

What are the new rules for Green marketing?

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Green marketing has gone mainstream, with what used to be a fringe market having become a US\$290 billion industry, according to a new book by Jacquelyn Ottman, which explodes the top myths about green products and marketing and examines which of today's green brands are the ones to watch in the near future.

In her book, entitled 'The New Rules of Green Marketing', Ottman provides new insights into the changing needs of mainstream consumers, how companies large and small have responded with fresh green marketing strategies, what it takes to succeed, and what the future of marketing is likely to look like.

The book explains why today's green marketers have moved beyond targeting so-called 'deep green' consumers with a 'save the planet' pitch and instead are appealing to a wider audience of consumers by promoting the added value of their products (e.g. better health, superior performance, good taste, cost-effectiveness, and even social status). In fact, Ottman argues that emphasizing these benefits is critical to winning over today's mainstream consumers.

Ottman has studied the most common myths and misconceptions about green products, brands, and marketing, and used the book as an opportunity to 'explode' the main myths. In short, they are:

- 1. Green products don't work as well**
Products such as Method, Tide Coldwater, and Clorox Greenworks brands have been developed specifically to work as well or better than regular products.
- 2. Consumers don't want to buy green products**
Green purchases represented US\$290 billion in sales in 2008, up from US\$219 billion in 2005.
- 3. Green products are more expensive**
Thanks to economies of scale due to high volumes, many green products today are competitively priced compared to their ordinary counterparts, and often make up for premium pricing many times over during their lifetimes due to savings on other factors such as energy and water usage.
- 4. Only specialty stores sell green products**
Major supermarkets now carry their own brands of organic products (e.g., Safeway's 300-item USDA certified 'O Organics' line), and even Wal-Mart is quickly making Green a priority for vendor selection.
- 5. Green products aren't really Green**
No product can be truly Green because they generally use resources and create waste somewhere down the line, but products can still be a lot Greener than their traditional counterparts, heading at least a good way toward sustainability.
- 6. Natural products are more healthy**
Although this can often be true, it is not always so. Think for example of fresh produce grown in areas with polluted water tables. At the far extreme, Arsenic is a perfectly natural substance while being quite deadly!
- 7. Plant based products will degrade in landfills**
Interestingly, this isn't always the case either. Even those products labelled 'compostable' will tend not to degrade quickly in a landfill. Compostable products are specifically designed and tested to degrade in industrial composting facilities or in backyard composters at high temperatures not

commonly found in landfills.

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

Depending upon how far the recyclable materials have to travel to recycling centres for processing - and thereby creating greenhouse gases and increasing the end product's carbon footprint - it seems that products with only 10% recycled content could actually be more environmentally friendly than their 100% recycled counterparts. It all depends on the environmental efficiency of the recycling system, and the distances travelled before and after production.

At the same time, Ottman suggested several Green products to watch over the next few years, including:

1. **Nissan Leaf Electric Car**

Driven in part by clean air/greenhouse gas emissions laws in the states, and the predicted growth of electric charging stations such as GE's new WattStation, expect Nissan's LEAF all-electric car to become to this decade what Toyota Prius (with its combination combustion engine and electric motor) was to the last.

2. **Wattson Energy Monitoring Device**

With energy prices on the rise, consumers will be watching their watts more than ever. DIY Kyoto's Wattson is one of many such devices that help to monitor a household's electricity use. When the dishwasher revs up, Wattson glows red. Turn off the AC, and Wattson turns green.

3. **G Diapers**

Cloth diapers may not have posed a threat to disposable diapers, but G Diapers just might. An innovative two-part construction allows the inner lining to be flushed, and the attractively designed outerparts to be reused over and over; the result: stylish, colourful, practical, and convenient while travelling. With 20 billion disposable diapers dumped in US landfills each year (along with their toxic content), expect Pampers and Huggies to respond with a flushable overhaul of their own.

4. **SmartGrid Appliances**

Seizing opportunities to help consumers save money, SmartGrid-enabled appliances can be controlled directly by the power company, which can lower thermostats, switch into energy-saver mode, or shut them down entirely during times of peak demand. Whirlpool predicts it will put one million smart clothes dryers on the market during 2011.

5. **Biobased Products**

The USDA launches its new 'USDA Certified Biobased Product' label in early 2011, heralding a new era in consumer products and packages. Indeed, with energy independence a growing imperative in the US, it may signal the dawn of a new biobased economy. For example, expect Coke to capitalise on its new recyclable 'Plant Bottle' (made of 30% sugar cane), and Frito-Lay to launch a second generation compostable (and less noisy) SunChips package made from corn.

More Info: <http://www.greenmarketing.com>

Source: *J. Ottman Consulting*