

## **The LEEDing Edge: Green Can Be Easy**

Today, when a client tells you, “I want a ‘green’ kitchen or bathroom,” there is a pretty, good chance color is not their only consideration. Your client might be referring to sustainable design. More consumers than ever before are incorporating green into home construction and remodeling projects. As a result, these environmentally conscious clients are seeking out design professionals who are certifiably ‘green’.

Incorporating ‘green’ into your design could be a difficult process if it not for a green rating system referred to as LEED™. As a Kitchen and Bath design professional you are probably familiar enough with the term LEED to ask, “What is the impact of this design system on my business?”

LEED or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is a ‘green’ building rating system first introduced for use in the design and construction of commercial buildings in 1998. Since that time LEED has matured into five individual rating systems: (1) LEED for New Buildings; (2) LEED for Existing Buildings; (3) LEED for Commercial Interiors; (4) LEED for Core & Shell; and finally, the US Green Building Council’s rating system for residential markets LEED for Homes.

The LEED Green Building Rating System encourages an integrated approach to design and construction. This process makes it possible for building professionals to gauge the structure’s environmental footprint. LEED guidelines award project points based on innovation in design, construction process and the incorporation of environmentally preferred products for each project. The total tally of points earned determines the applicable level of LEED certification.

Choice of product plays an important role in the design of a LEED certified home. Designers should specify Energy Star rated appliances and light fixtures, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified wood products, and/or products extracted, processed and manufactured within a 500-mile radius of the project. Wooden cabinets must be made of recycled, recovered or FSC certified materials with no added urea-formaldehyde resins. Flooring, countertops, faucets, paints and finishes must also comply to standards within each application’s criteria.

Remember too, that during product selection a key factor is location, location, location. Your LEED builder will require you to supply the country of manufacture or origin for each product you specify.

Whenever possible select products that originate within a 500-mile radius of the project to reduce cost and minimize environmental impact from fossil fuel as a direct result of transport. Local choice of project material also helps keep dollars circulating in the local economy. This maximizes point value in the scoring process while placing emphasis on the overarching theme of green: SUSTAINABILITY.

Low environmental impact, inside and out, starting with site selection and preparation through the entire building process plus life cycle durability, energy efficiency and in-door air quality add up to homes that cost less to run, and require fewer natural resources to maintain. This translates into long term savings for your client and increased ROI (return on investment) at sales time.

Whether or not you decide to participate in ‘LEED for Homes’ as a LEED accredited professional, the USGBC LEED for Homes guideline will help you incorporate “green” into projects for environmentally conscious clients.

To learn more about *LEED for Homes* and acquire a copy of the guideline visit the USGBC website, [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

FSC Certified Cabinets are available in New England from Young Furniture Mfg. Inc. For more information contact Paul Oppold at 603.224.8830 or [poppold@youngfurnituremfg.com](mailto:poppold@youngfurnituremfg.com).

FSC Certified Flooring is available in New England from Planet Hardwood. For more information contact Peter Nazarenko at 802.482.4404 or [peter@planethardwood.com](mailto:peter@planethardwood.com).

Low to no VOC paints are available from Pittsburgh Paints and Benjamin Moore.

**Ideas for future articles**

**The LEEDing Edge: The Map to Certification**

Article focus: The LEED point system and levels of certification.

**The LEEDing Edge: What's mandatory, what's not?**

Article focus: The LEED point system exceptions and point interpretation

**The LEEDing Edge: Interior Furnishings do they count too?**

Article focus: Paint, wall paper, furnishings, interior accents and accessories

**The LEEDing Edge: FSC Certified ← Should that be me?**

Article focus: When to become FSC COC Certified and when not to

**The LEEDing Edge: Am I Kissing a Prince or a Frog?**

Article focus: Market forecast – what's in it for me?

**The LEEDing Edge: Inner Outer Space**

Article focus: Space savers for smaller homes