

GREEN MARKETING: A STRATEGIC BALANCING ACT FOR CREATING VALUE; A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

As climate rapidly change, people are now more conscious about green products. “Green marketing” basically refers to the consumer satisfaction, need of existing customers, and desire to purchase environmental based products. Green oriented companies focus to put efforts in bringing green brands awareness in consumer mind by implementing strategies to sell not only green products but to sell green attributes. This paper focuses on strategies for environmental marketing. In today’s world without any technological strategy none of organization can promote their assets. This paper identifies that people are not enough aware of green market and suggest that social media is qualitative platform to promote and sell products that have environmental values. It reports that how can marketers use network marketing to gain competitive advantage. Through this paper, we are targeting consumers who are concern about environmental safety. Our data is being collected by interviewing 20 to 25 organizations. A balancing act for creating value need effective strategies to aware consumers about environmental issues and provide them less damaging product in a most significant manner.

Keywords: Green marketing strategies, market green status, consumer awareness, environmental attributes.

Introduction

Overview and background:

Green marketing is also termed as environmental marketing and eco-friendly marketing. According to American Marketing Association, marketing of products that are having environmental safe attributes is called as Green Marketing. Today, the Earth is facing environmental issues more than ever before, and people are now paying more attention on environmental issue. Thus marketers use wide range of activities covered under green attributes.

Green marketers play role in profiting green consumers, the concept of environmental marketing, process for creating value and its interface with consumers. Most of think that the idea of environmental marketing is worthless or it's not working, as for many marketers green marketing has delivered disappointing outcome. (J, 2013). Although, by making efforts most of the companies are able to engage an audience who are concerned about environmental based products but not in a large scale. (CLIFFORD & MARTIN, 2011). If practiced correctly organizations can use green marketing as a competitive advantage and to establish brand trust among green buyers and value creation. (LEONIDOU & LEONIDOU, 2011) VOL.45, 1. Creative strategies should be made to approach green consumers. Many new companies think to practice innovative ideas that revolves around environmental awareness. Indeed, companies also go beyond to target niche market for their green products by embracing new strategies. Companies now understand that it is not just selling green products but to sell green attributes to people and educate them environmental sustainability. Some of companies deliver marketing activities, by emotional appeal just to shift consumer attention from conventional to green products. Through these activities consumer feels emotionally motivate to take step towards environmental protection because they feel different from other members in society. The company named Nest, a Silicon Valley found in 2010 introduced Nest Learning Thermostat sell much more than just green attributes. It is a smart thermostat developed by Nest Lab, its ability to collect data from user to learn user routine and set it according to user convenience and it consider an energy saving mode. (Bianca Busker, 2012). Consumer Electronics Associations (CEA) recognized the Nest Thermostat an excellent technology and awarded it in Eco-Design and Sustainable technology category.

Therefore, companies emphasize important strategies to drive value for their green products and services and provide them opportunities for environmental marketing growth. As study create strategic model for green product positioning. My further research is also based on that model having one more effective variable which is a social media marketing influence. According to my study related to green marketing, internet can play an effective role to influence people mind about environmental benefits. Firm can take benefits from Google search engine optimization (SEO) as this can help people to found products, brand to reflect their green initiatives. As World popular search engine Google itself has taken step forward to generate green energy using wave power generator through natural motion of the water to power the on board data center. (M, 2008). Environmental marketing can promote with cost-effective or eco-friendly style by adopting email marketing. Through this firm can easily get consumers directly and indirectly feedback about their products. Organization can also consider enrolling their websites in numbers of green directories (Stephen Walker). For marketer social media provide a rich opportunity to transfer their green oriented message to people. Firms can engage consumers

