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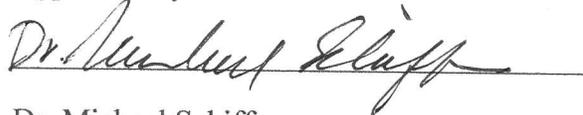
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THE GREEN MOVEMENT:
A SUSTAINABLE TREND IN AMERICA

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A Thesis Submitted to the Honors College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Bachelors Degree
With Honors in
Anthropology
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MAY 2011

Approved By:



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Abstract

This paper investigates the U.S. public's increased interest in ecologically friendly living, termed the "green movement," as a socio-cultural study. It encompasses cultural processes such as social conventions, mass behavior, and ideologies. Looking at marketing and consumer choices helps to assess these social factors involved in perpetuating the green market and will help determine how sustainable this trend is. The study of this widespread movement, increasingly apparent in America over the last 30 years, is necessary to understand current social concerns and what factors drive the mass consumer population. In addition, this information may show what needs to change in order to make a trend become a tool for creating a greener future for the planet.

Introduction to Green Marketing

Green is a very chic color in America today. It is not just the grassy front yards of homes or the trees in city parks, but the insides of living spaces that are turning green. This kind of green relates to the genera of products used for their less harmful effects on the environment; it is labeled "green" as it calls to mind the natural environment in need of saving. In this in-between time of realizing the harm industrialization has inflicted on the world we live in and controlling it before worse can happen, the green market has begun to capitalize on America's hopes and fears by selling products that will help end environmental issues such as global warming. At the same time, making the green movement a trend may not be a problem – that is, if people can actually identify the efficiency of the products that they are buying and realize why it is important to make lifestyle improvements.

I can't speak for every person who has followed this trend, but I do know why green living is important to me. The appeal seems to be an inherent part of what it is: Making a smaller impact by using fewer resources while making a place for other people too. But could it be that certain sociological factors are also at work, ingrained into how I perceive being "green"? The green movement certainly looks trendy after many movie stars have publicly proclaimed their love of the environment. Is it, perhaps, the beauty of nature photos in green advertising that catches my eye? Or the thought that I could be saving a lot of money by adding solar panels, even gaining more by selling energy back to the community? Maybe it is simply the self-righteous incentive of "saving the earth" that has worked its

way into my innermost agenda. Even the combination of such ideas could subtly persuade me over time of exposure to them in the media.

The dictionary defines the media as “the means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, and magazines that reach or influence people widely” (Dictionary.com). This is what sends people to Taco Bell for the latest crunchy creations, or to procure an “as-seen-on-TV Snuggie” of their own (a brand-name blanket with sleeves); it makes items more appealing through images and rhetoric, describing all the reasons their audience would want it. With this wide influence and just the right words, the media can have great effect on the masses. Most American citizens know the clichés attached to the green movement, but it is clear that there is a receptive audience who is helping to perpetuate this growing campaign, and that these ideological arguments have a place in American homes. Now, with a significant portion of the population acquainted with the green market and its basic message, people simply need to increase their understanding and then apply their knowledge.

Marketing

In America, a nation centered around capitalism, citizens are faced with choices every day of how to spend their money and organize their lives. As a result, companies know that by providing certain information and stressing particular advantages of their product, they can sell their merchandise to a larger amount of people. For this reason, it is essential to understand marketing techniques as they are reflective of what is important to buyers. Three types of functions will help explain how a product can be useful to consumers.

Some products on the market are more popular than others, but it is not immediately obvious what is so alluring about specific ones. When considering what attracts the largest amount of consumers toward a product, an understanding of what values are attached to the product is beneficial. Additionally, this may hint at whether a type of product is a passing trend

or something that will endure. Certain objects may have socio-functions, or functions that apply to social interactions. These are what integrates a person into a specific community by association with a type of product and makes a social statement about them. Social classes, group affiliations, and personal interests are all common examples of what an object's socio-function denotes. A product can also have ideo-function, or a purpose that relates to a particular school of ideology. This tends to apply more directly to the individual in terms of their personal beliefs or goals. For example, an ideo-function can be something that applies to someone's religion or a desire to be healthy. Finally, techno-functions, or an object's fundamental technological functions, are what the product itself can perform for its user. A nail can hold together a picture frame, just as a picture frame can display a photo (Schiffer). These three categories will assist in further analyzing the green market. First, we will take a look at two articles by business analysts that will help to introduce the way conventions are created and spread by the market.

