

Message in a Bottle

Since relocating to Arizona in 2001, my wife and I have become addicted to bottled spring water. It's relatively inexpensive and it's very convenient. Most important, staying hydrated is critical in this dry, hot climate.

Like many Valley residents, we buy bottled water in bulk, usually at Costco but sometimes elsewhere when there's a good sale. We also have an R/O system in the house and refill the bottles for as long as they pass the smell test.

For a while now I've been intrigued with the messaging on the Arrowhead bottles, touting the fact that they are using less plastic, and exhorting all those thirsty consumers to "Be Green."



I'm intrigued because plastic bottles – at least the ones that are not bio-degradable – are inherently a “non-green” product. Virtually every plastic container, whether filled with water, Nutella or Catalina salad dressing, winds up in a landfill, where it will sit for eons in its native, plastic state.

This is not a sustainable practice.

So when Arrowhead tells us that they're doing the right thing by using a cap with slightly less plastic . . . give me a break!

Arrowhead's new Eco-Shape® bottles and caps actually use 20% less plastic. But if we're talking about being green, Andy Rooney and his Cousin Vinny have some questions. How many trees did Arrowhead and its team of lawyers destroy in connection with registration of the Eco-Shape trademark? How lame is “Eco-Shape”? Is it actually worth a trademark? Why didn't they trademark “Eco-Slim”? Is Eco-Slim a subsidiary of Eco-Shape? Are they magic bottles?

Arrowhead's marketing ploy is a perfect example of how companies are attempting to leverage Green awareness and gain entry into the do-gooder club. I find this tactic typically disingenuous and especially so for a company that is blatantly non-green.

Green awareness should encompass more than simply the notion of marginally less environmental irresponsibility. Maybe we should take a hard look at the technology behind bio-degradable bottles and work at refining their chemistry so that when “bio-bottles” are accidentally mixed with old fashioned, plastic bottles, the recycling process is not corrupted.

I'm not yet prepared to boycott Arrowhead. But I'd prefer their message read something like this:

“We recognize that plastic bottles are not environmentally sustainable, and we are donating 10% of our profits to fund research that will enable commercial-scale production of bio-degradable bottles that will not contaminate the recycling process. That is our Green commitment.”