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2. Green marketing: honesty vs. deception

Green marketing is important in the world because it contributes to the preservation of the environment and the reduction of emissions of harmful substances into the atmosphere. It stimulates the development and implementation of environmental technologies that contribute to sustainable development. Green marketing encourages companies to behave responsibly and produce ethically. This helps to attract new consumers who appreciate environmentally friendly products and services. This type of marketing contributes to raising public awareness of environmental problems and ways to solve them. It creates a competitive advantage for companies that actively demonstrate their environmental responsibility. Helps reduce resource and energy consumption, leading to economic benefits for business. It helps to create a positive brand image and increase consumer confidence. Green marketing reflects current trends in consumer demand and helps companies adapt to them. It is a necessary step in the direction of sustainable development and ensuring the viability of our planet.

Green marketing is when a company promotes environmentally friendly or sustainable products and/or business practices. For example, if your packaging is made from 100% recycled paper products, and you share this in your marketing or brand-building initiatives, this is green marketing.

Some examples of green marketing include substantiated claims:

- Products are manufactured locally.
- Raw materials are certified to be from sustainable sources.
- People are paid a fair wage and provided with ethical working conditions.
- The company donates a percentage of profits to rainforest rehabilitation initiatives.

Benefits of green marketing

Aside from the obvious environmental and social benefits, consumers love to buy from businesses that ethically care for the environment and community. Other benefits of green marketing include:

- **Attracting investors** – 33% of millennial investors invest exclusively in companies with strong environmental values and initiatives.
- **Attracts customers** – 35% of consumers choose sustainable products over non-sustainable when possible. They also avoid plastic when they can and are willing to pay more for locally produced or sustainably produced food items. [22]

Main trends of the green marketing market

The green marketing market is constantly growing, reflecting the growing interest of consumers in environmentally responsible products and services. Here are some key trends to note in the green marketing market:

1. Consumers pay attention to sustainability: Consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious and are balancing their purchases with environmental impact in mind. They look for products and brands that actively demonstrate their ability to reduce their environmental footprint.

2. Ecological certification: The popularity of products with ecological certificates is growing. This helps consumers to more easily identify environmentally friendly products among the wide range on the market.

3. Increasing demand for green technologies: Businesses that use green technologies in production and marketing have a competitive advantage. This covers everything from the use of renewable energy sources to the development of sustainable packaging.

4. Increasing Brand Responsibility: Companies are becoming more open about their production practices and environmental impact. They actively communicate their efforts to reduce their environmental footprint and take steps to improve their environmental performance.

5. Growing Popularity of Secondary Markets and Uses: Secondary markets and uses are becoming increasingly popular among consumers as they reduce waste and promote an interesting approach to consumption.

6. Digital initiatives and eco-awareness: With the development of Internet technologies, consumers are becoming more aware of environmental issues. They seek information on how to make their lives more sustainable and use digital channels to share knowledge and experiences.

These trends indicate that green marketing is becoming not only a strategic necessity for enterprises, but also an expectation of consumers who care more and more about the environment and health.

Despite many advantages, green marketing also has its disadvantages:

1. Greenwashing: One of the most serious drawbacks is the practice of greenwashing, where companies over-proclaim their green orientation without real efforts to improve environmental performance. This can lead to consumer confusion and undermine trust in the brand.

2. High costs: Implementing environmental initiatives and standards can be an expensive process for businesses. This may include spending on research and development of new environmental technologies, production of environmentally friendly products, certification and advertising campaigns.

3. Consumers' lack of knowledge: Consumers cannot always correctly assess the ecological claims of brands or understand exactly what a "green" product means. This can lead to confusion and uncertainty in the market.

4. Potential for negative feedback: If a brand claims to be green but doesn't meet standards, it can be severely criticized and exposed on social media and the media. This can cause serious damage to the company's reputation.

5. Conflicting standards: There are many different standards and organizations that define what makes a product environmentally friendly or green. This can create confusion and confusion among consumers and businesses.

6. The possibility of devaluation of the "green" concept: Due to the spread of green marketing, the term "green" may lose its value and become a meaningless marketing phrase for consumers.

These disadvantages are important to consider when developing and implementing green marketing strategies to maximize positive impacts and reduce potential negative impacts.

As we can see the main disadvantage of Green Marketing is Greenwashing

What is greenwashing?

