

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

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GREEN MARKETING AND MNCs: GO GREEN PROCESS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. In the modern era of globalization, it has become a challenge to keep our natural environment safe. And this is the biggest need of the time. Environmental pollution is a buzz word in today's business environment. Consumers are also aware of the environmental issues like, global warming and the impact of environmental pollution. Green marketing is a phenomenon which has developed particular important in the modern market and has emerged as an important concept in India and also in other developing and developed world, and is seen as an important strategy of facilitating sustainable development. In this research paper, main emphasis has been made of concept, need and importance of green marketing. Data has been collected from multiple sources. Many research papers, journals, websites, news papers and books have been consulted to understand the importance of green marketing and sustainability management. The Paper aims at finding out what actually Green Marketing is all about and how can a business firm be more competitive by using green marketing strategies to gain a competitive edge over others. It explores the main issues in adoption of green marketing practices. The paper describes the current Scenario in Indian. Why companies are adopting it? And it concludes that green marketing is something that will continuously grow in both practice and demand.

KEYWORDS

go green, green marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The basic definition of Green Marketing has been misunderstood by majority. Green marketing is not restricted to the promotion or advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Green marketing incorporates modification in the product, production process, packaging and advertising. So we may conclude that Green Marketing is the process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits. Such a product or services may be environmental friendly in itself or produced and/or packaged in an environmentally friendly way. The obvious assumption of green marketing is that potential consumers will view a product or service's "greenness" as a benefit and base their buying decision accordingly. The not-so-obvious assumption of green marketing is that consumers will be willing to pay more for green products than they would for a less-green comparable alternative product-an assumption that, in my opinion, has not been proven conclusively. Green marketing can be a very powerful marketing strategy though when it's done right. Green Marketing is not just a catchphrase; it's a marketing strategy that can help a company get more customers and make more money but only if an organization do it right.

HISTORY

The term Green Marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The American Marketing Association (AMA) held the first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" in 1975. The proceedings of this workshop resulted in one of the first books on green marketing entitled "Ecological Marketing". After this many ups and downs came in the development of this green marketing concept.

Many concepts relating its merits and demerits came and hence according to Peattie (2001), the evolution of green marketing can be divided into three phases: **First phase** was termed as "Ecological" green marketing, to help solve environment problems through remedies.

Second phase was "Environmental" green marketing with focus on clean technology that involved designing of innovative new products, which take care of pollution and waste issues.

Third phase was "Sustainable" green marketing came into prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000 where it becomes necessary for companies to produce environment friendly products as the awareness for such products is on the rise as customers are demanding eco-friendly products and technologies.

Why go green?

Polanski (1994) identifies several reasons of why companies should adopt green marketing:

- 1) Social responsibility
- 2) Opportunities
- 3) Governmental pressure
- 4) Cost or profit issues
- 5) Competitive pressure

*** Social Responsibility**

Companies are realizing that they are members of a wider community, and thus have to behave in a way that is friendly for the environment (Polanski, 1994). This means that companies realize that they must both achieve environmental objectives as well as profit related objectives. This acknowledgement means that companies integrate environmental issues into the companies' corporate culture. Polanski (1994) says that there are two perspectives available for companies in this situation:

1. Companies can use their environmental consciousness as a marketing tool.
2. Companies can be environmentally responsible without promoting this fact.

Many companies desire is to implement both approaches simultaneously. Such companies try to offer environmentally responsible solutions to their customers. Moreover, by marketing this behavior they can create a competitive advantage (Polanski, 1994).

