

## **Purpose Driven Consumers Planning Sharp Increase in Socially Conscious Purchases**

*Conscious Consumer Spending Index (#CCSIndex) Establishes Baseline for 2013*

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 3 – Consumers are getting much more serious about using their pocketbooks to drive positive change, according to a new survey by Good.Must.Grow. (GmG), a socially responsible marketing consultancy.

In a poll of 1,015 Americans, nearly 30 percent of consumers said they plan to increase the amount of goods and/or services they buy from socially responsible companies in the coming year. This is up from 18 percent who reported buying more from such companies in 2012 compared to 2011.

Additionally, 31 percent of participants said they sought out socially responsible companies in the past year, while 25 percent avoided buying products from a company specifically because it wasn't socially responsible.

“The only way to sustain the recent momentum around social enterprise and heightened CSR efforts is for consumer demand to push it along,” said Heath Shackelford, Founder and Kick Starter for Good.Must.Grow. “Based on these results, consumers are more consistently aligning their purchasing habits with their passion and purpose and more aggressively supporting responsible businesses.”

Through the study, GmG also established a mechanism for gauging “conscious consumerism.” The Conscious Consumer Spending Index (#CCSIndex) is a score calculated by evaluating the importance consumers place on purchasing from socially responsible companies, actions taken to support such products and services, and future intent to increase the amount they spend with responsible organizations. Based on the inaugural results, the CCSI has set a baseline of 65 (on a 100 point scale).

In total, 60 percent of respondents said buying goods from socially responsible companies was important to them. Consumers also highly rated “being green” (83%), reducing consumption (81%) and contributing financially to nonprofits (65%) as important actions.

The growth in socially responsible purchasing greatly outpaced plans for charitable giving. Twenty-one percent of participants planned to increase their financial contributions to charities in 2013, the same increase they reported from 2011 to 2012.

Individuals see themselves playing a critical role in driving positive change. When asked which entity was most effective at making positive changes in society, 70 percent of participants ranked both individuals and nonprofits as being very or somewhat effective, ahead of major corporations (55%), social enterprises (53%), local government (47%) and the federal government (39%). Joint efforts between government, corporations and nonprofits came in at 61 percent.

“Consumers are constantly bombarded with marketing messages telling them they can be the change, that they can save the world and that their individual contribution is making a real difference,” said Shackelford. “It appears they’ve been paying attention. What we see in this survey are individuals who are progressively taking more action, specifically from an economic perspective, to fuel greater good.”

But even the most altruistic consumers are susceptible to a good deal. More than half (56%) said they would be more likely to purchase a product from a store that offered them a “buy one get one” special, versus a store making a donation to charity on their behalf (20%) or a store giving away the same product they purchased to those in need (15%).

Other findings:

- There is healthy skepticism among consumers, as 63% only sometimes trust a company’s claims that it is socially responsible.
- Respondents determine whether or not a company is socially responsible by reading the product packaging (41%), through the news (41%), and/or through personal research (38%).
- When evaluating whether or not a company is socially responsible, how the company treats its employees emerged as the most important factor with 45 percent rating it as very important. This was followed closely by the company’s impact on the environment (38%).
- Approximately 30 percent of consumers have no plans to proactively purchase socially responsible products and services.
- The survey also evaluated consumers by region (Northeast, South, Midwest and West) but saw no significant differences across geographies.

“With an initial score of 65, our index suggests we should be in for a very positive year for socially responsible purchasing,” said Shackelford. “However, we also see big challenges awaiting those who are selling the good stuff. There’s more education and trust building needed, and companies can’t market on purpose alone.”

### **About the Survey**

This study was conducted in partnership with Supportive Research Solutions and What They Think Research. Sampling was provided by ResearchNow. Data was collected March 11-21, 2013. In total, 1,015 Americans were surveyed. Margin of error is +/-3%.

### **About Good.Must.Grow.**

Good.Must.Grow. provides strategic marketing support for socially responsible businesses, nonprofit causes and organizations that are focused on health + wellness. We want to be part of a revolution that drives societal change by sparking increased charitable giving and community involvement as well as unprecedented levels of corporate social responsibility. Proud to be a Certified B Corp. See how we’re #GrowingGood at <http://www.goodmustgrow.com>.