

# When Personal Aspiration and Behavior Diverge

# SUSTAINABILITY 2013



A HARTMAN GROUP SYNDICATED RESEARCH REPORT

Learn how companies can bridge the gap between the sustainable products consumers say they want and what they actually purchase by addressing consumers' barriers to purchase.



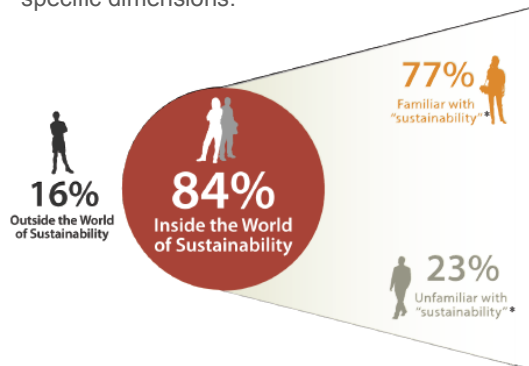
**Sustainability 2013** combines the strength of a quantitative sample size of U.S. adult consumers and in-depth ethnographic consumer immersions to gauge the depth of current sustainability “consciousness,” involvement, and usage. This integrated approach allows us to go beyond the usual listing of motivators and barriers to uncover the principal drivers responsible for moving consumers along the adoption path in the World of Sustainability.

“We’re seeing a broad gap in the way consumers and companies think about and approach sustainability. That very few consumers today can name a sustainable company underscores the fact that so many Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability activities go relatively unnoticed by consumers.”

Laurie Demeritt,  
CEO  
The Hartman Group

The Hartman Group has conducted Sustainability research in the United States every other year since the late 1990s. From the beginning, the intent of the studies has been to provide timely, comprehensive data, insights, and trends that track changes in consumers’ understanding of the term’s meaning, integration into their lifestyles, and purchase behaviors across a broad range of categories and retail channels.

*Sustainability 2013* provides a detailed analysis of several key product and channel categories and highlights key findings including how many consumers participate in sustainable behaviors and consider environment and social aspects at times in making purchase decisions, and those consumers willing to pay more for products with specific dimensions.



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## ABOUT THE REPORT

*Report Length:* General report (PowerPoint and PDF format) 144 pages. Set of standard demographic data tables in Excel format included.

*Market Coverage:* U.S. market

*Release Date:* June 2013

*Price:* \$15,000

## METHODOLOGY

Integrated two-phase qualitative and quantitative approach:

- 1.) Quantitative online survey: Nationally representative sample of 1,841 U.S. adult consumers fielded May 2013.
- 2.) Qualitative ethnographies fielded in Seattle and Atlanta.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hartman Group's Sustainability 2013 report is the latest in the longest running series of consumer-centric syndicated research exploring the area of sustainability. Building upon years of intellectual capital in this space, this year's report focuses on understanding why consumers state a want for sustainable products but don't always buy them.

In 2013, 84% of American consumers report they consider sustainability when making purchase decisions, and thus, reside in the World of Sustainability, a model created by The Hartman Group that helps explain consumer motivations and behavior around sustainability.

Consumers' orientation in the World of Sustainability ranges from Periphery (least involved) to Core (most intensely involved). Sustainability comprises four Zones of Responsibility—Personal, Social, Environmental, and Economic. Each zone is composed of various considerations, which we refer to as "Dimensions of Responsibility." These Dimensions of Responsibility are culturally relevant criteria that consumers use to assess how economically, environmentally, or socially responsible a company's/brand's practices or products/services are and the degree to which they benefit the consumer personally.

Personal Benefit is a unique consumer-oriented zone that explains how consumers view sustainability, along with conventional zones that include environmental, social, and economic constructs. In order for consumers to see meaning in sustainability, they must see some degree of personal benefit, regardless of their orientation in the World of Sustainability. When Sustainability and Personal Benefits meet, consumers are given the opportunity to "FEEL GOOD" about the products they purchase and use.

Consumers express concern for a world of increasing selfishness, the symptoms of which appear throughout contemporary society. In their own lives, consumers try to improve the world by starting with themselves, their home, and their community. They believe that, if everyone tries harder to do the right thing in "their own little world," the effects will ripple outward and result in a better world overall.

Consumers believe that companies also can, and should, be trying to improve the world around them by thinking beyond the bottom line. By supporting the work of "good companies" with their purchases, consumers feel that they are also helping make a difference in the world. As such, consumers want to see companies being sustainable, not doing sustainability.

In our previous study (*Marketing Sustainability: Bridging the Gap Between Consumers and Companies, 2010*), we suggested consumers understand sustainability in terms of companies and brands "Doing the right thing" and "Being responsible."

