

Cone Current Happenings

2007 Cone Consumer Environmental Survey

AMERICANS REPORT INCREASED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND EXPECTATION THAT COMPANIES WILL TAKE ACTION

National survey finds almost half of Americans are now environmental "doers;" highlights untapped opportunity for sale of green products

BOSTON (April 17, 2007) – The 2007 Cone Consumer Environmental Survey released today finds one-third of Americans (32%) report heightened interest in the environment compared to a year ago. In addition, they are overwhelmingly looking to companies to act: 93% of Americans believe companies have a responsibility to help preserve the environment.

The new study indicates a large number of Americans are now environmental "doers" themselves- in the past year, almost half (47%) have purchased environmentally-friendly products, more than one in five (21%) have donated to an environmental organization, and almost that many (18%) have advocated for environmental issues. Most Americans report they are also making efforts in their personal lives to intentionally reduce their impact on the environment, including:

- Conserving energy- 93%
- Recycling- 89%
- Conserving water- 86%
- Telling family/friends about environmental issues- 70%

What Americans Expect of Business

Americans are calling on companies to be proactive in their day-to-day operations when it comes to the environment. Concerns over packaging and transportation compete with pollution as an issue. Solid majorities support meaningful company actions including:

- Reducing pollution through office and manufacturing operations- 71%
- Designing products/packaging with more environmentally-friendly contents and minimal packaging- 69%
- Distributing and transporting products more efficiently- 69%
- Communicating environmental efforts to consumers and employees so each group can support those efforts- 62%
- Donating money to environmental causes- 59%
- Lobbying for environmentally-friendly policies- 57%

“Americans clearly have a heightened environmental consciousness, and their expectations now touch on a range of business practices,” explains Mike Lawrence, executive vice president of Corporate Responsibility, Cone LLC. “Companies need to have a credible environmental strategy that reaches across their operations if they expect to secure consumer trust and loyalty.”

Consumers Will Use Their Purchasing Power to Reward or Punish

The vast majority of Americans (91%) say they have a more positive image of a company when it is environmentally responsible. On the flip side, almost as many (85%) indicated they would consider switching to another company's products or services because of a company's negative corporate responsibility practices.

Among those Americans who report buying environmentally-friendly products, these items include:

- Products with recycled content- 62%
- Energy-efficient home improvements- 56%
- Cleaning supplies- 48%
- Organic or other third-party certified foods/beverages- 24%
- Energy-efficient cars- 13%
- Green apparel- 10%

In addition, many Americans report there are factors that would motivate them to pay *more* for environmentally-friendly products. These include:

- Saving money in the long-term- 72%
- Shopping convenience/readily available- 63%
- Health and welfare of future generations- 63%

“This is a call-to-action for companies. It's an opportunity for innovation in product design, packaging, and distribution,” says Julia Hobbs Kivistik, executive vice president of Cause Brandingsm, Cone LLC. “Companies ultimately need to engage consumers and effectively communicate the impact their business practices and products have on the environment. Consumers are listening.”

Communicating the Impact

Advertising is the leading way Americans prefer companies communicate their social and environmental issues and practices (45%), but electronic communications, particularly via company Web sites, are growing in popularity. Communication by way of a company's Web site now falls just behind advertising as the second leading outlet for social and environmental communication (41%), reinforcing the idea that as companies become more environmentally-friendly, their communications vehicles should too.

About the survey:

The 2007 Cone Consumer Environmental Survey presents the findings of an online survey conducted March 29, 2007 by Opinion Research Corporation among a sample of 1,066 adults comprising 499 men and 567 women 18 years of age and older. The margin of error associated with a sample size of 1,000 is $\pm 3\%$.