Authors Sae Won Kim and Chong Ju Choi have written an article which is highly relevant to the topic of how green marketing has become a trend on the public radar. This article pertains to how marketing caters to socio- and ideo-functions to attract a following. Entitled "Habits, Self-Control, and Social Conventions: The Role of Global Media and Corporations," and published in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, it addresses social conventions as the driving force of consumer choice. In this piece, they discuss how current events and socio-economics affect the market. They note, agreeing with previous authors, that conventions arise through "formal" and "informal" processes.

One way formal conventions are instituted is through "positive predisposition," which means that the general population is given incentives by an authority to make certain choices. In this way, consumers internalize a convention through education or other supporting factors. The global media and experts' opinions on a subject can also influence conventions through positive predisposition.

Green marketing has certainly benefited from certain forms of formal processes. The United States government has created both national and statewide incentives for homeowners to save energy by

granting tax rebates on big expenses such as solar panels or Energy-Star rated appliances.

Additionally, government projects, such as National Earth Day, help to promote and educate about protecting the earth and have been growing since the 1970's. Yet it bears remembering that because the United States government is elected and bills are passed by a vote, the people's voice, and ultimately the consumer's voice, is still reflected in these "formal" processes.

Informal conventions, "dominant in modern pluralistic society," also arise from consumer side, typically spreading to other consumers by word of mouth (Kim and Choi 150). They show that ideas will catch on in the greatest proportion of the population when an idea is 1) slowly adopted, or 2) quickly adopted but slowly rejected. This way, it has the best chance of being heard of, understood, and passed on, giving the concept time to be adopted by the most people. Focal points, collective contextual cues people can see and bring them to a singular conclusion, tend to increase the rate of adoption by the masses. The authors believe that these are

fundamentally dependent on a certain level of common knowledge of information. Information in society, however, is greatly influenced by... corporations and communication mechanisms... [which] help to create such focal points in a society and in turn the creation of social conventions (150).

Therefore, focal points for marketing an idea or product can simply be statements made by experts or endorsement by a respected group, which large bodies of people are able to recognize and apply to their own decisions. The social conventions that come of this then create the socio- and ideo-functions that attract buyers for particular products. This is one of the predominant ways Americans make choices about what they buy or how they develop their lifestyles, and the authors of this article show that this is one way social conventions make up a major part of the market. However, they point out that "in a knowledge-based society, where intangibility of value is common, social conventions need to be analyzed along with individual rationality and judgments, and their moral implications for lapses in judgment" (152). Because individual choices are not always in line with the public opinion, it will be

helpful to look at a wide variety of decisions about green products that many groups and individuals have made.

Informal conventions of green marketing begin with an internal desire to initiate positive changes in the environment but then grow to something more publically pronounced. Education about the need for greener lifestyles can spread by word of mouth or magazine articles, becoming ads and even popular television shows. Just as Kim and Choi cite, informal conventions can begin to blend with formal conventions at this point, seeming to drive the market from a more “formal” level toward the masses. Although the formal conventions that cultivate the green market from the top are there, the real force comes from the general public that advocates the movement from the bottom. The following article will help to delineate what American consumers look for when making decisions about a product or company, perhaps subconsciously, by learning what marketers know will attract the most people.

John Dodds, a marketing and business consultant and one of those who helped John Grant write *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, has written a blog entitled, “Green Marketing 101.” This is a straightforward list of the necessary strategies to market a product, and although he has made it more applicable to green marketing, he has kept it largely the same because the green market must sell itself to the consumer in the same way as any other. I believe that companies endeavoring to sell green products may really benefit from this top ten to-do list, where the first seven are most important to this paper.

One. “The greenness of your business must be integral – it cannot be a promotional add-on.” Number six also tells the business to be “genuine,” so I am including the two together. I certainly believe that this is doubly important, because it all comes down to the source whether the product, if bought and used, is really as effective as people believe it is. This covers the fact that many consumers depend on instinct when unsure about a product. As a result, any company wanting to use Green Marketing as a strategy should be aware that most customers look to the label for product information

and rely on it to be correct (Shelton). One very important reason businesses should be honest about their green product is conveyed in the 2009 Eco Pulse study by the Shelton Group, showing that

forty percent of the population claims that if they found out a product that had been advertised as green turned out not to be, they would stop buying the product. The more interesting finding is that 36 percent say they would not only stop buying the product - they'd also tell their friends and family to stop buying it, too (Shelton).

