

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVERTISING:
and its Importance to the Culture of Climate Change

by

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The nature of advertising requires it to be a constant perpetuation of cultural ideals, flexible enough to frequently change to anticipate and capitalize on the needs and wants of a society. Increasingly, advertising is inescapable. It has leapt from the two dimensional frames of newspapers, and evolved to the point of tracking our internet usage. Consumers adapt to new forms of advertising and have also learned to have some control over the brands in their lives. This has caused brands to advance the ways in which they interact with and appeal to consumers, attempting to avoid negative criticism and offer more to customers who are dedicated to brands. The evolution of this balance of power between consumers and brands has created a dense and complicated set of marketing practices designed to cut through media that is already saturated with advertising.

A popular way for brands to mean more to their consumers and add value to their products is by advertising the positive environmental value of their brand and its products. While some companies are truly interested in minimizing their impact on the

environment, many are more willing to simply appear to be making a difference. This type of false environmental advertising is known as greenwashing, and often involves claims about products that are difficult to measure and verify, and equally difficult to litigate over if they are found to be dishonest. Additionally, these environmentally oriented practices used to add emotional brand value have combined and affected more scientific methods of measuring the environmental impact of products, creating confusion for consumers and corporations in dealing with limiting their impacts on the environment.

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Introduction

There are many problems that arise when discussing how to mitigate our impact as humans in the issue of global warming. It's an issue so vast it includes all of our lives and impacts on this planet together in one. For that reason, it is easily ignored by individuals as a consequence of the actions of many. At a personal level, changing our own habits to support a healthy planet can appear useless. Our societies do not largely support opportunities to adequately change our behavior in support of our planet. Although we are beginning to realize the importance of changing our ways in the face of eventual uninhabitable conditions, we have little cultural infrastructure from which to draw wisdom and instruction about how to comfortably adjust to living within sustainable limits. Our government is making adjustments for environmental protection, and many individuals are making adjustments in their own lives that are important for the environment. Yet in between these platforms of change, national and personal, there are many systems within our culture that do not inherently support more efficient expenditure of carbon emissions. These systems require a closer look in order for first-world societies to be on the right path to living within a range of greenhouse gas emissions that is healthy and sustainable for our entire planet.

Among the broader issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure our planet's future stability is consumerism. The buying and selling of products currently requires emissions in large quantities through the production, transportation, and consumption of goods. In between the positive changes that are being enacted by various levels of government and individuals, there remains intact a culture of

consumption that is counterproductive to environmental sustainability. Advertising is a large part of this culture, heavily influencing an individual's buying decisions and levels of consumption.

It's important to pay attention to the ways in which we advertise now more than ever. Advertising can be an opportunity for us to aid ourselves in our struggle with global warming, or an opportunity to continue on a route that supports a culture of excessiveness. The main objective of advertising is the growth in sales of a company's products. Companies give their keen attention to the fact that environmentalism is on the rise as a public concern. Both businesses and consumers benefit from being sustainable and efficient to some extent. But many businesses are finding that going green is expensive, and may maximize their environmental appearance rather than their actions. This leads to an opportunity for advertising to mislead us in our attempts to help the environment when making purchasing decisions, spreading the false environmental appearance to consumers as well. There is a deficit between what our world needs and what economics will allow. Some companies may mislead knowingly, but many are misled themselves by choosing to believe that real change can be created through temporarily and economically viable green options. It seems there are many cases where companies and their consumers alike are stuck in a false sense of environmental sustainability in regards to the company's "green" product(s) and practices.

If positive environmental action and conservation were easy to understand in a cause-and-effect format, green advertising would not be a problem. But that is not the case, and thus green advertising can be difficult to make sense of. Corporations have

many strategies for branding a product or service as environmentally friendly, ranging from using light green color schemes in ads, to claiming that a product directly reduces the amount of carbon in parts-per-million in the atmosphere. While the stronger of these two green appeals will likely be scrutinized, lesser appeals can be seen as authentic without warranting the same scrutiny. Light green packaging or motifs that are connected to environmentally oriented campaigns can be used to appeal to consumers about a company's green practices without necessarily providing objective evidence for environmental stewardship. In this way our ideas for saving and conserving the planet via the brands we choose to purchase can be based upon emotional brand value rather than the actual behavior of a corporation behind the brand. This type of branding creates distance between consumers and corporations, restricting consumer knowledge about corporate environmental responsibility to simple green advertising tactics (such as the use of light green colors in ads) that purvey only feelings of environmental friendliness. It's important that environmentalism in advertising be explored in terms of emotional appeal because there can be a big difference between what we think we're doing for our planet and what we're actually doing.

Advertising is an essential tool with which modern businesses conduct themselves. The same can be said about advertising in regards to consumers and their buying decisions. This makes advertising a source of culture that is very important to sustainability. In order to improve upon our culture of sustainability within consumerism, however undeveloped it may be, it's necessary to understand what forms of environmental advertising are the most effective at reducing the negative impact of corporations and their products on the environment.

Greenwashing

False green advertising can inhibit our ability to help the planet by being a problem masquerading as a solution. When an advertisement implies that a product or service will help the environment and in reality it will not help, or not help as much as the advertisement implies, the ad is referred to as having been greenwashed. The negative effects of such advertising are twofold because not only does a company cover up its negative environmental impacts, it also spreads the notion that its products help the environment. This makes it possible for products that pollute and are unsustainable to become popular for their perceived environmental friendliness, and therefore be produced in higher capacity, creating more pollution.

Greenwashing can be difficult to define and diagnose, seeing as each individual's opinion can vary when interpreting an advertisement. It's more appropriate to consider greenwashing as a spectrum rather than whether or not something is greenwashed. Even if something is not greenwashed, it's necessary to consider that most products have a carbon footprint, and many different kinds of environmentally friendly qualities often do not offset this footprint.

There's a great deal of ambiguity presently in green advertising because both sides of the equation, consumers and corporations, are becoming adept at understanding the scope of our environmental situation. Both sides understand that the solution to our problems are complex and require much effort and time to solve. The days of short sighted and thinly veiled environmental ads are coming to a close, causing green advertising to develop into a sophisticated and complicated practice. We are entering

into a time when parent companies, alongside their brands, are realizing the importance of making dramatic changes in accord with green practices, not only to retain the loyalty of their consumers, but also to relieve their own financial woes in regards to things like rising gas prices. This has caused corporations to diversify their greenness, although sometimes this is achieved with the same greenwashing tactics seen in the ads for their brands. While it is important to keep an eye out for poorly assembled campaigns that have noticeable flaws in their plans or ideas to protect the environment, it's also important to adjust the scope of the green advertising discussion to complicated attempts by brands and the corporations behind them to appear green.

As the public's awareness and concern for global warming has grown to maturity within the last 20 years, so has the delivery of messages centered around the environment become a normal and necessary advertising tactic deployed by brands. The situation appears to be a win-win with consumers and companies both showing interest in lessening human impact on the environment. Yet with greenwashing comes confusion and misinformation about how significant this change in impact has to be, or exactly what specific ways are best for reducing our impact as consumers and brands. Advertisers and marketers also know that the number of environmentally dedicated consumers with extensive knowledge of their own impacts, which some call the "true-blue greens", only makes up about 30% of the adult U.S. consumer population (True Blue-Greens, Dict. of Sust. Mgmt.). As a business model, it may be seen as inefficient to cater to this section of the market with the expensive production of goods and services that are truly worth their weight in terms of environmental impact. It can at least be seen as coming with a certain degree of risk.

This specific group of environmental consumers is not the only reason for brands to be worried about their green image. There is growing evidence that a larger percentage of consumers take issue with green branding, even if they themselves are not true blue-greens. A survey from 2012 by Cone Communications suggests that only 44% of consumers are trusting of green branding claims, and 77% would boycott a brand for making false claims (King). With environmental education becoming more mainstream, consumers in general are also showing preference for companies that focus on the entire carbon life-cycles of their products, instead of just certain parts

This dynamic between brands and consumers exacerbates the desperate position of brands that are not set up to go green, especially on a scale that is being demanded. It is therefore no longer working for brands to appear environmentally aware in one or two ways, they must appear green in many ways. The problem is that many brands are still focused on appearance, and continue to fail in addressing real changes in terms of environmental issues.

With environmental advertising being caught in spaces between those who care immensely for the planet, those who are distrusting of green brands, and those who remain indifferent, the regulation of green claims has become confusing. Along with honest attempts to hold corporations accountable, and with corporations diversifying their greenness for this reason, it has created a legal and economic situation in which corporations have many different routes of appearing to be making a difference.

A very real situation that corporations find themselves in is having many interworking environmental agendas that help to hold up specific green advertisements, although not always directly.

Before looking at a spectrum of specific ads and analyzing their environmental honesty, it is necessary to discuss the current economic and political world into which these ads are born.

Greenwashing Law

Why it's difficult to regulate what companies say about our planet.

