

Green Marketing: The Revolutionary Road

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ABSTRACT: *Although environmental issues influence all human activities, few academic disciplines have integrated green issues into their literature. This is especially true of marketing. As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, businesses have begun to modify their behaviour in an attempt to address society's "new" concerns. Some businesses have been quick to accept concepts like environmental management systems and waste minimization, and have integrated environmental issues into all organizational activities. On the other way environmental claims can also be a powerful marketing tool. Companies are increasingly using environmental claims in an attempt to differentiate themselves and their products or services from those of competitors. These claims come in a wide range of forms, including statements about environmental sustainability, recycling, carbon neutrality, energy efficiency, use of natural products or impact on animals and the natural environment. Companies realise that consumers today have an increased awareness of the environmental impact that modern goods have. Environmental claims are now relevant to a larger product range, from small household items such as nappies, toilet paper, cleaners and detergents to major whiteware goods and appliances. Many consumers consider environmental claims as a major factor when evaluating products to purchase. Therefore, it is essential that consumers are provided with accurate information in order to make informed decisions. Businesses making environmental or 'green' claims should ensure that their claims are scientifically sound and appropriately substantiated. Consumers are entitled to rely on any environmental claims you make and to expect these claims to be truthful and not misleading.*

KEYWORDS: *integrated environmental issues, sustainability, competitors, environmental claims, awareness*

I. INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, a majority of people believe that green marketing refers solely to the promotion or advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Terms like Phosphate Free, Recyclable, Refillable, Ozone Friendly, and Environmentally Friendly are some of the things consumers most often associate with green marketing. While these terms are green marketing claims, in general green marketing is a much broader concept, one that can be applied to consumer goods, industrial goods and even services. For example, around the world there are resorts that are beginning to promote themselves as "ecotourist" facilities, i.e., facilities that "specialize" in experiencing nature or operating in a fashion that minimizes their environmental impact. Yet defining green marketing is not a simple task. Indeed the terminology used in this area has varied, it includes: Green Marketing, Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing. While green marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was first discussed much earlier. The American Marketing Association (AMA) held the first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" in 1975.

Green or Environmental Marketing consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

This definition incorporates much of the traditional components of the marketing definition, i.e. "All activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants". Therefore it ensures that the interests of the organization and all its consumers are protected, as voluntary exchange will not take place unless both the buyer and seller mutually benefit. The above definition also includes the protection of the natural environment, by attempting to minimize the detrimental impact this exchange has on the environment. This second point is important, for human consumption by its very nature is destructive to the natural environment. (To be accurate products making green claims should state they are "less environmentally harmful" rather than "Environmentally Friendly.") Thus green marketing should look at minimizing environmental harm, not necessarily eliminating it.

Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising.

II. GREEN PRODUCTS AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

The products those are manufactured through green technology and that caused no environmental hazards are called green products. Promotion of green technology and green products is necessary for conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. We can define green products by following measures:

- 1) Products those are originally grown,
- 2) Products those are recyclable, reusable and biodegradable,
- 3) Products with natural ingredients,
- 4) Products containing recycled contents, non-toxic chemical,
- 5) Products contents under approved chemical,
- 6) Products that do not harm or pollute the environment,
- 7) Products that will not be tested on animals,
- 8) Products that have eco-friendly packaging i.e. reusable, refillable containers etc.

III. NEED OF GREEN MARKETING: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL VIEW

Issues like Global warming and depletion of ozone umbrella are the main for the healthy survival. Every person rich or poor would be interested in quality life with full of health and vigour and so would the corporate class. Financial gain and economic profit is the main aim of any corporate business. But harm to environment cost by sustain business across the globe is realized now though off late. This sense is building corporate citizenship in the business class. So green marketing by the business class is still in the selfish anthropological perspective of long term sustainable business and to please the consumer and obtain the license by the governing body. Industries in Asian countries are catching the need of green marketing from the developed countries but still there is a wide gap between their understanding and implementation.

