

Retailers told to push 'green' marketing

Richmond firm's study stresses need to appeal to environmentally aware

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Retailers need to adjust their marketing if they expect to appeal to Americans who consider themselves environmentally conscious, according to a national study released yesterday by the Boomer Project LLC.

The study, unveiled at a Retail Mer-
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on inRich.com chants Association breakfast at the Holiday Inn Central on the Boulevard, said 78 percent of Americans consider themselves, to some degree, to be green.

The Richmond-based Boomer Project performed the study to help retailers find a way to market green practices to four generations of customers, authors Matt Thornhill and John Martin said.

Because green has so infiltrated the common consciousness, retailers are already targeting those customers in their marketing. Thornhill and Martin said retailers can spread the message without spending loads of money.

"You don't have to change your playbook; you have to change your message," Thornhill said.

The study, "Green Matters: New Rules for Marketing Across Generations," surveyed the generations born before World War II to people in their 20s. They asked about attitudes toward environmental issues and expectations of the companies they do business with.

Martin said 63 percent of all participants expect local retailers to be environmentally responsible. But when asked how local retailers performed, only 18 percent said local retailers are doing a good job at it.

For retailers, going green can be as simple as offering consumers reusable cloth bags or offering locally grown products, which are not transported long distances.

Even in difficult economic times, more than half of those surveyed in each age bracket said they would pay a premium to shop at companies with green practices.

The report cautioned retailers as well.

Thornhill said retailers need to avoid sweeping claims and exaggeration.

With so much information available online, any untruths, intended or not, could be found out and do more damage than good, he said.

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