Mindful Consumption

Cleaner choices: low impact living
Today's consumers’ want more from their cleaning beyond high performance on stains and odors. There are also increasing demands for detergents to align with holistic sustainability values that shape choices on everything from food consumption to fashion purchases.

The stakes are high. Demand for products with sustainability credentials is only likely to increase, with middle class consumers already willing to pay a ‘sustainability premium’ for products that ease their conscience, according to Nielsen. And in a connected, mobile-first world, discriminating consumers are better able to scrutinise products and easily share their conclusions on social channels.

DuPont is responding by continuing to provide new generations of biodegradable, performance enhancing, coldwater-compatible enzymes that deliver sustainable benefits to detergent manufacturers.

These new developments are being informed by four key drivers shaping consumer expectations around mindful consumption:

### A new cycle: cleaner technology

For laundry detergents, several life cycle studies have identified that the best way to reduce environmental impacts is to improve detergent performance. Heating water accounts for over 60% of the energy and greenhouse gas emissions in the laundry process. Innovative enzyme laundry detergent solutions to enable low temperature washing and decreased water use have the greatest potential to reduce the environmental footprint.

Over the past 40 years, the combination of energy efficient appliances and low temperature washing has enabled a three-fold reduction in electricity use and four-fold reduction in energy per wash as the industry has responded to green challenges and stricter regulation.

Uniformity in washing temperature and increases in machine capacity are also helping to reduce the number of cycles in Europe by 28%, according to a report authored by the European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy.

### Bio-solutions: greener chemistry

In The Dirt on Laundry, an influential study on global laundry behaviours, Nielsen found that performance still rules but the planet also matters.

Enzymes are one of the keys to unlocking further reductions in energy usage in laundry, with new innovations helping detergents to offer the same cleaning power in lower temperature washes and more sustainable washing conditions.
The study shows that 35% of global consumers claim to want no harsh chemicals in their detergents, and 32% want them to be environmentally friendly. In Asia Pacific, 40% of consumers want laundry detergents that won’t harm the planet.

As the detergent industry moves to greener chemistry, biodegradable solutions such as enzymes can help to meet the challenge. These materials have the potential to replace many of the ingredients currently derived from fossil fuel sources.

DuPont is a significant global force in the evolution of targeted biocatalysts, developing enzyme solutions that deliver a strong performance in sustainable washing conditions.

**A smaller footprint: consumer power**

An increasing number of concerned consumers across the world are scrutinising the ethical credentials and environmental impact of products more closely than ever before.

The impact products have on animals, people and the environment are all analysed and graded by websites like the Ethical Consumer that cater to consumers who want to make more informed choices.

It’s part of a global shift as retailers and their customers across the world demand products that have a smaller environmental footprint.

In 2014 Walmart, the world’s biggest retailer, challenged laundry detergent brands to reduce water content by 25% in every single dose – or face being dropped from its stores. This move resulted in the compaction of products and ties in with an overall preference from retailers for small size, low-weight, high performance products which can reduce transport costs. These benefits can complement the use-phase performance improvements.

Public commitments to sustainability can be rewarded by the market, with the IRI in its 2018 Shopper Insights Report finding that 72% of consumers’ prefer to buy from a company that is seen to respect the environment. It’s a trait particularly valued by Millennials.

As a result, there will be growing pressure for detergent manufacturers to be able to demonstrate to savvy consumers that they are committed to high performance products that provide sustainable solutions. Enzymes can help to deliver the lower impact performance they demand.
Brand power: embracing the circular economy

The fashion industry is transforming, as designers and labels wake up to the commercial potential of delivering products with improved longevity, a lower environmental impact and overall greater sustainability.

Global brands are changing their business models – and their fabrics – in response to consumer pressure. Detergent manufacturers should take note.

Laundry behaviors will change as environmentally aware consumers wear the clothes they own for longer, wash less frequently and increasingly choose sustainable, recycled fabrics.

The detergent industry needs to respond by enhancing cleaning performance at lower temperatures and with less water, helping clothes to last longer, and turning to natural solutions like biodegradable laundry enzymes.

For more information:
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