The number of organizations actively combatting greenwashing is staggering in light of their lack of success. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Advertising Division, state laws, private action under federal laws, and eco-labels are all fighting against false environmental claims made by brands (Pellus, 2). The FTC has been considered the main body of government responsible for handling issues like greenwashing. Their efforts are honest, and include the creation of the Green Guides specifically for environmental marketing back in 1992. These guides, however, are voluntary and do not carry the force of law. Terminology in the Green Guides is also vague and outdated, although they have been updated several times since 1992 (10). The reason these guides are vague is because they use terminology and standards that are “not based on scientific technology, but rather on how the FTC believes the advertisement will affect a consumer’s decision making.” (11) Chiara Pellus, in her paper, “Regulations, Watchdogs, Eco-labels, oh my! : The Highly Fragmented and Uncoordinated State of Anti-Greenwashing Efforts” presents a few reasons as to why the FTC fails to litigate successfully:

“the FTC’s limited resources are put towards prosecuting only the most egregious and visible violators and judges and jurors must make subjective determinations based on common sense or consumer surveys. Additionally, non-binding guidelines do not preempt states’ individual regulations, resulting in a lack of national uniformity in environmental regulations.” (10)

The FTC is not set up to handle the onslaught of environmental issues claims that have developed in advertising in the last 20 years or so. They are not oriented to handle the scientific claims that corporations are using. The scope of environmental issues for both the FTC and corporations are farther reaching than either can deal with competently. Although the FTC has the best interest of consumers, and ultimately the planet itself at heart, there is no denying that the situation has escalated far past what can be asked of the FTC. It may be the opinion of many in the business world that the FTC is acting with adequate results, helping to take down the worst offenders of greenwashing. Even when the FTC is functioning correctly to whatever extent it is capable, there is the issue of influence from other government entities. The FTC did not file a single complaint in regards to companies making false environmental claims during the Bush administration (Fiegerman). Several have been filed since Bush left office, but the focus of other government leaders in the response and effectiveness of the FTC cannot be ignored. Furthermore, a look into greenwashing litigation reveals that even the best lawyers cannot always bring down brands for their erroneous words.

One way to go about holding corporations liable for greenwashing is through federal securities fraud. Cases of this type pertain to shareholders who have invested in a company that has made environmental claims that prove to be fraudulent. The resulting damages in public relations and brand image cause investors to lose money. Even in this type of case, and when “the investor could successfully point to the false statement, the statement might be deemed “immaterial as a matter of law on the ground that it is meaningless hyperbolic puffery.”” This was the ruling in a recent case that was brought up against Ford Motor Company. (Pellus, 18) So in the eyes of the law, the

damages done by false green advertisements have to be palpable. As I have already explained, greenwashing can be a very deceptive form of advertising, and is difficult to weigh in significance as it applies to its physical effects on the environment. This also proves to be true in regards to green advertising's effects on consumers, at least in the eyes of the law. The significance of environmentally dishonest advertising is hard to weigh, perhaps because of its reach over millions of consumers and thousands of brands, all working interdependently. In any case, the scope of the legal argument, and the marketing/branding argument in regards to our planet certainly needs to be adjusted to consider what we lack in environmental awareness.

There are possible changes on the horizon as far as the bodies of law that oversee environmental ad claims are concerned. The U.S. Dodd-Frank Act which has been recently proposed, “enables the creation of a Bureau of Consumer Financial protection” specifically concerned with “consumer-information” litigation. The bureau and legislation are still new, and there is a lot of question as to how effective such an organization will litigate. (Pellus, 18) Nonetheless, any changes in the right direction can hold promise. The bottom line is that some government officials at least recognize the prolific properties of environmental claims that are questionable enough to take to court. The negative side is all the unknowns about such an organization. It could prove to have no more power in changing the landscape of green advertising than the FTC already has.

While there are a few different ways in which we are combatting greenwashing and the proliferation of eco-labels, the process is “an intricate, fragmented, and often redundant web of many bodies of law and market based solutions.” (45) This makes it

hard to trust in even the most well established eco-labels wholeheartedly. This fragmentation also suggests that a solution to simplifying and empowering eco-labels is not in the near future (45). This is at least true in the case of government created solutions. With the tumultuous activities of eco-labels, there could emerge a successful format that caters successfully to consumers, corporations, and government entities alike.

Eco-Labels and their Contemporaneous Assistance and Prevention of Greenwashing

Eco-labels are becoming a popular form of assurance for consumers who wish to be conscientious of their impact on the environment. These labels are popular because they are funded and produced by third parties that are separate from corporations, and therefore are supposedly free of biased or misleading information. Popular eco-labels become brands in their own right, representing products and identities that fit many varying green lifestyles.

The rate at which eco-labels and other forms of specialized labeling are evolving is too fast for the government or the public to control quality. Eco-labels, as with any other modern advertisement, are going up against a media-saturated world. It is easy for companies to make their own eco-labels, use false eco-labels, or mislead consumers with popular eco-labels.

Problems with eco-labels extend beyond malignant brands. The market for eco-labels alone, aside from any attachment to a brand, is confusing in itself. Eco-labels compete in many of the same ways as brands do, and can be considered themselves brands. There are many types of labels with varying degrees of honesty, integrity, and importance (Pellus, 32) In fact, “Eco-labels are just one type of environmental label, with a certain level of comprehensiveness, independence and reliability.”(23) They are specifically “voluntary, third party labeling programs, licensed by either the government or a private entity.” (23)

Few consumers have the instruction to know if what they are looking at is even regarded highly enough to be within the “eco” classification of labels. Aside from any eco-label or fake eco-label are labels with completely different purposes. A “content neutral” label, for example, is a mandatory government label for products that use up a significant amount of energy over time. (Pellus, 23) These labels typically display how much money will be spent powering a specific product for a year. They are criticized for not being updated frequently enough, making some products appear efficient when they are not. While these labels are a completely separate problem from eco-labels, they help to show that there are many labels used in the market today, making any one label less significant for consumers. This is especially true if even a government regulated label can be outdated and misleading.

The International Organization of Standardization (ISO) identifies 3 types of voluntary labels that are not considered misleading, and are designed to inform consumers, increase supply and demand for environmentally friendly products, lessen stress on the environment, and continue providing improvement for the environment that is market driven. (Pellus, 25) Type I labels are eco-labels, and “Type I-like” labels are “single attribute eco-labels”. Type II labels are labels usually created by the corporation itself for its own products, and are almost always used to greenwash. And Type III are “voluntary programs that provide quantified environmental data of a product, under preset categories of parameters set by a qualified third party and based on life cycle assessment, and verified by that or another qualified third party” (May, 369).

Unfortunately, this third type of label that holds the most promise for standardizing the world of eco-labels is not widely used at this point. (Pellus, 26) These ISO classifications also don't appear to be in common use as a way for consumers to identify which category a specific label falls into. I could not find any lists, official or otherwise, that delineate common labels into one of the three categories. These ISO classifications are also not used upon labels themselves, so it appears their application is largely left to the interpretation of those who choose to use them.

Even when looking at eco-labels specifically, the labels that have some degree of proven integrity, there is still a list of problems to discuss. The proliferation of such labels is perhaps the biggest problem. Overlapping and redundant labels confuse consumers, and with fake labels that mimic authentic eco-labels (Pellus, 32) there is added confusion. The government has little to no current oversight of third-party eco-label claims at this point in time (32), and there are over 460 eco-labels currently in existence (Rodriguez). Life cycle analysis (LCA), which is the most promising system for measuring environmental impact, is not perfected, and there is no standardized system of measurement for the analysis. On top of this is the fact that many eco-labels choose to highlight only a few attributes of a product's life cycle. There are no labels currently that conduct a fully comprehensive LCA (Pellus, 33). Thus any label is open to critique as to what attributes they choose to add or not to add.

Despite all the trouble with eco-labels, and whether they're worthwhile for consumers, some of the more popular labels are considered successful. There are also labels that are pushing forward in positive ways with their ingenuity, supporting the

possibility that the strongest and most effective labels in reducing carbon emissions will prevail.

There is something to be said about the drabness of successful eco-labels. It can be a positive thing, attesting to the labels credibility and non-reliance on flashy advertising to communicate its message. It also indicates that a label is willing to rely on its history and connection with consumers to make a simple logo easily recognizable. A few popular labels that are established as credible include the USDA's certified organic label, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label, and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification label.

While the diversity of eco-labels can be a source of confusion for consumers, the intentions for such a variety are good. Within the labels mentioned above are a wide range of various certification requirements from green roofing (LEED) to the protection of forest conservation areas (FSC)(Jeffries). While many of these labels need to be unified as a way of evolving to create stronger labels, we can at least be assured with so many labels that all the bases are being covered. The situation is in fact set up perfectly to create a new and stronger breed of labels, that utilize the resources of these many, fragmented labels.

A promising indication that we are moving towards fewer and more poignant labels is the rising popularity of carbon labeling. By focusing directly on what is causing the problem of global warming, these labels help even the responsibility out for consumers, who are ultimately the ones who decide what they should buy. A measure of carbon emission inherently focuses on the entire lifecycle of a product because carbon is the common denominator of a product's negative effects on the planet. Also, whereas

avoiding a product with known negative influence on the climate is relatively easy, it is the unknown processes by which even Earth-friendly products reach us that is the main concern in the case of carbon emissions. A product that has no effects on climate by its use may have been produced using unsustainable amounts of energy (carbon emission).

Some carbon labels that have been developed thus far include a handful developed by European supermarket chains. Migros, a Swiss supermarket, has made a label called *Climatop*, which is displayed on products produced with 20% less emissions than other products in the same category. The California Climate Conservancy, developed out of Stanford University, has created a *Climate Conscious* label. These labels rate products based on their greenhouse gas emissions from production, and categorizes products as bronze, silver, or gold. Carbon Counted, a Canadian organization, developed a logo bearing the same name for companies to use. BSI Standards Solutions developed PAS 2050 (Publicly Available Specification) that was until recently the most comprehensive carbon cycle assessment in existence. The label was used on Tesco products, a supermarket in the U.K., until the company announced it was phasing out the labeling in 2012. (Vezina)

These types of labels are an improvement from eco-labels because they appeal to consumers separate of any single brand, corporation or product category. They are created based upon scientific language that can be verified, and successfully used as evidence in litigation situations. They lack the capacity to be successfully used as greenwashing, and therefore are more accessible to consumers by being transparent in their nature. Because carbon labels lack the appeals that we can attach to advertisements and brands, they may lose some luster and lack the ability to be widely used or

considered by consumers as useful. This is not to say that branding cannot go (carefully) hand-in-hand with such labels in order to promote their importance.

