

## Green Marketing: An Emerging Step Towards A Positive Future

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### **Abstract:**

Green marketing, also known as environmental or ecological marketing, is gaining momentum as a significant aspect of sustainable business practices. This study explores the evolution, importance, and characteristics of green marketing, highlighting how organizations leverage eco-friendly initiatives to gain competitive advantages. By examining various green marketing strategies—such as energy efficiency, recyclable products, and ethical advertising—the paper identifies factors influencing consumer behavior and highlights exemplary practices by companies globally and in India. The research underscores the gap between consumer attitudes and actions, emphasizing the need for effective strategies to bridge this divide. Recommendations focus on aligning green marketing strategies with consumer expectations, promoting awareness, and fostering innovation for a sustainable future. This study contributes valuable insights for marketers and researchers, enabling the development of impactful green marketing initiatives.

**Keywords:** Green Marketing, Sustainability, Eco-Friendly Products, Consumer Behavior, Environmental Awareness, Ethical Advertising, Green Innovation, Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development, Green Strategies.

### **Introduction:**

Green marketing is also termed as environmental marketing or ecological marketing. According to the American Marketing Association, marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe is called as Green Marketing. Thus wide range of activities are covered under green marketing, which includes modifying the product, making

Changes in the production process and packaging, as well as modifying advertising or removing any activity that negatively impacts the environment. Today, the Earth faces more environmental issues than ever before, hence companies must make and market them as environment friendly. Green marketing is emerging as a popular promotional strategy owing to increased consumer awareness and Concerns.

Going by alternative names such as sustainable marketing, environmental marketing, green advertising, eco marketing,

organic marketing, all of which point to similar concepts though perhaps in a more specific fashion, green marketing is essentially away to brand your marketing message in order to capture more of the market by appealing to people's desire to choose products and services that are better for the environment. There are many environmental issues impacted by the production of goods and rendering of services, and therefore there are also many ways a company can market their eco-friendly offerings. Green marketing can appeal to a wide variety of these issues:

- an item can save water,
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions,
- cut toxic pollution,
- clean indoor air, and/or
- be easily recyclable.

When put side by side with the competition, the more environmental marketing claims your product or service can make, the more likely it is the consumer will select it, provided the price point isn't too much higher than the alternative. The concept of green or ecological marketing calls upon businesses to follow ethical and green practices while dealing with customers, suppliers, dealers, and employees. Companies have started marketing themselves as green companies. Even the Public Sector Units and state governments are now paying a lot of attention towards environmental issues such as global warming, pollution, or water contamination and have started taking steps to prevent environmental pollution.

#### **History of Green Marketing:**

Nowadays, the American Marketing Association (AMA) divides the definition of green marketing in three aspects (marketingpower.com): as "the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe" (retailing definition) as "the development and marketing of products designed to minimize negative effects on the physical environment or to improve its quality" (social marketing definition) and finally as "the efforts by organizations to produce, promote, package, and reclaim products in a manner that is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns" (environments definition). Companies have using green marketing for many reasons such as green policies are profit-making; the business world is more and more implicated in the social responsibilities. Furthermore consumers have been changing of attitudes and due to the government and the competitive pressures it is essential for firms to consider the "green" adjective to marketing strategies (Ghosh, 2010, p.83). According to a press release made by Mintel (organization of food and drink market researches) in November 2010, the consumer packaged goods (CPG) or FMCG sector should follow twelve trends, among these trends some of them concern the environment such as "redefining natural" or "sustainability" such as respect the regulation to 2 say that

a product is natural or not and for example continue to reduce packaging (mintel.com). These trends show that the FMCG sector is going to change and become greener.

#### **Research Methodology:**

The secondary literature is drawn in house. The secondary data was collected through various research publications, journals – online & printed, magazines, web sites. The literature is cross checked and validated to gives the latest information.

