

Green Marketing In India: Challenges and Opportunities For Sustainable Development

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INTRODUCTION

Green Marketing" refers to holistic marketing concept wherein the production, promotion, distribution consumption and disposal of products and services take place in such a way that the least of damage is inflicted upon the environment. As resources are limited and wants are unlimited, it is essential to use resources efficiently, so that every organizational objective is achieved without waste of resources. Thus green marketing is unavoidable. Both marketers and consumers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the need to switch into green products and services. As a result of this, the term "Green Marketing" has emerged. 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.

IMPORTANCE GREEN MARKETING

As resources are limited and human wants are unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste as well as to achieve the organization's objective. So green marketing is inevitable. There is growing interest among the consumers all over the world regarding the protection of the environment. Worldwide evidence indicates people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior. As a result of this, green marketing has emerged which speaks for the growing market for sustainable and socially responsible products and services. Thus the growing awareness among the consumers all over the world regarding protection of the environment in which they live, People do want to bequeath a clean earth to their offspring. Various studies by environmentalists indicate that people are concerned about the environment. Now we see that most of the consumers are becoming more in a survey conducted by Green Factor, which researches and highlights green concerned about environment-friendly products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To discuss the need for Green marketing in India from different perspectives.
- To understand the fundamental rules needed for successful Green marketing.
- To study the present scenario and potential of Green marketing in India.
- To study the challenges faced by Green marketers in India.

GREEN MARKETING-NEED OF THE HOUR

In the present scenario, challenge is to keep the customers as well as consumers in fold and even keep our natural environment safe – which is the biggest need of the time. Every person rich or poor would be interested in quality life with full of health and vigor and so would the corporate class. Companies may lose many loyal and profitable customers and consumers due to absence of green management. In today's innovative business world of high technology due to growing community and consumer interests in green and socially responsible products, increased community pressure on companies to internalize externalities, such as health issues, neighborhood amenity, climate change; environmental and governmental legalizations and initiatives; innovative technologies and approaches of dealing with pollution, improved resource and energy efficiency, and to retain old (loyal and profitable) customers and consumers, it is very much urgent to implement green marketing. Further green management produces new environment friendly customers which lead to increase in sales and profits of an organization that leads to growth and development of business; it also leads to good public image of the organization. In the present time when the government regulations around the globe are very strict and the whole world is talking about global warming ,climate change and environment protection the companies would be left with no option but to adopt green marketing otherwise it might be too late to survive in the greener world. The consumer's world over in general and India in particular are increasingly buying energy efficient products. In a nutshell most of the companies are venturing into green marketing because of the following reasons:

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- In India, around 25% of the consumers prefer environmental-friendly products, and around 28% may be considered healthy conscious. Therefore, green marketers have diverse and fairly sizeable segments to cater to.
- Many companies have started realizing that they must behave in an environment-friendly fashion and believe both in achieving environmental objectives as well as profit related objectives.
- Various regulations recently framed by the government to protect consumers and the society at large led to the adoption of Green marketing as a compulsion rather than a choice. For example, the ban of plastic bags in many parts of the country, and prohibition of smoking in public areas, etc.
- Many companies take up green marketing to maintain their competitive edge.

GREEN MARKETING – GETTING SUCCESS

To be successful green marketing companies there are a few fundamental rules that will go a long way in shaping the future of the business in the coming years. The fundamental strategy is to use the Four P's suitably modified to meet the needs of Green Marketing, but there are a few points that are needed to be stressed on before embarking on Strategy. They are:

1. **Know your Customer:** Make sure that the consumer is aware of and concerned about the issues that your product attempts to address.
2. **Educating your customers:** it is not 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.
3. **Being Genuine & Transparent:** means that 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.

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.
5. **Consider Your Pricing:** If you're charging a premium for your product-and many environmentally preferable products cost more due to economies of scale and use of higher-quality ingredients-make sure those consumers can afford the premium and feel it's worth it.

CHALLENGES IN GREEN MARKETING IN INDIA

Need of Standard Quality Assurance

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.

