

GREEN MARKETING: A NEW INITIATIVE

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Abstract

In today's world, so many environmental issues have been a matter of deep concern for everyone. Environmental degradation, global warming, depletion of ozone layer, deforestation are some of the key issues which require immediate action. Protection of environment against so many environmental issues is a need of an hour. For this, the concept of green marketing emerged. It means designing and developing the products and packages that are not detrimental for the environment. Green marketing is all about inculcation of green concepts in all the activities. It means producing and promoting that type of product and services that are not harmful for the environment in any manner. The present severe environmental problems have made the present customer more aware and conscious. And because of this they are ready to pay even high price for green products. Many business organizations are seeking this green concept both as responsibility and opportunity to serve the society. This paper makes an effort to explain the concept of green marketing in detail. In this paper, an effort has also been made to know the reasons for adopting it as well as the problems faced by the marketer in implementing it as a part of green strategy. This paper also throws a light on how we can contribute to promote green efforts. There are so many suggestions for going green such as going for solar and wind energy, promotion of save water campaign, use of E-rickshaw, use of ozone safe technology, use of recyclable and biodegradable products. By implementing all these measures in true manner we can contribute a lot in protection and upliftment of environment.

KEYWORDS: Green marketing, environment, protection, recyclable

Introduction

With the passage of time, so many environmental problems have been arisen. The problems of deforestation, soil erosion, global warming, and rapid industrialization have been very serious issue. In order to deal or cope up with all these issues, many initiatives have been taken. One such step in this direction is the evolution of "**Green Marketing**".

Green Marketing is the development, pricing, promotion and distribution of products that do not harm the environment. In short it means developing and promoting the products that are eco friendly in nature. The basic aim of green marketing is to eliminate the concept of waste, promotion of biodegradable products, protection of environment, preserving planets and maintaining ecological balance. The green marketing is also known as environmental marketing and ecological marketing. This concept is not new concept as it gains prominence in 1980s.

Almost all the sectors of Indian economy have developed green concept in their operations like banking sector (SBI, IndusInd bank), electronic sector (Haier, Panasonic), telecom sector (Nokia), IT sector (Wipro, Infosys) etc. These business organizations have well understood the supreme importance of green marketing because this has enabled them to increase their goodwill among customers, to increase customer's base and more over to have huge profits.

There are several reasons which have provoked the company to go green. Some are competitive advantage, reduction in cost, fulfillment of social responsibility, government regulations etc. Moreover the basic reason is that the corporate sector is looking at it as bundle of mass opportunities.

The growth of green marketing has been categorized in three phases.

- Ecological Marketing: It includes all those activities that can help to avoid environmental problems and can minimize the bad impacts.
- Environmental marketing: It includes the activities which emphasize on adoption of clean technology.
- Sustainable marketing: It includes the adoption of all those activities that can meet customer's needs in an eco friendly manner.

What is green product?

The product is not detrimental for the environment, indeed which seems to be eco friendly is known as green product. There are several features which can be incorporated in a product in order to make it "Green".

Some are:

- Recyclable
- Biodegradable
- Reusable
- Originally grown
- Non toxic
- Products with least pollutants
- Composed of natural ingredients.

Marketing Mix of Green Products

Like any product, marketing mix for green product revolves around four P's i.e. product, price, place, promotion. It's not an easy task for the companies to allure the customers with their eco friendly products. They will have to make their marketing mix very impressive. So their four P's should be very magnetic. Explanation of marketing mix for green product is as follows:

1. **Green Product:** The product to be marketed should be recyclable, biodegradable, reusable, non toxic. Moreover the product should be as per the essentialities demanded by the nature lovable customers, who pay supreme importance to nature.
2. **Green Price:** Normally it has been seen, many customers are ready to pay high price for environmental friendly product. Even though marketers are required to be very conscious while deciding the price for green products, because pricing is one of the most important element of marketing mix. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that charging reasonable price is part of responsibility of business towards its customers.
3. **Green Place:** Here, effort should be made to manage its distribution in such a way so as to reduce the routing. This will reduce the coverage area and hence will reduce the emission of pollutants from the reduced transportation. So, it's a matter of deep concern for marketer to decide as to where, when and how the product will be made available to customers.
4. **Green Promotion:** Promotion is very important marketing mix element for green products, as it's necessary to make more and more people aware about what does green product mean. Also, the promotional activities done to promote the product must be eco friendly. For example: Instead of using pamphlets for advertising the products, mobile or online advertising can be used.

Reasons for Going Green

With the growing environmental problems everyone is so concerned for the protection of environment and for this marketer has entered into markets with green products. There are many reasons for this initiative.

Some are as follows:

1. **Bundle of opportunities:** With changed business scenario business organizations have been so smart to exploit any opportunity in their favor. They too had used green concept for achieving their business objective of earning huge profits and having largest market shares. They have consolidated their responsibility of protecting the environment with the opportunity of impressing the consumer.
2. **Government Pressure:** Governmental bodies have also realized that until and unless they will not be strict in their regulations, major segment of business industry will not imbibe green concept in their practices. So for this, they too have taken several steps and have issued so many guidelines. Government of India has taken very applaudable steps by introducing CNG in Delhi, the capital of India. Even The Government has banned the smoking in public areas and also the use of plastic bags.
3. **Responsibility towards society:** Many business organizations have realized that it's their moral duty and obligation to provide environment friendly products. Many concerns relate it with the TBL concept of CSR. As by providing eco friendly products they are ensuring that their products are healthy for people, safe and chemical free for planet and adequate for profits.
4. **Advantage over Rivals:** The organizations adopting the green marketing in their practices attempts to differentiate themselves from their competitors and this thing helps them to be in forefront in the race of being market leader. For example: To minimize ozone depletion McDonalds replaced its clamshell packaging with waxed paper.
5. **For Cost Reduction:** Firm adopting the green marketing have been succeeded in reducing the cost by reducing the waste generated in production of any product or by recycling the waste to give shape to new product. A firm can gain substantial cost saving by reducing the wastage.

Challenges in going green

Implementation of green marketing is not an easy task as it seems. There are so many problems and challenges in its implementation.

1. **New Concept:** The concept of green marketing is still in its growing stage. Many do not take it seriously or even do not know about it. Only major segment of urban and educated people are aware about green product. For most of the people, they are merely useless and high price products. So many efforts are required to make people aware about it.
2. **Sustainability:** The concept of green marketing is fruitful only if it is implemented for long run. For short run it is a devil of increased cost. So it is sustainable if undertaken for long period of time.
3. **Cost Factor:** The adoption of green concept in practices is very costly phenomenon because both production and promotion are tough and costly. Production of green products require costly technology, R&D efforts etc.

4. **Less Cooperation:** The implementation of green concept is successful only if it's implemented with unanimity of all stakeholders. But to have unanimous cooperation is very challenging because many times firm gets failed to convince all of them in one say.
5. **Need for Standardization:** There should be an appropriate framework which can provide the authenticity to the green claims of marketers. Because it has been noticed that very few green marketing campaign convey totally true message.
6. **Social Auditing:** It's necessary to review the green efforts of marketers to check to how much extent they have implemented green concept in their practices. Because it has been seen that several regulations have been framed but hardly followed. For example: Use of polythene bags is still continuing.

How to go green

- Instead of using polythene bags, go for paper bags or cloth bags.
- Instead of using electricity based appliances, appliances driven by solar energy should be promoted e.g. solar lights, solar geyser.
- Instead of using print media, online media should be used.
- Instead of using single vehicle by single person, the habit of sharing of vehicles should be promoted.
- Promote water saving campaigns.
- Unplug, when not in use.
- Plant more and more trees.
- Promote the usage of CFL.
- For small distances, use of vehicles shall be avoided. Inculcate habit of walking.
- Educate people for going green.
- Adoption of car free day in any day or days of week to reduce pollution.