There are groups out there working on the problem of making carbon labeling more accessible and valuable to consumers. The CEO of Snow Shoe Foods in Wisconsin, Claus Moberg, created an app called “True Local” which tells consumers whether a product originated within Wisconsin or not based on its barcode. Moberg also worked in affiliation with graduate students from the University of Wisconsin in an attempt to create a fully comprehensive carbon footprint app for products. Their work focused on two local brands of ice cream. After four months of research, the team still felt as though their information wasn’t adequate to properly weigh the carbon lifecycle of either ice cream. Moberg explained his research was unsuccessful due to the lack of obtainable information given out by the two ice cream companies (Peters). Apps like these that combine a carbon based format and orientation with the ease and marketability of an app show promise by combining science and branding harmoniously, rather than leaving science as information you have to look up on some obscure web page. The fact that this information is not readily available to consumers displays another area where commerce is removed from sustainability.

Separate Branding of Eco-labels and their Products as a Pitfall.

Eco-labels in their current unorganized and unregulated state can provide a loophole for corporations to fill the same space and create the same emotional value in a consumer's mind without actually providing the objective value to the environment that an eco-label supposedly ensures. An example is Dole and its Rainforest Alliance (RA) certification. The problem, in this case, is not the credibility of the Rainforest Alliance, but the credibility of the company using its certification. While Dole appears to be taking significant steps in the direction of becoming an eco-friendly company, their positive actions can only act as a distraction at this point from their far heavier negative environmental impacts.

Dole has a long history of lawsuits involving pesticide-related injuries, child labor and human rights issues, and environmental destruction. Dole was sued successfully in 1992 and 1993 for using dibromochloropropane (DBCP) a pesticide with well documented carcinogenic and negative environmental effects. Dole's competitors, Del Monte and Chiquita, stopped using DBCP in 1977 when the EPA began the process of banning the pesticide, making it illegal to use or manufacture in the U.S. (Moore). Dole has continued to be the defendant in numerous lawsuits, including most recently in September of 2012, when it settled 38 lawsuits in the U.S. and Nicaragua. The reason for the lawsuits: pesticide-related injuries from DBCP. The cost of settling these lawsuits came out to \$907.5 million dollars (Korosec), enough for the company to make incredible strides in becoming sustainable. Aside from this amazing waste of money is the fact that Dole announced in 2011 (a year before these

lawsuits) that it had RA Certification in Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala (Casey). How can a corporation with an active track record of reckless environmental indifference be endowed with such a certification?

The company is also ensuring that this certification (applicable to a small fraction of Dole's produce) is permeable throughout its entire brand image. As a first hand example, I present the Dole bananas I bought at the store a week ago, which brought about this entire investigation. The bananas are certified organic, and are from Peru as the stickers on the bananas attest. There is a green plastic band around the bananas to hold them together. Upon this band are pictures of little dark-green toucans and frogs. The frogs closely resemble the very same frog from the Rainforest Alliance seal used on products with the alliance's certification. While these bananas are at least not sprayed with DBCP, they are not RA-certified as is implied by their advertising. An attuned consumer will of course look for the official Rainforest Alliance seal, which implies some degree of sustainability in the production phase of the bananas life-cycle. Yet it's easy to see how many will interpret the fact that Dole is RA certified to mean that all its bananas are produced with this certification, or at least a majority are.

An additional way in which Dole is taking advantage of its thinly layered eco-image is by connecting consumers with plantations via online tours. These tours include pages with titles like, "How do we protect the fruit and the environment?" and "How do we recycle?" The effort that Dole puts into sites like this, and the good that recycling and other Earth-friendly practices do on these unknown number of plantations, are certainly outweighed by even a single plantation being treated with DBCP. These green

practices are only powerful if it's the entire corporation and all its constituent parts that are RA-certified, certified organic, actively recycling, etc.

The exact number of RA certified plantations is inaccessible to consumers. A thorough search of Dole's many websites (Dole has separate sites for plantations, organics, salads, a banana farm tour, etc.) found one page composed of 3 short paragraphs within Dole's Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability site that addressed RA certification (Dole Sustainability). The only information about the scope of Dole's certification is that it has over 20,000 hectares (about 77 sq.mi.) of plantation land that are certified. Dole has about 52 square miles of banana plantations (owned by Dole and independent farms) from which it sources its Bananas in Costa Rica alone (Dole Sustainability). The company also grows and buys bananas in Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, The Philippines, and Thailand (World Dole). Although Dole's websites say the RA certified plantations are mostly in Costa Rica, Honduras, Colombia, and Ecuador, it's difficult to say really how big of a percentage of their land is actually certified.

An article in The Guardian reports that Dole's competitor Chiquita settled a lawsuit in 2014 over deceptive claims of sustainability. A Chiquita spokesman had stated that 75% of Chiquita bananas come from RA certified plantations. The actual percentage as suggested by RA staff was 15% (Shemkus). So, in addition to the inconspicuous numbers proposed by Dole, there is always the question of their honesty in the matter. Of equal importance is the apparent dysfunction that the RA and Chiquita displayed in this case. I would hope that an alliance of the rainforest would be quick in speaking up against such a vastly false claim.

There are other indications pointing to Dole's lack of transparency. Delving further into Dole's Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability page reveals a misleading carbon footprint assessment. On the assessment page of the website, it states "Dole Food Company, Inc. requested that Soil & More International B.V. conduct a study and calculate a comprehensive CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) footprint of its bananas." However, upon clicking on the link that leads from that page to a full report of the assessment, the first summary bullet beyond the table of contents reads, "This study aims to calculate the carbon footprint of bananas originating from Dole plantations in Costa Rica which are sourced to German supermarkets." (Luske, 4). While both the Dole webpage, and the Soil & More report refer to and utilize accredited sources like ISO environmental management systems (14001 and 14044), the GlobalGAP standard, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, this discrepancy which Dole fails to make clear speaks volumes about the company's main objective of covering up its true environmental impact.

The bottom line is that a company such as Dole is the definition of a non-transparent, greenwashing company. They put their ability to cover up the harm they cause to people and the environment before any actual altruistic capacities. While Dole is certainly at the far end of the negative spectrum of greenwashing, companies that produce bananas are important to pay attention to in environmental protection terms, seeing as "Bananas are the world's most exported fresh fruit both in volume and value." (Liu, 1). There are also many other companies who brand themselves in similar, pseudo-transparent fashions such as Dole. I hope my investigation makes it clear that

even with the most up-to-date certification and standards suggested by honest, pro-environment groups, it's still possible for a brand to hide its true colors.

It's important to remember that with branding, we are talking about a mental space within the mind of a consumer. Corporations use advertising to ensure the mentality that consumers have towards their company is not filled with facts and figures like, "how many Dole plantations are actually RA certified?", and rather are filled with positive blanket ideas like "bananas are good", or specifically in this case, "all our bananas are grown eco-friendly." There is no way to litigate about such claims, seeing as branding can involve many ways to say something in a non-factual way, meant to be interpreted non-factually. Emotional connections with consumers, in this way, are powerful by freeing corporations from being held responsible for things like environmental degradation by using strong emotional messages that replace bland, yet important, factual information.

How much good can I do by supporting a rainforest alliance when the nearest tropical rainforest is thousands of miles away from where I live? Not that I shouldn't pay attention to, and support to the best of my ability, these organizations that have honest environmental preservation as their main objective. It's simply the fact that no matter how voraciously I support such an organization, there will still be those corporations, like Dole, that use the RA in a misleading way. There is also the fact that anything with the RA seal automatically has a sizeable carbon footprint by being transported to the area where I live. So with all the hype that seals like the RA provide, it's possible for a product with no seals and no promises of environmental preservation to be a product with a much smaller carbon life-cycle. Therefore, the positive impact

that the RA has is conditional. Those companies who have all their farms RA certified and align all other areas of their business to be sustainable provide a true promise of environmental friendliness with the RA seal. Other products with the same seal provide nothing more than good vibes for the consumer, who falsely believe they are making a difference.

NGO's

and their Partnerships with Corporations to Promote Sustainability and Green Branding

Non-Government Organizations that partner with corporations allow consumers to see with some specificity the different programs that companies utilize to enhance the management or administration within the company itself. It's kind of like a boy scout badge or a facebook group page that shows how a company does good things internally for its employees and consumers alike. Having visible partnerships with well known NGO's serves a purpose similar to having certain eco-labels or qualifications printed on a company's products.

Earthwatch is a company that partners with corporations to “engage workforces, promote company values, create competitive advantage, and enhance employee competencies” in hopes of improving “environmental and corporate sustainability.” (Earthwatch.org). Some of their partners include Kraft Foods, Microsoft, UPS, British American Tobacco, and Royal Dutch Shell. There are many organizations like Earth Watch that are becoming a popular avenue for corporations to use in order to increase efficiency. While these NGO's are not exclusively in place to help the environment, they help to connect other aspects of business efficiency with climate-oriented projects.

NGO's like Earthwatch partner with a network of other organizations, adding to the credibility of the corporations involved with them. The complexity of such networks can be positive, but can also inhibit clear language about what exactly a company is doing to help the planet. Shell, a company involved with Earthwatch and the Carbon Disclosure Project conjunctively, appears to be in a diverse set of partnerships that

increase sustainability and abate climate change. The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) is an organization whose mission is to “motivate companies and cities to disclose their environmental impacts, giving decision makers the data they need to change market behavior.” (CDP website).

