

## **A future power - Is it a “G” marketing**

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### **Abstract**

Current practice in Green marketing does not equate with the demands of the theoretical perspective. G marketing has focused on marketing green products and addressing the environmental concerns of consumers. It has failed to relate to the theory of G marketing which perceives the dominant social paradigm of industrial societies, rather than particular behaviours, to be the agent of environmental crisis. G marketing strategies with this perspective would consider holistic issues and sustainability and would be aware of the limitations of the prevailing dominant social paradigm.

Generally people focused on attitudes and behaviour of the environmentally-conscious consumer. G marketing is an initiative process of delivering products and services that are based on environmental benefits. The main idea that revolves around the concept of G marketing is that, most of the products are environmentally or ecologically friendly.

The green products that are sustainable should be more durable, cheaper, healthier, and thoughtful as it brought to the social communities. The green business, together with its products and services should make the future in a creative and thrilling way.

A leader who is concerned with the environment and thinks of other strategy must face the environmental problems and challenges that the business will meet. The involvement of redesigning in completing the task and responsibility for the environment is emphasized, and in return the business will gain great opportunity to spare the environmental resources in various good reasons.

In order to achieve the overall competency, the business should improve the resource productivity to meet the efficiency expectation. The business will face many environmental risks and costs but still they have to acquire the knowledge in managing and controlling these aspects. As the marketing concept and perspective, the business should definitely meet the customers various environmental needs, for that they can build loyalty towards the customers and can promote value innovation and a chance to develop a breakthrough product. With this mindset, it would be interesting then to investigate environment as its driving theme.

## **Introduction:**

Green marketing has not lived up to the hopes and dreams of many managers and activists. Although public opinion polls consistently show that consumers would prefer to choose a green product over one that is less friendly to the environment when all other things are equal, those "other things" are rarely equal in the minds of consumers. For example, when consumers are forced to make trade-offs between product attributes or helping the environment, the environment almost never wins, and hopes for green products also have been hurt by the perception that such products are of lower quality or don't really deliver on their environmental promises. And yet the news isn't all bad, as the growing number of people willing to pay a premium for green products from organic foods to energy-efficient appliances attests. How, then, should companies handle the dilemmas associated with green marketing? They must always keep in mind that consumers are unlikely to compromise on traditional product attributes, such as convenience, availability, price, quality and performance. It's even more important to realize, however, that there is no single green-marketing strategy that is right for every company. The companies should follow one of four strategies, depending on market and competitive conditions, from the relatively passive and silent "lean green" approach to the more aggressive and visible "extreme green" approach with "defensive green" and "shaded green" in between. Managers who understand these strategies and the underlying reasoning behind them will be better prepared to help their companies benefit from an environmentally friendly approach to marketing.

The **GREEN** code for environmental market research:

**G eneralize with care** Consumer behavior will not necessarily be consistent across different product types, and particular market segments may respond to certain issues on the green agenda but not others.

**R emember**, the validity of a piece of market research is not related to the degree to which it supports your preferred option.

**E xplore** the context from which market research data comes. Be clear on the nature of the sample used, the questions asked, the way in which responses were recorded and the time and place from which the responses come.

**E nsure** that where market research is crossing international borderlines, that the terminology and interpretation remains consistent. Terms like 'environment', 'green' and 'conservation' do not always translate precisely between languages.

**N eutrality** is important. Ensure that when the company pose questions to consumers, that they can make any response without being made to feel guilty or uncomfortable, and ensure that the consumers' own preconceptions about the green agenda (such as an assumption that green products will cost extra) are not encoded within the questions.

## **The Research Objectives**

The concept of green marketing is yet to gain recognition, popularity and acceptance to the full extent. In view of growing concern over the environmental issues across the world the marketers are attempting to address the green issues by way of increased attention to 'cradle to cradle' products instead of 'cradle to grave' products. Though the shades of green are different, the marketers are constantly addressing the concept. Successful marketing strategy needs to be customer centric and so also the green marketing strategy.

Among other things it is the positive perception, attitude, interest awareness and preference of consumers towards the green products that ensure sustainable success. These pertinent aspects are yet to be explored with much vigor. Against this background this study has been attempted with the following objectives:

- To capture and categorize the respondents on the basis of their level of eco friendliness and to understand their profile.
- To study the level of awareness, source of awareness, preference and level of satisfaction with respect to select eco friendly products.
- To study the influence of select demographic variables on the perception of eco friendly products.
- To explore the difference in the perception regarding eco friendly products among the various categories of respondents.
- To offer suggestions based on the findings.

