

Upcycled vs. Recycled



A New Consumerism: Old is the new, NEW

These days, most of us are pretty familiar with the concept of “recycle.” And recycling was, indeed, a great start in our progress towards creating a more sustainable world. But times change, and there’s a whole new way of looking at this the concept has now evolved to “upcycle.”

Upcycle has an important distinction from recycle. The former applies to old products which are redeployed giving the new item more value (an Amish quilt, for example), the later implies the opposite (think: ground up and mixed together with other compounds to make, say, speckled cement). Reclaiming vs smashing.





Upcycling: Simply a Good Thing to Do.

It is easy to see how this “reclaimed” process has environmentally-responsible characteristics. There is certainly increased awareness recently; a desire to reduce the load on our landfills. As an illustration, according to an Oct 21, 2014 Southern California Public Radio feature, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a plan to divert 75% of its trash from landfills by 2025.

The non-profit US Green Building Council actually awards LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) credits for use of reclaimed materials in new construction. This depicts the addition of economic value to environmentally-responsible practice.

And there is one last element to the idea of increased use of reclaimed materials: social. Here, we are asking the question, “Is the world a better place as a result?” Think of this as a happiness quotient.

Taken together, environmentally-sustainable practices, a new-found economic benefit, and the fact that it is simply a good thing to do, have all lead to increased availability of upcycled materials. And, not least, the final product has a compelling story and is typically particularly interesting in character.





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