

Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) – Purchasing Environmentally Responsible Computers

Environmental and Human Health Impact: Vast reduction in use of toxic materials (lead, cadmium, and mercury) and energy; increased use of recycled resins, recycled content packaging, and reusable packaging.

Business Impact: Up-front purchase of computer systems is cost neutral with energy cost savings of \$4 million per year.

Challenge

Computers have enabled Kaiser Permanente to provide our members, patients, and physicians with real-time access to electronic medical information which has expedited and simplified delivery of care. But the manufacture, use, and disposal of computers and their electronic accessories have a global adverse impact on human and environmental health. Recognizing the benefits and problems with electronics, Kaiser Permanente was looking for a way to identify more environmentally responsible computer systems. The contract with a new computer system supplier in early 2006 included language specifying a strong and definite preference for energy efficient and environmentally responsible computers.

Aim/Goal

- To procure CPUs, monitors, and laptops that are manufactured with least toxic materials, designed for easy recycling, use minimal energy for operation, and are packaged with minimal material.
- To reduce KP's energy consumption and costs.

Team

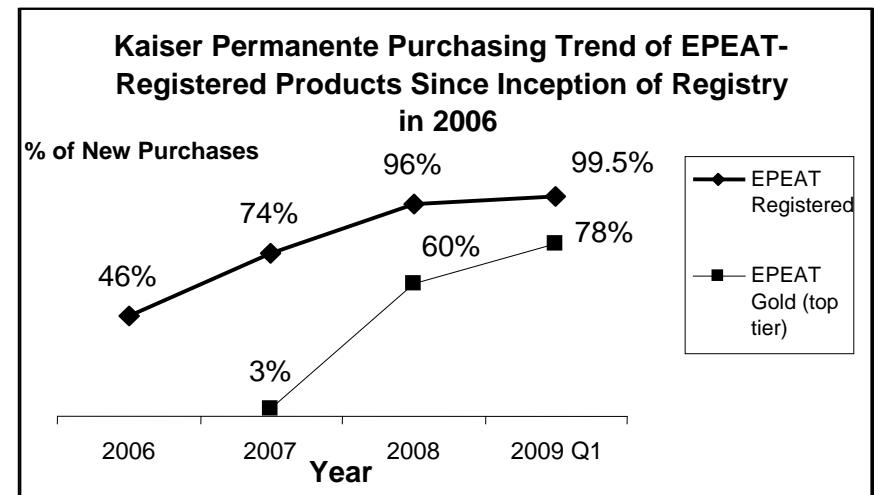
IT Procurement Sourcing Team
Pradeep Saxena, Sourcing Director, IT

Actions Taken

- ✓ In 2006, the EPEAT criteria and registry system that enabled an easy comparison of the environmental performance of computer systems was launched.
- ✓ Prior to EPEAT, Kaiser Permanente utilized the EnergyStar® rating system as a minimum requirement for new computer systems. However, Procurement & Supply's IT sourcing team quickly adopted EPEAT due to its comprehensive focus on environmental issues, which includes energy performance.
- ✓ Expectations were set with the incumbent supplier that as new products meeting higher registry tiers became available Kaiser Permanente would experience swift adoption of those models into our purchasing standards.

For More Information Contact: Environmental-Supply-Chain@kp.org

Results



Lessons Learned

- ✓ The use of a reputable and verifiable third-party certification tool can simplify the purchasing of environmentally preferable products.
- ✓ A certification system, like EPEAT, that compares supplier performance in a transparent and balanced fashion can help prevent price mark-ups and “green washing” (disingenuous promotion or advertising of product environmental attributes).

Next Steps

- ✓ Continue standardization on purchasing solely EPEAT Gold products when product refresh is required. (EPEAT Gold products meet all required and 75 percent of optional criteria.)
- ✓ Participate in working groups and support the expansion of EPEAT to new product areas including print imaging devices and televisions.