

Ethical Consumer Magazine

Best Buy Label



An Introduction to Ethical Consumer Magazine

Launched in 1989, the Ethical Consumer is the UK's leading ethical and environmental consumer magazine and an established and trusted name within the ethical business community and market.

Published by a not-for-profit research co-operative, we're proud to be an independent organisation funded by subscriptions to our magazine and databases, consultancy work and advertising from ethically vetted companies.

For more information visit www.ethicalconsumer.org

About Ethical Consumer Magazine Best Buy Label

Each issue of Ethical Consumer contains buyer's guides to everyday products and services from baked beans to building societies. Using the Ethical Consumer's extensive database, our researchers rate both the product and the company behind the product against more than 20 animal welfare, environmental and human rights criteria. Based on these findings we then identify and recommend a number of environmental and ethical Best Buy products.

Ethical Consumer is now licensing the Ethical Consumer Magazine Best Buy Label as a trademark which companies can purchase on an annual basis to promote their products and services. The 'butterfly' label can be used on packaging, websites, marketing and all other promotional material.

How the Best Buy Label can benefit your business

The Ethical Consumer Magazine Best Buy Label is only awarded to those products whose environmental and ethical record warrant it.

This endorsement from an established and trusted name within the ethical community can help to communicate the core environmental and ethical values that your product represents.

As the dramatic growth of the ethical sector continues, the Best Buy Label can make a valuable addition to the strategic marketing and positioning of your product within an increasingly competitive market.

How the Best Buy Label differs from other accreditation schemes

Companies can gain accreditation with BUAV, the Fairtrade Foundation, Soil Association and Vegetarian Society provided they fulfil these organisations' strict criteria.

The Best Buy Label however is unique in two key ways:

- The Best Buy Label scheme is an invitation-only scheme.
- The Ethical Consumer's unique ethical scoring system rates the environmental, ethical and social record of the companies behind the products. Plus, the scoring system looks at the sustainability features of the product itself. In this way the Ethical Consumer Best Buy Label is able to provide consumers with the overall, bigger ethical picture.

Purchasing the Best Buy Label

The scheme operates on a sliding scale based on the gross annual sales of the product or products to which the Best Buys label applies.

BAND	GROSS TURNOVER OF PRODUCT(S)	FEE
A	up to £50,000	£150
B	£50,000 to £100,000	£275
C	£100,000 to £250,000	£475
D	£250,000 to £500,000	£775
E	£500,000 to £1 million	£1,250
F	£1 million to £2.5 million	£2,450
G	£2.5 million to £5 million	£4,250
H	£5 million to £10 million	£8,750
I	over £10 million	£15,750

All prices are subject to VAT.

The annual fee also includes:

- 15% discount off advertising in Ethical Consumer Magazine
- Best Buys are already linked to the website (www.ethicalconsumer.org) but some are behind a subscriber-only gateway. Best Buy Label licensees will get a special landing page on the free area of the website confirming the award.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long is the licence agreement for?

One year.

2. Can I renew the use of the Best Buy Label after a year?

Yes, but you will need to disclose any changes to your company or product.

3. Does the Best Buy Label mean that that my company is a Best Buy?

No. Whilst we conduct research on the ethical and environmental record of the company behind the product, the Best Buy Label relates only to the product or service in question, not the company.

4. What happens if the ownership of my company changes during the year covered by the licence agreement. Will this affect the Best Buy licence?

It may do. There is an obligation within the terms of the agreement to inform us of any changes.

5. Can my company apply for the Best Buy Label?

No. The Ethical Consumer only invites those companies recommended in previously published reports.

6. I've already paid for accreditation with the Fairtrade Foundation, Soil Association and Vegetarian Society. Why should I buy another label from Ethical Consumer? Plus won't it just confuse shoppers?

Any company can gain accreditation from these national organisations so long as they fulfil the respective criteria.

What's unique about the Ethical Consumer Magazine Best Buy Label is that it's the only accreditation scheme that looks in detail at the ethical record of the company behind the product and the environmental and ethical record of the product itself.

Plus unlike other schemes, companies can only be invited to apply for a label by Ethical Consumer once we're satisfied that they are indeed an ethical and environmental best buy.

Far from confusing shoppers, we believe that the Best Buy Label brings much needed clarity to an increasingly complicated market.

Currently a product could be certified organic but not be vegetarian; a Fairtrade product need not be organic and finally

a product could have all three accreditations but be made by a controversial multi-national corporation.

