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MAGAZINE

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Ethical trading

Focus on fair and fabulous products

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shopping with conscience

How we shop may not feel like saving the world, but the decisions we make at the tills can affect not just the environment but the quality of other people's lives and our own health and wellbeing. The conscious consumer has become a force to be reckoned with and retailers ignore ethical trading at their peril.

Ethical trading is no longer considered a trend but a shift in consumer expectations, consumers are seeking out products with eco-friendly, organic, natural, recycled, or fair trade credentials even if it means paying more!

The gift industry has responded with more and more products coming on to the market targeted at the ethical shopper.

Kenana UK specialises in ethical toys and accessories and is the London based importer and distributor for Kenana knitters – a co-operative of nearly 800 women from five tribes, working together, near Njoro in the great Rift Valley, Kenya.

The project started in 1998 to help rural women find some much-needed income using their spinning and knitting skills. The group buys homespun wool produced locally, for knitting into toys, bedcovers, jumpers, socks, scarves, hats and other accessories.

The group generates two forms of income, buying the wool, then creating more work by turning the wool into a marketable product.

The money helps improve the lives of the women, helping to build a future for their children and the community.

The enterprise uses environmentally friendly



Making dye from dahlias



and sustainable processes, harmless to the environment using 100 per cent natural wool, home spun and plant dyed.

The women share the profits and the community now boasts a family planning clinic, homeopathic clinic, adult and child literacy project and glasses scheme, using old spectacles donated from the UK.

Kenana UK is a member of the British Association for Fair Trade Shops.

For further information visit the website www.kenana.co.uk.

Environmental issues are high on the agenda for all businesses these days. New developments are making it easier for businesses to make small changes without massive extra cost.

A simple step like changing envelopes can make a difference and enhance a company's green credentials.

Tru-Green envelopes are a new reusable, padded envelope, made from paper and padding that are not only recyclable but also compostable and biodegradable as well. The padding is not made from plastic, but is harvested from natural crop fibres such as jute

and plant waste like banana leaves.

Prakash Korde, who developed the Tru-Green envelopes says: "Unlike conventional padded envelopes, Tru-Green envelopes can be fully recycled or even composted. Most others end up on a landfill site, as the plastic padding cannot be separated from the paper. Tru-Green envelopes are made using natural, replenishable resources which are sustainable as well as environmentally friendly."

As an added environmental bonus seven trees are planted for every 200,000 sold.

For further information telephone **+44 (0)845 330 7765**.

Another revolutionary new product set to have a major impact is EcoGen – a new generation of biodegradable plastic.

EcoGen from Design Ideas was launched at Spring Fair Birmingham in February in a range of seven bathroom products.

It is a durable plastic that will last for years in the home, yet decompose within months on the compost heap. Described as:

- Durable, injection moulded plastic
- 100 per cent biodegradable without the need for extra chemicals or industrial processes
- A move away from petroleum based plastics

For further information visit the website www.ecogenlife.com.

