

What shade of green are you?

If you thought green was a trend primarily embraced by Gen X and Y, think again.



Key values and financial status, rather than age, are the defining characteristics in determining consumers' levels of interest in green products, according to information gathered by faucet manufacturer Moen, and Iconoculture, a cultural trend research firm.

"The research divided consumers into four primary groups, based on their level of eco-consciousness," said Jack Suvak, Moen's director of research. "Each group is very distinct – in terms of both interest in green and their key values."

● Dark Green

The most eco-conscious of the four groups, Dark Greens are motivated by a sense of responsibility to the planet. Dark Greens come from all age groups, and tend to be from mid- to upper-economic levels. They are driven by products that are eco-friendly but effective, and they will not use products that sacrifice performance just to be green.

Key values for this group were identified as a belief in the green movement, a strong sense of community and personal pride.

● Medium Green

The next green group, Medium Greens, has a heightened consciousness of green issues. A large contingent in this set consists of young parents concerned about protecting the Earth for their children and grandchildren, as well as protecting their families from toxins and other chemicals.

Another significant sub-group within Medium Greens is affluent individuals interested in going green. With regard to purchasing drivers for Medium Greens, they will assess the value against the price point, and are motivated by products that make it easy for them to go green.

Key values of Medium Greens include hope, convenience and prevention.

● Light Green

"Green is the new cool" is the motto of the Light Green group, which primarily consists of twenty-something city dwellers, über-urbans and the emerging middle

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DID YOU HEAR...?

- Do you know someone who might be vulnerable to mail, phone, fax, e-mail or Internet scams? Send them to www.fakechecks.org. The site, created by the National Consumers League, a non-profit consumer organization, is a central source of information about fake cheque scams. You can learn how easily you can be deceived by trying some of the six fraud tests offered on the site.

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Products that fulfill the wishes of Dark Greens are Moen's new environmentally responsible showerheads. The Envi water-efficient showerheads feature three settings and a flow rate of 6.6 L/min., using up to 30% less water than the industry standard 9.5 L/min.

class. Many within this group embrace the eco-friendly movement because it's trendy and desire the status associated with green's chic factor.

However, this group tends to be somewhat cost-sensitive, so pricing is a critical factor in determining whether they buy green products. They tend to look for products that are eco-chic in design.

Key values for this group include thrift, practicality, self-expression and status.

○ Non-Green

The last group encompasses those individuals who aren't necessarily interested in the green movement – yet. Non-Greens

are split between those who are newly affluent or income-challenged – so they tend to focus on green if it brings material gain and/or survival benefits. They will only buy green products if they carry the lowest cost.

Key values for the Non-Green group include stability, security, choice and entitlement.

'Greenvenience' is key

Beyond the leanings of the four distinct green interest groups, Moen also gleaned information about consumers' green purchasing behaviours. Most consumers felt there was an intrinsic value in going green, whether it comes from an interest in the planet or a desire for the status of going green. A few key highlights included:

■ When consumers were asked, "If a retailer raised prices to be more environmentally friendly, would you pay more?" nearly 40% said they would.

■ Consumers rated retailers in terms of location, prices, selection of products, customer service and a firm's environmental consciousness, and more than half (52%) rated a firm's eco-consciousness as 'very' or 'somewhat' important, compared to 32% who were neutral, and only 16% who said this was not very important.

Ultimately, 'greenvenience' is key for consumers looking for green products. "It isn't easy being green, but it's getting easier – and that's a strong sell to consumers who want to continue to live on their own terms," added Suvak. "Consumers expect convenient, no-sacrifice products that make it easier to be green." 🌿



DID YOU HEAR...?

- May is Speech and Hearing Awareness Month. You can find out more from the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists at www.speechandhearing.ca.