

# William Brent's Search for Cleantech

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## **Suppliers See Red over Green Building**

I've spent a lot of time in building technology since starting work with concrete innovator **Hycrete**. This sector screams business opportunity. In part because of what US groups like Healthy Building Network are doing with the Pharos Project and Bill McDonough and his crew are doing with Cradle to Cradle. Other groups are also in the space, such as UK-based The Green Standard. These groups, although taking somewhat different approaches, have one goal in mind - to ensure that building materials are safe for humans and the environment. Pharos is essentially a graded scale identifying what range of sustainability and health various products fall within, while C2C is a more transitional approach that gets companies that are manufacturing to buy in to a "back to the soil" design methodology and work to gradually improve their process. The Green Standard is very focused on International Organization for Standardization (ISO) life cycle assessment. Either way, this new type of thinking and the standards that are sure to emerge will force suppliers to the building industry to come up with alternative solutions or go the way of the dodo. Perhaps an even bigger red flag for suppliers - leading architecture and design firms are working independently and with the various emerging standards to come up with their own list of supplies that are deemed bad for human health and the environment. Another resource that has received some attention is an online database and book that look at various materials called Transmaterial. All of these initiatives will surely further ruffle the feathers of the Vinyl Industry and other powerful lobbies in the building sector. But if the incumbent suppliers buck the trend, they will be missing a huge business opportunity for the creation of new markets for more sustainable supplies. Just think what will be needed to replace PVC? It's not about ideology, it's about business opportunity.