Because the Ethical Consumer is an established and trusted name within the ethical market, shoppers will be reassured that when buying a product or service carrying our Best Buy Label they're making the best possible ethical choice.

7. My product is a Best Buy and I'd like to buy a label but I'm not planning on re-designing my packaging for another six months. Can I delay when I actually sign up for the scheme?

Yes. You can choose to start using the scheme whenever you like, providing that in the interim nothing has changed to either your company or your product. If anything has changed with either your company or product, Ethical Consumer will undertake to re-rate your company to ensure that it still meets our best buy criteria.

8. I have a small company which I believe is very ethical. How can I ensure that your researchers include my company in your product reports which would give me the chance of getting a Best Buy recommendation?

We welcome all approaches from companies who believe that they operate an ethical business and will endeavour to include them in future product reports. Please ask us for a 'company request form' so that we can enter your company onto our database.

9. What are the guidelines for using the Best Buy Label?

They are contained within the licensing agreement.

10. Who has signed up to the Best Buy Label so far?

Auro UK, Caurnie Soap, Earth Friendly Products, Ecology Building Society, Equal Exchange, Equigas, Essential Trading, Fair Deal Trading, Faith in Nature, Fry Group Foods, Good Energy, Green ISP, Green People, Kingfisher Toothpaste, Mooncup, Nelsons, Organic Spirit Company, Páramo, Ragmans Lane Farm, The Phone Co-op, Solar Twin, Suma, Totsbots Nappies, Union Hand-Roasted Coffee, Yarra Petfood, Yaoh.

The benefits of using the Label

Here's what some of the companies who've signed up to the scheme are saying about the benefits of the Best Buy Label. We've also included examples of how are these companies are now using the Best Buy Label to communicate their ethical values.

Ecology Building Society

"We signed up to the Ethical Consumer Best Buy Label scheme because we value its independence. As our ethical credentials are a cornerstone of our brand and mission, the Best Buy Label is an important testimonial to make current and future members of the Society aware of when considering our products."

Jon Lee, Product Development Manager, Ecology Building Society



Faith In Nature

"The Ethical Consumer Best Buy Label is integral to our marketing approach. As an invitation-only scheme you can't buy the accreditation which is vital for gaining credibility with the 'savvy' customers who our products appeal to. In these days of 'green washing' and unsubstantiated claims, Ethical Consumer's unique ethical scoring system provides an authoritative and impartial benchmark for consumers who want to get the full picture."

Mark Fenn, Marketing Manager, Faith in Nature



Good Energy

"The Ethical Consumer Best Buy Label is fantastic as it provides a reliable, independent and rigorous standard ensuring only the greenest, ethical and most environmentally friendly products are recognised. Our industry is riddled with consumer confusion so having a scheme that identifies which products are genuinely ethical is tremendously important as it provides customers with peace of mind, allowing them to make an assured purchase."

Martin Saunders, Head of Marketing, Good Energy



Kingfisher Toothpaste

“We like to communicate the values that we work hard to maintain and which are so important to us. We don’t always have, and can’t always afford, a lot of space to describe what we do and how we go about it. The Ethical Consumer Best Buy Label which we put on our boxes and tubes helps us to tell our customers that we genuinely care.”

Richard Austin, Managing Director, Kingfisher Natural Toothpaste



Solartwin

“Displaying the Ethical Consumer Best Buy Label has a significant positive impact on both inquiries and sales, particularly with discerning ethical consumers which are central in our market. The fact that Ethical Consumer, a third party, looks at us critically, using an objective scoring method means that valid numerical ethical comparisons can be made.”

Barry Johnston, Managing Director, Solar Twin Ltd



Suma

“Suma are proud to have a very strong ethical policy relating to products, people and trading methods. As a trusted mark within the ethical market place the Ethical Consumer Best Buy Label is ideal for us to use to market our business and products with honesty and openness to consumers who wish to be ethically certain in an increasingly competitive market.”

Rob Sherwell, Suma



How to proceed

If you are interested in purchasing a Best Buy Label, we will send you a copy of the licensing agreement upon request or you can download a pdf of it on our www.ethicalconsumer.org website.

Upon receipt of the agreed fee and signed agreement, the Best Buy Label artwork will be sent to you. This will normally be in a digital format.

For more information, please contact Simon Birch on 0161 226 2929 or email Simon at birch@ethicalconsumer.org