Partnering with groups like Earthwatch seems to be nothing but a positive thing. Yet, when a company like Shell, that primarily produces fossil fuels becomes involved with such a group, we see some aspects of greenwashing begin to turn up. Although it is a good sign that Shell would partner with such a group, it is evident that such a partnership serves a purpose of hiding the whole picture of shell’s environmental impacts behind a legitimate agency.

To help explain how these sites can be ambiguous, I have taken an excerpt from the conclusion of Shell’s profile on Earthwatch, which explains the results of a World Heritage program that was brought about by the partnership between these two entities:

“There are three key reasons why Shell is involved in the Business Skills for World Heritage program:

Personal development opportunities provided for Shell employees, enhancing leadership skills and motivation as a result of their field-based participation

Helping Shell achieve its environmental goals

Supporting Earthwatch climate change research” (Earthwatch Shell).

There is no specificity as to what Shell is doing to help the environment. The web page is filled with confusing data such as this, including the fact that 500 Shell employees have been involved in this specific program since 1999. For those who would take the time to read through these sites and attempt to draw conclusions about the true positive environmental impact that the company achieves with such programs (I believe I may

be one in a handful), there is a significant amount of uncertainty. For less involved parties researching Shell, they may be satisfied with the knowledge that the company is partnered with Earthwatch and the Carbon Disclosure Project, and look no further into the matter.

Environmental Advertising Campaign Spectrum:

Beyond green advertisements themselves, and the question of their individual honesty and tangible values, there is a quagmire of other practices that corporations use to be “green”. Or, practices that are used to embellish the appearance of being green. It can be difficult to understand exactly what a corporation is doing behind all of these practices, that vary widely in the degree to which they tell the truth. In order to appropriately analyze a corporation and what it is doing for the environment, and in turn promote better ways for these corporations to advertise honestly with the environment in mind, it is necessary to develop some guidelines for looking at brand image through the analysis of individual advertisements. These parameters should promote understanding beyond the words and colors of an ad, and allow a clearer picture of what a corporation is doing or not doing for the environment.

This beyond-the-advertisement approach to analysis of specific ads and campaigns should focus on a bigger context of corporate activity, in which the actions that are good or bad for the environment actually happen. The measures of analysis that I have developed for my green advertising campaign spectrum are designed to provide such clarity of context. They connect the ads themselves to context that makes it easier to interpret whether an advertisement has been greenwashed. An additional benefit of using these measures of analysis is the ability to compare multiple green advertisements in the same way. From this comparison, it is possible to gather congruent strategies that have success in being transparent and in having measurable benefit for the environment.

With the analysis of any environmental advertisement or campaign, the way in which we analyze is subjective because of the disconnection between the two things we are comparing: the environment and the corporate world. There is no definitive right or wrong answer for what companies are doing in regards to our planet, and the best we can do is to analyze how honest a company is in regards to their environmental impact.

Some points of analysis will pertain to the actual elements of advertisements themselves, and others will focus on the management and functioning of the company separate from their advertisements. Some campaigns will show all of the following points of analysis, while others may only show one or two. After a general discussion of each campaign, these points of analysis will be presented in relation to each ad.

1. Is the message positively or negatively specific?

Some messages in advertising are too vague to even explain the product at hand, let alone explain the product's environmental impacts. There can be many reasons for this including the strong presence of emotional appeals which allow room for the consumer to make their own interpretations of the advertisement. Some environmentally oriented campaigns and commercials can be ambiguous in this way, and therefore do not apply to this category of analysis.

Ads concerning themselves with the environment that are filled with specific facts about how a product or company helps the climate can be positive or negative. When environmental messages are specific they may have facts and figures that seem to be important when in reality they are not. These facts can be used to mislead or overemphasize certain points of data. Other messages will provide the correct amount

of information that is useful and transparent, allowing the consumer to make a rational and informed purchasing decision. So a message can be positively or negatively specific depending on the nature of each individual message.

2. Is the message positively or negatively ambiguous?

Lack of specificity in an ad isn't always a bad thing. In some cases companies want consumers to explore beyond the commercial, creating more mental connections that the consumer has with the company. This increased interaction with a company creates stronger ties between the consumer and the brand. It can also be useful in cases where a brand is doing more than it can explain in a single advertisement. Many companies with a lot of interworking agendas for environmental protection will refer consumers to a webpage or other sources to further display their Earthly awareness. This is not to say that all ambiguous/emotional ads are created equal. There are still many commercials out there that rely on ambiguity to hide behind, creating distance between consumers and the company's environmentally damaging actions. Therefore, this measure of analysis includes positive and negative ambiguity.

As an additional note, when advertisements are ambiguous it often means their focus is to evoke emotion. Because emotions can often be irrational, and companies know this, there is a tendency for advertisements to be negatively ambiguous. Even when a brand is positively ambiguous, there may be question as to whether or not the advertisement and its emotional value outweighs the facts and figures found outside of the advertisement that support the initial emotion behind the advertisement. To put it

simply, an intense emotion experienced during an ad can be disproportionate in correlation to a company's real actions. The emotionally charged commercial that someone sees supersedes their resulting research of the company and may alter their opinion of factual information about the environment presented by the company. This concept goes hand-in-hand with my explanation of Enviro-Corporate Distension, which I will discuss later.

3. External Indications of a Company's Environmental Awareness/altruism

When an advertisement is positively specific and unambiguous, there may be some question as to whether the company cares about the environment beyond a specific Earth-friendly product or campaign. When a company is positively ambiguous, it will ask consumers to visit other sources in order to get an in-depth understanding of the company's dedication to the environment. Yet, when a company does not ask consumers to research the company further, the environmental campaign or product could be an isolated occurrence. This category of analysis discusses what a company does for the environment beyond what the company has chosen for consumers to focus on. This is the "behind the scenes" category of analysis, and may be subject to blackouts, seeing as corporations are adept at sharing only certain information.

4. External indications of a campaign's/advertisement's success or failure.

Many particularly successful or unsuccessful campaigns will leave a trail in their wake from which a lot of honest information can be gathered. With the not so recent

proliferation of internet users, many campaigns that make bold claims about the environment become dissected for all to see. While not all campaigns receive widespread attention, many popular ones will be discussed by third parties to some degree. This information about campaigns is important because it offers a view that is separate from that of the company and is corroborative in nature.

5. How are emotional appeals incorporated into the message?

Visual Emotion: Visual appeals are important to many high-profile campaigns, and are the most readily available aspects of an advertisement for an audience to engage with. This area of analysis must be handled tediously, and with much thought about things such as colors, shapes, and symbolism.

Ideological Emotion: Whether it be the voice of Morgan Freeman himself, or perhaps a well crafted tagline that offers an audience a moment of epiphany, the words and ideas of an advertisement hold the energy that give it power to reach beyond its initial borders. Sometimes it's the audacity of these words, sometimes it's their prophetic or sensational value, sometimes it's their ability to get stuck in our conscience. No matter what the style, the voice with which an ad is crafted can be of equal importance as the visual aspects.

6. Does the company/campaign/message use any seal of any type (including pseudo-seals)?

Specifically with advertisements that consider our natural world, there is a high prevalence of seals and badges that are becoming increasingly popular as proof of authenticity. No matter the credentials that a label or seal may be endowed with, the specific situation that the seal is being used within must always be taken into consideration. Even the most prestigious seals can be used to represent a bad company. This is because there are many seals that only apply to a small special part of a larger corporation. A product with an awesome eco-seal does not always mean that it represents an amazing eco-company.

Fiji Artesian Water



www.greenwashingindex.com

This advertisement is perhaps an easier one to identify as being greenwashed. Consumers simply need to look at a map to understand why any help that Fiji Water is contributing to Fijian rainforests is certainly trumped by the many gallons of fuel used to transport the water to the U.S. To delve deeper, it is currently well known that the use of disposable plastic bottles has largely contributed to an island of trash in the Pacific Ocean larger than the size of Texas. For this reason, anyone concerned about the environment should not use disposable plastics, like the one made for Fiji Water. It's

also ironic that bottled water from Fiji is being flown over this trash island, ultimately making it grow in size.

The message in this advertisement is negatively ambiguous. Not only is the language in the tagline vague, but the site that leads to proper citation and facts proves in this case to be erroneous. Back in 2007 when this campaign first came out, Fiji presented itself as a company that had plans to become carbon-negative in the near future. This statement is laughable, seeing as the whole of the company is based on using energy. They import plastic from China to Fiji, waste several times the amount of water they put into a bottle just to create the bottle, and then ship that bottle thousands of miles further to the U.S. With this in mind, it's no surprise that someone decided to sue Fiji for their statements about being carbon-negative. Through the course of that trial a closer look at Fiji's press releases revealed that this carbon-negativity was to be accomplished by 2037, not in the near future as Fiji had implied in their advertising (Rohlf).

At the time that this ad came out, it could have been analyzed by myself as being positively ambiguous, as I assume that fijigreen.com had a wealth of facts and stats that falsely proved Fiji's dedication to the environment. Upon having these facts revealed as dishonest, however, and the fact that fijigreen.com no longer exists, this ad is definitely negatively ambiguous. It implies a great deal of natural benefit as a way of covering up the incredibly detrimental environmental practices of the company. This ad should serve as a strong reminder that just because a company can state facts about their relationship with the environment, doesn't mean that those facts are positive. We are

lucky that fiji was overzealous in their campaign, and their true colors have been revealed (their true colors aren't green, blue, and white).

Points of Analysis:

This ad is not specific. It is negatively ambiguous, because the information on fijigreen.com about how purchasing this water helps reduce emissions and protect rainforest has been revealed as incorrect to the point of warranting a class action lawsuit. This lawsuit and the accompanying press surrounding this campaign amount to strong external indicators of the company's failure at being environmentally friendly.