Two. "Successful green marketing must translate the initiatives of the converted into the needs of the agnostic." For anyone who thoroughly believes in "saving water for the fishes," buying a low-flow shower head is a no-brainer. But for those who could care less about the fishes – or wouldn't give our environment a second thought – they will need convincing from other angles. Ipsos Public Affairs conducted a nation-wide poll in January 2010 on saving resources: "The survey also shows that price (47%) and performance (38%) are the most important factors taken into consideration when purchasing everyday products. Comparatively, impact on the environment is selected by just 22% of respondents" (Ipsos). Therefore, it is clearly important for a green product to show consumers its strong points as a product or as a money-saver.

Three. "...to address the greenness of your existing business and to develop the new business model that will meet the changing priorities of those customers." It is absolutely essential to recognize that people's needs and wants are constantly being buffeted by the winds of mass communication today, as underscored by the article by Kim and Choi discussed above. The people themselves must be the focus when it comes to marketing rather than just "tried-and-true" strategies.

Four. "...carbon footprints and sustainability are concepts predicated on technological aspects not the actual function." In other words, "long words confuse and confusion bores." Scanning a webpage, an ad to the side of the text for CREE, LED Lighting, dons the slogan: "Save Energy, Sacrifice Nothing." Below this, basic statistics of the light bulb prove the statement. The

straightforward, and likely more effective, nature of the ad appears clear and honest to the viewer, leaving nothing more to be said or to misunderstand.

Five. “You can’t market a revolution, but you can market constant evolution.” Most Americans today feel that they have too much going on in their own lives to “save the earth” on their own. Marketing campaigns should not overwhelm consumers to the point that they don’t even buy green products – after all, what would be the point if the little they have time to do something will not even help? Instead they could, for example, encourage buyers with quick and clear statistics showing total emissions saved through the products’ use.

Seven. “Expensive, over-produced advertising may be visible but supporting low-level educational initiatives is much more likely to be effective.” It’s true. Studies point to education as one major factor in decisions about environmental spending. One example is found by The Shelton Group on the Horizon Brand by Dean Foods, saying that the company has taken advantage of general customer unawareness by launching a line of “natural” foods that cost less than the “organic” ones. Because many people do not know that “natural” is not a regulated term, they may buy into this new labeling without realizing it is any different than the regulated term “organic.” The Shelton Group’s advice to Dean Foods is to educate customers about the difference, so that they can continue to put well-founded trust in labeling, thereby maintaining and promoting green products in the future (Shelton). Also, in the same survey by Ipsos Public Affairs as cited above, “preserving resources for future generations was most cited by college graduates (66%),” a higher percentage than any other group surveyed (Ipsos).

With Dodd’s tenets for green marketing laid out here, it will be easier to understand the interactions between the prospective consumers of the products and the companies trying to promote them. It will also help to identify the individuals and the larger communities that are most likely to perpetuate the future of green marketing, and who will, in turn, promote a healthier environment for everyone to live in.

The Market

With the rise of the green market, companies have been putting their campaigns out to all demographics with a variety of earth friendly products. Companies cater to all ages from childhood, such as RealGoods.com; to parenthood, on FutureFriendly.com; and have not even forgotten those ages in between, like FormAndFauna.com and EcoShopper.net. Yet surveys conducted to benefit businesses attempt to show which demographic is most likely to buy these products.

According to a 2008 U.S. survey by ICOM Information and Communications, which helps companies by determining which demographics they should cater to, the most likely consumers to buy green products are females between 55-59 and males 65-69, who are about twice as likely as the average customer to choose green products. However, 61.9% of respondents did say they used some sort of “green product,” and the largest group of people said they did this because it ““makes me feel good about myself”” (Survey Finds Consumers Still Buying ‘Green’). Interestingly, both males and females in this survey aged 25-34 years made up the category for least likely to use green products. The results of this survey are somewhat surprising. One might expect the age groups that are likely to have young children to be thinking of preserving the earth for the future. Perhaps it could be monetary concerns which explain why college students or parents are less likely to buy something out of the ordinary and more expensive. However, one survey from July of 2010 gives hope, asserting that, “regardless of region, age, gender or state of the economy,” Americans are still optimistic towards greener services and products (Watson). A wider range of green consumers means more eco-friendly products, less pollution, and another step toward making the world a better place to live.

