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Research Paper
Sustainable and Green Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing refers to the practice of developing and advertising products based on real or perceived environmental sustainability. It includes a wide range of activities like modification of product, sustainable packaging alteration in production process, as well as modifying advertising techniques. It incorporates sustainable practices, eco-friendly materials, renewable energy resources and socially responsible manufacturing processes into marketing strategies. Sustainable and green marketing is a contemporary concept and it is implemented by companies and business firms to make a positive impact on the community and the planet. Sustainability addresses environmental degradation, climate change, global warming, inequality, poverty, peace and righteousness to accomplish harmony between nature and humans. In recent times there is growing interest among all sections of public regarding environment protection, the growing need for eco-friendly, renewable, zero-waste and carbon-neutral products. Examples of green marketing includes reduced emissions associated with a product's manufacturing process, use of recycled materials for product packaging, producing sustainable products, reduce exploitation of natural resources, cutting down energy consumption. As a result, green marketing has emerged a means for development in sustainable practices and technology. Green marketing shifts marketing efforts to digital platforms which reduce carbon footprint associated with printing. Green marketing encourages brands to impart just-in-time strategies or lean and agile manufacturing methods to save cost, optimize inventory and show fast quality outcomes. This research paper explains the concept of green marketing, principles of green marketing, benefits, limitations and challenges of green marketing.

1. Introduction

The adverse effect of human activities over environment has become a matter of concern in recent times. Environment enthusiasts all around the world are spending their energy to diminish human exploitation of natural resources. Understanding the society's new concerns businesses have begun to modify their behavior and incorporated environmental issues into organizational proceedings. The term Green marketing started emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" was held by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1975. The first introduction on green marketing to the world took place here which resulted in one of the first books on Green Marketing entitled as "Ecological Marketing". Green marketing and eco-marketing are part of modern marketing approaches which do not just refocus, adjust or enhance existing marketing thinking and practice, but also seek to challenge those approaches and provide a substantially different perspective. In more detail green, environmental and eco-marketing belong to the group of approaches which seek to address the lack of fit between marketing as it is currently practiced and the ecological and social realities of wider marketing environment.

• **American Marketing Association**, "Green marketing is the marketing of products and services that are environmentally safe"

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• **Michael Jay Polonsky**, “Green marketing consists of all activities designed to generate and facilities any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs with minimal degradation impact on the natural environment”.

Green Marketing, also known as sustainable or eco-friendly marketing, refers to the practice of promoting products, services or business practices that are environmentally accountable. While traditional marketing emphasizes selling products and services to meet consumer needs and drive profits, green marketing prioritizes environmental sustainability and preservation alongside consumer satisfaction. It focuses on producing, promoting and delivering offerings that minimize negative impacts on the environment while appealing customers who value sustainability.

Green marketing highlights eco-friendly attributes such as biodegradability, recyclability, renewable materials and energy efficiency. It is aligned with long-term goals of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable development- An approach that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2. Review of literature

The evolution of green marketing has been divided into three phases-

Ecological Phase

Green marketing has been developing 1960, and during the first phase, the focus of researchers and practitioners were on toxic industries like petroleum and chemical industry, mining industry, paint production etc., and the damage caused by them. There was a growing concern for natural resources and reduction in use of harmful pesticides like DDT. The main benefit gained during this phase was awareness from the government. Government recognized green marketing to be “a form of response to environmental activism”.

Environmental Phase

The focus was on clean technology for developing innovative product which leads to decrease in pollution and waste. This stage included electronics, tourism and clothing industries. Environmental phase was not only restricted to consumption of resources but put capture to environmental problems like destruction of ecosystem, extinction of species etc. But the companies in this phase found it hard to appeal the customers about green characteristics of the product and its benefits. However, recyclable packaging materials started being produced in this phase.

Sustainable phase

During 2000, sustainable phase started when the companies started focusing on special requirement of consumption and promotion in a means that the existing method does not harm the life of future generations. Marketing became more radical with a goal to meet full environmental costs of production and consumption in order to create a sustainable economy. Sustainable marketing, future orientation and emphasis on needs became popular in many companies. Analysis of evolution of green marketing proves that this orientation has matured over the past 6 decades. There is no doubt that green marketing is still evolving, so there exists a probability that soon green marketing will overrun the boundaries of sustainable phase.

3. Methodology

This research paper is descriptive in nature and based on secondary sources which are collected from different sources such as books, websites, articles and research paper.

