

A STUDY OF GREEN MARKETING AWARENESS AMONG CUSTOMER AND FIRMS IN TUTICORIN DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Although environmental issues influence all human activities, few academic disciplines have integrated green issues into their literature. As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, businesses have begun to modify their behavior 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. One business area where environmental issues have received a great deal of discussion in the popular and professional press is marketing. Terms like "Green Marketing" and "Environmental Marketing" appear frequently in the popular press. Many governments around the world have become so concerned about green marketing activities that they have attempted to regulate them. One of the biggest problems with the green marketing area is that there has been little attempt to academically examine environmental or green marketing.

This dissertation attempts

- 1) To introduce the terms and concepts of green marketing
- 2) To discuss why going green is important
- 3) To know why the manufacturers and marketers launch eco-friendly products
- 4) To examine some of the reason that organizations are adopting a green marketing
- 5) To mention some of the problems with green marketing

Key Words: Green Products, Green Marketing, Factors, Statistical Tool, Responsibility, Awareness.

Introduction

“It's not easy being green.”

Nowadays, as the environmental issues are globally noticed, green marketing has become common worldwide. The population growth and the reduction of natural resources and food led to an important phenomenon, namely the use on a large scale of artificial products or chemical substances that reduce the maturation periods of plants and animals.

This phenomenon has generated reactions from consumers and companies, that have started to pay more attention to the consequences of their actions and the impact on the environment.

Green marketing represents the way that companies can advertise their products and inform their consumers that they are working in an environmentally friendly way. Green marketing has become a global trend, and many companies consider it a part of their strategy

The Strong involvement in the environmental sustainability by producing innovative goods with manufacturing processes that consume less non-renewable resources represent significant opportunities for companies.

According to the American Marketing Association, green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Yet defining green marketing is not a simple task where several meanings intersect and contradict each other; an example of this will be the existence of varying social, environmental and retail definitions attached to this term. Other similar terms used are Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing.

Thus "Green Marketing" refers to holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment with growing awareness about the implications of global warming, non-bio degradable solid waste, harmful impact of pollutants etc., both marketers and consumers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the need for switch in to green products and services.

While the shift to "green" may appear to be expensive in the short term, it will definitely prove to be indispensable and advantageous, cost-wise too, in the long run.

Review of Literature

Prothero, A. (1998) introduces several papers discussed in the July 1998 issue of 'Journal of Marketing Management' focusing on green marketing. This includes; a citation of the need to review existing literature on green marketing, an empirical study of United States and Australian marketing managers, a description of what a green alliance look like in practice in Great Britain, ecotourism and definitions of green marketing.

Oyewole, P. (2001). In his paper presents a conceptual link among green marketing, environmental justice, and industrial ecology. It argues for greater awareness of environmental justice in the practice for green marketing. A research agenda is finally suggested to determine consumers' awareness of environmental justice, and their willingness to bear the costs associated with it.

Prothero, A. & Fitchett, J.A. (2000) argue that greater ecological enlightenment can be secured through capitalism by using the characteristics of commodity culture to further progress environmental goals. Marketing not only has the potential to contribute to the establishment of more sustainable forms of society but, as a principle agent in the operation and proliferation of commodity discourse, also has a considerable responsibility to do so.

Kilbourne, W.E. (1998) discusses the failure of green marketing to move beyond the limitations of the prevailing paradigm. The author identifies areas that must be examined for

their effect in the marketing/environment relationship, namely economic, political and technological dimensions of the cultural frame of reference.

Karna, J., Hansen, E. & Juslin, H. (2003) interpret that proactive marketers are the most genuine group in implementing environmental marketing voluntarily and seeking competitive advantage through environmental friendliness. The results also give evidence that green values, environmental marketing strategies, structures and functions are logically connected to each other as hypothesized according to the model of environmental marketing used to guide this study.

Donaldson (2005) in his study realized in the Great Britain initially concluded that in general the ecological attitude of consumers changed positively. This study reported the strong faith of consumers in the known commercial brands and in the feeble behaviour referring to the "green" claims, which was the main cause behind the consuming failure to interpret their concerns beyond the environment in their behavior.

Alsmadi (2007) investigating the environmental behaviour of Jordanian consumers reveals a high level of environmental conscience. Unfortunately however this positive tendency and preference in the "green" products does not appear to have any effect on the final decision, obviously because these consumers have a stronger faith in the traditional products and a small confidence in the green statements. The above obstacles are further strengthened by the lack of environmental conscience by a lot of enterprises and the existence of a large scale of prices for the same product, many of which included an impetuous estimate of environmental responsibility. The same phenomenon has been presented in other researches too (Ottman, 2004; Donaldson, 2005; Cleveland et al, 2005).

