

# Feedback on LCA communication at Steelcase



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*Lausanne, DF 52 LCA Forum, 25th of June, 2013*

**Steelcase**

# Steelcase

**Global leader** in the office furniture industry.

Our brands offer a comprehensive portfolio of workplace products, furnishings and services, inspired by 100 years of insight gained serving the world's leading organizations.

Products ranges:

- desks
- chairs
- storages
- performance tools
- space partitioning systems

Office space planning expertise to support companies' needs (moving in/out, space reorganization,...)



Steelcase

# Facts and figures



# Our Eco-design approach

3 key strategic initiatives :

## Materials Chemistry

19 criteria on human health and eco-system quality, supported by toxicity experts.

## Life-cycle Assessment

An LCA measures the environmental impact of products along their life-cycle (extraction, production, transport, use, disposal).

## Recycling & Reuse

Our products are designed for easy disassembly, recycling and reuse.

We offer furniture take-back services since 2007.



# The LCA practice at Steelcase

Steelcase started to use LCAs in **2002** (1st in the office furniture industry)

Application of this expertise:

➤ to support our **eco-design** approach:

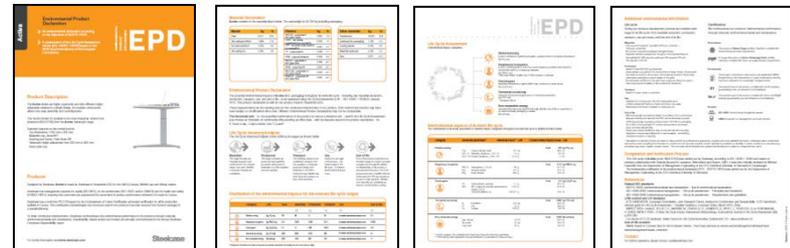
Environmental objectives & scenarios analyses (70 to 90% of the impacts of our products occur at the Materials & Production phases)

ex: materials & processes choices, design for recycling/reuse, packaging, logistics...

➤ to support our **environmental communications** to the market:

• **Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs)**

*More than 30 EPDs published since 2004*



• **Quantitative and relevant claims** on eco-designed products

# Some achievements thanks to LCAs feedbacks

**PP edges** for table-tops (instead of PVC or ABS)

Expanded PP and PE for **packaging corners** (instead of EPS)



Prix Entreprises & Environnement EDITION 2004



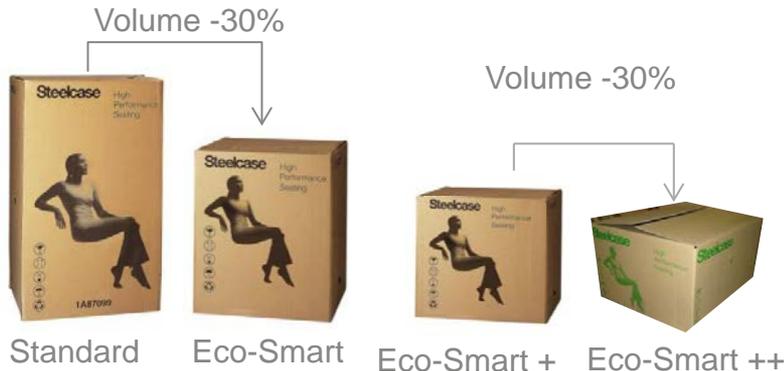
**'Fusion' desk**: optimized disassembly & material consumption, 1 type of plastic (PP) instead of 3



**'No PVC' strategy** (ex: -70% CO<sub>2</sub>-eq. emissions on storage tambour doors)

**'Think' chair**: optimized disassembly & material consumption

**Packaging volume reduction**



**Design for disassembly** (reuse and recycling)



# Conditions for a relevant LCA communication

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- **Apply the best available LCA practice:**

ISO standards, ILCD handbook, relevant databases and modeling methods, verify the uncertainties level, etc...

→ Steelcase only publish a couple of EPDs per year (ensure the right quality level)

- **Use a relevant recognised LCA modeling software**

- **Collect the maximum amount of specific input data**

- **Apply an external critical review of high quality** ('No review, no communication')

Ex: Prof. Michael Z. Hauschild (DTU) reviews most of Steelcase's LCAs studies

*N.B.: It is sometimes interesting to get critical reviews by other experts (fresh view)*

- **Trainings** around LCAs and EPDs (ex: for marketing, R&D, sales, etc...)

- **Make sure the results interpretation** doesn't create misleading:

Make sure of low enough uncertainties, relevant indicators choice & life-cycle stage focus, etc...

- **Follow rules** for environmental marketing claims

Ex: FTC (Federal Trade Commission) in the USA ('Part 260')

# LCA communication: some issues of concern

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- Development of **Product Category Rules (PCRs)** in various markets: sometimes several PCRs in the same industry field, but no real cohesion
  - complexity, cost, customers' misunderstanding (several ≠ LCAs results per product)
  - **Real challenge** for global companies like Steelcase
  
- **LEED v4** building certification – LCA criteria:  
Concerns about the number of LCAs studies requested  
i.e. ability to produce many LCAs studies with a relevant quality level
  - Will the progress around LCAs both tools- (data collection) and software (simplified LCAs) enable soon companies to quickly and more easily produce relevant LCAs?
  
- **Greenwashing is possible with or without LCA**  
Focus on some indicators (ex: only CO<sub>2</sub>-eq. emissions for agro-based materials)  
Focus on incomplete life-cycle view

thank you