The term "greenwashing" was proposed by the American ecologist Jay Westerveld. In 1986, in his essay, he described a case in which a hotel suggested that guests use towels more than once, as well as refuse to change bed linen daily. The owners of the hotel said that they want to reduce environmental damage and save coral reefs and oceans in this way. However, Westerveld was sure that the main goal of the company was to reduce the cost of washing, and the environmental motives were just a beautiful cover. At the same time, the environmentalist assured that the hotel harmed the environment, and the oceans in particular, in other ways. [23]

Greenwashing is when a company is (purposefully or is perceived to be) making false claims about its green and sustainability initiatives. Sadly, it doesn’t matter if greenwashing allegations are true or false. They can have devastating effects on your business. [24]

Green Technology and Sustainability Market size was valued at USD 14.3 billion in 2022 and is projected to register a CAGR of over 19.5% between 2023 and 2032. (Fig.1)

Fig. 1 Green technology and sustainability market global forecast to 2030

Green Marketing and Greenwashing are two approaches to business that focus on environmentally appropriate products and practices. However, there is **a significant difference** between them:

1. Green marketing:

➢ **Authenticity:** Green marketing reflects a company's real efforts to reduce environmental impact and create environmentally sustainable products. The company actively promotes its environmental initiative and often provides proof of its claims, such as certificates, sustainability reports, etc.

➢ **Honesty:** The company adheres to its statements and commitments regarding environmental protection, not using manipulative methods to attract customers.

➢ **Consistency:** Green marketing reflects a company's strategic approach to sustainability, which is reflected in all aspects of its business.

2. Greenwashing:

✓ **Deception:** Greenwashing occurs when a company tries to hide its negative impact on the environment or uses marketing gimmicks to create the illusion of environmental responsibility.

✓ **Inauthenticity:** A company may over-promote its "green" initiatives without real effort or use random elements to create the impression of environmental friendliness.

✓ **Lack of evidence:** In cases of greenwashing, the company does not provide sufficient evidence of its environmental responsibility or opportunities to verify their veracity.

So, the main difference is that green marketing is based on real environmental initiatives and environmental responsibility, while greenwashing is used to create a marketing image without actual sustainability efforts.

Companies often use Green Marketing to attract the attention of consumers and position their products as environmentally friendly. They may make inflated or unverified claims about the environmental friendliness of their goods or services to attract more customers. Often, companies use green marketing to distract attention from their own negative environmental activities. They may focus on only one positive aspect of their activities, avoiding the discussion of other problems. In addition, companies often use symbols, colors and images related to nature to reinforce the impression of environmental friendliness of their products. Implicit environmental claims, such as the use of "green" in marketing materials, can influence consumers without directly discussing environmental aspects. In addition, companies can try to appeal to the emotions of the audience to attract them to their environmentally oriented products. Drawing attention to charitable programs or initiatives can also be part of an environmental marketing strategy.

There are significant differences between Green Marketing and Greenwashing (table 1.)

Table 1. Key differences between Green Marketing and Greenwashing

Sign of difference	Green Marketing	Greenwashing
Authenticity and honesty	based on real environmental initiatives and environmental responsibility	consists of deceiving consumers to hide the negative impact on the environment
Consistency and duration	strategic approach to sustainability that is demonstrated in all aspects of business	can only be a temporary measure, not backed by real action
Evidence and validation	often accompanied by evidence of its environmental responsibility, such as sustainability certificates or environmental impact reports	may lack relevant evidence
Stability and meaningfulness	usually, stability and meaningfulness in its messages and actions	can be volatile and inconsistent

Continuation of table 1

Approaches to the problem	solves environmental problems by proactively developing and implementing environmental initiatives	only tries to create the illusion of being green without changing the actual practices of the company
Long-term implications	promotes sustainability and can have a positive impact on a company's long-term reputation	can lead to a loss of consumer trust and a negative impact on reputation
Openness and transparency	usually based on open communication with consumers and other stakeholders	can involve hidden and manipulative information
Environmental impact	actively aims to reduce a company's environmental impact	can even lead to an increase in negative impact
Internal cultural impact	can stimulate a company's internal culture that promotes real environmental change in its operations	may not have a corresponding impact on the company's internal culture
Reality of results	contributes to achieving real and concrete results in reducing the negative impact on the environment	can only remain at the level of promises without practical application

Green Marketing is the company's strategic approach to sustainable development and includes real efforts to reduce the negative impact on the environment. This requires honesty, vegetation and transparency in communication with consumers. Greenwashing, on the contrary, is a marketing strategy aimed at creating the illusion of environmental responsibility without real changes in the company's operations. This can include manipulative and non-transparent practices that can hide negative environmental impacts.

So, the main differences are the efficiency and component of the company's efforts, honesty and openness in communication with consumers and the real impact on the environment. While green marketing promotes sustainability and positive change, greenwashing can undermine consumer confidence and have a negative impact on a company's reputation.

