

LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS

Purpose:

- 1) to understand the complexity of product use, distribution, and disposal on a mass scale;
- 2) to glimpse the environmental impact generated from Northern patterns of overconsumption;
- 3) to contribute to the knowledge base on UVM product use for the Environmental Council;
- 3) to gain skills in cooperative group work;
- 4) to use graphic communication methods in oral presentation.

Assignment:

1) Focusing on your product, engage in a group brainstorm on ways to do "action research" (see handout) to gain information. Assign information-gathering tasks to members of the group. Meet frequently to share results and propose new, creative means of finding out useful information. Your job is to find out as much as you can which may have environmental implications based on the product creation, use, and distribution. Try to answer as many of these questions as possible in as much depth and detail as you can:

- a) Who uses the product, where and how much?
- b) How does the product get to UVM/Burlington and in what quantities?
- c) Where is the product made or grown and under what climate conditions?
- d) What is the product made of, what international markets does it depend on?
- e) What are the labor policies of companies or farms making this product?
- f) What waste products are generated by use of this product and where do they end up?
- g) What alternatives exist to the use of this product?
- h) What UVM barriers might block switching to alternatives?
- i) What hot political, economic, or ethical issues are involved in using this product?

2) Prepare a group oral presentation on your findings. Be as thorough, engaging, creative, and informative as possible. All members of the group should be engaged in the presentation. Rehears your presentation so you use your time effectively; you will have 20 minutes. Try to allow some time for questions from the group. Use visual aids to communicate information and show patterns. These might include but are not limited to:

- a) graphs and charts, diagrams
- b) slides (prints are less effective in a big group)
- c) samples of the product in various stages of use, shipping, waste
- d) systems flow charts with feedback loops

3) Written assignment: Please hand in three typed elements the day of your presentation

- a) one-page outline of your group presentation
- b) a typed summary of the key facts you have found to be passed on to the Env Council
- c) a 1-2 page self reflection from each person in the group addressing how the group worked and what you learned about group dynamics, activism, and action research.

4) Presentations: These will happen on February 25th and 27th. Each should be about 20 minutes long, well-organized and rehearsed for effective use of time. Do not run over! Staying to time limits is an important skill in presentations. Include not only your information, but the barriers to research which you encountered.

Grading Criteria on the back

Grading Criteria:

1. Research Quality and Depth
 - a) Life cycle of product
 - b) Degree of use
 - c) Alternatives to product
 - d) Issues involved
 - e) Integration of findings
2. Presentation
 - a) Visual aids
 - b) Timing
3. Group participation
 - a) Preparation/research
 - b) Presentation itself