

Strategic Evaluation of Sustainability Certifications for Andersen Corporation

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Executive Summary

Andersen Corporation is the largest window and door manufacturer in North America, located in Bayport, Minnesota, and is a leader in sustainability within the industry (Grand View Research, 2026; Andersen Corporation, n.d.-b). Andersen's products emphasize innovation through product enhancement, energy-efficient products, sustainably sourced materials, and manufacturing (Andersen Corporation, n.d.-b). The industry is changing with rising sustainability practices and competitors are following similar strategies. This shift led Andersen to collaborate with Arizona State University's (ASU) Master of Sustainability Solutions graduate students to improve their current approach and enhance market competitiveness.

To understand the landscape of sustainability certifications Andersen Corporation requested:

- A Competitive Landscape Analysis and Best Practices Assessment
 - Benchmarking sustainability certifications amongst top industry competitors
 - An assessment of industry best practices
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis
 - An analysis of Andersen's certification strategy
- Survey of Customers
 - Insights into consumer and B2B preferences for sustainability certifications
 - Analysis of survey results
- Strategic Recommendations
 - Forward-thinking recommendations to improve sustainability messaging and certification transparency.

The team assessed Andersen's current sustainability portfolio of product certifications and examined how they compare to industry competitors. An analysis of the current industry landscape, best practices and methods were also completed. In addition, a survey targeted towards industry professionals was conducted to provide insights about customer buying behavior. This comprehensive report details how Andersen can expand and communicate its impact of sustainability leadership in the industry.

Based on the results, the team recommends the following:

1. Product-level sustainability profiles to provide transparency and communication for customers
2. Expanding product sustainability certifications
3. Strategic sustainability messaging across marketing outlets and audience groups
4. Strengthening Environmental, Social, and Governance reporting with defined benchmarks and measurable targets enabling long-term sustainability performance tracking

Introduction

Andersen serves a diverse set of customers, including architects, homeowners, developers, and contractors in North America. The company's size, brand recognition, and long-standing reputation for sustainability leadership has positioned them as a leader in the window and door industry (Andersen Corporation, n.d.-b). This is achieved through maintaining a diverse portfolio of sustainability certifications and a commitment to sustainability. In line with these efforts, Andersen approached the ASU School of Sustainability (SOS) graduate team to identify opportunities for improvement, as these certifications have not been evaluated for stakeholder value or alignment with current industry standards. In collaboration with Andersen, the ASU graduate team completed a reassessment of the certifications currently held and a review of their existing sustainability strategy to strengthen or integrate sustainable initiatives through insight-driven research.

Key industry sustainability certifications include ENERGY STAR, SCS Indoor Advantage Gold, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPD). Sustainability certifications are becoming more common across competitors, reducing their value as a competitive differentiator and positioning them closer to a baseline expectation (Sustainability Atlas, 2026).

As sustainability certifications become standard, it does not diminish consumer interest. According to a 2024 Deloitte Global Consumer-Signals survey, over 72% of 20,000 respondents across all age groups indicated that they have shifted their behavior and purchasing habits to mitigate their personal environmental impact. Conducted bi-yearly between 2021 to 2024, the survey consistently showed that nearly 40% of consumer respondents had previously paid more for a sustainably produced good and would accept other trade-offs in pursuit of a more environmentally friendly product (Steinmann, 2025). As consumer preferences trend towards environmentally responsible products, it is evident that companies demonstrating measurable sustainability initiatives markedly differentiates themselves from competitors as industry leaders.

The central risk is tailored consumer needs to certification misalignment: without a revised strategy to continually re-evaluate and prioritize sustainability investments, Andersen may continue to invest in certifications with diminishing influence on customer decisions. This could create a growing gap in sustainability areas that are increasingly important to market expectations and product value, but lack the direct potential value to the consumer.

Problem Statement

For years, Andersen has demonstrated an understanding of the connection between corporate footprint and their long-term impact on the environment. As a result, Andersen's current certification portfolio is linked to environmental performance and product transparency within the industry.

Based on initial discussions with Andersen, several concerns were highlighted. First, there is ambiguity about which sustainability certifications and disclosures generate meaningful market value across Andersen's customer segments. Second, Andersen has indicated that its sustainability resources are limited, presenting a challenge to determine which certifications provide strategic value and should be prioritized (Risse & Saush, 2024). Lastly, there is a gap in how certifications are used to market Andersen's sustainability efforts and communicate them to customers, limiting effectiveness among competitors. Bridging this gap will ensure that decisions on which certifications to expand or pursue; in addition to strategies for marketing these certifications, are aligned with industry expectations.

Overall, these concerns underscore a broader strategic tension: balancing the desire to maintain Andersen's leadership position with the need to ensure that sustainability initiatives are targeted and efficient to meet market expectations.

Methods

The following methods used for this project include a landscape analysis, SWOT and survey of customers.

The research process began with a competitive landscape analysis to identify key competitors within the windows and doors industry and examine the certification positioning of each company. Andersen was then benchmarked against competitors to assess how they compare within the certification landscape. The analysis identified industry best practices by cross-referencing which companies hold specific certifications and analyzed their approaches to sustainability.

A SWOT analysis was conducted to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Andersen's sustainability certification strategy incorporating research collected from the competitive landscape analysis.

Lastly, a survey of Andersen's customer base was conducted to understand how certifications influence purchasing decisions, behavior, and to identify what sustainability attributes are most valued across customer groups. These results helped inform recommendations to improve Andersen's current sustainability strategy, positioning them as a leader in the window and door industry. It should be noted that the survey responses are drawn from Andersen's existing customer base, which may introduce some response bias. However they still provide a detailed understanding of the sustainability certifications and attributes relevant to the clients key customer segments.

Landscape Analysis

A landscape analysis was conducted to understand the current market size and growth of the fenestration industry, identify Andersen's key competitors, and examine regulatory and market

shifts. Andersen was compared against its competitors evaluating its position within the industry. This provides an industry overview and explains Andersen’s position within the broader competitive and regulatory environment allowing for the identification of industry best practices.

Market Size

The U.S. windows and doors industry currently has a total market size of \$7.3 billion USD and at a compound annual growth rate of 3.7%, highlighting stable industry growth from 2023-2028. This growth is driven by increasing home renovations and rebuilding projects in coastal regions of the U.S. affected by climate change impacts (Freedonia Group, 2024). The windows and doors market is projected to increase in demand, in both residential and non-residential buildings (PR Newswire, 2024). This demand will focus on raw materials, skilled labor, and technology, with shifts in residential design and features, and on public infrastructure spending by governments. Further this sector is influenced by regional climate conditions, security considerations, and evolving consumer preferences. Homeowners prioritize energy efficiency, modern designs, and artistic details, with developed economies leading the market with a focus on energy costs and display (PR Newswire, 2024). Key companies operating in the U.S. industry include Andersen Corporation, Pella Corporation, Marvin, Masonite International Corporation, and JELD-WEN (Grand View Research, 2026).

