



ARTMATRIX Walks the Green Walk with **GECA** Eco-Label

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Furniture and Fittings

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By all accounts, in today's 'greening' consumer markets, customers are no longer making purchasing decisions based on price and quality alone but on which products do less harm to the environment and the people who produce them. But with an explosion of broad unqualified green and environmental spin, it is no wonder demand for better sustainability claims has also been on the rise as it is clear that consumers don't always know what they are getting. This can also be blamed for the use of eco-labeling that may not offer the type of third-party verification that comes with legitimate eco-labeling. >>



It is to the credit of green-minded companies such as ARTMATRIX, a company that specialises in office furniture design, manufacturing and distribution business, which thinks it is crucial that consumers have an opportunity to differentiate their furniture purchases according to environmental attributes, and thus sees the payoff in being part of a pioneering initiative that can only bode well for the industry as a whole: seeking a green seal of approval that is certified by a third party.

In fact, ARTMATRIX is the first Malaysian company to have a range of its workstation products carry the Environmental Choice Australia (ECA) eco-label verified and assessed by Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd (GECA), an independent, non-profit organisation.

The criteria for the green label is set by a panel of specialists from industry, retail trades and the environmental and consumer movements, and GECA authorities will then decide whether a given product qualifies, based on a cradle-to-grave assessment of the product's impact throughout its life cycle, from the raw materials used to make it, through distribution, packaging, use and disposal.

The GECA green-white-and-red eco-label is only valid for three years, at which point the standards will be routinely reviewed. With the existence of such an internationally-recognised seal of approval, consumers can get reliable guidance to help them choose the products that do least damage to the environment.

To help finance the scheme, manufacturers whose products

have earned such a seal of green pride will have to pay to use the label as it will be seen as a desirable marketing tool.

While ARTMATRIX is already reaping the immediate rewards of its green initiatives by creating a healthier work environment for its customers besides leaving a lighter carbon footprint on the planet, it is the act of providing office furniture that comes with a story - whether it's made of non-toxic, sustainable materials, is fairly traded or provided with suitable information, among others - that will represent a specific challenge to every other product in the market that dares not narrate its path from forest to office space. After all, what better way to make a lasting impression on eco-savvy consumers than by putting money where the mouth is. ■

Six of ARTMATRIX's workstation products that have been awarded the Environmental Choice Australia eco-label are as follows:

Product Name	Product Description
Maxim-A (ECO)	Tile System
Max-I (ECO)	Pole System
Simplex (ECO)	Monolith Panel System
Trend X (ECO)	Desking System
I-Mode (ECO)	Desking System
Tri-X plus (ECO)	Monolith Panel System



ARTMATRIX's Green Milestones

Dec 2009 – ISO 14001:2004 Certified

- ARTMATRIX makes a commitment to be a good steward of the environment.
- Products are produced within a certified ISO 14001:2004 environmental management system.

Dec 2010 – ANSI/BIFMA X7.1-2007

- ARTMATRIX products are manufactured to enhance indoor air quality.
- Entire workstations are sent for lab testing, where the TVOC toluene, formaldehyde, total aldehydes and 4-phenylcyclohexene emissions are measured and tested against ANSI/BIFMA M7.1 standard.
- Products are manufactured in compliance with LEED – IEQ Credit 4.5 Low Emitting Materials – System Furniture and Seating.

Mar 2011 – GECA Certified

- ARTMATRIX's auditing process involved the following:
 - > Preliminary assessment by auditor from Environmental Assurance (EA) Australia.
 - > Factory visit and product assessment by EA representative.
 - > Final licensing is issued upon final review against the key environmental performance findings.
- As a GECA certified product:
 - > Product quality is in accordance to ANSI/BIFMA X5.6 standard with 5-year warranty against manufacturer defects.
 - > Materials are assessed against containing any hazardous material. Only non-hazardous materials are used during manufacture of products.
 - > Indoor air quality is ensured with the use of EO board and water-based adhesive. Formaldehyde content is at its minimum and emission is closed to zero.
 - > Sources of material are from legal premises. All timber components are FSC-certified.
 - > At the end of product lifetime, products are easily separable without using special tools. All plastic components above 100g are accompanied by proper resin identification code for easy recycle segregation.