at the very least, less harmful. Truly, it is very difficult to get it completely right and there are no easy answers to these complex questions.

With all the talk about green energy, green flooring (Bamboo) and even green detergent it’s easy for a lay person to get confused and miss the point. For example most detergents aren’t too bad for the environment and are definitely much better than they used to be, however everyone has a “new clean green label.” Turning your washing machine thermostat down to 30 degrees Celsius will have a much bigger impact than

changing your detergent. Bamboo flooring is definitely more sustainable than hardwood but the energy used to transport it from the place of origin to North America, cancels any “green” effect. It is complicated for sure.

Before you become jaded and too desensitized to the impact greening will have on your day to day life, we wanted to bring to your attention the CSP™ green initiative Eco Staging™. As you know already, CSP™ consultants provide a very comprehensive staging consultation and may choose to provide it in the CSP™ Room Ready Handbook™. Now we have taken the handbook a step further to include a four page checklist to enable a review of a property’s ‘green’ situation. CSP™ consultants are not energy efficient experts and we don’t profess to be home inspectors either. We understand not all of the CSP™ Eco Staging™ checklist will apply to every household; our work will help save energy, one household at a time and every small effort, moves us in the right direction.

What Eco Staging™ will do—is provide a simple review of everyday savings which you as an agent or home seller can use as marketing edge when selling the property. At a recent CSP™ conference in Toronto, Ontario a representative of the Canadian Federal Government applauded and supported the efforts of CSP™ with the Eco Staging™ initiative. The representative also spoke about the Natural Resources Canada program—EcoENERGY Retrofit for Energy Efficiency. The program provides grants of up to \$5000 for Canadian home owners. The grant is per address so it benefits the seller and the buyer by identifying the energy leaks in the house and providing the seller and homebuyer a window of time to retrofit to qualify for reimbursement. A seller would also be aware of the program for any property they purchased.

Across North America communities are waking up to the fact they have to do something. Perhaps in your community there are similar initiatives. We know in Ontario, for example, there is a mirror grant available from the Provincial government, which mean Ontario home sellers and buyers have access to up to \$10,000.

In the United States you can consult www.EnergyStar.gov, a program of the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Energy helping everyone save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.

Energy Star® has partnerships with manufacturers that meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and Dept of Energy. If you are a new home buyer, look for an Energy Star® compliant builder; it will save you \$\$\$ on your utilities in your new home. For existing homes, there are retrofit and rebates for upgrades to your home in almost every area of your home. The rebates are 10% to as much as 30% depending on the upgrade and product. Americans, with the help of Energy Star, saved enough energy in 2006 to avoid greenhouse gas emissions the equivalent to those from 25 million cars—and saved \$14 billion on utility bills.

The CSP™ Eco Staging™ initiative will raise awareness across Canada and the USA as to what can be immediately assessed to reduce, reuse and save money and energy.

We hope that “green fatigue syndrome” as some may call it, doesn’t affect many people and we trust there will be a day when everyone is doing all they can to reduce the impact on the environment and planet. If people like YOU support companies that do respect and support the place in which they live, then maybe one day we will get there. ■

For more information about Eco Staging™ and how it can benefit your marketing efforts contact the person who sent you this magazine or check www.ecostaging.com.