

next tuesday afternoon

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When thinking about green marketing, I can't help but think of Kermit the Frog's "It's Not Easy Bein' Green." But with spiraling fuel prices and global warming fears, being green is found more and more often on the front pages and as a result, in advertising efforts. As more companies try this type of positioning, consumers are becoming increasingly confused over what it means to be "green," according to a Landor study.

The problem is that being "green" can be about the environment, organic foods or healthy living. So far, nearly two-thirds of those surveyed couldn't name a "green" brand, even though over half considered themselves to be environmentally conscientious.

Not surprisingly, big players in the auto and oil industries have stepped up to the plate because they don't want to be caught not talking about environmental issues. The risk for these players comes when the public senses they're being "greenwashed." Ford, for example, started promoting energy independence and the use of alternative fuels. The problem? The vehicles being promoted as "green" had an overall low MPG rating. This was followed by Ford reneging on their promise to build 250,000 hybrids a year by 2010, instead moving to build vehicles which use ethanol-based fuel or regular gas. It has hurt their reputation in the green space.

So how can you avoid this? Smart green marketers should take advantage of green as both a product and a social cause by creating new ways to contact their customers. Try enabling your customers to act on their interests, allow them to interact with peers, encourage them to create content, listen to their ideas for new products and/or give unrestrained feedback to you. You're more likely to motivate them if you wrap one of your products with an affinity-based experience or by providing access to an event or experience that has perceived value or is deemed exclusive.

Given the passion that some consumers have for being green, marketers may be surprised by the response and the impact that such marketing vehicles may have on the bottom line.

I'm Lisa Davis. Let me know if I can help you in any way, please feel free to visit at OneAlliance.com and I'll be back next Tuesday afternoon.

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