



**Vypr**

Food for Thought.  
Does sustainability  
matter?

September 2023

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# Sustainability

In this report, we'll delve into whether consumers believe sustainability is important when making product choices. We'll uncover if their beliefs are shaping behaviours in the food and beverage industry, and see how they're reacting to ensure companies can adapt for a more successful future.

## Awareness of Environmental Impacts

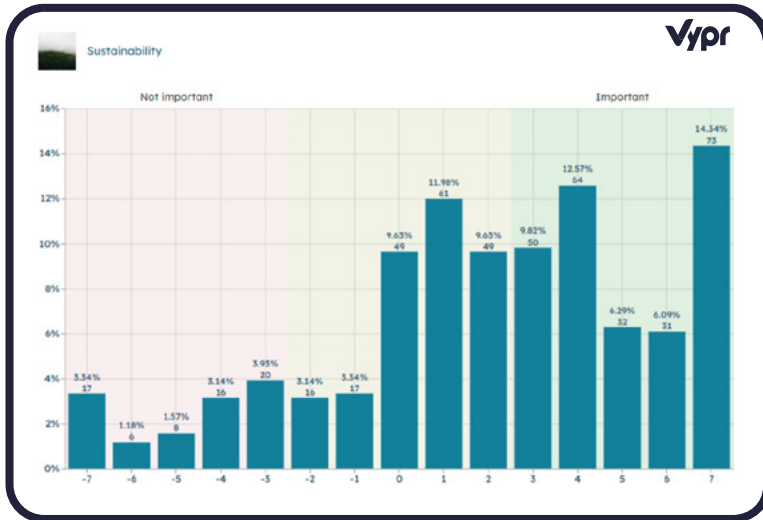
Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impact of their purchases. Though not a priority for many at a time of increasing costs, ignoring concerns around this could be detrimental for businesses looking to maintain future growth.





# Awareness of Environmental Impacts

## Consumers say Sustainability is Important

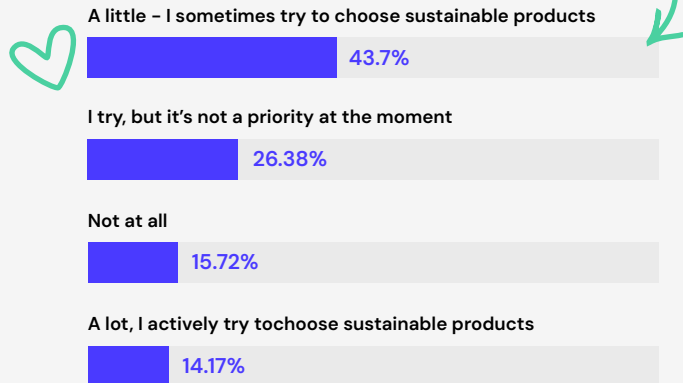


When we asked consumers how important sustainability is to them when deciding what food / drink to purchase, 49% thought it was important, and of these 14% thought it was very important.

How important is Sustainability to you when deciding what food / drink to purchase

Though it's important to remember that value for money is a current priority for many, even during the cost-of-living crisis nearly 44% say eco-friendliness/sustainability affects whether they buy a product to a small extent, and 14% to a large extent.

How much would you say eco-friendliness/sustainability affects whether you buy a product?

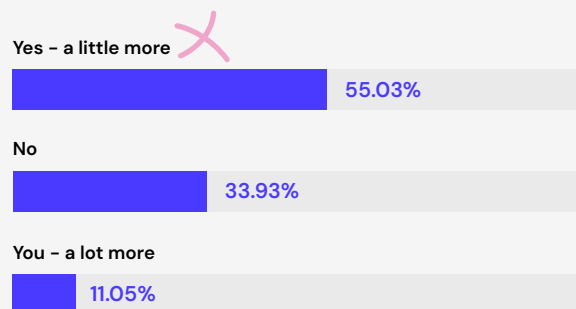


# Awareness of Environmental Impacts

## Consumers don't want to pay too much

Furthermore, 55% would be willing to pay a little more for sustainable products, but only 11% willing to pay a lot more.

