

# Teaching and Learning

By Diana Harrelson

## **It's not always easy being green.**

Living ecologically and socially friendly is a lifestyle choice, one that requires actively pursuing ways to make complicated decisions about every product purchased and item used in day-to-day life. For some, it is simply a personal decision made in an effort to be more health conscious. For others, it extends beyond the personal realm into what they can do to make a difference in their community. For all, it is necessary that they find ways to educate themselves on products, as well as ways of living, in order to support their lifestyle choice.

As they learn, people who make this choice also tend to want to share their experiences and knowledge with others. While the knowledge of our subjects varies from misinformed (Shamrock) to extremely well informed (Traveler), they all seemed to take pride in and enjoyed sharing what they knew with us as we interviewed them.

We found people in our study tended to fall into two groups, either those who were influenced by other people with more knowledge or those who were influencers extending their lifestyle and knowledge to the people around them as they continued to educate themselves. In the following two sections, we give examples of those who participate in this lifestyle as influencers in the way they exchange information, and those who do so as recipients.

### **Exchange of information as an influencer (active)**

Jade, a housewife and mother of three is an advocate for sustainable living and enjoys sharing her knowledge on how to live a more ecologically friendly lifestyle with others. After first becoming interested through her desire to learn more about organic foods and vegetarianism she sought to learn more about environmentally friendly eating. Literature provided by her mother's nutrition class as well as books became important sources of information.

Jade's education of others begins at home with her children, whom she home-schools.

“I may not be able to do everything now, but if I raise them [the children] with these beliefs I can make a difference now and it will be easier for them to make those choices later”

She refers to teaching her children as having a snowball effect and believes it will get easier with each new generation. Jade explained that her four year old has completely grasped the concept of organic products and that her seven year old educates her friends about her food choices. Jade involves the children in learning projects like decorating cloth shopping bags and camping, where she encourages responsibility for the earth.

Jade bought a water testing kit for her home-school science class, which she and her children used to test the local pond water. Finding the water to be very unclean she continued the lesson by running the water through her water purifier and testing it again. The water tested clean the second time giving her faith in the product she purchased and showing by example the difference between the two water sources to her children.

For Jade, her lifestyle is a constant topic of conversation with family and friends. She felt successful when she convinced a few friends to switch to organic milk. She has also taken an interest in her neighborhood by talking with her neighbors about getting permission to start a community garden. While noting that not all are receptive to her opinions and ideas, she believes those with small children tend to be the most readily influenced.

Jade's interest in ecological living goes beyond just her families day-to-day life as she also took an interest in permaculture and natural building techniques. After taking a class on the subject, she participated in a Native American Pow-Wow, where she operated a booth and passed out literature on the topic in hopes of educating others. In addition to her permaculture booth, Jade is working with others to try to set up natural housing for low-income families. Jade believes education is very important for people who want to make this change in their lifestyle.

“I think my biggest issue as far as being socially [and] ecologically responsible is education. People need to learn to educate themselves”

She believes it is up to those who are knowledgeable to share their knowledge because people really do want to know. This mindset encourages her to continue to look for ways to get information out to people and to participate in different projects such as our interview.

Traveler is another participant who not only feels strongly about the environment but also feels it is important to share her knowledge with others. Just as Jade is currently doing with her children, Traveler also home-schooled her now grown daughter. What is impressive about this is that her daughter retained her mother's lifestyle and continues in Traveler's words to “live off the grid”.

Traveler makes a point of using her lifestyle and knowledge to earn an income rather than being tied to a 9-5 job. She sits on several boards that teach the community at large about organic gardening, conservation, and creating less waste as a means of conserving rather than relying on recycling the waste in the end.

“Our western culture, the United States, we're 5% of the world population, but we consume the majority of the natural resources. [...] People always saying so you want my plastic bottles? No! You start collecting 'em. You start using 'em, or you stop buying that stuff.”

In addition to her board positions, she teaches yoga, using her class to pass on information about living organically, and she gives a lecture called “Gardening Naturally: Utilizing your natural resources” to youth groups and ladies gardening clubs.

