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# Green Marketing: Greening the 4 Ps of Marketing

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**Abstract:** Green Marketing as an area has not been a recent activity. If critically examined our ancestors had been involved in different ways to nurture and maintain the environment since a very long time. One may think of the various products required in our day-to-day life that were being manufactured in the olden times. All these products were extracted from nature in harmony taking into account its benefits and the way these products were even disposed of. But recently there has been a momentum in green activism so as to gain a competitive advantage. Due to consumer awareness, green activism and cut throat competition firms have started accepting the importance of green marketing to gain a competitive advantage over the competitors. But in this modern age as firms have started coming up with new technology products and services, so are the challenges. The paper attempts to overcome these challenges that had been posed to the environment and the society at large by way of considering green marketing from the view point of marketing mix. The paper discusses assimilation of green marketing and marketing mix by way of considering the 4 Ps of marketing.

**Key words:** Green Marketing, marketing mix, 4Ps of marketing.

**Introduction:** Green Marketing has been a buzz word these days. This may be attributed to the increased consumer awareness towards the depleting environment and everything that causes concern for sustainability. It may be in terms of the air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution or anything that takes the society away from its originality. It is everything that is concerned about the entropy i.e. the increase in the disorder of a system. This system is nothing but the dynamic environment of making business, the way products and services are manufactured, promoted and ultimately sold. The time has come for business organizations irrespective of its size to rethink on the methodology of doing business. Organizations are these days competing on the basis of the green effect that they produce in the market. This green effect is equal to the ability of a firm to

minimize or at least restrict to a certain extent the damages that are made to the environment.

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), Green Marketing can be defined in three different ways: First, Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe (Retailing Definition). Second, Green Marketing is the development and marketing of products designed to minimize negative effects on the physical environment or to improve its quality (Social Marketing Definition). Third, Green Marketing is the efforts by organizations to produce, promote, package, and reclaim products in a manner that it is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns (Environmental Definition). Charter (1992), has defined green marketing as a holistic and responsible strategic management process that identifies, anticipates, satisfies and fulfills stakeholder needs, for a reasonable reward, that does not adversely affect human or natural environmental well-being. Pride and Ferrell (1993), Green marketing, also alternatively known as environmental marketing and sustainable marketing, refers to an organization's efforts at designing, promoting, pricing and distributing products that will not harm the environment. Polanski (1994) has defined green marketing as all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

**Significance of Green Marketing:** Usually it has been thought that green marketing is more concerned in the manufacturing of products that are environment friendly. So green marketing in that sense is more aligned to the product and operation dynamics. But taking into consideration various factors that influence the environmental degradation, it is the right time to broaden the meaning of green marketing. Business houses should try to incorporate the 4 Ps' of marketing mix into green marketing. It is quite challenging for firms to see that products are produced in a way that will not harm the society and the environment but at the same time be profitable.

Green marketing has to be seen from society angle as well. In that sense green marketing would be all about the positivism of a product or a service. It would be also inclined the way a product or a service is being promoted. This promotion should be designed on the principles of ethics and morality. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying the advertisement.

### **Incorporating the 4 P's of Marketing mix into green marketing:**

**1. Green Product:** Product constitutes the first P of marketing mix. Many companies these days are quite serious of the ways the products are being manufactured. Different upgraded methodologies and systems are in place while assessing the impact of manufacturing on environment. The real challenge lies in front of industries which are trying to cut down the manufacturing cost by incorporating plastics and different fiber materials to lower the weight and cost of the manufactured tangible product. Here polymers are being considered as great substitutes for metals. It would be quite challenging for the companies to justify their stand on green products if they are using such low cost non-biodegradable material in their operations. The argument here would be how products manufactured from non-biodegradable plastic material can be considered as green products.

Green marketing needs to be incorporated into the first P of Marketing mix by considering the following components.

- **Design:** The Design is very important in today's world as it is all about gaining attention, focusing on the product and influencing the purchase decision of the customers. The design of the product at the same time should be customer friendly, non-vulnerable, comfortable and user friendly.
- **Technology:** The technology used in manufacturing the product should be environment friendly, in no way should pollute the environment and be acceptable to all the stakeholders.
- **Usefulness:** A product being a bundle of utilities should cater to the needs of a large spectrum of consumers.
- **Value:** Value is relative to what a customer seeks in a product/service. For price sensitive customers, cheaper products offering the same

benefits as that of others may be of value while for others who are more brands oriented may not value the price. Value of a product helps in magnifying its utility to the customer. Value is something which is always looked around by companies while developing a product. Hence high performance product which meets or exceeds customer expectations related to its performance should be developed without sacrificing its environmental value.

