

Chapter 27

Broadening the Concept of Green Marketing: Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates the concept of strategic corporate social responsibility to broaden the concept of green marketing. The guiding thesis is that social marketing has evolved throughout the decades and has led to strategic corporate social responsibility. There is, however, a lack of consensus on the definition of corporate social responsibility as the fundamental norm of this strategic state. In this chapter, a strategic framework that offers to broaden the concept of green marketing is provided. This chapter also explores the nature of strategic corporate social responsibility with a view towards understanding its components. Then discussion is framed by CSR theories and critical approaches.

AIMS/MISSION OF THE CHAPTER

Corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, social responsibility, philanthropy, charity, strategic philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, green marketing, sustainable marketing all matter because they influence fundamental aspects of business. All these concepts are indeed “common sense” combined with a strategic approach to business environment. This chapter is designed to provide a framework that offers insights into a broader concept of CSR. It provides a foundation that readers can understand and fit within their business processes. This chapter will be useful for students, researchers and practitioners mapping around the core idea of CSR. In addition, the intention of this chapter is to help the reader identify CSR issues, how it has evolved over time, and help readers to make better decisions in their current business and social environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Although satisfying the needs of customers in a profitable way is the fundamental principle of marketing (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010), environmental or “green” marketing has been seen as a tool towards sustainable development and satisfaction of society (Karna & Hansen, 2003). Today businesses are being proactive to take greater responsibility for the environment and consider the social impact of their actions. Of course there are still many companies resisting these socially responsible actions. But increasing growth of consumer awareness and worldwide environmentalist movements force businesses to take social responsibility into consideration.

In this chapter, we’ll examine one of the most important concepts of marketing that addresses sustainable green programs, meeting the needs of society, consumers and businesses through socially responsible actions. This chapter is organized into two distinct parts. Part I of the chapter highlights the depth of social marketing and societal marketing concept, cause – related marketing and green marketing, while Part II presents the concept of strategic corporate social responsibility. Part I lays down the foundation that provides details on where this subject originated and how it has evolved over time. In this part, first we’ll start by defining social marketing concept and how it evolves from green activities to strategic corporate responsibility, and then look at some criticisms based on green activities, and corporate responsibility from an ethical perspective. Part II defines CSR and examines the principles and components of corporate social responsibility in more detail and examines the strategic part of CSR (strategic CSR) by outlining how companies integrate CSR programs into their marketing communication efforts. Finally, we’ll see how corporations themselves can benefit from strategic social responsibility actions.

Today environmental quality is a part of overall quality and customer satisfaction. Consumers scan both the products and businesses and their impacts on general environment. They are asking questions they never asked before, like “what kind of material is this product made from? How was it manufactured? What will happen to it after I use it?” Today they are concerned about all the impacts of their products. In the old days, consumers went to the store to buy products that performed their functions properly, were convenient, and had affordable price tags.

The Changing Nature of Marketing Landscape

There are dramatic changes in the marketing landscape. Yesterday, companies’ primary focus was mass media, now they are tailoring their media plans according to individuals’ taste. Yesterday, there was no segmentation, but today companies are cultivating lasting relationships with carefully targeted customers. Rather than relying on one way communication through mass media, today they learn two way communications and how to engage their customers.

Today, not only have the companies changed, but also communication environment and the nature of society have also changed. New technologies have profoundly altered the ways in which people communicate. Explosion of Internet technologies has created the digital age. Now people are connected to each other more than ever before and they can retrieve information anywhere in the world. Digital age helps consumers to create, share, publish and even manipulate their content through social media. This changing nature of communication landscape also affects how consumers communicate to companies. Consumers have started to bypass companies and have started conversations with others through social media platforms. Content control has shifted now. New Internet technologies have given greater power and control. Although new technologies introduce many opportunities for marketers, they also create

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