Would you be willing to pay more for sustainable products?



*Sent to a Nationally representative sample*



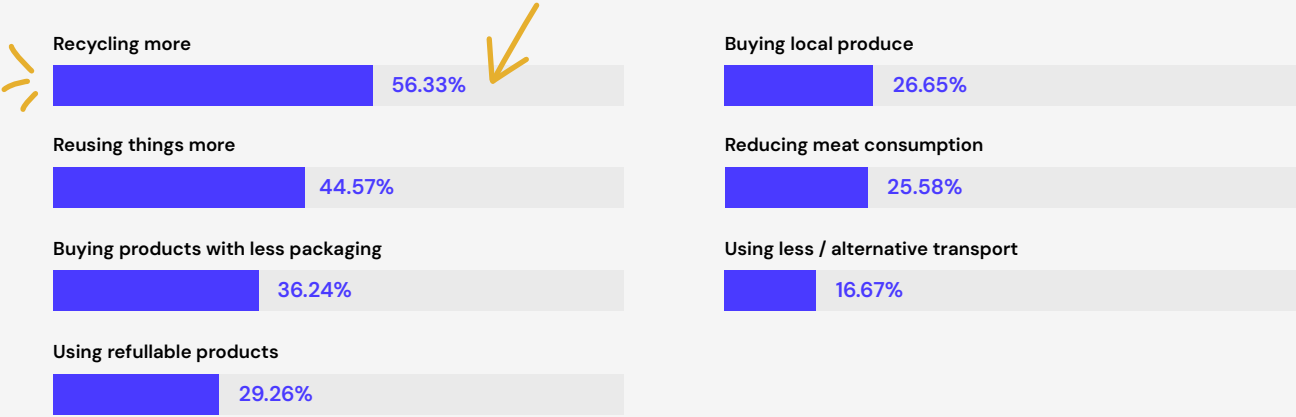
# Changing Habits

## But Behaviours are Changing

Though consumers may not be on-board with paying a lot more for eco-friendly products, this isn't down to the fact they don't care, but instead a squeeze on what they're able to afford. In other words, there is still a developing desire to become more environmentally conscious, and as soon as it becomes affordable to make conscious decisions, businesses should be prepared to see an increase of purchases in these products.

Evidencing the above, as visible on the graphic on this page, people are already changing their daily routines to try to do their bit towards sustainable living. Some of these have an impact on food and beverage sales – for example, 36% are favouring purchases of products with less packaging, and 29% are buying refillable products.

### Have you made any changes to your daily routine to reduce your environmental impact?







# Changing Habits

They're also caring more about ethics such as making sure they're supporting Fairtrade products, for example in confectionary like chocolate bars.

## Do you make an effort to buy Fairtrade chocolate?

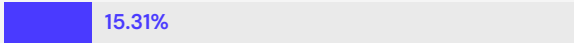
Yes - sometimes



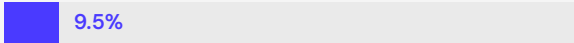
No



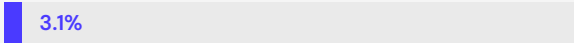
No - I'd like to buy more



Yes - always



I don't buy chocolate



*Sent to a Nationally representative sample*



# Desires from Organisations

## Consumers want more from Organisations

People actively want to see food and drink companies take charge to make choosing eco-friendly options easier.

As of February 2023, only 33% think such organisations are doing enough towards sustainability.



A lot of companies still do not do enough towards sustainability. For instance, *[brand name removed]* with their packaging - they could be doing so much more considering how much they make.

