Life Cycle Engineering of Plastics: Technology, Economy and Environment

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"This book adds much to the already evolving field of Design for Environment; but it goes far beyond most works on this subject by surrounding the central notions of life cycle assessment with a scientific body of knowledge and with a more practical slant reflecting the reality of the organizations in which product development occurs. Through a focus on plastic products, the authors show the importance of making ties between basic technical knowledge and the process of life cycle engineering. Their approach offers a practical, deliberate way to make ecologically and economically sensible decisions about product reuse and recycling and other critical dimensions of product life behavior. They demonstrate a positive approach to designing products that fits into a sustainable economy through down-to-earth cases. While the book focuses on the life cycle engineering of plastics, it is only a short step to other materials and products.

Beyond contributing to the technology of life cycle engineering, this text adds to the growing body of knowledge that argues for an fundamentally new way of thinking about economic and social activity--a new paradigm for sustainable social and industrial problem solving. Industrial ecology is such a new system for thinking about and implementing sustainability that draws its core set of ideas from the ecological world. Industrial ecology brings to the surface the idea of interdependence among members of a community--natural or economic, and notes the material cycles that are central to a stable ecosystem. The life cycle engineering framework, coupled with sound scientific knowledge of materials behavior as articulated in this book, makes a giant step towards bringing the model of industrial ecology into everyday practice."

From the Preface by John R. Ehrenfeld Director, MIT Technology, Business and Environment Program Center for Technology, Policy, and Industrial Development



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