



The

Heroic Green Brands: Consumer Perspectives and Strategies

A SOAP Cultural Lens Research Project

Green
Hero
Project

Overview

As has been the case for centuries – despite modern day amenities and innovation – heroic icons remain pertinent social influencers. Often motivated by duty, heroes not only bring positive change to the society in which they reside, but they provide an entity of hope for what is to come.

The SOAP Group developed an interactive online research project to begin gauging the levels of influence heroic icons have among modern-day U.S. consumers. In an effort to capture the hero’s role in today’s sustainability market, SOAP established 9 different archetypes based on lifestyle and personality traits. Through a series of close-ended questions, consumer rankings measured the level of influence and admiration each social archetype possesses.

The results yield insight into the traits and qualities consumers distinguish among heroes. By deciphering these traits, we can better understand our culture’s heroes and some of the core beliefs that consumers have in response to green marketing, specifically its: **Authenticity, Influence, Trustworthiness, Aspiration and Impact**

Thereby understanding and evaluating the influence of heroic archetypes, companies and organizations can offer motivators to better establish brands that emulate the hero.

The SOAP Group’s Cultural Lens Research Project provides insight for marketers into the perceptions, opinions, and influencers when it comes to marketing messages with green claims or attributes.

A companion workbook and workshop “How to Build A Heroic Brand” is available upon request. For more information contact, advocate@thesoapgroup.com

Authenticity
 Influence
 Trustworthiness
 Aspiration
 Impact

Purpose

The purpose of The Green Hero Project was to gain insight into the following questions:

Who do consumers **trust** when receiving marketing messages?

Who do consumers feel is **authentic** about “being Green”?

Who do consumers feel has the deepest environmental **impact**?

Who do consumers **aspire** to be like in terms of “being Green”?

What individuals are **admired** and recognized as actual Green Heroes?

Methodology

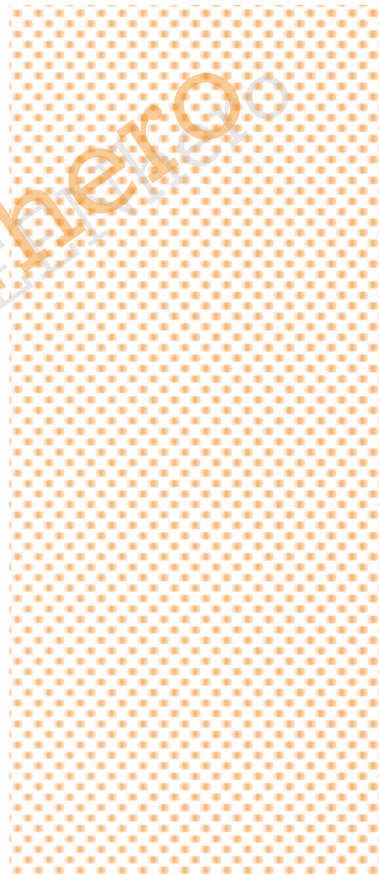
This document reflects data culled between the dates of October–December 2008, during which time 450 consumers were surveyed online at www.mygreenhero.com. While the survey was available for the general public, the response rate is primarily representative of the Conventional and Naturalites demographics of the LOHAS consumer segmentation.

Participants were asked five questions about 9 different personality-based archetypes.

1. Do you think they are authentically “green”?
2. How much influence do they have on the issues?
3. When they speak, do you listen?
4. Do you aspire to be like them?
5. Are they saving the planet?

Participants were also asked to vote for their Green Hero in the following categories:

- Politician
- Celebrity
- Scientist
- Activist
- Business Leader
- Company
- Media



ARCHETYPES

1. Soccer Mom/Dad

Mantra: "I'm green to save my kids"

Primary Motivation: Future Generations

Action: Buys organic food and cleaning products.



2. Business Person

Mantra: "Green is good for business."

Primary Motivation: Economic Opportunity

Action: Uses technology and process to reduce energy consumption.



3. Scientist

Mantra: "The data proves that climate change is human-made."

Primary Motivation: Scientific Validation

Action: Discusses climate change in terms of verifiable data, not emotion.



4. Eco-Entrepreneur

Mantra: "My business idea will save the planet."

Primary Motivation: Save the Planet

Action: Starts a mission-based business.



5. Green Socialite

Mantra: "My shoes are vegan."

Primary Motivation: Status Strategy

Action: Pays top dollar for visibly green goods.



