



EIGHTY PERCENT OF CANADIANS CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT WHEN MAKING PURCHASING DECISIONS

Cynicism about “green” marketing and perceived expense associated with environmental products present barriers for Canadians

TORONTO – July 28, 2008 – While 80 per cent of Canadians consider the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, the majority of consumers believe that environmental claims are often just marketing ploys, according to Bensimon Byrne’s Consumerology Report, released this week.

The national survey, commissioned by the Toronto-based advertising agency and conducted by Gandalf Group of 1500 Canadians, revealed that cost was the primary barrier of adopting more environmentally friendly practices among consumers, as green products are overwhelmingly seen to be more expensive than regular products. And while they are perceived as more costly, two-thirds of Canadians simply don’t believe that it costs more to produce them. However, the concern about cost does not correlate with income level but with the level of commitment each individual is willing to make to the environment.

“Canadians are eager to make choices that will benefit the environment. But cost, cynicism and confusion about green marketing efforts are prohibiting them from making those choices,” said Jack Bensimon, President of Bensimon Byrne. “The research suggests a significant opportunity for companies who are seen to be legitimate green leaders and can offer conventional pricing of environmentally friendly products.”

The survey further revealed that the majority of Canadians (85%) want government enforced standards for ‘environmentally friendly’ products as well as labeling that certifies and explains such terms as green, organic, low emissions, etc. Not surprisingly, consumers view the companies who produce green products as the least trusted source for information about the environmental impacts of their products.

Among other interesting findings, the survey showed that women are significantly more likely (88%) to consider environmental impact while making purchasing decisions over men (71%), which has major implications for company target marketing.

“The survey challenges the conventional wisdom that youth are the predominant target for environmental marketing and found that women are most responsive,” said Bensimon. “As a result, companies should be more targeted in their environmental communication and focus on the female audience.”

In addition, specific environmental issues were found to have more resonance with consumers than the “environment” as a category. Canadians place a higher level of personal importance on issues such as keeping fresh water clean, reducing excess waste, and reducing air pollution and smog than they do on more abstract issues like global warming and climate change.

Recycling is the clear leader among actions Canadians would take to benefit the environment. It is considered a credible action and one that requires little sacrifice. This stands in contrast to purchasing energy efficient appliances. While 93 per cent of Canadians say using energy efficient appliances would most benefit the environment, only 38 per cent would consider taking the action because of the perceived sacrifice - the cost.

The most visible and persuasive initiative a corporation could adopt is to use less packaging, followed by using renewable energy sources for production such as solar and wind, reducing



energy use by turning down lights, heat and A/C and using recycled parts for production.

The following are highlights from the Consumerology Report:

- 83 per cent of Canadians say they are motivated to make personal changes that would benefit the environment.
 - Yet only 39% of Canadians say they are very (6%) or somewhat financially able to make personal changes that would benefit the environment.
- 80 per cent of Canadians say they consider the environmental impact when they make a purchase decision
- 88 per cent of women say they consider the environmental impact when they make a purchase decision versus 71 per cent of men.
- 75 per cent of Canadians believe that environmental claims are often just marketing ploys.
 - 65 per cent of Canadians say the term 'green' has been used so much that it doesn't have much meaning for them anymore when a company claims it.
- 85 per cent of Canadians want standards enforced on producers and labeling that certifies and explains terms such as organic, low emissions, and green (86 per cent of Canadians want regulation and labeling to clear up the confusion over environmental claims)
- 65 per cent of Canadians say they don't understand why it's more expensive to purchase environmentally friendly products.
- 65 per cent of Canadians also believe that it doesn't cost more to produce environmentally friendly products but that companies claim a product is green so they can charge more.
- Regionally, Quebecers have a higher level of concern for the environment and are more motivated to make changes in their lives than the rest of the country and are the most likely to say they are financially able (46%).
 - Less than one-third of Atlantic Canadians say they are financially able to make personal changes to benefit the environment.

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About the Survey

The Consumerology Report survey was conducted by the Gandalf Group amongst 1500 Canadians. The questionnaire was conducted in French and English between June 26 and July 9. Results are accurate to +/-2.3% 19 times out of 20. To see the full results of the Consumerology report please visit: <http://bensimonbyrne.com/>

About Bensimon Byrne

Bensimon Byrne is a privately owned, full-service, Canadian advertising agency. Established in 1993, the agency has worked with a host of blue-chip companies and brands, producing some of Canada's most effective and memorable advertising.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Micha Goddard
Narrative Advocacy Media / Office: 416-922-2211 ext. 3277 / Cell 905-999-2856
Micha.goddard@narrativeadvocacy.com