by placing their profiles in social websites. User than easily connect to the brand by visiting these websites. A simple link in a personal profile can also play a power role in building awareness. Marketers can also target green consumers by direct a d placement. (David & Wigder, 2007). As the power of social media grows firms can design their personal representative web links or Face book pages. Companies by connecting to the web world, websites become the main channel of information for consumers because they contain the higher detailed info about firm's sustainable profiles. Through the use of social media firms can easily deliver up to date and real information to their target consumers and help them to find only that information they are interested in. Companies are increasingly use social sites to engage with stakeholders. (Chui et al., 2012; Divol, Edelman, & Sarrazin, 2012; Haegeman et al., 2012; Nielsen, 2012). Companies are using social media to give their detailed CSR strategies on websites, sustainability reports. They manage social campaigns and make partnerships with NGOs that supports their social challenges. (H & Amp; YAKOVELVA, 2006). With the use of social media companies promote their green attributes as well as can easily set their brand image in consumer's mind. Firms can also buy an advertising space on portal such as yahoo; bring which help users to visit easily to companies' profile. Although social media is recognized the most popular medium, as no such firms can promote their company's assets without an influence of an internet. Companies seek their brand image and create value in people with help of e-communication.

Problem statement:

According to Thomas J. Dean Desiree F. Pacheco, this study examines marketers realize that consumers prefer to purchase products based upon environmental considerations. The model given in an article refers to the term, that how can firms enhance their product effectiveness through the implementation of green marketing strategies. Firms used green marketing strategies in order to reduce negative social and environmental impacts or to promote less damaging products.

In a given model, author discuss five important strategies for promoting products having environmental attributes that allows business to charge higher price for their products or to capture greater market share. According to other research papers related to green marketing, they also consider one more variable which is internet marketing, as without social media influence no firm can promote their products. By adding this variable into existing model enhances the efficiency of this research paper.

In response to this problem, our study proposes an option for green orientated companies to promote their products by connecting to the web. The very first step to influence customer mind is to design decent website related to green products. User friendly website having graphic representation often captures the interest of people. Use of search engine optimization (SEO) is very successful tool for promoting green marketing. Firm which is selling green product can be buying advertising space on portal such as yahoo, Bing, popular website visitors than easily see their ads. Firms can pay any search engine to show their web link whenever people search related to green products. These steps then make their green marketing initiative successful. Email marketing can also contribute to promote firm's green products. Companies have to find

new ways to achieve a competitive advantage through open communication with the support of e-communication.

Research objectives and significance:

There is a lot of study in the area of green marketing. The aim of this study is to investigate that how companies set strategies to promote green products to their green consumers, to promote the idea of saving assets for future generation by selling sustainable products. The key factor of this study is to tell how companies lead to competitive advantage. Our objective is to aware people that the consumption of green products is effective for our environment. We want to trend the set that every company is socially and ethically responsible for the society they are working in. Every company should consider himself as a citizen.

There are many factors under green marketing that will act as successful strategies for promoting green marketing. Our interviews from different organizations are based on some factors which are.

- To investigate that how much companies are concern about environmental safety issues and what they contribute to environment.
- What strategies they are design to sell their green products and lead to competitive advantage.
- To analyses that what factors they are using to promote green products for creating value for their brands.
- To examine that what strategies should be made by companies to aware people about green marketing and to make their lifestyles eco-logical.

Outline of the research:

Our research paper key target are those companies who are environmental conscious, who knows how it is necessary to safe our environment from any danger for the sake of our future generation. This research study target companies who sell green products to their green consumers. Our target audience also belongs to those companies who are working hard to contribute sustainable environment to their customers.

Our paper is to focus on those green marketing strategies that are set by companies to promote green based products. As there are not less variables available to promote eco-friendly environment but we only select those most effective variables who strategically well for the company's product promotions. As environmental issues are gain more important in business world. Companies seek to work on those strategies that give values to their product as well as play effective role in promoting the phenomenon of green marketing Our study introduce strategies that are design to cater market by offering natural products.

This paper provides insight to design strategies for promoting green marketing. The certain limitation is that our model is considering specific variables for this purpose. Companies can also use new approach by considering more effective strategies that attract consumers toward their green market. As consumer are the who decide the fate of any company thats why

companies should consider these variables to make value in consumer's mind for their brand. A major sector of country population still has no idea about environmental attributes. Even most of the companies provide their products to consumers without any environmental based packaging. The scope of green marketing should go beyond any limitation as it is most important for our future generations.

