

Nearly Half of US Consumers Would Choose a “Green” Handset At the Right Price

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Results from a 2009 ABI Research survey of 1000 adult mobile phone users in North America reveal that approximately 7% would be willing to pay a premium for an environmentally-friendly handset. A further 40% would choose a green handset over a conventional one if price, features, and performance were equal.

“These survey results mean that almost half of those surveyed were at least committed in principle to use of a green handset,” comments industry analyst Michael Morgan. “However the public is largely uninformed about their availability: only 4% said they were ‘very familiar’ with green handsets.”

Is that “equal in price” condition a deal-breaker? Not necessarily. Some recyclable components may be slightly more expensive, but the vendors have in most cases offered handsets with comparable functionality while keeping costs down. Generally the price differential between green and non-green models is not remarkable.

The cost to handset manufacturers can be, though. Creating a verifiably green handset can mean revamping the whole supply chain and retooling the production process. Watchdog groups such as Greenpeace are on the alert for “greenwashing.” Says Morgan, “There’s an avalanche of information to be managed, just to prove that you’re green.”

Legislation and regulation play roles too. The EU has the most comprehensive regulations in place, with targets which the most proactive handset vendors such as Nokia, Samsung, and Sony Ericsson view as worth meeting globally.

However, says Morgan, “There’s a difference between being merely compliant and being truly green. The three key factors are: using recyclable or renewable materials; ensuring that handsets are in fact recycled after use; and introducing low-power chargers. Even more crucial for the long-term: leveraging the lessons learned in this process and applying them right through entire handset portfolios.” As these lessons are applied, ABI Research believes, the percentage of properly recycled handsets will grow from 8% in 2009 to 17% in 2014.

ABI Research’s new “[Green Mobile Devices](#)” study identifies and explores key global handset initiatives and the handsets that are coming to market. It also offers an analysis of US consumer interest, awareness and preferences of green handset vendor initiatives.

It forms part of two the firm’s Research Services: [Clean Telecoms](#) and [Mobile Devices](#).

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