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GREEN MARKETING – A SIGNIFICANCE OF ECO-FRIENDLY MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

The environmental movement has become one of the most important issues at the global scenario. We need to undertake the task of protecting the environment from further destruction, which can be done mainly by educating people especially the youth, who holds the reins of Nation's future. Today there is growing awareness among us on environment in which we live and it had led to ecological concern. The need of the hour for every human person is to evolve a spirituality which can respond positively, creatively and critically to the ecological crisis of today. The main aspect of the eco-crisis is pollution. The environmental crisis, which is the result of greed, a desire to have more and more material possession. As a result the poorer are the first victims of pollution air, water, and of deforestation and erosion of floods and droughts. Since resources are limited and human wants unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste while achieving the organization's objective. Today's consumers are becoming more and more rational about the environment and are also becoming socially responsible. Therefore all companies are attentive towards the consumers' aspirations for environmentally less damaging or neutral products. Many companies want to have an early-mover advantage as eventually they have to move towards becoming green. Green Marketing, environmental Marketing or ecological marketing refers to holistic marketing concept, wherein the production, marketing consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less harmful to the environment. Green marketing is not all about manufacturing green products and services but encompassing all those marketing activities that are needed to develop and sustain consumers' eco-friendly attitudes and behaviors' in a way that helps in creating minimal detrimental impact on the environment. There is a growing awareness among consumers worldwide regarding protection of the environment in which they live. People do want to bestow a clean earth to their descendants. Various studies by environmentalists indicate that people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior pattern so as to be less hostile towards it. In this context, this paper highlights the Green Marketing – A Significance of Eco-friendly Marketing involves the new mantra for marketers to satisfy the needs of consumers and earn better profits.

INTRODUCTION

Green Marketing, environmental Marketing or ecological marketing refers to holistic marketing concept, wherein the production, marketing consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less harmful to the environment. Green marketing is not all about manufacturing green

products and services but encompassing all those marketing activities that are needed to develop and sustain consumers' eco-friendly attitudes and behaviors' in a way that helps in creating minimal detrimental impact on the environment. With growing awareness about the implications of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, harmful impact of pollutants, etc, both marketers and consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the need for a switch to green products and services. While the shift to "green" may appear to be expensive in the short term, it proves to be indispensable and advantageous in the long run. Many organizations want to turn green as an increasing number of consumers associate themselves with environment-friendly products. Alongside, one also witnesses confusion among the consumers regarding the products. In particular, one often finds distrust regarding the credibility of green products. Therefore to ensure consumer-confidence, marketers of green products need to be much more transparent and refrain from breaching any law or standards relating to products or business practices.

Significance of eco-friendly marketing

Since resources are limited and human wants unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste while achieving the organization's objective. Today's consumers are becoming more and more rational about the environment and are also becoming socially responsible. Therefore all companies are attentive towards the consumers' aspirations for environmentally less damaging or neutral products. Many companies want to have an early-mover advantage as eventually they have to move towards becoming green.

There is a growing awareness among consumers worldwide regarding protection of the environment in which they live. People do want to bestow a clean earth to their descendants. Various studies by environmentalists indicate that people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior pattern so as to be less hostile towards it.

Most of the consumers, both individual and industrial, are becoming more concerned about environment friendly products. Most of them feel that environment-friendly products are safe to use. As a result, green marketing has emerged, which aims at marketing sustainable and socially-responsible products and services. It is the era of producing recyclable, non-toxic and environment-friendly goods. This has become the new mantra for marketers to satisfy the needs of consumers and earn better profits.

Some of the significant benefits of green marketing are:

- It creates sustainability in marketing socially-responsible products and services to the society.
- It ensures sustained long-term growth along with profitability.
- It saves money in the long run though initially the cost is more.
- It helps companies market their products and services keeping the environment aspects in mind.
- It helps in accessing the new markets and enjoying competitive advantage.
- Most of the employees also feel proud and responsible to be working for an environmentally-responsible company.

Consumers to Promote Green marketing

Green marketing involves focusing on promoting the consumption of green products. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the companies to adopt creativity and insight, and be committed to the development of environment-friendly products.

The following principles can be adopted by organizations as well as consumers to promote green marketing.

- Companies should produce the product with new technology or with modified existing technology in order to reduce detrimental impact on the ecology resources.
- Management should strictly follow environment-protective procedures.

- Companies should use eco-friendly raw materials for production purpose. Recycled materials can also be used for production and packaging.
- Commercial enterprises should encourage their employees and nearer society to use green products in and out of their home.
- Public should try to reuse the waste where applicable. For example, waste fruits and vegetables can be given to animals, etc.
- People should use refill containers for secondary purposes when their actual purpose is over.

