Case Study: Sustainable Carpet Pursuit

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Kaiser Permanente
The Corporate Stage:

Kaiser Permanente is the nation’s largest nonprofit health plan

8.2 million members  431 medical office buildings  30 medical centers

• 64 million square feet
• $25 billion annual revenue
• 136,500 Employees, 12,300 physicians
• 9 states and Washington D.C.
• Planned Growth 2004 - 2013
  – 25 hospital replacements or significant additions
  – 100 Medical Office Buildings (MOBs)
  – Call Centers, administrative buildings, regional labs
Commitment to Sustainability

• Environmental Stewardship Vision:
  
  We aspire to provide health care service in a manner that protects and enhances the environment and health of the community now and for future generations.

• Focus Areas:

  Green Buildings, Environmentally Responsible Purchasing, Sustainable Operations
Why Sustainability

- Alignment with corporate mission: improve the health of the communities we serve
- Industry practices generate waste, pollution and consume natural resources
- Recognized link between building design and health outcomes
- Impact of building materials on indoor air quality and environmental health
Alternatives Assessments

- Medical Products:
  - PVC/DEHP-free products for neonatal units; latex-free and PVC-free exam gloves; mercury-free measurement devices

- Safer Chemicals:
  - Replacing mercury-based fixatives; selecting greener cleaners; recyclable solvents

- Green Buildings:
  - Eco Toolkit, casework, corner/wall protection, resilient flooring, energy efficiency standards
National Purchasing Agreement

- NPA for carpet established in 1993
- Focus on recycling and landfill diversion
- Product: broadloom; 6’ vinyl-backed
Carpet Assessment 2001 - 2002

- 2-year study of all facilities
- Partnered with manufacturers
- Evaluated type, condition, cleaning methods

- Result:
  - eliminated broadloom from standards
2002 RFP

- Required vendor submissions:
  - Questionnaire response
    - environmental impact from manufacturing through “post-use”
  - Independent testing results
  - Product samples
  - Presentation
Vendor Evaluation Criteria:

1) Environmental Criteria:
   A) Product Content:
      - Free of polyvinyl chloride (PVC)
      - If PVC, content is recycled
      - Not other persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs) or carcinogens
      - Post consumer recycled content

   B) Sustainable manufacturing practices:
      - Minimize waste
      - Minimize water use
      - Minimize use of non-renewable energy
      - Reduce air emissions during manufacturing

   C) Indoor air quality for carpet content and adhesives
      - CHPS 1350 emissions testing
      - Meets CHPS carcinogen standards
      - Green Label certified or equivalent
      - Maintenance with low or no IAQ impact

   D) Recyclability (Post Use)
      - Closed loop recyclable
      - Readily down-cyclable
      - Supplier facilitates end of life disposition
Vendor Evaluation Criteria (cont.):

2) Healthcare Product Line:
   A. Depth of line
   B. Aesthetics
   C. Compatibility within product line

3) Product Performance:
   A. References
   B. Comparison to current KP standards
   C. Reparability
   D. Impermeable backing
Outcomes

• “Ideal” product did not exist
• Vendor selection focused on R&D efforts to create alternative to vinyl
• Created partnerships with manufacturers to explore PVC-free alternatives
Current Standards

- Product is 100% recycled vinyl-backed
- Carpet removed from our site is recycled
Toward a PVC-Free Carpet

- Both C&A and Interface pledged to develop a non-PVC backed carpet in 2 years.
- Kaiser Permanente & our consultant from Healthy Building Network worked with each company’s R&D departments
PVC Free Carpet Backing!

- C&A Ethos
- Recycled PDB Backing: Made from reclaimed PVB film used in laminated safety glass
- Same performance characteristics of PVC backing without the negative environmental impact.
For Kaiser Permanente, developing a sustainable approach to the way we design, equip, build, maintain and commission our buildings is essential to our vision of creating environments that celebrate health across generations.