

Overview

In 2017 the OIA and bluesign are launching a partnership intended to accelerate the positive impact for companies who desire to improve the environmental footprint of their products. More specifically, the action is directed at dramatically improving the chemical integrity of product and supply chains.

The partnership provides access for OIA Brands to the services of bluesign at a discounted rate, in exchange, brands commit to making tangible improvements to their programs, and therefore, products.

1) Why is OIA establishing this partnership? Why now?

a) *It reflects the communicated strategy of the OIA to move from **Assessment** to **Action**.*

From the beginning of the Sustainability Working Group (SWG) the intent was/is to drive the greatest amount of positive impact. The development of the Eco/Higg Index has been a great step forward to standardize the measures of sustainability—the assessment. Ultimately impact is driven through action.

It is recognized through assessment that the use of chemistry can be one of the greatest sources of negative impact from outdoor apparel and equipment. Staying true to the original purpose of the SWG, it is believed that providing tools and aggressively addressing the impact of chemistry is one of the most important to-dos of the industry association.

2) Why bluesign technologies?

a) *The bluesign® system, getting its start in the outdoor industry in 2000, is one of the most time tested and utilized methods by leading brands in the industry, indicating support of the system and meets all of OIA's partnership criteria.*

b) *The bluesign® system is a holistic method of assuring the integrity of inputs all through the supply chain—from chemical supplier to finished products. It deals with impact areas which are important and relevant to the outdoor industry. This is validated by the Chemicals Management Framework, a uniquely created instrument of the OIA Chemicals Management Work Group (CMWG), indicates all the key dimensions of a robust chemical integrity program. The bluesign system satisfies nearly all aspects of this model.*

c) *The Higg Index MSI (Materials Sustainability Index) and DDM (Design and Development Module) recognizes the robustness of the bluesign® system as the most comprehensive way to improve the chemical profile of materials. Materials developed under the bluesign® system receive the highest impact reduction scores for chemistry.*

d) *The bluesign system is uniquely positioned to provide valuable impact reduction benchmarking data for system partners the industry as a whole.*

3) Does this mean that as an OIA brand I must use bluesign to ensure the chemical integrity of my materials

a) **No**, this is completely a voluntary program. Brands may use whatever method they choose to address chemistry in their products. The OIA is strongly suggesting that they adequately address the issue and propose that they consider using bluesign as the means to do so. To further help incentivize the behavior it has negotiated a 15% discount on the services provided by bluesign as a benefit for its brand members.

4) Isn't endorsing a commercial service a departure from what OIA has done in the past?

a) *Yes and no. Yes, for the first time OIA is encouraging specific action which is believed to legitimately reduce the footprint of products, vis-à-vis chemistry. No, because OIA has had partnerships with other service providers where it is felt that they can offer members good value (e.g., UPS, YRC Freight, Office Max, etc.)*

5) When does this program start?

a) *The program's official start date is March 1st, 2017*

6) What is the discount on? How much is the discount? What is included?

a) *Annual system partnership, the all-inclusive fee paid to bluesign annually for all services provided.*

b) *The discount is 15% off of the annual system partnership.*

c) *Services provided are the normal full package provided to bluesign® System Partner brands.*

7) Is the discount permanent?

a) *The discount is designed to reward performance and can be permanent if the brand demonstrates achievement. It is intended to be a two year "jump start" towards Progressive and Aspirational behaviors.*

b) *It allows a brand to show progress and after a two year period if the brand continually demonstrates Progressive behaviors, the discount will remain in place for as long as the brand maintains this level of performance.*

c) *The measures of Foundational, Progressive and Aspirational behaviors will be evaluated by bluesign as part of the regular brand assessment process.*

8) What if I am already a bluesign brand system partner, can I get a discount too?

a) *If you are already a bluesign® System Partner brand and your annual system partnership fees are at or near the newly rate then you may be entitled to a discount just like any new OIA-bluesign brand may be.*

b) *If your annual system partnership fees are already below the OIA discounted rate, then no further discount applies.*

Note: This new rate will be released with the official launch of the program

9) What if I am already an OIA member, but not a brand, can I get a discount on bluesign services as well?

a) *No, not currently. The bluesign organization is rolling this out for brands only at this time. OIA and bluesign are open to exploring options for other stakeholders in the future, including suppliers.*

10) I am a European, Asian/Oceania or Other brand, but not an OIA member, can I get a discount as well?

a) *It is intended to be a benefit for OIA members so any brand, wherever the organization is based, can benefit if said organization is a member of the OIA.*

11) I'm interested, who do I talk to?

a) *To confirm your OIA membership and basic program info, you may talk to: Beth Jensen, bjensen@outdoorindustry.org; +1 (303) 327-3517*

b) *For bluesign information and initiate the process, you may talk to: Kevin Myette, kevin_myette@bluesign.com; +1 (253) 332-6108*