Green Marketing Strategies

A Company practices green marketing strategies in order to attain the following goals:

- Eliminate the concept of waste
- Reinvent the concept of a product
- Make prices reflect actual and environmental costs
- Make environmentalism profitable

The various green marketing strategies include

- Marketing review (including internal and external situation analysis)
- Expand a marketing plan outlining strategies with regard to four P's – green product, green price, green promotion and green physical distribution
- Apply marketing strategies
- Set up performance evaluation schemes

Eco-friendly Status

The environment-friendly status is not yet a marketing strategy in India. Green products, services and organizations are a rarity in almost all categories of products and services marketed in India. Eco-tourism, green buildings, environment-friendly hotels, organic food etc., account for a minuscule percentage of our economy, whose rapid growth is driven by consumption expenditure, contributing to about 64 per cent of GDP. Marketers, in fact, should have grabbed this opportunity and developed a strong differentiating ground for their brands.. Unfortunately, they are approaching green marketing only half-heartedly.

While the media is often flooded with the news of organizations highlighting their environment-friendly initiatives and achievements, these initiatives are hardly ever leveraged to differentiate the firm and its offerings in the marketplace. Many green initiatives relate to manufacturing plants and back-end operations, for example, water and energy conservation, social forestry, solid waste recycling, etc, and have largely remained a socio-legal obligation. If we consider the top 500 businesses in India, less than 40 per cent of the websites have a webpage on environment. Many people also believe that if the information on the websites is the reflection of priorities, these organizations are highly unlikely to use green initiatives as a marketing tool in the near future. However, this is quite surprising when one considers the universal concerns for climate change and global warming.

Considering the international markets, especially those in developed countries, environmentalism is a major concern and the firms are forced to adopt environment-friendly market practices such as developing and marketing products that are recyclable, more fuel-efficient, less polluting or making use of packaging that is bio-degradable, recyclable or reusable. Consumers in these countries are also eco-friendly and pay attention to the company's green credentials, eco-friendly brands and green labels/marks on the products.

The international scenario suggests that in the international markets there is a pull for the green products and services rather than a push as existing in the Indian markets. However, if a similar pull effects is generated by the consumers in India, the market for green products and services is bound to evolve.

The Role of Markets for Green Products

The markets for green products will evolve through a favorable convergence of macro-environment forces comprising legislations, economic incentives, consumer support and technological break through's. These include multi-point fuel-injection systems, low-emission engines, unleaded fuel devices for cement and thermal power plants, alternatives to chlor-ofluorocarbon-based refrigerants, etc., Consumer-preference will be the most critical factor to determine the growth of green products in India. Several initiatives will be required to grow these existing niche markets to attract the mainstream consumers. Marketers in order to market their brands as green will first have to go through a presume way. They will need to identify the consumers who are already green in their attitudes and behaviours, and can lay a foundation for the further evolution of the phenomena. It is believed by most marketers that green consumerism will follow a trickle-down effect.

Green products have been promoted as conspicuous consumptions rather than products for mass consumption. Marketers will have to make green products affordable. These seemingly incongruent objectives can be achieved through technological innovations. There is a new breed of green-minded consumers who are opting for these environment-friendly products. Currently, the number of these green consumers might be less but the future holds a strong possibility of increase in these green consumers.

An environment-friendly consumer would prefer an organic food and might also be a believer in vegetarianism. Such a consumer would use energy sources effectively and engage in energy-usage optimization. These consumers will have knowledge about devices using alternate energy like solar water heaters, and vehicles like Reva and yobikes, which cause minimal pollution. An eco-friendly person would also minimize the usage of air-conditioners and fans by using natural ventilation during days and might regularly indulge in recycling.

The Role of Society

Society denotes people's contributions towards the development of green marketing. Green marketing concept must be encouraged by voluntary organizations like NGOs. To promote green marketing, banking sectors are advised to provide finance to green marketers more than the ordinary marketers.

Conclusion

Stakeholders' involvement is very important in magnification of environmental marketing. Stakeholders are producers, employees, consumers, creditors, government, competitors, society and whoever involved in the amplification of ecology marketing. Companies can probably come out with products and services that are environment-friendly and at the same time cater to the economy of the consumers. They should also keep in mind the availability and knowledge of environment-friendly products as these factors could be the biggest contributors to the success or failure of such products and services. Rather than carrying out environment-friendly activities just as a part of the sustainability reporting, organizations must start adopting genuine green marketing practices.

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