

Cone Releases 2009 Consumer Environmental Survey

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CONSUMER INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL PURCHASING NOT ECLIPSED BY POOR ECONOMY

More than one-third of consumers more likely to buy environmentally responsible products today

BOSTON (February 18, 2009) – Despite the dire state of the economy, 34 percent of American consumers indicate they are *more likely* to buy environmentally responsible products today, and another 44 percent indicate their environmental shopping habits *have not changed* as a result of the economy. Fewer than one-in-10 (8 percent) say they are *less likely* to buy. This is according to the results of the **2009 Cone Consumer Environmental Survey** released today.

Even amid the recession, American interest in the environment has not waned, and as a result, many consumers are inclined to hold companies accountable for their environmental commitments today and in the future:

- 35 percent of Americans have higher interest in the environment today than they did one year ago;
- 35 percent of Americans have higher expectations for companies to make and sell environmentally responsible products and services during the economic downturn; and,
- 70 percent of Americans indicate that they are paying attention to what companies are doing with regard to the environment today, even if they cannot buy until the future.

“The fact that consumers continue to be interested in the environment and mindful of corporate efforts, even in the midst of a grueling recession, is evidence that this is more than just a passing trend,” says Jonathan Yohannan, Senior Vice President of Corporate Responsibility, Cone.

“Environmental responsibility is not just an expectation in times of prosperity.”

Environmental Messaging Largely Immune to Consumer Distrust

As consumer confidence in companies dips to record lows, trust in environmental messages remains surprisingly resilient. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of Americans say they trust companies to tell them the truth in their environmental messaging. There is one caveat: Most

consumers (85 percent) believe companies should communicate their environmental commitments year-round.

“Earth Day is right around the corner, and we’ll likely see many environmental campaigns hit the marketplace to capitalize on the event,” says Yohannan. “But companies must think beyond this singular occasion to develop authentic and long-term commitments, even as they weather the recession. Environmental communications continue to be credible touch points through which business can regain or sustain consumer loyalty and trust.”

About the survey:

The 2009 Cone Consumer Environmental Survey presents the findings of an online survey conducted January 29-30, 2009 by Opinion Research Corporation among a demographically representative U.S. sample of 1,087 adults, comprising 518 men and 569 women 18 years of age and older. The margin of error associated with a sample of this size is $\pm 3\%$.

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