



Understanding an Audience's Social Values:

Communicating with Americans with different worldviews on global warming

February 5, 2010

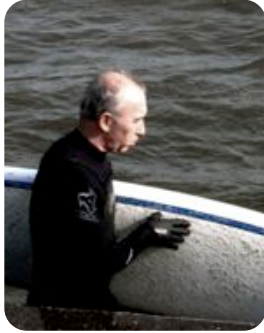
Re:Green-The Ecological Roadmap, created by the Social Capital Project, is one of the largest national studies on American social values and environmental worldviews. The Roadmap segments the public into ten distinct groups based on how people think of the environment and their role in protecting it. Recognizing that the “public” is not all the same is a critical aspect of developing effective public engagement strategies.

The Social Capital Project analyzed the American Values Survey of more than 2,000 Americans, 15 years of age and older, voters and non-voters, citizens, and non-citizens. The AVS tracks more than 100 social value constructs through a series of 800 questions and examines attitudes about global warming and other environmental issues. The Social Capital Project validated these findings with more than 20 focus groups in Oregon, Washington, California and New York.

The Social Capital Project is an effort of The Climate Leadership Initiative, a social-science-based global climate change research and education collaborative between The Resource Innovation Group, a 501(c)3 non-profit, and the Institute for a Sustainable Environment at the University of Oregon. CLI's mission is to foster the development and application of innovative thinking and approaches to the complex causes and solutions to global climate change. CLI's Social Capital Project assists climate leaders from the nonprofit, government, civic, and business sectors to help increase their capacity to communicate effectively with the public about global warming and to develop outreach strategies that can overcome the barriers to behavior change.

What follows is a summary of the findings from the American Values Survey. For a full copy of *Re:Green*, please contact Meredith Herr (meredith@thesocialcapitalproject.org).

GREENEST AMERICANS



- 9% of adults, 4% of voters
- 35% make \$100k+
- 49% have post grad degree
- 25% are 65+ years of age
- 89% Caucasian
- 93% very likely to vote
- 68% rank global warming as one of the most important issues**

Values to Tap

Ecological Concern
Comfort with Ambiguity
Civic Engagement
Global Consciousness

Values to Avoid

National Pride
American Entitlement
Confidence in Big Business

About the Greenest Americans:

The Greenest Americans represent the 9% of the public who are the most politically engaged and supportive of environmental causes. These affluent, highly educated Americans can often afford to make green consumer choices, including renovating their homes to include green features. Given most of the Greenest Americans can be found in the later stages of behavior change, it is possible to engage this group in the political process as well as to provide incentives for this group to continue to move to carbon-neutral lifestyles.

Tips:

The Greenest Americans are the most informed about global warming yet even they need help determining the most effective ways to address it. Create tools that help the Greenest Americans measure and reduce their carbon footprint such as consumer guides and carbon calculators. Ask the civically-minded Greenest Americans to be community leaders by reaching out and helping to engage their neighbors, families, and friends.

Sample framing:

We know you do your part. You recycle, save energy, try to drive less. Now global warming is calling us to do more. It impacts every other environmental issue you care about and other concerns from energy to the economy. We have a responsibility in the United States to act as a leader by creating new laws that limit carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions and by investing in clean energy technologies. Your effort to save energy at home is important too. Learn more about how you can take advantage of tax and cash incentives to make even more efficiency improvements.

IDEALISTS



3% of adults, 2% of voters
34% make >\$100k
44% between 25-44 years of age
29% are students
73% Caucasian
53% very likely to vote
51% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Enthusiasm for New Technology
Rejection of Authority
American Dream

Avoid

Duty
Saving on Principle
Importance of Discipline

About the Idealists:

Younger and less political than the Greenest Americans, the Idealists express the second highest level of concern about global warming. Too bad they only represent three percent of the public. Yet don't write them off completely because they have the potential to be an influential group. The Idealists look to technology for solutions and are interested in investments being made in carbon-free energy sources. Keep in mind that while the majority of the Idealists may be in the later stages of change when it comes to their level of awareness and taking individual action steps, such as converting their cars to run on biodiesel, they are not engaged politically.

