



S H E L T O N G R O U P

Study Shatters Stereotype of the ‘Green Consumer’

Their Kids Are Not Making Them Greener, and Their Top Concern Is Not the Planet

A new national study of green consumers is busting the stereotypes about them: The environment is not their top concern, their kids are not influencing them to be green, and while many know what they should do to save the planet, they often don't do it.

As a result, messages aimed at them often fall on deaf ears, said Suzanne Shelton, whose firm, Shelton Group, conducted the study.

The study, one of four annual surveys conducted by Shelton Group, polled 1,007 U.S. consumers who at least occasionally buy green products (77 percent of the population) and found there is no typical “green consumer.”

“Most green advertising is created as if there's one pool of green consumers and they're all motivated by ‘save the planet!’ messaging,” Shelton said. “We need a revolution in this thinking. Not all green consumers are the same, they're not all motivated by the same messages and they're not all inclined to buy only green products.”

The study, called Green Living Pulse, shattered six myths:

1. Myth: Green consumers' top concern is the environment.

When asked to identify their top concern, the economy, by far, is No. 1 (with 59 percent calling it their top concern) and the environment falls far behind (8 percent).

2. Myth: Green consumers' main motivation when reducing their energy use is to save the planet.

When asked the most important reason to reduce energy consumption, 73 percent chose “to reduce my bills/control costs” and only 26 percent chose “to lessen my impact on the environment.”

3. Myth: Green consumers are all-knowledgeable about environmental issues.

For example, the survey asked, “From what you have read or heard about CO₂ (carbon dioxide), please place a check beside any of the following statements you think are true.” Almost half (49 percent) chose the incorrect answer, “It depletes the ozone layer.”

4. Myth: Green consumers fall into a simple demographic profile.

While the study detected some demographic tendencies, it found that green consumers aren't easily defined by their age, income or ethnicity. Instead, the survey found that green consumers generally share one of two mindsets. The Engaged Green Mindset is marked by optimism, extroversion, and a propensity to try new things -- and is more likely to respond to themes of

innovation and possibility. The Mainstream Green Mindset is more pessimistic, introverted and apt to like things known and tried – responding to themes of security and reliability.

5. Myth: Children play a big part in influencing their parents to be green.

Only 20 percent of respondents with children said their kids encouraged them to be greener - promoting recycling and turning off lights, for example.

6. Myth: If people just knew the facts they'd make greener choices.

The study showed that knowledge does not always lead to behavior. Individuals who answered all of the science questions correctly did report participating in a significantly higher average number of green activities -- such as driving a fuel-efficient car or lowering their thermostat. However, the 25-34 age group consistently answered the questions correctly, yet, on average, their green activity levels were lower than those of older respondents.

“Because green consumers are being stereotyped, and these myths we tested are embraced by marketers as facts, many green messages are falling on deaf ears,” Shelton said. “If these messages were better targeted, more people would be buying green products, conserving electricity and doing more to save the planet.”

About Shelton Group

Shelton Group, founded in 1991 by Suzanne Shelton, is an advertising agency located in Knoxville, Tennessee, focused exclusively on motivating mainstream consumers to make sustainable choices. The agency conducts four proprietary consumer opinion studies annually – Eco Pulse, Energy Pulse®, Utility Pulse and Green Living Pulse.

Learn more at www.sheltongroupinc.com

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