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the concept and history of green Marketing.
2. To study the importance, current and latest examples of green marketing.
3. To find out ways and new ways of green marketing by suggestions and recommendations

#### **Characteristics of Green Marketing:**

Some common characteristics of products generally accepted as green, including the products are:

1. Energy efficient (both in use and in production).
2. Water efficient (both in use and in production).
3. Low emitting (low on hazardous emissions).
4. Safe and/or healthy products.
5. Recyclable and/or with recycled content
6. Durable (long-lasting).
7. Renewable.
9. Reused products.
10. Third party certified to public or transport standard (e.g., organic, certified wood)

#### **Golden Rules of Green Marketing:**

- 1. Know you're Customer:** Make sure that the consumer is aware of and concerned about the issues that your product attempts to address, (Whirlpool learned the hard way that consumers wouldn't pay a premium for a CFC-free refrigerator because consumers dint know what CFCs were.).
- 2. Educating your customers:** It isn't just a matter of letting people know you're doing whatever you're doing to protect the environment, but also a matter of letting them know why it matters. Otherwise, for a significant portion of your target market, it's a case of "So what?" and your green marketing campaign goes nowhere
- 3. Being Genuine & Transparent:** Means that a) you are actually doing what you claim to be doing in your green marketing campaign and b) the rest of your business policies are consistent with whatever you are doing that's environmentally friendly. Both these conditions have to be met for your business to establish the kind of environmental

credentials that will allow a green marketing campaign to succeed.

**4. Reassure the Buyer:** Consumers must be made to believe that the product performs the job it's supposed to do-they won't forego product quality in the name of the environment.

**5. Consider Your Pricing:** If you're charging a premium for your product-and many environmentally preferable products cost more due to economies of scale and use of higher-quality ingredients-make sure those consumers can afford the premium and feel it's worth it.

**6. Giving your customers an opportunity to participate:** means personalizing the benefits of your environmentally friendly actions, normally through letting the customer take part in positive environmental action.

**7.** Thus leading brands should recognize that consumer expectations have changed. It is not enough for a company to green its products; consumers expect the products that they purchase pocket friendly and also to help reduce the environmental impact in their own lives too.

#### **Need For the Study:**

Green marketing has now evolved as one of the major area of interest for marketers as it may provide competitive advantages. However it requires investment in terms of technology enhancement, process modification, communicating benefits to customers etc. Many of the companies in India have now started marketing themselves as green organizations due to certain government regulations and shift in the preference of the consumers worldwide. However, not much research with respect to green marketing has been done in India and there is question about the awareness of green products among consumers. The attitude of Indian consumers towards green products and the relationship between the attitude and behavior is also questionable. As green marketing is different from the marketing in traditional way, marketers need to know the factors that persuade the consumer to buy the green products. This study aims to resolve the research question that what factors influence the consumer persuasion to buy the green product or not.

#### **Green Marketing Practices and Examples:**

Many consumer durable companies are now marketing their products with Energy Star Label stating that their use will reduce the energy consumption and consumers can save a lot of money on electricity consumption over a period of time. For example, Godrej Consumer Products is marketing its product through green marketing and gives additional incentive to buyers to exchange their old products with latest green and environmental friendly products. The advertisements try to persuade the buyers to adopt a green lifestyle and contribute in development of a greener planet. NDTV a major media group