Recent studies conclude that “eco-superior” products really are rising in demand in America. On a list of “Consumer Trends to Watch for in 2011,” a guide for businesses to determine what products will sell best, green products make the list alongside the desire for better health products

and services and the interest in public bike programs and car sharing. A growing number of Americans now seek out eco-friendly products, but they want them to be even better than the more polluting alternatives in some way. This study reveals that eco-consciousness has certainly penetrated mainstream consuming, but in order for this market to grow significantly, green companies should try to meet their market halfway by providing a better price or performance than the alternatives (Consumer Trends to Watch in 2011).

One of the many companies seeking to expand the market for green products does so through a combination of techniques and messages. On the website for Progress Lighting, a company specializing in energy-efficient home lighting from LEDs to fluorescent bulbs, a variety of photos is used for maximum effect. These create the sense that eco-friendly lights actually look better and are trendier, by displaying a slideshow of elaborate and expensive rooms with decorative, natural-looking lighting. In that sense, the product is promoted as a desirable, upper-class commodity. At the same time, it lists the many benefits energy-efficient lighting provides to the consumer, such as saving money, role-modeling for children, and helping the environment. By adding these points to their website, the company increases their target audience. This includes anyone wanting to lighten their energy bill, families, and environmentally-conscious people. Furthermore, Progress Lighting takes one more important step, in accordance with John Dodd's list, in widening their market range by providing educational data "to help you make informed decisions about energy-efficient lighting" (Energy Efficient Lighting). A role model in green marketing, Progress Lighting covers all its bases with effective communication with a varied audience. The message to be found here is that differences in buying habits across American demographics should not be the main focus, but that with the right information to each group and by bridging gaps in communication through education, anyone and everyone may find a reason to be green.

The green revolution may be taking hold of America home by home as individuals discover more of the benefits of sustainable lifestyles, but in some remarkable cases, entire cities have come

together to create a sustainable environment for their citizens. The cities in America shown to be the greenest based on certain standards have their own reasons for going green, and have chosen certain aspects to improve on.

The *Popular Science* magazine has compiled a list of “America’s Top 50 Greenest Cities” by taking “raw data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Geographic Society’s Green Guide, which collected survey data and government statistics for American cities of over 100,000 people in more than 30 categories” (Svoboda). They then took this information and created four broad categories: electricity, transportation, green living, and green perspective; which they rated each of the cities in. Three of the cities that scored high ratings in eco-conscious activities illustrate why it is important for Americans to promote a sustainable lifestyle.

The top city on the list is Portland, Oregon, where “half its power comes from renewable sources, a quarter of the workforce commutes by bike, carpool or public transportation, and... 35 buildings [are] certified by the U.S. Green Building Council” (Svoboda). This city was first planned in 1910, but was even then given smaller blocks to prevent urban sprawl, and preserves its historical buildings through “sustainable building practices,” as Karen Ruben, an author for the *Travel Writer’s Magazine*, states. As a result, it has since had room for new green construction, wide bike paths and walkways, and an air rail transportation system (an energy efficient mass transit system). This setting is ideal for cultivating the green movement because of its more recent population growth, the surrounding natural beauty, and now its renown for being green. All of this lends to promoting the movement here, as well as the revenue and space to create a more environmentally-friendly city. Portland is clearly a trendsetter for other cities as well, being the birthplace of the now nationwide Flexcar car-sharing company, a program which allows people to pay to use a car for shorter amounts of time as they need it; this means essentially sharing one car and keeping many others off the streets. Portland’s city-wide efforts

epitomize the fact that locals, with enough consumer interest, can really make a visible impact and even make “being ‘green’ a reason to visit,” (Karen Ruben).

