

## DEALING WITH ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ISSUES: STUDENT KNOWLEDGE AND OPINIONS

Beverlee B. Anderson, California State University, San Marcos,  
San Marcos, CA 92096-0001; (760) 750-4248

### ABSTRACT

As environmental and social issues are becoming more critical in mankind's long-term survival and way of life, they are also becoming salient in the teaching of marketing. Rather than merely teaching how to produce, sell and consume as much as possible, marketing should consider how to balance growth and various environmental and social concerns.

Last year, Ted Trainer (2006) stated, "Very few people realize that the environment problem cannot be solved without fundamental social change .... Most people and all governments refuse to face up to the 'limits of growth analysis' of our situation." These thoughts support the earlier work of Galbraith and McNabb (1999) who called for marketing educators to be more socially responsible by incorporating environmental and social issues that will help students to function in an environmentally friendly future. Armstrong and Kotler (2007) say that worldwide; today's marketers are "being called on to take greater responsibility for the social and environmental impact of their action" (p. 28). This notion was expanded upon by a special session at MEA in 2006 (Wilhelm et. al 2006) and is consistent with the societal marketing concept that asks marketers to consider the balance between short-run wants and long-term consumer welfare.

The study undertaken was designed to explore senior level business students' knowledge and opinions about the environment and social issues and ways of dealing with these concerns. Using Galbraith and McNabb's survey instrument data were collected over four academic years (2003-04 to 2006-07).

The student responses show that, regardless of major in the business program, students did not have substantial knowledge with regard to social and environmental issues. Based on these responses it is safe to assume that environmental education has been neither a salient nor significant part of their education. If, as Trainer and other postulate, it is important for marketing graduates to have an understanding of environmental and social issues, then we, as marketing educators, need to explore how we can integrate this knowledge in our courses.

### REFERENCES

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