## **Methodology**

The study assumes the characteristics of both exploratory and descriptive research. The study was based mainly on the primary data captured through a specially designed questionnaire. The questions designed in the interview schedule aims to explore (1) the profile of the respondent in terms of age, gender, education etc., (2) awareness level of green products (3) knowledge base pertaining to green products (4) Preference towards green product category (5) Loyalty rating (6) Attitude towards green products. For the purpose of measuring attitude. 45 variables explaining awareness, preference, behavior, switch over behavior, satisfaction and the like have been developed and the responses were obtained in Likert's five point scales. This database is used to categorize respondents into different category of green consumers. A sample of 60 respondents distributed equally between male and female.

### **Categorization of Respondents on the Basis of Eco Friendliness:**

The respondents were categorized on the basis of the perception towards eco friendly aspects. The respondents are classified into four categories viz., 'Aspirants', 'Addicts', 'Adjusters' and 'Avoiders'. A brief description of the categories of respondents is given below:

Aspirants are aware of the ecological imbalance and its damaging effects. They wish to consume eco friendly products and feel that eco friendly products render value for price paid. Addicts have a very strong favorable attitude towards eco friendly products. They buy only eco friendly products, feel that the eco friendly products are good for health and are fully satisfied with the same. They always recommend eco friendly products and wait for the availability of the same instead of buying the alternatives. Adjusters don't feel much difference between eco friendly products and non eco friendly products and are happy with any product that fulfills their needs. They are not very specific about the eco friendliness and go by product availability, price and quality. Avoiders feel that ecological imbalance is bound to happen and as an individual they cannot contribute to avoid the same. They feel that eco friendly products are yet another marketing gimmicks, they don't deliver what they promise and that they are costly. They also feel that eco friendliness does not enable to upgrade quality and the products do not have world class quality.

The classification of the respondents as per the findings is reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents on the Basis of their Level of Eco Friendliness

Category	No.	%
Aspirants	35	58.3
Addicts	12	20.0
Adjusters	9	15.0
Avoiders	4	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that majority (58.3%) of the respondents are 'aspirants', 20 % are 'addicts', 15% are 'adjusters' and only 6.7% fall in the category of 'avoiders'.

**Profile of the Respondents:**

The above categories of respondents are further explored on the basis of demographic variables. Result is shown in the following table:

**Profile of the Respondents**

	Aspirants		Addicts		Adjusters		Avoiders	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gender								
Male	15	42.9	7	58.3	5	55.6	3	75.0
Female								
Age								
Below 20 years	-	-	1	8.3	-	-	-	-
21 to 30 years	3	8.6	1	8.3	-	-	-	-
Education								
School level	18	51.4	7	58.3	5	55.6	2	50.0
Under graduation	12	34.3	3	25.0	3	33.3	-	-
Family Monthly Income								
Below Rs.10,000	5	14.3	3	25.0	2	22.2	2	50.0
Occupation								
Business Professional	18	51.4	4	22.2	1	11.1	1	25.0
Employed	10	28.6	5	41.7	5	55.6	2	50.0
Housewife	3	8.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Family Size								
Two	4	11.4	3	25.0	-	-	-	-
Three								
Four	10	28.6	2	16.7	2	22.2	-	-
Above four								
No. of Earning Members in the Family								
One	20	57.1	6	50.0	5	55.6	4	100
Two								
Three								
Four								
Place of Origin								
Rural	6	17.1	3	25.0	2	22.2	3	75.0

**Level of awareness:**

The level of awareness regarding eco friendly products in select category of products viz., is explored and the result is shown below:

Table 3: Level of Awareness of Eco Friendly Products

Products	Fully		Partially		Not at all	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Food products	32	53.3	28	46.7	-	-
Cosmetics	17	28.3	43	71.7	-	-
Medicine	29	48.3	31	51.7	-	-
Furniture	27	45.0	26	43.3	7	11.7

It can be seen from the above table that majority (53.3%) of the respondents are 'fully' aware of the eco friendly food products. In case of cosmetics and medicine, majority of the respondents are only 'partially' aware of the eco friendly products. In case of furniture category most (45%) of the respondents are 'fully' aware of eco friendly products however it is to be noted that 11.7% are not aware of the same.

**Source of awareness of eco friendly products:**

The following table shows the source through which the respondents came to know about the eco friendly products.

