

GREEN MARKETING: THE INNOVATIVE MANTRA OF MARKETING



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Introduction

As consumers become more conscious of the natural environment, businesses are modifying their own thoughts and behavior in an attempt to address the concerns of consumers. Green marketing is becoming more important to businesses owing to consumer's genuine concerns about our limited resources on the earth. By implementing green marketing measures to save the earth's resources in production, packaging, and operations, businesses have increased their rate of targeting consumers who are concerned about the environment. These same consumers through their concern are interested in integrating environmental issues into their purchasing decisions through their incorporation into the process and content of the marketing strategy for whatever product may be required.

Green marketing subsumes greening products as well as greening firms. In addition to manipulating the 4Ps (product, price, place and promotion) of the traditional marketing mix, it requires a careful understanding of public policy processes. It is not a catchphrase; rather it is a marketing strategy that can help entity get more customers improvements in bottom line and thereby value of enterprise.

According to the *American Marketing Association*, "Green Marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe." Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including: product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising.

Green Marketing refers to a comprehensive marketing orientation where in products and services are promoted to gratify the target audience who favor products of good quality, durability, performance and which are available at an affordable cost, simultaneously not having an injurious impact on the environment. As per Mr. J. Polonsky, Green Marketing can be defined as, "All activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchange intended to satisfy human needs or wants such that satisfying of these needs and wants occur with minimal detrimental input on the national environment."

Elkington (1994: 93) defines green consumer as one who avoids products that are likely to endanger the health of the consumer or others; cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal; consume a disproportionate amount of energy; cause unnecessary waste; use materials derived from threatened species or environments; involve unnecessary use of, or cruelty to animals; adversely affect other countries.

Evolution of Green Marketing

The promotion of environmentally safe or beneficial products, green marketing began in Europe in the early 1980s when specific products were identified as being harmful to the earth's atmosphere. As a result, new "green" products were introduced that were less damaging to the environment. The concept caught on in the United States and has been gaining steadily ever since.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) held the first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" in 1975. The proceedings of this workshop resulted in one of the first books on green marketing entitled "Ecological Marketing". The first wave of Green Marketing occurred in the 1980s. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Reports started with the ice cream seller Ben & Jerry's where the financial report was supplemented by a greater view on the company's environmental impact. The green marketing has evolved over a period of time. According to Peatie 2001, Green marketing has evolved through three phases. First phase was termed as 'Ecological' green marketing, during this phase all marketing task related that can provide remedial for environment problems were formulated. Second phase was termed as 'Environment' Green marketing, which focused on shifting the attention on clean technology that included designing of innovative products that can take care of pollution and waste issues. Third phase was termed as 'Sustainable' green marketing which comprised of the thinking that people do want to leave clean earth to their progeny.

The term "sustainability" has become the keyword of this competitive era. As resources are scarce and human wants are infinite, this broadening gap has augmented the interest among the consumers all over the world regarding fortification of environment. This increasing awareness and environmental consciousness has transformed the behavioral blueprints both in individuals and business. Now there is an era of recyclable, non toxic and environment responsive green goods.

Why marketers go for Green Marketing

To bridge the gap between resource requirements and availability, it is important for marketers to utilize resources efficiently without waste as well as to achieve the organization's objective. So green marketing is inevitable. There is growing interest among the consumers all over the world regarding protection of environment. Worldwide evidence indicates people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior. As a result of this, green marketing has emerged which speaks for growing market for sustainable and socially responsible products and services.

Issues like Global warming and depletion of ozone umbrella are important for the healthy survival. Every person rich or poor would be interested in quality life with full of health and vigour and so would the corporate class. Financial gain and economic profit is the main aim of any corporate business. So green marketing by the business class is still in the selfish anthropological perspective of long term sustainable business and to please the consumer and obtain the sanction license by the governing body. Industries in Asian countries are catching the need of green marketing from the developed countries but still there is a wide gap between their understanding and implementation. Green marketing has been widely adopted by the firms worldwide and the following are the possible reasons:

Opportunities-

As demands change, many firms see these changes as an opportunity to be exploited and have competitive advantage over firms marketing non environmentally responsible alternatives.

