



Green marketing in India: Upcoming opportunities and challenges

Sawan Kumar

University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

Abstract

As the environmental issues are getting worse, consumers are becoming more and more concerned in their buying approach towards green lifestyle. People have started taking initiative to reduce their impact on the environment. This concept of green marketing has just started and is still evolving. As buyers have started changing their attitudes, the business and organizations are seeing a great scope in green market industry and are looking to exploit the potential in this field to get an edge over other competitors in the market. Green marketing has emerged as a prominent concept in India as well as in different parts of the world. It is a tool to facilitate sustainable development. Green marketing concept needs to be spread all over the world. This is the responsibility of every individual at their level to protect this planet from pollution because if we don't do anything to protect it and let the things happen the way are, then we will have to face the natural calamities and disasters. Whatever we give to our nature, it give us back. Now it is up to we people that what we give to mother nature. We are polluting our environment since a long time by emitting dangerous gases into air, cutting of forest at a large scale, flowing hazardous chemical into rivers and oceans and now mother nature started giving back the gift in the form of global warming, uneven rainfall, floods, landslides etc. So, now every individual, government, companies and businesses need to take step towards protection of their environment. At the same time new opportunities have opened up in field of green products and services. This study focuses on the upcoming opportunities and challenges that businesses and organizations may have with green marketing concept. The paper also describes the reason why the businesses and organizations are adopting this green marketing concept and becoming more socially responsible. Moreover, this paper also describes the present scenario and future of green marketing in India.

Keywords: green marketing, environmental issues, consumer, eco-friendly

Introduction

The main reason behind emerging of Green marketing concept is the environment and problems associated with environment. According to Yakup and Sevil (2011), from the beginning of 1980's, there have been ecological issues such as global warming, the greenhouse effect, pollution and climate changes which are directly related to industrial manufacturing and this will continue to affect human activities. Green marketing involves various activities like product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes along with modifying advertising. So the companies have begun to use green marketing to satisfy the wants of consumers and need for quality, affordable pricing, performance and convenience in an environmental friendly way. The Green marketing concept has become a great mantra for marketers to satisfy the consumers needs and earn better profit in an environmental way.

Evolution of Green Marketing

We all are aware of the fact that planet Earth has limited resources but human wants are unlimited so it becomes very crucial for organization to use the available resources economically without any wastage along with achieving the goals of organization. Consumer's interest regarding the environment protection is growing around the globe. Due to the

changes in consumer's behavior, the companies are adopting green marketing and developing products which are eco-friendly or are made in an environmentally way.

The concept of green marketing has evolved over a period of time. The term green marketing was discussed in a workshop on "Ecological marketing" organized by American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1975 and took its place in the literature. The term green marketing came into prominence in the late 1980's and early 1990's. The first book on Green marketing was by Kenpattie (1992) in U.K. and next by Jacquelyn Ottman (1993) in U.S.A., both were called "Green Marketing". According to Peattie (2001), the evolution of green marketing has three phases.

The first phase was known as "Ecological" green marketing, the second phase as known as "Environmental" green marketing, and the third phase as "Sustainable" green marketing.

Characteristics of Green Products

The Green products can be defined by the following measures

1. Products that are originally grown.
2. Products with natural ingredients.
3. Products those are recyclable, reusable and biodegradable.

4. Products with recycled contents and non-toxic chemical.
5. Products contents under approved chemicals.
6. Products that will not be treated on animals.
7. Products that have eco-friendly packaging like reusable, refillable containers etc.
8. Products that do not harm or pollute the eco system.

Challenges in Green Marketing

There are various challenges in the field of green marketing which are listed below:

1. Green marketing is a new concept in India and is reaching the Indian literate and urban consumers. But still a large section of consumers needs to be educated and made aware of the environmental issues. The new green movements needs to reach the masses and it will take its time. Indian consumers have a great exposure since ancient time in terms of Yoga and natural food taking habits. In such aspects an aware consumer would accept the green product easily.
2. It has been found that very low proportionate of the marketing messages from "green" campaign are true and there is lack of standardization to authenticate such claims. There is need for standardization to certify a product as organic. Unless and until some regulatory body get involved in providing the certifications, it wouldn't be possible to verify the authenticity of the products characteristics.
3. The companies initially may have very low profits as renewable and recyclable products and research and development program for green technologies are costly. So, there is need of patience perseverance to the get the desired profits and that will be possible in the long run.
4. Green marketing involves green products/services, green power/energy, green technology and for this huge amount of money will be required in R&D programs. So, green marketing involves lots of cost which is a great concern to start with green marketing.
5. As green marketing involves huge capital to start with, the company surely charge higher process for green product. May consumers may not be willing to pay higher prices for green product or services which may affect the sales of the company and the company may have to bear losses.

Avoiding Green Myopia

The first principle of green marketing is focusing on the customer benefits i.e. the main reason why customers buy a particular product/service in their first priority. Is this a right approach and motivate the customer to change brand and also pay a higher price for greener products. If a product is produced or made

which is absolutely green in all the aspects but doesn't get through the customer satisfaction criteria. This will lead to green myopia. Also if the green products are priced very high, as a result, the product will lose its market acceptability.

Golden set of rules of Green Marketing

1. Know your customer: Make sure that the buyers are aware of and interested about the issues that your ware attempts to address.

2. Aware your customer: It is not just an issue of letting masses know, whatever you are doing is to protect our environment, but also an issue of letting them know why it is important.

3. Be Genuine and clear: It means that you are actually doing the same thing which you were doing in the green marketing movement and the remaining business policies are uniform with whatever you are acting upon that's environment friendly.

4. Reassurance to the buyer: Consumers must be made to trust that the product does the job and the firms should not compromise with the quality of product in the name of the environment.