The emotional appeal in the ad itself is mostly visual, using green, blue and white to instill a sense of closeness with nature. The brand name Fiji, and the copy of the ad indicate further connection with the planet, and an understanding of how the company fits into a bigger picture of environmental support. The green droplet of water on a white circular background can be considered a pseudo-seal because the same droplet shows up in other advertisements of this same campaign. The green droplet also appears separate and on top of the picture of the bottle itself, making it look more like a stamp or sticker. This shows that the advertisers were looking to make the green water droplet a symbol of environmental friendliness, and not just a visual aspect for this ad specifically.

Earth Equity



Earth Equity is a network of farms that are 100% organic and fair trade certified. They place these stickers on their produce to allow consumers to feel connected with their brand. The name of this group is misleading because they are really focused more on helping people. Upon scanning this QR myself, I was directed to a page that indicated less than a penny of my purchase made in 2015, would go to help build a school that was completed in 2014. So really I wasn't helping anyone. While this sort of charity is potentially all well and good, there is a difference between the talk that this brand is talking and the walk they are walking (Earth Equity).

Points of Analysis:

This sticker is not specific and negatively ambiguous. The QR, which many consumers will not scan, ultimately leads to one paragraph about the school that is

being built with proceeds. There is no information about what the company is doing that is equitable for the Earth directly.

There is little external indication of this group's success. A web search yields several documents that appear to be for potential investors. This makes the pseudo eco-label seem premature, as it seems to be a campaign within itself, that provides little to no information about the actual brand, aside from the fair trade seal within the seal.

The emotional cues given off by the green leaf at the top of this seal are all too familiar as a greenwashing tactic. That combined with the name of the brand, "Earth Equity" gives off an inflated and larger than life vibe that is uncorrelated to the fair trade and organic aspects of the brand. There is no proof of this brand's significant impact on the environment, and their message should be adjusted accordingly to represent the impact that the brand may or may not have on its employee's lives.

Volkswagen BlueMotion



**Why be environ-mental
when you can be environ-normal?**

The Golf BlueMotion.

Some 'green' products can be off-puttingly impractical. That's why Volkswagen has created a car that's easier on the environment and fun to drive. It performs just like a Golf, but is packed with eco-friendly BlueMotion Technologies like the Start/Stop System and Optimised Aerodynamics. So test drive a Golf BlueMotion today. It's about the most environ-normal thing you can do. Visit environ-normal.com.au to find out more.

BLUEMOTION



Das Auto.

http://cdn1.mumbrella.com.au/uploads/2011/06/environ-normal_Das_Auto.png

"Some 'green' products can be off-puttingly impractical. That's why Volkswagen has created a car that's easier on the environment and fun to drive. It performs just like a Golf, but is packed with eco-friendly BlueMotion Technologies like the Start/Stop System and Optimised Aerodynamics. So test drive a Golf BlueMotion today. It's about the most environ-normal thing you can do."

This advertisement from 2011 contains greenwashing that affects consumers to this day. This particular model of VW Golf is one of the models currently being litigated over because it contains a "cheat device" in its software, allowing it to cheat on

emissions standards tests (Berman). Leaving that fact aside, there is the juxtaposition of the car being advertised as a green product. There is no way for a car to help the environment, especially if it burns any type of fuel, which this one does. Furthermore, this commercial goes beyond basic greenwashing by suggesting to consumers that protecting the environment can cause people to go crazy, and look stupid. The Yumbrella being shown in this commercial is a product designed to allow people to drink rainwater from an inverted umbrella. Contrasting the simplicity of environmental protection that VW implies can be achieved by purchasing their car with the craziness of the Yumbrella can be harmful to a consumers ideas about environmentalism. It suggests that consumers should be complacent in their attempts to relieve our climate problems, and just buy the product suggested in this ad.

Points of Analysis:

This ad is negatively specific because it uses detail in a misleading way. The mention of “eco-friendly BlueMotion Technologies” and “Optimised Aerodynamics” are negatively ambiguous, and allow the audience to prescribe their own evaluation of how environmentally helpful these attributes actually are. There is no link to a site further explaining BlueMotion Technology, adding further to the negative ambiguity of the ad.

The resulting lawsuit of this campaign serves as external indication of failure for the campaign and company alike. This ad is in short supply for visual emotion appeals, and relies mostly on ideological emotion. This emotion is evoked by explaining the simplicity of environmental awareness via the product being advertised, and also

through the suggestion that other forms of sustainability may be too outlandish to be acceptable. The BlueMotion pseudo-seal at the lower left-hand corner of the ad is indeed a pseudo-seal because of its singular use on VW's vehicles. There is no frame of reference for this seal, so the audience doesn't really know what its value is. In fact, VW doesn't really know what its environmental value is either. It is simply there to look official and imply that the reduction in environmental impact that this vehicle ensures is measurable and significant. There is no real value in the seal because it has not been evaluated by a third party, and lacks specific carbon data that would explain exactly how much BlueMotion features reduce carbon emissions by. Carbon emissions, particularly in this case, should be held over everything.

The Rainforest Alliance



www.rainforest-alliance.org

I am using the Rainforest Alliance as a source of greenwashing based upon one of their more popular commercials, and in conjunction with my argument about Dole's use of RA certification discussed later in this paper. Before talking any further about the RA, I'd like to share exactly what their certification entails, as is stated on their website:

“The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and improve livelihoods by promoting and evaluating the implementation of the most globally respected sustainability standards in a variety of fields. Through

RA-Cert, the Rainforest Alliance's auditing division, we provide our forestry, agriculture and carbon/climate clients with independent and transparent verification, validation and certification services based on these standards, which are designed to generate ecological, social and economic benefits.” (RA "about" webpage).

The RA’s goal is broad, in that it uses many different methods in the name of preservation and sustainability. All of these methods ensure significant and measureable results, and yet are only one portion of the picture. The rainforest is only one area being affected by global warming, and any progress in sustainability there needs to be reciprocated in places like the U.S. The suggestion by the RA’s advertising implies that a heavy reliance on products with its certification amounts to an adequate enough effort on consumer's part to not seek further involvement in stopping climate change.

The specific advertisement with which I am concerned is a three minute video that was uploaded to Youtube by the RA, and tells the story of a man who gave everything he had to save the planet, but to no avail. He travels to the rainforest and rallies local tribes, in what the commercial calls a “gringo fantasy”. The man's efforts to stop the destruction of the rainforest are unsuccessful, and he returns home to find his life in shambles. The commercial's suggestion is that instead of crusading for the environment, we simply need to “follow the frog” (RA youtube), referring to the green frog on the RA’s eco-seal. If everyone just follows the frog, there is no room to do better, to do what we really need for our planet. I wish to imply here that the way in which advertising works as a system to make our lives easier, even in ways that are 100 % positive for our planet, can still be greenwashing by denying us the innovation in our own lives that we need to be Earth-friendly.

Points of Analysis:

This commercial is not specific, because it does not explain the positive impact of The Rainforest Alliance with any detail. Furthermore, the lack of detail makes this message negatively ambiguous, because it tells the audience simply to use products with the RA's seal as a way of saving the planet. The ambiguity of saying that the purchase of all these products is good for the planet makes the message dishonest. Saying that consumers should simply look for a seal promotes complacency, which influences a consumer's capacity to be environmentally aware.

This specific campaign did not receive widespread positive or negative feedback, but was generally received as a success. The Rainforest Alliance as an organization has received some criticism for not having the same certification requirements as fair trade certification. Most notably is the RA's lack of standards for trade, including no minimum payment required for buyers (Fair World Project). Although the RA does not specifically consider itself a fair trade organization, it is often considered to be one by grocers and other businesses that sell products with the seal.

The emotional appeal of this commercial is very personal, because it reveals and connects with consumers anxieties about purchasing products that will reduce the stress we cause to our planet. The main visual appeal is from the footage of the rainforest. The more important ideological appeal is the viewer's connection with being a green consumer, and wanting to do good for our planet.

The idea of the commercial is to help the planet by buying products that have not harmed the immediate rainforest around them, and suggesting that this will help

stop global warming. The ideology that is important here is in making a big deal out of a small part of the puzzle, and brandishing it as a panacea.

Method's Ocean Plastic Bottles



www.marcgunther.com

This advertisement represents an advanced greenwashing tactic that can be interpreted as environmentally friendly not only by consumers, but by the company making the product and its advertisers. This idea for recycling an unused source of unwanted trash is a good idea, yet the problem is hidden in the details of Method's campaign. These Method soap bottles are made from a combination of plastics collected from beaches

and post-consumer recycled plastics. There is no information on the Method website for these soaps that says specifically how many bottles they made out of this recycled plastic blend. Videos on the recycled bottles product page openly discuss the fact that the impact of these recycled bottles on the entirety of our oceans plastic problem, and our consumption of plastics in general, is small. Method attests that the more important purpose for such bottles, and the extensive advertising of their creation and significance, is important in changing consumers perception and awareness of such products (Method Ocean Plastic).

As in my argument about plastic Fiji bottles, there is still significant impact on the planet that occurs when consumers continue to buy and use plastic bottles, recycled or not. Additionally, these bottles do not appear to be a mainstay in the Method product line. These types of ads that have their greenwashing deeply buried under rationality are frustrating, especially for those attuned to helping the planet. It's exciting for consumers to see brands finding new ways to help slow global warming. But when these solutions equate to nothing more than a metaphorical spinning of corporate tires, there needs to be a shift of focus to creating real changes outside of consumerism.