Corporate Social Responsibility -

Many firms are beginning to realize that they are members of the wider community and therefore must behave in an environmentally responsible fashion. This translates into firms that believe they must achieve environmental objectives as well as profit related objectives. This results in environmental issues being integrated into the firm's corporate culture. There are examples of firms adopting both strategies. Organizations like the Body Shop heavily promote the fact that they are environmentally responsible. While this behaviour is a competitive advantage, the firm was established specifically to offer consumers environmentally responsible alternatives to conventional cosmetic products. This philosophy is directly tied to the overall corporate culture, rather than simply being a competitive tool. Fund managers and corporate developers too, are taking into account the environmental viability of the company they invest in. Venture Capitalists are investing in green business because they believe it's growth opportunity. Britain based HSBC became the world's first bank to go carbon neutral late last year and is now turning its 11000 buildings in 76 countries worldwide into models of energy efficiency

Government Pressure -

As with all marketing related activities, governments want to "protect" consumers and society; this protection has significant green marketing implications. Governmental regulations relating to environmental marketing are designed to protect consumers in several ways.

They are:

- Reduce production of harmful goods or by products
- Modify consumer and industry's use and/or consumption of harmful goods
- Ensure that all types of consumers have the ability to evaluate the environmental composition of goods.
- The ban of plastic bags in prohibition of smoking in public areas, etc.

Government establishes regulations designed to control the amount of hazardous waste produced by firms. For Example: New Delhi, was getting polluted gradually at a very fast pace till Supreme Court of India forced a change of fuel on it. In 2002, a directive was issued to completely adopt CNG in all public transport systems to curb pollution.

One of the more recent publicized environmental regulations undertaken by governments has been the establishment of guidelines designed to "control" green marketing claims. These regulations include the Australian Trade Practices Commission's (TPC) "Environmental Claims in Marketing - A Guideline", the US Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) "Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims" and the regulations suggested by the National Association of Attorneys-General. These regulations are all designed to ensure consumers have the appropriate information which would enable them to evaluate firm's environmental claims

Competitive pressure-

Another major force in the environmental marketing area has been firms' desire to maintain their competitive position. In many cases firms observe competitors promoting their environmental behaviors and attempt to emulate their initiatives. In some instances this competitive pressure has caused an entire industry to modify and thus reduce its detrimental environmental behaviour. For example, it could be argued that Xerox's "Revive 100% Recycled paper" was introduced a few years ago in an attempt to address the introduction of recycled photocopier paper by other manufacturers.

Cost or Profit Issue -

Reduction of harmful waste may lead to substantial cost savings. Sometimes, many firms develop symbiotic relationship whereby the waste generated by one company is used by another as a cost-effective raw material. For example, the fly ash generated by thermal power plants, which would otherwise contributed to a gigantic quantum of solid waste, is used to manufacture fly ash bricks for construction purposes. Firms may also use green marketing in an attempt to address cost or profit related issues. Disposing of environmentally harmful by-products, such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contaminated oil are becoming increasingly costly and in some cases difficult.

Consumers: attitudes versus behaviors

Since the 1960s, environmental issues have gained importance in business as well as public policy discourses. Recent polls report that 87% of U.S. adults are concerned about the condition of the natural environment (Phillips, 1999), 80% believe that protecting the environment will require major changes in current life-styles (Ottman, 1996) and 75% consider themselves to be environmentalists (Osterhus, 1997). Not surprisingly then, some scholars believe that consumers are willing to pay premiums for green products because consumers often prioritize green attributes over traditional product attributes such as price and quality: 50% of Americans claim to look for environmental labels and to switch brands based on environment-friendliness (Phillips, 1999).

However, the caveat is that such claims and attitudes may not always translate into actual behaviors (McGuire, 1985). One reason could be the social pressures to be 'green' (Ritchie and McDougall, 1985). Consequently, notwithstanding -the claims about the concern for the natural environment, mass consumer markets for green products in most categories have yet to develop.

Some scholars claim that green policies/products are profitable: green policies can reduce costs; green firms can shape future regulations and reap first-mover advantages (Porter and van der Linde, 1995; for a critique, see Rugman and Verbeke, 2000).