Today, many companies in the United States are actively engaged in Green Marketing and implement various environmental initiatives. Some of the most well-known companies in this field include: [25]

1. **Apple**

When the company introduced the updated versions of the MacBook Mini and MacBook Air, they made it clear that these goods were produced using 100% recyclable aluminum. The slogan they used was: "Truly innovative products leave their mark on the world, but not on the planet". This company is a true example of green marketing, as they are working towards making new items while decreasing the amount of electrical waste and rubbish produced. They also ensure that the components and chemicals they use in their products are not only safe for consumers, but also safe for the natural environment in which they are used.

By 2022, they were using around 20% recycled material, the largest implementation of recycled materials in history.

In its 2023 Environmental Progress Report, the corporation provided additional information regarding its progress and innovation initiatives in sustainable energy use and recycling practices.

2. **Starbucks**

Starbucks is among the most remarkable examples of green marketing companies. It has maintained its environmentally friendly practices. Here we highlight the use of solar energy and, consequently, low energy consumption. It has also used environmentally friendly building materials in its establishments and for the benefit of the city's streets, a successful green marketing campaign was run on Facebook, the purpose of which was to encourage people to help by planting trees and painting the pavements. This was an example of green marketing that was acclaimed, and they are now trying to use recyclable cups to reduce the amount of litter generated.

The Greener Stores framework, developed in conjunction with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in 2018, aims to accelerate retail's transition to lower impact shops by reducing carbon emissions, as well as water usage and landfill waste.

Starbucks began its journey into being eco-friendly in 1999 with its "Grounds for your Garden" campaign. As a part of this campaign, they gave leftover coffee grounds to people who wanted them for composting.

In 2009 they implemented a water-saving solution by replacing dipper wells with push button metered faucets for rinsing and this reportedly saved up to 150 U.S. gallons of water per day per store. In 2018 they Starbucks banned single-use plastic straws across all stores worldwide. In 2010 and since then Starbucks (branches in the U.S.) has donated leftover pastries to local food banks through a food collection service called Food Donation Connection.

All these initiatives have been announced publicly and through green marketing, they have created increased customer loyalty towards the brand.

3. Nike

Nike is one of the leading companies when it comes to protecting sport for future generations and is one of the leading green companies that has a clear vision for the future. It implemented the Move to Zero programme in which it set out to reduce waste as well as its environmental footprint. In all its operations, the corporation has also set out to achieve its goal of saving the environment by taking a global view of the natural world. It implements green business practices in which it enforces significant change using 100% renewable energy.

4. Tesla

Tesla is a leader in the field of electric vehicles and renewable energy. The company actively promotes its products as environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional options. Tesla's Green Marketing efforts are integral to its brand identity and differentiation strategy. By positioning itself as a champion of sustainability and clean energy, Tesla appeals to environmentally conscious consumers and cultivates a positive reputation in the market.

5. IKEA

IKEA makes significant efforts to use renewable materials in the production of its furniture and to use resources as efficiently as possible. IKEA's Green Marketing initiatives are an integral part of its business strategy, reflecting the company's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and responsible corporate citizenship. By prioritizing environmental stewardship and engaging stakeholders, IKEA aims to drive positive change and contribute to a more sustainable future for generations to come.

IKEA developed and adopted their Environmental Action Plan 1992 and as a part of it revamped their products to be more eco-friendly.

In 2000 they implemented a code of conduct for suppliers and since then audit every supplier to ensure everything being procured is as eco-friendly as possible. In 2008 IKEA launched GreenTech, a €50 million venture capital fund that is located in Lund, a university town in Sweden. The main focus of GreenTech is to invest in companies that will advance the sustainable energy field through alternative light sources, solar panels, efficient water-saving and purification, etc.

6. Timberland

Timberland LLC, a U.S.-based outdoors wear manufacturer and retailer, in early 2019 pledged to plant 50 million trees in various global locations by the year 2025. They are working with companies like Smallholder Farmers Alliance, GreenNetwork, TREE AID, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Connect4Climate - World Bank Group, Justdiggit, Las Lagunas Ecological Park, Trees for the Future, American Forests, and Treedom to achieve this.

They publicly announced this initiative on their website, through outreach programs like affiliate marketing, blogs, and through all their social media handles.

