

A challenge here is that consumers say they recycle more than they really do. Kelton Global recently conducted a survey and found that two-thirds of Americans report recycling on a regular basis. Yet, the EPA rate for recycling in the U.S. is at approximately 34 percent, and for most plastics, the rate is considerably lower.

Generally speaking, mainstream U.S. consumers are not willing to be inconvenienced for sustainability.

BP: People have questions on which materials are the most sustainable, as many are touted as such. How can brands help consumers answer uncertainties on the packaging?

JM: It helps to put the discussion into the context of the system: What are we asking packaging to do? There are many materials in the market, and they have different attributes that contribute to performance of the task required. The American Institute for Packaging and the Environment has been and is continuing to develop communication materials about how packaging contributes to sustainability. Brands could point to those pieces, and members can propose different things to highlight.

TB: I agree: Packaging needs to be put within the context of the system. Glass has a good recyclability story; flexible has a good carbon impact story — all have stories to tell, but they have to be put into the context of what the consumer cares about. LOHAS might be more willing to compost, but many mainstream consumers wouldn't know what to do with a compostable bag. The How2Recycle label is a good step in the right direction in communicating to consumers what part of the package can be recycled.

JM: That's a great point. Labeling is important to communicate what sustainability attributes are included in a

Interestingly, when Tide introduced its more sustainable cold-water formula, the brand focused on cost savings for the consumer as opposed to the environmental benefits.



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