Traveler uses her home as a teaching tool by sharing how she takes advantage of natural things, like harvesting rainwater and having a compost pile, to make her life better. She finds other ways to educate and earn a living by selling and teaching about the organic things she makes and uses around her home. These things include products such as manure and compost teas sold to people for use as fertilizers. She also uses her property to teach others how to live chemically free and as an added benefit she allows members from a local Raw Food Group to harvest dandelions and other weeds for consumption purposes.

Traveler is very knowledgeable about how products have different effects on the environment. During the interview she shares information about polymers and how they gas-off, she explains how Diatomaceous Earth is used as an alternative to poisons, she also speaks on the economy of wood and how companies are reclaiming it to make things such as fences out of it. She explains how Co-ops work and why they are the shopping choice for environmentally friendly people. She even shares how the company 7<sup>th</sup> Generation got its name, explaining that it was a native folklore term and that when discussing how some present action was going to affect later generations, the question became ‘how it will effect the 7<sup>th</sup> generation?’

Traveler also makes it a point to research things she sees being marketed in a way that is less than 100% truthful. If she finds a particular product that falls short of its claims, she will make it a crusade to educate people about the product and its misrepresentation. The example she provided us was Dyno-Dirt, a product that was being sold as fertilizer but was in fact nothing more than sludge from the municipality, loaded with high amounts of heavy metals.

These two women have fully embraced their lifestyles and have made it a point in their lives to share their knowledge. Others we interviewed were just as passionate about their lifestyles but their influence did not go as far as booths at Pow-Wows or holding lectures on organic gardening. However, they did prove to be influential with roommates, friends, and family. In these situations, we found most share their values and lifestyle by example and explanation for the reasons why they do the things the way they do.

For many people their way of life and choices are common topics with friends, family members and acquaintances. Their excitement is contagious as they share their love for environmentally friendly things. Natural Woman shares her excitement through missionary work and her religion. This stems from a lifetime of being interested in the environment as in 7<sup>th</sup> grade she started a neighborhood-recycling program. Cat Woman frequently gets into conversations with people who take notice of her hybrid car and she takes that opportunity to promote it and educate others about making environmentally friendly choices. South Park is also a good example of this, as he was very happy to share the experience of his recently purchased used clothing drying rack and how it has made a

big change in his day-to-day living. He goes so far as to introduce people to it when they come over and has even influenced a friend into purchasing one as well.

Things that excite their senses also tend to be things they enjoy sharing. Examples of this can be seen in South Park having his interviewers smell his organic laundry detergent and how Bryn Mawr had her interviewers place their hands in a bowl of tapioca starch so they could feel it.

Each of the participants had at least one ecologically or socially friendly thing they agreed they have or would voluntarily share with others. Though some were a lot more active than others in how they shared their knowledge, they all did so in some way.

### **Exchange of information as a recipient (active / passive)**

Although sharing information about their choices is important to those who live an ecologically friendly lifestyle, the ways they attain information is just as important as how they share it. We found this begins for most people with self-education. Books, magazines, and the internet are all common places people in our study looked to find more information on how to be “green”. Products claiming to be green also became a valuable source of information, from the labels and literature they provided in their packaging, to where they were purchased and what products were found in the same location. Other people including parents, significant others, as well as past and current roommates also proved to be a great source of inspiration and information.

### **Books (active)**

Jade is a big believer in the benefits of books and even uses them as a medical reference and means of diagnosis and treatment instead of going to the doctor.

“My kids have never been to the doctor. [...] I’ve read too much to trust the medicinal system ... and I’m much healthier now.”

Jade also makes use of her local library to increase her learning resources, believing it is ecologically responsible to share and borrow books and that it has the added benefit of saving money as well. Although Jade did not grow up in this lifestyle her mother has always been interested in it and in turn has served as a source of information for Jade both through the classes her mother takes and the books her mother reads.

South Park refers to his Feng Shui book as a source of inspiration for better living and uses practices he learned from it to help him reduce things he finds he doesn’t use anymore around his home. He takes the things he no longer uses and donates them to places like Goodwill and Half-Priced books. By relieving himself of the clutter in his life he believes he lives a more positive life and is happy to give to others what he can no longer use himself. He also uses the books as a source of direction from things like decorations to arrangement of furniture. He explained as a man living alone these were important things to learn.

“It’s a 6000 year old culture and we call it a developing nation, I think it’s done by now. Where the West is focused on technology and that’s where our advancements are, the East is concerned with spirituality. Just because you don’t understand how something works doesn’t mean it doesn’t work, [take] acupuncture for example.”

