



AGENCE CONSEIL
EN COMMUNICATION
SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ET LES QUESTIONS
DE SOCIÉTÉ

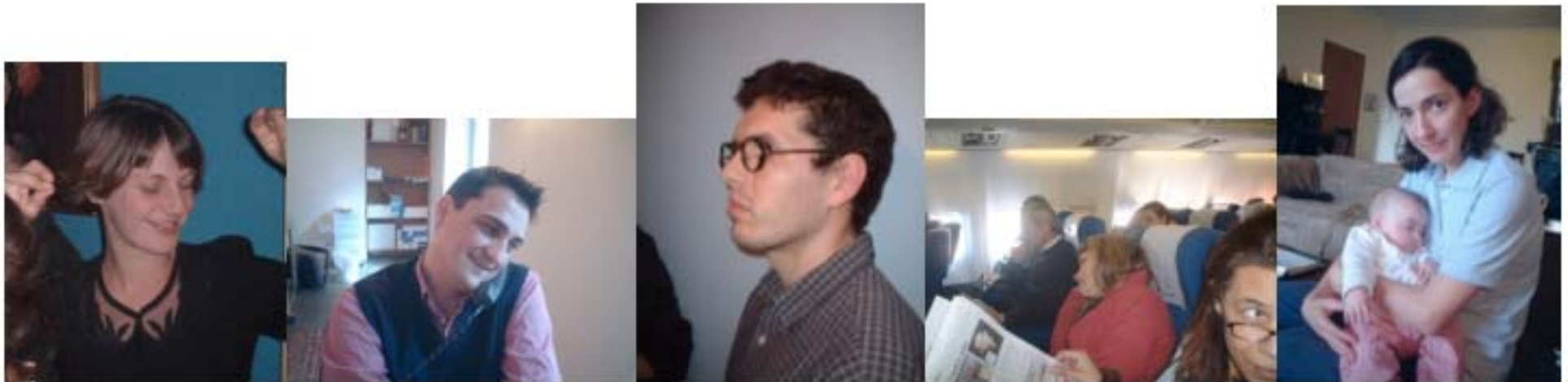
Bobos, cultural creatives, NIMBY, alternatives...
Who are the « sustainable consumers »?

If you think that those who are concerned about environment and social matters look like that...



You are a few years late!

Since the beginning of the 21st century, they look like this...



Sharon, economist in Oxford ; Andrea, account manager in an advertising agency in Milano ; Luiz, primary school teacher in Bilbao ; Ranalava, top executive in a food company in Madagascar ; Alexandra, ergotherapist in Athens.

But since a few months, they also look like this...

Suzanne, my mother-in-law, retired ingeneer, used to read « Le Point » and vote for conservative parties... This winter, she changed the brand of her car for a « cleaner one ». She also began to buy « fair trade » products. She may vote for a green party at the next elections.





What are the common points between Sharon, Andrea, Luiz, Ranalava, Alexandra and my mother-in-law?

- Very concerned about the state of the planet
(like 80 % of the people in France, according to SIMM 2003)
- Think companies have a major responsibility in environmental problems
(like 47%, according to Baromètre EDF 2002)
- Take « citizenship » of the company in consideration when they choose a brand
(like 38%, according to CREDOC 2002).
- Regularly buy organic (« bio ») products
(like 37%, according to Baromètre 2004 CSA / Agence Bio)
- Consider pollution and security as the major issues for the car industry in the coming years
(like 70%, according to SIMM 2003)
- Choose bank/insurance companies or cosmetic brands with an « ethic » approach
(like one out of two heavy consumers of these products and services, according to SIMM 2003)



What do they want ?

Organic soft drinks (an eco-cola!)

Cleaner cars

Biodegradable pens and yoghurt packaging

A beauty cream not tested on animals

A fair trade doll for my daughter

...



Most major companies do not respond to their demands

Their arguments:

« We are serious people, we only consider figures. With our surveys, we know exactly what the consumer wants: a convenient product for a good price. »

(a top executive in a global company)

« When we try to sell sustainability, It does not work. »

(an eye-glasses manufacturer)

« When consumers have to pay more for a sustainable product or service, they refuse it!»

(a car manufacturer)

« Fair trade coffee represent in Europe beetween 2% and 4% of the market, like organic food, we can not focuse on marketing niches ! »

(a marketing manager in a big food company)



Are their arguments relevant?

1. Studies never tell what the consumer wants, only what he does not want anymore.
2. To only consider shares of market is not serious. Anticipation requires qualitative approach and tendencies analysis (the sales of the main fair trade products double each year).
3. Many consumers refuse to pay more for a sustainable products, just because they consider that it should already exist for ages (water without pesticides, cleaner cars, recyclable eye-glasses, Tshirts not made by children...)
4. Many consumers do not buy organic food or fair trade products, just because it is not on sale or very difficult to find!



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Major companies that do not work on sustainable products
and services are now in danger!

Why?



Because we live in the era of mass-information

On TV this month:

6500 to 9500 dead each year in France with urban atmospheric pollution

1000 to 10 000 vegetal or animal species disappearing each day

120 millions plastic bags in the bottom of the sea

No petrol in 40 years

250 millions of slave children!



Because « sustainable consumers » are about to become the new middle class

1960-70: anti-conformism

- 1967: « hippies »
- 1968 : « may 68 »
- The 70's: women emancipation, ecology, sex liberation, green tourism, mass cultural industry...

1980-90: neo-conservatism

- Early 80's: « Golden Boys » (and Girls), « yuppies ».
- The 80's: « neo-liberalism », Reagan, Thatcher, Bernard Tapie, Berlusconi, junk bonds, Davos, etc.

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2000-10 : social responsibility

- Late 90's: « bobos » (bourgeois bohemians)¹,
- 2000: « cultural creatives »².
- The 00's: « ecocitizens », « alter-mondialists », « nonos », « consomm'acteurs », « citoyens consommateurs », « new consumers », « alternatives », « new rural » « NIMBY » (Not In My Back Yard)... All put together: a new middle class.

¹ *Bobos in paradise* – David Brooks – Simon&Schuster – New York – 2000

² 23% of the american population, growing of 3% each year according to P.Ray and S.Anderson (*The Cultural Creatives : How 50 Million People Are Changing the World?*, New York, Harmony Books, 2000)



Time to move

Can major companies still produce cola drinks, pens, yoghurts, diapers, cars or energy like they used to do in the sixties?

Of course not,
big companies have to move, and fast,
just because the consumers are now... far ahead.