promotes green values through its campaign Greenathon. NDTV Greenathon as they call it organizes various philanthropic and social activities to raise awareness regarding environmental issues at the same time contribute to the social causes like electrification of rural areas etc. Philips is marketing its Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) as “Marathon”, highlighting its new “super long life” and energy efficiency. Many companies are now offering more eco-friendly alternatives for their customers; re-cycled products are one of the most popular alternatives that benefit the environment. Companies are now focusing on not to use plastic bags, instead they use carry bag made up of recycled paper (for example, Titan, Tanishq have made a corporate policy that the goods will be delivered or given to customers only in the carry bags made out of recycled paper). Idea Cellular Limited also launched an advertisement stating saving trees towards their corporate social responsibility. Kansai Nerolac Paints is marketing themselves as green as they have removed hazardous heavy metals from their paints and are marketing their lead free paints in India. Dell focuses on producing green IT products under their strategy called “Go Green with Dell”. Dell products are also coming in eco-friendly packaging with a system recycling kit bundled along. They are also focusing on green innovations from data-center efficiency to the use of ecofriendly materials for everything from chassis design to product packaging. Major electronic goods manufacturing organizations are selling their products with star energy ratings that help to consume less energy. More is the star rating (maximum rating is 5 star) of the electrical/electronic appliance, less is the energy consumed.

Nokia has come up with the concept of recycling of phones to save the natural resources. In 2007, IBM launched Project Big Green to help clients around the world improve the efficiency of IT and better optimized their data center resources. IBM has software and services technologies to help businesses reduce data center energy consumption and cut energy costs by more than 40 percent.

#### **Global Scenario in Green Marketing:**

“Green’ is the buzzword that is gaining popularity among the current generation. A number of businesses right from private entities such as Wal-Mart trying to push the concept of organic food to public entities like the London governments congestion charge are all aimed at improving the environment by promoting ‘Green’ products and issues. 87% of people from various nations like Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, the UK and the US have shown an interest in reducing their impact on the environment, according to a survey by (McKinsey, 2007).

However, showing interest and actually acting on the interest are two different deeds. This fact is proved by a survey that was

conducted on a global scale, which was repeated in 2008 with the help of BBC World, which showed that not a lot of people were actually doing something to move their lifestyle to a green lifestyle.<sup>1</sup> The overall market for green marketing is said to be worth \$ 3.5 trillion by the year 2017, according to a report by Global Industry Analysts Inc. of 2011. The report also states that increasing awareness about the environmental issues among the people, businesses and the governments is one of the main reasons for such market potential. Another research study by Mintel, clearly showed that 12% of the American population actively sought green products.

### The Indian Scenario

SN	Company	Green Marketing Initiatives
1	Mahindra Reva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrical vehicle “e20”</li> <li>• Earth friendly small tracter</li> </ul>
2	Wipro Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable IT products</li> <li>• Recycled plastic</li> <li>• Toxin free desktop</li> </ul>
3	CISCO systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cisco is planning to minimize the ecological impact by establishing responsible operation programme aimed to reduce energy consumption.</li> </ul>
4	Infosys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on Green buildings, water harvesting and conservation, better transport management.</li> <li>• Focused on green engineering</li> </ul>
5	HCL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental friendly products.</li> </ul>

### Conclusion and Implications:

One thing that is being reiterated is that the current consumption levels are too high and are unsustainable. Therefore there is a need for green marketing and a need for a shift in the consumer’s behavior and attitude towards more environmental friendly life styles. The current study is a compilation of various aspects related to green marketing. It is clearly evident from review of literatures and the conceptual model that the majority of the consumers still lack ‘green’ knowledge and because of such low awareness towards green

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ccsenet.org/ass](http://www.ccsenet.org/ass) Asian Social Science Vol. 8, No. 12; 2012 119

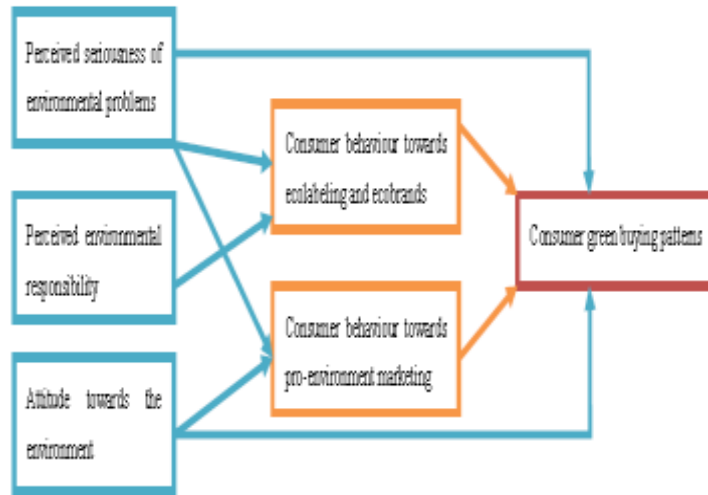
products organizations are still not pushing towards developing more green products nor are they working hard on green packaging.

