

GREEN MARKETING AND FORMING OF GREEN STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing is a phenomenon which has developed particularly important in the modern market. This concept has enabled for the re-marketing and packaging of existing products which already adhere to such guidelines. Additionally, the development of green marketing has opened the door of opportunity for companies to co-brand their products into separate lines, lauding the green-friendliness of some while ignoring that of others. Such marketing techniques have been explained as a direct result of movement in the minds of the consumer market. As a result of this, businesses have increased their rate of targeting consumers who are concerned about the environment. These same consumers through their concern are interested in integrating environmental issues into their purchasing decisions through their incorporation into the process and content of the marketing strategy for whatever product may be required. This paper discusses how businesses have increased their rate of targeting green consumers, those who are concerned about the environment and allow it to affect their purchasing decisions. The paper identifies the green strategies adopted by the companies.

Keywords: Green marketing, eco-friendly, sustainable consumption, marketing strategies, green companies

INTRODUCTION

“Everything’s gone green” was a subtitle of an article in the Marketing Magazine in 2012 (O’toole, 2012). Green marketing has become common worldwide as environmental issues are globally noticed. Both consumers and companies have started to pay more attention in thinking the consequences of their actions to the environment (Polonsky, 1994, 3). Green marketing is the way firms can advertise their products and at the same time inform the consumers that they are working in an environmental friendly way (Chen & Chang, 2012, 489). Green marketing is quickly becoming a global trend (Zhang & Zhang, 1999, 99). Many firms have taken it as a part of their strategy. This makes it important to define, which role green marketing actually has in company’s strategy? Can green marketing bring added value to the company and be profitable activity? The question about the competitive

consequences of green marketing still remains unclear (Fraj, Martinez, Matute, 2013, 396). By determining green marketing’s strategic role, it is easier to understand its implications to the company.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS, OBJECTIVES AND LIMITATIONS

The main goal of this study is to find out, what is the role of green marketing in company’s strategy, and how important this role is to the company. Reasons that make firms start green marketing are also discussed. Study also aims to find out if green marketing brings added value to the company and specify variety of these values. One goal is to find out, if there are similarities in the theories existing and the empirical section of this study. This study is not limited to any specific industry or country. It considers green marketing as a global phenomenon. It does not examine or question

actions done behind marketing. Even if the study is not limited to one industry or country, it does emphasize on industry and B2B marketing. Customer-perspective is not ignored, because even if company works in B2B field, its end-users often are consumers..

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to clarify the short history of green marketing studies, some relevant findings are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1: Findings of Green Marketing Literature

(Based on Sharma et al., 2010; Baker & Sinkula, 2005)

Year	Author	Findings
1987	Brundlant Report: Our Common Future	Brought issue of sustainability into the mainstream
1993	Ottman, J.	More profits and market Share
1995	Porter & van Linde	Encourage to innovations and higher productivity
1995	Kuhre, L.	Reduction of trade barriers Standardization Fewer health and safety impacts Increased awareness and interest Improved community and employee relations
1995	Polonsky, M.	Five reasons to GM: achievement goals, moral obligation, pressure from government and competitors, eco- effectiveness in respect of waste disposal/ reductions in material usage
1995	Hart, S.	NRBV (natural-resource-based view of the company): Three stages of proactive environmental strategy: pollution prevention, product stewardship, sustainable development
2000	Miles & Covin	Impact to reputation and overall performance
2000	Bansal & Roth	Three major motivations for ecological initiatives: competitiveness, legitimating, environmental responsibility
2000	Mathur & Marthur	Criticism: Not all green or environmental marketing activities motivate investors
2001	Kassaye, W.	Size and scale of business matters in undertaking green marketing initiatives.
2002	Banerjee, S.	Internal and external environmental orientation
2005	Baker & Sinkula	Motivation to environmental marketing hard to establish
2013	Fraj, Martinez & Matute	Managerial support effects positively the firm's development of green marketing strategy

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The empirical part of the study is done by using qualitative research. Qualitative research means a group of different interpretative research methods .Secondary data and theoretical findings are the basis of the findings.

CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES OF GREEN MARKETING

In 1970's people started to realize consequences the fast population growth and high level of industrialism would have to the environment. Problems like green house effect, destruction of the ozonosphere, acid rain, pollution of air and water, deforestation and overuse of natural resources and growing shortages of water were increased explosively (Zhang & Zhang, 1999, 99-100; Kotler, 2006, 90). People started to rethink their own behavior and started to demand more environmental friendly produced commodities. As a respond to that, companies reformed their operations and strategies and a trend called sustainable development was born (Zhang & Zhang, 1999, 100).In 1990's, this trend of being green started to pervade all over the world. This was a consequence of people's increased awareness of the importance to protect the environment. Green consumption increased considerably and new concepts like green food and green factories were born. "Being green" became a global trend (Zhang & Zhang, 1999).After being spread over, consumer's increased interest towards the environmental friendly products forced firms to change their marketing strategies (Chen & Chang 2012, Kotler 2011). Concept of green marketing was created in 1990 at the Earth Day in the United States. After that, there was an explosion in the number of firms, which seek to utilize this consumers' increased sensitivity to environmental issues (Kotler, 2011, 91).Nowadays companies around the world are turning their attention towards environmental sustainability. Paco et al. (2008) considered that major drivers to this change have been people's concern of the environment and consumers' demands. Being green is also seen as a way to differentiate from competitors and gain competitive advantage. Green marketing is a channel of advertising messages of company's environmental considering actions (Chen &

Chang, 2012, 489). Green marketing is a special way of doing marketing. Traditional marketing has its goal in satisfying the needs of individuals and groups through creating, offering and exchanging products and services with others (Kotler, 2000, 8). Green marketing aims at satisfying the unlimited needs of individuals and industries with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment and at the same time achieve organization's aspirations on selling (Polonsky, 1994, 2). Wong (2007, 224) continues from this that green marketing can be divided in two business models: one is to produce environmental friendly products and services and the other is to develop activities that are related to environmental protection. As Kärnä et.al (2002) expressed it, it is about balancing between objectives of sales and profits and the concern for society and the environment. In practical, green marketing includes a lot of activities including inter alia product modification, changing the production process, modified advertising and change in packaging (Polonsky, 1994, 1). These actions are done in order to reduce the detrimental impact of products and their consumption on the environment (Mishra & Sharma 2012). Chamorro and Banegil (2005, 12) argued that green marketing philosophy means that environment should become one of the firm's values determining its organizational culture.

GREEN MARKETING STRATEGY

Taking green marketing to be a part of company's strategy can be seen as a reflection of organization's values. It focuses on whether the managers consider environmental issues when making plans (Baker & Sinkula). Kärnä et al (2003, 853) gave reason that in the core of the green marketing in a business strategy is a strategic product and customer decisions, where environmental issues are emphasized and environmental strengths are used as a competitive advantage. Green marketing is closely related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is company's commitment to participate to sustainable economic development and to work with employees, their families, the local community and society in general to improve their quality of life (WBCSD, 2004). It means that company voluntarily does more than is required by law or other regulation, regarding

environment, worker's safety and health and investments in the field in which they operate (Hay et al, 2005, 108). Servaes and Tamayo (2013, 1046) argued though, that there is no general consensus of all activities included in CSR. Green marketing can be seen as socially responsible marketing, which relies on proper legal, ethical and social behavior (Kotler, 2006, 707).

Kotler (2011, s. 133) argued that in green marketing strategy all the main marketing program elements; product, price, channels of distribution and marketing communication, can be designed and executed in a more environmental friendly way (Figure 1). In the figure the new aspects of marketing mix are marked with green colour. In designing of the product, needs to be considered which materials are used in order to reduce carbon footprint of the products and minimize the energy used in production. In pricing it is needed to make a price difference between the normal and the environmental friendly product. Product with environmental friendly label can have a higher price than the ordinary one and that way product is easier to separate from the ordinary ones. Promotion and selling of the product needs to be done more online in order to reduce waste of paper and unnecessary traffic. It is important to include communication of the company's sustainability development into the firm's promotion. Production should be decentralized in order to avoid long distance transports, which lead to increased pollution (Kotler, 2011, 133).



