

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY LANGUAGE GUIDE

**HOW TO COMMUNICATE
EFFECTIVELY TO CONSUMERS
AND AVOID GREENWASHING**

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Samsnite

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This language guide should be used in conjunction with the Sustainability Communications/Greenwashing Webinar, which provides broader context, guidance, and examples on how to communicate on sustainability and avoid greenwashing. You can access the November 2022 webinar presentation slides and recording [here](#).

This guide is designed to define and clarify sustainability terms, provide guidance about what we can and cannot say, and lay out cautionary guardrails.

We will update this guide as needed to keep up with external developments and user needs. The latest version of the guide will be available [here](#). Please send questions, feedback, suggestions, and requests to:

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INTRODUCTION

We are including ever more content on the sustainability credentials of our products and our company in our consumer-facing communications. At the same time, scrutiny of the green claims that companies are making continues to rise. Sustainability communications are increasingly a target for regulators, many consumers are skeptical of the claims companies make, and potential critics are looking for brands they can call out for greenwashing.

While we want to continue to take credit for the good work we are doing, we always want to stay credible and protect our brands. We therefore need to pay careful attention to what we say and be robust and accurate in the claims we make regarding our sustainability initiatives and especially our products.

We must avoid making general statements or claims that we cannot fully support. While usually unintentional, content that can be seen as misleading will invite criticism and can undermine our efforts.





SUSTAINABLE

For a product to be 'sustainable', its production and use should cause little or no negative impact on the environment across its lifecycle – from raw materials to final disposal. A sustainable product should also have a positive impact on the people who have helped produce it or live in communities around its supply chain.

Like virtually all businesses, we are on a journey to make our company, brands and products more sustainable, but we cannot currently claim that they are 'sustainable'.



Not OK: "Sustainable"



OK: "More sustainable" (with supporting details)

What we cannot say:

- Our line is sustainable because it is made from recycled polypropylene/polycarbonate/PET fabric
- Our labels are sustainable because we use 100% recycled content
- Samsonite has created sustainable luggage

What we can say

- We can say we've made our product 'more sustainable'. BUT this must be qualified with specific claims of how the product is more sustainable and backed up with relevant data. It must also be clear what the claim of 'more sustainable' is in relation to, e.g. a previous version of the product or competitor products and again, data to back this up must be available and easy for the consumer to access.

Examples include:

- The suitcase is not only more sustainable, but also light and strong for the best travel experience. We have reduced emissions from raw materials and manufacturing by xx% compared to the previous model. For more information, see here [insert web link to data].
- With the Neoknit collection, we are pushing the boundaries of construction and what it means to create bags in a more sustainable way. The exterior of the bags is made from 100% post-consumer recycled polyester. This reduces the carbon footprint of the product by xx%, compared to the same model made with virgin polyester, and reduces waste to landfill. For more information, see here [insert web link to data].

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Sustainable solutions are products or technologies with a positive social, environmental and societal impact.

None of the Samsonite brands or regions currently offer a truly sustainable solution and this phrase should not be used in any product-related materials. We can use the term 'a more sustainable solution' for products that include an element of sustainable materials.

Beware: This term is often used for products which just have a 'lesser' social, societal and environmental impact compared to other products available on the market. However, to be considered a true sustainable solution, it should provide an actual solution to systemic issues (e.g. waste, pollution, social inclusion) and should not contain any unsustainable materials (such as other plastics).



SUSTAINABLY SOURCED MATERIALS

Materials are considered to be sustainably sourced if social, ethical and environmental issues are a major part of the overall sourcing process with full transparency of their supply chains.

Sustainable sourcing can be defined as when providers are accountable for the ethics and sustainability of their products and materials during the development, purchase, manufacture, supply and sale of their goods and services.

Sustainably sourced materials rely on full transparency of suppliers, vetting suppliers before selecting them, assessing their suppliers continuously, auditing when needed, governing their suppliers with relevant standards, and utilizing technological advancements to optimize risk reduction.

Certifications provide a way to demonstrate that materials for products and packaging are responsibly sourced. For example, paper packaging with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) certification shows support of responsibly managed forests. You must make sure you follow the certification's guidance on how to communicate. Certifications tend to avoid the use of the word sustainable in their claims.

Examples include:

- Our packaging is FSC® certified. Choosing FSC® supports responsible forest management.

What we cannot say:

- This product is made from sustainably sourced fabric.

Beware: If a supplier has unlawful child labour in their material production, the brand purchasing will be held accountable for irresponsible sourcing and cannot credibly claim to be 'sustainably sourcing materials'.