4. Principles of green marketing

The core principles of green marketing include-

1. Emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices throughout the product lifecycle, from sourcing of raw materials to manufacturing to delivery to customers and disposal.
2. Ensures that sustainability features, such as durability or energy efficiency align with consumer expectations.
3. Involves adopting business practices that support environmental stewardship and ethical treatment of resources, employees and communities.
4. Transparency and honesty where companies clearly communicate environmental benefits of products or services and avoids “green-washing” which involves making false and exaggerated claims about eco-friendliness.
5. Invest in research and development to create sustainable alternatives to traditional products.
6. Educate consumers about the importance of sustainability and how their choices impact the environment.

4 P's OF GREEN MARKETING

Green marketing is a way for companies to link their business to the environment through their marketing activities. It can help businesses and society to create a more sustainable and equitable world.

Product	Green products do not pollute the environment and helps to save energy. It focuses on environment friendly materials and design. It also includes offering consumers greener options like organic products that appeal to eco-consumers.
Place	The choice of where and when to make a product available has a significant impact on attracting consumers. It also focuses on providing consumers with easy access to greener products and choosing transport options that have lower

	impact on nature, such as e-vehicles.
Price	Most customers are ready to pay more if there is a perception of the value of additional products. A specific price bracket can highlight the product's environmental benefits. Setting fair prices to products can show company's commitment.
Promotion	Smart green marketers will be able to strengthen environmental credibility by using sustainable marketing and communication tools and practices. Highlight the environmental benefits and sustainability efforts of the product in marketing campaigns.

Benefits of green marketing

1. Business benefits

• Competitive advantage

Differentiates business from competitors by showcasing their commitment towards sustainability, attracting environmentally conscious customers. This differentiation can lead to a unique market position, attracting customers who prioritize environmental responsibility and giving the business an edge in a competitive landscape.

• Enhanced brand image and reputation

Builds trust and loyalty by portraying the company as socially responsible and environmentally friendly. As consumers become more eco-conscious, they increasingly favor brands that prioritize green practices. This positive perception can elevate a company's reputation, foster goodwill, and build a strong trust-worthy brand.

• Social responsibility

The HSBC became the world's first bank to go carbon-neutral last year. Other examples include Coca-Cola, which has invested in various recycling activities. Walt Disney World in Florida, US, has an extensive waste management program and infrastructure in place.

• Consumer loyalty

Retains eco-conscious consumers who prefer brands that align to their values. When companies demonstrate a genuine commitment towards environmental sustainability, they resonate with customers who share similar values. Loyal customers not only repeat purchases but also advocate for the brand, potentially attracting new customers by word of mouth.

• Cost savings

Sustainable practices such as energy efficiency and waste reduction often lead to lower operational costs in the long term. Implementing energy efficient practices, reducing waste, optimizing resources can lower operational costs. These savings not only benefit the bottom line but also enhance overall efficiency of business operations.

2. Consumer benefits

• Health and safety

Products made from natural, non-toxic materials and those that are free from harmful additives can enhance consumer health and safety. Green products use non-toxic, organic or biodegradable materials ensuring safety for customers and their families. For example, eco-friendly cleaning products reduce indoor air pollution, while organic food products avoid the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.

• Eco-friendly choices

Green marketing educates consumers about the environmental impact of their purchases. Provides customers with products that have lower environmental impact, allowing them to contribute to sustainability. This transparency helps consumers understand the broader implications of their buying decisions and encourages them to support products and brands that contribute to environmental preservation.

• Awareness and education

Encourages customers to make informed purchasing decisions and adopt sustainable habits. Consumers who choose green products are supporting businesses that align with their environmental values. By purchasing from companies that prioritize sustainability, consumers contribute to the broader movement toward environmental responsibility.

Limitations of green marketing

• Initial costs

Environmentally friendly materials, sustainable sourcing, and eco-friendly production processes can often be more expensive than traditional methods. This can be a barrier for some companies, especially smaller ones. These higher costs may result in higher prices for consumers, which could limit market adoption, especially in price-sensitive segments.

• Consumer skepticism

Many consumers may not fully understand the claims made by green marketers, leading to skepticism about the legitimacy of environmental benefits. Without clear, easily understood information, consumers may not trust that the product is genuinely eco-friendly. Companies must navigate diverse consumer perceptions and ensure transparency.

- **Complex certification process**

Acquiring environmental certifications can be a lengthy and complex process, particularly in certain industries. There is often no universally accepted standard for what qualifies as "green" or "sustainable", leading to confusion and inconsistency in the marketplace. This hurdle might dissuade companies from pursuing green marketing or delay their entry into the eco-friendly market.

- **Unwillingness to pay premium**

Majority of consumers are not willing to pay a premium for green products because of the price sensitive nature of our market. Price becomes a critical factor of consideration for green marketers. Most consumers will pay extra price, if there is a perception of extra product offering.