However, this does not seem to be the norm within and across most industries. Many believe that green policies are expensive, especially after the initial gains - the 'low hanging fruit' - in reducing end-of-the-pipe pollution have been harvested (Walley and Whitehead, 1994). As a result, firms often need to charge premium prices for green products. Of course, if green products were cheaper than other products, their premium pricing would be less of an issue for consumers.

The above discussion raises two issues regarding consumers' benefit-cost calculus: first, whether consumers regard greenness of products/firms as 'hygiene' or 'motivating' factors, and second, to what extent green products create social benefits but impose private costs. Extending Maslow's (1943) theory, Herzberg (1966) developed a theory of work motivation that focused on two work-related factors: those that motivated employees (motivators) and those that prevented dissatisfaction among them (hygiene). As discussed in Prakash (2000), a key challenge for marketers is to understand whether consumers view firm/product greening as motivating factors (their presence induces consumers to purchase a given product; preference for a product is an increasing function of the greening level) or hygiene factors (their absence may bother consumers but, after a low threshold of greening, the preference for a product is not an increasing function of the greening level). If consumers favor firms with green policies (for example, the one with ISO 14001 certification is preferred) or green products (for example, the one with a higher percentage of recycled inputs is favored), green policies/products are motivating factors. Managers, therefore, have economic justification to ensure that their firms/products are greener than their competitors'. However, if consumers do not care much about who is greener, but they do penalize firms that violate environmental laws or emit high levels of toxins, greenness is a hygiene variable - 33% of adults claimed to have avoided buying products, at least occasionally, from companies with poor environmental records (Ottman, 1996). If so, then the managerial task then is to obey environmental laws, to stay out of trouble with the regulators and to avoid bad press by undertaking minimal beyond-compliance initiatives.

Challenges in Green Marketing

Many organizations want to turn green, as an increasing number of consumers' want to associate themselves with environmental-friendly products. Alongside, one also witnesses confusion among the consumers regarding the products. In particular, one often finds distrust regarding the credibility of green products. Therefore, to ensure consumer confidence, marketers of green products need to be more transparent, and refrain from breaching any law or standards relating to products or business practices.

There are numerous challenges in the field of green marketing. Some of the major hurdles are as following:

Need for Standardization:

It is found that very less percentage of the marketing messages from "Green" campaigns are entirely true and there is a lack of standardization to authenticate these claims. There is no standardization to authenticate these claims. There is no standardization currently in place to certify a product as organic. Unless some regulatory bodies are involved in providing the certifications there will not be any verifiable means. A standard quality control board needs to be in place for such labeling and licensing.

New Concept:

Indian literate and urban consumer is getting more aware about the merits of Green products. But it is still a new concept for the masses. The consumer needs to be educated and made aware of the environmental threats. The new green movements need to reach the masses and that will take a lot of time and effort. By India's ayurvedic heritage, Indian consumers do appreciate the importance of using natural and herbal beauty products. Indian consumer is exposed to healthy living lifestyles such as yoga and natural food consumption. In those aspects the consumer is already aware and will be inclined to accept the green products.

Patience and Perseverance:

The investors and corporate need to view the environment as a major long-term investment opportunity, the marketers need to look at the long-term benefits from this new green movement. It requires a lot of foresight, patience without immediate returns. Since it is new concept and idea, it will have its own acceptance period.

Avoiding Green Myopia:

Green marketing must satisfy two objectives: improved environmental quality and customer satisfaction. Misjudging either or overemphasizing the former at the expense of the latter can be termed "green marketing myopia." Many green products have failed because of green marketing myopia—marketers' myopic focus on their products' "greenness" over the broader expectations of consumers or other market players (such as regulators or activists). For example, Whirlpool (in 1994) launched the "Energy Wise" refrigerator, the first CFC-free cooler and one that was 30 percent more efficient than the U.S. Department of Energy's highest standard. For its innovation, Whirlpool won the "Golden Carrot," a \$30 million award package of consumer rebates from the Super-Efficient Refrigerator Program, sponsored by the Natural Resources Defense Council and funded by 24 electric utilities. Unfortunately, Energy Wise's sales languished because the CFC-free benefit and energy-savings did not offset its \$100 to \$150 price premium, particularly in markets outside the rebate program, and the refrigerators did not offer additional features or new styles that consumers desired.

