

Ethical and Green Retailing - UK - September 2009

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What is this report about?

This report focuses on consumer awareness of the issues and how their behaviour has changed in response to changing economic and environmental conditions.

It identifies whether consumer action on environmental issues is increasing and assesses whether retailers need to do more on environmental and ethical issues as a consequence.

What have we found out?

- Environmental and ethical issues retain the power to attract attention and spend with nearly half of UK adults (25 million) viewing them as important or very important.
- The recession is undermining people's willingness to pay more for 'environmentally-friendly' products: 2 million fewer people are prepared to pay more for these products in 2009 compared with 2008.
- Workers conditions are more important to shoppers than environmental impact: more shoppers would consider boycotting big retailers because they are sourcing goods made under poor conditions for workers (20 million) rather than because they are not reducing their impact on the environment (14 million).
- Ease and speed with which consumers have adopted low-energy light bulbs (41 million) and reusable carrier bags (38 million) shows there is positive underlying sentiment to be exploited by retailers.
- Almost three-quarters of adults (38 million) think retailers should do more to reduce the amount of packaging they use, with lightweight plastics a much sought-after addition to the recycling infrastructure.
- Widespread support for reusable bottles could be better exploited by retailers and the packaging industry: 44% of people (22 million) say they are willing to take bottles to supermarkets or other collection points.

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