Suggestions for going green

1. The masses should be made educated and aware about concept of green products. Because it has generally seen lack of awareness is major hurdle in implementation of green marketing.
2. There should be appropriate framework and structure that can impart authenticity to the claims of marketers. This framework will be able to put check on false green claims of marketers.
3. Green marketing can be successful only if it is undertaken with due consent of all stakeholders, so efforts should be made to have unanimous cooperation of all.
4. There should be proper and efficient utilization of resources.
5. Utilization should be in such manner that can facilitate present requirements and can save future also.
6. Efforts should be made to use natural ingredients in product composition or less use of chemicals and toxic ingredients.
7. Packaging should be done either with reusable material or with biodegradable material.

8. Marketers should be innovative in their approach. Instead of sticking to old traditional ways of interacting with present and potential customers, they should emphasize on mobile and e-marketing. This will not only save paper and will make their functioning more efficient and transparent.

Initiative in pursuit of being green

- The most prominent example of green initiative in India is the enhanced usage of **E-rickshaws**. E-rickshaws have emerged as an option to auto rickshaws and pulled rickshaws. This has proven to be eco friendly due to less fuel consumption and non emission of pollutants.
- **Amul** is one of the leading Indian brands who have undertaken commendable initiative in the race of being green. Amul in association with the milk producer of Gujarat has carried out the tree plantation programmes. Thus, helped a lot in environment upgradation.
- **Wipro**, an IT company has also inculcated green concept in their operations. It has taken so many initiatives that has been proven directly or indirectly the eco friendly initiatives. These initiatives includes disposition of e-waste in eco friendly manner, green computing solutions, eco friendly infrastructure and operations etc. It has launched new series of desktops and laptops with the name Wipro Greenware.
- **Banking sector** is not far behind the adopting the go green concept. They have taken applaudable initiative by implementing “green banking” as pursuit of being green.
- Although the concept of green marketing is still developing but a beautiful effort has been taken many years ago by establishing first planned city of Haryana namely Chandigarh, for upliftment and upgradation of environment.
- **Haier** India has also taken green initiatives by contributing eco life series of its various electronic products. The company has attempted to make every product pollution free.
- **Panasonic** has also launched environment friendly or green product by launching ECO-NAVI range of AC and LED. The basic premise behind this is conservation of energy.
- **Nokia** has also framed so many strategies to inculcate the green concept in their activities by launching models free of PVC.
- **Compact fluorescent light (CFL)** was basically developed with the intention of go green. The target of go green was achieved by its power efficiency feature.
- The Delhi Govt. has initiated manoeuvre by proposing **CNG** concept in Delhi. At present one more initiative of odd even pattern of vehicles is implemented.
- **ACC Ltd.** India's foremost cement manufacturer has stepped into market with “concrete +” (eco friendly cement brand). “Concrete +” utilizes fly ash, a toxic industrial waste to make eco friendly cement and thus, helps in conservation of natural resources.

Conclusion

Considering the importance of environment for human beings, the concept of green marketing/environment friendly marketing is getting attention in India with time, but it's still in its infancy stage. Thus, green marketing is a tool for protecting the environment for future generations. Adopting green marketing may not be easy task in short run but in the long run it will definitely have a positive impact on the firm. Now it's the right time to select green marketing globally. Even the Indian market consumers are ready to pay the premium price for green products. Green marketing has evolved as an opportunity for the marketer to gain competitive advantage and to fulfill its social responsibility towards its entire stakeholders. Moreover, it enables them to take a step ahead for sustainability of the environment. And it's the only weapon in the hands of corporate for protecting environment for future generations. Now, it's the right time to implement green marketing as, if it's implemented collectively, it can prove to be a boon for saving the whole world from natural disasters.

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