

THE IMPACT OF GREEN MARKETING ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

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ABSTRACT

A common mantra in green marketing is that if you want the masses to buy your product, focus your messaging on more traditional attributes such as price, quality or service. A product's "greenness" is likely secondary for many mainstream consumers. For green marketers then, the Holy Grail may be to offer a product that is competitive on dimensions both traditional and eco-friendly. This would result in the greatest number of products sold and greatest impact on the environment. As such, the green product paradox presents quite the challenge for a marketer. For individual companies, such products can be both profitable and socially responsible. It is only by looking at the forest from the trees and perhaps a little into the future does it become apparent that, in aggregate, such products may, paradoxically, have a negative impact.

A sustainable brand might try itself to mitigate any impact that its products may have. But, this will only have broad impact if it ultimately compels competitors to follow suit. Given this, marketers should recognize that a solution to the paradox may not lie within an individual company's grasp. Alternatively, it may take an industry consortium to make the necessary product changes or evolve consumer expectations. Or, it may take collaboration across industries to have lasting impact.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Consumer Satisfaction, Environmental Safety.

INTRODUCTION:

Green Marketing is a phenomenon which has developed particular importance in the modern market. Green marketing is a way to use the environmental benefits of a product or service to promote sales. Many consumers will choose products that do not damage the environment over less environmentally friendly products, even if they cost more. With green marketing, advertisers focus on environmental benefits to sell products such as biodegradable diapers, energy-efficient light bulbs, and environmentally safe detergents.

GREEN MARKETING:

The concept of green marketing has been around since the first Earth Day in 1970. But the idea did not catch on until the 1980s, when raising the public interest in the environment led to demand for more green products and services. Manufacturers responded to public interest by labeling hundreds of new products “environmentally friendly”—making claims that products were biodegradable, compostable, energy efficient, or the like.

In spite of its growing popularity, the green marketing movement faced serious setbacks in the late 1980s because many industries made false claims about their products and services.

DEFINITION:

According to the American Marketing Association, green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. The green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product notification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Other similar terms used are Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing.

EVOLUTION OF GREEN MARKETING:

The green marketing has evolved over a period of time. According to Peattie (2001), the evolution of green marketing has three phases. First phase was termed as “**Ecological**” green marketing, and during this period all marketing activities were concerned to help environment problems and provide remedies for environmental problems. Second phase was “**Environmental**” green marketing and the focus shifted on clean technology that involved designing of innovative new products, which take care of pollution and waste issues. Third phase was “**Sustainable**” green marketing. It came into prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000.

WHY GREEN MARKETING?

As resources are limited and human wants are unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste as well as to achieve the organization’s objective. So green marketing is inevitable.

There is growing interest among the consumers all over the world regarding protection of environment. Worldwide evidence indicates people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior. As a result of this, green marketing has emerged which speaks for growing market for sustainable and socially responsible products and services.

GREEN MARKETING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to the World Commission on Environmental Development (1978), Sustainable Development is “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. The common theme

throughout this strategy of sustainable development is the need to integrate economic and ecological considerations in decision making by making policies that conserve the quality of agricultural development and environmental protection. This is what the end product of green marketing is, environmental protection for the present and the future generation. The development of energy- efficient operations, better pollution controls, recyclable and biodegradable packaging, ecologically safe products are all part of green marketing which also leads to sustainable development.