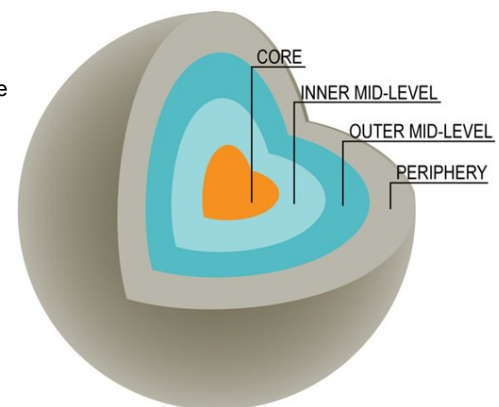
We emphasized that consumers were looking for companies that:

- Can be depended on to keep their environment clean and healthy
- Are not aloof, but participate in local activities and the social well-being of the community
- Contribute to the economic viability of the community
- Are sincerely interested in their personal well-being

While these concepts continue to resonate with consumers, it is clear that simply doing the right thing is not a guarantee that consumers will buy your company's products.

On the one hand, consumers say they want to be sustainable and support companies that behave sustainably. On the other, when companies do act sustainably, consumers don't always give them the credit they might expect.

Where consumers live in the World of Sustainability defines the intensity of their engagement with sustainability issues



A HARTMAN GROUP SYNDICATED RESEARCH REPORT

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)**

In this study, we continue to explore the ways in which sustainability and corporate responsibility concepts manifest in consumer discourse but turn our attention to their relevance in explaining “The Gap” between the Sustainable products consumers say they want and what they actually buy.

In doing so, we have discovered that understanding consumer priorities at the product category level gives us greater insight into why consumers often fail to “walk the talk.” At the category level, consumers speak more to the sustainability values that actually guide their purchase decisions, whereas they tend to evaluate companies from a more general perspective, one that originates in the media and social discourse.

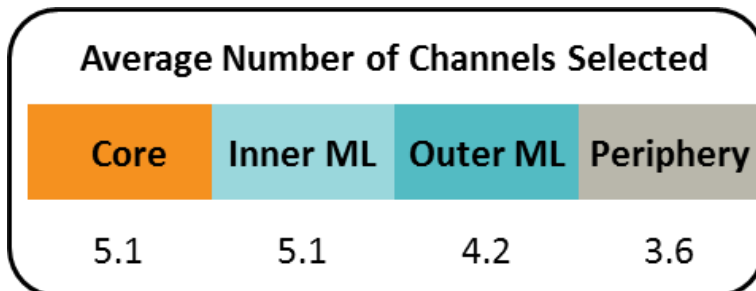
The values that guide purchase decisions vary by category. For example:

- In Meat, Animal Welfare is the most salient Dimension of Responsibility because consumers believe animals that have lived a good life provide healthier meat
- In Chocolate, Fair Trade is salient because Fair Trade practices indicate a higher quality bar, made by a company with a passion for ingredients
- In Cosmetics, Animal Welfare is salient because consumers assume that a product tested on animals contains chemicals they would worry about putting on their skin
- In Household Cleaners, Air and Water Pollution is salient because consumers assume that a product that causes pollution must contain harsh chemicals that are unsafe to have in the home

This report identifies ways in which companies can bridge “The Gap” by addressing consumers’ barriers of Knowledge, Practicality, and Faith. Recognizing and addressing these barriers and understanding what consumers ultimately value at the category level will help companies reach those 84% of consumers who consider sustainability when making purchase decisions.

Update your understanding of consumers’ evolving attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations regarding sustainable products, services, brands, and companies

**Consumers closer to the Core use more channels, and more specialists to purchase their groceries**



### WHAT'S INSIDE: SAMPLE PAGES

#### Where consumers live in the World of Sustainability defines the intensity of their engagement with sustainability issues

**14%** The **Core** (14%) is the smallest segment and most intensely involved in Sustainability

- Promoting sustainability for the benefit of the greater good is a defining feature of their values, and it consistently drives decision making

**66%** The **Mid-level** (66%) represents the majority of consumers and the greatest opportunity

- Although not as intensely involved or committed as Core consumers, Mid-level consumers share some attitudinal and behavioral characteristics with the Core (more for Inner Mid-level) and some others with the Periphery (more for Outer Mid-level)

**20%** The **Periphery** (20%) is least involved in Sustainability

- Sustainability is rarely top of mind in decision making, but it does play a role in their value system more generally

Segmentation is based on respondent behavior regarding: animal testing, packaging, community issues, supporting companies helping the local community, recycling, and price. Base: n=1,287. © 2013 The Hartman Group, Inc.