Not OK: "Sustainably sourced"



OK: Certifications which demonstrate responsible sourcing

ECO-FRIENDLY

'Eco-friendly', 'environmentally-friendly' and 'green' are becoming interchangeable terms in a consumer product context. These terms have no commonly accepted definitions and have become increasingly associated with greenwashing. Consumer marketing regulations and guidelines have tightened on how such terms can be used and some countries require a full lifecycle assessment of the product (from how it is made to how it is disposed of) to prove that it is 'eco-friendly'. In France, the use of general terms such as 'environmentally-friendly' are prohibited by law.

We should therefore avoid using these terms, and instead make specific claims about the product, backed up by data.

What we cannot say:

- The new **eco-friendly** LIMO luggage and SCHOLAR backpacks are made from 100% recycled PET bottles.

What we can say

- The new LIMO luggage and SCHOLAR backpacks are made from 100% recycled PET bottles.



Not OK: "Eco-friendly", "Green"



OK: Specific, validated claims



RECYCLED MATERIAL

Recycling means taking materials from products you have finished using, or industrial processes that have created waste, and making brand new products with them. For example, the average aluminium can made in the US is made from 73% recycled content.

Recycling takes consumer materials – mostly plastic, paper, metal, glass and textiles – and breaks them down so their base materials can be remade into new consumer products, replacing the need for virgin materials.

Materials recycled in an industrial setting are often by-products or waste left over after a production process that can also be recycled and re-used again within the same process or in adjacent industries.

Not all materials can be recycled, and a ‘recycled material’ must have gone through the above life-cycle to be labelled as ‘recycled’.

Examples include:

- A baggage set that features both interior and exterior textiles made with 100% post-consumer recycled plastic (PET) bottles.
- The suitcase’s shells are made using recycled polypropylene (PP) from post-consumer packaging and the inside fabric is made from recycled plastic bottles (PET).

Note: Recyclex™ Material Technology is our range of fabrics and shells created using post-consumer or post-industrial recycled materials that are specially crafted to be durable, flexible and more environmentally responsible. Please refer to the [Recyclex™ Material Technology guidelines](#) for additional guidance.

Beware: You must clarify which component, fabric and/or material is made from a recycled material (nylon, PET, polypropylene, polycarbonate, etc.) – if it’s just the exterior or interior you need to specify this. If the exterior is made from one recycled material (e.g. recycled polypropylene) and the interior is made from a different recycled material (e.g. rPET) you need to specify this difference.

POST-INDUSTRIAL OR PRE-CONSUMER RECYCLED CONTENT

Post-industrial and pre-consumer recycled waste are different names for the same type of waste. It is waste generated during the production process of a product – not waste from a product that has already been used once.

What we can say

- The S’CureEco range was introduced in 2018 and is made from 90% post-industrial waste, enabling us to recycle around 100 tonnes of high-quality plastic in our own facility each year.

POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED (PCR) CONTENT

Post-consumer recycled waste comes from finished products that have served their useful lives and been recycled. They would otherwise end up in a landfill or be incinerated. Using PCR waste is preferable to Post-industrial (PI) waste because of the greater likelihood that it is diverting waste from landfill. We should specify which type of recycled material we are using.

What we can say:

- Both the outer fabric and the inner lining of Ecodiver items are made using 100% recycled post-consumer waste using between 4 and 47 recycled bottles (0.5L) per model.



PET and RPET

PET or polyethylene terephthalate is a plastic which is strong, durable and recyclable. Its uses commonly include soda and water bottles, and food jars.

RPET stands for recycled polyethylene terephthalate, or recycled PET.

RPET can be made into other products such as blankets, insulation, car parts, shoes – and suitcases! Please refer to the [Recyclex™ Material Technology guidelines](#) for additional guidance.

RECYCLABLE

If something is recyclable, it means it can be broken down into its raw materials and repurposed so it can be used again.

However, within a consumer product context, if there are no widely available facilities in the region where the product is sold that enable the product to be deconstructed or collected for recycling, it is not credible to call the product ‘recyclable’.

Proxis is our first range with completely recyclable shells. At end-of-life, the suitcase can be returned through our WeCare program to be recycled or repurposed.

Some of the Samsonite brands or regions currently offer packaging that can be recycled. If the packaging can be recycled, it is acceptable to use the term ‘recyclable’ or ‘can be recycled’ in reference to that specific packaging. It must be clear that this claim relates only to the packaging and not to any other part of the product.

Note: California has introduced new legislation on the use of the term ‘recyclable’ and symbols suggesting recyclability which will come into force in early 2024. Measures include prohibiting the use on packaging of the “chasing arrows” symbols and other recyclability claims unless approved by CalRecycle standards. If communicating/selling in the US, ensure you are up-to-date on the latest rules.