Tips:

The Idealists are low on the value "trust." They need to see the proof for themselves that change is happening. Connect individual acts to the need for systemic change and illustrate the benefits of political engagement. Tap into their anti-authoritarian values by revealing who stands to win and lose from inaction on climate issues. Given they are focused on creativity and self-expression, ask Idealists to play a role in outreach, particularly in helping climate messages to go viral through their social networks.

Sample Framing:

Global warming is a big deal. To address it, we need the government and businesses to invest heavily in new clean energy technologies. But let's face it, that's not going to happen until the powers that be feel the squeeze on their bottom lines. Be part of creating the new energy reality. Stop supporting corporate oil. Ride your bike, run your car on veggie oil. Raise your voice with decision makers and inspire your friends to do the same.

CARETAKERS



24% of adults, 21% of voters

26% African-American

18% Hispanic/Latino

60% make <\$75k

70% very likely to vote

44% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Group Egalitarianism

American Liberty

Ecological Concern

Avoid

American Entitlement

Unfettered Individualism

About the Caretakers:

The Caretakers are the largest segment in the Roadmap, representing almost a quarter of the public. While they hold strong ecological values, they are not ideological in their approach and like to avoid conflict. Nurturing and family-focused, these community-minded Americans place great importance on local issues such as children's health and access to clean parks and play areas. The Caretakers are more representative of the average American, both in terms of cultural diversity and socio-economic status, than the Greenest Americans or Idealists. Caretakers tend to be in the middle of the behavior change process. They think about global warming, but are more concerned about rising gas and energy prices.

Tips:

Responsibility, common sense and everyday ethics should drive global warming framing approaches for the Caretakers. These busy Americans need to see how global warming is connected to things they already care about, such as their children's well-being. While they vote in high numbers, Caretakers do not connect with shrill advocacy messages. The idea of stewardship, however, can appeal. They want to see problems solved and will support local action on global warming if there is a clear economic benefit or possibility for job creation. Socially connected, they are likely to take steps to address global warming when supported by the church or community groups they are a part of.

Sample Framing:

It is important to take care of the environment so our kids and grandkids have the freedom to play outside and to fish and camp like we did when we were young. But it's not always easy to act with the future in mind. Take global warming; it is hard to know what to do or to have the time or money to make a difference. But there are things that everyone can do by taking steps to save energy at home and in their communities. Addressing global warming has the potential to help you save money and heartburn every time gas and energy prices rise.

TRADITIONALISTS



20% of adults, 24% of voters
81% Caucasian
47% between 25-44 years of age
32% between 45-64 years of age
55% live in a rural location or small town
22% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Duty
National Pride
Liberal Communitarianism
Altruism

Avoid

Excessive Taxation
Apocalypse
Humans superior to animals

About the Traditionalists:

The second largest segment of the public are the Traditionalists who tend to be found in the earlier stages of change do not place importance on global warming in part because they do not see how it will impact people. Given their religious orientation, they are split on whether it is caused by humans, natural causes, or both. And as most Americans, the conservative and often rural Traditionalists are more concerned with gas and energy costs than with global warming.

Tips:

Avoid a focus on the causes of global warming and shift the discussion to our responsibility to protect God's creation, our responsibility to future generations, and the need to reduce the risks associated with climate impacts. Tap into their interest in rural economic development by filling in the picture of how investments in clean, carbon-free energy sources can protect the quality of life and unique character of rural communities. Messages have particular resonance when delivered by respected authority figures, such as a minister or successful business leader.

Sample Framing:

You may have been hearing more talk about global warming lately but are unsure if there is anything that can be done. It may just be God's will. Regardless of the cause, being responsible stewards means ensuring that our children have the opportunity to enjoy the high quality of life we have in America. Global warming threatens that way of life, particularly in communities where the economy is dependent on a stable climate for growing food, harvesting timber, and providing recreational and tourism opportunities. Investing in clean energy can bring economic development to communities that need it without destroying our way of life.