Cat Woman cares a lot about the natural surroundings on her property. In order to keep them as natural as possible she purchased the book *Organic Garden* in order to find what plants are native to Texas as well as what plants grow best in native Texas conditions. This allows her to save on things that she would use to acclimate nonnative plants to grow well, such as fertilizers and heavy watering, thus allowing her to be more ecologically friendly.

### **Magazines (active)**

Natural woman reads magazines such as *Self*, *Shape*, and *Good House Keeping*. She uses these magazines to get information about healthy living and natural products. Traveler’s use of magazines stems from those her friends give her that have articles on gardening in them. Organic living magazines such as *Dwell* and *Natural Living* have become a great source of information and guidance for South Park.

“If you have no idea what direction to go in, you can be led in any way. I want to be responsible, [but] how? I can come up with a few ideas on my own but there are experts out there.”

Towards the end of his interview Rasputin remembered an article he had read in the indie-music magazine *Arthur* about the dangers of mobile phones on the environment. After a few minutes of searching he produced the magazine and article that had been published over a year before our interview. This article left enough of an impression on him that he not only remembered it a year later but he also kept it for reference.

Bryn Mawr reads *Mother Jones* magazine, “a nonprofit whose roots lie in a commitment to social justice implemented through first rate investigative reporting” (from their website <http://www.motherjones.com/about/>); as well as *The Nation*, a socio-political magazine; and mainstream news outlets such as *The New York Times* and *Internet News*.

“I am interested to read about environmental concerns because that reflects how mainstream society feels about these concerns. I think it is great to have a small audience reading *Mother Jones* and you know, We “Heart” Whales, but you know if you aren’t hitting more people you aren’t making enough of an impact.”

### **Shopping (active / passive)**

Shopping and packaging has proved to be an invaluable source of information and learning on natural living for our study participants. Many participants commented on how they only shopped at certain stores because they trusted those stores and the products they sold. South Park brought up *Whole Foods* as the store he shops at for his organic products and had this to say about it:

“Whole foods is like this Dwell Magazine, you have an idea of what direction you want to go in, I didn’t want to be told what to do, but if I want to do something that’s responsible I know I can buy stuff there and it will be responsible, it will be the direction I want to go in.”

We noticed a few similarities in the ways people educated themselves while shopping for new products. For some, the place where they purchased it was an important learning tool as in South Park’s case. He feels a sense of security in anything he purchases at Whole Foods because of the store’s reputation as an organic product provider. Shamrock was another Whole Foods shopper who equated her purchases there with confidence in the fact they were organic just because that’s where she bought them. Traveler, on the other hand, made a point of not shopping at stores and instead traded things she grew or made and was intent on only purchasing things from co-ops.

Once they were in the store they still had decisions to make. We found two things prompted their decisions to learn more about new products, proximity of the product to other products they normally purchased and/or what the packaging said about the product. Packaging awareness included product statements, stamps or symbols such as the recycling symbol, the USDA stamp, and or FDA certification; and the list of ingredients (especially for food or healthcare products), as well as Energy Star labeled and energy friendly rated items.

- Proximity (passive)
  - Rasputin – already purchased natural products such as Tom’s Toothpaste and Tom’s Natural Deodorant. He found “Kiss My Face” mouthwash because of its proximity to the other products he purchased.
  - Rasputin – found his recyclable tooth brush the same way
  - South Park – found his organic dishwasher detergent because of its proximity to the other natural cleaning products he normally purchased.
  
- Packaging (active/passive)
  - Auckland – the packaging on organic trash bags and other 7<sup>th</sup> Generation products helped him decide on them as an organic product choice.
  - Deco – specifically read the packaging on anti-freeze bottles looking for one that was safe for pets, was sold on one with animals on the cover stating it was safe for pets. She avoids purchasing items that can’t be recycled, pays special attention to the recycle logo.
  - Natural Woman – will not buy anything with out first becoming educated about the product by reading the packaging, USDA stamps are important
  - Shamrock – reads the label of products to be come more informed about them and to make sure they are made from natural ingredients
  - Cat Woman – reads detailed information on the labels of products in order to choose the one with the least hazardous chemical toxins and ingredients.