7. Johnson & Johnson

This company, which sells a variety of baby and children’s products, has made efforts to develop environmentally friendly procedures internally. These include training staff to teach them to implement earth-friendly practices in their work environments. J&J’s purchase of renewable electricity is in line with the organisation’s broader climate action policy, as J&J believes there is a direct correlation between health and climate change. In this regard, Johnson & Johnson argues that climate change changes infectious disease patterns and raises concerns about drought and food shortages. As part of the Race to Zero/Business Ambition for 1.5 initiative, J&J has set some tentative targets, such as 100% of the world’s energy to come from renewable sources by 2025. It also expects to achieve carbon neutral operations by 2030, exceeding the science-focused target of a 60% decrease in absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions relative to 2016 levels.

8. The Body Shop

The Body Shop is a great example of green marketing. They have created a green ecosystem by running all processes - product testing, product development, product packaging, etc, through sustainable methods.

One of their initiatives is creating sustainable, zero-waste packaging. Another is minimizing the use of plastic across all of their stores.

In 2016, The Body Shop developed 'Enrich Not Exploit,' a sustainability framework that incorporated 14 specific CSR (corporate social responsibility) targets for 2020. Some of these goals were to ensure all of their natural ingredients are traceable and sustainably sourced, to reduce energy consumption within all stores by 10% per year, and to guarantee that 70% or more of their product packaging does not contain fossil fuels.

Some **agricultural companies in the United States are actively engaged in green marketing**, promoting their products and practices aimed at sustainability and environmental responsibility. Here are some examples of such companies:

1. **Organic Valley (Wisconsin):** This company produces organic dairy products, meat and other products. They actively use green marketing, emphasizing their commitment to sustainable production and environmental responsibility.

2. **Annie's Homegrown (Berkeley, California):** Annie's makes organic and natural products such as pasta, snacks and sauces. The company actively promotes its environmental values through its packaging and sponsorships.

3. **Stonyfield Farm (Londonderry, New Hampshire):** They produce organic dairy products such as yogurts and milk. Stonyfield is known for its initiatives to reduce environmental impact and increase production sustainability.

4. **Clif Bar & Company (Emeryville, California):** This company makes energy bars and other products for an active lifestyle. They actively promote themselves as an environmentally conscious company that cares about its consumers and the environment.

5. **Patagonia Provisions (Ventura, California):** Known for its outdoor clothing and outdoor gear, Patagonia also has a subsidiary, Patagonia Provisions, that makes sustainable food products like dried fruits and nuts.

These companies actively apply green marketing, emphasizing their efforts towards sustainable development and environmental responsibility in their products and operations.

Usually, companies that promote themselves as "environmentally friendly" or "green" but do not provide sufficient evidence of their environmental responsibility or actions can be criticized for greenwashing. However, specific examples may change over time and depending on the context.

There are various companies that have been criticized for greenwashing practices in the past. Some of them are making efforts to improve their practices, while others may continue to use marketing strategies that may be aimed at creating the illusion of environmental responsibility without actual changes in the company's operations. Here are some **examples of companies that have been criticized** or cited as examples of greenwashing in the past:

1. Volkswagen: In 2015, Volkswagen became the subject of a scandal due to the manipulation of diesel car emissions. The company actively promoted itself as an environmentally friendly car manufacturer, but in reality used software to cheat emissions tests.

2. BP: After the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, BP (British Petroleum) was criticized for using marketing strategies that tried to calm down the threat to the environment and the environmental consequences.

3. Walmart: Walmart has been criticized for greenwashing practices in connection with its attempts to increase the environmental friendliness of its operations and products. A few years ago, the company was accused of not keeping enough promises to reduce carbon emissions and other environmental measures. Although Walmart actively promotes its energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, its environmental impact may be more complex given the scale of its manufacturing operations and logistics networks.

4. Nestlé: Nestlé has also been criticized for greenwashing practices in relation to the packaging of its products and water resources. Some critics point out that the company makes claims about its environmental responsibility but actually has a significant environmental footprint. For example, their products may claim renewable energy or use renewable resources on their packaging, but in reality this may only be part of their manufacturing process.

5. Nissan: In 2019, Nissan was accused of greenwashing after it was revealed that they could be mis-measuring the carbon emissions of their cars and convincing consumers that they were environmentally friendly.

6. Marlboro: Philip Morris International, the maker of Marlboro cigarettes, has been criticized for trying to launch its IQOS campaign as an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional smoking, although that may not be true.

These examples can serve as an illustration of how some companies can use marketing strategies to create the illusion of environmental responsibility without actually changing their operations. Manipulation of Green Marketing can occur in various industries and involve both large and smaller companies.

