

Consumers and Sustainability: Ways to Innovation and Communication

From preserving water quality to responsible waste management, reducing pollution to clean air, the sustainability practices of companies are changing. Whether due to increasing legislative pressure to meet environmental standards or to target consumers seeking sustainable products, brands need to know how to best implement and articulate their sustainability practices.

Our [recent study](#) on corporate ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) practices uncovered insights about all areas of ESG—including a deep dive into Environmental issues. So how can your brand pivot their product development to make sure sustainability innovations can dovetail with top consumer concerns like convenience, price and taste? And how can you best communicate these changes with your target audiences?

Let's look at the top three Environmental concerns cited in our research.

Air and Water Quality Preservation

Certainly changes in the manufacturing processes can bolster companies' preservation of the natural environment, but sometimes these changes need to be made in production. It could be a packaging change, ingredient change or another innovation that helps protect air and water quality. To make these changes, it's important to understand the impact on consumer preference, behavior and purchasing.

A good market research approach for a sustainable pack change would be [Purchaser Follow-Up \(PFU™\)](#). Using this solution, brands can understand pre- and post-pack change comparisons to be sure the change meets (or exceeds) consumer expectations. If it is an announced change, brands can also understand if sustainability benefits are helping to drive consumers to purchase or impacting value perceptions relative to competitors.



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Adherence to Conservation Standards



There are many standards and requirements from governmental bodies such as the EPA, USDA and FDA that guide business practices, including those that help protect the environment. There are also a variety of certifications that products can receive for following sustainable guidelines, like Energy Star, USDA Organic Seal, Forest Stewardship Council, and Green Seal. Our study shows that consumers are looking for communication about these standards via company websites, marketing materials, and, of course, on the package itself.

Using market research methods like [PackPulse™](#) to optimize the pack's Visual Identity System can help brands communicate sustainable practices directly to consumers from the store shelf. This can help ensure any new pack messaging is relatable, motivating and not adding clutter to the pack.

Waste Management & Reducing Pollution

Another identified Environmental topic was for companies to utilize responsible waste management and take active steps to reduce overall pollution. Whether the change comes about through governmental regulation, or consumer demand, there are a variety of ways that corporations do this. Steps can include reducing pack materials, inventory management, and recycling throughout the product lifecycle.

To understand how to communicate some of these behind-the-scenes sustainable activities, using a market research approach like [MessageFilter™](#) can help get the word out, the right way. Specifically, this approach can help brands build a communication hierarchy: What is the best articulation of sustainability benefits and where should these messages fit relative to communications about price, convenience, quality, and other aspects important to consumers?



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Consumer Insights on Company Environmental Matters

While governmental regulations may drive many of the sustainability changes in the marketplace, consumers still want to understand what's happening on this front within the brands they buy. And brands need to understand how best to communicate about these ESG implementations.

Our consumer behavior study on consumer attitudes toward Environmental, Social and Governance practices showed that more than half of consumers are likely to be influenced by brand and product behaviors that align (or don't align) with their personal beliefs, including protecting the environment.

Understanding, through market research, how to best pivot, innovate and communicate with consumers is vital to overall corporate ESG implementations.



**Learning more about your consumers' attitudes toward
your company's ESG practices is key to the right communication!**

CONTACT US TO GET STARTED:

www.amcglobal.com

info@amcglobal.com

+1.610.238.9200