SOLVING LONG-TERM CHAIN OF CUSTODY ISSUES: A MARKET-BASED INITIATIVE

AUTHORS

CHRISTOPHER GIBBONS, AMERICAN GREEN CONSULTING GROUP LLC

Audit documentation and preparation frustrates most Certificate Holders (CHs), but it doesn't have to.

"IT ISN'T THE EASIEST OR NECESSARILY ALWAYS THE MOST ECONOMICAL CHOICE TO BE ECO FRIENDLY, BUT IT HELPS US ALIGN OUR VALUES AND REMIND US WHERE WE'RE HEADED AS A COMPANY. WE'RE TRYING TO BE A BETTER ALLY TO THE PLANET."
LAUREN ALSINA
CREATIVE DIRECTOR,
LIVETRENDS DESIGN GROUP

LIVETRENDS design group

Scope and objectives

There is a constant push and pull in the chain of custody system between people who want to increase the rigor and coverage of the FSC CoC standard, and those who must implement an ever changing and increasingly complex standard. This creates a barrier to entry for FSC in many markets around the world, especially at the small business level.

The American Green Consulting CoC Portal transforms the documentation requirements of CoC certification into an easy to understand question and answer format that someone with no understanding of the CoC Standard can use to get their documentation audit ready. It also includes an optional subscription model that helps insulate users from unexpected changes to the standards (important for businesses with staff turnover). By removing certification headaches and ambiguity, American Green Consulting aims to increase the prevalence of FSC® CoC certification for businesses both big and small.

Conclusions

When certification becomes too much of a headache, businesses choose not to certify and instead seek out easier pathways to increase revenue.

By removing documentation headaches, guesswork, and unplanned expenses in staff time, AGC's CoC Portal allows businesses an easier pathway to become sustainable, make responsible choices for their wood and paper material sourcing, and trust that the process is both equitable and efficient.

"OUR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS ARE A CORE VALUE - TO CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND TEAM, MEET CLIENT'S SUSTAINABLE GOALS, AND REDUCE OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AS WE CONDUCT BUSINESS."
NADINE GEERING, EVP
D|FAB

d|fab

Innovative approach

AGC's CoC Portal provides all required documentation for your FSC CoC audit, including: Operations Manual, Product Group List, Supplier Verification instructions and more.

FSC certification requires annual visits to ensure compliance with standards, but industries worldwide are in constant upheaval, especially small businesses. The staff tasked with certification compliance often may change between renewals or visits. Staff unfamiliar with the process will have more difficulty during audits, especially if working under the pressure of a five year expiration deadline. This leads to corrective actions and frustration with the FSC system overall. And that's not to mention someone completely new to the system that is simply trying to figure out what is actually being asked by the standard in order to get started.

- By keeping all your documentation ready to go, and by making the certification process easy-to-understand even for someone who is totally new to the process, AGC's CoC Portal removes those barriers to gaining and keeping your FSC certification.

- Additionally, the simplicity and standardization of the AGC CoC Portal provides all the benefits of crowdsourcing but with none of the confidentiality concerns. We review the audit reports of many clients, looking for trends. Those trends then become updates to the CoC Portal, helping to inoculate all of our clients against CARs, NCRs, and audit frustrations.

- Because the AGC CoC Portal is built on a platform that is easily replicated and scalable, it can easily be updated in different languages, or leased as a custom branded "white box" application for other organizations to use in their own outreach and growth programs. It is the first large-scale market-driven attempt to solve the dilemma of how to make the CoC standard easier without reducing rigor.

- The AGC CoC Portal handles single certificate transfer system with outsourcing, right now, through our website. Plans are in place, but awaiting funding, for expanding to handle credit, percentage, reclaimed and controlled materials, and multiple sites. Currently, American Green offers more traditional consulting packages for each of those options.

Other

The FSC® Chain of Custody (CoC) certification is the most common FSC certification. The purpose of CoC certification is to be able to track each product back to the forest from which it originated, ensuring that it came from a responsibly managed forest. As would be expected, this process requires thorough documentation – and while complex, the process does not need to be onerous. With the right tools, any business – big or small – can succeed at becoming FSC® CoC certified. The demand for FSC-certified products continues to grow, so if you've been thinking about getting your FSC certification, now is the time. The AGC CoC Portal is the way.

AMERICAN GREEN CONSULTING GROUP LLC

FSC FORESTS FOR ALL FOREVER™