Green Marketing: Its Strategies for Sustainable Development

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Abstract
In today's business world environmental and social issues plays an important role in marketing. There is a growing interest among consumers all over the world regarding protection of environment, which led to the emergence of Green Marketing as a market for sustainable and socially responsible goods and services. As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, businesses have begun to modify their behaviour in an attempt to address society's concerns. Many governments around the world have also become so concerned about green marketing activities that they have attempted to regulate them. Green Marketing practices is been adapted by various companies in various industries, thereby minimizing wastage and integrating their activities in the environment. Indian companies are also become serious about building sustainability in the environment. The present paper explores the necessity, benefits and challenges of Green marketing. It also focuses on the strategies that makes eco-friendly environment through Green Marketing.

Keywords: Environmental issues, Green Marketing, Sustainability, Waste Minimization.
Introduction
According to the American Marketing Association, “Green Marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe”. Green Marketing is also known as “Environmental Marketing” and “Ecological Marketing”.
Green marketing is also be defined as "comprehensive management process of recognizing, forecasting and fulfilling the needs of customers and society in a profitable and sustainable manner" (McDonough, P., Prothero, A, 1997).
In the words of Polonsky (1994) “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”.

Green marketing refers to the process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits. Such a product or service may be environmentally friendly in itself or produced and/or packaged in an environmentally friendly way.
Thus, it incorporates a broad range of activities including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising.

Objectives of green marketing
1. To know the Opportunities and challenges of green marketing.
2. To bring out the green marketing strategies.

Opportunities
As demands, taste and preferences of the consumer changes, many firms see these changes as an opportunity to be exploited and have a competitive advantage over firms marketing non-environmentally responsible alternatives. In India, around 25 per cent of the consumers prefer environmental-friendly products and appears that all types of consumers, both individual and industrial are becoming more concerned and aware about the natural environment. Nowadays, firms marketing goods with environmental characteristics have realized a competitive advantage over firms marketing non-environmentally responsible alternatives.

1. **HCL eco Safe** focuses on product lifecycle management to ensure that our products right from when they are manufactured, bought by customers, recovered at their end-of-life and recycled after useful life are done in an environmentally responsible manner Key initiatives undertaken through HCL eco Safe program.
2. **Maruthi Company** has been promoting 3R since its inception. As a result the company has not only been able to recycle 100% of treated waste water but also reduced fresh water consumption. The company has implemented rain water harvesting to recharge the aquifers. Also, recyclable packing for bought out components is being actively promoted.

3. **New Delhi**, capital of India, was being polluted at a very fast pace until Supreme Court of India forced a change to alternative fuels. In 2002, a directive was issued to completely adopt CNG in all public transport systems to curb pollution.

4. **ITC** strengthened their commitment to green technologies by introducing ‘ozone-treated elemental chlorine free’ bleaching technology for the first time in India. The result is an entire new range of **top green products and solutions**: the environmentally friendly multi-purpose paper that is less polluting than its traditional counterpart.

5. **Suzlon Energy** is the world’s fourth largest wind-turbine maker is among the greenest and **best Indian companies** in India. Tulsi Tanti, the visionary behind Suzlon, convinced the world that wind is the energy of the future and built his factory in Pondicherry to run entirely on wind power. Suzlon’s corporate building is the most energy-efficient building ever built in India.

6. **IDEA Cellular** is one of the **best Indian companies**, IDEA, paints India green with its national ‘Use Mobile, Save Paper’ campaign. IDEA has also set up bus shelters with potted plants and tendril climbers to convey the green message.

7. **Tuna manufacturers** modified their fishing techniques because of the increased concern over driftnet fishing, and the resulting death of dolphins.

8. **Xerox** introduced a "high quality" recycled photocopier paper in an attempt to satisfy the demands of firms for less environmentally harmful products.

9. The **Hewlett-Packard [HP] Company** announced plans to deliver energy-efficient products and services and institute energy-efficient operating practices in its facilities worldwide.
10. The **Surf Excel** detergent which saves water (advertised with the message—"do bucket paani roz bachana").

11. **Philips** Lighting's first shot at marketing a standalone compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulb was Earth Light, at $15 each versus 75 cents for incandescent bulbs.

12. The energy-saving **LG** consumer's durables.

13. **Coca-Cola** pumped syrup directly from tank instead of plastic which saved 68 million pound/year.

14. Badarpur Thermal Power station of **NTPC in Delhi** is devising ways to utilize coal-ash that has been a major source of air and water pollution.

15. Barauni refinery of **IOC** is taken steps for restricting air and water pollutants.

We also have green buildings which are efficient in their use of energy, water and construction materials, and which reduce the impact on human health and the environment through better design, construction, operation, maintenance and waste disposal. The green building movement, spearheaded by the Confederation of Indian industry (CII) - Godrej Green business center, has gained tremendous impetus over the last few years. From 20,000 sq ft in 2003, India's green building footprint is now over 25 million sq ft.

This is not to imply that all firms who have undertaken environmental marketing activities actually improve their behaviour. In some cases firms have misled consumers in an attempt to gain market share. In other cases firms have jumped on the green bandwagon without considering the accuracy of their behaviour, their claims, or the effectiveness of their products. This lack of consideration of the true "greenness" of activities may result in firms making false or misleading green marketing claims.

**Challenges in Green Marketing**

Many organizations want to turn green, as an increasing number of consumers' want to associate themselves with environmental-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.
There are numerous challenges in the field of green marketing. Some of the major hurdles are as following:

a. **Need For Standardization:**
   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 labeling and licensing.

b. **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.

c. **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.

d. **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.