- South Park – Reads the labels of his products to learn more about them. He feels those products that don't list the things they "do or don't do" probably aren't as good as those products that do.
- Rasputin – Chose his toothbrush after reading the packaging realizing the product came with an easy way to recycle it.
- Bryn Mawr – checks labels to make sure the products are natural/organic.
- Ladybug – educates herself about the products looking for those who list natural ingredients over chemicals. Looks for FDA certification.
- Rudy – bought an Energy Star rated home
- Cleo– bought an Energy Star rate washing machine after being educated on how much electricity it saves and how some states even offer tax cuts for buying those type of appliances
- Cleo – picked 7<sup>th</sup> generation products due to the information contained on their labels. Such as the following which she provided in her interview:

“[If] every household in the U.S. replaced just one bottle of petroleum-based dishwashing [liquid] with our vegetable-based product, we could save 230,000 barrels of oil, enough to heat and cool 117,000 U.S. homes for a year.”

### **Other Methods**

Other methods of learning about the lifestyle and various products most often included word of mouth from friends and family members as well as learning by example.

(Passive)

- Shamrock – learned of health benefits of natural honey from her friend.
- South Park – did not grow up in an ecologically friendly environment but feels he got the “natural bug” from his father although it was by example more than sharing of knowledge. Having come over from India his father prefers to treat himself homeopathically rather than to visit a doctor. This made quite an impact on South Park who now searches for natural ways to cure ailments rather than relying on modern medicine, which he feels is a producer of a lot of waste.

“Road to medicine is paved with garbage, plastic garbage wasted things, 1000 Petri dishes and you're looking for the one that works, the rest are thrown away.”

- South Park – also learned about products such as natural cat food, and things like feng shui from his girlfriend.
- Rasputin – learned about Tom's products initially from his girlfriend.
- Rasputin – was introduced to 7<sup>th</sup> generation dish soap by his mother.
- Cat Woman – initially got introduced to being ecologically friendly by a friend who influenced her by being very pro-environment going the extra mile to rescue animals, save energy, and promote socially friendly businesses and non-traditional business practices.
- Auckland – trashed his Converse tennis shoes after hearing from a friend that they were bought by a company who uses sweat shop labor

Some people were a little more proactive in their learning by taking classes or watching documentaries. (Active)

- Jade – took a permaculture class because it interested her and now wants to use that knowledge to help provide low cost living accommodations to under privileged families via natural building practices.
- Deco – watched a documentary on Styrofoam that has changed her product purchases dramatically. This involves everything from egg containers to house siding made of PVC. She would rather be inconvenienced, (purchases eggs in packages of 18 because they come in cardboard, purchasing a 1 gallon container of tea because the to-go cups were made of Styrofoam) than buy anything with Styrofoam in it.
- Bryn Mawr – took a seminar on reproductive rights and environmental concerns.

Social situations and memberships with certain associations as well as traveling and life experiences are utilized as learning opportunities. (Active)

- Ladybug – witnessed groups actively trying to clean up and recycle while at a music festival and this left quite an impression on her. She found it interesting that kids her age, that you would consider slack-offs and hippies with dreaded hair, were making this effort. The music festival also had booths set up advertising things like hemp for fuel and Tibetan Freedom. She refers to the music festival in general as a learning experience.
- South Park – was in the Peace Corps and picked up a lot of his organic start from there
- South Park – lived in Trinidad, which he referred to as a closed eco system. Due to the fact they did not have many natural resources everything had to be imported and therefore was not just thrown away.
- Natural Woman – completed missionary work in Africa. Her religious views play an important role in how she treats the earth. She once belonged to several green groups including Sierra Club and World Wildlife Federation.
- Cat Woman – belongs to the Sierra Club and Nature Conservancy as well as the Natural Resources Defense Council. She also uses Green Mountain as her electric provider.
- Bryn Mawr – grew up in the activist community of Syracuse.
- Cleo – grew up on a farm in a small Texas town with a family that had a high respect for nature and attributes this to her environmental awareness.
- Deco – belongs to the ASPCA

Health issues as well as a preference for Vegetarianism also proved to be great learning tools for ecological living. (Active)

- Shamrock – got into organic foods because of health issues; she takes suggestions of certain types of foods from her friends.

