



IT'S EASY BEING GREEN:

A CONTRACTOR'S GUIDE
TO ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY PRODUCTS



Construction used to be focused on aesthetics, product performance and longevity. There was less concern with how a product was made or what was in it so long as it was durable and pleasing to the eye.

But there has been a shift in the last decade towards more sustainable materials throughout the construction industry. Now, clients are caring what products are used in their buildings and how those products affect both the immediate and global environment.

Historically, the construction industry has accounted for a substantial percentage of the world's carbon emissions and waste. But the growing demand for healthier living and greener buildings has altered the way architects approach their designs. In fact, to help encourage industry professionals to consider more energy-efficient builds, codes and building standards like [ASHRAE 189.1](#), [LEED®](#) and ICC 700 have been developed.

It has also shifted the way manufacturers produce their products. More and more green products have saturated the market, making sustainable construction more attainable than ever before, and the benefits of using environmentally friendly materials make them an easy choice for most clients.





WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS?

In the construction industry, **environmentally friendly products**, also known as sustainable or green products, are ones that have a low environmental impact in their production, installation and maintenance phases. These products are manufactured with care and consideration for how they will affect the global and local environment.

Green products can be made of naturally occurring materials that are easily renewable. They can also be made of recycled materials or resources that are reusable in order to save on the production of new products and alleviate waste.

Sustainable construction focuses on the protection of ecological resources for future generations. This starts immediately and extends to the lasting effects products will have on the environment. Issues like energy savings, water usage, resource regeneration and eliminating pollutants are at the forefront of sustainable design, and environmentally friendly products lessen the negative ecological impact of the construction industry.

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BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

Apart from being a popular trend in today's market, sustainability in construction has lasting environmental, financial and social benefits. Going green can lead to cost savings, improved quality of life and protection of our limited ecological resources.

Improved Indoor Environment Quality

Indoor environmental quality encompasses the conditions inside a building, including air quality, lighting and thermal conditions and their effects on occupants. Maintaining good indoor environment quality protects occupants from injury and harmful substances, reduces stress and improves their overall quality of life.

The indoor environment is directly affected by the materials brought into the space. The best way to protect the quality and health of the environment is to avoid materials and products that could potentially introduce pollutants.

Common building materials such as paint, **adhesives**, sealants and coatings emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can pollute the air and lead to serious health problems. Non-moisture resistant materials can also introduce mold, mildew and dangerous bacteria to the structure.

Choosing materials and products with low VOC emission and **moisture resistant properties** protect the air quality by eliminating potential pollutants at the source.

A few other simple but effective ways to improve the indoor environment quality include utilizing natural daylight, providing ergonomic furnishings, practicing safe cleaning methods and improving the acoustic design of the building.

Cost Savings

Sustainability is often viewed as an expensive endeavor, but sustainable construction is becoming more and more cost-effective.

Water, energy and materials management is the key to sustainable construction, so green building is going to cost less than a normal building because it uses fewer resources. There is also a significant return on investment as green buildings have lower water and energy bills, and the property's value will increase substantially.

To encourage sustainability and LEED certification, local and federal governments offer tax credits and other incentives which grant money back to the project. Many companies are also currently pushing towards more widely available green products, and sustainable materials have become more cost-effective in recent years. So, a green building is more financially feasible than ever before.

Materials Efficiency

Materials efficiency means being conscious about the amount and quality of resources being used to help reduce waste and environmental impact. This can look like recycling extra materials from a previous project and using them in a new project or using products that did not require a lot of water, energy, and raw materials to manufacture.



Repurposing materials from previous projects that would have otherwise gone to waste not only prevents unnecessary waste and reduces material strain but also leads to cost savings on the new project.

The quality of materials should be considered as well. Low-quality materials will need to be replaced more often resulting in more waste — both in materials and money. It is better and more cost-effective to invest in durable, long-lasting products that can also be recycled at the end of their life.

Waste Reduction

The construction industry contributes sustainably to global waste. This waste often ends up in landfills contributing to landfill space issues, and if not handled correctly, it can lead to toxins permeating the soil and water.