In greenwashing, companies use phraseological attempts to masquerade as green products to confuse the buyer and create the illusion that their goods or services are green, even when they are not. Here are some **examples of phraseological attempts at masking**:

1. "Eco-friendly" or "Green": These terms are often used by companies to describe their products, but without concrete evidence of environmental compliance.

2. "Natural" or "Organic": While these terms may have their own definition in product manufacturing, they are also often used without proper certification or evidence that the product is environmentally friendly.

3. “Biodegradable” or “Biodegradable”: These terms may be used to describe materials that break down in the natural environment, but in reality, they may break down very slowly or require special conditions to break down.

4. "Eco-friendly" or "Natural choice": These phrases can be used to encourage consumers to choose products that the company believes are better for the environment than other alternatives.

These terms and phrases can be used by companies to create a positive image of their products or services, but with no real effort to improve environmental responsibility. They can mask the shortcomings or insufficiency of the product's true environmental compliance to attract consumers. The use of phraseological attempts to disguise as eco products has certain **negative consequences**:

Consumer distrust: If consumers find that a company uses green marketing without real efforts in the area of sustainability, it can lead to a loss of consumer trust in the brand. Distrust can spread to other products of the company.

Moral damage: Using the disguise of eco products can create a false impression that the company really cares about the environment, while its actions may even be harmful to nature. This can affect the moral values of consumers and cause indignation.

Consumer confusion: When consumers discover that they are being misled about the sustainability of products, they may feel confused and disillusioned with the brand. This can lead to loss of loyalty and refusal to buy from this company.

Negative impact on the environment: If a company uses the guise of eco products without making real efforts in the area of sustainable production and consumption of resources, this can lead to a further increase of the company's ecological footprint and negative impact on the environment.

Therefore, not using green marketing honestly can have serious consequences for the company's reputation, relations with consumers and the environment.

Examples of companies that use phraseological attempts to disguise themselves as eco products:

H&M: H&M uses phrases like "Conscious Collection" to draw attention to its clothing line, which it claims is made with environmentally friendly standards. However, some environmental activists criticize the company for its lack of sustainable production efforts.

Tesla: Although Tesla produces electric cars that have lower carbon emissions compared to traditional diesel cars, some critics point out that the production of batteries for electric cars can also have a negative impact on the environment.

Nestlé: Nestlé uses the terms "natural", "organic" and "healthy food" to advertise its products. However, critics point out that some of their products may contain artificial additives and preservatives that are not in line with the idea of organic food.

These examples show how companies can use phraseological attempts to masquerade as eco products in order to draw consumers' attention to their products.

It is necessary to fight against companies that use greenwashing. Accordingly, it requires a comprehensive approach and joint efforts on the part of consumers, government and public organizations. Here are some ways to overcome this problem:

1. **Strict regulation and supervision:** Government bodies can set strict rules and standards for green marketing and enforce them through systems of supervision and sanctions for violators.

2. **Increased transparency:** Companies should be required to provide evidence of their claims regarding the environmental friendliness of their products and production processes. This may include publishing data on emissions, resource use and other indicators.

3. **Consumer education:** It is important to educate consumers to distinguish between real eco products and those that use greenwashing. This can be through educational campaigns, information resources and the media.

4. **Creation of independent ratings and certifications:** Public organizations and professional associations can create independent rating and certification systems for green products so that consumers can trust certain brands.

5. **Lawsuits and public pressure:** Civil society organizations can take legal action if companies violate green marketing laws. In addition, public pressure and campaigns can force companies to change their practices.

6. **Support of real eco-initiatives:** Consumers and investors can actively support companies that really make significant efforts in the field of sustainable development and environmental responsibility.

These measures can contribute to a more transparent and responsible market, where companies have incentives to act in an environmentally friendly and honest manner.

Based on the analysis, it is possible to conclude that the negative use of greenwashing can have serious consequences for companies, consumers and the environment. First, it can lead to a loss of trust among consumers when they discover that the brand is deceiving about the environmental aspects of its products. Loss of trust can negatively affect the company's reputation and affect its financial performance. In addition, not being honest enough about green marketing can lead to resource consumption without real improvements in sustainability. This can exacerbate environmental problems and lead to a further increase in the company's environmental footprint. Also, greenwashing can cause confusion and frustration among consumers who feel cheated after discovering the company's true motives. A lack of integrity in green marketing can also contribute to the overall deterioration of the environment, as it discourages companies from implementing valid environmental initiatives. Such practices can undermine the long-term success of the business and lead to the loss of competitive advantages in the market. In general, the negative use of greenwashing reflects shortcomings in the way companies perceive and use the concepts of sustainable development and environmental responsibility in their operations.