Strategies for Green Marketing

Green Marketing means deploying resources in a way that minimizes the adverse impact on our environment and ensures a healthier place to live in. It seeks to implement several processes that efficiently take care of sustained ecological growth and development in technology simultaneously. Digital advent is also actively and efficiently aiding in 'greening' of the marketing tasks by transforming the very elementary methods of procedures and policies utilized in marketing. Green Marketing can be incorporated by utilizing the following strategies:

Internet Marketing:

Internet marketing or e-marketing, since years, has evolved as one of the most efficient tools of branding and promotion. With the augmentation of online marketing, the world has transformed into a small marketplace. Looking at the growth of the internet technology, a lot many companies have taken the route of online marketing for creating awareness about its brand awareness about its brand amongst the online customers. Internet marketing, without any doubt, is an environment-friendly version of marketing to a very high extent. The internet has been the chief initiator saving the paper. Up till now, conventional marketing methods were dependent heavily on paper that guzzled a chunk of our green cover.

Direct Marketing:

With the advent of modern means of marketing techniques, a lot many organizations are attempting to reduce their costs and also save the environment. Direct marketing is an initiative under which a marketing organization reaches out to its target audience in the form of SMS, e-mail, Phone call, etc. Because most of the companies NEED (necessities a) direct interaction with the customers and direct marketing is one of the most efficient techniques for the same, it can easily avoid the requirement of circulating pamphlets, leaflets, brochures and other printed material. This, in turn, can protect the environment and keep it green.

Implementing Environment-friendly Resources:

By the means of solar, wind and further non-conventional energy resources for illumination, the extra pressure on our environment can be reduced. Besides being eco-friendly, implementation of these measures can help us in saving the scarce resources as well.

Avoiding the Use of Plastic:

The government's initiative of banning plastic bags has been duly supported by the Indian masses. This move has proved to be fruitful and has positively affected the environment. However, more efforts and initiatives are required to minimize the use of plastic and other non-biodegradable materials. For instance, plastic is highly used in marketing and packaging. This can be minimized to a major extent by utilizing what is known a 'Green packaging'¹ that aims to keep the environment protected and secure.

Environmental demands on packaging companies:

Packaging introduced in the market must, in addition to all that has been stated, fulfill a number of other fundamental requirements:

- The packaging shall be fabricated using as little material as possible to prevent from unnecessary waste, as well as unnecessary impact to the environment in connection with transport.
- The packaging shall not be fabricated using toxic chemicals that can reach the environment.
- The packaging shall not be contaminated with harmful insects.
- The packaging shall be 100% recyclable.
- Reusable packaging should be used where the logistical situation permits.

In line with these requirements, a number of Group companies, to varying degrees, have systems for developing environmentally friendly packaging.

Evidence indicates that successful green products have avoided green marketing myopia by following three important principles: consumer value positioning, calibration of consumer knowledge, and the credibility of product claims. Consumer Value Positioning

- Design environmental products to perform as well as (or better than) alternatives.
 - Promote and deliver the consumer- desired value of environmental products and target relevant consumer market segments (such as market health benefits among health-conscious consumers).
 - Broaden mainstream appeal by bundling (or adding) consumer-desired value into environmental products (such as fixed pricing for subscribers of renewable energy).
- Calibration of Consumer Knowledge

- Educate consumers with marketing messages that connect environmental product attributes with desired consumer value (for example, "pesticide-free produce is healthier"; "energy-efficiency saves money"; or "solar power is convenient").
- Frame environmental product attributes as "solutions" for consumer needs (for example, "rechargeable batteries offer longer performance").
- Create engaging and educational Internet sites about environmental products' desired consumer value (for example, Tide Coldwater's interactive Web site allows visitors to calculate their likely annual money savings based on their laundry habits, utility source (gas or electricity), and zip code location).

