

MARKETING

## Sustainability growing in importance for global consumers: Kantar

November 1, 2021



*Packaging is one way brands can illustrate their sustainability commitments. Image credit: Gucci*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Brands and retailers can create a competitive advantage through sustainability as consumers becoming increasingly environmentally conscious.

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According to [findings from Kantar and Europanel](#), the number of households that are "most" environmentally conscious, dubbed "Eco Actives," climbed for the second consecutive year. This group now accounts for almost a quarter of all global consumers.

"Many brands will need to evaluate the impact this population shift will have on their business," said John Truelove, solutions director at [Europanel](#), London, in a webinar.

The research is based on a sample of more than 88,000 consumers surveyed across 26 markets from June to July 2021.

### Consumer opportunities

Eco Actives represent 22 percent of global consumers in 2021, up from 16 percent in 2019. These shoppers are highly concerned about the environment and take personal action to reduce plastic waste, such as using refillable water bottles or avoiding plastic packaging.

The largest "eco segmentation" is "Eco Considerers," accounting for 40 percent of consumers. They share similar concern levels with Eco Activists but are less proactive, citing price and convenience.



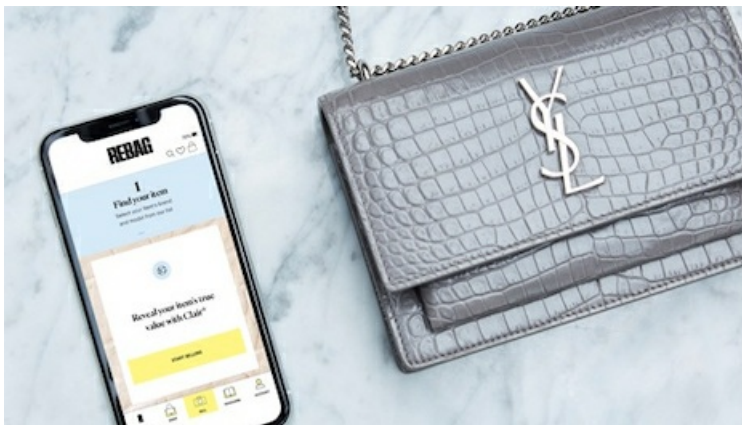
*More consumers are looking for items made with recycled materials. Image credit: Longchamp*

Thirty-eight percent of consumers are "Eco Dismissers," who lack awareness of environmental issues and are not taking steps to reduce their plastic use. This segment has fallen from 49 percent of shoppers in 2019.

Eco Actives also represent larger shares of the population in more affluent markets accounting for an average of 30.6 percent of consumers in high GDP countries. There are exceptions, however, as the U.S. at 18 percent has a smaller share of Eco Actives than the global average.

This is predicted to soon change, with Eco Actives expected to become the global majority by 2030. In high GDP markets, Eco Actives are predicted to reach 50 percent by 2025.

In part, this growth is forecast because brands and retailers are investing in more sustainable alternatives which will appeal to the significant number of shoppers who are Eco Considerers. Seventy percent of Eco Considerers want to make sustainable purchases, but only 27 percent do so.



*Luxury consumers are becoming increasingly interested in resale and secondhand fashion opportunities. Image credit: Rebag*

Packaging is one crucial area where brands can stand out to consumers.

More than nine in 10 shoppers pay attention to sustainable information on packaging, with 38 percent of all consumers checking if packaging is recyclable. Fewer consumers are concerned with specific packaging materials or certifications.

Other environmental actions consumers are taking include using refillable or reusable products, shopping local businesses, driving less and shopping for secondhand clothing.

#### Luxury responses

For brands to make sustainability a competitive advantage, they need to make sustainability a rewarding and easy choice by increasing the visibility of environmentally conscious goods and packaging.

Brands should also highlight the positive impact of sustainable offerings, while continuing to emphasize what originally differentiates them such as their luxury heritage.

Luxury brands are increasingly ramping up their sustainability efforts in response to affluent consumer sentiment.

British fashion label Burberry recently set an ambitious sustainability goal and is pledging to become "climate positive" by 2040.

Burberry is the first luxury brand to commit to be climate positive, meaning that it will remove or save more carbon emissions than it is producing to create an environmental benefit. The brand has been accelerating its environmental efforts and is on track to become carbon neutral across its own footprint by 2022 ([see story](#)).

In October, French fashion house Chlo has received B Corp Certification, the first luxury fashion house in Europe to do so.

Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability. Chlo succeeded in the vigorous vetting process including a 300-question survey analyzing the inner workings of the business of obtaining this marker that symbolizes the ultimate dedication to sustainability ([see story](#)).

These efforts will only become more important as Eco Actives become more prominent and climate concerns become more pertinent.

"Brands needs to find a way of elevating the carbon agenda into shoppers' decision-making processes," said Europanel's Mr. Truelove.

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