# Don’t Be Tricked By Snake-Oil Salesmen: How to Beware of Greenwashing

Most of us have never heard the term “greenwashing.” In fact, it seems a little bit strange. What is greenwashing and why is it something to be wary of?

Unfortunately, the world is full of businesses who want to take advantage of vulnerable people. The vegan community has a weakness that a business that is profit driven can easily exploit; they want to do things ethically and are willing to pay extra money for products they believe have their ethics in mind.

This screams “opportunity!” to businesses that want extra money for products that they might otherwise find difficult to sell, or that they simply have a surplus of or want to remarket to people for higher prices. Profit is the name of the game unfortunately, and whether we do it consciously or not, a lot of vegans play right into the game.

We already know that organic products and businesses that sell ethical products have to do so at a mark up because demand is lower and because it can often take more money to thrive as an ethical business. This is something that greenwashing companies understand and can easily take advantage of. They believe the world is all nickels and dimes, and don’t think twice about deceiving consumers for the extra cash.

If you want to avoid being duped by a greenwashing company, you have to make sure that you look into the claims that they make. If the claims are meaningful and you can trace them to a source that is credible, then the company is likely genuine. But if the company is making broad statements or claims that are not meaningful, you should be wary. They may just be using clever marketing to sound better than they actually are. Tweaking a word or the meaning of a word means nothing to these companies. It is all about what you buy into, and if they want to trick consumers to make a buck, they find no fault in that. So watch your back.

An example of a claim a greenwashing company might make is to claim that their product is free of something that all products these days are free of. If they are marketing based on the exclusion of an ingredient that has already been banned in your part of the world, then they are trying to sell you something that isn’t quite up to par with your standards. Keep a keen eye out.

Some brands that you should be wary of, as they have been known for greenwashing techniques, include GE, ExxonMobile, DuPont, ExxonMobil, and several others.

If you do your research there should be nothing to worry about. Just use discretion when you are shopping. If you are finding a brand that you are suspicious of, you can easily do an online search to determine whether or not the company is credible. If they aren’t, then you know what to avoid, and if they are, then you may have found a great new product that you can buy ethically!