

PUBLISHERS NOTE:

HOPPING ON THE GREEN BRANDWAGON

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Clorox The annual Tipping Sprung brand extension survey is an insightful and sometimes humorous study that dissects which extensions are compelling and logical, and which are weak and dilutive. Here's a quick overview of this year's findings. What's hot? Coppertone sunglasses, BMW driving schools, Campbell's V8 soup, Mr. Clean car washes, BMW performance driving schools. What's not? Burger King men's apparel, Kelloggs hip-hop streetwear, Kanye West's trip-booking website, the Hermes Smart Car, and Rolling Stones ice wine. More detail in the upcoming March edition of GDUSA magazine. For today's purposes, I would like to focus on one specific area: the growing practice of extending brands in order to hop on the "green and all-natural bandwagon." There are serious risks and rewards here, as three examples of the study attest. First, eBay appears to have struck gold with its World of Good website, which

logically extends the auction service to environmentally responsible products. Second, AllState Green insurance gets a thumbs down. As Robert Sprung explains, "the insurance coverage is basically 'green' only in that you produce the policy electronically and theoretically save a bit of a tree in the process. With a rather grandiose name like 'Allstate Green' one would have expected a broader, more strategic 'green' tie in." A third example is harder to judge. Clorox Green Works, plant-based household cleaning products marketed in connection with the Sierra Club, has been roundly criticized and cost some Sierra Clubbers their jobs — why would an environmental advocacy group link up with a big corporate bleach maker? On the other hand, professional marketers see value in the program because, notes Mr. Sprung, the extension is exceedingly well executed with first-rate graphics, packaging and marketing materials, and Sierra Club coffers have truly benefitted. So let's sum up: for these green brand extensions, it's one win, one loss, one tie.

Gordon Kaye