Points of Analysis:

The message of this campaign is negatively specific. There is not enough information about how many bottles were produced with ocean plastic and for how long they were produced. Although there is a lot of detail about the process of making these bottles, the campaign is heavily diluted by facts like just how much plastic is in the ocean at this point. These facts cause consumers to lose sight of what is really

important: the direct link between a specific consumer's purchase and its effect on the environment. Facts about ocean trash would be appropriate if Method were organizing beach cleanups, but they are using these facts to promote their brand.

It's unclear if Method is still producing or selling these specific bottles, and also difficult to find exactly when they were producing them. Media caught wind of this product in 2011, so a good guess would be that their production stopped around then. Method's webpage about packaging still explains the ocean plastic project as if the company is still using plastic from the ocean, which they are not. This adds an element of negative ambiguity to this campaign, because it is being touted by the company as an important aspect of their brand, when it was actually a finite project that the company once worked on.

Looking at external indications of Method's awareness, we find evidence of a company that really does care about making changes. It is difficult to scrutinize their ocean plastic campaign, as misleading as it may be, because I know there are many other things the company is doing that are positive. Method, for example, has started using post consumer resin (PCR) plastic which is a highly efficient method of reusing plastic. They use many environmentally-friendly ingredients in their cleaning products. They also offer refill pouches so that their bottles can be reused (Method Packaging). Method is indeed a company that should be utilized by consumers as a green brand, because they do promote the reuse and reduction in use of plastic. However, their advertising about their ocean plastic bottle is not transparent, and is being used by Method to boost their brand, while providing no long term benefit for the environment.

The emotional appeal of this campaign is simple. It is something along the lines of, “look how good we are?” Modesty is the virtue that Method needs to utilize. They are doing a lot of good, but some of their messages about the good they're doing seem to be overinflated.

Tide Coldwater



KEEP IT COOL.

IF **EVERYONE** IN THE UNITED STATES WASHED THEIR LAUNDRY IN **COLD WATER** ...

A **HOUSEHOLD** SWITCHING TO COLD WATER WASHING FOR A YEAR ...

WOULD SAVE ENOUGH ENERGY TO WATCH TV FOR **1,363 HOURS**

PLAY XBOX 360 FOR **684 HOURS**

CHARGE AN IPHONE 4S **30,861 TIMES**

OR POWER AN AVERAGE NEW REFRIGERATOR FOR NEARLY **4 MONTHS.**

THE **ENERGY** SAVED IN ONE YEAR WOULD EQUAL THE ENERGY PRODUCED AT THE **HOOVER DAM** FOR **4 YEARS**

WHICH IS ENOUGH TO POWER THE **EMPIRE STATE BUILDING** FOR THE NEXT **444 YEARS**

AND COULD REDUCE **CO₂** EMISSIONS BY UP TO **11 MILLION METRIC TONS** EVERY YEAR.

TIDE COLDWATER IS A SPECIALLY FORMULATED DETERGENT THAT PROVIDES A DEEP CLEAN IN COLD TEMPERATURES. IT IS A **SMART, PRACTICAL CHOICE** FOR CONSUMERS LOOKING TO **CUT HOUSEHOLD COSTS** AND UTILIZE THE MONEY AND **ENERGY-SAVING** BENEFITS OF USING COLD WATER FOR THEIR LAUNDRY. WASH IN COLD WITH TIDE COLDWATER AND **SAVE UP TO 50% OF ENERGY PER WASH CYCLE.**

Data provided by the Alliance to Save Energy, and Based on national average electric costs (7/04), water heater at 140°F, warm to cold water switch, 7 loads/wk and assuming the efficiency of electricity generation and transmission of 35%. Created in partnership with oBizMedia

http://superstarbabies.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Tide_ColdWater.jpg

This campaign by Tide is a great example of a socially integrated environmental campaign. Asking consumers to take matters into their own hands is a great way to reduce impact on the environment while avoiding empty promises of carbon reduction on the part of the company. In this way greenwashing is avoided by keeping the scope

of the campaign within the hands of the consumer, instead of relating the issue of global warming to a grander idea.

Points of Analysis:

The vanguard part of this campaign was conducted via social media through the hashtag, #TurnToCold (Tide Challenge). All of the print ads I found for Tide Coldwater promoted the product as a way to save energy. The campaign as a whole is positively specific, because it is asking consumers to change the way they do a specific task in order to reduce energy and in turn reduce carbon emissions. The good that the campaign and the product do for the environment is direct, and does not require much explanation beyond specifics about the amount of energy we can save, making the campaign unambiguous.

This campaign is different from other green ad campaigns within this paper's spectrum because it is so simple. It's talking about a specific week in the life of the brand and consumers (during Earth Week 2014). It asks consumers to use its product and not use any hot water to clean clothes. The idea is open ended and suggests a positive change that consumers can make, forever.

External indications of Tide's environmental awareness are not readily present, nor promoted. The parent company, Proctor and Gamble, has incorporated Tide Coldwater into its Future Friendly campaign, which focuses on changes that people can make in their household to save energy (Mitchell). There is not a proliferation of media attention for the Future Friendly campaign or the #TurnToCold campaign, which indicates a passive reaction from consumers.

This social media campaign, and the idea behind Tide Coldwater in general is not emotionally intense. There is no appeal for using Tide Coldwater to save the rainforest or save our planet, it's mainly to save energy. The specific tie between Tide Coldwater and Earth week is subtle and practical. It suggests creating a positive habit within the household. To introduce stronger emotional appeals would only hinder the message of this campaign by way of coercion.

Scotch-Brite Greener Clean Sponge



http://www.staples.com/3M-Scotch-Brite-97033-Non-Scratch-Scrub-Sponge/product_366006

Some green ad campaigns seem to be lost within a proliferation of sources talking about the green product. This is one way to know that whatever positive environmental changes came from the product in question are either really good or really bad. After searching through online articles about the Scotch-Brite Greener Clean Sponge, and gaining a clear understanding about why the product is environmentally friendly, I found the original campaign page.

The main slogan of this campaign is to “celebrate the little things” in life. While the handful of campaign videos portraying a married couple doing little things for one another like remembering to put the toilet seat down seemed a little disconnected at first, it eventually settled into the rest of the campaign in a positive way. The sponges at the center of this campaign are made from recycled agave leaves, a component of the plant that is normally thrown away when producing tequila. 3M saw an opportunity to use these fibrous leaves as 50% of their 100% plant based sponges that outlast 30 rolls of paper towels (Greener Clean)

By tying in the story of how little things can make a difference, 3M paints a picture for consumers of how they can make the difference for the planet in manageable ways. Beyond this important message to consumers is the fact that 3M decided to sell less product (a single sponge that lasts longer than normal sponges) and gain more environmental benefit. They went out of their way to find a byproduct that wasn't being recycled and brought it to consumers. 3M avoids greenwashing by keeping their discussion oriented towards consumers.

Points of Analysis:

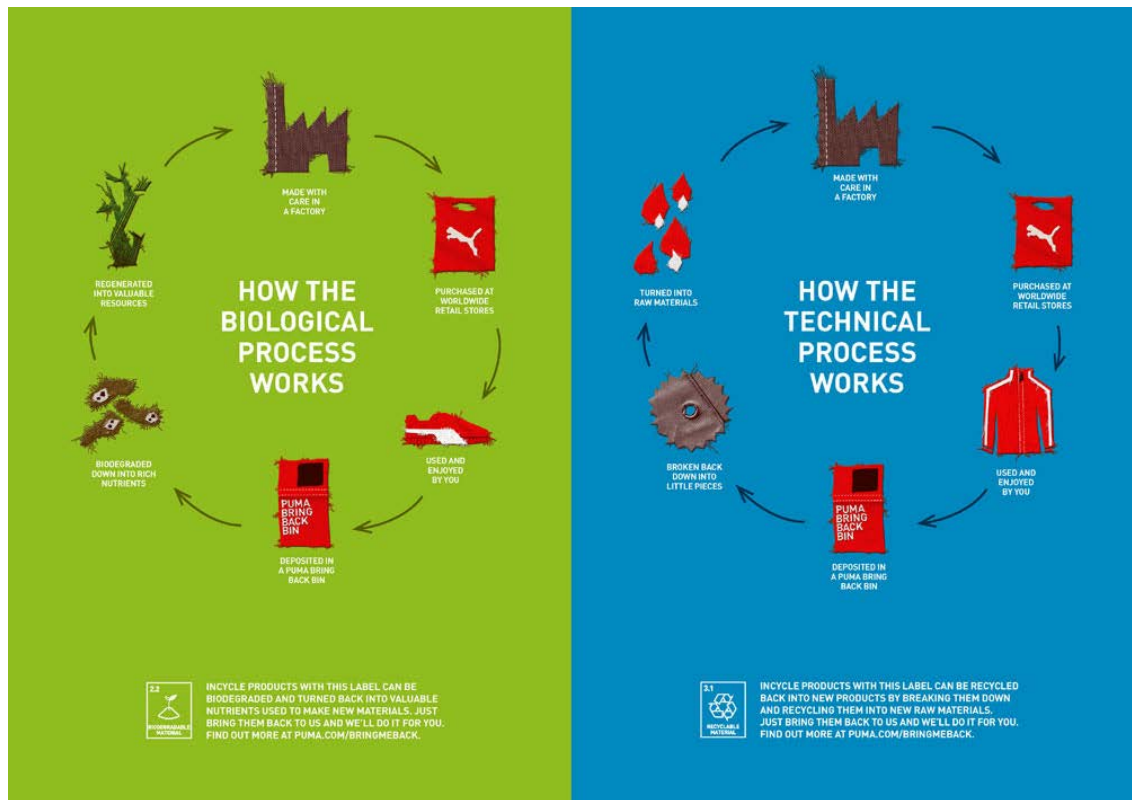
The message of this ad is positively specific and unambiguous. There is enough information to explain the value of the recycled materials that are put into the sponge, without trying to connect to a bigger picture. Some of the print ads for this campaign on their own are ambiguous only in utilizing the word and color green, which can always inflate the environmental value of any product. Aside from the use of this word the campaign holds together by being transparent and not relying only on the product by

itself. The message here is made stronger by asking for the consumers involvement in being green.