DRIVEN INDEPENDENTS



7% of adults, 7% of voters

65% male

31% have college degree

45% live in the suburbs

61% very likely to vote

29% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Saving on Principle

Openness to Change

Enthusiasm for New Technology

Avoid

Rejection of Authority

Government as Economic Equalizer

Liberal Communitarianism

About the Driven Independents:

Most of the status-seeking Driven Independents consider global warming to be important yet they are predominantly stuck in early stages of behavior change. They are cynical that we will address the challenge given our dog-eat-dog society. Global warming will become of interest when the Driven Independents see a way they can personally benefit, such as making money. Of average age with middle to upper incomes, this segment skews more male than any other. The Driven Independents don't really take a position on environmental issues but they are also not likely to oppose those who do as long as they don't create a barrier in their path to success.

Tips:

The Driven Independents are status focused. They believe they deserve access to a healthy lifestyle, beautiful places in which to recreate, and to benefit from the prosperity that could come with a green economy. The problem is that they don't always know how to get that access. Help direct this group by tapping into their enthusiasm for new technologies and motivating them to support investments in clean energy or to upgrade their home with the latest in eco-living and energy efficient features.

Sample Messaging:

We need to invest in clean energy technologies that address global warming and provide opportunities to make and save money at the same time. Business has a role to play in driving this innovation and creating opportunities for Americans to benefit from being a global leader. We can't let China, India, and others get ahead and miss out on this chance for prosperity.

MURKY MIDDLES



17% of adults, 16% of voters

67% make <\$75k

40% identify as Independents

34% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Equal Relationship with Youth

Openness to Change

Animal Equality

Avoid

Aversion to Complexity

Enthusiasm for New Technology

Duty

About the Murky Middles:

These Americans are average in many ways – income, education, age, diversity, etc. They show moderate concern about global warming which is consistent with the fact they do not hold strong views on most issues. The third largest segment of the public, the Murky Middles tend to follow trends, not start them and won't engage in behavior change until they see others doing it too. Given their focus on getting ahead, it is not surprising they are more concerned than most about energy and gas prices than with global warming.

Tips:

Given they are at the early stages of behavior change, the case for paying attention to global warming has yet to be made for the Murky Middles. Information campaigns aimed at the Murky Middles should focus on mainstream values, such as freedom and responsibility. These Americans strongly believe in the American dream so that dream needs to be expanded to include the role of innovation and leadership in shifting to a low carbon energy economy.

Sample Messaging:

These days, it can take every ounce of energy to get ahead. We are all working harder and for less return. It is time for a change. There are simple things we can all do to get America back on track, such as saving energy at home. Why bother wasting time arguing about issues like global warming? Let's start saving money and creating jobs by making our buildings and cars run on less energy. It just makes sense.

FATALISTS



5% of adults, 3% of voters
32% African American and 21% Hispanic/Latino
30% between 15-24 years of age
23% are students
65% <\$50k
37% live in a central city area
46% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Active Government
Saving on Principle
Importance of National Security

Avoid

Ecological Fatalism
Openness to Change
Liberal Communitarianism

About the Fatalists:

The Fatalists tend to be a young, culturally diverse, and urban segment of the public. They express one of the highest levels of concern about global warming yet their strong sense of hopelessness and disempowerment prevents them from seeing what can be done to address it or what role they might play. Given their low socio-economic status, the Fatalists are more concerned about gas and energy prices than any other segment of the public.

Tips:

To reach the Fatalists, climate leaders must illustrate that change is possible and that there will be direct benefits to getting involved. Saying it is not enough. The possibility of change must be experienced. Given they are closely tied to their family and community culture, Fatalists see issues through a cultural lens so emphasizing what addressing global warming means to local communities is a must.

Sample Framing:

Global warming is already impacting our communities. It feels like such a huge issue and can be confusing to sort out in terms of what can be done. But there are already places across the country where business, government, and people have come together and taken tried and true steps that save energy and reduce our reliance on foreign oil. This is helping to make America a safer place and the air a little easier to breathe again.

MATERIALISTS



7% of adults, 5% of voters
36% between 15-24 years of age
22% are students
29% live in a central city area and 22% in small towns
43% likely to vote
25% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Pursuit of Intensity
Confidence in Big Business
Need for Status Recognition
Active Government

Avoid

Religiosity
Ecological Fatalism
Civic Engagement

About the Materialists:

The Materialists are the fourth largest segment of the public and like the Fatalists, are young, urban, and multicultural. Yet unlike their counterparts, the Materialists often feel socially isolated and directionless. They are largely focused on themselves and living in the moment. As a result, they are among the least concerned Americans about global warming. Yet even the majority of the Materialists agree it matters to some extent. This belief needs to be cultivated giving this segment will be facing increasing impacts of global warming over their lifetime.