Key Findings: Benchmarking Andersen Against Competition

Andersen was benchmarked against its industry competitors to assess the certification landscape and determine its position relative to other companies. Table 1 highlights detailed information on the certification descriptions of the fenestration industry.

Table 1: Definitions of Sustainability Certifications

Certification	Definition
FSC Certification	FSC verifies wood and other forest products come from responsibly managed forests (Forest Stewardship Council, n.d.-a).
FSC Chain-of-Custody (CoC)	FSC CoC tracks FSC-certified products throughout the supply chain to maintain the sustainability standard (Forest Stewardship Council, n.d.-b).
Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)	SFI is a North American certification. It verifies wood and other forest products come from responsibly managed forests (Sustainable Forestry Initiative n.d.).
SFI Chain-of-Custody (CoC)	SFI CoC tracks SFI-verified products throughout the

	supply chain to maintain the sustainability standard (SCS Global Services, n.d.-b).
ENERGY STAR	ENERGY STAR identifies products that are energy-efficient and help consumers save money on energy bills (Energy star, n.d.)
ENERGY STAR ® Partner	ENERGY STAR Partner is a voluntary partnership program. It works in collaboration with the private sector to advance energy efficiency and promote ENERGY STAR certified products (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.-a).
ENERGY STAR Most Efficient	ENERGY STAR Most Efficient is a higher-tier designation for the absolute best products. It represents cutting-edge efficiency and innovation for specific product categories each year (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.-b).
National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) Certification	NFRC provides independent, uniform energy performance ratings for windows, doors, and skylights based on five key metrics: U-factor, Solar Heat Gain Coefficient, Visible Transmittance, Air Leakage, and Condensation Resistance. These certified ratings help determine compliance with energy codes and Energy Star requirements (National Fenestration Rating Council, n.d.).
EPDs	It is a document that transparently reports the environmental impact of a product or material, based on a product life-cycle assessment (SCS Global Services, 2017, UL Solutions.n.d.-a).
SCS Indoor Advantage™ Gold	This is an indoor air quality certification for low-emitting interior products. It validates that furniture, building materials, and finishes contribute to healthier indoor air quality (SCS Global Services, n.d.-a).
SCS Recycled Content Certification	Ensures recycled materials are used to develop a product (SCS Global Services, n.d.-c).
LEED Certification	It is a green building certification system. It focuses on

	sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor air quality to reduce operational costs and environmental impact (U.S. Green Building Council [USGBC], n.d.-b).
Passive House	It follows an international building standard that verifies extremely energy-efficient construction, reducing heating and cooling energy usage (Passive House Institute, n.d.).
Cradle to Cradle	Used to assure the quality of a product. It is a standard for designing and manufacturing safe, circular, and sustainable products (Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute, n.d.).
Declare Label	This is a voluntary product disclosure form. Manufacturers disclose product information on Declare labels on the Declare platform so consumers can easily understand what exactly they are getting (International Living Future Institute, 2024).
UL ECOLOGO Certification	A lifecycle-based environmental certification that complies with stringent environmental standards. ECOLOGO Certified products are verified for reduced environmental and health impact (UL Solutions.n.d.-b).
The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest (PEFC)	A forest certification system that ensures forest tree-based products come from sustainable managed forests (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, n.d.).
ISO 14001	An international management certification ensuring compliance with regulations and waste reduction (International Organization for Standardization n.d.-b).
ISO 9001	An international standard for quality management systems that helps improve efficiency and customer satisfaction across products (International Organization for Standardization n.d.-a).
Health Product Declarations (HPD)	HPD is a member association that reports material transparency and associated health information. HPDs assist architects, designers, builders and contractors in

	evaluating products based on their impact to the building environment and occupants (Health Product Declaration Collaborative n.d.).
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Table 1 outlines sustainability certifications commonly used in the window and door industry by Andersen and its top four competitors identified in this report.

Industry Overview

Andersen’s direct competitors are Pella Corporation and Marvin Windows and Doors in the U.S. market. Pella Corporation has an estimated annual revenue of 2.4 billion USD (Growjo, 2026), compared to Marvin Windows and Doors at 1.8 billion USD (RocketReach, n.d.), and Andersen Corporation at 4 billion USD as of 2024 (Darius, 2026). Both Pella and Marvin have variability in their sustainability certification portfolios in comparison with Andersen, with differences among HPD, forest certification programs, indoor air quality certifications, LEED support, EPDs and ENERGY STAR certifications (Table 2). Additional competitors include JELD-WEN and Masonite, which expand the competitive landscape beyond premium-focused brands with their respective certification portfolios being limited in comparison with Andersen, but are still key players (Grand View Research, n.d.). This creates distinctions in how each company goes beyond compliance in the industry.

Pella Corporation

Pella Corporation has products with key certifications, including FSC, SFI for responsible sourcing, ENERGY STAR, NFRC, and Passive House certifications, all of which contribute towards LEED certification points for green buildings (Pella Corporation, n.d.-a; Pella Corporation, n.d.-b; Pella Corporation, n.d.-c). Pella also participates in the sustainability initiative SmartWay Transport, which partners with the Environmental Protection Agency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation of its products (Pella Corporation, n.d.-d).

Marvin Windows and Doors

Marvin Windows and Doors has several certifications including SFI, FSC, Passive House, NFRC, and ENERGY STAR which support LEED certification requirements (Marvin Windows and Doors, 2011; Marvin, 2024; Marvin n.d.-a; Retrofit Magazine, n.d.).The company further supports sustainability through energy-efficient design, responsible sourcing, and reducing its environmental footprint, including recycling 99% of its products (Marvin, n.d.-b).

JELD-WEN and Masonite

JELD-WEN and Masonite add variation to the certification landscape, each offering different certifications to consumers. JELD-WEN offers products with certifications such as FSC, ENERGY STAR, NFRC and Cradle to Cradle on select products (JELD-WEN, n.d.-a;

JELD-WEN, n.d.-b; JELD-WEN, 2025). In 2026, JELD-WEN published EPDs for select product lines, demonstrating a rising emphasis on transparency and lifecycle impacts (JELD-WEN, 2026). Similarly, Masonite highlights sustainability through responsible sourcing practices and participation in certification programs such as FSC, ENERGY STAR, EPDs, and SCS Indoor Advantage Gold (Masonite International Corporation, n.d.; SCS Global Services, 2017). However, compared to Andersen, both companies have a limited comprehensive sustainability certification portfolio.

Andersen Corporation

Andersen Corporation presents a broader range of sustainability certifications, including ENERGY STAR, SCS Indoor Advantage Gold, FSC, Passive House, Recycled Content, HPDs and EPDs (Andersen Corporation, n.d.-b; Andersen Corporation, 2018). For example, Andersen completed EPDs for its E-Series windows nearly five years ago, and more recently expanded EPDs coverage to its 100 Series, 400 Series, and A-Series windows in November 2025 (Andersen Windows, 2025).

The company also offers third-party verified recycled content in many of its products through SCS Global Services, which showcases resource efficiency and supports sustainable materials management by reducing demand for virgin materials (SCS Global Services, n.d.-c).