Female aged 45-54



I don't really think about it but if it has something on the packaging I think it's a better company / brand than one of its competitors

Female aged 35-44

# Desires from Organisations

## Products with Desired Changes

We asked consumers if there are any specific products they want to see in more eco-friendly packaging, and received a variety of responses:

- Ready meals
- Coffee beans
- Fruits & veg – especially vacuum-packs and plastic bowls
- Products in plastic trays – such as meat
- All packaged crisps & biscuits
- Cleaning and hygiene products
- Crates of alcoholic drinks

They also wanted to see more biodegradable packaging and a general ability to recycle more.

Research and development into more sustainable yet durable options would help here, as well as clearer labelling. Currently nearly 40% of consumers don't think labelling is clear enough around how to properly dispose of products.

**Do you think products have clear messaging around how to recycle / dispose of them?**



*Sent to National Representative Sample*

All in all, many consumers understand that removing plastic completely is not a realistic aim, but the ability to recycle is a huge plus for them, something companies should keep in mind.

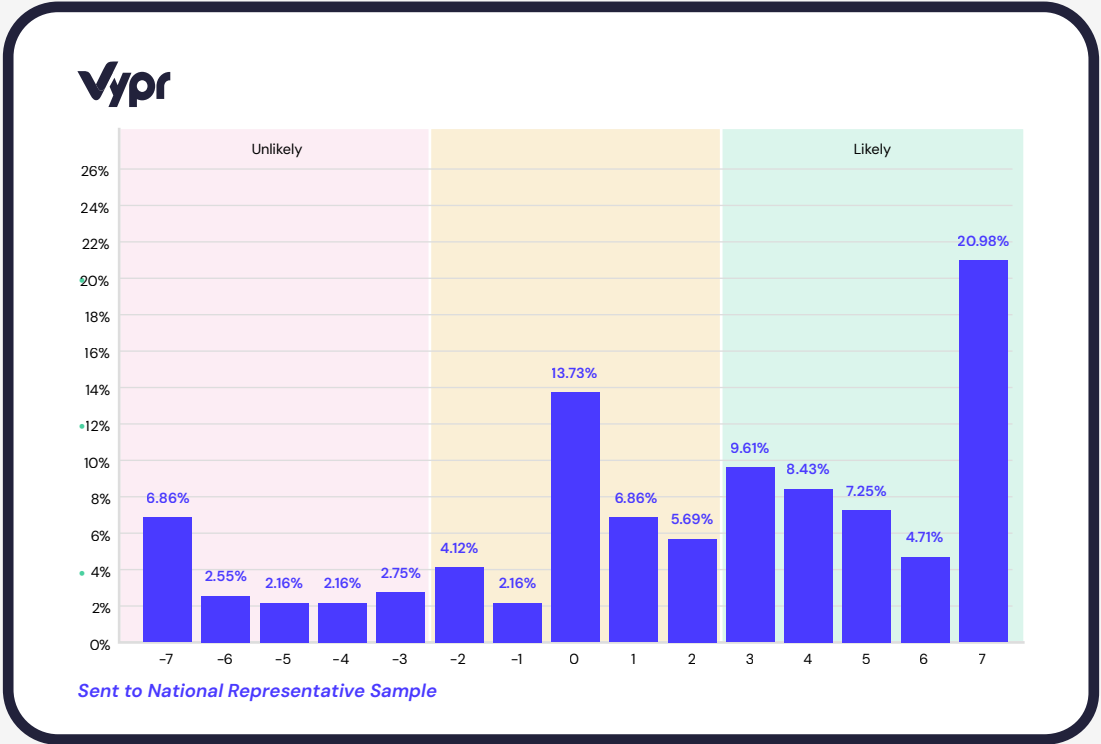
# Beware the Greenwash

It's worth emphasising that brands should not claim changes to gain favour unless genuine efforts to be more sustainable have been made, as this can backfire due to consumers being more aware of a phenomenon called 'greenwashing' – deceptive advertising around sustainability.

