

CHINA;

- reusable bags, white and brown goods and the automobile industry were the three most important sectors relating to environmental issues for themselves or their business
- rated buying energy efficient goods as the thing they were most likely to do to minimise the impact they had on the environment
- showed great willingness to pay a premium for green products and services



KEY FINDINGS

Energy Industry

Asked to identify and rate the most important environmental issues for themselves or their business related by sector, Chinese respondents rated the energy industry as being the fourth most important sector (80%). While men (79%) and women (82%) were generally in agreement as to the importance of this sector, 35–44 year olds (85%) were noticeably the generation who were most interested in this.

When asked “Which of the following are you likely to do in the future to minimise your impact on the environment?”, respondents indicated switching to a renewable energy supplier or making energy efficient home improvements was also their fourth most likely action (61%). Men (64%) were more interested in such options, in comparison to women (58%). While younger respondents were more likely to take action in this way, with 65% of 16–24 year olds and 68% of 25–34 year olds prepared to make take this step, declining to 53% of 45–54 year olds.

China’s Renewable Energy Law was passed in January 2006 and is among the most aggressive in the world which perhaps makes these findings slightly surprising. A number of new laws have been put in place, in particular financial and tax incentives for the development of renewable energy sources. China is also planning to decrease CO2 emissions by 10% by 2010.

Food and Drink Industry

Asked to identify and rate the most important environmental issues for themselves or their business related by sector, the Chinese rated the food retail sector as being the fifth most important (73%). 74% of women were interested in the sector, in slight contrast to 71% of men. Interest in this sector was highest among 35–44 year olds (79%).

When asked “Which of the following are you likely to do in the future to minimise your impact on the environment?”, respondents indicated that buying local or organically grown produce was their sixth most likely action (57%). Women were more likely to make this decision (60%) compared to male respondents (55%). 35–44 year olds were the most likely to make this purchasing decision (65%).

KEY FINDINGS

Clothing Retailers

Asked to identify and rate the most important environmental issues for themselves or their business related by sector, the clothing retail sector emerged as an industry of low importance to Chinese respondents, who ranked it as second lowest in importance (72%). This was fairly consistent between men (70%) and women (73%). 25–34 year olds and 35–44 year olds (74%) were the most concerned sectors of the population, a sharp increase from only 64% of 16–24 year olds.

When asked “Which of the following are you likely to do in the future to minimise your impact on the environment?”, respondents indicated that buying environmentally friendly clothes was their second least likely action (55%). In contrast with other countries surveyed, women were less likely to make this decision (53%), compared to 58% of males. 16–24 year olds again showed themselves to be the least concerned with the retail sector, with only 48% agreeing with the statement, in contrast to 58% of both 25–34 and 35–44 year olds.

Automobile Industry

Asked to identify and rate the most important environmental issues for themselves or their business related by sector, the Chinese rated the automobile industry as being the third most important sector (84%). There was only a slight variance from men (85%) to women (83%). There was broad acknowledgement of the benefit of cutting harmful emissions and wider education about the automobile sector’s influence on the environment across the age groups.

When asked “Which of the following are you likely to do in the future to minimise your impact on the environment?”, respondents indicated that buying low carbon emission cars was again their third most likely action (66%). 68% of men were interested in this, in comparison to 64% of women. Younger generations showed they were more willing to make this purchasing decision, with 67% of 16–24 year olds and 72% of 25–34 year olds demonstrating this preference.

There are now 31 million vehicles on the road in China, and that number is projected to reach 150 million by 2030. Cars are constantly in the headlines due to their negative impact on the environment and this has led to increased consumer awareness although car emissions are clearly not the number one priority. In October 2004, China introduced its first fuel efficiency standards for passenger cars, which set requirements for how much fuel a car can use every 100 kilometres. Several other important policies, designed to improve vehicle efficiency and reduce emissions, have also been adopted over the past two years. These include fuel economy standards, emission standards, vehicle excise tax, legalising hybrid vehicles and the development of public transport across many of the major cities. All of these measures have heightened the awareness of the impact of the automobile sector.

Tourism Industry

Chinese respondents rated the tourism industry as their lowest concern when asked to identify and rate the most important environmental issues for themselves or their business related by sector (61%). There was a consistently low percentage in agreement between the genders and age groups.

When asked “Which of the following are you likely to do in the future to minimise your impact on the environment?”, Chinese people were most hesitant to choose eco-holidays, not to fly or carbon offset their travel (27%). However, in contrast to other countries surveyed, women (25%) were less likely to choose this option than men (29%).

