

A Green Globes® for Sustainable Interiors Certification Evolves Industry Education



A sustainable interiors project in Washington, D.C. is having far-reaching impacts. The Vinyl Institute wanted to create positive changes inside its new office space despite the real-world limitations of not having control over building systems or building owner decisions.

Representing vinyl resin producers developing products that fit into green building solutions, Dick Doyle, President and CEO of The Vinyl Institute at the time of certification, says his organization pursued Green Globes® for Sustainable Interiors certification out of a shared commitment. "Our team met on a regular basis to factor in sustainability and resilience," Doyle recalls. "Then, we worked with our members to see how we could incorporate vinyl products into the formation of a sustainable space. Our manufacturers' donated flooring, wallcovering, cabling, and wiring earned points for various sustainable attributes and helped us achieve our SI certification.

Roger Sola-Sole, Partner at OTJ Architects in Washington, D.C., led the design team. "We ran Green Globes parallel to our design phases so that as we came up with strategies, we made sure we were following the guidelines," notes Sola-Sole. "It was an intuitive process."

Doyle says the path to certification became an evolving education for his organization. "We learned a lot through the process - recycling, power use, water use - they all factored into the decisions we made to minimize environmental impacts of our new office space."

Highlights that helped The Vinyl Institute receive a Two Green Globes rating include:

- Lighting controls such as miniblinds, sunscreens and blackout shades that mitigate the office's abundant direct sunlight and the addition of glass walls and partitions to reduce artificial lighting demands and provide access to natural light
- Energy-saving strategies that include LED and compact florescent lighting on sensors or dimmers
- ENERGY STAR-rated appliances
- Materials with a high recycled content
- Low or no-VOC materials to safeguard occupant health



Transparent Process

Doyle was impressed by the level of communication the team had with the Green Globes Assessor who was involved early on. “The assessor was terrific,” Doyle remarks. “It wasn’t thumbs up or down; he supported our collaboration with expertise and ideas. For us, it made the process transparent and promoted stakeholder involvement.”

“The assessor was really accessible, which allowed us to have a true dialogue with him. Rather than running the design and evaluation separately, he was able to inform the process.”

Green Globes’ interactive approach appealed to Sola-Sole as well. “During the walkthrough, it was really effective to have a sit-down with our assessor, the contractor, building owner, and client to address specific points and engage in a productive dialogue.” The recommendations in the final

report also extended the conversations. “The final report gave the client things to consider in terms of maintaining and further improving the sustainability of their office space, like setting up recycling or instituting environmental policies. Green Globes is a resource for not only designing but occupying your space,” affirms Sola-Sole.

Proud of their accomplishment, Doyle indicated that several hundred vinyl industry executives and other dignitaries have come through the new office since the beginning of the year. “We have an absolutely beautiful space that helps me educate and inspire others to advance their commitment to sustainable practices,” Doyle says. “Even the building owner now gives tours of our space to his prospective tenants showcasing the benefits of Green Globes.”

“With any client, it’s important to understand the message the space needs to convey, and certification is a great message to deliver,” says Sola-Sole. “The Vinyl Institute has taken that extra step to make sure their space is responsible and their Green Globes certification shows it.”