Perhaps surprisingly, with the highest rating in the “Green Living” category, “Chicago is among the first cities to confront energy loss head-on” (Murdoch). This is probably partially due to the fact that its population density is higher than most cities in the U.S., with 11,864 people per square mile (2010 Census), creating environmental issues that are more apparent and imperative to control. As a result of the changes they have made, they now “produce twice the energy with a third the carbon” by way of innovative power plants (Murdoch). At the same time, Chicago has some of the largest parks in the U.S., great bikeways, and homeowners and businesses even “green” their rooftops by adding gardens (Green Chicago: Green Roofs). Despite how easy it might be for Chicago to lose sight of environmental needs as a dense metropolis, acknowledging the need for action has driven green conventions “formally,” or by way of the government. The direction and initiative of the mayors have played key roles in initiating city-wide improvements for green building practices and in maintaining and enhancing the extensive parks. The fact that Chicago has been dubbed “one of the greenest cities in America” and rates so highly in the “Green Living” category indicates that a city benefits greatly from government support and direction that would be difficult for the public themselves to undertake. The third largest city in America, Chicago would seem one of the more difficult places to maintain a care for the environment, yet the fact that it is so eco-savvy proves that any area has the potential for “greenness.”

Minneapolis comes in 11th on this list, yet it has one of the highest green ratings in both electricity and transportation. It is clear that many Minneapolis city planning groups, made up of citizens, have come together to work toward a greener future. They have created numerous grants and incentives for programs “ranging from household power-consumption monitors to ‘block club talks’ about global warming” (Minneapolis Sustainability Roundtable). In addition, with a population of nearly 400,000, the plan for the city’s green future includes making walking and cycling feasible

methods of transportation and community-building. In its 50 year plan, this city has stressed the health of its citizens, the affordability of sustainable housing, and growing its green market as some of the most important aspects to promote. The individual and the family are both central focuses in Minneapolis' endeavor to be a green city, just as citizen welfare is one of the main goals of many American cities. Minneapolis proves to the world that including green practices in city planning is not only a trend, a money-saving business plan, or an endeavor for tree hugging activists, but a lifestyle essential for the environment, and in turn, its citizens.

It is heartening to see so many companies and organizations cropping up to serve the needs of a growing green market. It truly appears that the foundations of a green America have been laid: the corporate world knows where the profit is and is investing in green products; caring for the environment is starting to become a popular way of life; and entire cities are setting large scale environmental goals. There is hope in the knowledge that together many people can make a change. It all starts with one home and one decision.

Introduction to the Green Home

The American home is reflective of social influences, marketing being one of the most pervasive, on the individual. From solar panels to Energy Star washing machines and bamboo cabinetry, the “must-have” items of the green movement have gained a great amount of popularity in the public eye. Green living has come out of the “special interests” corner it was formerly relegated to and has finally merged with pop culture in television and advertisements, even enjoying its position as a social trend. But advertisements can be misleading and trends can fade, so what about the Green movement will make it enduring, if anything? If it does continue on, will it make a difference in the world as we like to believe, or will it serve only to make consumers feel less guilty about their impact?

Energy Saving

For those who want to make the most of their decision to live sustainably, there is the option to install residential solar panels, wind turbines, and geothermal heating are the major active energy-producing commodities. These three are major long-term energy savers; earning homeowners back a large chunk of the energy bill or even sending them a check for putting extra energy back on the grid (Huso 20, 21).

Energy Star is a program by both the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency which gives a range of appliances and other products a stamp of certification that indicates a significantly higher level of energy efficiency than average. It is thoroughly regulated to make sure the products are proven to make a significant decrease in energy use nationwide, that the products perform on par with similar products and display the qualities the consumer expects of it, that it will cost the same as others or will earn back the difference in a “reasonable time,” that they will be offered by more than one manufacturer, and that purchasers can easily see and understand the Energy Star label. Energy Star certifies eco-friendly products from light bulbs to dishwashers and tank-less water heaters, which all save significantly on energy use and cost, but it goes beyond this by actually certifying entire homes for green construction. In some cases, the Energy Star label can save even more money by its association with government incentives and rebates for reducing energy consumption (How a Product Earns the Energy Star Label).

At the same time, homeowners can green their energy consumption passively. This isn't the lazy person's solution, however, requiring a conscious effort on the homeowner's part. Passive energy saving techniques include both rethinking aspects of home construction or renovation to maintain comfortable home temperatures and simple habit changes such as turning off unused electricity. Green construction keeps the outside temperature from affecting the indoor temperature by preventing heat loss within the house in cold weather and keeping heat out in the summer with well insulated walls and

making sure all cracks in windows and doors are completely sealed. One company, Passive House, designs homes with “the highest building efficiency standard in the world,” exceeding even Energy Star’s ratings by 25% (High Performance Homes Midwest). Their mission is to combine all measures for passive energy saving to create homes with little or no net emissions.