6. Celebrity

Mantra: "Together we can solve it."

Primary Motivation: Trendsetting

Action: "Is outspoken about saving the planet."



7. Politician

Mantra: "Energy independence is our only hope."

Primary Motivation: Popularity

Action: Combines energy and environmental policy as one talking point.



8. Treehugger

Mantra: "I was green before it was cool; we need real change NOW."

Primary Motivation: Personal Belief

Action: Protests and composts.



9. Vegetarian

Mantra: "I have only one body. I am going to take care of it."

Primary Motivation: Health

Action: Eats a vegetarian diet, but still wears leather shoes.



Demographic Profile

Participants were profiled according to the following demographics:

COLLEGE DEGREE:
95%

Education

\$55K-\$75K: **55%**
\$75K+: **45%**

Household Income

MALE/FEMALE:
50/50%

Gender

"MORE GREEN THAN NOT":
85%

Self-defined level of "greenness"

The survey was predominantly taken by an educated, self-defined green consumer, with a household income of more than \$55,000 per year.

Results & Observations

The following questions were specifically asked about each individual archetype. The results illustrate a ranking of consumer response for which social archetype best identifies with the question. The rankings reflect #1 as the most relevant, with #9 respectively being the least.

The following is a numerical ranking of participant perspectives on:

AUTHENTICITY

INFLUENCE

TRUSTWORTHINESS

ASPIRATION

IMPACT

AUTHENTICITY: Do you think they are authentically green?

1. Treehugger
2. Scientist
3. Eco-Entrepreneur
4. Soccer Mom/Dad
5. Vegetarian
6. Business Person
7. Celebrity
8. Politician
9. Green Socialite

OBSERVATION:

Mission-based personality types tend to be viewed as the most authentic. Those with actions most removed from mission tend to share in a low authenticity ranking. Understanding the proximity of action to authenticity may provide perspective for marketers whose clients/organizations are removed from action.

INFLUENCE: How much influence do they have on the issues?

1. Business Person
2. Scientist
3. Politician
4. Eco-Entrepreneur
5. Celebrity
6. Soccer Mom/Dad
7. Treehugger
8. Vegetarian
9. Green Socialite

OBSERVATION:

Influence is often something that mission-driven brands seek. If your product, service or brand intends to influence a better environment or social situation, emulating the archetypes of business, science and politics will have relevance to your messaging.

TRUSTWORTHINESS: When they speak do you listen?

1. Scientist
2. Eco-Entrepreneur
3. Business Person
4. Politician
5. Treehugger
6. Soccer Mom/Dad
7. Vegetarian
8. Celebrity
9. Green Socialite

OBSERVATION:

Scientist and businesspersons (whether mission-based or opportunistic) command the most attention from consumers. The visibility of science-based information and CEO or senior business leaders may be an untapped asset to your brand.

ASPIRATION: Do you aspire to be like them?

1. Scientist
2. Eco-Entrepreneur
3. Treehugger
4. Soccer Mom/Dad
5. Business Person
6. Vegetarian
7. Politician
8. Celebrity
9. Green Socialite

OBSERVATION:

Celebrities are classically used in the “be like...” category for marketing. This strategy is not always the most effective when promoting sustainability. In green marketing, you may want to develop a spokes-scientist or spokes-activist to advocate your message.

IMPACT: Are they saving the planet?

1. Scientist
2. Eco-Entrepreneur
3. Business Person
4. Treehugger
5. Soccer Mom/Dad
6. Vegetarian
7. Politician
8. Celebrity
9. Green Socialite

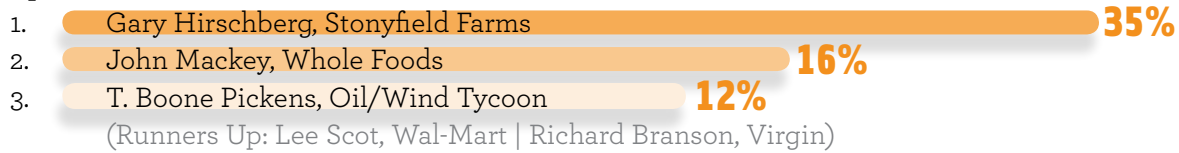
OBSERVATION:

Business leaders continue to maintain a leadership position. Building a brand or campaign position around the personal and social aspects of these archetypes could offer extended value for your organization. Likewise, the need for scientific validation continues to have strong prominence in green marketing.