2.1 REVOLUTIONARY STEPS IN GREEN MARKETING

2.1.1 Need for Standardization

It is found that only 5% of the marketing messages from “Green” campaigns are entirely true and there is a lack of standardization to authenticate these claims. There is no standardization to authenticate these claims. There is no standardization currently in place to certify a product as organic. Unless some regulatory bodies are involved in providing the certifications there will not be any verifiable means. A standard quality control board needs to be in place for such labelling and licensing.

2.1.2 New Concept

Indian literate and urban consumer is getting more aware about the merits of Green products. But it is still a new concept for the masses. The consumer needs to be educated and made aware of the environmental threats. The new green movements need to reach the masses and that will take a lot of time and effort. By India's ayurvedic heritage, Indian consumers do appreciate the importance of using natural and herbal beauty products. Indian consumer is exposed to healthy living lifestyles such as yoga and natural food consumption. In those aspects the consumer is already aware and will be inclined to accept the green products.

2.1.3 Patience and Perseverance

The investors and corporate need to view the environment as a major long-term investment opportunity, the marketers need to look at the long-term benefits from this new green movement. It will require a lot of patience and no immediate results. Since it is a new concept and idea, it will have its own acceptance period.

2.1.3 Avoiding Green Myopia

The first rule of green marketing is focusing on customer benefits i.e. the primary reason why consumers buy certain products in the first place. Do this right, and motivate consumers to switch brands or even pay a premium for the greener alternative. It is not going to help if a product is developed which is absolutely green in various aspects but does not pass the customer satisfaction criteria. This will lead to green myopia. Also if the green products are priced very high then again it will lose its market acceptability.

IV. GOLDEN RULES OF GREEN MARKETING

1. Know you're Customer: Make sure that the consumer is aware of and concerned about the issues that your product attempts to address, (Whirlpool learned the hard way that consumers wouldn't pay a premium for a CFC-free refrigerator because consumers dint know what CFCs were).

2. Educating your customers: Isn't just a matter of letting people know you're doing whatever you're doing to protect the environment, but also a matter of letting them know why it matters. Otherwise, for a significant portion of your target market, it's a case of "So what?" and your green marketing campaign goes nowhere.

3. Being Genuine & Transparent: means that whether today's brands are actually practicing "radical transparency," disclosing the good – and the bad along with **a)** are they actually doing what they claim to be doing in green marketing campaign and **b)** whether the rest of business policies are consistent with whatever they are doing that's environmentally friendly. All these conditions have to be met for business to establish the kind of environmental credentials that will allow a green marketing campaign to succeed.

4. Reassure the Buyer: Consumers must be made to believe that the product performs the job it's supposed to do—they won't forego product quality in the name of the environment.

5. Consider Your Pricing: If you're charging a premium for your product and many environmentally preferable products cost more due to economies of scale and use of higher-quality ingredients—make sure those consumers can afford the premium and feel it's worth it.

6. Giving your customers an opportunity to participate: means personalizing the benefits of your environmentally friendly actions, normally through letting the customer take part in positive environmental action.

7. Consumer expectations have changed and they don't expect perfection: It is not enough for a company to green its products; consumers expect that the products they purchase are pocket friendly and also to help reduce the environmental impact in their own lives too. Consumers don't expect your products to be greenest of greens but they expect that you'll set high goals (i.e., perform beyond mere compliance), keep improving, and report on progress.

8. Green is mainstream: Not too long ago, just a small group of deep green consumers existed. Today, 83% of consumers – representing every generation, from Baby Boomers to Millennial and Gen Ys – are some shade of green. Moreover, there are now finely defined segments of green consumers.

9. Green is cool. Once a faddish preoccupation of the fringe, green is not only mainstream, it's chic. In fact, green consumers are early adopters and leaders who influence purchasing behaviour. Celebrities and other cool types generally are espousing green causes. People show off (and self-actualize) by tooling around in a Toyota Prius (or soon, we predict, in a Nissan LEAF electric), and carry cloth shopping bags to look the part.

