Environmental marketing can mean big bucks for golf industry suppliers

Manufacturers can use green marketing to distinguish their products from other competitors

By Peter Blais

With the vast majority of Americans calling themselves "environmentalists," green marketing is becoming the hottest topic to hit advertising in years, according to a pair of marketing experts.

"Brand after brand is being forced to look at the implications of manufacturing, packaging and marketing on the environment. These trends usually start on the consumer side, but eventually impact the business-to-business side. The golf industry is no exception," said Dennis Chase, executive editor of the advertising trade journal Ad Age. Chase and Owen Towne, product manager/fungicides/turf and ornamentals for Ciba Geigy's Agricultural Division, made their comments during a recent Golf Course News-sponsored marketing seminar in Oak Brook, III.

A recent Ad Age survey asked consumers to rate marketers and brands on how concerned they appeared to be about the environment. Procter & Gamble Co. (named by 6 percent) and McDonald's (4 percent) were rated the top two environmentally conscious firms. But most respondents (66 percent) including many self-proclaimed "strong environmentalists," who said environmental consciousness weighed heavily in their buying decisions — could not name a single environmentally conscious company.

Such contradictions plague green marketers. Advertisers constantly struggle with consumers' belief that all brands of a certain product are basically the same.

For example, while the soft-drink manufacturing industry has increased green consciousness (probably because of recyclable bottles and cans), individual companies like Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola and Seven-Up all received basically the same approval ratings.

But the consumer's view of overall parity also gives the smart green marketer the chance to breakaway from the pack, especially with the green consumer, Chase said.

The green consumer is someone willing to make purchasing decisions based on concern that a product or its packaging may help or harm the environment. Successful green marketers capitalize on that concern.

Government and business are not concerned enough about the environment, according to about three-fourths of those surveyed. Yet, when compared to the environmental advantages of their products, barely half (54 percent) believe the advertising information is accurate.

"Clearly, the public has more confidence in individuals with credibility... than with the federal government or business," Chase said.

"From Fuji film to Phillips Petroleum, everyone is wrapping themselves in green. ..." said Dennis Chase, executive editor of Ad Age.

"The green consumer is one willing to make a difference, especially when the wind was blowing into Spokane, Wash., from Idaho or into Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, from Spokane County, Wash."

"The regional management plan brought the two areas together and treated it as a regional problem," Jacklin said. "We regulated it so we don't send smoke at each other."

"Field- burning opponents, government agencies, consumers, and industry groups have launched a campaign to persuade the industry to stop burning," Jacklin said. "We say, if you don't want to let our grass burn, then you have to let ours burn."

"It's included the Bonner, Kootenai and Spokane county clean air coalitions, to "try to find some areas where we can give a little more. And I'm sure they are going to want us to give quite a bit more. And if we don't give what they want, it's entirely possible things could get heated. They could come back to the Idaho legislature for action. Those are the chances you take when you negotiate with people like that."

The Bi-State Regional SMOKE Management Plan was drafted following 19 meetings between representatives of 16 groups, organizations and agencies, starting last November.

Grass growers in Washington and Idaho are under different regulations and would burn at different times. That caused consternation, especially when the wind was blowing into Spokane, Wash., from Idaho or into Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, from Spokane County, Wash.

"The regional management plan brought the two areas together and treated it as a regional problem," Jacklin said. "We regulated it so we don't send smoke at each other."

"Clean-air groups and Spokane County wanted some kind of entity in Idaho to control the burns there. The Intermountain Grass Growers in Idaho have always regulated themselves. They did it again this year, but under the bi-state plan."

"This year, Jacklin said, "we're going to the Idaho legislature to try to form some type of smoke management advisory board or similar agency."

In the past, growers in Idaho could burn their fields seven days a week and those in Spokane were given 16 consecutive days to burn.

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Gratz Rejouns AERATION

CHASKA, Minn. — Aeration Industries International, Inc. has appointed Michael S. Gratz as president for North American sales.

Gratz rejoin Aeration Industries after serving two years as national sales manager for Carbonair Services, a firm specializing in the decommissioning of water, soil and air.

Gratz initially joined AII in 1985, creating and implementing the company's customer service program. In 1984, he promoted to Northeast regional sales manager and was named national sales manager in 1985.

In his three years as national sales manager, sales increased more than 200 percent by expanding the range of services offered from simple aerator systems to complete turnkey wastewater treatment projects.

Gratz earned a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Mobay's parent company reorganizes, changes name

PITTSBURGH — Bayer USA Inc., the U.S. management holding company of Bayer AG of Leverkusen, Germany and parent company of Mobay Corp., will become an operating company, effective Jan. 1.

At the same time, the company will change its name to Miles Inc., presently the name of its largest subsidiary, with the major U.S. subsidiaries being merged into divisions of the new Miles.

"We are confident the new organization is best suited to manage the $6-billion business of our operating subsidiaries in the U.S.," said Helge H. Wehmeier, president and chief executive officer of the present holding company, who will hold the same position in the new company.

According to Wehmeier, the new organization and name change are designed to create, and develop a common corporate culture; improve competitiveness; better meet customer needs; streamline the management structure by shortening lines of communication, decision making and reporting; and improve efficiency by using synergies in the service functions of the company.

Under the reorganization, Miles Inc. will be composed of eight operating divisions and two service organizations. The current principal Bayer USA subsidiaries — Mobay Corp., Miles Inc. and Agfa Corp. — will be merged into the new divisions. The smaller operating companies — Haarmann & Reimer Corp., Rhein Chemie Corp., Deerfield Urethane, Inc., and H. C. Starck, Inc. and NRC Inc. — will remain separately incorporated, but will be integrated operationally into the new divisions.

"Our plan is to broaden recognition of

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SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Water conservation — a critical issue of global concern — is the focus of the 1991 International Irrigation Exposition and Technical Conference being sponsored by the Irrigation Association.

The conference, entitled "Water: Enough for Tomorrow," is being held Nov. 10-13 at the San Antonio Convention Center.

The exposition, which opens at 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 10, will host more than 200 exhibitors from the irrigation industry, displaying and demonstrating state-of-the-art water management products and services, and revealing their 1992 new-product lines.

More than 30 technical presentations and seminars, experts from industry, government, and academia will talk on water conservation — addressing the ways in which water management techniques can help preserve water resources and maximize the quality of agricultural, recreational, commercial, and residential lands.

In addition to the technical sessions, the conference will feature industry leaders and management specialists speaking to the bottom-line concerns of the irrigation industry. A session on chemigation will offer the most current information on chemigation practices, research and safety issues.

In a concurrent session, attendees will get a comprehensive picture of the current product liability issues from LaVerne Stetson of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Richard Friedrick of Alta Engineering, and attorney Dale Hicks of Plunkett, Gibson & Allen.

Sessions on agricultural technology with include information on "What To Look For When Selecting a Filtration System for Irrigation Water," to be presented by Barbara Lowett of Yarberry Water Management System in Riverside, Calif.; and the "Impact of Higher Energy Prices on Irrigated Agriculture," by Dr. Les Sheffield of the University of Nebraska.

Joe Henggeler of the Texas Extension Service in Fort Stockton, will discuss ways of "Managing Automatic Systems for Better Uniformity" during the session on management of turf/landscape systems.

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Pictured above: The world's largest bunker — adjacent to the 13th hole on the Valley of Giza Country Club

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