

An Inconvenient Light: New survey shows eight in 10 Americans switch off to conserve energy

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30 October 2007, CHICAGO – When it comes to buying and living green, do Americans put their money where their mouth is?

A new survey by Synovate and Marketing Daily sought to unveil what Americans are doing to conserve energy and how much they consider energy efficiency when shopping for products.

Of the 1,000 Americans surveyed, 96% claim that they regularly do something to conserve energy. The most popular activity is turning off the lights at home (84%), followed by using energy efficient light bulbs (67%) and lowering their heat (63%). Forty three percent of respondents say they are driving less and purchasing energy efficient appliances, but only 20% are driving a more fuel-efficient vehicle and only 18% walk or bike instead of drive.

"The results indicate that Americans seem much more likely to do what they can while at home but when they leave the house, it's a bigger stretch for them to continue to be energy efficient," said Tom Mularz, senior vice president at Synovate.

When shopping for new products, over one-third of consumers say that energy efficiency is 'very important' to their buying decisions while another 49% say it is 'somewhat important.' Only 4% think energy efficiency is not important and 11% say it's a non-issue.

Not surprisingly, more people consider energy efficiency when shopping for appliances, autos and gas/fuel than other categories. The survey found that 57% of respondents think energy efficiency is very important when shopping for appliances and gas/fuel, and 52% said it's very important when shopping for autos. However, just over one-third said energy efficiency is very important when it comes to buying consumer electronics and home-improvement materials, and a mere 11% think it's very important to consider when shopping for hotel/travel accommodations.

Even though consumers say that energy efficiency is important to them, they don't necessarily believe all the claims that marketers make on this front are completely believable. Less than 10% of respondents think claims about energy efficiency are 'very believable.' However, the majority of respondents (70%) said these claims are 'somewhat believable.'

"This is good news for companies that claim their products conserve energy," said Mularz. "Most people feel that claims of energy efficiency are at least somewhat credible. Less than 1% of people think they're not at all believable."

With the latest emphasis on marketers touting "green" products, are energy efficiency claims just a passing fad? More than eight out of ten of those surveyed said these claims are here to stay, while 16% think they're more of a passing fad. Interestingly, younger Americans are more inclined to think energy efficient claims will fade, with 21% of 18 to 24 year olds feeling that energy efficiency is a passing marketing fad compared to 10% of people over age 65.

The study was conducted online from September 19 to 21 with 1,000 adults in the US using Synovate eNation.

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