

Preface

Welcome to *Social Influence and Sustainable Consumption*, where discussions and critical thinking about consumer well-being take place, where we search for information about who influences who and why, and where we wonder about changes in communication patterns and the impacts on the marketplace.

We used to get our information in person—word of mouth. That expanded to print and other forms of media. Then, our world of interaction exploded with the advent of the Internet and interactions became more complicated. Our daily time management includes hours spent online. Questions arise about privacy and whether our loyalty or views can be easily swayed by people we do not know, “friends” we meet online. Who are the influencers? Are you an influencer? If so, in what ways or categories?

This book is divided into three parts—*Social Influence*, *Consumers*, and *Sustainability*—as a means of understanding consumer behavior in the twenty-first century given new technologies and ways of interacting online and off-line. In Part I, Chaps. 1–4, provides an overview, a theoretical and historical/background of opinion leaders, and a Social Influence Model original to this book. Part II has Chaps. 5–7 focusing on consumption, consumer behavior, decision making, problem solving, and applications to households as consumption units. Part III is led by Chap. 8 contributed by Dr. Ronald Goldsmith of Florida State University and Dr. Todd Bacile of Loyola University New Orleans. They reintroduce social influence as it relates to sustainability and recommend the use of social marketing strategies to promote it. This chapter leads to a discussion of the built environment contributed by Dr. David Goldsmith of Virginia Tech University, who teaches in the Myers-Lawson School of Construction: Where we live and how we live and what it all means. What will the next 50 years look like? The last chapter provides four strategies for improving sustainability.

Be empowered, curious, challenge conventional ways of influencing and being influenced. This book is a guide to creating bonds between sources and receivers with implications for consumers, educators, businesses, public policy, and government.

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