This campaign had some good reviews in various green blogs and environmentally oriented consumer websites. The original webpage for the campaign on Scotch-Brite's website has been recently taken down, indicating that the campaign was perhaps not as much of a success as the company had hoped. This is perhaps due to the environmental concern being stronger than the meaning of the product itself. There is too much detail perhaps about the environmental benefits of this recycled sponge, and not enough about the fact that it is a good sponge! The sponge itself is also dirty looking when it is new. This is revealing of some disconcertion between the idea of cleanliness and the idea of reusing/recycling.

This campaign is strong because it lacks emotional appeal. It relies on facts to make the message meaningful.

Puma InCycle



[A4 Cycles PREVIEW sm.jpg](#)

Puma's InCycle collection is an example of positive brand transparency. The corporation has completely redesigned its production process for a specific line of clothing and shoes while adhering to C2C (cradle 2 cradle <http://www.c2ccertified.org>) life-cycle specifications. In Puma's commercial for the InCycle collection, they lay out specifically how they significantly reduce the carbon life cycle of these specific products (Puma Youtube). The InCycle shoes are 100% biodegradable and the jackets are broken down into materials that can be reused (Ringel). The language and science explained in the video are easy to understand. The campaign reflects a whole-hearted

interest in doing the right thing for the planet, while including consumers in on the effort.

Points of Analysis:

This campaign's basis is positive specificity. It's whole purpose is to explain in detail the process by which the InCycle collection reduces carbon emissions. Because the whole process is able to stand alone, and isn't squeezed between other normal production processes, we get a full picture of the impact of InCycle products.

There is not much external indication of Puma's environmental dedication, but this single campaign and production process is monumental. When a company redesigns the way they produce a product, that takes a lot of money and effort, which speaks for itself in regards to dedication to the planet. This campaign's use of a third party (C2C) helps ensure the InCycle process isn't cutting any corners.

This campaign does not rely on emotional appeals. It also does not utilize any seals of approval. The lack of both of these aspects is positive because it adds to the transparency of the campaign.

Puma has created two labels for their InCycle line, one for biodegradable products and one for recyclable products. The labels indicate which bin a product should be placed in when returning them for Puma to recycle/biodegrade. These labels can be considered an unorthodox, informal eco-label. Their main purpose is for consumers after a sale has been made. Although Puma uses these labels in the ad pictured above, they are only displayed after explaining how and why their products are recyclable or biodegradable. Many eco-labels work the opposite way by displaying the

label first and separate of explanation, requiring consumers to read further into the matter of why an eco-label is warranted.

Target Sustainable Product Index

https://corporate.target.com/_media/TargetCorp/csr/pdf/TARGET-SUSTAINABLE-PRODUCT-INDEX.pdf

Target has come out with a sustainable product index that rates household products based on their environmental and human safety. The index is designed “to assess products on ingredients, transparency, minimal environmental impact, certification and key issues within product categories.” The index includes regulations based on, but not limited to: Cradle2Cradle, EPA Safer Choice, the Global Protocol on Packaging Sustainability, the Forestry Stewardship Council, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and USDA organic specifications. The top score that a product can receive is 115 (Target index). This system of measurement is novel in that it adheres to many different sets of sustainability guidelines from varying areas of the economy. This system is unique in that it can be used to rate many different products, and Target has utilized its removed brand position as a means of instilling equality within its index. I like this system because it relieves some of the stress that consumers may feel when making green purchasing decisions. An index score is easy to understand, and it can be easily fact checked to make sure any given score is correct. Systems like this that require little advertising to begin with and put power in the hands of consumers are a great way to lessen the gap between supporting the environment and the economic world.

Points of Analysis:

This index is positively specific because of its sheer thoroughness. It shows a good degree of external environmental awareness by using a litany of third party sources and guidelines. I fear that this level of detail is easy to ignore as a consumer, although the use of a point system helps to lessen this problem. Based upon feedback I've managed to find online, this index has not been received with much excitement. There are a few articles that praise Target for making such an index, but there aren't many. I think in this case Target could have advertised more in order to increase awareness. My guess is that advertising was tricky because of how many brands are involved with target, causing a scenario where target would be picking favorites.

Frito-Lay

I would like to use Frito-Lay as an example of the complexity of corporate environmentalism, because of their position as a brand that is not immediately thought of as causing harm to the environment. Frito-Lay is currently doing a number of things to reduce their own carbon footprint. The company is part of the clean fleet initiative introduced by President Obama, which promotes the use of electric vehicles. They also completed a solar energy field and generator at their plant in Casa Grande, Arizona in 2011 (*Frito Lay*). The company is showing a serious commitment to improving the way it does business in regards to its effects upon the environment.

The difficulty in understanding whether Frito-lay is a green brand arises in understanding what Frito-Lay's commitment to the environment actually equates to in physical results. In other words, how can we quantify what Frito-Lay's is doing to

determine if they are having an impact? Is their commitment to sustainability enough to warrant my support of Cheetos as a green product? The truth is that there is no set way to quantify a company like Frito-Lay's greenness or direct environmental impact. There is no way to substantiate their activities and weigh them out. All we can do is take comfort in their apparent dedication to doing the right thing for the environment. Even when corporations like Frito-Lay honestly want to lessen their impact on the environment, it's only a matter of slowing the negative impact that they already have. The amount by which this negative impact is being slowed is even more difficult to calculate. So even a good company with honest intentions needs to be viewed with scrutiny in environmental terms.

Points of Analysis:

Frito-Lay's various programs and efforts to reduce carbon emissions are positively specific, because the information is presented in a clear manner via their websites. Frito-Lay is also uniquely specific in that it talks directly about what the company is doing as a whole. They avoid many green branding problems by focusing on their entire company as their main green brand. Their message, in this way, is not asking the consumer to make an environmental choice in regards to a product, but to know that the company is doing its best to reduce its own impact. It's almost like the company is making changes in sustainability that it knows should be commonplace, and not heralded and communicated with intensity.

Frito-Lay is showing remarkable positive ambiguity, because through the corporations advertising a consumer could be oblivious to their green actions. It's only upon studying the company further that the discovery is made about how environmental

they really are. That being said, there is no pressure that the company places on its consumers to be green. This style of environmentalism promotes change through positive action, and goes beyond the products we buy as a solution. Frito-Lay shows honesty in its green agenda, helping the environment separately from its exterior branding.

There is not much external indication of Frito-Lay's environmental dedication, yet that is expected with their style of positive ambiguity. An online search of the corporation results in many sites that have been created by the company itself, along with a few article about past campaigns. A specific campaign that stands out is their SunChips biodegradable bag campaign (Howell), which was most likely discontinued because the bag was egregiously loud. After that campaign, the company switched to their current, stealthy greenness. This covert environmentalism does not require any emotional appeal, and is too broad for a bio-seal, or several.

Patagonia's "Don't Buy This Jacket" Campaign



**DON'T BUY
THIS JACKET**



THIS SEASON, SHARE SOME VALUES
Learn more about our Common Threads Initiative,
and take the pledge to reduce consumption

TAKE THE PLEDGE

<http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/ad-day-patagonia-136745>

DON'T BUY THIS JACKET



It's Black Friday, the day in the year retail turns from red to black and starts to make real money. But Black Friday, and the culture of consumption it reflects, puts the economy of natural systems that support all life firmly in the red. We're now using the resources of one-and-a-half planets on our one and only planet.

Because Patagonia wants to be in business for a good long time—and leave a world inhabitable for our kids—we want to do the opposite of every other business today. We ask you to buy less and to reflect before you spend a dime on this jacket or anything else.

Environmental bankruptcy, as with corporate bankruptcy, can happen very slowly, then all of a sudden. This is what we face unless we slow down, then reverse the damage. We're running short on fresh water, topsoil, fisheries, wetlands—all our planet's natural systems and resources that support business, and life, including our own.

The environmental cost of everything we make is astonishing. Consider the R2[®] Jacket shown, one of our best sellers. To make it required 135 liters of

COMMON THREADS INITIATIVE

REDUCE

WE make useful gear that lasts a long time
YOU don't buy what you don't need

REPAIR

WE help you repair your Patagonia gear
YOU pledge to fix what's broken

REUSE

WE help find a home for Patagonia gear you no longer need
YOU sell or pass it on*

RECYCLE

WE will take back your Patagonia gear that is worn out
YOU pledge to keep your stuff out of the landfill and incinerator



REIMAGINE

TOGETHER we reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace

water, enough to meet the daily needs (three glasses a day) of 45 people. Its journey from its origin as 60% recycled polyester to our Reno warehouse generated nearly 20 pounds of carbon dioxide, 24 times the weight of the finished product. This jacket left behind, on its way to Reno, two-thirds its weight in waste.

And this is a 60% recycled polyester jacket, knit and sewn to a high standard; it is exceptionally durable, so you won't have to replace it as often. And when it comes to the end of its useful life we'll take it back to recycle into a product of equal value. But, as is true of all the things we can make and you can buy, this jacket comes with an environmental cost higher than its price.

There is much to be done and plenty for us all to do. Don't buy what you don't need. Think twice before you buy anything. Go to patagonia.com/CommonThreads or scan the QR code below. Take the Common Threads Initiative pledge, and join us in the fifth "R," to reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace.

patagonia
patagonia.com



TAKE THE PLEDGE

*If you sell your used Patagonia product on eBay® and take the Common Threads Initiative pledge, we will co-fulfill your product on patagonia.com for no additional charge.

