

The Ethical Consumer - US - July 2015

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"Ethics have become increasingly important to a company's reputation. Due to a nearly ceaseless stream of information, consumers are bombarded with issues to care about, and many do feel that they should take a stance in support of or against differing opinions. How they go about showing or demonstrating a commitment, however, varies from passive avoidance to zealous evangelism."
- Lauren Bonetto, Lifestyles & Leisure Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- People expect ethical behavior – What is the best way to communicate the message?
- Confusion over ethical terms and icons may lead to rejection
- Taking a stance on a polarizing issue can attract and repel
- Big companies struggle with an image problem
- Consumers more likely to punish the bad than to reward the good

Marketing to the ethical consumer can be difficult due to wavering interest and skepticism. Though investing in the "ethical-ization" of a business may not offer a return on investment, it is increasingly necessary to protect the company from being criticized by the media and boycotted by consumers who find business practices or company ethics unsatisfactory.

For the purposes of this Report, Mintel has used the following definitions:

"Ethical consumer" is defined as someone whose purchasing decisions are at least sometimes influenced by a company's ethics.

"Ethical actions" are defined as efforts by a company to be honest, fair, and responsible. Examples include, but are not limited to, efforts to be green, to treat animals humanely, and to treat employees well.

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DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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