5. Ruminant the price: If the firm is charging a premium price for their product or services and many environmentally fit products becomes more costlier due to economies of scale and use of rich-quality material make sure those consumers can pay the premium and feel it's worth appeal it.

6. Giving your clients an opportunity to participate: It means letting the consumers participate in prolific environmental activities.

The concept of green marketing is being adopted worldwide and the reason for worldwide adoption are given below

1. Opportunities: Green consumers are more internally controlled as they believe that it is also the responsibility of consumers to protect their environment just like the government, NGO's and scientists. Green consumers avoid buying those products which are harmful for the environment. As the demand changes, many firms see those changes as an opportunity to exploit and try to capture the green market to have an edge over their competitors. For e.g. McDonald's changed its clam shell packing with wax paper because of consumer's concern regarding polystyrene production and ozone depletion. Xerox has introduced a "high quality" recycled photocopier paper in order to satisfy the demands of firm for eco-friendly products.

2. Competitive pressure: The desire of companies to maintain their competitive position, is also an important for to adopt green marketing. The cut throat competition makes firms be aware of environmental issues and using green marketing to capture the maximum market share and have an edge over their competitors. Those companies which are not adapting according to the market, in the long run they might fail to stand with those companies which are adopting the green marketing strategies. So if companies want to be in competition then they need to switch themselves towards more eco-friendly products.

3. Government Pressure: Governments of different countries have to play an important role in order get rid of these environmental problems. Government always tries to frame regulations to protect the consumers and environment. For instance, Government of India has also framed regulations to reduce the production of harmful goods and by-products. These regulations help in reducing the production of hazards goods. For instance, Supreme Court of India ordered to use CNG in all commercial vehicles in Delhi in 2002. Nowadays government is promoting the use of vehicles which are battery operated as they are pollution free and futuristic. Some companies like Maruti suzuki, Mahindra and Mahindra ltd. etc. have started the production of battery operated cars (like wagon R and Mahindra e-verito) which are on roads and some cars will be launched soon. Companies like Hero motocorp, Revolt and some other companies have started electric scooters and motorcycles in their production line. Many charging points are being stationed in various cities to charge the batteries of these battery operated vehicles. Though they are not so popular but in coming future they would be at high demand. Some other steps have also been taken by the government like the ban of plastic bags, prohibition of smoking in public areas etc. to control and minimize the environmental problems.

4. Corporate social responsibility: Now a day's companies are becoming more concerned about responsibility towards society. They are using it as a strategic tool to improve their image in society. Those firms which are not taking the environmental issues seriously, they might not get the entry in other countries for trading purpose. Those firms which are socially responsible get a leverage if they want to enter into foreign countries. So, companies will have to keep in mind the importance of responsibility towards society if they want to expand their business.

5. Cost Issues: Firms may also use green marketing in order to address cost issues. It is becoming very costly to dispose of environmentally harmful by products like Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contaminated oil. So,

the firms that can reduce the harmful wastes may have significant cost savings as well as improve environment at their level.

Google Trends reports that, on a relative basis, more searches on "green marketing" originated from India from any other country on the map which shows that Indians are becoming more concerned about environmental issues

Table 1

Rank	Countries
1	India
2	United Kingdom
3	United states of America
4	Thailand
5	Australia
6	Canada
7	China

There are many companies which are adopting this concept of green marketing in order to address environmental issues and also to exploit this opportunity to capture market share. Examples of such companies are given below

1. Wipro and Infosys
2. Tata Metaliks Limited:
3. Maruti Udyog Ltd
4. LG:
5. HCL
6. Samsung
7. MRF Tyres
8. IndusInd Bank
9. Tata Consultancy Services

Introduction of CNG in Delhi: New Delhi, capital of India, was being polluted at a very fast pace until Supreme Court of India forced a change to alternative fuels. In 2002, a directive was issued to completely adopt CNG in all public transport systems to curb pollution. Nowadays another popular alternative for running the vehicles is electricity. As mentioned above battery operated vehicles are being promoted to get rid of pollution.

Suggestions

Green marketing is still in its initial stage and a lot of research is to be done on the green marketing to fully explore its potential. There are some suggestion that an organization should implement in order to face challenges and successful exploitation of green marketing. Those are: Consumers need to be made more aware about the benefits of green products/services. It is still a new concept for most of the consumers. The consumer needs to be educated and made aware of environmental issues. It should be made sure that the consumer is aware of and concerned about the issues that your product attempts

to address. Green marketing advertising and campaign is also a good step to educate the masses. The consumers should be motivated to change their brands or pay some extra for greener products. Further steps should be taken to control false promise and claim by the marketer to maintain legitimacy and trust worthiness of green products. The government needs to pay more attention on this concept and create specific and stringent laws and also implement them in an effective manner. Such kinds of environmental issues can only be sought out if firms, consumers and the government work together. If we want to save this planet and our future generations then we all need to work together for this social cause. So leading brands need to understand the approach of consumers and try to provide products which are not only green but also pocket friendly. Consumers are becoming more and more conscious about the environment so companies have a great opportunity to provide pocket friendly green products and capture the green market.

Conclusion

Now this is the right time to select "Green marketing" if want to protect our environment for our future generations. Green marketing is in its early stage. The results of green marketing may not be seen in the short run, but in the long run surely there will be positive results. As this concept is new in market, there are lots of opportunities for firms. Green marketing is very essential to save this planet and human race. In order to deal with environmental issues like global warming, green house effect, climate change, all nations need to encourage this green concept. Recycling of paper, metals, plastics etc. in a safe and environmentally harmless manner should become much more systematized and universal. People have started using efficient lamps and other electronic goods to save energy.

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