This campaign that Patagonia produced prior to the Black Friday of 2011 is unprecedented. It is novel in that it asks consumers not to buy a product in order to preserve our planet. The advertisement describes in great detail how one of Patagonia's most popular jackets utilizes many production practices that reduce carbon emissions, and yet still has a significant environmental impact. The campaign also supports a partnership with Ebay, allowing Patagonia customers who wish to sell their used gear on Ebay to have the added benefit of having that gear also listed on Patagonia's website (Cleanest Line).

Separate from the "Don't Buy This Jacket" campaign is Patagonia's dedication to repairing broken or worn out clothing and gear in a cost efficient and timely manner. The scope of Patagonia's dedication to the environment is embodied in their website dedicated specifically to environmentalism. This site includes information about their supply chain, corporate responsibility, their dedication to environmental support through sales proceeds, and of course their "Worn Wear" mission (Worn Wear).

Points of Analysis:

This message is positively specific and unambiguous. They are talking about the environmentally-friendly product that they don't want you to buy because it still does too much harm to the environment. As proof that this is not some sort of reverse-psychology advertisement, Patagonia offers a brand story about their incentives for people to repair and reuse their old jackets. Patagonia is a brand based upon storytelling, and they incorporate their global environmental message thoroughly into pretty much everything that they do (Patagonia Responsibility). So the message of this advertisement aligns with all the other messages they have always promoted.

Patagonia is synonymous with external praise for environmentalism. They are currently one of the paramount green brands of the economic world, and external indicators of this position are prevalent in current media.

This campaign does use a seal in this ad to promote Patagonia's Common Threads Initiative, which is completely based on recycling and repairing old apparel. The seal is explained in each ad as a pledge for consumers to take in order to not buy new apparel frequently. There is no ambiguity about what the seal represents, and the visual on the seal of two hands reaching for one another in partnership is not misleading.

Conclusion

What Attributes Should Advertisers Work to Advance in Order for Environmental Advertising to be Easier to Understand and More Effective?

What we have within the realm of green advertising is a mismatch between the environment, and corporate America. The culture surrounding each do not align with one another, and there is no way for one to directly help the other, especially with the way our current economic world works. This problem with climate change is not limited to the subject of branding. There are many other ways in which our cultural ideals are being challenged by the changing climate. Perhaps the most clear example is with our methods of transportation, but we also see difficulty in changes like rising sea levels in coastal areas and areas affected by drought.

Some scholars suggest we are not paying enough attention to what it means culturally to deal with climate change. Professor Neil Adger of the University of Exeter, the lead researcher of a study dealing with the cultural dimensions of climate change, believes that governments are not considering the losses we are suffering culturally. He believes that cultural changes are important in moving us towards a completely sustainable World. His study suggests that “If the cultural dimensions of climate change continue to be ignored, it is likely that responses will fail to be effective because they simply do not connect with what matters to individuals and communities” (Exeter). In the situation of green advertising, the cultural dimension being ignored is that of commercialism, and its dependency on constant consumption, which is blatantly misaligned with what is required for our ailing environment. To think that we can

change this cultural problem from within advertising itself (i.e. by only changing the way we advertise about products environmental effects) is short-sighted.

Advertising began as a way for consumers to make informed buying decisions, and to thus improve their lives. With the rise of greenwashing, we see brands that still seek to appeal to us by making our lives easier through streamlining our efforts to be green. Unfortunately by selecting the environment as an issue to simplify within our lives, the problems with our environment are being covered up and made worse.

The companies and corporations that do the most good, or least damage, to the environment are those that have the natural world in mind as a main objective of the company. These companies do not need to become unraveled through large corporate changes in administration in order to become green, they simply are green to begin with. It's important to realize that many corporations have small segments of their company or specific brands that they own which are focused on being green, and catering to a green market. It's easy to confuse a green brand as being representative of a green corporation, when the two are really very different.

Here is a list of qualities that brands which are truly green will offer to their consumers:

1. Integrative approaches that are about more than buying and selling, involving the consumer's personal action while using a product or corporations services.
2. Corporate Transparency, allowing the full story of an entire corporations global impact to be viewed by the public.
3. Corporations who support environmental friendliness at a parent company level.
4. Environmental Basics: transportation, production, use of goods. Where did it come from? What went into it? How will I use it? These basics that

are the fruits of transparency need to be on the table for consumers to ponder.

5. Green branding has to be about more than a product or a corporation. It needs to be about all of us, which makes it an inherent branding problem for individual companies hoping to get an upper hand.
 6. 100% in or 100% out. If you go green in advertising own the moment as being greater than its constituent parts.
 7. Every green ad should hold an opportunity for change. A green ad should never be a solution it should be an invitation.
 8. Find a healthy medium between scientific language and providing consumers with an emotional brand story. One or the other will not work.
 9. Create campaigns that function with permanence. One of the most frustrating things about writing this paper was finding a popular or infamous campaign that is untrackable. Within the course of my research, the Scotch-Brite sponge that I referred to in my spectrum was all but abandoned as a campaign, and the site bearing its name is no longer in existence. If we want to have green ads that make lasting changes, they need to be developed in a way that makes them permanent in some way, to be carried on by the company.
10. Avoid Enviro-Corporate Distension

Enviro-Corporate Distention: The consequences, intentional or not, of corporate marketing/advertising related to the environment that automatically grows in importance regardless of the actual environmental impact of a corporation or its products. This happens in part due to the bilateral significance of climate change inside and outside of the company, and within the public sphere in general.

Global warming is such an intense issue to discuss that many can get caught up in trying to find a definitive solution. The truth is it's going to take a long time to properly change our ways. Corporations feel the heat by being such a big contributor of greenhouse gases, and they want to adjust their image to avoid scrutiny. With such great importance being placed upon significant reductions in corporate contributions to global warming, the real scientific and often unflattering truth about how to help the

environment can become buried beneath pseudo-solutions that appease consumers and corporations alike into a false sense of comfort.

Thus, with the current desperation that we have placed on the topic of our warming planet, corporations that have previously been free to use energy in large amounts have suddenly been condemned and are trying to change. This situation is what creates enviro-corporate distension, in which everyone wants to achieve the best possible solutions, and thus settle for what appears to be the best at any given time. Many corporations want to be the best at environmental protection, and there is certainly a reward for being regarded as the best. What is true is that we will benefit more from having many corporations that work together to create the best results for the collective situation that is global warming.

Green advertising has a tendency to appeal to something bigger than itself. A singular environmental benefit often is advertised to represent an environmental solution. We see this in the Rainforest Alliance's advertising, in which their eco-label is shown to be the best way to help the environment as an American. In other "eco-labels" like the Earth Equity label, there is a lot of ambiguity as to what Earth Equity is, and it is not clear whether it represents significant changes in sustainability for our planet. In the case of Method's ocean plastic soap bottles, grand ideas for change are explicitly recognized as being the goal when in reality the actual benefit of recycled plastic from the ocean is small and impermanent. How do we reconcile with these green advertisements that all have good intentions and create actual positive change, but seem to mislead us into inaction? How do we keep the grandiose spirit of green advertising while ensuring that the action we put into the ideas is congruent and significant?

It's important that future environmental advertising be integrative in regards to the environment, requiring more participation than just buying and selling. There is a great distance between the natural world and the world of consumer capitalism. Making the distance between these two smaller will make it easier to think of buying decisions and the products we need in regards to the product's effects on the environment.

Consumers want to feel connected with the positive decisions they make for the environment, not only to avoid decisions that are not truly environmentally positive, but also to feel that the decisions they make are shared with other people or companies. When a corporation asks individuals to interact with their advertising they are asking an individual to share experiences with their brand in order to create a situation where that individual buys the company's products. With green advertising, corporations are attempting to achieve the same results with the added value of a healthier environment provided by the company and its products. Corporations have largely failed to maximize the value they can add to their company via environmental protection by not augmenting the real environmental value that their company could possess and endow. In other words, many companies have not realized the true significance of going green which is a more honest relationship with their consumers. Going truly green implies honesty and transparency at many levels within a company. This transparency is something that consumers are increasingly looking for in a saturated market that is filled with misleading information.

Aside from the benefit for companies is the importance of what consumers can do when they feel empowered by brands that are willing to be honest about our environmental situation. Consumers respond to appeals that they believe are legitimized

by more than just advertising. Advertising has received mostly a bad reputation in regards to how it affects human behavior. Yet there hasn't been much attention given to the fact that some ads inspire us to do good things. Green advertising inspires us to do good, the problem is in the details of what good means. We have a bad frame of reference for what we should be doing with our environmental situation. If green advertising can only change the scope of what is socially appropriate in caring for our planet, we can reap the benefits together.

In changing the scope of what is appropriate and accomplishable environmentalism, corporations will struggle because much of the details and positive specificity that comes with these changes is difficult even for scientists to sort through and understand. The perfect balance for green branding will be somewhere in between, allowing consumers the ease of modern branding with its feel-good language, with the assurance that claims are backed by tediously calculated carbon life cycles and the like. We are making great progress by dealing with gritty details as is seen in Target's index, but there is still work to be done in making the information in such indexes accessible in layman's terms.

The most important cultural change that green advertising can bring about is a shift away from thinking about the environment and the "green" market segment as a phenomenon from which there is money to be gained. If we continue to marginalize our green activities and view them as the extra mile, the opportunity to integrate what needs to be normal practices that promote healthy sustainability will remain novel and additional in nature to mainstream practices of wastefulness.

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