White/ Brown Goods

There was clearly agreement as to the importance of the white and brown goods industry. The Chinese ranked it as the second most important sector in relation to environmental issues for themselves or their business (88%). They also indicated that the purchase of energy efficient electronic goods was the most popular choice for respondents (84%) in minimising their own or their businesses’ environmental impact.

While there was agreement between the genders in relation to the sector’s importance and their own purchasing decisions, there was greater disparity between age groups. Younger generations proved to be more interested in the sector, with both 91% of 25–34 and 35–44 year olds in agreement on white/brown goods importance, in contrast to 79% of 45–54 year olds.



KEY FINDINGS

Buying reusable shopping bags

Asked to compare and rate the most important environmental issues by sector, the majority of respondents (92%) surveyed believed that buying reusable shopping bags was the most important environmental issue for themselves or their business. This is in line with recent government initiatives, such as the 2008 State Council nationwide ban on plastic bags. Prior to the ban, China consumed 37 million barrels of crude oil each year to manufacture more than one trillion plastic bags. There were mixed reactions to this; many small market vendors ignored it, but supermarkets and large department stores implemented the ban more efficiently.

Chinese respondents were in agreement between the genders and largely across the age groups, as to the importance of buying reusable plastic bags for the environment. However 45–54 year olds stood out as not being aligned with the other age groups surveyed, with only 87% agreeing as to reusable plastic bags' importance.

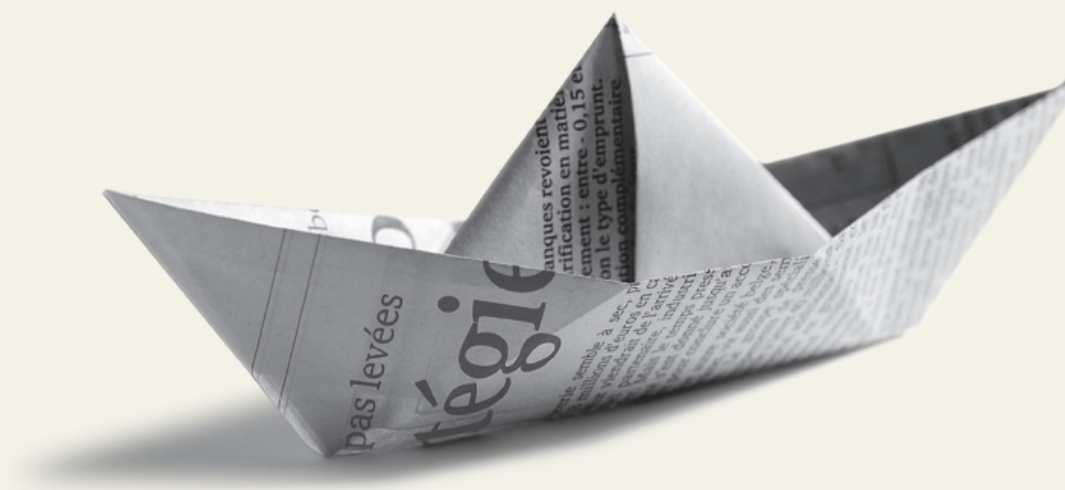
Financial Services

When asked “Which of the following are you likely to do in the future to minimise your impact on the environment?”, respondents indicated selecting financial services that help or reward green behaviour was their fifth most likely action (58%). Older age groups showed a greater interest and understanding in making this choice, with 62% of 25–34 and 60% of 34–45 year olds interested in this option, opposed to 51% of 45–54 year olds.

PAYING A PREMIUM IN THE DOWNTURN

The largest group of Chinese respondents (45%) were willing to pay a premium of 5–10% for a product or service that is more environmentally friendly. This was closely followed by 30% who would be willing to pay between 1–5%. 15% were willing to pay more than a 10% premium. In contrast to many Western countries only 3% of those surveyed would not be prepared to pay a premium.

Findings showed that men were more willing to pay a higher premium, with 50% prepared to pay a premium of 5–10%, while only 39% of women would. In this case, 25–34 and 35–44 year olds showed they were more willing to pay than other age groups.



Note: Over 1 000 members of the public between the ages of 16–54 were interviewed. Respondents were segmented by their age group, sex, level of education and employment status. They were also asked to specify their region: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or Chengdu.

Respondents were asked questions relating to the most important environmental issues for themselves or their business related by sector; the actions purchasing decisions in regards to 'green' goods and services; and the premium they were prepared to pay for 'green' goods and services.

For a list of all questions, please see the methodology section of the full RSA Green Appetites Report 2009.