Literature Review

Green Marketing:

In today's market, green marketing is a new changing concept in changing time. As consumers are now becoming more socially responsible, companies are also pay more attention to provide green quality products to satisfy consumer's needs. Green marketing is a phenomenon to satisfying consumers' needs and wants or to create value for company's brand by offering them products while being sustainable as well as profitable. The key literature of this paper is that the green marketing involves marketing strategies that help firms to create value in consumer's mind for their products. Strategies made for promoting and developing green based products that benefits environment. The key aspects of implementation of strategies for creating value for the company includes pure-green play, marketing green status and image, self-functional value, the holistic brand, target commercial markets, internet marketing will be explained purely based on promoting green marketing and to sell green attributes.

Pure green play:

To promote environmental safety programs companies, have to set effective strategies as everything is begins with strategy. By playing pure-green play companies, who wants to lead their brand to competitive advantage should offer products having pure green attributes or values to those consumers that oblige in avoiding the use of those products which will cause harm for the environment they are living in. If companies provide green quality products having lower negative impacts on environment will impact consumers' willingness to pay. It is necessary to understand green consumer mindsets for the companies who consider themselves green minded. It is clear that consumers will pay more for the products having additional attributes or values.

Pure green play is to provide products that are sustainable and their manufacturing or disposing method will not cause danger for the society. To understand pure-green play, an example of the marketing of renewable energy to the people. It means to provide electricity in part from renewable energy sources like solar system, wind and other various forms of biomass. Renewable energy will serve to the residential consumers by power marketing programs. Consumers can buy or use green power without switching their electricity service from the default service providers in their homes. The utility and independent renewable energy provider in US indicates that green power sales exceed from 17% to approximately 30% MWh in 2009. People are value the pure environmental attributes and will pay more to buy renewable energy as they observe no negative change in environment by experiencing green power energy. Private individuals paying for social benefit as they feel them socially responsible and concern about environmental safety. Marketer should respect the perception of green consumers by providing those products having pure green attributes.

Market green status and image:

Consumers are influenced to buy products not only by the quality of what they purchase, also with the image they receive after purchasing that product. It means strategy to market image conscious consumers are useful. Those consumers who value social status will buy green products just to show that how they concern about environmental safety issues. Consumers who are status conscious often purchase luxury cars or a branded clothes because they are attracted to the associations they receive after using luxury products. Likewise, people who consider themselves socially responsible will pay more for the sustainable products. Additionally, people prefer to purchase those products that make them a different person from the other members in the society. Technological advancement in producing green products will also instigate consumers to buy green products. An excellent example is the success of Toyota hybrid electric vehicle, introducing with slogan "Commute with Nature." The reason of purchasing hybrid cars is consumers are aware of the advantages of the vehicle that it is not harmful for the environment as well as they will build their image in the society. The term green homes are also well known now a day because it utilizes less energy and it gives the impact of natural environment.

Many status conscious consumers likely to purchase green products just to keep their lifestyle maintained. This is the main reason why consumers are attracted to Nest Learning Thermostat. Many companies are willing to sell eco-friendly products with the slight change in designs from other products just to attract image conscious consumers because those consumers will pay more for the unique and authentic design. While targeting status conscious consumers is not that easy because it is not just depending on consumer desire to purchase but also on their attitudes or on their level of income.

Sell functional value:

Companies who want to promote their green products to the large audience may also focus to sell functional value attributes which attracts consumers to make purchase from them. Selling these attribute are benefits for the companies because socially conscious consumers wants to purchase those products which adds value in their lives. This approach is successful in a case that it broadens the target market for green products. In order to attract consumer companies should transform themselves to green building. To charge higher prices for their products, companies should increase the efficiency of the product. Green consumers are likely attracted to those products who give them something extra. The idea of developing green buildings is very useful as it will give us environmental as well as social benefits. Companies can take advantages from environment by follow greener practices.

People admire natural things, health and care attributes will also drive consumers desire to purchase green products. If companies are selling pure organic food without any artificial chemical in it then the demands for green products will also increase. Companies should give their customer a value by selling them a pure environmental based product having all the green attributes.

Target commercial markets:

Companies usually target consumer market to promote their product's green attributes. Indeed, market green products in consumer market instead of commercial market have much more benefits. Companies can get more consumers by connecting them to other commercial markets. If companies provide their green products to industries, owners of buildings then it will be more profitable for them as compared to sell an individual customer. This approach will provide a great opportunity to companies to charge higher prices for their product as they target the huge segment of market. It will also help them to become a well-known company as their links and PR increased.

