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06 4814 | 01 - 07

## Tricks of the Trade

Whenever we buy something – in the supermarket, the shopping mall or online – we participate in a market, local or global. But do we make intelligent decisions when we part with our money? And what are the consequences for the environment, our own health and that of the workers toiling to make the products we buy?

Only the well-informed can make responsible purchase decisions, though some manufacturers would prefer us all to be blissfully ignorant: For them, an awful lot of money is at stake. That is why they often declare crucial facts about their products only when forced to by law. And marketing strategies can often amount to perfidious manipulation. But a sustainable economy needs informed and critical consumers. We reveal some of the **Tricks of the Trade**.

### 01 Assault on the Senses – How Consumers are Manipulated **HD**

Do we buy something because we really want to? Or are we seduced into doing so? Using increasingly sophisticated methods, businesses attempt to directly influence consumers at a subconscious level: Smell, sound or colors can be more important than the product itself.

### 02 The Price of a Long Shelf Life – The Health Risk of Packaging **HD**

Modern packaging makes groceries look attractive, and means they last longer. That's good for transport and brand identity, with consumers often able to find the same products all over the world. But some packaging contains harmful substances that can affect the quality of the product.

### 03 Hip But Harmful – Toxins in Clothing **HD**

Cool jeans, seductive underwear, elegant shoes: These days, fashionable clothes are often available at a bargain price. But there's a catch: It is not uncommon for toxic chemicals to be used in their manufacture, representing a danger to both the workers on the production line and the buyer.

### 04 Throwaway Society – Electrical Equipment That Simply Don't Last **HD**

Our lives are filled with consumer electronics and electrical appliances. When they stop working, it is often said they are not worth repairing and they are simply thrown away. Is industry intentionally making products that break down quickly and can't be fixed?

### 05 No More Use-By Date – Questionable Food Conservation Methods

Preservation technology is revolutionising the food industry. Sophisticated cool chain logistics and new preservatives are increasing product shelf-life like never before. But some of these methods are questionable from a health point of view. And is it always a good idea to alter the natural state of a foodstuff to give it a long shelf-life?

### 06 Healthy or Dangerous? – Synthetic Vitamins

Vitamins are essential for life; without them we would fall ill. The manufacturers of vitamin supplements would have us believe that the high doses they sell us contribute to good health. But scientific studies cast serious doubt on such claims: Many supplements are useless, and some are downright dangerous.

### 07 An Invisible Risk – Chemicals in Toys **HD**

Unfortunately, our children's dolls, soft toys, diggers and building bricks are often produced in the same manner as so many other items: as cheaply as possible. As a result, many toys contain substances that can be harmful to our health.

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