*** Opportunities**

As people are becoming more concerned for the environment, the benefits of adopting green marketing are increasing (Polanski, 1994). Companies that have adopted green marketing into their corporate strategy can enjoy sustainable competitive advantage over the companies who are marketing non-environmentally responsible alternatives (Polanski, 1994). Also, first-movers that adopt green marketing improve their image by reacting to market incentives instead of government regulations (McDaniel and Rylander, 1993). However, green marketing is not always beneficial because companies may use it to mislead their consumers in attempt to gain market share. According to Polanski (1994), companies have used false claims of the effectiveness of their products, as well as of the accuracy of their behavior. This often leads to companies losing both customers and market share (Polanski, 1994). Other factors that can negatively affect the market share are that companies that employ green marketing, but are not first-movers, may be seen as imitators. Customers may be sceptical of these latecomers' true intent (McDaniel and Rylander, 1993).

*** Governmental pressure**

In all marketing related activities governments try to protect consumers; this is true for green marketing as well. Polanski (1994) identifies several ways where governments protect the consumers and the society. Governments try to:

1. Reduce production of harmful goods or by-products.
2. Change consumer and industry's use and consumption of harmful goods.
3. Ensure that all types of customers have the ability to evaluate the environmental composition of goods.

Governments try to establish regulations that control the amount of dangerous waste produced by companies. They also issue various environmental licenses in order to control by-products of production, which modifies organizational behaviour (Polanski, 1994). Furthermore, governments try to encourage final consumers to become more environmentally responsible. This triggers companies' will to become environmentally responsible, as they satisfy their customers better. Moreover, governments publicize environmental regulations that control green marketing claims. The *Environmental Claims in Marketing – A Guideline* and the *Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims* are examples of these publicly available documents (Polanski, 1994). These regulations make sure that customers have appropriate information, which enables them to evaluate companies' environmental claims. In, for example, the USA many States have stricter rules than the publicized environmental guidelines issued by the country.

Thus governmental attempts to protect consumers from false and misleading claims provide consumers with the ability to make more informed decisions (Polanski, 1994).

* Competitive pressure

The activities by a company's competitors influence the company to modify its strategy. Many companies observe competitors promoting their environmental behaviors and they try to follow suit. As mentioned above, McDaniel and Rylander (1993) identify companies' competitors as a potential reason for the change in companies' environmental behavior. Furthermore, McDaniel and Rylander (1993) discuss the effects of being a first-mover or a follower.

* Cost or profit issues

Some companies also use green marketing in an attempt to address cost or profit related issues. According to Azzone and Manzini (1994), environmental issues can improve the performance of companies. Green marketing acts both on revenues and costs. A green marketing strategy often leads to higher revenues (Azzone and Manzini, 1994). However, more limiting environmental standards can increase manufacturing and nonmanufacturing costs. On the other hand, when companies focus on improving environmental performances it might result in less waste, which in turn lowers costs (Azzone and Manzini, 1994). Polanski (1994) argues that when trying to reduce waste, companies are often forced to re-examine their production processes. This often leads to better production processes that both reduce waste and reduce the need for raw materials (Polanski, 1994). Also, companies sometimes attempt to find end-of-pipe solutions instead of reducing waste. This means that companies try to find other markets where their waste materials can be used as an input of production (Polanski, 1994). Polanski (1994) also claims that cost or profit issues may affect companies' environmental marketing activities in the way that industries may be developed. Yurman (1994) identifies two ways in which this can happen (cited in Polanski, 1994):

1. Company develops a technology for reducing waste and sells it to other companies;

or

2. Waste recycling or removal industry develops.

How Can a Firm Go Green?

It is a main question because "Going green" makes many marketing firms feel nervous, endangering as it does images of cutting back client service or advising clients to cancel resource-intensive campaigns and many more risks. Marketing field is better at positioning a company to promote eco-friendly benefits than practicing them. But going green in marketing doesn't have to limit company's style, reduce their level, client service or change the impact of marketing campaigns. It does shift the way company use resources, adjust the way they work and change the way they communicate for what it is stand. Green is equally parts as attitude and action. Some of the points can be as under which leads towards the going green concept as a firm owner:

1. SHIFT WAY COMPANY USE RESOURCES

Firms are notorious for generating mountains of paper. That's because the product is creativity, which has to be presented, revised, refined, finalized, documented, produced, distributed and finally, measured. And those hours burning the midnight oil are hard on energy bills.