Brahma, M. & Dande, R. (2008), The Economic Times, Mumbai, had an article which stated that, Green Ventures India is a subsidiary of New York based asset management firm Green Ventures International. The latter recently announced a \$300 million India focused fund aimed at renewable energy products and supporting trading in carbon credits.

Sanjay K. Jain & Gurmeet Kaur (2004) in their study environmentalism have fast emerged as a worldwide phenomenon. Business firms too have risen to the occasion and have started responding to environmental challenges by practicing green marketing strategies. Green consumerism has played a catalytic role in ushering corporate environmentalism and making business firms green marketing oriented. Based on the data collected through a field survey, the paper makes an assessment of the extent of environmental awareness, attitudes and behaviour prevalent among consumers in India.

Scope of Green Marketing

There are basically five reasons for which a marketer should go for the scope of green marketing. They are –

- **Opportunity** In India, around 25 percent 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. There are numerous examples of firms who have strived to become more environmentally responsible, in an attempt to better

satisfy their consumer needs. For Example, the Surf Excel detergent which saves water (advertised with the message—"do bucket paani roz bachana).

Research Objectives

1. To understand the benefits of implementing the green marketing.
2. To understand the change in the marketing mix due to implementation of green marketing.
3. To understand the various strategies for implementation of green marketing.
4. To understand the level of awareness of customers & firms and the segment to which they belong

Research Strategy and Approach

A dissertation is an appropriate strategy when focusing on one or a few research objectives with the purpose of achieving a deeper insight into the events, relations and processes. As the aim of this study is to gain deeper understanding of implementation of CRM in retail outlets and to know the relevance of such initiatives, conducting and using a case study is an appropriate strategy.

Sample Selection: In and around Tuticorin District.

Data Collection: Through Questionnaires, Interview, Magazines, Journal and Company Resources and Internet browsing

Method of Analysis: Exploratory and Descriptive Research

Limitations and Implementation

1. Be fluent in sustainability. Green marketing efforts should only be made once after integrating the effort with the product manufacture.
2. Awareness our customers and firms.
3. Use clean language to convey your idea. Do not be ambiguous.
4. Do not make false claims relating to green marketing, they are sure to back fire.
5. Highlight programs and processes that your company has undertaken in the area of environment friendly business.
6. Build and Develop network with other green based business.

Observations And Findings Observation:

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

2. Educating & Awareness 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: a) You are actually doing what you claim to be doing in your green marketing campaign and b) The rest of your business policies are consistent with whatever you are doing that's environmentally friendly. Both these conditions have to be met for your 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.

Findings

• Survey Findings:

Around 3 out of every 4 people (75%) surveyed said that they know about Green Marketing, whereas when informed about what green marketing is all about the percentage of people who believed in it increased to 91%. This shows that most of the consumers believe that companies are trying to attract them by labeling the product as environment friendly.

When enquired about the frequency of usage of Green products the results showed that 1 in every 2 people uses Green Products sometimes. Around 1 in every 3 people uses them as far as possible and around 1 out of every 5-6 people does not care if the product is green or not. Hence majority of the population do use Green Products either sometimes or more often.

• The source of awareness about green products for majority of population is through newspapers while TV, magazines and posters also contribute towards awareness of Green Products. Awareness about different "Green Products" did not vary much. There is no significant knowledge gap among the population about Green Products. Electric vehicles appear to be the most popular while Electronic Products with BEE certifications the least popular. FMCG, Recycling building materials and Recycling water for planting are moderately popular.

• **Consumer Perception** about Green Products a whopping 84% population agrees that Green Products are helping save resources and manage wastes. When inquired about whether the "Green features increase their motivation to choose the product, 62% said that they were motivated and 30% were not influenced by them. Similar was the response when people were asked about increased market value of products due to its Green features.

• This suggests that if companies are able to convey customers the real benefits of the product then even if they are overpriced they are willing to purchase them, but this additional cost must not be very much; about 93% people say that it should be maximum overpriced by 10% than the normal product. Reasons for paying the extra cost were cited as Environment protection responsibility and to enhance quality of life. The main reason for people to not pay more for the Green Products were that people expect government to provide it at a lesser or at par prices and other was that prices are already very high they cannot afford more. This suggests that burden of heavy prices is discouraging people from using environment friendly products. This fact gets more established when 50% of respondents say Green Products are value for money.

Conclusion

The Environmental problems in India are growing rapidly. The increasing economic development, rapid growth of population and growth of industries in India is putting a strain on the environment, infrastructure and the countries natural resources. Industrial pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and land degradation are all worsening problems. Environmental pollution is one of the most serious problems facing

humanity and other life forms on our planet today. So it's the right time to implement the Green Marketing in India. Green Marketing makes drastic change in the business not even in India but save the world from pollution. Corporate should create the awareness among the consumers, what are the benefits of green as compared to non green ones. In green marketing, consumers are willing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment. 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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