Andersen also utilizes recycled content as a differentiator, especially through its proprietary Fibrex(R) composite material, which blends reclaimed wood fiber into its composition and pushes pre-consumer recycled content numbers higher (Renewal by Andersen, n.d.). However, Andersen does not know if customers value recycled content in their products as there has been no formal research into whether customers are making decisions based on these attributes.

However, Andersen does not currently hold certifications such as Cradle to Cradle, Declare Label or SFI certifications (Andersen Corporation, n.d.-b). These certifications address different aspects of sustainability including circularity, material ingredient transparency and responsible forest sourcing in North America (Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute, n.d., International Living Future Institute, 2024, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, n.d.). As sustainable practices become increasingly prevalent in the construction industry, there is a shift towards closed-loop material systems and material transparency. The lack of participation in these certification frameworks may limit Andersen's positioning in building markets (Illankoon & Vithanage, 2023).

Analysis of Emerging Certifications and Regulatory Shifts

Regulatory and industry shifts shape long-term strategic direction in buying patterns. The window and door industry is currently transitioning from a narrow focus on operational energy efficiency to broader expectations for embodied carbon, material transparency, and lifecycle performance.

ENERGY STAR remains a foundational benchmark for residential products and continues to influence consumer purchasing decisions due recognized energy savings (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 2023). However, evolving green building standards are expanding sustainability expectations beyond energy efficiency. LEED v4.1 and anticipated LEED v5 place increasing emphasis on environmental product transparency, life cycle assessment, and embodied carbon disclosure, elevating the strategic importance of EPDs (USGBC, 2023). EPDs follow internationally recognized standards (ISO 14025) and provide higher value; however, ENERGY STAR becomes a minimum compliance indicator rather than a market differentiator. Simultaneously, state and municipal climate policies are beginning to incorporate embodied carbon considerations into procurement and building requirements. For example, California’s Buy Clean Act and similar legislation in Colorado require EPDs and establish global warming potential limits for certain construction materials used in public projects (California Department of General Services, 2023; Colorado General Assembly, 2023). At the federal level, the U.S. General Services Administration continues to implement initiatives prioritizing low-embodied-carbon construction materials supported by verified EPD data, particularly through Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funded programs, although broader federal “Buy Clean” efforts have been scaled back under recent administrative priorities (U.S. General Services Administration, 2023; updated implementation guidance 2025). These developments indicate that lifecycle transparency tools such as EPDs may become increasingly important in future specification decisions.

For Andersen, these shifts suggest that sustainability certifications will increasingly function as compliance and specification tools rather than solely as marketing signals. The key strategic challenge lies in determining which emerging certifications are likely to become baseline expectations within the coming years and which remain niche differentiators. Aligning certification investments with regulatory momentum and verified customer demand will be essential to maintaining competitiveness in both residential and commercial segments.

Table 2: Sustainability Certifications Currently Implemented by Companies

Certification	Andersen	Marvin Windows and Doors	Pella Corporation	Jeld-Wen	Masonite
FSC Certification	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FSC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Chain-of-Custody (CoC)					
SFI	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
SFI Chain-of-Custody (CoC)	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
ENERGY STAR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ENERGY STAR ® Partner	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ENERGY STAR Most Efficient	Select Products	Select products	Select Products	No	No
NFRC Certification	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
EPDs	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
SCS Indoor Advantage™ Gold	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
SCS Recycled Content Certification	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
LEED Certification	Some Support	Some Support	Detailed Support	No	No
Passive House	Yes, certain products	Yes, certain products	Yes, certain products	No	No
Cradle to Cradle	No	No	No	Select products	No
Declare Label	No	No	No	No	No
UL ECOLOGO Certification	No	No	No	No	No

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest (PEFC)	No	No	No	Yes	No
ISO 14001	No	No	No	Yes	No
ISO 9001	No	No	No	Yes	No
HPD	Select Products (E series)	No	No	No	No

Table 2 demonstrates the presence of all the sustainability certifications from Table 1 compared to Andersen and its competitors.

The team created a ‘consumer benefits’ table to visually illustrate how many sustainability certifications go beyond environmental responsibility to deliver tangible value to end consumers. Currently, Andersen does not highlight their certification benefits to their respective clients. A gap that can be mediated by clarifying these factors to the consumers. 91% of consumers are most likely to purchase from a brand that provides tailored recommendations or provides tailored insights to personal benefits (Morgan, 2020). Table 3 delivers a method to understand how different standards contribute in relation to cost savings. Many certifications have tangible benefits to the consumer, ENERGY STAR, Passive House, and LEED result in direct savings tied to the consumers energy bill. While other certifications like NFRC and EPDs do not directly impact the consumer, but do aid the processes that eventually add savings, or which are required for project approval. This helps bridge the disconnect between technical certifications and real-life implications, making it easier to see how these attributes affect purchasing decisions and long-term value.

Table 3: Industry-Wide End-Consumer Savings

Certification	Consumer Benefits
FSC CoC	Guarantees sustainable sourcing from forest to consumer (Forest Stewardship Council, n.d.-b).
SFI CoC	Meets demand for sustainable materials and mitigates supply chain risk (SCS Global Services. (n.d.-b)
ENERGY STAR Partner	20–35% lower energy consumption, reduced utility bills, and improved building comfort (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.-c).

ENERGY STAR Most Efficient	Top-tier energy savings, significantly lower utility bills, and reduced environmental impact without sacrificing performance (Bray & Scarff, 2026).
NFRC Certification	NFRC certification is often required for products to qualify for programs such as ENERGY STAR (National Fenestration Rating Council, n.d.)
EPDs	Helps architects and developers document embodied carbon impacts of materials. Increasingly required in public procurement and institutional construction projects (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2024).
SCS Indoor Advantage Gold	Healthier indoor environments for occupants (SCS Global Services, n.d.-d)
SCS Recycled Content Certification	Helps projects earn LEED Materials & Resources credits (SCS Global Services, n.d.-c)
LEED Contribution Documentation	Lower utility costs, improved health and productivity, higher property values, and reduced environmental impact and a high ROI (U.S. Department of Energy[DOE], n.d.-b).
Passive House	Up to 75–90% reduction in heating and cooling energy demand (Passive House Institute, n.d.).
Cradle to Cradle	Supports consumer confidence as products are assessed for material health, product circularity, clean air and climate protection, and water and soil stewardship (Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute, n.d).
Declare Label	Enhanced occupant health and streamlined product certification (International Living Future Institute,2024)

Table 3 highlights the direct savings to the client, end-consumer, or homeowner.

Based on the landscape analysis, Andersen’s competitors approach sustainability certifications similarly and face similar pressures and customer expectations. This analysis synthesizes the key strategies currently used by leading companies in the window and door industry to respond to a market where sustainability certifications are becoming widely adopted and increasingly commoditized. Rather than treating certifications as standalone differentiators, industry leaders are shifting toward more strategic applications that enhance their effectiveness and relevance (World Green Building Council, 2022). The selected best practices include tailoring

sustainability communication to specific stakeholder segments so that technical audiences receive detailed certification data while consumer-facing messaging emphasizes simple, recognizable signals; regularly reassessing which certifications still provide strategic, regulatory, or market value to avoid over-reliance on saturated labels; and embedding sustainability directly into product design. Collectively, these practices reflect a potential broader industry shift away from certification quantity as a competitive advantage and toward more intentional, integrated, and audience-specific sustainability strategies.