New Concept: Difficult to understand

Indian literate and urban consumer is getting more aware about the merits of Green products. However, it is still a new concept for the masses. The consumer needs to be educated and made aware of the environmental threats. The new green movements need to reach the masses and that will take a lot of time and effort. By India's Ayurvedic heritage, Indian consumers do appreciate the importance of using natural and herbal beauty products. Indian consumer is exposed to healthy living lifestyles such as yoga and natural food consumption. In those aspects, the consumer is already aware and will be inclined to accept the green products.

Patience and Persistence

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. Since it is a new concept and idea, it will have its own acceptance period.

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 green in various aspects but does not pass the customer satisfaction criteria. This will lead to green myopia. In addition, if the green products are priced very high then again it will lose its market acceptability.

UPCOMING FUTURE OF GREEN MARKETING

There are many lessons to be learned to avoid green marketing myopia, the short version of all this is that effective green marketing requires applying good marketing principles to make green products desirable for consumers. Evidence indicates that successful green products have avoided green marketing myopia by following three important principles:

1. CONSUMER VALUE POSITIONING

- ✓ There is greater consumer awareness and demand for product information.
- ✓ There is a trend towards a more open and accountable society (as witnessed by recent development in eastern Europe);
- ✓ Specific consumer education is now well established in schools and college;
- ✓ Information Technology developments make information more easy to generate and disseminate;
- ✓ Significant competitive advantage may be obtained from the marketing use of Management Information

2. CALIBRATION OF CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE

- ✓ Educate consumers with marketing messages that connect environmental attributes with desired consumer values. Footprint of their corporate activities and of every Sony product throughout its life cycle to zero, and they continue to pursue a wide range of related initiatives. They will strive to achieve Frame environmental product attributes as “solutions” for consumer needs.

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- ✓ Create engaging and educational internet sites about environmental products desired consumer value.

3. CREDIBILITY OF PRODUCT CLAIM

- ✓ Employ environmental product and consumer benefit claims that are specific and meaningful.
- ✓ Procure product endorsements or eco-certifications from trustworthy third parties.

GREEN MARKETING MIX : 4 P's

Every company has its own favorite marketing mix. Some have 4 P's and some have 7 P's of marketing mix. The 4 P's of green marketing are that of a conventional marketing but the challenge before marketers is to use 4 P's in an innovative manner.

- **Product:** The ecological objectives in planning products are to reduce resource consumption and pollution and to increase conservation of scarce resources.
- **Price:** Price is a critical and important factor of green marketing mix. Most consumers will only be prepared to pay additional value if there is a perception of extra product value. This value may be improved performance, function, design, visual appeal, or taste. Green marketing should take all these facts into consideration while charging a premium price.
- **Place:** The choice of where and when to make a product available will have significant impact on the customers. Very few customers will go out of their way to buy green products.
- **Promotion:** There are three types of green advertising: -
 1. Ads that address a relationship between a product/service and the biophysical environment.
 2. Those that promote a green lifestyle by highlighting a product or service.
 3. Ads that present a corporate image of environmental responsibility

Adoption of Green Marketing: There are basically five reasons for which a marketer should go for the adoption of green marketing.

1. Opportunities or competitive edge

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2. Corporate social responsibilities (CSR)
3. Government pressure
4. Competitive pressure
5. Cost or profit issue

CONCLUSIONS-

Thus, we can conclude that Green marketing concept is evolving at a rapid pace in India. The firm has to plan and then carry out research to find out how feasible it is going to be. Green marketing has to evolve since it is still at its infancy stage. Adoption of Green marketing may not be easy in the short run, but in the long run it will definitely have a positive impact on the firm. Green Marketing is still in the stage of childhood in the Indian companies. The lots of opportunities are available in Indian market. Customers are ready to pay premium price for green products. The rapid increase for the environment concern in last two decades is stressing companies to prove the change to ensure the sustainable growth of the society. Marketers also have the responsibility to make the stakeholders aware about the need and the advantages of green products. Organizations are now aware with the fact that without adopting green in the core of their strategy they cannot survive in the present competitive era. The companies are involved in various activities to show their concern for environment as well as society, but at the same time it is necessary for the companies to understand that Green marketing should not overlook the economic aspect of marketing. Marketers also have the responsibility to make the consumers understand the need for and benefits of green products as compared to non-green ones and the benefits they can reap in the future. Finally, consumers, industrial buyers and suppliers need to promote the positive effects of Green marketing on the environment. Green marketing assumes even more importance and relevance in developing countries like India.

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