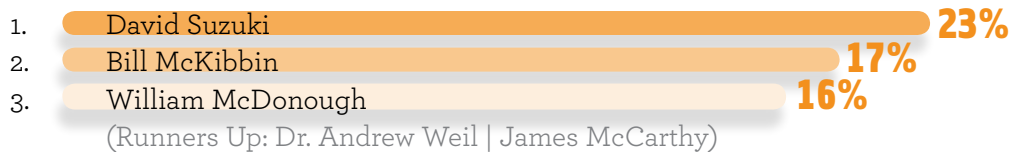
Green Heroes

Looking at who are today's perceived trendsetters and leaders in the green movement, participants were asked to vote for their Green Heroes. Seven different industry genres were evaluated, providing five names to vote on, as well as a write-in option.

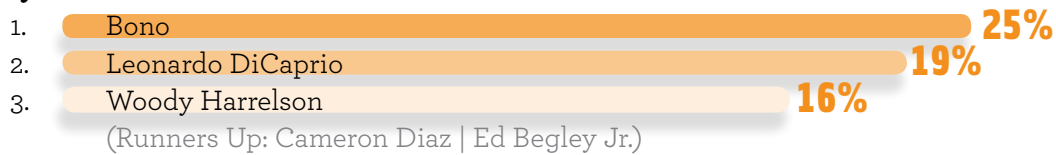
Businessperson Green Hero



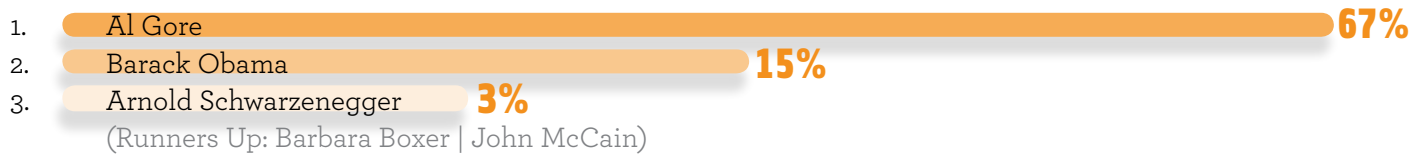
Scientist Green Hero



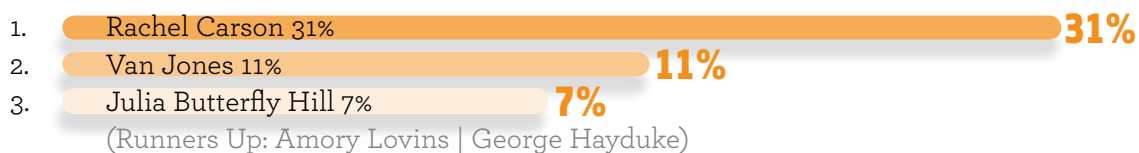
Celebrity Green Hero



Political Green Hero



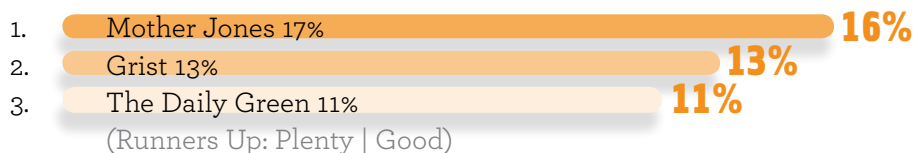
Activist Green Hero



Corporation Green Hero



Media Green Hero



Bonus Report: My Green Villain

Hot on the heels of the My Green Hero Project, The SOAP Group launched the My Green Villain Project (www.mygreenvillain.com). This project is the antithesis of the My Green Hero Project looking to determine consumer perceptions on Green Villains.

For this consumer research project, The SOAP Group is examining consumers' perspectives on:

- Awareness
- Influence
- Rationale
- Respect
- Impact

Among the following archetypes:

- Big Box Retailer
- Eco-Terrorist
- Factory Farmer
- Oil Tycoon
- Politician
- Unconcerned Citizen

As an active research project, percentages are not included in the rankings, which will be finalized and unveiled once the study is complete, Summer 2009.



ARCHETYPES

1. Big Box Retailer

Mantra: "Cheap is Good. Cheapest is Better."

Primary Motivation: Keep inventory moving by increasing demand.

Action: Constantly promote things as necessities in order for people to live a fulfilling life.



2. Eco-Terrorist

Mantra: "It's not vandalism, it's violence against property."

Primary Motivation: Raise public awareness of rights causes, even if it impacts innocent victims.

