



## New TLDs: Signaling Beyond Consumers

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October 31, 2009

When sizing up the [new ICANN top-level domain \(TLD\)](#) extensions, we should recognize that they benefit all stakeholders, not just [consumers](#). It's a consumers-only focus that causes the media to present dot-eco and dot-green as competitors.

My previous essays have focused on the consumer, but in this essay I introduce “people signals”—more specifically, messages to a company's current employees and future recruits.

Let's consider dot-green. For employees, the TLD provides a unified message of corporate mindset and values: When employees need to think of solutions, green should be on their mind. Moreover, when facing the decision to select among alternative solutions, green can yield a higher shareholder value because corporate social responsibility and sustainability create value, as has been demonstrated by the actions of many Fortune 500 companies. Nevertheless, some governance experts have argued that it is in the interest of corporations to look beyond profits as a measure of performance and to include the benefits of their actions to nature.

Green signaling requires a change in corporate mindset, not just cutting costs on existing operations. It requires changes to organizational capabilities, operations, and—potentially—business models. With such changes in the value creation equation, top-of-their-class graduates would seek Wall Street jobs to work on green projects.

However, the viability of a people-signaling TLD should go beyond demand. It should make economic sense. That is, the TLD should do its basic job better than alternative signaling mechanisms.

For dot-green and dot-eco, the signals conveyed are not only nature and sustainability, but people too. Thus, these TLDs should be looked on as potential complementors, not just competitors. ■

**Topic tags:** [new top-level domain \(TLD\) extensions](#)