Segment-Specific Sustainability Signaling

Tailoring sustainability strategies to segment-specific stakeholders is a practice used within the industry. Segment-specific sustainability signaling is the strategic communication of environmental or ethical values to distinct consumer groups, recognizing that different audiences prioritize different aspects of sustainability. Rather than a one-size-fits-all "green" signal, this 'best practice' approach connects product sustainability attributes and/or certifications to specific motivations (McKinsey & Company, 2020). As segment-specific stakeholders prioritize different certifications and sustainability attributes, there is potential to further invest in messaging targeted to specific audiences. When analyzing landscape research, architects and commercial developers emphasize technical documentation, such as EPDs, indoor air quality, and earning LEED credits (USGBC, n.d.-b). Homeowners are more responsive to simple, recognizable signals like ENERGY STAR, which communicate energy savings and cost benefits. More specifically, 90% of American homeowners recognize ENERGY STAR, solidifying its importance in the landscape (EPA, 2023).

Competitors like Pella take advantage of this approach. Instead of listing certifications, they focus on how their products earn LEED credits for projects. For example, Pella explicitly states that its products can contribute to "more than 41 of 110 possible points" (Pella, n.d.-b). Andersen has a strong set of certifications, but doesn't always adjust how those are communicated for different audiences. This creates an opportunity to improve how sustainability is positioned rather than what is being offered as an umbrella strategy. This demonstrates how sustainability certifications are most effective when they are clearly linked to the priorities of specific customer segments rather than presented as a generalized sustainability claim.

Andersen already maintains a broad portfolio of sustainability certifications; however, not all certifications are equally relevant for every stakeholder group. A communication strategy would allow Andersen to emphasize technical certifications such as EPDs and LEED contribution documentation when engaging with architects, engineers, and institutional clients. At the same time, ENERGY STAR performance and energy efficiency messaging could be prioritized in residential marketing, as they directly benefit consumers. This is showcased through lower energy costs, and/or tax incentives (EPA, n.d.-a).

Periodic Reassessment of Attribute Value and Sustainable Reporting Strategy

Companies that are sustainability leaders only retain certifications as informed by regular, purpose-driven reevaluation, and it has become a standard to regularly revisit them to make sure they still add current value. This lines up with broader sustainability thinking, which emphasizes the need to keep evaluating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) efforts to make sure they actually support business goals and meet stakeholder expectations (McKinsey & Company, 2020; Whelan & Fink, 2016).

In addition to certifications, it's important to focus on robust ESG reporting practices that go beyond static achievements and emphasize continuous, measurable progress. While ESG reporting used to be a 'nice to have,' a study found that companies who do not prioritize or engage with ESG reporting standards face high critical feedback from important stakeholders such as investors, activists, environmental NGOs, and many more (Smith, 2023).

A reassessment of strategy could help Andersen evaluate certifications in line with business priorities. Such as market relevance, competitive differentiation, regulatory importance, and alignment with long-term sustainability goals. This process can help identify opportunities to adopt additional certifications that signal leadership in areas such as material transparency, and lifecycle sustainability (International Organization for Standardization, 2019a).

In practice, Andersen's reassessment strategy would operate as a recurring internal review process integrated across sustainability, marketing, product, and sales teams. On a regular cycle, each sustainability certification, such as ENERGY STAR, EPDs, FSC, and more would be evaluated using a standardized scoring matrix that assesses market demand, competitive differentiation, regulatory or industry relevance, and alignment with Andersen's long-term sustainability goals. Based on this evaluation, certifications would be categorized as core, supporting, or monitor, which would directly determine how prominently they are featured in product communications, marketing materials, and sales discussions. The results would then be translated into updated internal messaging guidelines to ensure consistent, segment-specific communication across industry target audiences. In addition, the framework would identify gaps in current certification coverage and guide strategic decisions about adopting emerging standards that strengthen leadership in target areas, creating a continuous loop of evaluation, prioritization, and refinement that keeps Andersen's sustainability strategy both consistent and responsive to evolving market expectations.

Integration of Sustainability into Product Design

In the fenestration industry, sustainability directly embedded into product design is actively pursued, rather than treated as a separate initiative or marketing layer. Environmental performance is considered throughout materials selection, manufacturing processes, and product functionality. This reflects a broader shift toward "built-in" sustainability, where the focus is on what the product delivers rather than on external messaging and attributes, or certifications (World Green Building Council, 2022).

Sustainability is increasingly operationalized through material innovation and performance-based standards. Engineered and composite materials that extend product lifespan and reduce reliance on virgin resources are being used to improve durability while minimizing environmental impact (International Energy Agency, 2019). In the window and door industry, which heavily relies on durable materials, sustainability is anticipated as it leads to major downstream benefits, including benefits in the form of sustainable certifications like LEED. In Andersen's case, it is the development of Fibrex material, a composite material invented by Andersen that outlasts and outperforms other common materials like wood, vinyl, and aluminum. Fibrex material keeps substances out of landfills by having a longer lifespan and responsible sourcing, while also qualifying them for LEED and ENERGY STAR (Renewal by Andersen, n.d).

Energy efficiency is also a foundational design requirement, with many products engineered to meet ENERGY STAR standards as a baseline expectation in the residential and commercial building markets (DOE, n.d.-a). In parallel, manufacturers are increasingly adopting EPDs as a standardized tool to communicate lifecycle environmental impacts, providing transparent and comparable data that supports sustainability-related decision-making across industries (International EPD System, 2025).

Industry practices show that sustainability integration extends beyond compliance standards into material sourcing and product transparency. For example, the use of responsibly sourced wood certified under frameworks such as FSC reflects a broader commitment to sustainable material procurement (Balditas, n.d.).

Overall, this best practice highlights an industry-wide movement toward designing sustainability into the product from the outset. Rather than relying primarily on external certifications as signals of environmental performance, we see an industry-wide movement toward designing sustainability into the product from the outset.

The table below summarizes three industry best practices, associated gaps, and strategic opportunities for improving sustainability integration and communication that the team deemed most valuable within the window and door industry. The core areas are as follows: segment-specific sustainability signaling, periodic reassessment of sustainability attributes and reporting strategies, and the integration of sustainability into product design. For each area, existing challenges are paired with targeted opportunities. The table emphasizes the need for coordinated, data-driven strategies to enhance communication clarity, strengthen competitive positioning, and ensure sustainability efforts deliver tangible value across consumer markets.

Table 4: Best Practices: Gaps and Strategic Opportunities for Sustainability Integration.

