

# **The Future of Environmental Marketing in the United States**

**THESIS**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree of  
Bachelor of Arts from the Center for Environmental Studies at  
Brown University**

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May 1994**

## ABSTRACT

Using the environment as a marketing tool has become an increasingly popular trend among manufacturers throughout the past decade. In the United States, environmental marketing claims are being made to promote everything from "environmentally improved" batteries to "bio-degradable" diapers. Due to the large number of manufacturers wanting to cash-in on various environmental achievements, a myriad of claims has ensued. This diversity of claims is causing confusion among consumers wanting to make environmentally sensitive purchasing decisions. This thesis demonstrates the problems inherent in green marketing by first outlining the main sources of consumer confusion, and then analyzing various measures that have been taken to alleviate this confusion and ultimately deliver clear, accurate information about a product's environmental profile. Specifically, I examine the current programs being developed both within the United States (at the government and private level), as well internationally. Upon concluding that these efforts are not having a significant impact on controlling the problem within the US, I make two recommendations for future action; a national mandatory labeling program similar to nutritional labeling, as well as a privately run structure modeled after several established international programs. These recommendations are based on hypotheses I have developed through conducting interviews, analyzing polling data, and organizing an independent market research study. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate the need for more extensive market research and encourage the development of new ideas in the field of environmental labeling.