Action: Stunts include tree spiking to deter logging and use of arson.



3. Factory Farmer

Mantra: "Food is food; no matter where it comes from or how it's raised."

Primary Motivation: Highest output at the lowest cost.

Action: Creates crowded conditions for animals, requiring increased use of antibiotics and pesticides.



4. Oil Tycoon

Mantra: "Drill, baby, drill. Everywhere!"

Primary Motivation: Keep the money rolling in by keeping Americans addicted to oil.

Action: Pushing to expand domestic oil exploration, especially drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf.



5. Politician

Mantra: "I'll sway my position with whatever helps get me reelected."

Primary Motivation: Staying in office, not saving the world.

Action: Talks the talk, but fails to walk the walk.



6. Unconcerned Citizen

Mantra: "Blah Blah Blah. I'm too busy to listen."

Primary Motivation: If it doesn't directly impact me right at this very moment, I don't care.

Action: I'll just leave it up to someone else to get involved.



Questions

AWARENESS

Are they conscious of the negative impact their actions may have on the planet?

(Most aware of negative impact to least aware)

1. Big Box Retailer
2. Oil Tycoon
3. Politician
4. Eco-terrorist
5. Factory Farmer
6. Unconcerned Citizen

RESPECT

Even if you don't agree with their actions, do you respect them? (no respect to a minimal respect)

1. Big Box Retailer
2. Oil Tycoon
3. Factory Farmer
4. Eco-terrorist
5. Politician
6. Unconcerned Citizen

INFLUENCE

How much direct negative influence do you think they have on "the issues"?

(most amount of negative influence to least amount)

1. Big Box Retailer
2. Oil Tycoon
3. Politician
4. Factory Farmer
5. Unconcerned Citizen
6. Eco-terrorist

IMPACT

Are they directly responsible for environmental degradation?

(directly responsible to indirectly responsible)

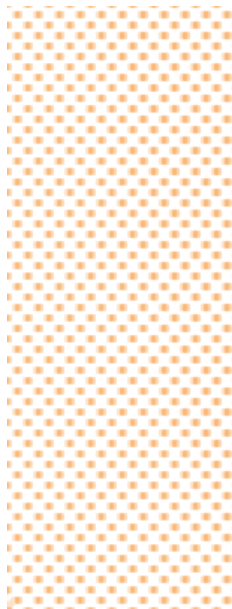
1. Big Box Retailer
2. Oil Tycoon
3. Factory Farmer
4. Unconcerned Citizen
5. Politician
6. Eco-terrorist

RATIONALE

Can you justify some of their actions?

(no justification to barely justifiable)

1. Big Box Retailer
2. Oil Tycoon
3. Factory Farmer
4. Politician
5. Unconcerned Citizen
6. Eco-terrorist



Green Villain

SOAP is also gathering responses from participants to vote for their favorite Green Villains. Six different industry genres are being evaluated, providing five names to vote on, as well as a write-in option. With consumer response actively being submitted, the following is reflective of current results reported for each segment.

