



Colgate-Palmolive Company

Sector: Consumer Goods

Region: Based in the US, product sold globally

[Colgate-Palmolive Company](#) focuses on the production, distribution and provision of oral care, home care & personal care products.

Through the Save Water logo and messaging campaign, Colgate-Palmolive encourages people to change their behaviour and turn off the faucet while brushing their teeth to raise awareness of water waste and scarcity. The Save Water logo appears on Colgate-Palmolive product packaging. The company also invites consumers to make a personal online pledge to save water at the communication [campaign website](#).



Mindset

Life Cycle Thinking: As part of its efforts to better understand impacts and opportunities, Colgate-Palmolive has estimated the water and carbon footprint of their products from Oral Care, Personal Care and Home Care categories, including the key phases of raw/packaging materials, manufacturing and consumer use.

Hotspots Analysis Approach: Colgate-Palmolive identified that water use is a hotspot in the overall sustainability performance of their products. Also, water footprint and greenhouse gas assessments have helped the company to identify that approximately 90% of the water usage of their products is in the consumer use phase. This hotspot analysis helped support and drive the Save Water campaign.

Mainstreaming Sustainability: The Save Water messaging has been integrated into the marketing and merchandizing of the Oral Care business and brand strategy. In addition, Colgate-Palmolive has incorporated Save Water messaging and to some extent product development into a Product Sustainability Scorecard process, which aims to make all products incrementally more sustainable.

Principle 1: Reliability

Colgate-Palmolive utilized accepted Life Cycle Assessment protocols and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and World Resources Initiative's [GHG Protocol](#) methodologies to conduct the greenhouse gas and water footprint assessments, which form the basis for identifying the use phase as a key impact area of the product. The estimation methodologies have been reviewed by experts in the field. Since the claim is based on assumed change in behaviour (e.g. turning off the faucet), Colgate-Palmolive has developed consumer insight surveys asking people if they have heard about the Colgate Save Water campaign, and if so, did it have an impact, and what specific habits did they change as a consequence.



Colgate-Palmolive uses a science-based approach to estimating the water footprint as well as translating consumer behaviour changes to water and GHG reductions. This approach helps the company estimate and monitor water use reduction based on the success of the Save Water campaign and associated change in consumer behaviour. Underlying methodologies have been reviewed by a third-party and a leading technical NGO.

Principle 2: Relevance

Based on the water footprint analysis and hotspot approach, water was identified as a hotspot in the overall sustainability performance of Colgate-Palmolive products. Also, water usage in the consumer use phase accounts for approximately 90% of Colgate-Palmolive's water use impacts.



The Save Water campaign is clearly relevant to the sustainability impacts of Colgate-Palmolive's products. The claim highlights an area that is integral to the performance of products.



Principle 3: Clarity



The Save Water message on packaging is clearly related to the intended use phase of the products.

The messaging around Save Water has been designed to be as simple and clear as possible to the consumer. "Save Water" is not technical; it is easily understood by consumers.

By design, the Save Water messaging is meant to be accessible and visible to consumers through multiple channels and touchpoints, and most importantly during the use phase, where the action from the consumer is required.

Principle 4: Transparency



Data behind the claim: Consumers are able to obtain information about the Save Water initiative, the water reduction impacts and the underlying information (methodologies) via the interactive website, which is written on the product packages. The website also includes links to the US Environmental Protection Agency [WaterSense program](#).



Save Water messaging campaign are visible at the point of purchase.

Information about saving water is made available and is comprehensible, and consumers are able to assess the information that underpins the claim.

Principle 6: Three Dimensions of Sustainability



Environmental: The primary dimension of the Save Water campaign is the environmental aspect of reducing water consumption by reducing water waste. Additionally, reducing water also contributes to reducing CO₂ emissions associated with water treatment, pumping and wastewater.

Social: Saving water can have profound social benefits, particularly in water stressed regions. In addition, the Save Water campaign aims to raise awareness and change social behaviours that can translate beyond water.

Economic: Reducing water use helps consumers reduce water bills and cities to reduce their water and wastewater operating costs.



Example of how Save Water logo and messaging campaign are available on pack.

Principle 5: Accessibility



The Save Water logo and website feature on-pack and are visible at the point of purchase, as well as in store, print/TV and online, including major social media. The Save Water logo is also being implemented on the actual products, for example on toothpaste tubes as well as their outer cardboard packaging.

The primary focus of the communication campaign is related to environmental issues, although the wider impacts also aim to touch upon both social and economic dimensions.



Principle 7: Behaviour Change and Longer Term Impact



'Save Water' is a direct call to action. The claim is written in a way that actively encourages consumers to change behavior and adopt more sustainable consumption patterns. The additional expected benefit of the campaign is that it may also help instill new water conservation habits beyond Colgate-Palmolive products, helping to scale-up the overall benefits. Linked to the communication campaign website, Colgate-Palmolive has developed the [EveryDropCounts website](#) where consumers are invited to make a personal pledge to save water. The website also includes a "Turn off the faucet when brushing" video by Colgate-Palmolive's global water ambassador, Michael Phelps.

Colgate-Palmolive has conducted consumer insight surveys to understand the reach and effects of their Save Water Campaign: in the first year, they estimate that the global Save Water campaign helped consumers reduce water use by about 53 billion gallons. Colgate-Palmolive's claim aims at changing consumer behaviour around reducing the amount of water associated with using Colgate-Palmolive products. The messaging 'Save Water' is clear and goes beyond simply informing consumers to encouraging them to act.

Principle 8: Multi-Channel and Innovative Approach



The Save Water logo and website are available on pack, in store, print/TV and online, including major social media. Since the Save Water campaign is global and across different product categories (Oral Care, Personal Care and Home Care) it reaches a wide variety of consumers around the world. Colgate has a large quantity of engaging and entertaining video assets on its [YouTube](#) channel.

The Save Water message is communicated to consumers via multiple channels, aiming at addressing different user groups

Principle 9: Collaboration



Colgate-Palmolive has utilized sustainability standards related to Life Cycle Assessments and the GHG Protocol in the development of water and GHG footprints. Through social media and interactive activities, consumers themselves are invited and encouraged to feel part of a joint effort.

The claim was developed with inputs from external stakeholders, such as NGOs and industry associations. Colgate-Palmolive aims to foster consumer engagement in the claim by using an inclusive language: letting consumers feel they are part of a larger group or movement.

Principle 10: Comparability



This principle states that product comparisons should be used only where it really helps the consumer to make sustainable choices. In this claim, Colgate-Palmolive opted not to address this aspect.