

Green Marketing

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental discussion is a constant in our society, reflecting the concerns of the public and their growing awareness of ecological problems. This progressive awareness of environmental issues by consumers has had consequences in the business world, which began by new products development, more consistent with the ecological concerns of the markets – hence the emergence of green marketing.

Green Marketing consists of marketing activities defined to create and facilitate transactions of goods and/or services with the goal of satisfying the needs and desires of consumers expressing their concerns in terms of environmental sustainability. The concept of green marketing introduces the marketing strategy with a concern for the eco-performance because it represents the impact that business's actions have on humans and their natural environment (Hartmann & Ibanez, 2006). The effect of marketing activities on preserving the environment is increasingly interested in more managers, consumers and marketing researchers. Marketing managers have found that environmental issues usually provide a source of competitive advantage (Schultz II & Holbrook, 1999). Companies focus on the problem of sustained growth or development (Hart, 1997; Elkington, 1994) While managers aspire to ecological (Fisk 1974), Environmental (Polonsky & Mintu-Winsatt, 1995), Green (Ottman, 1997; Wasik, 1996) and more recently to enviropreneurial marketing (Kilbourne, 1995) (Hartman & Stafford, 1998; Menon & Menon, 1997; Kangu, Carlson & Grove, 1991).

This article presents the path of the integration of the environmental concerns in management, namely in marketing management, as a response of the market-oriented business to pursue the green consumers' needs and desires. Doing so, the article introduces the green marketing concept and discuss what its necessary to do further to reach an environmental concern in the business reality and therefore to contribute to a sustainable society and development.

BACKGROUND

Green marketing become a discussion in the decade of 1960 due to the imbalance between natural resources and the exponential growth of the population. During the 1970 years, environmental concerns were no longer just about this the gap but also about the abuse of resource consumption by companies, with their excesses of production and lack of respect for preservation of the environment. Here, the western countries of the northern hemisphere were the most targeted countries of the debate (Portilho, 2003). In the decade of 1980, consumption options were the reflection of an individualism that was responding to a proliferation of products that emerged to meet the needs of a fragmented market. From the decade of 1990, considered the most fertile in terms of scientific production on the green consumer (Hartmann & Ibanez, 2006), the perception of the environmental impact widened to the high standards of consumption

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of companies and the centre of this problem shifted to the individual sphere of each consumer. People began to be aware of the consequences of their acts of consumption, not only in terms of depletion of natural resources because of the excessive consumption and of the pollution that these acts, and all their daily activity caused in the preservation of nature and, therefore, in those resources. In the 90's, a social consciousness arises in consequence of the need to deal with global problems (Afonso, 2010). The big difference between the consumers of the years 70 and 90 is that the first were concentrated on a radical perspective and a restriction of consumption, while the seconds were favourable to technological solutions that enabled them to maintain their lifestyles. The birth of the new century seems to have reinforced this posture, resulting in a passage from non-development to sustainable development.

In this new reality, there is the emergence of pressure groups with environmental defence campaigns, increasing media reports on these topics, ecological issues become part of the political agenda, laws and regulations are defined for environmental protection and concerted actions were carried out in this field, with comprehensive international cooperation. These trends have been accentuated, and in some countries in northern Europe, as is the case of Sweden, at the end of the first decade of this new century, the discussion has already focused on the participation of green consumers in policy decisions relating to the environment (Klintman, 2009). At the beginning of this second decade of the 21st century, the focus is increasingly on the concern of social behaviour due to its reflection on the future quality of life of the entire world population.

In view of the evolution described, it can be affirmed that the gap between values and environmental behaviour, although existing (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008), has been decreasing significantly. In face of this new environmental context, we can say that the last decades have seen a new consumer born, with a "greener" behaviour, called "Green consumer".

Sustainable Development to Sustainable Marketing

Sustainable development is a concept originally popularized in 1987 in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, where it is argued that future prosperity depends on the preservation of natural resources (Lozada & Mintu-Winsatt, 1996). This future prosperity requires balancing human activity with the ability of nature to renew itself. In other words, this idea refers to the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs, that is, to sustainability (Lozada & Mintu-Winsatt, 1996). This definition despite being the most accepted, has been criticized for defending two seemingly irreconcilable objectives (economic development and preservation of resources), because it is disconnected from natural ecology and for its lack of operational objectives and lines of action (Jennings & Zandbergen, 1995). Sustainability is achieved, for Jennings and Zandbergen (1995), when the extraction of ecological system resources takes place within the capacity of the base resource and when the transfer of waste from the physical components does not exceed the capacity of assimilating each ecosystem.

According to Lozada and Mintu-Winsatt (1996), some authors argue that sustainable development ideas are not the only methods of "greening" international business activities. They also argue that the content of the World Commission Report is a critical ecological perspective on the preservation, protection and conservation of our physical or natural environment. This ecological perspective does not focus only on biological systems, but also on how the ecosystem interacts with social, technical, human and economic systems. Thus, from an ecological standpoint, sustainability requires societies to meet human needs, not only by increasing the productive potential, but by ensuring equal opportunities for

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