



The ULS Report™

Helping people Use Less Stuff™ by conserving resources and reducing waste.

Green Gifts for Dads 'N Grads

By Robert Lilienfeld, Editor

It seems as if environmental messages are always aimed at Moms. Given the time of year, we thought it would be nice to talk about green gifts for Dads 'N Grads. (Of course, Mom is probably the one who's going to either buy those gifts, or will be called upon for help, given her knowledge and expertise.)

Invest in Their Ecologic and Economic Future

First, let's talk about grads. One of the best ways to provide for their future while instilling a savings ethic is by giving them a financial investment like stocks, bonds or mutual funds. You can turn this financial investment into an environmental investment by purchasing one of the "Green" mutual funds that invests in companies that create sustainable products and services.

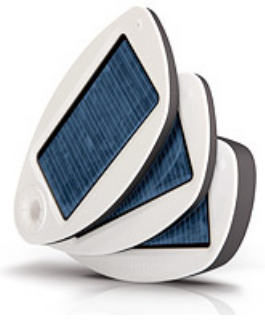
Two that were recommended by Wells Fargo Advisors are the **Allianz RCM Global EcoTrends Fund** and the **iShares S&P Global Clean Energy Index Fund**. There are many more to consider, so talk to your advisor or simply Google "green mutual funds." You'll help conserve economic resources while growing financial resources!

Green Gadgets

Now, let's talk about what dads and grads really want: electronic gadgets. From both a productivity and sustainability perspective, one of our favorites is Apple's new **iPad**. It uses less material so it's very light and also very energy efficient – it gets up to 10 hours per charge. And, between taking notes on it and using it as a book reader, you can significantly reduce paper usage. Plus, Apple has designed it to be easily dismantled for recyclability and eliminated many of the harmful chemical compounds found in traditional computers.



Once you buy electronic devices, you should also think about how to recharge them. Instead of plugging into the grid, consider solar chargers, like those from **Solio**. They work with iPods, cellular phones and other small devices. They're great for travel too, for those times when you might not have all the necessary plug adaptors for international use. They're available at Radio Shack, Apple, REI and other stores.



Speaking of solar power, when my oldest son graduated from high school, I bought him a solar powered watch so he didn't have to keep replacing batteries. But there's an even more sustainable (and more traditional) version: the **automatic, or self winding, watch**. It has no solar mechanism or internal battery, and works by converting arm movements into stored energy. Plus, a local jeweler confided that self-winding watches tend to retain their value, while battery powered watches become virtually worthless over time.



I should have known about these myself, because *my* watch is self-winding! Even better, it's a reused watch that belonged to my father. He gave it to me when I graduated from college. So, don't forget about **heirloom jewelry** you already own that can be given to grads: watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, etc. They're not only beautiful and valuable, but carry ongoing emotional impact.

And, if you're buying your Dad or grad a new iPhone because the old one is kaput, don't landfill it - sell it! Even a broken one is worth a fair amount of money to recyclers & refurbishers. Check prices at **iPhonesIntoCash.com**. They'll even send you a postage paid envelope!

Gifts of Experience

As the saying goes, we are social animals. Many times, the best gifts are not gifts of things, but gifts of social experiences. How about giving Dad a membership to the **zoo, or a museum, or a fitness club**? He can take the kids and create great memories for himself and the children, while giving Mom some time off. From an environmental standpoint, experiential memories are the best gifts of all, because they don't use any stuff and can be used and reused over and over!



These facets make perfect sense when the only discussion is the package. However, we should really start by asking a different, more complex question: *What is the value of the product being contained in that package and what would the economic and environmental impacts be if that product did not arrive in the condition that the purchaser was willing to pay for it?*

Food for Thought

Consider food products. In general, the environmental footprint of a food item is 10-14 times greater than the footprint of the package that contains it. (Think of all the resources it takes to grow, produce, transport, maintain, prepare, and serve food.)

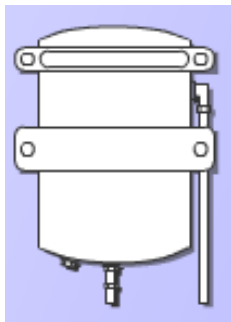
So, before you can examine the environmental impact of the package, you must also examine the environmental impact of both the food it contains and the potential that the food will be wasted through spoilage, misuse, poor handling, etc. *Thus, the true test of a sustainable package is one that provides maximum protection against degradation and spoilage and minimum creation of solid waste, energy consumption, and pollution.*

This is the definition that most packaging designers and engineers use when creating new packaging. It's the reason that lighter weight rigid containers and flexible packages are becoming more widely available. In general, paper, plastics, and foil, either individually or working together, are doing an increasingly good job of minimizing food waste while also reducing packaging waste.

Kind of changes your thinking, doesn't it? To learn more, check out the life cycle inventory studies on our web site at www.use-less-stuff.com/research.htm. ♻️ ♻️ ♻️

The Ultimate Green Gift for Car Guys

Finally, I think we've come up with the ultimate gift for Dads Who Are Into Cars. This device is called the **PetroSaver Engine Oil Refiner**. Attach it to your engine and *you may never need to change your oil again*, because the PetroSaver constantly filters and cleans it. The device also reduces engine wear by 95%, so you'll save big on maintenance costs while significantly increasing vehicle life and possibly bluebook value. You'll also eliminate the cost of buying new oil and disposing of used oil, while keeping the used oil and filters out of the waste stream.



Learn more:

iPad: www.apple.com

iPhonesIntoCash: www.iphonesintocash.com

Solar Chargers: www.solio.com

PetroSaver: www.allgreenoilrefiner.com

Focus on Packaging

We're starting a new monthly column devoted to issues related to packaging. Why? Because it's a topic that continually comes up in discussions about sustainable business practices. We hope you both enjoy and learn from this, our inaugural, discussion.

Sustainable Packaging Defined

Whenever we participate in a discussion regarding sustainable packaging, we hear definitions that include reduced material usage and waste, high levels of recycling and recycled materials, and use of renewable resources.

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