Ethical Consumerism: what is it and how can you make it work for you?

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Ethical Consumerism

Ethical Consumerism is defined as personal consumption where choice has been informed by a particular ethical issue – be it human rights, social justice, the environment or animal welfare.

Moral principles/standards and subsequent impact upon consumer behaviour of individuals/groups.

(Williams, Taylor & Howard 2005)
## Typology of the current research approach to ethical consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Central theme</th>
<th>Concerns/main practices</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By concern</td>
<td>• Fair Trade</td>
<td>Equitable trading partnerships and sustainability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sustainability issues</td>
<td>Pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour, sustainable farming practices, animal welfare and organic sourcing</td>
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<td>By behaviour/lifestyle</td>
<td>• Voluntary simplicity</td>
<td>Globalization and the reduction of consumption practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Political consumption</td>
<td>Boycotting, ‘buycotting’ and corporate ethical information seeking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dual approach</td>
<td>• Ethical consumers</td>
<td>Can include various combinations or all of the above</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Soul of the New Consumer
(Lewis and Bridger 2001)

The quest for AUTHENTICITY

The New Consumer
- Individualistic
- Involved
- Independent
- Informed

The New Scarcities
- Time
- Attention
- Trust
Scarcity of Time

• More demands, more decisions, less time
• Family and relationships
• Price premiums reduce burdens
• Quick/slow food…
Scarcity of Attention

- Need to understand messages quickly
- Younger groups with greater visual literacy
- Conventional methods of persuasion are failing
Scarcity of Trust

- Consumers unlikely to offer unquestioning trust to manufacturers/suppliers
- Increasing dissatisfaction owing to high expectation and desire for instant gratification
- Pursuit of added value
The New Consumer

• Individualistic

• Involved

• Independent

• Informed
Authenticity

- Move towards self actualisation
- Often involves considerable inconvenience
- New standard related to added values
- Retail therapy/spirituality enhancing self actualisation
Forever Trends (trendwatching.com)

• The Eco Trend
• Beauty, Health and Wellbeing
• Spirituality
• Pink Trend
• Female Power
• Baby Boomer
Faith Popcorn Trends 2009

- Cocooning
- Fantasy adventure
- Small indulgences
- Egonomics
- Down-aging
- Being alive
- Vigilanty
- 99 Lives
Summary

• Social and consumer trends driven by environment
• Potential to affect many areas of business
• Trends translate within different contexts
• Ethical consumption set to increase
References

- Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2006)
- Lewis and Bridger (2001)
- Harrison, Newholm and Shaw (2005)
- Popcorn (2009)
- Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2006)
- Williams, Taylor & Howard (2005)
Other Sources

- www.trendwatching.com
- www.springwise.com
- www.thefuturelaboratory.com
- www.PSFK.com
- www.trenhunter.com
- www.micoach.com

- The New Consumer magazine
- Ecologist magazine