10. Greener products work equally or better – and are often worth a premium price. Thanks to advances in technology, we've come a long way since the days when greener products gathered dust on health food store shelves because they didn't work as well and were not a good value. Organics, hybrid cars, and safer cleaning products now command a price premium.

11. Green inspires innovative products and services that can result in better consumer value, enhanced brands, and a stronger company. Savvy managers no longer consider the environment to be a burden that represents added cost and overhead – but an investment that can pay back handsomely.

12. Values guide consumer purchasing. Historically, consumers bought solely on price, performance, and convenience. But today, how products are sourced, manufactured, packaged, disposed of – and even such social aspects as how factory and farm workers are treated – all matter.

13. A life-cycle approach is necessary. Single attributes such as recyclable, organic, or energy-efficient matter greatly, but don't mean a product is green overall. Recycled products still create waste, organic strawberries can travel thousands of miles, and CFLs contain mercury. So a more thorough, life-cycle or carbon-based approach to greening is necessary.

14. Manufacturer and retailer reputation count now more than ever. In addition to looking for trusted brand names on supermarket shelves, consumers are now flipping over packages, saying, "Who makes this brand? Did they produce this product with high environmental and social standards?"

15. Save me! Scrap the images of planets! Bag the daisies! Nix the babies! Even the greenest consumers no longer buy products just to “save the planet.” Today’s consumers buy greener brands to help protect their health, save money, or because they simply work better. That’s why products such as organics, natural personal care and pet care, and energy-efficient products are leading the way in sales.

16. Businesses are their philosophies. It used to be that companies were what they made. International Business Machines. General Foods. General Motors. Now, businesses and brands are what they stand for. Method. Starbucks. Timberland.

17. Sustainability represents an important consumer need, and is now an integral aspect of product quality. Green is no longer simply a market position. Products need to be green. Brands need to be socially responsible.

18. The greenest products represent new concepts with business models with significantly less impact. If we simply keep greening up the same old “brown” products we’ve been using forever, we’re never going to get to sustainability. With time running out, we’ve got to “leap” to service replacements for products, and adopt entirely new ways of doing business.

19. Consumers don’t necessarily need to own products; services can meet their needs, perhaps even better. Consumers historically met their needs by owning products, but concepts like Zipcar and eBooks are starting to prove that utility and service are what really matters.

20. The brands consumers buy and trust today educate and engage them in meaningful conversation through a variety of media, especially via websites and online social networks. Talking “at” consumers through traditional media and paid advertising can’t build loyalty among empowered consumers in a connected world.

21. Green consumers are strongly influenced by the recommendations of friends and family, and trusted third parties. With rampant cynicism about traditional forms of advertising and a backlash in place against perceived greenwashing, savvy marketers leverage purchase influencers and third parties like NGOs and especially eco-labellers.

22. Environmentalists are no longer the enemy. Recognizing the power of the marketplace to effect change, many environmental advocates willingly partner with industry, offering useful guidance and expertise.

23. Nearly everyone is a corporate stakeholder. No longer confined to just customers, employees, and investors, publics of all stripes are now corporate stakeholders: environmentalists, educators, and children – even the unborn.

24. Authenticity. It’s not enough to slap on a recycling logo or make a biodegradability claim. Brands viewed as the most genuine integrate relevant sustainability benefits into their products. That’s why HSBC and Stonyfield Farm aim to reduce the carbon impacts of their operations.

25. Keep it simple. Plato was an environmentalist: “Simplicity is elegance.” Today’s consumers are cutting out the needless purchases, and getting rid of the gadgets and gizmos that don’t add value to their lives. That’s why they are migrating to brands that help express these values – Method, Starbucks, and Timberland. It’s just that simple.

