



Ask SCORE for Business Advice

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Do You Know Your Market? by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

“How Green in My Appliance? Ask Green Bay, Wisconsin.”

This headline, posted on a MediaPost News site, surprised me. When the same newsletter noted months ago that Green Bay is one of the top consumers of potato chips, it seemed like a reasonable statistic. However, thinking of Green Bay as being tops in the nation in buying environmentally friendly appliances was harder to grasp.

Posted March 24 and written by Aaron Baar, a Chicago freelancer, a recent study from Scarborough Research found that Green Bay and Honolulu tied as being the cities with the most energy-saving appliances at 40% of households. Green Bay beat out cities like Portland and San Francisco that are typically considered more environmentally aware.

Howard Goldberg, senior vice president of Scarborough Research, said that the study showed it isn't just the Californias and markets you might expect that are adopting a green philosophy. “That leaves a tremendous opportunity for retailers and manufacturers to get their brands in front of consumers,” he said.

Goldberg says that owners of energy-saving appliances tend to have an affinity for other things environmental. He noted that they are 31% more likely to eat organic food and 21% more likely to garden. They're more apt to run, bike, jog, and hike.

This is a challenging thought for businesses that are trying to stay abreast of the trends in their marketing. Is this how you think of Green Bay? It certainly stopped me, but I noted there are evidences of some of this in the market.

The Cellcom Marathon and Bellin Run have exploded in popularity and shops like “For the Birds” are prospering. There is a growing group called the “Greater Green Bay Earth Week Coalition” that has been busy making plans for Earth Week, April 17 to 25.

Jodi Arndt, attorney with Liebmann, Conway, Olejniczak & Jerry and group member, forwarded a packed schedule of events. In addition to community service events such as clean-ups of various areas, there will be a focus on education and fun. Activities will include outdoor activities, a green gardening presentation at the Green Bay Botanical Gardens, readings at local elementary schools, a film presentation, leave your car at home day, a green parade, and an awards banquet.

It sounds like something you might expect in California. But this is Green Bay and maybe a business would be wise to define potential customers in a new way. It could be time to make changes when putting together marketing plans, adjusting inventory, and in employing energy saving operational practices. Is your business seen as environmentally friendly and will your business model attract these consumers?

Last year, about 20 local businesses were involved in the Greater Green Bay Earth Week events as sponsors, organizers or hosts. Several new partners have joined this year and the Coalition hopes to engage at least 3,500 area residents over the course of the week.

Our city may be a leader in using energy-saving appliances, but that appears to be just one part of a trend toward becoming a greener Green Bay.

If you'd like to learn more, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit www.greenbayscore.org or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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