

# The Great Green Market

When I hear of an emerging market, I'm at least mildly interested.

But an emerging \$3 trillion market catapults me way past mildly interested into the fully engaged category. Any number with a full dozen zeros neatly lined up behind is a real attention grabber.

This emerging green market is defined as "goods, services, and technologies which address the challenges created by increased awareness of global climate change". In other words, almost anything that is, or can be positioned as, beneficial to the environment in a world filled with anxiety over potential environmental disaster can enter the new market place.

And it doesn't matter much whether the benefits are substantive or "feel good", simply offering comfort to replace the sense that things just might be spinning out of control here on Planet Earth.

The possibilities are exciting, ranging from downright ordinary to dauntingly avant garde. As you consider the role you want your company to pursue, it might be a good idea for you to look at some of the ideas that are already taking hold in each of the broad categories.

PRODUCTS. Virtually everybody in the US has already been involved in some conversation about hybrid cars. Toyota's Prius is beloved by environmentalists, even though, depending on how and where it is driven, many of its benefits are more the "feel good" variety.

But you don't have to spend big bucks to go green. At the grocery store, items from cereal to milk to mops lay claim to being environmentally kinder than their shelfmates, and a halo effect has folks seeing organic, natural, free range, fair trade, no preservatives, et al, as part of the same eco-friendly effort.

In clothing stores, much is made of the nature of the fibers, with hang tags telling the tales of the materials used in detail. A television commercial uses made up fabric names to conjure the horrors that will befall the foolish buyer who chooses

"itchyscratchalotta" over pure cotton.

The building industry offers the usual solar panels but hastens to remind us that (for not so very much more) rainwater can be recycled or oh-so-sustainable bamboo can deliver stunningly elegant floors. Did you notice the counter where you bought your breakfast pastry was a lovely mosaic of recycled glass shards? And the coffee to go with had a provenance worthy of a museum painting, authenticating it as having been grown and harvested with all due environmental concern.

Where once we thought it adequate to recycle our grocery sacks, today we need not answer to "paper or plastic?" We carry our own canvas bags, supplied perhaps by the California entrepreneur whose endeavor is approaching \$1 million in sales just as it comes up on its second birthday. Of course, she sells only on the internet.

Gone are the days of packaging overkill, And I, for one, am pleased to do no further battle with unyielding plastic before I can listen to my new cd. A new era in package design has dawned as part of the great green market.

Wonderful gadgets are worth your attention. My own personal fav is a nifty battery-free flashlight which comes to life brightly with a few shakes of the wrist. No more nasty batteries going off to landfill.

The world of health and beauty aids is being reshaped by products made of pure minerals or found in the rainforests. Old brands are scrambling to reformulate in order to compete with boutique products, some of which launched on line with only a few thousand dollars invested.

New board games instill environmental precepts just as Monopoly made us lust after rental real estate in good locations. There are restaurants whose menus are constantly changing to reflect their ties to nature and even a new vodka which lays claim to "a green state of mind".

With so many possibilities, it's a bit of a maze, and the pitfalls are everywhere. Even as Toyota's Prius thrives, Honda has announced that it is stopping production of its hybrid Accord, a

glaring failure with consumers. You must proceed with caution and use the best resources available to plan your strategy.

But if you can deliver something to either consumers or other businesses that folks want to eat, drive, sleep on, wear, live in, take therapeutically, play with, look at, exercise on, or even argue about, you have as good a shot as anyone else at making a go of it in the environmental agora.

SERVICES. The elephant in the room here is financial institutions of every sort, with Bank of America setting up a new \$20 billion pool for eco-friendly projects, the Chicago Climate Exchange creating a trading floor for environmental credits and new insurance products proliferating like bunnies. Some fifty organizations including our own ACES Program provide retail carbon credits to consumers.

In fact, environmental financing is such a big elephant that it demands another column all to itself. So for businesses in the service sector, let's focus elsewhere.

Whether it is house painting with organic paints, chemicals free pest control or heirloom gardening, the businesses which help to maintain properties have gone green with a vengeance. Laundries and drycleaners are seeking fresh methods, and the newspaper boy is offering pick-up and recycling services.

Designers and decorators are telling us to embrace nature and charging 20% more for giving us harmonious lives through feng shui.

Classes abound. Can you teach the homely arts? Cooking --- local produce, of course --- is among the environmentally praiseworthy efforts. Needlework, too, is seen as part of the stewardship effort. Or if you prefer, there are students on college campuses learning the ins-and-outs of sustainability, seeking out research grants and planning careers as environmental entrepreneurs.

One fine service will save trees and help to control landfill by culling your name from all junk mail lists. Their modest fee even covers planting some new trees in your name to atone for past junk mail pollution.

Supply chain management and logistics services minimize transportation woes and inventory losses. Recycled supplies, sustainable materials sourcing and more can help turn any business into a paradigm of environmental virtue.

Car sharing and transportation co-ops are taking hold in some of our big cities, as folks see that public transportation serves them and the environment equally well most of the time. Day to day survival without a car is not only possible but quite pleasant --- as long as there is a good green service to fill in the blanks when you need them.

Use your imagination. There is no end to the services we Americans are willing to try. If we like the service, we move it pretty quickly to an entitlement --- and your business just might be the one we just can't live without.

TECHNOLOGIES. While this sector is probably the most difficult for individual entry, there are still great opportunities for all sorts of players, even the smallest.

Consider this: students at a local university collect used cooking oils from the cafeterias and recycle the yucky stuff to provide fuel for on-campus vehicles like lawn mowers and tractors.

Even a relatively small farm can gain some operating economies and explore new product potential by using proper waste management technologies.

Major scale desalination projects can claim ocean water for clear sweetwater uses. But some very small scale water purification technologies can fit in the back of a pick-up truck and deliver potable water to drought besieged areas, saving lives and restoring ecological balance.

Joint ventures abound. Academia and utility companies work together to pursue alternative energy sources.

Companies like BMW and Milliken are leading the way in waste-to-energy, with a portion of their power secured by technologies which turn landfills into power sources, simultaneously cleaning one form of environmental pollutant while avoiding

dependence on foreign fossil fuels,

A leading edge genetic engineering firm has created trees which are faster growing, more disease resistant, and able to sequester carbon more efficiently than trees born of unmanaged pollination. This means that forest products industries can be managed for greater sustainability, that carbon sequestration programs can be enhanced, and that environmental disasters such as forest fires can be mitigated through rapid reclamation

Pretty heady stuff this. And it's all happening here and now.

From any perspective this is a market worth considering. If you can imagine it, you may be able to achieve it on this new \$3trillion playground. It will take focus, savvy, incredibly hard work, wise use of available resources and luck. But it will be an adventure worth your best efforts, as you build not just a business but a legacy in environmental stewardship.

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