The holistic brand:

Many companies are aggressively performing activities to promote green products. Company should also focus on different path to promote green attributes which is the choice of holistic marketing approach. Companies can use this approach when they are internally and externally strong. With the help of holistic approach company can get the right customer on their doorstep by priorities its product quality in their promotional efforts. Company should focus on their internal practices and make sure that every activity under organization is performed exactly and up to date.

To deliver green products to target huge segment of consumers, firms pay more attention to enhance their product quality and their maintenance rather than just focused on aggressive promotions. A successful example of this approach is the company named New Belgium Brewing, famous for their high quality Belgian-style beers with festive spirit. New Belgium is taking advantage of wind-power, water and efficient energies in their manufacturing process. Work for an environmental safety to create brand loyalty in customer's mind. An another successful example is the model of Patagonia and Hanna Anderson they often focus to enhance their product quality with respect of green marketing to attract customer towards their green based products.

This is clearer now that companies can promote their attributes not just by promotions but to working on their brand product to convert into high quality product with authentic environmental attributes.

Internet marketing:

Promotion of green marketing by using the platform of internet is an essential step in a fast moving era of advertisement. Companies who want to make their brand product known have to invest in social media because it is now become a necessity of today's world. Social media will be the favorable medium for companies to promote the idea of "Keep green by purchase green." Companies will sell their green attributes by reaching directly to the millions of consumers particularly searching for a product they offer by just placing an add internet search engines. Many businesses are starting the use of online channels such as mobile marketing, search marketing, media marketing to sell their products. There are also green web portals are available on the internet in which companies can easily place their advertisements related to

green marketing. This portal helps green consumers and green business to reach the larger audience in a very low cost comparable to offline media. Companies can also create pages on Facebook that bring their visitors direct to their websites. Design their representative web links through which consumer can easily understand that what company actually offers. Companies can also attract their green consumers by adding the link of their privacy policy and contact information at the bottom of the web page that will tell them what your organization actually sell and why the product of your company is better for the environment.

Make the use of social media for a green business is a simple strategy to promote green marketing and tell consumers about the expertise of their brand product. Green marketing company through internet can easily provide awareness about the term green. Company has to use innovative designs to capture the consumer interest and to motivate them to click on the web link to find more about the company product and choosing this medium to promote product's green attribute will very helpful for the company's image.

Methodology

Method of data collection:

Qualitative approach is adopted for the research. Our goal is to find out that how well companies use strategies to promote green marketing and create value for green products. Moreover, the focus of this study is to find how important green marketing is and why people should aware about this sensitive topic.

We decided to made interviews of 20 to 25 companies to get appropriate answers for research questions as in qualitative inquiry, we need to collect data through interviews with the selected companies. Before the selection of the companies, we made sure one thing that the selected companies should work in green attributes in order to get better understand the research topic. After the selection of the companies we sent a detailed message through email to the selected companies. However, we only get few successful replies. When we get an email back from the companies, we have only left three companies to be interviewed. After that the interview date was fixed.

We conduct the whole interview within 25 to 30 minutes and throughout the interview, the interviewer and the interviewee both spoke in Urdu Language together to better understand the information. The interview then translated in English. In order to get a quality data, we used the same questionnaire for all companies during interview session. Well we did our interview session by meeting the most qualified person in a company personally. However, companies were really cooperative with us.

Sampling

The sample size consists of three companies as we were aimed to interview four organizations but unfortunately we recorded only interviews from only three who were qualified to answer our questions for our data collection. We include those companies in our research who

work for environmental issues and willing to contribute in order safe environment from harmful impacts.

Instruments to collect data:

For our qualitative approach we used interview to collect data. We design an effective questionnaire based on our objectives of research paper. Our questionnaire for interview includes queries given in following table.