Figure 1: Kotler (2011) Greening marketing mix (Based on McCarthy's 4P- model)

Ginsberg & Bloom (2004) have listed four different strategies to integrate green marketing to the current marketing plan. These are lean green, defensive green, shaded green and extreme green (Figure 2). Firm can select one of these depending on its business model and environment (Wong, 2007, 223).

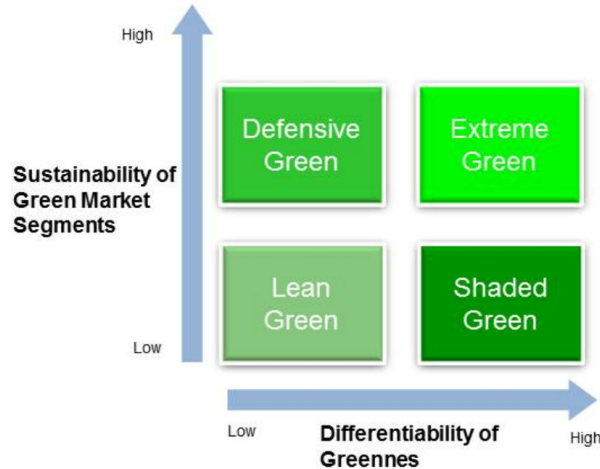


Figure2. Ginsberg & Bloom. (2004) Green Marketing Strategies.

In this green marketing matrix, there are two questions regarding green marketing strategy, which need to be answered. First, how substantial is the green consumer segment for the company? Second question is, can company be differentiated on the green dimension? Companies, which are not focused on publicizing or marketing their green initiatives, but gain to reduce costs and improve efficiencies through pro-environmental activities, are categorized as “Lean Greens”. “Defensive Greens” use green marketing as a respond to the critics or to competitor’s action. They realize that green market segment is an important one and can provide revenues. “Shaded Greens” see green marketing as an opportunity to develop innovative products and technologies, which lead to competitive advantage. For the “Extreme Greens”, environmental issues are fully integrated to company’s business and are a major driving force in the company (Ginsberg & Bloom). This Ginsberg & Bloom’s theory (Figure 2) can be integrated in the primary presented marketing mix (Figure 2). In table below the differences among these four strategies can be seen by considering how the four elements of the marketing mix are used in

each strategy (Table 2) . In “Extreme green” - strategy, all aspects of marketing mix are included, whereas in the “Lean green” -strategy company only focuses to its products to be environmental friendly produced. This matrix can be used as a tool when integrating green marketing into companies’ marketing plans (Chen & Lin, 2011).

Table 2: Marketing Mix tools used in Green Strategies (Chen & Lin, 2011)

	Product	Price	Promotion	Place
Lean	□□			
Defensive	□□		□□	
Shaded	□□	□□	□□	
Extreme	□□	□□	□□	□□

GREEN MARKETING STRATEGY IN B2B COMPANIES

Business marketers act in the largest market of all. Compared to business-to- consumer markets, volume of transactions in the industrial or in the business is significantly exceeded. A single customer in B2B field can form a considerably part of company’s selling activity (Hutt & Speh, 2013, 4). Sustainability requires firms to expand their economic responsibilities to social and environmental areas. They also have to dedicate resources to interacting with secondary stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and environmental groups (Fraj, Martinez, Matute, 2013, 398-399). In B2B marketing, building a successful marketing strategy is highly dependent on the industry. Often different industries enquire completely different promotional, pricing and distribution strategies. To penetrate these markets effectively, the marketer must understand the organizational buying process, including complex buying motives. (Hutt & Speh, 2013, 28) . Sima (2013, 151) argued that B2B marketing is 100% relationship marketing. In developing green marketing strategy in B2B-context, it has become essential to build long-term-relationships. This is because these relationships can contribute to firm’s operational and environmental efficiency, instead of the relationships based just on buyer’s demand for

greener products and services (Fraj, Martinez, Matute 2013, 397). Fraj, Martinez and Matute (2013) have noticed the importance of the managers' support towards environmental protection in developing green marketing strategy in B2B organizations. Their individual values, ideals, and knowledge of problems may affect their decisions at work and determine organizational orientation towards the environment (Fryxell & Lo, 2003, 62). Managers desire to integrate these values into organizational culture (Fraj, Martinez and Matute, 2013, 398). Menon and Menon (1997) saw manager's concern with sustainability values as the main motivator to environmental practices. Fraj, Martinez and Matute (2013) came to the hypothesis that managerial support for environmental protection positively affects the firm's development of green marketing strategy and environmental culture in the B2B context.

