

ERM Conference Highlights

PSX 2023

OCTOBER 2023 | BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Nearly 300 participants attended the conference, with representation from across the Chemical, Pharmaceutical & Healthcare, Technology, Food & Beverage, Consumer Products, Diversified Energy, Manufacturing, and Automotive industries.

ERM's involvement

ERM was a proud Gold Sponsor of the conference, exhibited, and led several presentations on various topics, covering take-back responsibilities, sustainability and circularity, resilient supply chains, and optimizing hazard communication:

- *Translating Aspiration into Action in Sustainability and Circularity*, presented by [Kate Sellers](#), Technical Partner
- *Optimizing Hazard Communication: A Case Study of Cargill's Process Improvements*, presented by [Steve Smith](#), Technical Director; [Chuck McCormick](#), Partner; and [Ann Drew](#), Partner
- *Preventing Regrettable Substitutions with Resilient Supply Chains*, presented by [Chelsea Pinedo](#), Consultant II
- *Dealing With 'Take Back' Responsibilities in Brazil*, presented by [Maryann Sanders](#), Technical Director and co-authored by [Marília do Amaral Freitas](#), Managing Consultant

Insights & trends

PSX 2023 was a high-energy conference, where the range and depth of the



presentations showed once again that “product stewardship” covers a dizzying range of activities to bring products to market safely, sustainably, and in compliance with global regulations. Three key themes emerged this year.

Data. Numerous attendees remarked that “Data’ is the theme of the conference!” Our practice demands data from throughout the life cycle of a product: supplier data, formulation information, manufacturing/operational information, sales volume and geography, and end of life. Person after person acknowledged that those data tend to be housed in different silos within a company and referred to the tedious effort to compile those data. Once collated, that information yields many insights about stewardship and sustainability, but can also be a resource to the entire business. Some product stewards believe that interpreting that flood of data, particularly in light of ever-growing regulatory demands may require support from AI.

DO YOU WANT TO ADVANCE
PRODUCT INNOVATION,
MANAGE BUSINESS RISKS,
STREAMLINE AND DIGITIZE
OPERATIONS, AND MEET
INVESTOR EXPECTATIONS?
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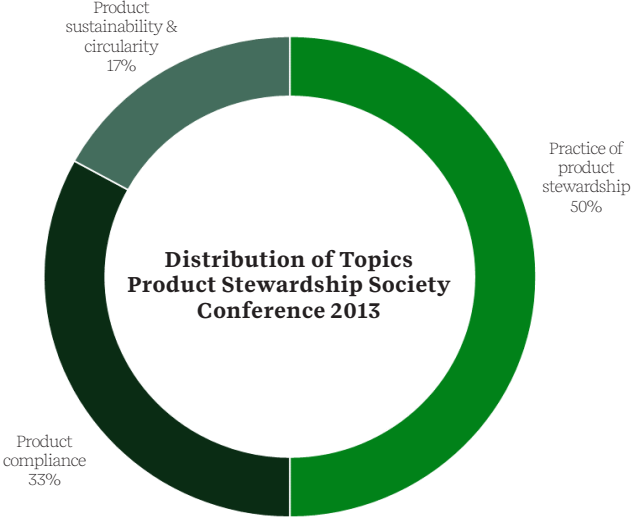
Product sustainability. This topic surfaced in the opening and closing keynote talks, as well as in presentations and conversations throughout the conference. The degree of focus was nearly unprecedented. Topics ranged from developing strategy to the nuances of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). One thing is clear: demand for more sustainable and circular products is growing. Making those products requires thoughtful strategy and methodical change to how companies do business.

PFAS. Developments in TSCA and REACH and perhaps a more general fear of liability led to a lot of talk about PFAS, in presentations and in hallways. Lack of supply chain data was a general theme. We will no doubt hear more about PFAS at PSX 2024!

Evolution of product stewardship

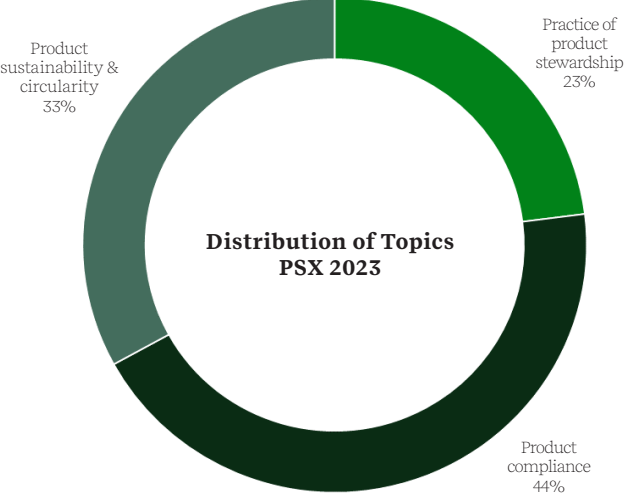
The program also showed how the practice of product stewardship has continued to evolve. At the first product stewardship conference in 2013 (Figure 1), speakers focused on the practicalities of building and running product stewardship programs. Product compliance received nearly as much focus, though PFAS were not yet a topic of concern. And product sustainability and circularity, then confined to discussions of extended producer responsibility, made up a small fraction of the conference topics.

Figure 1



Times have changed. In 2023 (Figure 2), our focus has shifted to match the issues facing business today. Product compliance comprised 44% of the agenda this year, including PFAS presentations that accounted for 8% of the talks. Product sustainability and circularity have risen in importance and complexity, signaled by the prominence of the topic in the opening and closing keynote presentations and in the fact that one-third of the presentations overall pertained to the topic.

Figure 2



The bottom line? Product stewards, who are at the forefront of ensuring market access for their company’s products and working toward a more sustainable economy, have seen a remarkable transformation of their practice. Taking a product to market has never been more complex. ERM is the only global company that brings expertise across all aspects of the product value chain, both strategically and operationally. By working together, we can differentiate your products in the market, navigate the changing landscape, and operationalize your business to meet your sustainability goals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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