GREEN MARKETING IN TERMS OF PRICE, PRODUCT, PLACE AND PROMOTION

Green Marketing begins with 'green design'. Product design constitutes an active interface between consumer manufactures. Super concentrated laundry detergents are associated with energy saving, reduced packaging, space and money. The product itself has to be made in such a way that it satisfies consumer and manufacture's needs. For ecologically sustainable products to be successful, green branding attributes have to be efficiently communicated. Most buyer decisions are influenced by the labeling, (green labeling) that states all that makes the product green compliant. The price of green product has to be affordable for the customer to encourage purchase. Industrial differentiation works only when products reduce client's cost. Most buyers are influenced by advertisement that reflects a company's commitment to environment .Companies that do green advertisement that tend to portray an image of environmental friendliness, influences their customer purchase decisions. Consumers love to associate themselves with companies that are environmental stewards. When a company communicates this through their advertisements, promotions, publicity and corporate social responsibilities, they are sure to get many loyal customers. Green distribution is a very delicate operation. Customers must be guaranteed of the 'Ecological nature' of the product. The green environment is a constantly regulated environment and as such high level of compliance is necessary when carrying out distribution of green products.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND GREEN MARKETING:

Customer satisfaction has been defined in two basic ways: as either an outcome or as a process. As an outcome, satisfying the end state resulting from the consumption experience. As a process, it is the perceptual evaluative and psychological process that contributes to satisfaction. The definition is varied with regards to their level of simplicity which includes;

- Product satisfaction
- Satisfaction with the purchase decision experience
- Satisfaction with the performance attribute
- Satisfaction with the store or institution
- Satisfaction with pre-purchase experience

Marketing literature suggests that there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfaction leads to attitudinal loyalty. It could be seen as the intension to purchase. Satisfaction is an outcome that occurs without comparing expectations. Customer satisfaction could also be defined as an evaluative response to perceived outcome of a particular consumption experience. It is an overall judgment on satisfaction, based on the assumption that satisfaction is the outcome of service

quality. Many Authors believe that customers have a high level of involvement regarding environmental issues as a consequence of growing environmental consciousness. O'[-Consequently, companies that communicate their 'green product' in their packaging, advertisement or manufacturing process, gain satisfied customers. Because of the green trend, companies that fail to 'go green' are not failing to fail in their industry. Customers want to associate themselves with companies and products that are eco-friendly.

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Environment is simply our surrounding. The increased awareness on environmental issues is as a result of increased publicity on the media on issues such as, the warring off of the ozone layer and increased pollution of the environment by industries. Customers have become concern about their everyday habit and the impact it has on their environment. Managing environmental safety issue is highly challenging, time consuming and expensive. There are many laws on environmental safety that have made companies liable to any wrongdoings. These laws cover areas such as, harmful pollution, managing of hazardous materials and soon. As a result, several hazard controls, pollution control and prevention programs are held in different parts of the world on emergency procedures, contingency planning and employee training. Similarly, many regulatory bodies and acts are set to ensure environmental safety and protection. Environmental Safety is not an easy task to implement. Implementing the GHS standardization policies of a single frame work of the classification and labeling of chemicals so hazards are consistently defined across different national jurisdiction is beneficial but highly challenging. EH&S (Environmental Health and Safety) regulatory compliance and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiative throughout the supply chain can help promote and sustain ongoing improvement within an organization. These improvements will help the company achieve regulatory compliance and position itself as a socially responsible company.

CUSTOMERS AND GREEN MARKETING:

There is now a real sense that environmental protection is highly necessary. Everyone believes a green life is a better and healthier life for present and future generation. Most consumers' spending pattern shows that they have a desire for brands that 'go green'. Consumers not only want to buy their products but are willing to pay more for it. People are willing to pay a premium for energy alternatives such as, wind and solar power. Consumers are motivated to buy from companies that are eco-friendly in the production. When a company display's the green logo on their product, it shows that their product or services stands out from the crowd and this gives them a competitive edge. Consequently, most customer buying decisions are influenced by green product label.

CONCLUSION:

Green marketing is a tool for protecting the environment for the future generation. It has a positive impact on environmental safety. Because of the growing concern of environmental protection, there is an emergence of a new market which is the green market. For companies to survive in this market, they need to go green in all aspect of their business. Consumers want to identify themselves with companies that are green compliant and are willing to pay a premium for a greener life style. As such, green marketing is not just an environmental protection tool but also, a marketing strategy.

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