Best practice	Gaps	Opportunity
Segment Specific Sustainability Signalling	- Requires coordination between marketing, sustainability, and sales teams to ensure messaging is consistent across markets - Without clear internal guidance, certifications may be communicated inconsistently or lose strategic impact	- Develop clearer internal guidelines that define which certifications should be emphasized for specific market segments - In turn improving communication clarity, strengthen competitive positioning, and ensure that sustainability certifications deliver measurable value across professional and consumer markets
Periodic Reassessment of Attribute Value and Sustainable Reporting Strategy	- Reputational risk associated with reducing emphasis on established sustainability programs - Risking customers to interpret changes as a weakening of the company's environmental commitments.	- This risk can be reduced by explicitly framing certification changes as part of an evolving sustainability strategy. By explaining how new certifications deal with emerging environmental challenges such as circular material use or lifecycle transparency, Andersen can maintain credibility while strengthening its sustainability leadership.
Integration of Sustainability into Product Design	- Practices are not yet consistent across the entire product line - Measuring the real-world impact of sustainability certifications on product performance and market outcomes - Comparing to other competitors can be a starting baseline, but eventually, developing metrics that connect certification investments to tangible results like specifier adoption, energy efficiency, or reduced material waste.	- This approach not only strengthens product-level strategy but also supports a unified, core sustainability framework throughout the company - Allowing Andersen to evaluate which certifications most effectively drive the sustainability efforts that are wanted across its products (Andersen Windows, 2025).

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis of Andersen

Figure 1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis of Andersen's Certification Landscape

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Long-standing certifications reinforce credibility with industry stakeholders • Use of EPDs to support product transparency • Strong alignment with building performance standards and green building frameworks • Established manufacturer with experience navigating certification requirements • Internal capacity and resources to maintain, renew, and expand certification offerings • Certification strategy is particularly strong in spec-driven markets (architects, designers, and builders)	• Lack of a clear, formalized certification strategy and governance structure, resulting in limited prioritization and product information across certification types • Resource- and labor-intensive certification maintenance, including updates, renewals, and data management • Inconsistent certification coverage across product lines and customer segments, and priorities, reducing the comparability of certified products • Limited measurable goals in ESG reporting
Threats	Opportunities
• Increasing competition as sustainability certifications become an industry standard • Heightened risk of greenwashing • Evolving certification standards and regulations that increase compliance maintenance • Rising expectations for transparency and disclosure beyond product-level certifications • Higher certification and compliance costs may deter price-sensitive customers • Customer confusion resulting from an expanding certification landscape • Dependence on suppliers for accurate data and compliance creates potential delays and risks to certification integrity	• Growing demand for material transparency enables expanded and more strategic use of product certifications • Improving communication and operationalization of certifications to make them more usable for both specifiers and consumers • Differentiation through stronger positioning within green building ecosystems and performance-based standards • Development of a targeted, tiered, and standardized certification framework aligned to distinct market segments and broader ESG narratives • Opportunities to scale EPDs across product lines

Andersen requested an understanding of their current certification strategy. This analysis presents the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of their current efforts.

Strengths

The first quadrant in Figure 1 highlights the strengths in Andersen's current certification strategy. They hold ENERGY STAR, indoor air quality, recycled content, and FSC certifications that contribute to their longstanding legacy, which reinforces credibility in the market (Andersen Corporation, n.d.-b). Andersen's manufacturing facilities are established in navigating certification requirements; for example, their products also include EPDs to support product transparency (Andersen Windows, 2025). This illustrates the strengths of Andersen's certification strategy in markets with specific spec-driven audiences where green building and performance are increasing, and also emphasizes their internal capacity for maintaining and acquiring more certifications.

Weaknesses

The second quadrant in Figure 1 discusses the weaknesses in the current strategy. Based on internal conversations with Andersen, there is no clear, formal strategy currently in place, resulting in limited prioritization across new certifications. Many of the certifications in Andersen's portfolio require updates and re-certifications which can be a resource intensive process, especially when considering adding additional certifications. There are inconsistencies among certifications across product lines, reducing compatibility and scalability of certified products (Andersen,n.d.-a). Lastly Andersen has not released a recent ESG report using the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework as of 2023, presenting a weakness through the lack of clear measurable goals in sustainability efforts (Andersen Corporation, 2024).

Opportunities

The third quadrant in Figure 1 highlights the opportunities this presents for Andersen. Growing demand for material transparency creates an opportunity to expand and more strategically apply product certifications such as EPDs across additional product lines (International Organization for Standardization, 2019b). This expansion can support differentiation within green building ecosystems and enable stronger connections to broader ESG narratives. Lastly, these trends present an opportunity for Andersen to improve communication and better operationalize product certifications for consumers.

Threats

The last quadrant in Figure 1 features the threats to Andersen in its existing strategy. Competition is increasing as sustainability certifications become industry standard; this can lead to a loss of competitive advantage as well as an increased risk of greenwashing (International Organization for Standardization, 2019b). Further, rising expectations among spec-driven markets for transparency and disclosure beyond product certifications (World Green Building Council, 2022). Another threat is that the increase in certification and compliance costs can deter price-sensitive customers and cause confusion when selecting a product type (Fortune Business Insights, 2026). Lastly, increasing certification types can affect manufacturing and supply chain logistics, requiring data and compliance rules, causing delays to product manufacturing.

Survey of Customers

A survey was conducted through Andersen's client network to understand sustainability trends. The survey received a total of 328 respondents with the distribution of audience groups being: 42 Architects, 45 Builders, 73 Contractors, 163 Dealers, and 5 Developers. Architects design the structure and create blueprints, builders and contractors both execute the construction and dealers supply the necessary materials, lastly developers initiate and finance the project. The results provide key information on certification value, product selection behavior and sustainability characteristics of value to consumer groups, thereby informing strategic recommendations for Andersen.

Insights into Customer and B2B Preferences for Sustainability Certifications

Understanding how different customer segments value sustainability certifications is central to evaluating Andersen's current certification strategy. Because no prior internal survey data exists, this project uses a primary research approach to gather insights directly from key stakeholders, including architects, builders, developers, and contractors. The team concluded that a survey is the best approach to understand the value of certifications in the fenestration industry. The survey is designed to measure awareness, perceived importance, and behavioral influence of certifications. Survey questions with significant findings are included in the report, along with further breakdown in the Customer Survey Analysis: Sustainability Certifications in the Window and Door Industry deliverable. The survey was designed with the intention of asking respondents whether they actively look for certifications before making a purchase, and which specific certifications influence their decision-making process. It also examines at what stage certifications matter the most, during initial screening or final validation, or before selecting a product. The survey also explores how sustainability documentation affects product specification in LEED or high-performance projects.

This approach allows the team to distinguish between stated importance and actual purchasing influence. A literature research review shows that while many consumers express a positive attitude toward sustainability, this does not always translate into purchasing behavior (White, Habib, & Hardisty, 2019). While consumers frequently claim they would pay a premium for sustainable products, this is largely reflected in survey-based research focused on inexpensive goods where price differences are minimal. When it comes to purchases, particularly higher-cost items, factors like price, performance, and convenience tend to take precedence, which accounts for the gap noted in this research. This divide is also shaped by demographics, as wealthier and more environmentally aware consumers are generally more likely to act on their stated sustainability preferences. Therefore, it is critical not only to measure perceived value but also to understand whether certifications function as decision drivers, risk mitigators, or post-purchase validation tools.

