

CPG brands assailed over misleading sustainability claims

Article

The trend: With an unprecedented heat wave hitting much of Europe, there's a growing call for brands to take meaningful action against climate change. It's also put a greater focus on brands' greenwashing practices.

- Numerous consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies, including **Coca-Cola** and **Unilever**, have made false sustainability claims on products, according to a report from [Changing](#).

Markets Foundation.

- Climate-related lawsuits, including those tied to corporate greenwashing, are picking up steam, per a recent report.

Marketing miscues: Companies across the spectrum, from fashion and food brands to airlines, are being taken to task for perpetuating false claims to woo more eco-conscious consumers.

- H&M removed scorecards showcasing the environmental soundness of clothing products after a report unveiled the inaccuracy of its sustainability statements.
- In April, **Gorton's** was accused of falsely marketing tilapia as “sustainably sourced” in a Massachusetts lawsuit that contends the fish is farmed in China using inhumane methods.
- **Procter & Gamble's** Head and Shoulders shampoo purports to be made out of “beach plastic,” giving the impression that pollution is being reduced but doing nothing to decrease the use of plastics.

Why it matters: Many consumers face conflicting priorities now—the desire to shop more sustainably while keeping prices in mind as inflation ratchets up, per Morning Consult.

- Over half of UK online adults (57%) surveyed by YouGov for Deloitte stated a preference to buy more sustainable products if they were more affordable.
- Consumer interest in adopting a more sustainable lifestyle has risen in the past year, per Deloitte.

Leading Product Categories and Actions UK Adults Are Taking in an Effort to Lead a More Sustainable Lifestyle, June 2022

% of respondents

Recycled or composted household waste	75%
Grocery shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages	87%
Restaurants/takeaways	20%
Reduced food waste	69%
Grocery shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages	90%
Restaurants/takeaways	24%
Limited the use of single-use plastic	64%
Grocery shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages	77%
Everyday household items	48%
Beauty and personal care products	29%
Reduced the amount of new products and goods I buy (e.g., buy just what I need)	59%
Clothing and footwear	62%
Grocery shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages	48%
Everyday household items	47%
Bought more seasonal produce	54%
Grocery shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages	94%
Restaurants/takeaways	12%

Note: ages 18+

Source: Deloitte, "Sustainable Consumer 2022" conducted by YouGov, July 4, 2022

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The big takeaway: Companies need to be wary of making false claims about sustainability measures, as it could cost them consumer trust. Brands need to remain transparent around green efforts and be able to back up claims in their advertising.