Variable Name.	Questions For Interview
1. Pure-green play.	1. Who are pure-green consumers? 2. Is selling less negative products help our society? 3. What factors will make consumers to pay more for green products?
2. Target status and symbol.	1. Do you think use of latest technologies in green products will help to gain consumers attention towards green products? 2. What key factors you use to influence status conscious consumers buying decision? 3. What make status symbol consumers to purchase green products?
3. Sell functional value.	1. What types of value add green attributes in a product? 2. What are the functional benefits of green marketing? 3. Do you think, sell functional value to customers will help to broaden the target market for green marketing? 4. How well value selling will convert the mind of consumers towards green marketing?
4. The Holistic brand	1. Is green marketing promote by doing environmental base activities? 2. Is it possible to create brand image by prioritize the product quality rather doing aggressive promotions? 3. How companies use holistic branding and why it is matter? 4. What types of sustainable programs you need to promote green marketing? 5. Is high quality products help to build trust in customer mind towards your brand?
5. Target Commercial Market.	1. What factors will make commercial consumers to purchase green product? 2. How would commercial target market be affected by government changes, new regulations or soon? 3. What types of commercial customers should be targeted and how to make them buy more? 4. Is connecting your product with mass market help to engage large audience?
6. Internet marketing.	1. Why should green company have a social media link? 2. In your opinion, which social network fit for green marketing? 3. How well the use of internet will help company to aware consumers about green marketing? 4. What steps you follow to promote green marketing through the use of internet? 5. Do you think internet will help companies to retain their green customers, and solve customer problems as they come up?

Framework for Green Marketing



Figure no 1: Framework for Green Marketing

Results and Discussion

Toyota Company:

On 14 November, 2018, we conduct our first interview from Toyota Company at 12:30am. As schedule for interview were decided before so we arrived on time. The Toyota Company started telling us about their product and their promotion activities related to green marketing. The company core strategy is to promote sustainable products to their loyal customer's. Our interview is consisting of following questions mentioned in above table. And the data we gathered from those queries are summarized below.

Company focuses on green consumers for their green products as green consumers are those who want their surroundings healthier and eco logical. Who take care about their environment while making purchases of products they are using in their daily life. Toyota, sell functional value in order to broaden their target market because consumers are not only pay for the product who they are about to consume but they also pay for the functional value that gives solution to their problems. Toyota gives their consumers a possible solution to their issues. By using green marketing, company serves functional benefits to their consumers that they are using less damaging product and a product have no negative impact on environment.

An attributes they are using to make their product an eco-label is that the manufacturing and disposing process used for their products have less negative impacts towards environment. Toyota belief in a fact that the use of latest and innovative technologies in their product will not

only enhance the product features but also gain consumers attentions towards green products. Toyota target elite class of society because by targeting them make their product fashion kind a product. That's why they celebrity endorsement to influence people buying behavior. They belief that selling green attributes through their product will definitely attract status conscious consumers because it will give them a feeling of patriotic person that how they are concern about their surroundings. Toyota willing to do environmental based activities to promote company's green marketing theme.

Company focus to enhance efficiency of their product rather than promote their product green attribute aggressively. By prioritize the quality of a product make them company a holistic brand. Quality of product help to gain consumers trust and make them a loyal customer. Toyota target their customers directly instead of targeting commercial consumers. However, they appreciate this phenomenon to targeting mass market it will increase audience for green product. They give an advice to other green companies to target retail stores for their green product because it will help them to gain huge pool of consumers for green product as commercial sector has larger audience who make purchases from them. According to Toyota, for green product internet will play a magnificent role for company because in today's world people are not only aware by traditional marketing such as Television advertisement and direct marketing so internet will help in awareness of green marketing. Two main social media accounts will work as a key medium from green marketing promotion which are Twitter and Facebook. Both social networks have millions of users. Toyota itself have accounts on different socials site operating by social media managers.

Pak Suzuki:

November 16, 2018, we did our interview from Pak Suzuki at 3:15pm. Well, the time of interview was fixed at 3:00 but due to company busy routine it was start 15 minute late.

