



# Effectively Navigating the Challenging, Green Marketplace



**By Colette Chandler,  
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Green is an interesting phenomenon. I've been in green and LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) marketing for close to 10 years and remember when green was not too hip. Obviously, times have changed. But to be effective in reaching and communicating to these green and LOHAS consumers, you need to understand who the drivers are of the green trends—the LOHAS consumers. These are the consumers who concentrate on making decisions based on planetary well-being, social issues and health and wellness. They are the ones that influence others to buy. Yet, they are some of the hardest to reach. I've been working with The Cleveland Women's Journal to help create their green section of their newspaper with real, authentic

green content that readers want and with information on resources that are actually green and healthy.

I see many companies spend time training their staff on how to best represent a green brand. As a matter-of-fact, I train many of the people on their staff. Who wants to walk into a green hotel and be told by the staff that they do not have any local, organic cuisine at their restaurant and they have no idea if they recycle? It could make the green brand seem less authentic.

After the staff is trained on how to better understand the green and LOHAS consumers, it's time to communicate it to your customers. It's ironic that you can come this far, then forget or neglect to effectively communicate to your customers your green essence. I often asked myself, "how could this happen?" I often found that companies fell into one of these categories:

A. They assumed that their customers already knew what they were doing.

B. They were doing it because it was part of their value system and thought communicating it was too showy.

C. They incorporated green practices out of necessity—pushed by a vendor, supplier, corporate office, marketplace, etc., and didn't feel customers really cared about this.

Regardless of how you as a company fell into this, it's critical that companies effectively communicate what you are doing to your customers—this starts with your staff. So now that your staff understands who these consumers are, how do you effectively disseminate this information to your customers?

You need a plan, a strategy, to effectively communicate in the most environmentally friendly manner as possible? You need to ask yourself these same questions when you consider your external communication methods to ensure you're not saying you are green and then practicing something else. We call that greenwashing and there are many awards you can win for it.

When your staff knows what you are doing, it makes it a lot easier to more effectively communicate to your customers how green you really are or striving to be. So how do you effectively do this?

First, you want to develop a

process of communicating this information to your customers. Here are some ways to do this:

- When you make the changes to a greener facility or greener products and services, find ways to allow your customers to get involved and make a difference. If you are in the hospitality industry, this could mean asking guests to throw things away in the recycling bins, asking them not to have their linens changed every day, etc. Think about what other ways you could get your guests involved in your efforts.

- Explain what you are doing or about to do and why you are doing it. This information can easily be posted on your website, be sent via email, in guest rooms, posted in your office, etc.

- Every time you make a change, build into the process the method you will use to disperse the information to customers and when you will do this. Your customers will get used to the methods you use and know to expect new updates in 3 weeks on your website or via email. Keep a "green or LOHAS" section on your website with updates if you are undergoing a lot of changes

that will impact how they buy, use, etc. your products and services.

- Allow your customers to see a before and after and show them how things have changed, don't just tell them. Show them some proof by measuring energy usage, waste reduction, etc. They'll be impressed to be a customer of such a good environmental steward.

Here are some things to keep in mind when you are disseminating this type of information:

- Consider how you will disseminate it in an environmentally friendly manner. Use less paper, make sure it is post consumer waste content, and consider using soy-based inks.

- When you send any type of gifts to customers, press, etc., consider how you send it and what you send. One company thanked a reporter for writing an article on how they were becoming carbon neutral by sending a package from Fed-Ex when the office was practically down the road.

Spend time effectively communicating your green efforts and you'll be more likely to connect with green consumers who care about what you are doing.

## Going Green?

- **Interested in finding a consumer so brand loyal, that even your revenue grows in an economic downturn?**
- **Want to anticipate future consumer buying habits?**
- **Need to differentiate yourself in today's competitive market?**

**THINK GREEN!**

**Call Today 216.228.1379**



We are aware of our carbon footprint and are doing our part to make a healthy cleaner environment, see publisher page.

Our Healthy, Green Lifestyles program offers greater depth than most traditional, green programs. The Women's Journals has retained Colette Chandler, leading green and LOHAS marketing expert and president of The Marketing Insider, to consult and advise us on how to create a green program with more transparency.

"I am excited to be able to provide a voice to all the women of Northeast Ohio for a healthier you and our environment as well as the opportunity to make a difference in our community. The women and business of our community will benefit from the resource we will provide." – Linda J. Lutz, Owner, LJ Publishing, LLC DBA The Cleveland Women's Journal -West

Join The Women's Journals and become part of our campaign to make a difference in Cuyahoga County.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN REACHING THE POWERFUL WOMAN LOHAS CONSUMER, BOOST YOUR SALES WITH OUR SPECIAL GREEN PROGRAM RATES CALL OR E-MAIL TODAY. WE WILL BRING COLETTE'S EXPERTISE TO YOU WHEN YOU PARTNER WITH OUR SALES TEAM.**