Building Materials

In addition to energy saving options, many people who choose to renovate old homes or build new ones have the choice to construct with more renewable, recycled, and/or durable resources. As there is now more interest for reducing waste, companies often make it possible to obtain materials such as granite for countertops leftover from previously built homes; to reuse salvaged and refinished wood beams, flooring, and bricks from old and torn down constructions; and to recycle items like glass from bottles into decorative tiling in kitchens and countertops.

As stated by GreenerBuildings in 2007, a survey conducted by McGraw-Hill Construction, people are 85% happier with their new green homes than with their previous non-green ones. Of the American homeowners who had done recent renovations, 40% of these said they had used green products in their remodeling. As McGraw-Hill vice president Harvey M. Bernstein said, "As home prices increase and homeowners stay in their homes longer, remodeling becomes a key market opportunity. It's encouraging that there is already so much of the community aware of these green product options and, more importantly, using them" (Green Homes Save Money, Make Owners Happier).

Because home building and renovation usually requires a great amount of resources – not to mention the energy used and pollution that comes from their manufacturing, shipping, and installation – the fact that an increasing amount of people are choosing to renovate and build more sustainably is no small service to the planet. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification system was created by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2000 to support the construction of well-

designed homes that fit high standards in sustainability. The USGBC created certification for homes, partly in hopes of education; buyers need to be conscious of what constitutes a green home, and then to know how to maintain it to keep it functioning as its most efficient. Additionally, a home that is LEED certified becomes a tangible symbolic feature that can communicate to the owner and society of a higher standard of living. The certification system “works throughout the building lifecycle” to assure “scientific consistency and rigor” in the entire project (USGBC: U.S. Green Building Council). This program is beneficial for the future of green home building in that it ensures otherwise skeptical consumers of what they will gain and encourages them to make a bigger impact. The process of building a house to LEED standards promises a number of advantages including: “lower operating costs and increased asset value, reduction of waste sent to landfills; conservation of energy and water; healthier and safer [environment] for occupants; reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions; and qualification for tax rebates, zoning allowances and other incentives in hundreds of cities.” Not only does this certification stand to show that a single home can make a big difference, it becomes a label for others to see and aspire to.

The findings about LEED certified buildings researched and compiled by Rob Watson in *Green Market and Impact Report 2010*, are promising. They show that each one of these buildings makes a “major impact in reducing the overall environmental footprint of individual structures,” yet it is clear that LEED building needs to become more mainstream in order to significantly benefit the environment overall (Watson). These homes have at least set a high standard for future green home owners. Some of the houses that have been made as a response to the movement have truly gone above and beyond the norm. The best part about this trend, however, is that it is not limited to any specific type of home or neighborhood.

Case Study:

Living a more sustainable lifestyle piece by piece can be a fairly simple way to make what seems like a great leap into a short walk. However, it is understandable that one major impediment for people to make a bigger difference is how daunting the final picture can be. When you take a look at the wide range of completely green homes, it might be more exciting (and in some cases relieving), to see what is possible with eco-friendly living. Here are some dwellings featured on the popular television show, *World's Greenest Homes*: listed from extreme to eco-chic.

One extremely unique home designed with a sense of adventure and a love of nature is found in New Paltz, New York. Designed by a smart car maker, this innovative and exceptionally sustainable edifice would look out of place if it was not located in the middle of the woods. As the show host states, the dome house looks a bit like a spaceship that has “landed in the middle of nowhere” (World’s Greenest Homes). The homeowner and his wife were actually inspired by the very natural shape of a nautilus shell. The resulting effect is that the outside of the wood-built home is rounded, while the inside makes use of curving patterns throughout to recall the environment that surrounds it. Large, thick windows make optimum use of natural light during the day, also giving a great view of the beautiful surroundings; but in order to keep the sun from coming inside too much during the summer or too little during the winter, this house employs a very interesting and effective technique. The house is actually able to rotate with the seasonal movement of the sun by way of a control box below it. The total energy required to move the whole house is the equivalent of a hair drier. In addition, the home takes up the least amount of land space possible by being built partly on hillside and partly on a platform, which means that the land underneath did not have to be modified very much. The homeowners say that for them, all of these factors are very important, that “it’s about a different way of living.”

