

Buying green, but not for the planet



Sometimes the real reason people buy green is not always Mother Earth, and the marketing for those products is starting to reflect that. Andrea Gardner reports.

Kai Ryssdal: Take a minute for me here and think back on your day. When you woke up today, did you by any chance flip on an energy-saving light bulb? Did you put organic milk in your coffee and then wash out that mug with eco-friendly soap? If you did, how did you come to buy those products in the first place?

The real reason a lot of people buy green isn't always Mother Earth. And the marketing of those products is starting to reflect that, as Andrea Gardner reports.

ANDREA GARDNER: First, I have a confession. When I buy environmentally-friendly products, it isn't for the planet. What I mean is I buy organic apple juice because I figure it's healthier for my toddler. Energy-saving light bulbs help me save money. And I think non-toxic cleaning products are just safer. I asked around, and many of my friends admitted the same thing.

Here's my yoga teacher Arianne.

ARIANNE: I mean, the side effects of it being good for the environment is great, and I'm glad, but my priority is really just my family and their health.

It turns out most people who buy eco-friendly products feel the same way. In a survey by market research firm GfK Roper, health and cost-savings beat out the planet as the main reasons people bought green products for their homes. Companies are taking notice and

starting to market those products with messages like "better for you," "safer for you," "cheaper for you."

Jacquelyn Ottman is a green marketing consultant. She says the trend mirrors the advice she's given clients for years.

JACQUELYN OTTMAN *Leave the planets and the daisies behind, and find the direct benefits that their products can support, such as health, superior performance, good taste, saving money, or even convenience. And then, the environment is a nice add-on benefit.*

Sales of eco-friendly consumer products have been growing by double digits over the past five years. And they're expected to hit at least \$300 billion this year. It's no surprise big players in consumer products, like Clorox and Procter & Gamble, are getting into the game, using the "What's in it for me" message to reach more consumers.

Take this ad for Clorox's green laundry soap. It shows a mom cleaning baby clothes, with a child nearby.

CLOROX AD: Clothes washed in Green Works detergent are gentle on skin, and have no harsh chemical residue. And since they're from Clorox, you can trust them to remove tough stains.

It's no accident the ad features a mother; they're among the prime targets of the new push. Even green marketing pioneer Seventh Generation has created a new marketing campaign to appeal to new moms.

Chuck Maniscalco is the company's CEO.

CHUCK Maniscalco: Because they are suddenly reassessing everything in their lives. There is nothing like having a toddler crawling around the floor to make you think hard about what's going on in your house.

Previously, Seventh Generation did little advertising, relying largely on word of mouth from dedicated environmentalists. But the company recently unveiled a nationwide TV ad campaign on shows geared toward women.

SEVENTH GENERATION AD: We want to talk to you about a revolution. Where no one holds their breath while they're cleaning. Seventh Generation. Protecting Planet Home.

Maniscalco says feedback for the new campaign has been generally positive, but he admits he had concerns about alienating his most eco-conscious consumers -- marketing folks sometimes call them "dark greens."

Los Angeles mom Jessica Bilandzija is one of them.

JESSICA Bilandzija: I think a lot of large corporations are getting in on it. And it becomes commercialized, it becomes trivialized in a sense. But at the same time it's like, well, if that's what we have to do in order for people to be aware of things. If we create less trash, if we create less toxins, then that's a win-win.

Jessica is a longtime Seventh Generation fan. Although she says, with the economy the way it is, she's been experimenting with vinegar and a little elbow grease, and she finds it works just as well as cleanser.

In Los Angeles, I'm Andrea Gardner for Marketplace.