

MARKETING

## Authentic actions key for brands reaching conscious consumers

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*An environmentally conscious consumer is one who is more likely to be Gen Z or a millennial. Image credit: Snap, Inc.*

By KATIE TAMOLA

Environmentally conscious consumers continue to expand their presence online, calling on brands to be forthcoming about their efforts to preserve the planet.

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According to [new findings from market researcher Resonate](#), environmentally conscious consumers are searching for specific and authentic actions behind brands' environmental promises, which is ultimately beneficial for both brand and buyer. These consumers tend to be younger and more likely to either publicly criticize or recommend brands based on how well they align with their personal values.

"Over the course of the last 16 months, we've seen consumer activism gaining momentum and many brands struggling to determine their best response," said Ericka McCoy, chief marketing officer at Resonate. "It's critical that brands authentically maintain their corporate values and understand where their values align to those of their current and potential customers.

"Brands require deep, human-centric, real-time insights traditional research tools are not adequate."

Environmental consciousness counts

Resonate identified the characteristics of the environmentally conscious consumer through its [Ignite Platform](#) tool, an AI-driven consumer data and analytics platform that delivers more than 13,000 real-time insights on 200 million consumers. The tool assists organizations in understanding their audiences' needs.

An environmentally conscious consumer is one whose purchasing decisions are driven by supporting companies that reduce energy use as well as packaging. These consumers want brands to walk the walk after talking the talk, recognizing that greenwashing is not enough and actively seeking policies that are put into action.



*Sephora's latest sustainability push involves a seal for brands that make efforts toward sustainable sourcing, responsible packaging and donating to environmental causes. Image credit: Sephora*

This group is 42 percent more likely than the average consumer to be Gen Z and 14 percent more likely to be a millennial, reflecting the point/theory that younger generations are those leading the way towards environmental protection and progress.

Environmentally conscious consumers are split almost equally in regards to the number of males and females.

Almost a quarter, 23 percent, of this group has a household income between \$25,000 and \$50,000 and most are unmarried with no children. They are 48 percent more likely than the average U.S. online adult to prioritize locally-owned organizations or shopping independently.

This group's top retail brands are footwear retailer DSW and LVMH-owned beauty retailer Sephora.

When brands are looking to connect with these consumers, they initially should align their creative outreach with this group's top values. Environmentally conscious consumers are 94 percent more likely than the average consumer to value caring for nature, and they note being driven by living an "exciting life."

Brands need to produce campaigns that position themselves as leaders and innovators. These creatives should inherently illustrate value alignment and the fact that the brand is actively trying to make a difference.



*Yoox Net-A-Porter is taking more steps towards circularity. Image credit: Yoox Net-A-Porter*

Another key tactic Resonate suggests in connecting with environmentally conscious consumers is actively spotlighting actions.

Ninety-two percent of people in this group are more likely than the average consumer to criticize companies that do not live up to their green standards, while 89 percent of members of this group are more likely to recommend consumers who do.

Brands need to prove that they are actively achieving or trying to achieve their environmental goals. Adding a page to a brand website that lists environmental efforts and actions is one way to reach this audience.

Additionally, when brands show that they are donating to worthwhile environmental causes, consumers are more likely to view them in a beneficial light.

Conscious consumers are 49 percent more likely to donate money, which is a direct way for a brand to align themselves with their consumers' values. If a consumer sees a brand supporting one of their favorite causes, they

could be more likely to return to that brand down the line.

Lastly, brands need to meet these consumers where they are, and for many that means social media. This group of consumers is more likely than the average consumer to be on any major social media platform including YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Reddit and Twitch.

#### Luxury brands making it clear

Several luxury brands have increasingly made strides in not only their environmental efforts, but also in putting their conscious efforts on display to prove authenticity and action behind their planet-protecting efforts.

Last month, Sephora announced it was expanding on its sustainability efforts by introducing a new Clean + Planet Positive label for brands that meet certain clean and environmental standards.

Building off its Clean at Sephora program, the new Clean + Planet Positive subcategory includes brands that aim to change the beauty landscape and the planet. To earn the Clean + Planet Positive seal, brands must be Clean at Sephora-approved and must prove efforts toward sustainable sourcing, responsible packaging and donating to environmental causes ([see story](#)).

Earlier this year, LVMH French luxury conglomerate LVMH Mot Hennessy Louis Vuitton announced new objectives of its Life 360 environmental strategy, once again centering on the relationship between nature and creativity.

Last year, LVMH implemented its new Life 360 strategy, which addresses the environmental approach from manufacturing through in-store experiences. During the opening ceremony of LVMH's first Climate Week, executives shared the framework of Life 360 as the group moves to intensify its environmental policy ([see story](#)).

The [strategy](#) also has its own page on the LVMH website.

In such an age of innovation and technology, there are many ways brands can make their environmental efforts clear, especially to the group that values these kinds of efforts the most. Brands will have to continuously prove that there is authenticity and action behind their promises.

"With access to accurate and real-time data telling you what consumers value today, you will always have a leg up against your competitors," Ms. McCoy said. "Not only can you pursue more environmentally conscious efforts that align with consumer expectations, but you can pinpoint which ones to shine light the most light on, and the best channels to do so."