Shifting resource usage can begin with paper. Discourage the endless storage of paper documents. Move to online billing, including backup documentation, which will cut both paper and postage costs. Turn from documenting and communicating on paper to electronic conference reports, traffic reports, creative approvals, budget agreements, production estimates and campaign measurement. Post agendas rather than print them out. Encourage meeting attendees to take electronic notes.

Become recycling fiends--from copy-room paper to lunch-room aluminum cans. Save and recycle shipping supplies. Take a company off junk mailings and if want the info, sign up for electronic delivery. Cut out unnecessary dining waste for work days and client entertaining. Stop using paper plates and napkins, plastic forks, disposable water bottles. Use instead, real coffee cups, glasses, plates, and silverware and cloth napkins and wash them in low-phosphorus detergents. Put a brand on them and make a 21st century style statement.

2. ADJUST HOW YOU WORK AS A FIRM

Reconsidering running your office where everyone either shows up or is on the road somewhere. Allow staff to telecommute at least one day a week. According to Go Green.com, IBM estimates that 25 per cent of its workforce worldwide telecommutes full or part time. The company claims a \$700 million savings in real estate costs and 50 per cent more productive employees.

To cut air travel to clients' offices, use more teleconferencing tools. New electronic meeting options like "Go-to-Meeting" and Skype now allow face time without the airport hassles.

Encourage your staff to ride-share and depending upon where your office is located; consider a bike-to work-day once a week during the summer. Every gallon of gas burned dumps an estimated 20 pounds of carbon into the atmosphere. Average gas mileage of 23 miles per gallon for a round trip commute of 50 minutes per day, releases 40 pounds of carbon per car, just going to and from work, according to Green.com.

Change your presentation style: try electronic creative presentations instead of storyboards or pasteboard mock-ups. If it must be on a board, recycle the board.

3. FIND GREEN IN STRATEGY

Consider the green impact on the media strategy itself. Instead of traditional newsletters or paper-intense direct mail, recommend e-blasts and e-newsletters. It's easier to measure them anyway.

Lead the way, by recommending a campaign that provides a donation to green/environmental causes. Include campaign measurement of the client's carbon footprint reduction and product market share growth.

4. KEEP GREEN COMPANY

Commit to associate with "green" partners. Focus on printers who develop good recycled paper products and production companies that use green video and film habits. Establish corporate travel policies that put your people at green hotels and restaurants. If you lease your office space, ask if your landlord is green, and if not, offer to provide suggestions on how you can work on this together.

When you entertain clients, do your part to reduce shipping pollution; make a point of using local producers who don't have to ship local foods, such as produce, breads, cheeses, craft beers or wines. The ultimate green statement is a brave one: to commit to working only with clients who share your environmental commitment.

5. COMMUNICATE STANCE

Becoming a green marketing company practically requires you to speak up. Communicate your position to your staff, your suppliers and your clients. Begin to document and measure your business carbon footprint. Develop a green reminder phrase like..."Do you really need to print that?" As Ben & Jerry's has done, consider starting a foundation or at the least, contributing time and money to environmental activities. It tells the world what your values are.

Companies leading towards Green Revolution through their eco-friendly behavioral change

In recent years, many big-name companies have realized their way towards more sustainable and eco-friendly business practices. Following are some well-known companies that are leading the green revolution. In some cases willingly, in other cases somewhat unwillingly, but in all cases green.

1. Bank of America

Bank of America is proving that eco-friendly operations can coexist with business growth. According to their corporate website, the company reduced paper use by 32% from 2000-2005, despite a 24% growth in their customer base! Bank of America also runs an internal recycling program that recycles 30,000 tons of paper each year, good for saving roughly 200,000 trees for each year of the program's operation. As if that weren't enough, the company also offers employees a \$3,000 cash back reward for buying hybrid vehicles.

