



Angela Arthur wanted to hire an environmentally friendly housecleaning service back in 2007. When she couldn't find what she wanted, she went into business for herself.

The timing was both good and bad: The recession was just beginning — but more people were getting interested in going green.

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Today, California Green Clean operates in Sacramento, Roseville and Incline Village. Last year, Arthur was approved by the California Department of Corporations to offer franchises.

In the four years since opening her business, Arthur's picked up some competition.

"There are lots of people doing it now," Arthur said. "I frankly don't think it is a faddy kind of thing. Taking better care of ourselves by decreasing our exposure to toxins — I don't think that's going away."

A lot of businesses think the same and are embracing "green" products and practices to meet rising consumer demand — despite the recession. It's a nebulous concept, and numbers measuring the trend are hard to find. But today consumers can find a wide variety of green goods and services, from solar panels and automotive vehicles to window coverings and biodegradable dish soap — even mortgages.

As with any new business trend, success can be a matter of trial and error. Josh Daniels, for example, thinks he may have been premature when he opened Green Sacramento LLC about six years ago. The company offered cabinets, countertops, floor coverings, paint and other building finishing products, each with an environmentally friendly pedigree.

"What I focused on, basically from research and experience, were the products that people could relate to a little easier," Daniels said. But they didn't relate quite enough. Early this year, Green Sacramento had a big sale to clean out its inventory, and then closed its doors.

But Daniels hasn't given up. Working out of the same midtown location with business partner and architect Matt Piner, he's now head of Ecologic Builders Inc.

"Now I'm more in that other nebulous area where it is things you can't see," he said. That would be heating and air conditioning ducts, insulation and other systems hidden behind walls. Because energy efficiency is the core of a green building, Daniels said, he's now concentrating on the core, not the finishing touches.

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The art of selling green

Despite recession, companies still find market for green products