- Natural Woman – prefers organic and natural foods because of health issues; she educates herself on different types of foods paying special attention to the labels.
- Rasputin is a Vegetarian because of a tour through a meat packing plant given by a friend while in High School.
- Cat Woman – is a vegetarian as a result of her philosophy on life. It is this philosophy on life that also contributes to her being socially and ecologically friendly.
- Bryn Mawr – is a vegetarian due to health reasons but she is also sympathetic to the allocation of resources that goes into meat products as opposed to produce.
- Jade’s choice of becoming a vegetarian made her seek out more literature on health/environmentally friendly eating.
- Ladybug –is a vegetarian stating that one of the biggest turn-ons for vegetarianism for her was that it was environmentally friendly after educating herself on the fact that agriculturally growing animals is really environmentally destructive. She learned that it requires more land to grow food for the animals, and factory farming has a lot of waste/runoff. She explained that being vegetarian influences everything she buys and that it taught her to start looking at labels and to start caring about animals. If it weren’t for becoming vegetarian she wouldn’t have thought twice about it.
- Rudy – became a vegetarian after learning about the cruelty to animals in the meat packing industry as well as environmental concerns.
- Aukland – disliked purchasing meat from regular stores after he became educated on how the animals were treated.

Transportation concerns was another interesting pattern we found among our study participants. Many of them went out of their way to educate themselves on their current and or future modes of transportation as well as new and interesting methods people are creating to make transportation more ecologically friendly. (Active)

- Deco – bio-diesel was something she had a lot of knowledge of and felt very passionate about. She mentions how the Denton Recycles trucks (those trucks used to empty the recycling bins) are fueled with this fuel that is created from garbage. She spoke of how Willie Nelson is a big supporter of it and how Denton had a ribbon cutting ceremony centered around it because they were one of the first cities in the world to embrace it.
- Deco – test drove a hybrid, mentioned that they get twice as many miles to the gallon so you don’t have to buy as much gas and that less gas meant fewer emissions.
- Deco – bought a used bike 9 months ago, explains to people that biking is better than driving because it “helps the air and saves you money at the same time”.
- Natural Woman – dad works for a hybrid company and on his advice she will be buying one in January.
- Cat Woman – owns a hybrid and talks about it all the time to friends, family, neighbors, and strangers who take notice.
- Jade – purchased a used van after doing research on its gas mileage and emissions, she eventually wants to get a diesel car so that she may convert it

- herself into one that uses “greasol”. She learned about greasol in her permaculture class. Greasol is run off of used vegetable oil that you can get from restaurants that usually have to pay for it to dispose of it properly.
- Jade – loves her bike and would ride it more often if it was safer for the little ones in the bike lanes.
  - Ladybug – would have preferred a hybrid car but couldn’t afford one, purchased the car she owns now after researching its gas mileage. She is very much against SUVs and the fact that they aren’t gas efficient/eco-friendly, went so far as to print out fliers about how bad SUVs are and distributed them at a local mall.
  - Ladybug – uses her skateboard as an alternative form of travel. Feels that people are too dependent on their cars.
  - Aukland – loves his bike, said he would use it more if he lived closer to town, and used it all the time while in school.
  - Aukland – in reference to his Hyundai stated, “It gets good gas mileage and has an excellent warranty”. Having good gas mileage and putting out fewer toxins into the air were both important to him.
  - Rudy – purchased her Honda after learning about its gas mileage and cost
  - Cleo – lives about two blocks from work so she takes her bike, and rides it almost everywhere because it saves money

### **Use of information/communication technologies for environmental purposes (active)**

As you can see by the previous examples, there are several methods people use to learn more about living an ecologically friendly lifestyle. The internet has proven, for many of our study participants, to be a valuable tool in learning about products, practices, and associations/groups. Nobody in our study seemed to be tech-phobic and many seemed to embrace the ease at which they could gather information from the internet. Although many use the internet as a learning tool others (Jade) also use it as a teaching tool.