- **Convenience:** Convenience is a parameter related to the usage and the means of obtaining a product. The product should bring ease in life of the customer by way of its easy availability and convenient usage.
- **Quality:** Quality gains a customer as an individual always looks for good quality product or service. Hence green products manufactured, in all sense should comply with quality.
- **Packaging:** Packaging is used for raising the product's value. Usually polymers are having wide applications in packaging especially polystyrene and polyethylene. Many companies these days are trying to have environmental friendly packaging. Packaging is that area which puts the environmental policies of a firm to question as most of the products now-a-days are being wrapped in polymers which are non-biodegradable. Even if plastics are recycled it emits harmful gases like sulphur dioxides and carbon mono-oxides. A green product packaged in a non-green or non-decomposable plastic material is not a green product at all.

**2. Green Price:** Price refers to the amount paid by the customer to purchase a product. The price of a product is influenced by several factors like cost of material, product differentiation, competition, market share and the customer's perceived value of a product. When it comes to pricing the question arises as to how firms ensure green marketing while pricing their products. In this discussion it would be quite convincing that green products are relatively costlier than non-green products. The cost of absorbing environmental concerns is relatively high compared to conventional ones. It can be argued that green marketing pricing should be affordable to a common customer. Talking in terms of electronic products, CRT (Cathode ray tube) TVs and LCD TVs are relatively cheaper than LED which is greener than the former. LED bulbs are more costly than the conventional bulbs. Similarly hybrid cars and electric cars are relatively more costly than conventional automobiles. Thus it becomes more logical to

state that green technology is not cost effective. Rather green pricing differs industry to industry. So when customers have option to purchase a green product, its price should never be demotivating.

**3. Green Place:** Place is generally referred to as the distribution channel or distribution network. Place can be any physical store as well as virtual stores. The process involved in transferring products from the producer to the consumer is known as physical distribution. Green place in that sense can be anything which minimizes the customers and the manufacturer's effort in acquiring and selling a product respectively. Many firms now-a-days have started selling their products online. This really cuts down the customers cost to practically visit a market place, select a store and then purchase the product. Firms have come up with their own websites which displays the merchandise and the customers have to place the order online and get the delivery of product within few days. The internet can really be termed as a green place as it offers an unmatched comfort to the customer and this also saves cost to the manufacturer in way of commissions or cuttings given to various middlemen. The challenge in selling a product on a green place would be in terms of sensing the features of a product and experiencing it. The green place should be enough in convincing the smart customer about the product features. Green place will definitely influence the scope of distribution partners and will also benefit the end user in making the product available at a relatively lower cost. The challenge in terms of green place will be in case of highly technical products which require prior testing and visiting the manufacturers place by the end user. So B2B selling in some cases may not adapt to green place.

**4. Green Promotion:** Firms undertake promotional activities so as to create awareness about the product/services they make. It always has been an expectation from the top management of organizations to have an optimum promotional budget that creates good awareness and influences the target audiences for further purchases. Talking in terms of green promotion would then be meeting this optimum level. The optimum level needs to be taken forward not only in terms of the promotional expenses but also the different ways in which promotion is being affected. This can be thought of in the following ways.

**Selection of promotion partners:** Only those promotional partners should be contracted who have a good track record in green marketing or preserving the environment.

**Selection of promotional material:** Environment friendly promotional material should be encouraged for use, such as recyclable bags rather than plastic which is detrimental to the environment at large. Similarly online advertising could reduce a great clutter offline.

**Selection of advertising message:** In a way to expand the dimensions of green marketing companies these days have to be very serious in a way in which advertising message is being generated. Green marketing should not be evaluated only on the basis of environmental impact but also the way a firm has societal impact. Now-a-days firms have started increasing the sexual content in its advertising message which creates a great impact on consumers mind. This helps the customers in remembering an advertisement among others on the TV network. This has been observed in the ways deodorants, cosmetics, automobiles, FMCG products; beverages to name a few are advertised.

Firms if are really serious about green marketing should also scrutinize the content or message ethically and morally before being sent in the society through advertisements. This would certainly help in minimizing the bad effects of advertisement on children.

#### **Re-engineering green marketing**

"Green Marketing is the marketing of products and services that are not only environment friendly but also preferably acceptable to various stakeholders in the society. Various dimensions on which green marketing are based are a broad range of activities including product modification, production process, product packaging, product transfer, and ethical product promotion."

**Conclusion:** So as to ensure sustainable growth and nurture a symbiotic relationship with the society it is imperative for firms to come up with green products and green services. This will be of course not an end to the long lasting journey of mankind towards a cleaner and sustainable environment but the top management has to keep evolving different principles and practices that helps in providing a new platform for green environment for future generations to come. Green marketing should not be undertaken by firms as a promotional measure but should be considered as a corporate social responsibility. As mankind will keep on progressing, different

issues and challenges on the environment and societal sides will keep on surfacing. On the societal sides these challenges mainly would be in the form of violation of ethics and moral principles. Hence a holistic approach to green marketing can be achieved by blending the principles of green marketing into marketing mix.

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