



CRADLE TO CRADLE  
**PRODUCTS**  
 INNOVATION  
 INSTITUTE

# REDEFINING PRODUCT QUALITY

CRADLE TO CRADLE CERTIFIED<sup>CM</sup>





## GREAT DESIGN IS A CHOICE

Traditionally, as designers set out to create a new product, they draft a list of essential questions about how the product will be made. Who is it for? What should it do? How much will it cost?

Manufacturers and designers need to think carefully about what sort of product they really want to create and ask themselves the questions that will reveal what is important to them. Great design, then, is a choice. The more demanding the criteria, the higher the quality will be.

*We know this works. Our earnings have gone up nine-fold between 2007 and 2010. | [DESSO](#)*

*Innovation is a primary reward of sustainable design. | [STEELCASE](#)*

*Inspiring both employees and suppliers to work on more sustainable products and designs. | [DSM](#)*

Today, growing numbers of designers and manufacturers - along with rapidly increasing numbers of discerning consumers - are setting new expectations for product quality. New design questions need to be asked because products are being judged not only by aesthetics or functionality, but also by their impact on the environment, and human health and their re-usability in the circular economy.

How can a product be considered truly innovative, beautiful, and high quality if it causes harm or wastes evermore scarce resources?

The Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard is a framework for innovation that shows that 'designing with purpose' makes perfect business sense today and positively impacts the bottom line.



## PRODUCT QUALITY REDEFINED

Based on the groundbreaking book 'Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things' by William McDonough and Michael Braungart, the Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard guides designers and manufacturers through a continual improvement process - from BASIC to PLATINUM levels - to aim for products that do more good instead of merely being less bad.

Quality is defined by five criteria categories:

### MATERIAL HEALTH

Product ingredients are inventoried throughout the supply chain and evaluated for impact on human and environmental health. The criteria at each level build towards the expectation of eliminating all toxic and unidentified chemicals and becoming nutrients for a safe, continuous cycle.

### MATERIAL REUTILIZATION

Products are designed either to biodegrade safely as a biological nutrient or to be recycled into new products as a technical nutrient. At each level continued progress must be made towards increasing the recovery of materials and keeping them in continuous cycles.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CARBON MANAGEMENT

The criteria at each level build towards the expectation of carbon neutrality and powering all operations with 100% renewable energy.

### WATER STEWARDSHIP

Processes are designed to regard water as a precious resource for all living things. At each level, progress is made towards cleaning up effluent to drinking water standards.

### SOCIAL FAIRNESS AND BIODIVERSITY

Company operations are designed to celebrate all people and natural systems and progress is made towards having a wholly beneficial impact on the people and the planet.



Material Health



Material Reutilization



Renewable Energy



Water Stewardship



Social Fairness

*Working with the Cradle to Cradle Certified Program steered us towards considering the totality of the environmental impact of our product, from the beginning to the end of the product life cycle. | SCHOTT*



# THE PRODUCT CERTIFICATION PROCESS

## A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR INNOVATION

The Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard enables companies to accelerate innovation and be recognized for high quality.

### 1 PLAN

Visit [c2ccertified.org](http://c2ccertified.org)

to review the certification program overview and choose an accredited assessor who will review your product's preliminary information and respond with a comprehensive certification plan: timeline, estimated cost, trademark licensing considerations, and clearly assigned responsibilities for all aspects of data collection and assessment.

### 2 ANALYZE

Work with your assessor to establish what is in your product, how it is made, and what happens to it at the end of use. You will complete the product's Bill of Materials, optimization plans, and other documentation - usually with non-disclosure agreements in place between the assessor, your company, and your suppliers.

### 3 ASSESS

Your assessor follows the guidelines in the product standard to evaluate in detail the composition of product ingredients and manufacturing processes. This includes a site visit to the final manufacturing/ assembling facilities and the completion of an Assessment Summary Report to be submitted to the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute for review.

Cradle to Cradle Certified<sup>CM</sup> is a registered trademark licensed to the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute.





## 4 CERTIFY

Congratulations!

Products that meet the criteria receive the Cradle to Cradle Certified hallmark at a specified level of achievement. You will be asked to sign the Institute's Trademark License Agreement to guide your use of the mark on the product and marketing materials. Your product will be added to the online product registry and circulated to the Institute's network of like-minded product listings. The Institute team is on hand to support your marketing efforts.

## 5 RENEW

Companies must

maintain the certification by updating product and process data, as well as showing good faith efforts to make continuous improvement in all criteria categories.