- Rasputin – mentioned going to the website of Tom’s of Maine to look up product information because he wanted to learn more about the company after his girlfriend introduced him to the toothpaste. He now purchases Tom’s Deodorant after finding it on the website. <http://www.tomsomaine.com/>
- Rasputin – when looking to purchase new electronics, he asks friends about different products and does his research on the web
- South Park – researched organic products on the web, especially health products. Found on the web both Dr. Bronner’s Peppermint Oil and GSE as organic solutions to assorted problems he was having.
- South Park – mentioned that he always goes to the web when researching new electronic purchases like cell phones or digital cameras. <http://www.cnet.com>
- South Park – mentioned visiting sites like Craig’s List and eBay when looking for deals on services and products. <http://dallas.craigslist.org/> <http://www.ebay.com>
- Rudy – uses her computer to research and keep informed on activist issues. She mentioned the ability to send form letters through the internet to your State or U.S. Representative on ecological issues through various sites and enjoyed how easy it was.

- Rudy – uses her computer to buy refurbished (recycled) products.
- Ladybug – researched cars on the internet before purchasing one
- Cleo – researches products online, she explains that there is plenty of information online and that unless you are illiterate or too poor for the products that are good for you there are “no excuses” for not being environmentally friendly.
- Shamrock – uses Yahoo Groups and Care2.com as well as search engines using keywords to stay environmentally active online. <http://groups.yahoo.com>  
<http://www.care2.com>
- Jade – uses the internet for education purposes, especially since she home-schools her children. Not considered a cost issue because there is so much available on the internet and everyone uses it.
- Traveler – views her computer as a teaching/communication tool, uses her daughters old computer to send messages to several people at once cutting down her work (calling each person) every month.

### **The Wish to Learn more and Still Learning (active)**

Throughout the interviews it became apparent that even those who seemed to be well versed in the ways of living an ecologically friendly lifestyle still felt there was room to learn more. It was not uncommon for someone to voice concern over just starting out, or taking baby steps in the beginning before fully embracing the lifestyle. Many felt that any little bit a person can do helps and that there was no action too small to start one’s road to sustainable living.

- Auckland – stated that he is not as “green” as he would like too be and feels that he is just a novice in the lifestyle but he is open to exploring all aspects of environmental consciousness in his product buying.
- South Park – is active in his search to learn more about living a way that is in harmony with his mind, body and environment through the use of magazines, friends, and products that are environmentally friendly. He thinks the more convenient something is the more people would be prone to taking advantage of it.
- Rudy – participates in online activist groups trying to learn and make a difference any way she can. She enjoys the fact she can use the internet to stay up to date on environmental awareness.
- Jade – continues to educate her self and has made it a priority to educate her children in an ecologically friendly home-school environment. Her family’s health and welfare comes first and she chooses this lifestyle to provide that for them, while at the same time having benefits for the world around her.
- Bryn Mawr – makes a point of keeping up to date with socio-political and environmentally friendly topics via seminars and magazines.
- Cleo – said that it is a collaborative effort among all her family members to be environmentally responsible and that the more information that is available, the more responsible they become. She gains insight from magazines while in line at grocery stores, from the internet, and books she reads.

- Rasputin – learns a lot from shopping, from purchasing new products and researching their manufacturers for other products if he likes them.
- Cat Woman – after being turned on to the lifestyle by a like-minded friend, she has joined several groups that help keep her informed about activist topics.
- Ladybug – Continues to be involved in the music festival scene, feels that it is both educational and fun.
- Deco – enjoys becoming knowledgeable about environmentally friendly things such as bio-diesel as well as non-environmentally things such as Styrofoam. Using her knowledge she educates others and makes better decisions for herself.
- Shamrock – Shamrocks main sources of education are the Care2.com website and Yahoo! Groups. Where she can read about environmental news and information, health, human and animal rights news along with shared with interest groups to join and sign petitions just by the click of a mouse.

Though many of our participants would never consider themselves teachers, they all taught us many valuable things throughout the study. They were all willing to invite us into their homes and share with us their lifestyle choice, why they made it, and how they continue to make it on a daily basis. Throughout this chapter you will notice we made annotations of Active or Passive next to many of the headings and subheadings we've discussed. Our purpose in doing this was to establish an overall pattern in active and passive actions people engaged in while ascribing to this lifestyle. You may notice some people never show up under the passive annotation (Traveler) while everyone else shows up under both annotations depending on the circumstances. The importance of this is that it shows, though they all make some sort of active effort in becoming more educated on their own, many of them are open to new things that come their way.

### **Design Implications**

Using the trends we saw in how people educate themselves as well as how they share information we put together the following list of design implications.