V. GREEN MARKETING – ADOPTED BY THE FIRMS

Green marketing has been widely adopted by the firms worldwide and the following are the possible reasons cited for this wide adoption:

4.1. Opportunities

As demand changes, many firms see these changes as an opportunity to exploit and have a competitive advantage over firms marketing non-environmentally responsible alternatives. Some examples of firms who have strived to become more environmentally responsible, in an attempt to better satisfy their consumer needs are:

- McDonald's replaced its clam shell packaging with waxed paper because of increased consumer concern relating to polystyrene production and Ozone depletion.
- Tuna manufacturers modified their fishing techniques because of the increased concern over driftnet fishing, and the resulting death of dolphins.
- Xerox introduced a "high quality" recycled photocopier paper in an attempt to satisfy the demands of firms for less environmentally harmful products.

4.2. Government Pressure

As with all marketing related activities, governments want to "protect" consumer and society; this protection has significant green marketing implications. Government regulations relating to environmental marketing are designed to protect consumers in several ways,

1. Reduce production of harmful goods or by-products Modify consumer and industry's use and/or consumption of harmful goods.

2. Ensure that all types of consumers have the ability to evaluate the environmental composition of goods. Government establish regulations designed to control the amount of hazardous wastes produced by firms.

4.3. Competitive Pressure

Another major force in the environmental marketing area has been firms' desire to maintain their competitive position. In many cases firms observe competitors promoting their environmental behaviours and attempt to emulate this behaviour. In some instances this competitive pressure has caused an entire industry to modify and thus reduce its detrimental environmental behaviour. For example when one tuna manufacture stopped using driftnets the others followed suit.

4.4. Social Responsibility

Many firms are beginning to realize that they are members of the wider community and therefore must behave in an environmentally responsible fashion. This translates into firms that believe they must achieve environmental objectives as well as profit related objectives. This results in environmental issues being integrated into the firm's corporate culture. There are examples of firms adopting both strategies.

An example

of a firm that does not promote its environmental initiative is Coca-Cola. They have invested large sums of money in various recycling activities, as well as having modified their packaging to minimize its environmental impact. While being concerned about the environment, Coke has not used this concern as a marketing tool. Thus many consumers may not realize that Coke is a very environmentally committed organization. Another firm who is very environmentally responsible but does not promote this fact, at least outside the organization, is Walt Disney World (WDW). WDW has an extensive waste management program and infrastructure in place, yet these facilities are not highlighted in their general tourist promotional activities.

4.5. Fulfilling the Promise

Consumers, shareholders and society at large all stand to benefit when a company integrates environmental friendliness into its marketing strategy. If properly implemented, green marketing can help to increase the emotional connection between consumers and brands. Being branded a green company can generate a more positive public image, which can, in turn, enhance sales and increase stock prices.' A green image may also lead consumers to have increased affinity for a company or a specific product, causing brand loyalty to grow. While there are obvious benefits to integrating environmental friendliness into consumer marketing, there are also some significant risks. There is a lot at stake for companies that choose to implement green marketing strategies, including the magnitude and risk of capital investments, the rigors of regulatory compliance and the potential for consumer backlash. An ability to anticipate and react to the next environmental issue could mean the difference between maintaining a green reputation or losing status as a green company — and potentially much more.

VI. CONCLUSION

Now this is the right time to select “Green Marketing” globally. It will come with drastic change in the world of business if all nations will make strict roles because green marketing is essential to save world from pollution. From the business point of view because a clever marketer is one who not only convinces the consumer, but also involves the consumer in marketing his product. Green marketing should not be considered as just one more approach to marketing, but has to be pursued with much greater vigour, as it has an environmental and social dimension to it. With the threat of global warming looming large, it is extremely important that green marketing becomes the norm rather than an exception or just a fad. Recycling of paper, metals, plastics, etc., in a safe and environmentally harmless manner should become much more systematized and universal. It has to become the general norm to use energy-efficient lamps and other electrical goods. Marketers also have the responsibility to make the consumers understand the need for and benefits of green products as compared to non-green ones. In green marketing, consumers are willing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment. Finally, consumers, industrial buyers and suppliers need to pressurize effects on minimize the negative effects on the environment-friendly. Green marketing assumes even more importance and relevance in developing countries like India.

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