*We are making a difference and ensuring that what they design is beneficial to the biosphere. | [AVEDA](#)*

*These (certified) products have changed our industry. | [MECHOSYSTEMS](#)*

*Working with the Cradle to Cradle Certified Program steered us towards considering the totality of the environmental impact of our product, from the beginning to the end of the product life cycle. | [DECADE](#)*





## BENCHMARKING PROGRESS

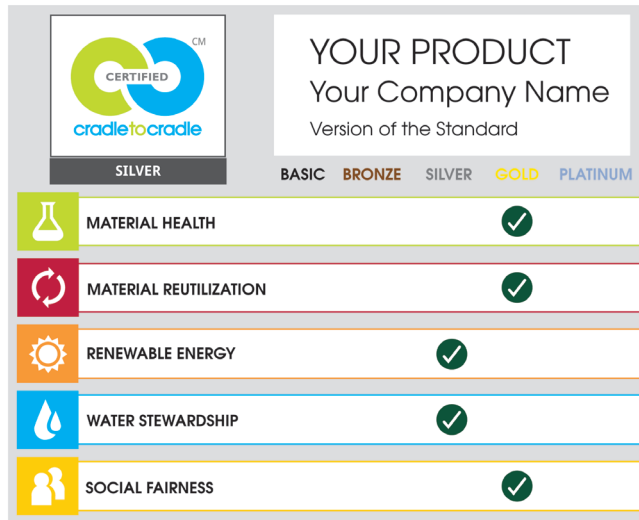
Cradle to Cradle product certification is both comprehensive and rigorous. It requires a paradigm shift in thinking about how a product is designed, what's in it, and where it goes after use. It is a guidance system for product designers and manufacturers, that leads to the creation of products that redefine quality, beauty, and innovation.

Products or materials from all industries (with the exception of food and beverages, but including packaging) are eligible to receive certification. Since the program began in 2005, nearly 200 companies worldwide have participated in the Cradle to Cradle Certified program, with 1000s of different products certified and millions of products sold.

There are 5 levels of Product Certification: Basic, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum that recognize a spectrum of achievements and incentivize progress.

To be certified at a certain level, a product must meet the minimum criteria for that level in all five criteria categories.

This scorecard shows a product which has attained Silver certification.





*The certification is the highly valued crown on our work that helps us distinguish our value proposition in the marketplace. | [VAN HOUTUM](#)*

*As we looked for a credible third-party product certification that would prove our products' environmental and safe nature, we found the whole concept of Cradle to Cradle and product certification just made perfect sense. | [TAGAWA SANGYO](#)*

*To be able to say we are Certified Cradle to Cradle<sup>CM</sup> is a huge shortcut in conversations with client and customers. | [ECOVATIVE DESIGN](#)*

*The Cradle to Cradle mantra provided us with a methodology for ... balancing a commitment to people, planet, and profits. | [BE GREEN PACKAGING](#)*

*Cradle to Cradle Certified Program provides a critical platform for transparency around the material health of our products. | [MICRO-PAK](#)*

*Although it takes intellectual capital to go figure out the chemistry about the different materials we use, by the time we get done with the process, it is less expensive for us to produce and develop a Cradle to Cradle Certified product than (it is) what we did historically. | [HERMAN MILLER](#)*

*A fundamental re-design took place in every aspect of production, from the factory work space, to the elimination of all toxic dyes and chemicals, to the sourcing of raw materials. | [GESSNER AG](#)*

*Continued improvement of our environmental and social impact. | [SHAW](#)*

*Applying Cradle to Cradle<sup>®</sup> design principles created the opportunity for innovation which allowed gugler\*, once again, to forge ahead of the field with a unique selling proposition - while bringing positive change into the world. | [GUGLER\\*](#)*

*The launch of the recycled surface Eco by Cosentino has been a success story, not only because of the benefits for society ... but also from a business point of view. | [COSENTINO](#)*

*Our certifications are tangible evidence of the commitment to the work our developers do every day. Most importantly, we have come to know that creating sustainable value in the 21st century isn't just about using less. It's also about creating more - more opportunities, more innovation, more capacity for positive change. | [STEELCASE](#)*





## ABOUT THE CRADLE TO CRADLE PRODUCTS INNOVATION INSTITUTE

The Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute, a non-profit organization, administers the Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard. It was created to bring about a new industrial revolution that turns the making of things into a positive force for society, economy, and the planet.

The continuous improvement quality standard was gifted to the Institute by William McDonough and Michael Braungart after more than 20 years of development with some of the world's leading brands.

The Institute is governed by an independent board of directors and is headquartered in San Francisco, California.

Bridge funding for the Institute's work is provided by foundations and individuals who share common values and hope for the future. Self-sustaining revenues will result from training programs and certification and licensing fees.

Initial support has been provided by the Nationale Postcode Loterij and the Schmidt Family Foundation, established by Wendy and Eric Schmidt.

For more information, please visit [www.c2ccertified.org](http://www.c2ccertified.org)



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