**Some Other Challenges Ahead In Green Marketing Are:**

- Green products require renewable and recyclable material, which is costly.
- It requires a technology, which demands huge investment in R & D.
- Water treatment technology, which is too costly.
- Majority of the people are not aware of green products and their uses.
- Majority of the consumers are not willing to pay a premium for green products.

**Green marketing strategies**

As consumers become more environmentally conscious, businesses must adapt a green strategy. Small businesses seeking to leverage the power of "going green" should carefully coordinate genuine actions and marketing strategies.
1. Successful Market Segmentation and Concentration on Selected Market Segment
A company needs to focus on the market comprising of the green consumers. The company can run advertisement for its products in green focussed media. It can also innovate of a new green product along with its existing products. Further, it can altogether launch a new strategic business unit aimed at green.

2. Developing a New Generation of Green Product
Insufficient production processes and poor designing of products can be very harmful for the environment that is why the companies should consider possible negative effects on the environment and minimize them at the beginning of New Product Development.

3. Green Positioning
Companies interested in positioning themselves as green should make sure that all the activities that it is involved in supports its projected image, so as not to cheat the consumers as well the media.

4. Applying Green Promotion
Successful promotion depends on choosing the right strategy and media for promotion of green products. Any kind of green promotion becomes neutral unless it supported by corresponding corporate activities.

5. Green Packaging
A business that manufactures and packages products can convert to eco-friendly packaging. Converting to biodegradable packaging provides customers with a visible symbol of the company's commitment to "going green". The business can also leverage the eco-friendly packaging as part of its advertising program to help draw in new environmentally conscious customers.

6. Deciding about Green Prices
Consumers today are willing to pay only a small premium or no premium at all for the green products. Pricing may become a cause of concern when it comes to selling the product in the market, as its manufacturing may be expensive due to new technology involved. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the manufacturer to decide upon the pricing of the product.
7. Applying "Green" Logistics

Distribution of goods can also be designed such that they leave minimum impact on the environment. Mere reduction in packaging and wrapping can contribute to a large extent in reducing the waste and saving paper. Efficient inventory management can also contribute in minimizing wastage in a big way.

8. Changing the Attitude towards Waste

Waste generated always does not necessarily have to be an unhelpful result of production processes. A newer understanding of the idea of waste has given birth to a new market of recycled products. Also it may be so that which is deemed waste for a company may be a raw material for another.

9. Electronic Press Kit

Press kits typically include a company history, product brochures, biographies of the company executives, photos and press clips. Companies often send a press kit to every media outlet in the area. A business could convert all of the documents and images into electronic files and offer the kit as a downloadable folder on its website. The electronic press kit requires no paper and no postage. The website could even indicate that the electronic press kit is part of an ongoing effort to reduce the business' environmental impact.

10. Electric/Hybrid Vehicles

Small-business owners often serve as the most visible representative of the business itself. If a small business owner tries to rebrand the business as green, but drives a fuel inefficient truck or SUV, the green marketing effort seems deceptive. Switching over to an electric or hybrid vehicle serves as another visible reminder that the business pursues a green policy.

11. Creating Green Partnerships

It may be sometimes possible that a company may not have proper knowledge about green marketing, under such circumstances the company can resort to making strategic alliances with other companies, who already have been using green marketing. These kinds of green partnerships can aid in flow of necessary knowledge and information for development and effective implementation of green marketing.
12. E-Newsletters

Many businesses offer monthly newsletters to their customers. A business can cut paper waste and printing costs, while providing equal or greater levels of content, by shifting over to e-newsletters. In this case, the newsletter itself serves as marketing for the business and the delivery method functions as an easy way to go green.

Some of the other successful strategies of Green Marketing are as follows;

Show potential customers that the company follow green business practices and could reap more green on bottom line. For green marketing to be effective, company have use following strategies too.

- **Being genuine:** The companies are actually doing what the business claim to be doing in the green marketing campaign and the rest of business policies are consistent with whatever the company is doing that’s environmentally friendly. Both these conditions have to be met for the business to establish the kind of environmental credentials that will allow a green marketing campaign to succeed.

- **Educating your customers:** It is not just a matter of letting people know whatever the companies are doing to protect the environment; but also a matter of letting them know why it matters.

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

- **Know your customer:** To sell a greener product to consumers, first the company need to make sure that the consumer is aware of and concerned about the issues that its product attempts to address.

- **Empower consumers:** Make sure that consumers feel, by themselves or in concert with all the other users of the company’s product, that they can make a difference. This is called “empowerment” and it’s the main reason why consumers buy greener products.

- **Be transparent:** Consumers must believe in the legitimacy of the product and the specific claims the companies are making. Hence complete information need to be disclosed to make environmentally friendly economy.
• **Reassure the buyer:** Consumers need 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. (Besides, products that don’t work will likely wind up in the trash bin, and that’s not very kind to the environment).

**Conclusion:**
Green marketing involves focusing on promoting the consumption of green products. Therefore, it becomes responsibility to adopt creativity and insight, and be committed to the development of environment-friendly products. Green marketing is still in its infancy and a lot of research is to be done on green marketing to fully explore its potential. Main problems are Lack of consumer awareness, Limited scientific knowledge, Financial constraints, Deceptive marketing, Lack of stringent legal standards. There are sufficient opportunities for green marketing but it may also face lot of challenges as considerable percentage of population are not aware and also willing to know the affairs of green marketing initiatives. Hence proper campaigns shall be used to educate them. Green marketer must find an opportunity to enhance product's performance and strengthen customer's loyalty.
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