Vypr research has found that a lot of consumers will actively avoid buying from food/drink brands with questionable values – as visible on the Vykert graph below, most consumers say they're likely to avoid buying from such brands.



How likely would you be to avoid buying from a food/drinks brand due to disagreeing with their values/ethics?



# Beware the Greenwash

## Continued

In fact, nearly 61% of consumers say they've at some point avoided buying from brands whose values they disagreed with.

**Have you ever avoided buying from a brand because you disagreed with their values/ethics?**



*Sent to National Representative Sample*

Questionable brands include those they believe are greenwashing. We found this result frequently when asking if consumers thought companies do enough towards sustainability.



**I don't think they are being honest... greenwashing**

Male aged 55-64



**I don't think they do enough to be honest, there's a lot of greenwashing**

Female aged 25-34

# Company Efforts Perceived Positively

The story is not all negative as many have been seeing any company efforts towards eco-friendliness as a good thing, and so brands have much to gain by investing in green practices – not to mention, a responsibility to.



**I believe most are getting better and are working towards more sustainable processes methods and certainly the packaging is improving. However more still needs to be done but it is a fine balance when you still need to be a profitable company**

Male aged 55–64



**I think it is good that companies like to work towards sustainability but I feel that too many of them feel the need to shout about it.**

**It should be the norm now that sustainability is a must for the survival of our planet. I'd expect to see this in their company tagline/about/info etc and if necessary reflected in their price but in a way as not to profit off the customer also.**

**There is always more to do and also lots to learn from**

Female aged 35–44



# Company Efforts Perceived Positively

Ignoring sustainability could be costly as it's not difficult for consumers to switch their choice of products, as more options and alternative brands begin to offer more affordable, quality options. Of course, the extent to which this affects a brand's target audience depends on that demographic, which can only be teased out through further research specific to the brand/product.

Here are some consumer suggestions on what they believe different companies could do as steps towards a more sustainable future:



**Changing their packaging to be more sustainable and making actual improvements on the amount they give out. Rather than just planting some trees.**

Female aged 25-34



**Make it cheaper to go sustainable – I would happily do this but can't afford to.**

Female aged 35-44



**Stop putting so much packaging on items. Fruit and veg shouldn't be a perfect size and shape.**

Female aged 55-64

# Company Efforts Perceived Positively

Continued



“Stop producing plastic cutlery eg knives, forks, spoons, straws and encourage people to bring/use their own if needing them.

Encourage pen use cups for coffee/tea fill ups etc. End sales of plastic carrier bags. End sales of water sold in plastic bottles.

Male aged 55–64



Stop sending out leaflets to promote their business.

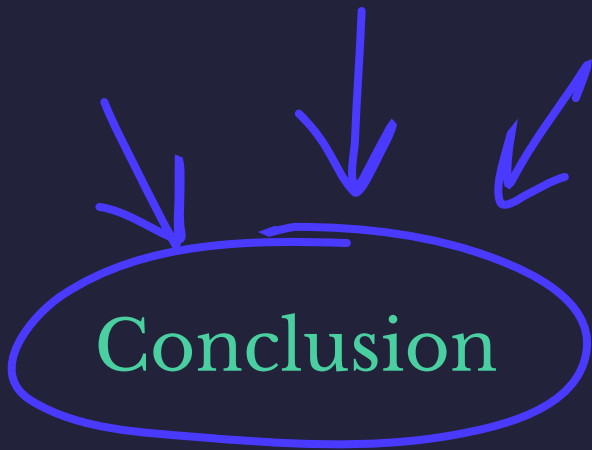
Female aged 25–34



Reduction of waste during production by creating better designs and prototypes before going into full production (which companies like Vypr can help with)

Male aged 18–24





**\* All in all, it's worthwhile for companies to start**

investing in or improve their sustainable practises, in every area of their product process, as consumers start becoming more aware of environmental issues and the contributions companies make to them.