For B2B customers, particularly architects and developers, certifications often serve a different function. Green building rating systems such as LEED require documented material and performance attributes, which increases the practical importance of certifications such as EPDs and FSC chain-of-custody documentation (USGBC, 2023). In contrast, homeowners may prioritize energy cost savings and comfort over technical documentation, making ENERGY STAR more influential than lifecycle transparency disclosures (EPA, 2023).

Survey Results

The project team put together a set of 19 questions with the intent to understand customer's awareness and inclination towards sustainability certifications. Using Andersen's customer base, the survey was distributed to 50,000 customers through a newsletter on March 9th. The initial

expected response rate was 5-10% response rate, around 2,500 to 5,000 responses, by March 16th. However, a total of 328 responses were recorded at the end of data collection. The findings are analyzed in detail in the Customer Survey Analysis: Sustainability Certifications in the Window and Door Industry deliverable, and they help us inform strategic decisions regarding whether Andersen should maintain, expand, or redirect certification resources. The key highlights from the survey that informed our recommendations are included below. The survey also helped quantify perceived return on investment by linking certifications to customer willingness to pay premiums for certified products.

It should be noted that the survey responses are drawn from Andersen's existing customer base, which may introduce some response bias, but the data still provides a detailed understanding of the sustainability certifications and attributes relevant to the clients key customer segments.

The Influence of Sustainability Information on Product Selection Behavior

Customers, architects, builders, contractors, dealers, and developers were asked at what point do sustainability certifications influence product selection behavior. The results show in some capacity that of respondents selected that certifications influence product selection behavior, whereas of respondents selected that sustainability certifications do not affect their decision. This data suggests that sustainability certifications hold value among audience groups and can influence product selection behavior. It also indicates that clearer, targeted messaging and more information about certifications could make sustainability a more central factor in consumers' purchasing decisions.

Sustainability Attributes Most Valued by Respondent Groups

The professional groups were asked about the most valued sustainability attributes, and across all respondent groups, product durability/warranty, price, and energy efficiency were highly valued attributes. The responses also reflect a broader preference for brand reputation as it was rated highly across respondent groups, supporting an importance of trust and proven performance in decision-making in company selection. These findings suggest that sustainability attributes are most effective when they are clearly connected to product reliability and efficiency and supported by brand trust. This presents Andersen an opportunity to strengthen its positioning by emphasizing these attributes in certification messaging to customers.

Awareness of Sustainability Attributes by Respondent Group

The five professional groups were asked about their awareness of sustainability attributes. Across all groups, architects exhibited the highest overall awareness, with builders also showing a strong familiarity with the most well-known attributes. ENERGY STAR, FSC, and recycled content were the most consistently recognized attributes across all groups. Although contractors and dealers display more variation in awareness, they still show consistent familiarity with these core certifications. Dealers indicated that they had a limited awareness of other attributes, which

directly impacts what information is communicated to the customer prior to the point of sale. Dealer familiarity with product sustainability attributes plays a key role in shaping customer awareness, influencing purchasing decisions, and reinforcing Andersen's position as a sustainability-focused brand.

Awareness of more specialized attributes such as HPD's, Declare Labels, and Cradle to Cradle remain comparatively low across the surveyed groups. This suggests that some established certifications are now widely recognized and more standardized, while awareness of emerging sustainability attributes remains limited. These findings highlight an opportunity for Andersen to improve messaging around more advanced sustainability attributes and strengthen sustainable decision-making across stakeholder groups.

Sustainability Certifications Valued by Respondent Group

The sustainability certifications valued by all respondent groups when selecting windows and doors were ENERGY STAR, indoor air quality, EPDs and recycled content. All groups also indicate increased value in embodied carbon certifications. This indicates that these certifications are influential in decision making as they provide improved efficiency and reduced material impact. Architects value recycled content, FSC and ENERGY STAR certifications as important. In contrast, builders selected ENERGY STAR, LEED and indoor air quality certifications as important. Contractors and dealers, by comparison, are both noted to value more commonly known industry characteristics such as indoor air quality certifications, ENERGY STAR and recycled content. Lastly, developers value characteristics of HPDs, EPDs and ENERGY STAR certifications. This data can help inform Andersen's sustainability certification strategy by identifying which certifications are most valued by different audience groups and where expanding certification coverage could provide the greatest benefit.

Sustainability Characteristics Valued by Respondent Groups

All the professional groups were asked about the most valued sustainability characteristics, and all groups value regulatory or code compliance and lower operating costs the most. This suggests that sustainability is primarily valued for financial and regulatory reasons. Whereas the secondary drivers are marketing or branding value, personal values, and client/occupant health. These characteristics can be utilized by Andersen to better align its certifications with the values of its customer groups. For example, creating specific messaging on the regulatory and code compliance of certifications and comparisons of sustainable and non-sustainable products will allow for better selection and awareness by audience groups.

Factors Influencing Whether Sustainability Is a Priority

The different professional groups were asked about the factors that does not influence their sustainability prioritization. The data shows limited client demand as the primary barrier to sustainability not being prioritized in the landscape due to that option receiving the highest

number of responses. Indicating client demand is a major factor in considering sustainability as a priority suggests clients and customers may not understand what certifications mean, which ones are more credible, or how to navigate the options available.

The second highest selected option was budget constraints. This suggests that sustainable materials have a high upfront cost limiting prioritization, however it adds significant savings over the product's lifespan (Sustainable Design Group, n.d).

Too complex/too many labels and lack of clarity or trust in certifications suggests a gap in education surrounding sustainability importance. This can signal consumers wanting to avoid green washing that holds no tangible value and distrust in a broader sense. Notably, No perceived ROI was not selected by respondents, indicating that sustainability lacks value, rather it is demand-dependent, too costly, or not clearly understood.

Preferred Sources for Sustainability Information

Customers, architects, builders, contractors, dealers, and developers were asked where they prefer to access sustainability information. This highlights how target audiences navigate different sources when researching sustainability attributes of products. The results show that respondents rely on manufacturer websites as their primary source, followed by product specification sheets, indicating a strong preference for manufacturer-controlled channels. Secondary sources such as marketing materials and sales representatives also play a meaningful role in information gathering. This data suggests that manufacturer-operated platforms are both the most trusted and most widely used sources across audience groups. It also indicates that providing clear, comprehensive sustainability information directly through these channels is critical to effectively reaching and influencing consumers' decision-making.

Preference for More Compelling Sustainability Characteristics by Respondent Group

The five professional groups were asked about their preferences for compelling sustainability characteristics. Across all professional groups, the results show a clear pattern in what makes sustainability characteristics compelling. The most influential factors are clear cost savings, simple explanations, and side-by-side comparisons, all of which rank at or near the top across every group. In contrast, elements that sustainability efforts have traditionally leaned on, like third-party certifications and case studies, were lower on the list. This suggests that audience groups care less about validation and technical detail, and more about how easily they can understand sustainable choices on practical and financial grounds.