BUSINESS GREEN VILLAIN

1. Lee Scot (Wal-Mart)
2. Kenneth Lewis (Bank of America)
3. T Boone Pickens (Oil Mogul)

CELEBRITY GREEN VILLAIN

1. John Travolta
2. David Beckham
3. Michael Crichton

POLITICAL GREEN VILLAIN

1. Dick Cheney
2. George Bush
3. Jim Inhofe

ECO-TERRORIST GREEN VILLAIN

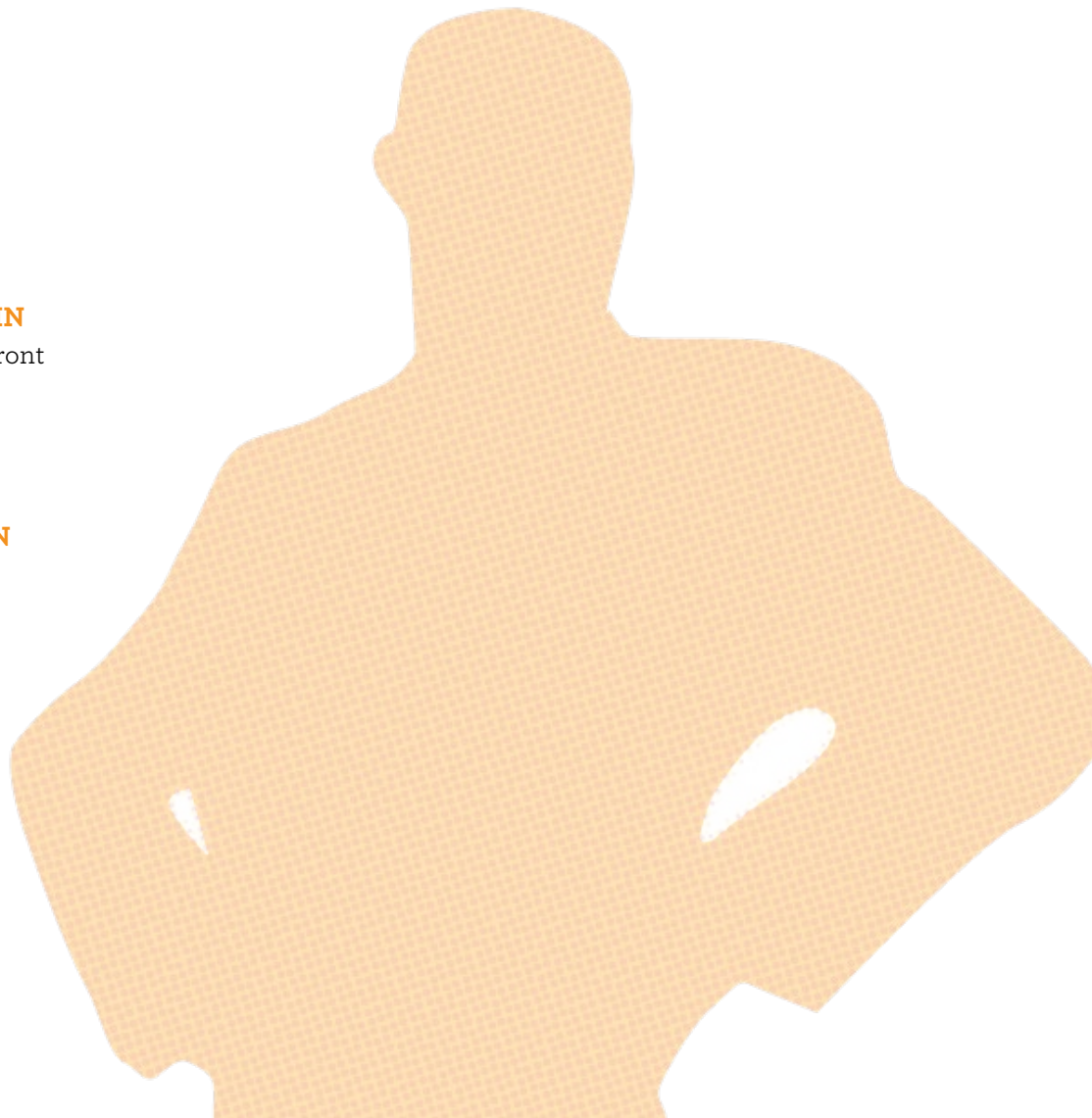
1. Earth Liberation Front
2. PETA
3. GreenPeace

CORPORATION GREEN VILLAIN

1. ExxonMobil
2. Dow Chemical
3. Dupont

MEDIA GREEN VILLAIN

1. Fox
2. CNN
3. NBC Universal



About The SOAP Group

The SOAP Group (Sustainable Organization Advocacy Partners) is a communications firm interested in sustainability and social justice. Our goal is to leverage your good mojo into attention, recognition, reputation, awareness, sales and value (financial and intellectual).

SOAP provides advocacy and activation for government groups, not-profits, corporations and all the crevices in between.

Services Include: Branding + Strategic Consulting + Public Relations + Creative Campaigns + Graphic Design + Interactive Design and Development + Research + Affinity Building + Membership Engagement + Education + New Media + Video + Culture Studies + Category Support for Traditional Communication Companies

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The Green Hero Workshops:

HOW TO BUILD A HEROIC BRAND

We learn through mythologies. Parables, nursery rhymes and myths are all stories that follow patterns that we recognize. Tales of iconic heroes follow these patterns as well. By following these patterns in the way we tell the stories of our brands, we can build brands that resonate and become heroic among target audiences.

The SOAP Group's Green Hero Workshops guide organizations through the patterns of the hero. By establishing the stories and opportunities of your own brand, these customized private workshops transform brands into heroic brands.

For more information, email advocate@thesoapgroup.com or call **207 772 0066 x. 105.**