Tips:

It will be a challenge to engage the Materialists given how uninterested they are in following the news, let alone voting. At the same time, the Materialists do have things in common with the Greenest Americans such as their willingness to reject the status quo and their comfort with ambiguity. Campaigns that use an anti-authoritarian tone could resonate. Given their focus on image and thrill seeking, they might be persuaded by climate-friendly celebrities and tune into experiential outreach efforts that take into consideration their fast, thrill-seeking lifestyle.

Sample Framing:

Okay, let's get real. You are too busy to sit around and worry about global warming. What can be done anyway? In this world, everyone is just out for themselves. You might as well just have a good time.....Yet being cynical doesn't mean you can't care. And while businesses and the government need to step in to make sure we have a future, it's your time to make a difference too. Get involved. Get noticed.

CRUEL WORLDERS



6% of adults, 6% of voters

71% make <\$75k

85% Caucasian

38% work in semi- to unskilled trade

29% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

Entrepreneurialism
American Entitlement
Tried and True

Avoid

Aversion to Complexity
Technology Anxiety
Every Man for Himself

About the Cruel Worlders:

The Cruel Worlders have low socio-economic status and are resentful that they have been left out of the American dream. These older, white, disempowered urban residents tend to blame others for their challenges. Negative about many things in life, the Cruel Worlders for the most part accept global warming will have an impact on our lives yet are still at the early stages of behavior change given they are the least confident that anything can be done to address it.

Tips:

The Cruel Worlders are not a priority segment to target for outreach. Their concerns, however, should be taken into consideration when designing programs that protect consumers from costs increases associated with shifting to new energy sources so they do not inadvertently become opponents to climate action. They might also be persuaded by green job development programs, particularly if they or their family and friends directly experience the benefits by having a new job that increases their socio-economic status.

Sample Framing:

America knows how to deal with tough challenges. We have faced them before and have had the creativity and resiliency to prevail. Our entrepreneurial spirit will help us stay ahead of the pack when it comes to finding new energy sources that we can use to power our lives and save money. Global warming is already impacting the American way of life. We can't afford to let China and India take the lead and push us to the side.

UNGREENS



3% of adults, 3% of voters

63% male

32% make >\$100k

53% live in a rural area or small town

96% identify as conservatives

83% very likely to vote

13% rank global warming as one of the most important issues

Tap

National Pride

Importance of Discipline

Confidence in Big Business

Avoid

Ecological Concern

Global Consciousness

Comfort with Ambiguity

About the UnGreens:

A small percentage of the UnGreens think that global warming is a very important or important issue, but most do not. More than any other group, this segment believes global warming is occurring due to natural causes and thinks there is nothing that can be done, which is consistent with their anti-environmental attitudes and fatalism. These rural, conservative Americans lack the moral and community-focused values held by their counterparts, the Traditionalists. While they enjoy spending time outdoors, they reject the idea of environmentalism and environmentalists because of the political ideology they associate with these concepts.

Tips:

Interestingly enough, while some UnGreens are actively denying global warming is real, others are investing in energy efficiency and alternative energy at home – not because of global warming but due to an interest in self-sufficiency and in reducing our dependence on foreign oil. Engagement is less about getting the UnGreens onboard and more about avoiding unnecessary public opposition to action on climate issues. The key is that global warming can't be talked as an environmental issue. It needs to be about freedom, self-reliance, and independence from foreign oil.

Sample Messaging:

America needs to get back on track and restore our place in the world by investing in clean, reliable energy that never runs out. We must become more self-reliant so we don't continue to fall prey to the interests of foreign oil producers who threaten our well-being. Whether you believe global warming is real or not, many corporate leaders see that there is money to be made in low-carbon energy production. But remember, self-reliance starts at home. Every American needs to tighten their energy belt by taking steps at home such as weather stripping and buying more efficient appliances.