The data points to a broader shift, sustainability is increasingly being treated as a financial and operational consideration rather than an environmental or values-based one. Builders, contractors, and developers in particular favor solutions that demonstrate clear returns, cut through complexity, and fit naturally into existing workflows. Even architects and dealers, who tend to focus more on design and client communication, show a strong preference for tools that

streamline decision-making and allow for direct comparisons. Taken together, the findings identify confusion and complexity as the main obstacles, while transparency, ease of use, and cost relevance are the key drivers.

For Andersen, this points to a meaningful shift in how sustainability should be framed and communicated. This showcases that the focus should be on quantifiable savings, clear messaging, and comparison tools which will help stakeholders decide with ease and confidence.

Effective Sustainability Communication Methods by Respondent Group

The five professional groups were asked about effective sustainability communication methods, and across all professional groups the communication methods vary, but reveal clear patterns. Storytelling and real-world examples and data and metrics consistently emerge as the most influential approaches, though their importance differs by audience. Architects and dealers strongly favor data-driven communication, while contractors and developers show a clear preference for storytelling and real-world applications, suggesting a need for practical, experience-based framing. Whereas builders lean toward visual icons/labels and data & metrics, indicating a preference for quick, digestible information. Across all groups, compliance-based messaging remains minimal, reinforcing that regulatory framing alone is not a compelling communication strategy.

The results reveal that different professionals engage with sustainability information in fundamentally different ways. More technical and design-oriented audiences, like architects, respond to hard evidence and performance benchmarks. Execution-focused groups, like contractors, want to see sustainability demonstrated through real projects and practical outcomes. Dealers and builders, who often serve as intermediaries, benefit most from visual and simplified formats that make sustainability easy to convey to customers.

For Andersen, this makes a strong case against a uniform messaging strategy. Sustainability communication should instead be tailored to each audience, leading with performance data for architects, visual tools and quick-reference labels for builders and dealers, and grounded case examples for contractors and developers.

Strategic Recommendations

Based on findings from the landscape analysis, industry best practices and survey of customers, the project team recommends the following strategic recommendations, product-level sustainability profiles, expanding product sustainability certifications, standardizing sustainability messaging and strengthening ESG reporting with defined benchmarks. These recommendations will give Andersen a competitive advantage against its competitors and improve sustainability performance.

1. Product-level sustainability profiles would provide transparency and communication for customers

While Andersen has obtained several sustainability certifications across different categories, the benefits and implications of these certifications are not always clear or accessible to customers. Improving product-level sustainability transparency would help customers understand how sustainability attributes influence purchasing decisions.

Many customers, particularly architects, developers, and environmentally conscious homeowners, seek products that support green building certifications such as LEED or other sustainability frameworks. However, without clear communication of how Andersen products contribute to these goals, potential sustainability advantages may remain underutilized (Dodge Data & Analytics, 2021). In the survey conducted by the team which was then distributed by Andersen, we identified several trends that further confirm the prior claim. The survey analysis demonstrated high value among the target audiences for LEED and ENERGY STAR, especially to architects, developers, and builders.

Survey findings indicate that limited client demand, lack of clarity, and the perceived complexity of sustainability certifications are key barriers to their prioritization. Andersen can close this gap by improving how sustainability is communicated during client engagements, especially in sales conversations and product discussions.

Improved transparency would strengthen Andersen's positioning among environmentally conscious consumers and industry professionals. By translating technical certifications into explicitly stated benefits, Andersen can enhance the value of its existing sustainability initiatives while reinforcing trust and credibility among stakeholders.

To address this, it is recommended that Andersen develop simplified product-level sustainability labels that clearly communicate environmental attributes such as recycled content, responsible sourcing certifications, indoor air quality standards, and carbon impact. The sample label shown in Figure 2 was created by the team to demonstrate how Andersen can increase transparency at the product level. The team also recommends adding a small 'client tailored' benefit that would be directly valuable to different target audiences. The certifications in each product label will cater to audience groups in different capacities and increase product and certification awareness. These labels could be integrated directly into product pages on the company's website.

Figure 2: Sample Label For Andersen E- Series Products

 ANDERSEN™ WINDOWS & DOORS	
E-Series Products	
 ENERGY STAR CERTIFIED 20–35% lower energy consumption	 LEED CERTIFIED Lower utility costs, improved health
 NFRC Verification for energy code compliance	 EPDs Increasingly required in public procurement and institutional construction projects

2. Expand product sustainability certifications

Andersen is looking at diversifying its sustainability certification strategy, and an analysis of the certification landscape has indicated that Andersen holds the most diverse amount of sustainability certifications against its main competitors: Pella, Marvin, Jeld-Wen and Masonite. Andersen requested an analysis of whether pursuing the SFI certification would provide value to its products as it is only certification their competitors have that Andersen does not.

Survey results show SFI, FSC, EPD, recycled content, and embodied carbon certifications are important characteristics across all 5 audience types: architects, builders, developers and contractors. Andersen currently has several certifications that are recognized in the industry including ENERGY STAR, FSC, SCS Indoor Advantage Gold, SCS Recycled Content and EPDs on select products.

The results also highlight that SFI receives high levels of interest comparatively among architects, builders, and contractors. When comparing the SFI to FSC certification the primary difference is in the geographic locations in which they operate and while the governance of the certification remains the same. FSC is an internationally recognized certification applied worldwide, whereas SFI is focused on North American forestry standards (Forest Stewardship Council, n.d.-a; Sustainable Forestry Initiative n.d.). Although the FSC certification shows the highest responses of importance among all audience groups. This interest can be attributed to the

general awareness of forest sourcing practices as Andersen already holds FSC certification. Therefore pursuing an SFI certification may offer limited additional value due to Andersen already having the existing FSC certification demonstrating responsible sourcing practices.

Andersen, Masonite and Jeld-Wen are one of the few companies that showcase product transparency through EPDs, and this certification was the fourth most selected amongst all audience groups whereas embodied carbon was the second highest attribute. Andersen currently holds EPDs for select product lines, which positions the company alongside a small group of competitors already demonstrating product transparency (Andersen Windows, 2025). However, this also presents Andersen with an opportunity to further differentiate itself by expanding its existing EPD certifications across additional product lines.

Based on the survey results, the project team recommends Andersen to strengthen communication of its existing EPD certifications through revised marketing strategies that emphasize carbon transparency. This is important because EPDs include embodied carbon data, which was the second-highest ranked sustainability attribute among respondents, suggesting that strengthening communication and expanding EPD certifications would better align with customer priorities (International EPD System, n.d.). Further, at the federal level, initiatives prioritizing low-embodied carbon products supported by EPDs have showcased an interest in product transparency (U.S. General Services Administration, 2023).