This second home demonstrates that there is no standard look for a green home and no size requirement to have a great place to live. In Hong Kong, one of the most densely populated cities in

the world with seven million inhabitants, there is not much room for the large, energy-consuming homes we may be used to seeing in many parts of America. Therefore, much of the typical housing is apartment-style living, with the smaller areas inherently making less environmental impact. The designer and owner of this apartment is Gary Chang. As the show host states, Gary, “following the Hong Kong tradition of not taking up a lot of space... decided not to give up the tiny tenement apartment that he and his large family used to live” (World’s Greenest Homes). His living space is a mere 330 square feet, yet he has built the apartment to make the home complete by way of a futuristic sliding wall system. He makes no sacrifices even though his impact is minimal: instead, he says, “the house moves for me.” This ingenious use of space allows the apartment to have up to 24 different combinations. To increase light value and make it seem bigger, he has also added mirrors on the walls and ceiling. This inspirational haven in the city is a testament that any place can be made both livable and sustainable.

Finally, there is one very eco-friendly house, much closer to home for many of us, both in location and design, found in Minneapolis. This house incorporates a full range of green products. Here, the bedrooms are all very bright, and even the bathroom sinks are made from ecologically friendly materials. The flat roof is covered with solar panels that soak up the sun’s rays, providing solar PV (photo voltaic) and solar thermal heating for water. Together, these provide the house with 25-35% of the electrical needs. Normally a larger house means larger bills, but not here – the owners proudly state that they are “saving \$800 a month just on our electrical bills” (World’s Greenest Homes). In order to avoid the extra carbon output of using newly produced materials, their decking is made of recycled milk jugs, but is made to look like wood planks. Besides keeping more plastic out of landfills, another benefit of this type of material is that it is more durable and smoother than wood, even over time, and there will never be a need to refinish it. Finally, the kitchen’s red oak floors are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which confirms that they are environmentally friendly and sustainable. *The*

World's Greenest Homes shows that this is simply an average home that “leads by example by keeping things simple, affordable, and responsible, without sacrificing the fun.”

Definitely not “cookie-cutter” homes, these buildings are more than just places to sleep. They epitomize such values as individuality, healthy living, and style – values that have captured America’s attention and will inspire the trend to continue in all types of homes throughout the world.

Conclusion

Some of the most pressing issues Americans face today are health and finances. When it comes to deciding how to begin a sustainable lifestyle, the questions most people ask are: will this make my life healthier? And, will it help me save money? It is therefore no coincidence that these two factors play a leading role in Green Marketing. The value of the home increases with upgrading, often repaying the owner more than they put into the project in the long run. This is very true of Green renovations, not only because it will add value to the house, but also because these renovations often pay for themselves over time. Because energy-efficient upgrades from washing machines to geo-thermal heating and cooling take up less energy or use energy from free and natural sources, these options are always saving money.

In America, we have the privilege of choice in our lifestyles, to spend our earnings however we wish and to follow the principles of our own hearts. We have the opportunity to learn from a great number of viewpoints and backgrounds in such a society and to ask questions and find answers from readily available resources. It is even a blessing that, through the media, there is such great interaction among people across all ages and social classes in the nation that can bring us all together for a common cause. The mass media and marketing efforts are so commonplace, generally taken for granted in our society, yet in recent times this is the starting place for great movements that change lives. Just as media publicity and social discussion about sustainable living drew me to investigate the green movement, I am sure many more have as well, and will continue to adopt ways of life that benefit our world.

I believe that what America really needs right now to make the green movement more than a trend is far more basic than government incentives or better advertising; what we need is education. If nothing else, this study has given evidence that many Americans are at least aware of the environmental issues we face, and know that there is a rising initiative to reduce them. If the movement does endure as it seems it will, then the hope is that knowledge of the market and attempts to expand it by educating the general public will also make an environmental impact through changes in many individuals' lifestyles. The intention of this paper is simply to take this knowledge and transform it to help understand this movement going on in American homes today. The fact that "being green" is becoming very popular throughout society has valuable potential. Yet it is only the nudge, a catalyst to start making a perceivable difference.

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