Challenges of green marketing

- **Green washing**

Some companies make false or exaggerated claims about the environmental benefits of their products to appear eco-friendly, a practice known as greenwashing. Greenwashing leads to consumer distrust and skepticism, making it difficult for genuine green products to stand out. It also undermines the credibility of green marketing efforts overall.

- **Need for standardization**

There is no standardization currently in place to certify a product as organic. Without clear guidelines or standards, businesses can exploit the ambiguity of green labels, leading to misleading claims and consumer confusion. This also makes it harder for businesses to prove their sustainability credentials. 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.

- **Ineffective communication**

Many green marketing campaigns fail to effectively communicate the environmental benefits of a product or service in a way that resonates with consumers. If the environmental impact is not clearly explained or quantified, consumers may not fully understand the product's value, reducing the effectiveness of the marketing.

- **Avoiding green myopia**

Green Myopia refers to a narrow, short-sighted approach to green marketing and environmental responsibility, where businesses focus too much on promoting individual "green" products without considering the broader, more systemic environmental impacts of their entire business operations. Businesses may market a product as "green" without addressing the environmental impact of the entire lifecycle of that product, from sourcing materials to disposal. For instance, promoting a product as "eco-friendly" because of recyclable packaging, while ignoring the carbon footprint of its production process, is an example of green myopia.

Suggestions

- **Being transparent**

Back up your sustainability claims with certifications, third-party audits, or specific data. For example, use eco-certifications like Fair Trade, Organic, or Energy Star to give your claims credibility. Regularly report on sustainability efforts and progress through detailed sustainability reports or environmental impact assessments.

- **Sustainable packaging redesign**

This involves evaluating your packaging materials and making eco-friendly changes. Ensure your packaging is reusable or easily recyclable, and encourage consumers to recycle by clearly labelling packaging with appropriate recycling instructions. Consider using recycled or biodegradable materials and reduce excessive packaging to achieve this and communicate the eco-friendly aspects of your packaging to customers.

- **Spreading awareness to customers**

Share the journey of your sustainability efforts and the challenges you've faced and overcome in becoming more eco-friendly. Consumers appreciate businesses that are honest about their progress and setbacks. Avoid jargon or overly technical terms in your messaging. Make your sustainability claims easy for all consumers to understand.

- **Green partnerships**

This campaign involves collaborating with other sustainable businesses or organizations. Consider creating joint marketing campaigns or cross-promote each other's eco-friendly products. Strengthen your collective impact and reach a wider audience. Ensure that your suppliers follow sustainable practices. This includes using eco-friendly materials, reducing energy consumption, and maintaining ethical labour practices. Partner with environmental organizations or

contribute to sustainability-focused causes. This could include supporting reforestation efforts, donating a portion of profits to environmental charities, or participating in environmental clean-up projects.

• Engage in corporate social responsibility

If your company's operations produce carbon emissions, consider investing in carbon offset programs, such as tree planting or renewable energy projects, to neutralize your carbon footprint. Encourage sustainability within your organization by involving employees in environmental initiatives, from reducing office waste to promoting energy-saving practices at work.

• Innovate with green technologies

Partner with start-ups, tech companies, or research institutions focused on sustainable solutions to create innovative products or services with lower environmental impact. Stay ahead of the curve by investing in new green technologies that improve your products, reduce your environmental footprint, or create new sustainable products that meet consumer demand.

5. Conclusion

Green marketing is not an easy concept to be performed by any companies and business firms. Business firms and companies implement rules and regulations to achieve the goals of green marketing strategy and earn more profits. Sustainable marketing is a crucial strategy for both businesses and consumers, offering benefits such as enhanced brand image, increased consumer loyalty, and support for sustainable practices. By adopting these principles, businesses can align with environmental values and meet the growing demand for eco-friendly products and practices.

Businesses are encouraged to explore and integrate sustainable marketing practices to stay aligned with evolving consumer values and environmental needs. By doing so, they not only enhance their market position but also contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious world. Governments, consumers, and other stakeholders are increasingly demanding that companies be more responsible in their operations and supply chains. This has led companies to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and differentiate themselves from their competitors.

By promoting products and practices that are eco-friendly, companies can not only reduce their own environmental impact, but also contribute to a larger societal shift toward sustainability. Finally, the growth of green marketing can also be attributed to technological advances that have made it easier and more cost-effective for companies to adopt sustainable practices. As a result, it has become increasingly viable for companies to engage in green marketing and to promote their environmental efforts to consumers.

In conclusion, green marketing is a crucial aspect of modern businesses as it helps raise awareness about environmental issues and encourages consumers to make more sustainable choices.

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