OPPORTUNITIES IN GREEN MARKETING

Most discussed opportunities found in green marketing literature are introduced. These are green marketing as a competitive advantage and green marketing's impact to company's image and reputation.

Competitive advantage

Because of the growing importance of environmental and social issues in the marketing environment, companies now consider these issues more in their strategy development (Baker, 2008, 569). It appears that all types of consumers, both individual and industrial are becoming more concerned and aware about the natural environment. Many firms see this as an opportunity to be explored (Polonsky, 1994, 3). Baker (1999, 601) stated that companies have realized that environmental responsiveness is something that customers, investors and other stakeholders take an interest in, and which can provide opportunities for innovation and competitive advantage. Based on this change, Polonsky (1994, 3) assumed that firms that are marketing goods with environmental characteristics have a competitive advantage over firms marketing non-environmentally responsible alternatives. Zhang & Zhang (1999, 100) argued that companies need to implement green marketing, or they will lose out in the

intensive market competition. In 1990's, greening the strategy was argued as a source of competitive advantage by Porter & Van der Linde (1995). They argued that making preferable environmental solutions develop new, more effective technologies (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995, 121). Likewise, Hart (1995) argued that innovative environmental strategies lead to unique capabilities. Later, Baker and Sinkula (2005) viewed green marketing rather as a resource that enables these unique capabilities. These capabilities can lead to new innovations that allow companies to use its range of inputs, for example raw materials, more productively and that way lower the total cost of the product. Firms can also use its inputs more carefully in order to reduce its pollution. Pollution can be seen as a form of economic waste: opportunity costs of pollution are wasted resources and wasted effort. These are often buried throughout product's lifecycle (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995, 120-122). These practices can also be proactive, when they goal to eliminate environmental inefficiencies before they are generated (Fraj, Martinez, Matute, 2013, 399). Reduction of pollution and efficient use of inputs lead to enhanced productivity. This is both better to the environment and makes company more competitive (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995, 120-122).

Company Image and Reputation

Firm's reputation consists of the perceptions, which firm's relevant stakeholders have about the firm. These relevant stakeholders come both inside and outside of the company and they all impact on firm's reputation (see Figure 3) (Miles & Covin, 2000, 300; Carroll, 1996). In the Figure 3, NGO's is meant non-governmental organizations with a special interest towards the firm. Superior reputation is argued to be a strategic advantage in firm's long-term ability to create value (Porter, 2011). Many studies also argue that reputation has a positive effect on the market value of firms (Dierickx & Cool, 1989; Weigelt and Camerer, 1988). Miles and Covin (2000) found out in their study that there is a strong support that being a good environmental steward helps to create reputational advantage. This leads to preferable marketing and financial performance.



Figure 3. Reputation Formed by Stakeholders.
(Based on Carroll, 1996)

Miles and Covin (2000) argued that firms that produce superior quality products, use truthful advertising, act in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, and have fulfilling their obligations to various stakeholder groups through firm's history, are creating reputational advantage. According to many researches, environmental performance is suggested to be but social responsible and rational, also to build firm's reputational advantage (Spicer, 1978; Hamilton, 1995). Menon et al. (1999) stated that firm by satisfying stakeholder demands for environmental friendly products can avoid problems such as customer switching and boycotts, which could lead to negative publicity. This means that by building good reputation to the firm, it simultaneously prevents bad reputation (followed by negative publicity).

PRESSURES TO GREEN MARKETING

Pressures that drive companies to practice green marketing can be divided in governmental, competitive and consumer- pressures.