Credibility of Product Claims

- Employ environmental product and consumer benefit claims that are specific, meaningful, unpretentious, and qualified (that is, compared with comparable alternatives or likely usage scenarios).
- Procure product endorsements or eco-certifications from trustworthy third parties, and educate consumers about the meaning behind those endorsements and eco-certifications.
- Encourage consumer evangelism via consumers' social and Internet communication networks

Table I.: Marketing messages connecting green products with desired consumer value

Value	Message and business/product
Efficiency and cost effectiveness	"The only thing our washer will shrink is your water bill."-ASKO "Did you know that between 80 and 85 percent of the energy used to wash clothes comes from heating the water ? Tide Coldwater-The Coolest Way to Clean." - Tide Coldwater Laundry Detergent "mpg:)" - Toyota Prius
Health and safety	"20 years of refusing to farm with toxic pesticides. Stubborn, perhaps. Healthy, most definitely." —Earthbound Farm Organic "Safer for You and the Environment." —Seventh Generation Household Cleaners
Performance	"Environmentally friendly stain removal. It's as simple as H2O." —Mohawk EverSet Fibers Carpet "Fueled by light so it runs forever. It's Unstoppable. Just like the people who wear it." —Citizen Eco-Drive Sport Watch
Symbolism	"Think is the chair with a brain and a Conscience." —Steelcase's Think Chair "Make up your mind, not just your face." —The Body Shop
Convenience	"Long life for hard-to-reach places." —General Electric's CFL Flood Lights
Bundling	"Performance and luxury fuelled by innovative technology." - Lexus RX400h Hybrid Sports Utility Vehicle

SOURCE: Compiled by J.A. Ottman, E.R. Stafford, and C.L. Hartman, 2006.

Unsung story of Green Marketing strategy in India

Although the growth that has been observed in the Indian landscape, over the past few years, has been tremendous, it is still under strain for providing a healthy and clean environment to its future generations. Therefore, a lot many brands in India are now strategizing more on policies that will assist them to understand the consumer's choice for green products and promotion of eco- friendly methodology in their respective markets. Some examples are:

ITC Group

A green initiative of ITC is to take up social forestry for its paper and packaging business. It emerged as one of the champion initiatives in carbon sequestration. Almost 30% of this unit's energy today comes from renewable sources.

TATA Group

Tata Group is considered to be one of the most ethical groups in India. Tata steel is making a lot of efforts to reduce Carbon Di Oxide (CO₂) emissions at its Jamshedpur plant from the current 1.8 tons to 1.7 ton of liquid steel by 2012. It is also utilizing effective natural building materials to design its showrooms with the help of natural substances and also LED and CFL lights. TATA Indica EV, and electric car, is another product that will share eco Friendly features with polymer lithium ion batteries.

Oil and Natural Gas Companies

The largest oil producer in India, ONGC is very much ready to lead the list of top 10 green companies in India with energy efficient, green crematoriums that will, very soon, reinstate the conventional wooden pyre around the country. ONGCs Mokshada green Cremation plan will save 60 to 70% of wood.

Idea Cellular Limited

Idea, one of the renowned brands of India, has launched many campaigns that aim to spread the awareness about green marketing. Its popular campaign "Use mobile, save paper" has been successful and acknowledged all over the country. The organization had arranged Green pledge campaign at several Indian states where thousands of people came forward and pledge to save paper and trees. Idea has also established bus shelters with the plotted plants and tendrils climbers to communicate the green message.

Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd

Kansai Nerolac paints Ltd. has introduced an innovative eco friendly paint-"Nerolac Impressions Eco Clean". It is low VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) and odorless paint. Nerolac also led the way in creating awareness for lead free goods in India. Nerolac is taking a subsequent rational step and leading the industry in introducing low VOC paint. VOC in paints pollutes the indoor as well as outdoor air, water and soil and in turn has adverse effects on human health. Nerolac Eco Clean with low VOC will help in preserving the indoor air quality and reduce the incidence of eye and respiratory irritation by exposure to VOC fumes.