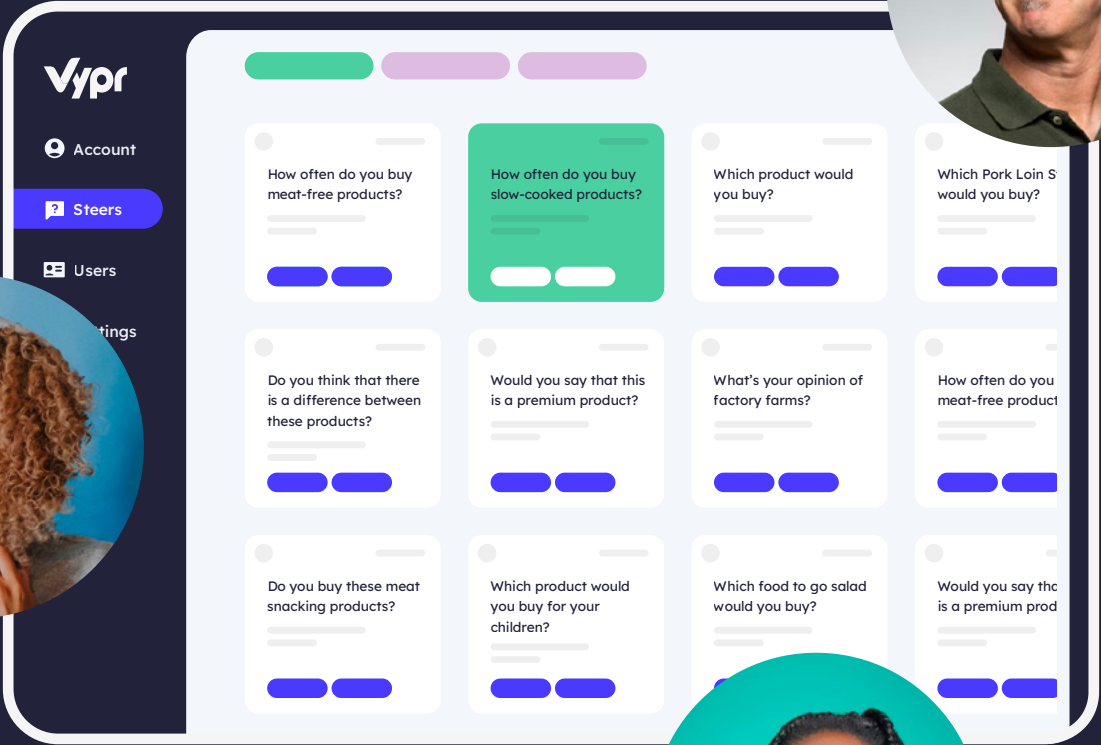
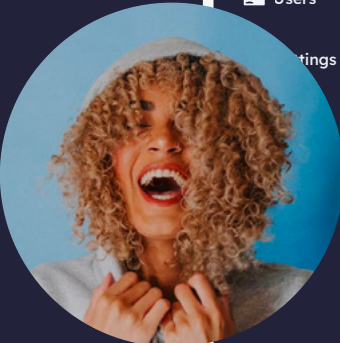
Using research platforms like Vypr can help companies reduce waste when developing new products and ideas, as mentioned by a consumer above.

# Our product intelligence platform makes it easy to get these insights.

Vypr is an online self-service platform that allows you to run research with consumers, whenever you need it.

With Vypr, you get the consumer voice at your fingertips, meaning decision-making is rapid, robust and precise resulting in **better decisions, for winning products.**

Our service integrates effortlessly with current product processes, and our Steers (what we call research questions) take an average of 90 minutes to complete, so you can say goodbye to waiting for long-winded research reports, and **get insights when you need them, quickly and efficiently.**



# Better decisions, winning products.

Ready to get robust consumer intelligence to power your product strategy? Get started with some free research!

Get **FREE** consumer research

