

## INTENSIVE RECYCLING AND ECO-EFFICIENCY

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It's common knowledge, that environment now is an important part of our life. Initially it was particular industries that most felt the pressure of the environmental critique – agriculture, chemicals, energy, oil and mining – and the industries reacted with defensive hostility. But leading corporations have come to recognize that the environment is a more general issue, and that environmental policy propositions can no longer be resisted in particularistic ways.

Waste was one of the most tangible symptoms of the material excesses of mass production. Its volumes climbed with growth. The rising resistance to its disposal was one expression of the limit to the old industrial order and contributed to the elaboration of the alternative. Waste reduction is part of the new paradigm now being put into place.

Essence of the term 'Eco-Efficiency' is contained in seven simple guidelines:

- reduce the material intensity of goods and services;
- reduce the energy intensity of goods and services;
- reduce toxic dispersion enhance material recyclability;
- maximize sustainable use of renewable resources;
- extend product durability;
- increase the service intensity of products.

Following these guidelines can give companies a competitive head-start into the next century – but not if they are treated as an addition to business as usual. Eco-efficiency does require a profound change in their theory and practice of core business activities.

Major companies have begun to adopt zero targets. Bell Canada, Kimberley Clark, Du Pont, Honda, Toyota, Hewlett Packard, the Ricoh Group and Interface Carpets are all aiming for Zero Waste. The eco-efficiency literature is full of examples of firms cutting waste and toxic emissions by orders of magnitude.

In its early phases of application, eco-efficiency is applied to on-site processes and later to products.

Intensive recycling needs to give much priority to mapping its waste. In the case of waste, the primary mapping will have three main parts.

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