Table 4: Source of Awareness of Eco Friendly Products

Products	Television		Press		Users		Friends/		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Food products	25	41.7	9	15.0	11	18.3	15	25.0	-	-
Cosmetics	24	40.0	19	31.7	10	16.7	6	10.0	1	1.1
Medicine	10	16.7	9	15.0	19	31.7	14	23.3	8	13.3
Furniture	8	13.3	11	18.3	8	13.3	26	43.3	-	-

### Level of eco friendliness Vs Perception

In order to explore whether the various categories of respondents viz., 'aspirants', 'addicts', 'adjusters' and 'avoiders' differ in their perception towards eco friendly products, the following hypothesis is postulated: There is no significant difference in the perception regarding eco friendly products among the various categories of respondents. The above hypothesis is tested through Analysis of variance technique and the 'F' value along with the level of significance is shown in the Table 5:

**Table 5: Level of Eco Friendliness Vs Perception**

Issues	'F' Value	Significance	Issues	'F' Value	Significance
Awareness			Preference		
Food products	.704	.553	Food products	1.647	.189
Cosmetics	.362	.780	Cosmetics	.362	.781
Medicine	.487	.693	Medicine	2.445	.033
Furniture	.207	.891	Furniture	.645	.589
Source			Satisfaction		
Food products	1.261	.297	Food products	.336	.799
Cosmetics	.056	.982	cosmetics	1.570	.026
Medicine	.105	.957	Medicine	.007	.999
			Furniture	.660	.580
Furniture	.258	.855	Willingness to recommend	1732	.002

Table 5 shows that eco friendly categories viz., the 'aspirants', 'addicts', 'adjusters' and 'avoiders' differ significantly as regards the preference for eco friendly medicines and satisfaction regarding eco friendly cosmetics. The above said categories also significantly differ in their willingness to recommend eco friendly products to others.

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The study findings indicate that few respondents are 'avoiders' and 'adjusters' of eco friendly products. On the other hand majority of them are aspirants. This conveys a positive signal to the marketers to further activate the attempts

towards coming out with eco friendly marketing mix. Further, customer segment specific strategic attempts are to be explored for conversion of 'avoiders' of eco friendly products into 'aspirants' and 'aspirants' into 'addicts'. There is a likelihood of more and more eco friendly food product to pour into the market as the concern for eco friendly food product is higher as compared to others. This has a greater implication on the product mix strategy of the concern. Government can come out with advertising and publicity campaign through television media as it appears to be the popular medium in generating awareness about the eco friendly products. Further, government should come out with policy measures to invest as much as possible to build awareness about eco friendly products and render incentives to the organizations committing themselves in the generation and distribution of green products. The society at large would be benefited by healthy green products as there would be competition among organizations in developing and sustaining competitive edge on account of capturing the niche segment pertaining to green products. From the academic perspective studies of this nature are at the budding stage. Further studies in active collaboration with agencies concerned with green marketing will yield much more meaningful results that would provide input for strategic decision making for the overall improvement in the corporate performance. The bottom line is preserving and making effective use of rare resources for the betterment of the present and the future generation.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

The following suggestions emanate from the study:

1. It is encouraging to note that majority of the respondents fall in the category of 'aspirants'. This green signal shows a ripening market for eco friendly products which can be explored by marketers.
2. Profile of the respondents belonging to various categories viz., 'aspirants', 'addicts', 'adjuster' and 'avoiders' will enable to frame customer segment specific strategies to reach and engage the consumers.
3. Majority of respondents in the case of eco friendly cosmetics, medicine and furniture are only 'partially' aware of the same. Hence vigorous steps should be taken to increase the awareness.
4. In case of eco friendly food products and cosmetics television is identified as the major source of information. In case of medicine it is 'existing users' and as regards eco friendly furniture it is the 'friends/ relatives/neighbors'. These sources can be further explored to a greater extent to create awareness and preference.
5. In order to enhance the market opportunities marketers can concentrate on the demographic variables highlighted in the study so as to influence the awareness, preference and satisfaction.
6. The study shows that the perception of respondents towards eco friendly products differs. Also the paper has highlighted the variables discriminating the category of respondents which enables to develop customized strategies to address specific category of respondents.



7. The ecological imbalance is causing serious implication and the issue is gaining more attention in the global scenario. Among other constituents of the society, marketers have an indispensable role to play in safeguarding the environment by designing, developing, delivering socially responsible marketing mix.

This paper mirrors the mindset of eco friendly consumers and thereby provides the knowledge base required to equip the marketers to face the task of creating a safe world for present and prospective consumers. The findings would enable the marketer to arrive at appropriate green marketing strategies and thereby scale new heights in the less explored terrain.

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