Consumer Confusion: Understanding The Green Market of Makeup

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Introduction
In 2009, sales of “natural” cosmetics had grown by 8% and in the next five years the United States alone is predicted to gain $5.8 billion of revenue in this market. In an effort to gain new consumers, cosmetic companies engage in “greenwashing” for makeup products. Consumers must understand terms used by companies as well as current governmental standards and choose makeup that is certified by creditable programs.

Methods
Only lipstick and mascara were analyzed because of their popularity and number of health concerns associated with them. L’Oreal and Estee Lauder are the dominate distributors of makeup, which is why their products were selected for review. Research was completed on preexisting literature as well as review of advertising and marketing techniques of a product in order to evaluate green claims. Comparison between products in terms of cost, advertising, and availability was done at Macy’s, Target, and Wal-Mart. After compiling information, a consumer’s guide was created that would help the purchaser of makeup determine the environmental and safety concerns for a certain product.

Conclusion
There is a lack of regulation from the United States’ government in labeling as well as chemicals content in makeup. As a result, except a product claiming to be organic, there is no definition for products using terms such “natural” or “green” and thereby making these labels meaningless. Alternative makeup solutions are understanding the current regulation from environmental makeup, being able to interpret product labels, buying certified organic when possible, and limiting the amount of exposure to lipstick and mascara when possible.