

Eight Myths About Green Products and a Secret About the Hispanic Marketplace

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First the secret: Latinos are just as likely as Whites and Asians to be “green” consumers! According to the Natural Marketing Institute, a respected marketing research firm, in 2009, Latinos represented 4% of U.S. population—and 4% of U.S. green consumers, too. What’s more, green Latinos tended to be equally distributed among the same types of green segments as Whites and Asians: LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) – 4%, Naturalites 1%, Drifters (status-conscious) – 4%, Conventionals (resource conservers) 4%, and Unconcerned 3%.

This means that marketers targeting the Hispanic market with the high quality products that Latinos seek, need to heed the same myths of green marketing as the White and Asian marketplaces. These myths of green marketing, as I describe in more depth in my new book, *The New Rules of Green Marketing*

Strategies, Tools and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding include:

Myth #1 Green products don’t work as well.

Fact: Method, Tide Coldwater, and Clorox Greenworks brands have been developed specifically to work as well or better than regular products—and command a slight premium price to boot!

Myth #2 Consumers don't want to buy green products.

Fact: Green purchases represented \$290 billion in sales in 2008, up from \$219 billion in 2005 (Source: NMI, 2009).

Myth #3 Green products are more expensive.

Fact: Thanks to economies of scale due to high volumes, many green products today are competitively priced versus “brown” counterparts; and often can make up for premium pricing many times over during their lifetimes due to savings on energy and water, or simply better performance and value.

Myth #4 Only specialty stores sell green products.

Fact: Major supermarkets now carry their own brand of organic products (e.g., Safeway's 300- item USDA certified “O Organics” line), and Wal-Mart is quickly making “green” a priority for vendor selection.

Myth #5 Green products aren't really “green”.

Fact: No product can be truly “green” since all products use resources and create waste, but products can be “greener,” denoting a continuum toward sustainability.

Myth #6 Natural products are more healthful.

Fact: Arsenic is a natural substance, yet deadly.

Myth #7 Plant based products will degrade in landfills.

Fact: No product, even those labeled “compostable,” will degrade in a landfill. Compostables will only degrade in industrial composting facilities or in backyard composters at high temperatures.

Myth #8 100% recycled products are better for the environment than 10% recycled products.

Fact: Depending upon how far most recyclables must travel to recycling centers for processing (creating greenhouse gases in the process), products with 10% recycled content could actually be environmentally preferable to more recycled counterparts.

Jacquelyn Ottman is an expert adviser on green marketing to Fortune 500 companies and the U.S. government. The author of four books on the subject, her latest is the just released, The New Rules of Green Marketing: Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding (Berrett-Koehler, February 2011), 252pp. \$21.95. Her firm's website, containing more information about the book, is <http://www.greenmarketing.com>