3. Strategic sustainability messaging across marketing outlets and audience groups

The survey results also highlight that the growing number of sustainability certifications, combined with inconsistent communication, can create confusion for customers. When too many labels are presented without clear explanation or distinction, the effectiveness of certifications as a decision-making tool is reduced. Andersen can tackle this by building a streamlined, standardized framework for sustainability communication, one that stays consistent across every customer touchpoint. This framework would organize certifications into a handful of clear, intuitive categories, such as:

- Energy Efficiency
- Health and Indoor Environmental Quality
- Material Transparency and Sustainability

Most customers purchasing products themselves will not have a preexisting knowledge of certifications. This gap presents Andersen with the unique opportunity to educate consumers of sustainable practices; a shift in interaction between potential customers and Andersen's website would associate their brand even more meaningfully as a company that values green living, energy-efficiency, cost-saving, and an overall more encompassing branding message from Andersen. The outcome objective seeks to increase client awareness and understanding, ultimately increasing the perceived value and adoption of sustainability certifications.

Andersen should also consider utilizing its website more effectively. Currently, Andersen's website presents their products that list green qualifications in its own section linked to a database of all sustainable certifications and practices used by the company across their products lines. This requires the user to purposefully search a database of products to match with a specific certification as requested by the end-user. This current strategy requires knowledge of existing certifications or of renewable practices that Andersen is implementing, but could be improved upon to effectively convey the purpose, advantages, and real-world applications of each certification or other sustainability measures Andersen uses in the life-cycles of their products.

For example, Andersen states that recycled content information for all Andersen products is available upon request. As 48% of their products are created with recycled materials according to their 2023 GRI report (Andersen Corporation, 2024), there is a missed marketing opportunity to present a variety of products in a manner that showcases their individualistic differences between offerings. A stronger marketing of attained certifications through the design and implementation of a more intuitive, user-friendly interface would offer a competitive advantage through accessibility of information.

Grouping certifications this way makes complex information far easier to comprehend. Additionally, using consistent language across marketing materials, technical documents, and sales conversations would help prevent mixed signals and reinforce the most important messages. Further, creating short, plain-language summaries aimed at non-technical audiences will enhance messaging (Nielsen Norman Group, n.d.). These should focus on what a certification actually means in practice, rather than how it's earned. Therefore it is recommended that Andersen standardize sustainability messaging across its marketing outlets including the Andersen website to enhance industry certification knowledge and target each stakeholder effectively.

Survey findings indicate that the majority of respondents across professional groups fall within the "somewhat important" or "somewhat aware" categories regarding sustainability certifications. This suggests a significant opportunity for Andersen to target stakeholders who recognize the value of sustainability but are not fully committed due to barriers such as cost constraints, limited knowledge, or lack of regulatory requirements. Rather than prioritizing a smaller segment that is disengaged from sustainability altogether, Andersen should focus on this middle segment, where incremental improvements in communication and education can drive meaningful impact. By strengthening marketing strategies and clearly articulating the value proposition of certifications, Andersen can increase adoption, enhance customer understanding, and more effectively position its products within the evolving sustainability landscape.

4. Strengthening Environmental, Social, and Governance reporting with defined benchmarks and measurable targets enabling long-term sustainability performance tracking

The GRI reports released by Andersen provide sustainability data and performance metrics, but there remains an opportunity for improvement. For example, Section 305-5 of the Andersen 2023 GRI Index reports a reduction of 1,336 metric tons of CO₂e relative to the baseline year, alongside Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions data (Andersen Corporation, 2024). While this demonstrates progress, this disclosure lacks accompanying targets that would contextualize whether this reduction is incremental, sufficient, or aligned with broader climate goals.

By strengthening reporting with specific, measurable, and time-bound targets that Andersen projects to meet, these metrics can be presented as achievements within a broader context and demonstrate intentional progress toward a cohesive sustainability strategy. Many leading corporations publish ESG findings to report performance and establish measurable targets, providing stakeholders with benchmarks to track progress (Global Reporting Initiative, 2021).

Other competitors such as JELD-WEN, illustrate both metrics and future targets in their 2024 sustainability report. JELD-WEN has committed to responsibly sourcing all wood used in production by 2030; by 2050, the company aims to achieve net-zero Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions (JELD-WEN, 2024). Additionally, the company publishes a yearly report and provides contextual information to clarify that data. JELD-WEN reported a reduction in metric tons of waste as a consistent 12% reduction year-to-year, as well as a 10% reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions since the year 2021 (JELD-WEN Holding, Inc., 2025). JELD-WEN frames their reporting to demonstrate a clear commitment to future-thinking and long-term sustainability milestones, whereas Andersen provides a limited overview of commitments and annual targets.

Recent research has indicated that 80% of consumers take environmental impact into account prior to making purchases and 79% want easier methods of identifying environmentally conscious companies (PDI Technologies, 2024). This reinforces the necessity for not only transparency, but benchmarked projections that signal long-term commitment to sustainable goals; clear, future-thinking goals must be integrated, rather than merely included, within a business strategy to gain an advantage over their competitors. With this in mind, the project team recommends Andersen transition their focus to publishing transparent, target-driven GRI disclosures that clearly demonstrate measurable progress on a yearly basis. These disclosures can also be used to contextualize sustainability certifications, such as EPDs, by linking them to measurable performance benchmarks and long-term sustainability targets. Detailed reporting would be most effectively presented on a dedicated sustainability page, with relevant metrics also integrated in product pages and sales materials to ensure visibility when customers are making purchasing decisions.

Deliverables

This project produced the following deliverables as requested by Andersen: Landscape Analysis of the Window and Door Industry, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis of Andersen, Survey of customers, and Strategic Recommendations.

The Landscape Analysis of the Window and Door Industry in this report provides an overview of sustainability certifications used by top competitors and benchmarks Andersen against industry leaders. The analysis can be used by the client to understand where their competitors are currently positioned in relation to Andersen's current strategy.

The SWOT analysis of Andersen in this report highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to Andersen's certification strategy and should be used to inform decision making in improving sustainability approaches.

The customers survey referred to in this report provides an analysis of emerging certifications and regulatory shifts in the window and doors industry, in addition to insights into consumer and B2B preferences. This section also details key survey takeaways from customers providing an understanding of the current certification landscape.

In this report the strategic recommendations provide details on improvements to Andersen's sustainability and communication strategy, whether that is through enhancing EPD's, product level transparency and sustainability messaging. These recommendations should be considered by the client to enhance their strategy.

Conclusion

With increasing sustainability commitments and reporting, Andersen has positioned itself as a leader in the window and door industry. After conducting a thorough landscape analysis, reviewing best practices, SWOT analysis of the current sustainability certification strategy in addition to a survey of Andersen customer base, the team was able to understand Andersen's certification portfolio, areas of opportunity, and differentiation among competitors.

Following this analysis the project team has developed the following four strategic recommendations: product-level sustainability profiles, expanding sustainability certifications, strategic messaging for marketing and strengthening ESG metrics. As sustainability certifications continue to gain recognition in response to evolving market trends and increasing competition, these recommendations present an opportunity for Andersen to further differentiate within the market. Implementing these strategies will allow Andersen to evaluate and strengthen the effectiveness of its current certification strategy while creating a stronger competitive advantage in the industry.

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