#### Periphery consumer profile | Ladyjoy

*"...as for the environment and politics — I don't get involved in it. I just do my little bit, try and recycle, but I just don't really think about it."*

**Description:**

- 43, single, works in procurement

**Sustainable behaviors:**

- Working with victims of domestic violence through her local church, hoping to start her own nonprofit
- Recycles sometimes

**Sustainability knowledge:**

- Thinks organic produce should be cheaper
- Likes to stick with big, reliable brands and is excited to see them supporting causes; e.g., Lysol-developed program called "helping in your community"
- Mainly concerned that food looks good, is healthy, and is not out of date

**Shops at:**

- Walmart, because it's a great one-stop shop

**Sustainable brands:**

Silk, Lysol, Avon

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#### The Environmental Zone

**ENERGY CONSUMPTION**

- global warming
- carbon footprint
- resources
- alternatives (solar, wind, water)
- clean? (coal, water, trees, farm)
- use it (reduce, limit, reuse, recycle)

**WASTE DISPOSAL**

- pollution (air, water, ground, sewage, chemicals, trash)
- throwing away (reduce, reuse, recycle)

**RESOURCE PRESERVATION**

- habitat (animal, plant, birds)
- stewardship (balance, respect, natural order, science vs. nature)
- restoration (protection, preservation)
- sustainable (responsible sourcing)

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#### How consumers define sustainability has broadened in the last 5 years

Definition	2008	2010	2013
Ability to last over time	45%	49%	64%
Conserving natural resources	45%	50%	60%
Recycle, reuse, reduce	47%	48%	46%
Environmentally friendly	32%	34%	42%
Ability to support oneself (self-reliance)	19%	24%	35%
Responsibility	11%	14%	20%
Reducing carbon footprint	22%	26%	32%
Green	23%	24%	27%
Responsible farming methods	25%	26%	32%
Economic viability	26%	32%	35%
Maintaining a clean water supply	10%	12%	16%
Stewardship of land	10%	11%	14%
High quality	17%	17%	17%

**Most consumers do not naturally use the term "sustainable" in conversation**

When asked explicitly, "sustainability" does not make them think of the holistic qualities they are looking for from a "good" company or product. "Sustainability" most strongly cues literal definitions of "long lasting" particularly in reference to the environmental zone.

- Relatively few consumers can comfortably connect sustainability to more social endeavors

Q13. The word "sustainability" may mean different things to different people. What does it mean to you? (Select all that apply). Base: Consumers familiar with the term "sustainability", 2008 (n=1,151), 2010 (n=1,151), 2013 (n=1,356). © 2013 The Hartman Group, Inc.

#### SNACKS

#### Dimensions of Responsibility related to minimal/ecofriendly packaging are most salient to consumers

Dimension	Percentage
Minimal/Ecofriendly Packaging	28%
Supporting Local Economy	25%
Animal Welfare	21%
Employment Practices	20%
Fair Trade	18%
Natural Agricultural Methods/Practices	17%
Supporting Local Economy	10%
Animal Welfare	14%
Employment Practices	11%
Fair Trade	6%
Natural Agricultural Methods/Practices	8%
Minimal/Ecofriendly Packaging	11%

**The Personal Benefit Connection**

Consumers have varied priorities in this varied category. **Minimal/ecofriendly packaging** represents consumers' concerns around the wastefulness of single-serve packaging. However, it also cues convenience, as consumers do not want to have to struggle with packaging when they're on-the-go. Local also cues more personal, less processed and **healthy**.

**The Consumer Perspective**

*I like the Pure Chocolate Brownie fruit and nut bar because it is organic, gluten-free and does not contain any GMO ingredients. I think the Pure brand is making a difference by offering products free of pesticides and herbicides...Pure also supports the "Non-GMO Project" - Inner ML consumer*

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#### Consumers closer to the Core use more channels, and more specialists to purchase their groceries

Channel	Percentage
Grocery store/supermarket	97%
General merchandise store	85%
Drug store	63%
Dollar/discount store	60%
Warehouse/club store	54%
Convenience store	50%
Farmers Market	22%
Specialty Pet Food Store (e.g., Petco, PetSmart)	18%
Gourmet/Specialty Food Store	13%
Supplement/Vitamin Store (e.g., GNC, Vitamin Shoppe)	12%
Butcher or Fish Market	12%
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	1%

**Average Number of Channels Selected**

Segment	Average Number of Channels Selected
Core	5.1
Inner ML	5.1
Outer ML	4.2
Periphery	3.6

**Inner-ML and Core consumers are shopping more frequently, more locally, and at more specialist retailers, to meet their highly specific demands for sustainable products in each category**

e.g., 20% of Core have visited a Gourmet/Specialty Food Store in the last 3 months, compared with 15% Inner-ML, 11% Outer-ML, 7% Periphery

Q34-Q40. At which of the following [TYPE OF STORE] have you purchased your food, beverages and groceries during the past 3 months? Base: Significant shoppers inside the World of Sustainability (n=1,481). © 2013 The Hartman Group, Inc.