Governmental Pressure

Countries' governments try to protect customers and society by placing restrictions to the marketing and production. This protection has significant green marketing implications. Governments establish regulations designed to

control the amount of hazardous wastes produced by firms. Production is controlled through the issuing of various environmental licenses, thus modifying organizational behavior. In some cases governments try to encourage final consumers to become more responsible. In other cases governments tax individuals who act environmentally irresponsible (Polonsky, 1994, 5). In addition to countries' own restrictions, there are several international pressures to the environmental marketing too. European Union has developed directives, which aim to improve environmental quality, focusing for example on toxics, chemicals and recycling. These directives have a major impact on electronics industry, but also have an influence on many other industries. Any company making a product for the EU market must comply these directives (Esty & Winston, 2008, 72-73). World's Trade Organization (WTO) has remarked sustainable development and protection and preservation of the environment to be fundamental goals of the organization. While there is no specific agreement dealing with the environment, under WTO rules member countries can adopt trade-related measures aimed at protecting the environment (WTO, 2013). These "green barriers" are set against import including surtaxes and green technological standards regarding products. Governments can demand marks to the green commodities to certify that they meet the standards. Import of the sensitive products, like residual pesticides and heavy metals, can have special regulations. Under these circumstances, green marketing can be seen as a way to pass these regulations and gain access to the international market (Zhang and Zhang, 1999, 100-101). One environmental regulation undertaken by governments has been the establishment of guidelines designed to control green marketing claims and green wash. This is discussed more in this study.

Competitive Pressure

McDaniel and Rylander (1993) identified companies' competitors as a potential reason for the change in companies' environmental behavior. Competitor's activities influence to the company's strategy. If in the same industry one company reports its compliance with environmental and social standards and others

do not, this company gains environmental advantage. That pushes competitors to do the same in order to keep its customers (Esty & Winston, 2008, 84). Often when firm reacts to the competitor's activities, firm's goal to do the same measures as the other company, but nothing more (McDaniel & Rylander, 1993). Competitive pressure pushes firms to take an approach to green marketing in order to avoid negative consequences. This will not lead to competitive advantage, because firm is always one step behind of its competitors (McDaniel & Rylander, 1993). Rather than formulating and executing a consistent, customer-oriented strategy, company decides its moves based on its competitor's moves. Company does not move towards its own goals (Kotler, 2006, 366). Polonsky (1994) pointed out that there is a risk that reacting to competitive pressures can have costly consequences, if the leader company has made a mistake which followers subsequently repeat. This makes it important not to follow competitors blindly, but keep a close eye on them (Polonsky, 1994, 6; Esty & Winston, 2006, 84).

Consumer Pressure

As mentioned above, human wants are unlimited, but resources of the world are limited. Companies can minimize their share of waste by utilizing these limited resources as efficiently as possible and that way protect the environment. The arousal of the environmental protection consciousness among consumers in various countries in the world gives rise to a heated trend of green consumption. This upsurge of green products' demand has resulted to following new behavior of companies: in addition that they have to have higher level of environmental protection consciousness, they also have a greater task of satisfying consumers' new, higher demands through proper design, production, sales and recycling (Zhang & Zhang, 100). Marketers have before categorized consumers' choosing among brands on the basis of functional (Marketing 1.0) and emotional (Marketing 2.0) criteria. But today consumers are using third criteria too, which is how the company meets its social responsibilities (Marketing 3.0.) (Kotler, 2011, 133). Research in the last decade has shown that consumers are

aware of the environment's condition, especially in the developed countries (Cherian & Jacob, 2012, 117). Also B2B companies may nowadays receive pressure from their distributors and customers to adopt more environmental friendly practices, even if there may not be immediate savings (Kotler, 2011, 134). In B2B-industry, one customer can have a major purchasing power and be really important to the company. These large customers are now increasingly demanding information on the product's lifecycle. In many industries, proof of environmental responsibility has become a requirement for keeping customers and getting major contracts. This activity is technically called "Greening the supply chain". Buyers insist their suppliers to meet the environmental standards. Nowadays, also suppliers have been pressuring their customers, so this pressure can be mutual (Esty & Winston, 2008, 84).