Organizations still believe that marketing aspects such as developing a proper supply chain, packaging, pricing etc take precedence over green marketing initiatives. However, this is all changing. People are beginning to realize their role and responsibilities towards the environment. Although this change is not happening quickly, it is happening. Businesses are looking towards gaining an edge in the green market industry by trying to re-package their products into a more environmental friendly product. They are cutting down on extras and wasted materials and turning their operations into more efficient and green operation. Companies are also starting to educate the masses with an increase in advertising that puts emphasis on green products and how they are more beneficial for the consumers. This kind of advertising goes a long way in educating the masses and promoting the concept of green products among the people. With more and more consumers willing to pay a little extra towards green products, organizations are taking notice of the demands and behavior and attitude of the consumers.

**Recommendations:**

1. Align green marketing strategies with target market expectations to gain a competitive edge.
2. Develop green products that resonate with public demand and core company values.
3. Minimize cost-related risks associated with green marketing efforts.
4. Educate consumers about the environmental benefits of green products to drive adoption.
5. Implement policies and strategies to support businesses and consumers in embracing green initiatives.
6. Foster partnerships between private and public sectors to create incentives for sustainable practices.
7. Introduce certification programs to authenticate green claims and enhance consumer trust.
8. Invest in research and development for innovative green technologies.
9. Use digital platforms to promote awareness and engage consumers in environmental actions.
10. Monitor and evaluate the environmental impact of green marketing initiatives regularly.

By adopting these recommendations, businesses can contribute to a sustainable future while meeting consumer expectations for environmentally friendly products.



Green marketing is a continuous process that requires constant inputs from the suppliers, government legislations and policies and the people. This is required so that the businesses green marketing strategy can be aligned to the target markets and so it can gain a sustainable competitive advantage. It is important that strategies and policies in relation to green products be developed and implemented so as to guide and help the retailers and customers towards a green change. Businesses should concentrate on focusing on developing a green product that have a demand from the general public and which also aligns to the company's core positioning. Furthermore businesses should also present efforts in a manner that reduces the risk related to costs. In conclusion, creating and implementing a green marketing strategy is not straight forward because it is not only complex, but also a relative concept that continuously varies over time.

The framework that is presented in the current paper is based on the need to explain inconsistencies in attitudes and behaviors that have been revealed in past researches. The current framework will be framing the gap between the attitudes and behaviors as a social dilemma and also attempts to understand the gap by trying to identify individual factors by using the reference group theory. Furthermore the framework also tries to recommend certain ways to cover the research gap. The current study will provide a valuable insight to both practitioners and theoreticians who want to understand environmentally conscious individuals. Since the success of green products depend on the consumers adopting or changing their attitude and behavior towards such Products, it is imperative that green marketers identify all the factors that encourage cooperation. Thus the current study will also be of benefit to the green marketers as it aids in developing a marketing strategy that persuades consumers to seek the value of collective gain over self-interest. There is a need of reverse way of marketing to achieve green marketing objectives.



### Reverse Model



### Footnotes:

1. American Marketing Association, "Green Marketing Definitions," [www.ama.org](http://www.ama.org).
2. McKinsey & Company, "Green Consumer Behavior Survey," 2007.
3. Global Industry Analysts, "Green Marketing Industry Report," 2011.
4. UN Sustainable Development Goals, "SDG 12 and 13," [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

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