2. Ceres

While not technically a business itself, Ceres has advised some of the nation's biggest corporations and investors on the environmental impact of their operations. Having billed themselves as "the largest coalition of investors, environmental and public interest organizations in North America", the organization is primarily focused on ensuring that companies accurately disclose the environmental aspects of their business practices to investors and shareholders. Major achievements thus far include persuading Dell Computer to support national product "take back" legislation and convincing Bank of America to spend \$20 billion on the growth of eco-friendly business practices.

3. General Electric

General Electric's presence on this list might surprise you, but the steps they have taken toward green operations are undeniable. Since 2006, the company has sold over \$12 billion of its Ecomagination products (including solar panels). For those who are still upset at GE's polluting of the Hudson River with polychlorinated biphenyls, the company is also making headway on an ambitious cleanup of that area. Barring further setbacks, the river should be cleaned up to a much better state in just a couple of years!

4. DuPont

DuPont is another company that has drawn the ire of green advocates for many, many years. However, it now seems that they are taking strides toward more sustainable operations. In addition to drastically lowering its emissions of airborne carcinogens and greenhouse gases, DuPont has appointed an ex-Greenpeace head as an adviser to the board. And true to its word, the company successfully reduced greenhouse gas emissions during the 90's by 63% – far ahead of the timetable set forth in the controversial Kyoto Protocol.

5. Innovest

Innovest has boldly set out to "reengineer the DNA of Wall Street", according to executive managing director Matthew J. Kiernan. As William Grieder explains in his book "The Soul of Capitalism", Inn vest grades publicly traded companies for such things as its track record in hazardous waste disposals and past pollution. The overall goal is to give investors a quick gauge on the true eco-friendliness of the companies they are investing in. Interestingly, early data seem to indicate that companies with higher "Eco Value" rankings outperform lower ranked companies as stocks, boasting returns 1.5 to 2.4 per cent higher.

6. McDonalds

Time was not long ago when McDonalds wouldn't have come within striking distance of making this list. However, the increasing public shift toward greener living has sent a clear signal to the powers that be at the popular fast-food chain. Instead of ravaging the natural habitats of animals, McDonalds now works in close collaboration with PETA on systematically reforming its business practices to be more humane and friendly to the environment in which they operate.

7. Home Depot

Home Depot is another ex-offender who has taken great pains to turn things around. Once the Rainforest Action Network identified the company as the world's largest retailer of old-growth wood products, demonstrations and protests unfolded at Home Depot stores around the nation. When the outcry reached the point of 45,000 customer calls and letters, the bigwigs at Home Depot decided that enough was enough. Within months, the company rolled out a new "no old-growth sales" policy to ensure consumers and activists that the days of harvesting trees from old-growth rainforests were over.

8. Anheuser-Busch

Most people don't expect much in the way of environmental awareness from their beer company, but that hasn't stopped Anheuser-Busch from delivering. In his landmark text "Natural Capitalism", author Paul Hawken shines light on the fact that Busch now saves 21 million pounds of metal per year by trimming an eighth of an inch off the diameter of its beer cans. The best news for beer enthusiasts? "The trimming doesn't reduce the volume of beer one bit", says Hawken.

9. Pratt & Whitney

Pratt & Whitney offers another inspiring story of how much raw materials can be saved – and pollution avoided – with a little old-fashioned, hard-nosed ingenuity. As "Natural Capitalism" explains, Pratt & Whitney used to scrap 90 per cent of its ingots (that's right, almost all) in the process of manufacturing jet engine blades. This massive waste continued unabated until someone at Pratt & Whitney had the bright idea to have the supplier simply cast the ingots into ready-made blade-like shapes. This one seemingly small change proved to be transformative, and has lowered the amount of wasted ingots and factory emissions a great deal.

10. Starbucks

Starbucks has green advocates smiling about its "bean-to-cup" approach, which stresses top efficiency at each link of its global supply chain. By all measures the program appears to be a great success, with the company's decision to use coffee cup sleeves made of recycled paper saving roughly 78,000 trees per year since 2006. Starbucks has also partnered up with many environmental organizations, from Conservation International to the Earth watch Institute, in efforts to do right by the communities it operates in.

