

Food Retailers Among Those Most Open About Sustainability

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Through Personal Consumption

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According to a new report by The Hartman Group, a Bellevue, Wash.-based consultancy, consumers want more information about a company's sustainability efforts, and identified Amazon, Whole Foods Market, Target and Walmart among the 10 companies that they considered most transparent in that regard.

"Consumers associate transparency with how authentically committed a company is to ethical action," said Laurie Demeritt, CEO of The Hartman Group. "Most consumers – 73 percent of those surveyed in our new report – understand what transparency means when it comes to business practices."

Moreover, about seven in 10, or 69 percent, of those surveyed said that they'd like companies' sustainability practices to be more publicly visible.

Added Demeritt: "Transparency is more than enabling a moral evaluation of trustworthiness for brands; it is a way for companies to reveal details about production and sourcing that enable consumers to find higher-quality distinctions otherwise concealed in conventionally marketed branded commodities."

While the report noted that transparency was rarely a primary driver of purchase, such attributes in relation to a product could potentially tip the scales in otherwise identical items where what's being communicated makes sense. The strongest transparency attribute currently made on packaging in terms of consumer relevance is "how it was made," The Hartman Group found.

Other businesses to make the list of the 10 most transparent companies were Apple, Google, Chick-Fil-A, Coca-Cola, Microsoft and Starbucks.

The report, "[Sustainability 2017: Connecting Benefits With Values Through Purposeful Consumption](#)," surveyed 1,500 U.S. adult consumers.

For more about grocers' sustainability programs, read the [Progressive Grocer article](#) in the November 2017 issue.