HCL's Environment Management and Ecosafe policy

In building a system to identify, develop and sustain the maintenance of an environment management system at corporate level we have formulated a program that we proudly refer as HCL's eco safe. The aim is to encapsulate knowledge, awareness, and key developments on all environmental issues faced by today's world and to incorporate these in HCL's operations assuring our commitment in delivering quality products, solutions and services. The key objective under HCL eco safe is targeted at integrating environmental management procedures into its business processes thereby protecting the environment, health, and safety of all its stakeholders. HCL commits to manufacture products that are environment friendly in all respects and are free from hazardous chemicals. HCL eco safe focuses on product lifecycle management to ensure that our products right from when they are manufactured, bought by customers, recovered at their end-of-life and recycled after useful life are done in an environmentally responsible manner

Maruti: Greening the Supply Chain

The company has remained ahead of regulatory requirements in pursuit of environment protection and energy conservation at its manufacturing facilities, and in development of products that use fewer natural resources and are environment friendly. The company credited the 'Just-in-Time' philosophy adopted and internalized by the employees as the prime reason that helped to excel in this direction. The company has been promoting 3R since its inception. As a result the company has not only been able to recycle 100% of treated waste water but also reduced fresh water consumption. The company has implemented rain water harvesting to recharge the aquifers. Also, recyclable packing for bought out components is being actively promoted. The company has been facilitating implementation of Environment Management System (EMS) at its suppliers' end. Regular training programs are conducted for all the suppliers on EMS. Surveys are conducted to assess the vendors who need more guidance. The systems and the environmental performance of suppliers are audited. The Green co-efficient of this system is much better than the conventional system

Panasonic

Green Plan 2018 of Panasonic outlines initiatives that all Panasonic Group employees should carry out to achieve the industry's No. 1 status in the green indexes the company set to realize the centennial vision. The plan also describes specific areas of activity and numerical targets. Through the united efforts of every Panasonic employee, the company will accelerate the integration of its environmental contributions and business growth to become the No.1 Green Innovation Company in the Electronics Industry.

Nokia Corporation

Nokia recently announced a green marketing initiative in India. From January this year, the company is taking back used mobiles and chargers from the customers for recycling. The campaign titled as Take-Back campaign is a unique social responsibility initiative by this market leader. Under this campaign, the company is encouraging the mobile users to give their old, unused, broken mobiles and chargers for recycling. Nokia also promises to plant one tree for every mobile dumped.

McDonald's replaced its clam shell packaging with waxed paper because of increased consumer concern relating to polystyrene production and Ozone depletion. Surf Excel detergent which saves water (advertised with the message—"do bucket paani roz bachana").

Godrej Green business center claims that they also have green buildings which are efficient in their use of energy, water and construction materials, and which reduce the impact on human health and the environment through better design, construction, operation, maintenance and waste disposal. In India, the green building movement, spearheaded by the Confederation of Indian industry (CII). Xerox introduced a "high quality" recycled photocopier paper in an attempt to satisfy the demands of firms for less environmentally harmful products.

Conclusion

Green Marketing initiatives would be effective when well known marketing principles are used to attract customers attention to green products. The initiatives could be hastened by incorporating the potential economic gains that are likely to accrue from use of green products. Effective green marketing requires applying good marketing principles to make green products desirable for consumers. Green marketing should not neglect the economic aspect of marketing. Marketers need to understand the implications of green marketing. It to some extent strengthen company's image in the mind of consumers. Green marketing covers more than a firm's marketing claims. While firms must bear much of the responsibility for environmental degradation, the responsibility should not be theirs alone. Ultimately green marketing requires that consumers want a cleaner environment and are willing to "pay" for it, possibly through higher priced goods, modified individual lifestyles, or even governmental intervention. Until this occurs it will be difficult for firms alone to lead the green marketing revolution. We need to come out through green myopia.

It is equally imperative for industrial buyers to mandate their suppliers to adopt green initiatives. In other words, environmentally conscious organizations should include green initiatives in their vendor development plans, besides their offerings to markets. Such an approach could result in a chain reaction on an entire supply chain. Having said this, it must not be forgotten that the industrial buyer also has the ability to pressure suppliers to modify their activities. Thus an environmental committed organization may not only produce goods that have reduced their detrimental impact on the environment, they may also be able to pressure their suppliers to behave in a more environmentally responsible fashion. Final consumers and industrial buyers also have the ability to pressure organizations to integrate the environment into their corporate culture and thus ensure all organizations minimize the detrimental environmental impact of their activities. Sustainability, however, is destined to dominate twenty-first century commerce. Rising energy prices, growing pollution and resource consumption in world, and political pressures to address climate change are driving innovation toward healthier, more-efficient, high-performance products. In short, all marketing will incorporate elements of green marketing.

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