#### **Separation of lives**

Dealing with the product itself we feel with the busy lives many of the study participants lead a great calendar option would help make the phone invaluable. Though many phones today come with scheduling features what we came up with would be a bit more robust.

As the user enters a particular task, to-do, or appointment we feel they should be able to put it under a certain life category, i.e. Work, School, Home, Social. Then allow the user to view the life categories separately or as a single life category with all of the separate lives chosen.

The key to making this work is ease of use. Allow the phone's scheduling program to be compatible with standard calendar applications (iCal, Outlook), and/or provide them with a new desktop application. With a USB or blue tooth connection the user can update their phone from their home computer instead of manually typing everything in since this can be a cumbersome job with small screens and buttons.

As an added benefit allow them to also publish what they want out of this calendar to the web so that they can share parts of their lives with co-workers, and/or friends and family. This could also allow people who are not in front of their home computer where they have the desktop software to send information to their phone via the internet. If someone must update from their phone we suggest providing them with a QWERTY keyboard to make it as easy as possible.

For people who take advantage of all three options (having the information on the phone, the home computer, and the web) they have an added benefit of a great back up system. This will allow them if one of those goes down or they purchase a new compatible phone to continue to have access without having lost anything. Utilizing the web interface it may be an added benefit to allow key people to add items to the calendar from the web. This feature would then send the user a text message alerting them to an upcoming event they've been invited to.

### **Camera Phones**

We feel if EcoMoto chooses to put a camera on the phone this would be a great idea for *some* users but not all. Because of current restrictions implemented on cell phones with camera such as, not being allowed into locker rooms or concerts with them, we believe there is a user base out there that would prefer to purchase the phone camera free. However, for those people who would enjoy having a camera phone, allowing them to share the photos they take on the web in the same place as their calendar and even allowing them to link the photos to certain events in their calendar would be a great added benefit.

### **Internet Options**

While several of our participants used the internet to do research and to stay alert as to common trends or innovative ideas we understand that not everyone has access to the internet. Although web capability is a standard function on phones today, for many it's just too cumbersome to try to navigate. We think providing users with a customizable webpage, as their start page when they connect via their phone, would be a great idea. On a personal level web page would house their web enabled calendar as well as their pictures but it could also be used to provide them with the latest news and trends for living an ecologically friendly life style. They could pick and choose what is important to them such as different clubs and association newsletters, RSS feeds of publications they subscribe to, organic product companies, and recycling locations.

By teaming up with the right people this could allow for great brand marketing as well as collaborations with well respected companies who now have a captive and willing audience to market to. With purchase of the phone you could offer some interesting packages allowing members to donate some of the cost to organizations of their choice. With their donation customers could chose to receive free literature and or subscriptions

to the specific organization's newsletter that they could opt to receive electronically by phone and/or email allowing for the reduction in paper, giving EcoMoto one more way to call their phone ecologically friendly.

### **Packaging as a learning tool**

Packaging is one of the most used ways to gain knowledge about potential product purchases. People want to learn more and are encouraged when they see the packaging contains in depth information about the product provided. They are looking for more than features listed, they want to know about the product itself, in addition to what it can do. This is what matters most.

Having a statement about EcoMoto's vision and commitment, emphasizing what makes the phone ecologically friendly including materials, as well as a statement about recycling of the customer's current or old mobile phones would be a great step in the right direction. In addition to providing consumers with great information, the packaging should also be made of recyclable material as well as organic based products and should say so. More packaging discussion is available in several of the other chapters.

### **Collaborations with like-minded companies**

Collaborations with well respected ecologically friendly companies, magazines, and associations not only gives credence to the EcoMoto brand but would also allow customers to have direct access to what is important to them as well as provide them with a continuous learning tool. These may be advertising avenues for EcoMoto as well as people who would be interested in a partnership with the custom web portal and/or trial subscriptions with purchase of the phone. It would be a two way street with EcoMoto getting its name out to the people who care, and for the other companies to be introduced to new people who may have never heard of them before.

### **Conclusions**

What we can say after this study is that ecologically friendly people want to learn more, but don't always know how to get the information they are looking for. By providing them with a phone that not only fills their communications needs, but also their need to learn, as well as making it easy to use and packing it with great features, they will now have an invaluable tool that they will learn to count on and feel good about using.