Incorporating a green waste management plan includes utilizing recycling facilities instead of landfills, repurposing unused materials and donating additional resources to charity. This not only lessens the negative environmental impact of the construction industry; it improves the health of communities, reduces building costs and can help a building qualify for tax benefits and LEED certification.

Reduction of Resource Strain

Sustainable construction is concerned with the short-term and long-term impact a building has on the environment. Building use and maintenance are very resource-heavy, accounting for a large portion of the community's energy use, waste and water consumption.

Green buildings help alleviate resource strain and preserve those resources for future generations to use.

Better Health

People who live and work in green buildings are happier, healthier, less stressed and more productive. More and more people are being drawn to companies that share similar values in sustainability and leaving a positive impact on the world.

Implementing live greenery and natural light energizes and refreshes any workplace environment. Eliminating construction products that contain toxins or emit strong odors improves the air quality and protects the occupants from harmful pollutants. Controlling the **acoustic properties** in a building prevents disruptions, hearing loss, and unnecessary stress.

These are just a few examples of how certified green buildings have a positive impact not just on the environment, but on the people inside as well.



EXAMPLES OF GREEN PRODUCTS

More and more manufacturers are leaning into the green movement and producing environmentally friendly products at affordable prices. There are also opportunities to use reclaimed, recycled and renewable resources.

Flooring

Sustainable flooring options are easy to find without breaking the bank. Renewable materials like bamboo or cork are incredibly versatile and do not take long to produce.

It is also easy to find recycled flooring materials like carpet, tile and rubber that ease the burden on landfills and help conserve natural resources. Pair your floors with a **durable, easy-to-use adhesive** and you can help ensure a secure, long-lasting flooring system.

Some forests that produce hardwood are sustainably managed, but it is even better to use reclaimed wood. Reclaimed wood can come from previous construction projects or can be found in places like salvage yards, shipping pallets and excavation companies. Reclaimed wood also provides gorgeous character that cannot be replicated with new materials.

Adhesives & Sealants



Adhesives and sealants with high VOCs pollute the indoor air quality. Alternatives with low or even zero VOCs have been popping up on the market. There are also adhesives and sealants that use little water to produce in order to preserve natural resources. Adhesive manufacturers, like Bostik, are conscious of the environmental impact the construction industry has and are invested in the innovation of green technologies.

Bostik's **Greenforce®**, for instance, is a high-performance hardwood flooring adhesive that has zero VOCs and does not contain any water. Greenforce also acts as a moisture membrane for subfloor protection and is easy to install. At Bostik, we offer several tile grout options as well, like **TruColor® RapidCure™**, with low emissions and made using recycled content.

Roofing

Recycled metals are a common environmentally friendly roofing option. This includes recycled steel, aluminum, copper and mixed metals. Natural, chemical-free tiles are another option that elevates the roofing design.

Green roofs have also been growing in popularity and serve multiple functions. Green roofs incorporate live plants into the roofing and have great insulation properties to help cut down energy usage. Green roofs can also be designed with fruits, vegetables and herbs and can serve as a community hub.

Solar panels can be added to a roof or used as the roof itself. Solar panels not only reduce or eliminate energy bills but also protect the structure from harsh sun rays.

Insulation

Alternatives to fiberglass, such as soybean or sheep's wool insulation, have been growing in popularity and offer the same or greater R-value. Other pour-in alternatives include using non-conventional materials like shredded newspaper, recycled plastic and even denim to give a renewed purpose to used resources.

Paint

Many commonly used paints also have high VOCs, so options with low or zero VOCs are preferable. Even better are natural and organic paints that are free from any harmful toxins and combustible materials.

HOW BOSTIK CAN HELP

At Bostik, we are profoundly convinced that [adhesives](#) have an essential role to play to help build a world that is more sustainable. We are constantly developing environmentally friendly products that last longer, use more recycled resources, require less water and energy usage in production and ultimately perform better than non-green alternatives.

When it comes to sustainability, our goal is to continue to reduce our environmental impact and increase our positive contribution through our products, our practices and our societal commitment.

Sustainability is at the core of our smart adhesive solutions. To learn more about how Bostik products can transform your project and count towards LEED accreditation, [reach out to us.](#)