GREEN MARKETING BY MNCs IN INDIA (OTHER)

* Philips Light's CFL

Philips Lighting's first shot at marketing a standalone compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulb was Earth Light, at \$15 each versus 75 cents for incandescent bulbs. The product had difficulty climbing out of its deep green niche. The company re-launched the product as "Marathon," underscoring its new "super long life" positioning and promise of saving \$26 in energy costs over its five-year lifetime. Finally, with the U.S. EPA's Energy Star label to add credibility as well as new sensitivity to rising utility costs and electricity shortages, sales climbed 12 percent in an otherwise flat market.

* Electronics sector

The consumer electronics sector provides room for using green marketing to attract new customers. One example of this is HP's promise to cut its global energy use 20 percent by the year 2010. To accomplish this reduction below 2005 levels, The Hewlett-Packard Company announced plans to deliver energy-efficient products and services and institute energy-efficient operating practices in its facilities worldwide.

* ITC

ITC has taken steps and remain the green:

- It has been 'Carbon Positive' three years in a row (sequestering/storing twice the amount of CO2 than the Company emits).
- 'Water Positive' six years in a row (creating three times more Rainwater Harvesting potential than ITC's net consumption).
- Close to 100% solid waste recycling.
- All Environment, Health and Safety Management Systems in ITC conform to the best international standards.
- ITC's businesses generate livelihoods for over 5 million people.
- ITC's globally recognized e-Chou pal initiative is the world's largest rural digital infrastructure benefiting over 4 million farming families.
- ITC's Social and Farm Forestry initiative has greened over 80,000 hectares creating an estimated 35 million person days of employment among the disadvantaged.
- ITC's Watershed Development Initiative brings precious water to nearly 35,000 hectares of dry lands and moisture-stressed areas.
- ITC's Sustainable Community Development initiatives include women empowerment, supplementary education, integrated animal husbandry programmes.
- Maruthi: Greening of Supply Chain

The company has remained ahead of regulatory requirements in pursuit of environment protection and energy conservation at its manufacturing facilities, and in development of products that use fewer natural resources and are environment friendly. The company credited the 'Just-in-Time' philosophy adopted and internalized by the employees as the prime reason that helped to excel in this direction. The company has been promoting 3R since its inception. As a result the company has not only been able to recycle 100% of treated waste water but also reduced fresh water consumption. The company has implemented rain water harvesting to recharge the aquifers. Also, recyclable packing for bought out components is being actively promoted. The company has been facilitating implementation of Environment Management System (EMS) at its suppliers' end. Regular training programs are conducted for all the suppliers on EMS. Surveys are conducted to assess the vendors who need more guidance. The systems and the environmental performance of suppliers are audited. The green co-efficient of this system is much better than the conventional system.

*** HCL's Environment Management Policy under HCL eco-Safe**

In building a system to identify, develop and sustain the maintenance of an environment management system at corporate level we have formulated a program that we proudly refer as HCL's Eco safe.

The aim is to encapsulate knowledge, awareness, and key developments on all environmental issues faced by today's world and to incorporate these in HCL's operations assuring our commitment in delivering quality products, solutions and services

The key objective under HCL eco-Safe is targeted at integrating environmental management procedures into its business processes thereby protecting the environment, health, and safety of all its stakeholders. HCL commits to manufacture products that are environment friendly in all respects and are free from hazardous chemicals.

Some more Examples:

* McDonald's restaurant's napkins, bags are made of recycled paper.

* Coca-Cola pumped syrup directly from tank instead of plastic which saved 68 million pound/year.

* Badarpur Thermal Power station of NTPC in Delhi is devising ways to utilize coal-ash that has been a major source of air and water pollution.

* Barauni refinery of IOC is taken steps for restricting air and water pollutants.

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