Pak Suzuki also works on green marketing idea. They also add green attributes in their products. Suzuki also serves the masses in order to sale their spare parts to commercial sectors. They target their commercial consumers by providing them product reliability. Commercial market performances will discourage by governmental changes likewise change of law, implementation of new policies. When we talk about target commercial market, yes governmental change will influence the purchasing pattern of commercial consumers. Companies are already using social media accounts because their core strategy is to reach their target market. We also use social media accounts to target consumer for our product likewise green marketing will enhance definitely when it will connect with internet. For green marketing nothing is better than internet. Facebook on of the most popular network which will help much to engage audience towards green marketing. People wants quality based product they won't compromise on quality. But we can't ignore promotional efforts. As green marketing is very sensitive subject without the promotion of green products none of green company will promote their assets. Suzuki Company will also appreciate those activities that promote green marketing. Environmental based activities will also help much to promote green products. By purchasing green product, it will enhance the status of people in the society. People who prefer green product over other product are those who are loyal to their surroundings they are not only purchase product but to purchase green symbol that make them a unique person in the society.

Pak Suzuki is willing to sell less damaging product. They want to sell pure green attributes through their products to make their brand a sustainable brand.

Haier Company:

On November 17, 2018, we recorded our interview from Haier Pakistan at 4:00. Haier is a company who consider themselves socially responsible they want to serve green marketing.

Selling green products to their customers mean you sale value to them of using product having no such bad side effects for environment. When we talk about functional value we need good resources we should have effective resources in order to give our consumers as beneficial product. Those resources include human resource with terms of market. Green product add value in consumer's life. Use of paper bags instead of plastic while purchasing will not make customer feel shy but to make them feel proud that they also value their surroundings. Consumers who are more conscious about their purchasing feel good after consuming green products because it will not only fulfill their need but also give something extra. Internet is the only one who help to retained green consumers and help to solve their problems as they come up. We have also social media links. We hired a skilled person who operate our all social media accounts actively. Green marketing needs more of the clear communication. It need attractive taglines and story board who tell consumers what actually is green marketing and how it is important for us to save our resources for future generations. Representative Websites will help to catch consumer eyesight. Target mass market will help to engage large audience of green marketing. Green companies can use retail stores for selling their product it will create a relationship of consumers with green marketing. Promotional efforts and focus on quality both are necessary for green marketing. We can't ignore any one of them both will work effectively for this segment.

Conclusion and discussion

This study was intended to seek what kind of strategies should have designed by companies to promote green marketing and create value for green products. The data we gathered for this research shows only fewer companies will practice green marketing for their product development. Only 3 companies out of 25 were accepted our interview request just because their business operations involved green practices. However, the companies who wants to promote green marketing also appreciate this fact that how important is to design a systematic strategy. Additionally, companies are also willing to contribute environmental safety programs by implementing above model in their business operations. The outcome we received during our data collection give us a clear preference that companies are also take this matter seriously that how important is to safe our environment from harmful impacts, as consumers of today are more conscious about their environment.

In a nutshell

- Companies starting adding green practices to retain their green consumers.
- They work in strategic model to promote their green attributes.
- They want to sell sustainable products in order to safe environment.
- They sell green emotions to their consumers.

- They believe in “Think green, do green” symbol.

It is concluded that, as the climate is rapidly changes it enhance the idea of green marketing. And make our environment sustainable. Companies are focusing on working green attributes and want to make their products eco-label in order serve their consumers a healthy and safer product. And create value for their brand in consumer’s mind.

Limitation and recommendations

The findings of this research paper identifies that the idea of green marketing is still limited in specific product category. Although today’s organizations are pay more attention on green marketing as compared to previous years. Not only companies but consumers of today are also not pay enough focus on green marketing because this segment is still rare. Not everyone is aware about this sensitive subject. Indeed, companies are also given us an answers of limited questions.

It is recommended that companies should also consider themselves a citizen who is socially and ethically responsible for their environment. If they consider themselves as a member of a society they automatically start contributing in environmental safety issues. Companies need to understand that they have to increase their practices regarding green marketing. The idea of green marketing should not be limited in few companies but all the companies should focus on this idea, as our environment needs to safe from harmful impact. My suggestion is that companies should invest in green market today in order to growth of future green market.

As our research is limited to 3/4 companies, shortage of time and having less resources, our research is limited to only 3 companies. So for future researcher my recommendation is that companies can also consider more companies to collect more sufficient data. It will be going to be more interesting to get more detail about green marketing.

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