UPCYCLING

Upcycling is the process of converting old and discarded materials and reusing them to create something new. This process repurposes items or materials without breaking them down. You may be refashioning it – like cutting a t-shirt into strips of yarn – but it’s still made of the same materials as when you started. Also, the upcycled item is typically better or the same quality as the original.

As such, the upcycling process enables manufacturers or consumers to avoid sending valuable materials to landfill, but crucially without the loss of quality found with traditional ‘downcycling’.

Beware: None of the Samsonite brands or regions currently upcycle any of our products. All of the recycled materials in our products have been melted down in order to repurpose them. The term upcycled should not be used to describe our products.



COMPOSTABLE AND BIODEGRADABLE

The labels 'compostable' and 'biodegradable' are often mistakenly thought of as interchangeable.

If something is compostable, it is capable of decomposing back into natural elements in soil or water, using micro-organisms. The time it takes for something to decompose depends largely on the composting conditions, and the product itself.

If something is biodegradable, it is capable of decomposing back into natural elements but doesn't need oxygen to break down. However, it can take a very long time – far longer than a year – and is dependent on the specific material, the temperature, and the amount of moisture present.

Many products or materials require commercial/ industrial processes to break them down. It is misleading to promote them to consumers as simply 'compostable' or 'biodegradable' if they are unable to apply these processes at home.

Beware: None of the Samsonite brands or regions offer compostable or biodegradable products. These terms should not be used to describe our products.

BIOPLASTIC

Bioplastic is plastic made either in full or part from plant or other biological material, for example corn, sugarcane or cellulose. It can also be called bio-based plastic.

Most biodegradable and compostable plastics are bioplastics – but not all bioplastics are biodegradable or compostable. Bioplastics can also be hard to recycle as they are sometimes combined with other types of petroleum-based plastics, creating a hybrid material.

RENEWABLE

Renewable resources are resources which have the potential to be replaced over time by natural processes. For example, energy from wind and solar is renewable. Materials made from plants are renewable materials. In contrast, fossil fuels and minerals are not renewable.

NATURAL

Natural means that a product is made from ingredients produced by nature, rather than man-made ingredients. It has typically been used by the food and beauty industries. However, like 'eco-friendly', there is no clear definition and, because of this and the way it has been mis-used and over-used, we should avoid its use.

VEGAN

Vegan products contain no materials derived from animals.

Leather is an animal product that we use to make some of our products.

Vegan leather is an alternative derived from non-animal sources. It can be made from polyurethane, which is derived from fossil fuels, so not necessarily more sustainable. It can also be made from more innovative natural materials, such as pineapple leaves, cactus leaves and even mycelium, the underground root network of fungi.



Not OK: "Compostable", "Biodegradable" (for our current products), "Natural"



CARBON NEUTRAL

Carbon neutral refers to an entity (e.g. a company, product or building) whose carbon emissions have been balanced out by an equivalent amount of emissions reductions elsewhere (known as offsetting). Offsetting is typically done through the purchase of carbon credits from a project that reduces carbon, such as tree planting. It is important to the credibility of a carbon neutral claim that the offsets purchased are high-quality and from a certified provider.

For a product to be considered carbon neutral, the carbon emissions from the product's entire life cycle (from raw materials to end of life) must be calculated and then offset. Some carbon neutral certifications also require that the product be low carbon prior to the offsetting.

Samsonite has a target to be carbon neutral as a company by 2025, but this goal does not apply to our products.

Beware: Our company carbon neutral commitment does not apply to our products and cannot be used as a product claim.

NET ZERO EMISSIONS

Net zero is similar to carbon neutral, in that it applies offsets to balance out emissions. However, it is a more rigorous and credible approach. It is most commonly used in reference to companies, rather than to products.

Net zero goes beyond carbon neutral in two ways: (1) It requires an aggressive reduction of carbon emissions, consistent with what climate science says is required; (2) Once all emissions reductions have been pursued, any “residual” emissions must be offset with a special (and more expensive) type of carbon offset called a “removal”.

Beware: We cannot not claim to have a net zero commitment or be on the pathway to net zero.

LOW(ER) CARBON

Low(er) carbon products or services are those which have comparatively lower emissions (across their entire life cycle) when compared to a baseline (business-as-usual) scenario or reference product of a similar function.

ZERO WASTE

The aim of zero waste is to reduce the waste that goes to landfill and incinerators as close as possible to zero, and to redesign products, packaging and other items so that they can be reused, recycled, repurposed or otherwise to avoid landfill. The philosophy of zero waste extends through the product lifecycle, to include waste generated through manufacturing.

Zero waste is most commonly used for manufacturing facilities, and can also be applied at a company level. A product could be said to be manufactured in a “zero waste” facility.



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