Social Responsibility

Environmental deterioration has become global problem restricting economic development. People are searching for better development models with regard to the relationship between economic development and environmental protection. Sustainable development strategy is nowadays accepted by various countries in the world (Zhang & Zhang, 1999, 100). Firms have begun to realize that they are part of a wider community and therefore they must behave in an environmentally responsible way. This means that firms must achieve their environmental objectives as well as their profit related objectives. Firms can either use the fact that they are environmentally responsible as a marketing tool, or they can choose not to promote this fact. Environmental issues are integrated into the firm's corporate culture (Mishra & Sharma, 2012).

CHALLENGES AND RISKS IN GREEN MARKETING

Green wash means that companies are misleading the consumers regarding company's environmental practices or the product's or service's environmental benefits (Parguel et al. 2011, 2). Companies turn in to green wash because they try to make themselves to look more environmental friendly and that way gain

consumer's trust by concealing faults and allegations (Laufer 2003, 255). Green wash has become more popular when companies are trying that way to get ahead of their competitors (Chang & Chen, 2012, p.490). Green wash is a serious threat to the green marketing. Consumers usually have faith in company's advertising and messaging and these have a great influence in purchasing decision. Consumers are overwhelmed with messages of environmental friendly products (Polonsky et al. 2010, 50) and when not knowing the company better, consumer's image of the company is based on these messages and advertisement. If these are not reliable, it is very hard for the consumer to make the crucial decision. When customers do not know who or what to trust and they can lose their faith towards the matter of green purchasing and think that environmental claims are just marketing gimmicks (Kotler, 2011, p.91). This would damage the green marketing of the numerous companies (Chang & Chen, 2012, p.491). Issues regarding environment are often scientific complex, e.g. global warming. This is why it is challenging to communicate relevant information to consumers in understandable form (Polonsky et.al 2010, 50). This is also the reason, why marketers should be particularly attentive concerning their green marketing, because consumers are easy to mislead (Virtanen, 2010, 141). There are some regulations made, which try to prevent the green wash. In the USA Federal Trade Commission (FTC) first published in 1992 the Guidelines for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims ("Green Guides"), which has been renewed couple of times, the latest in 2012. This Guideline is merely administrative interpretations and it does not have the force of law (Feinstein, 2013, p.242-243). International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) (2011) has published a framework for responsible environmental marketing communications. There are rules for "green" claims that are determined to be "any type of claim where explicit or implicit reference is made to the environmental or ecological aspects relating to the production, packaging, distribution, use/consumption or disposal of products" (ICC, 2011, 3). Marketers have normal responsibility to be truthful according environmental marketing. Eco-labels make environmental marketing easier for

marketers and producers, and same time prove that products truly are environmental friendly. These eco-labels are granted by registration, based on evaluation of the firm's environmental performance (Virtanen, 2010, 141). In addition to these regulations, there is consumer protections law, which every country has its own. Despite of these regulations and laws, there is lack of standardization to authenticate these green "claims". There is a need for a standard quality control board for labeling and licensing green products (Mishra & Sharma, 2012).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study explores green marketing as a phenomenon. Main objective of the study was to determine, which role green marketing has in company's strategy. This objective was attempted to achieve with the help of three sub-questions. Study also aims to find out, if green marketing can bring added value to the company. These questions were examined by scientific articles and literature, issues, which are discussed in the theoretical part of the study, are also listed in the table. From this study a conclusion can be drawn that green marketing has a significant role in case-companies' strategies and it brings added value to the companies. Type of the added value is depended on the industry and company itself. Most important benefits of the green marketing according to this study are its positive effect to the company image and differentiation from the competitors. Both of these can bring added value to the firm. Sales growth is also an important benefit, but only for the one case-company. Green marketing's role is center in case-companies' strategy and both of them see that its potential will be growing in the future. In the further studies, it would be interesting to limit the study in some specific industry. In this study, both case-companies work in the industry, but their field of business differs a lot. Green marketing varies from company to company, but there may be some similarities between equivalent industries. In order to produce more reliable results, this study should be expanded by including companies into the empirical research. It would also be interesting to include customer's perspective into the study, for example, of some specific green marketing

campaign. Then could be seen, how the green marketing strategy can be built to be as efficient as possible to match the customer's demands.

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