**It’s Not Easy Buying Green: Dishonest Advertising and its Negative Effects on Green Products**

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When it comes to marketing in this day and age the products that sell fast are the ones that make the consumer feel good. People like to know that the product they use provides the minimum environmental impact; they want to buy “green”. The lack of regulations on what green descriptors a company uses for promotion of their products is appalling. The average consumer intending to buy green does not have the time to consider the implications of each product they purchase. **When a product is considered to be green or environmentally friendly it should be able to demonstrate that not only does its usage provide a green solution, but that its production and shipment processes, as well as the company, employ methods which are environmentally conscious.** In addition people need to learn to recognise the tricks of advertising and make their own judgement on the sustainability of the products they buy and the companies that sell them. A company advertising a product as green should be able to prove that not only is the production, shipment, use and disposal sustainable but that the company providing the product is sustainable as well.

In 2007, Terra Choice Environmental Marketing Inc, performed a study on green promotion and compiled a list of green marketing’s “sins in advertising”, or “greenwashing”, which were; Sin of Hidden Trade-Off, Sin of No Proof, Sin of Vagueness, Sin of Irrelevance, Sin of the Lesser of Two Evils and the Sin of Fibbing. This list was compiled after observing over one thousand products which made environmental claims, and finding only one that was not false or misleading. This not only causes consumers to buy and use products which are not sustainable, but if allowed to continue may cause a public distrust of all green claims. People want to buy green, it makes them feel better that the little things they do can make a difference. The green label needs to be more discerning, taking into full account all aspects of the product and corresponding companies, maintaining faith in the green label and isolating the truly green products.

Proverbs 10:9 says “The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out”. This holds true in the advertising world. An over abundance of embellishment or a rash use of fiction in the end leads to general mistrust of the product offered. Mistrust will lead to a consumer’s reluctance to purchase a product or ones similar to it. Numbers 30:2 “When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said”. Advertisers should be truthful in all their claims, refraining not just from lies but also from exaggeration and partial truths.

I believe that there should be repercussions for advertisers making false claims, such as misuse of the Energy Star logo, or claims regarding organic materials. In addition there should be regulations and rules which determine whether a product should be labelled green, these regulations should take into account more than production of the product but also use and disposal.

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