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DELIVERING SUSTAINABILITY - GREEN MARKETING EVOLUTION

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Abstract

Since the 70's, environmental and social issues have raised to the top of companies' business plans, policymakers' agenda and people's life being a driver for innovation and sustainable change. Many companies aligned their corporate culture, strategies and products to sustainability principles, gaining a competitive advantage from it. Many others did not, not believing in the change or trying to cheat the system with greenwashing strategies. To this extent, identifying the characteristics of green products, understanding consumer's purchase behavior and what they are willing to pay extra for, how competitors rethink supply chains and promotional channels would be useful for businesses that aim to design, develop and market green products. Green Marketing is a key factor to this process. One side enhances clean production by designing and developing green products. The other side advocates and strengthens sustainable consumption, keeping the consumers well-informed during the overall purchasing process. This study reviews the most relevant papers related to Green Marketing since its formation to the present analyzing definitions, approaches, concepts, strategies, tools and solutions. The review shows that Green Marketing has changed over time, adapting to the growing attention and relevance gained by the entire sector. During this journey, different strategies have been implemented, various types of green products exist, and consumers are well-engaged in sustainability in addition to preserving the environment and being socially responsible. Companies furthermore have changed their attitudes for opportunities or because of pressure from legislators or consumers. Supply chains are vital to achieve sustainable consumption, reducing pollution and waste. Advertisements play a key role to inform and advocate the benefits of going Green Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

One of the key challenges humankind faces is to discover more sustainable and fair approaches to produce, deliver, consume and live. Climate change and environmental sustainability are key concerns in the growing international reality. Companies are facing huge challenges to integrate environmental and social problems into organizational culture, strategies and policies. This is a wider change that interacts with various company's areas, such as research and development, manufacturing and supply chains, governance, leadership and marketing. Successful development of sustainable and eco-friendly products and services is fundamental for environmental impact; clean and lean production chains are essential. Marketing plays a key role in this process by setting up a Green Market and communicating to consumers, increasing the awareness of socially responsible behaviors and impact on environmental and social issues, and informing them about the benefits of sustainable products and services. Marketing scope has shifted from consumption at any cost to sustainable consumption.

This paper focuses on the evolution of Green Marketing since its first definition by Hennison and Kinnear (1976) as *ecological marketing* to today's concepts and applications. Since then definitions have changed and concepts have evolved, becoming a constant variable of companies' decision-making processes, policymakers' agenda, and people's life. As per its first definition, concern of environmental issues was what drove the focus in the early ages; consumers were already willing to pay a higher price on green products. The 90's is the decade with the most considerable increase of green attention and strategies. It is also the decade with the most sizable increase of misleading behavior that hurts consumer's trust and creates confusion. Step-by-step the sector shifts from considering only specific physical features to a broader view that involves environmental and social impact. Green Marketing begins to drive the idea of normalizing environmental damages to create green opportunities and competitive advantage, which is the step before the end state of achieving a sustainable economy.

As evolution takes place, numerous challenges evolve. The focus shifts again, from the product to the consumer and from the consumer to the organizational objectives. These objectives align with environmentally responsible principles through a multidimensional approach to corporate philosophy, business practices and functional activities.

The matter is approached with various methodologies and from different viewpoints. Companies do the segmentation of the market, while researchers do the segmentation of

companies according to their green strategies and philosophies. Factors that influence green purchasing behavior are strongly considered, placing the consumer again on the spot. Network between peers, emotional appeal towards environmental concerns and strong branding imagery result in key solutions to gain consumers' attention, which is not always automatically translated into a sale.

Green Marketing continues to evolve, integrating transformative changes with the purpose to create value for the environment, along with individuals and society possessing long-term benefits.

A common denominator of the different authors is the importance to communicate and inform the consumers. Ecolabels, branding, and advertising are fundamental tools to solve the Green Marketing paradigm and find feasible ways to raise perception, awareness of Green products, and drive consumers' purchasing behaviors. Informing consumers during the purchasing process helps to strengthen the evolution of Green markets.

The aim of the authors is to give a relevant perspective on the Green Marketing evolution that could be used for companies that truly want to align their corporate culture with environmental and social principles. Common misleading behaviors are presented; the path towards green principles is not an easy fix. It involves a deep reconfiguration of the business from manufacturing, supply chains, distribution and commercialization. It is an ethical metamorphosis that starts from the company's leadership and changes the way of doing things in the entire organization itself. The scope of this study is to stimulate research, fabricate managers and scholars to involve in topics of environmental, social, and governance sustainability, as well as new ways of design, and to develop and market products and services.

METHODOLOGY

This study reviews and synthesizes 35 relevant articles related to Green Marketing since its formation. It is a common methodology used in business, management, and economic domains to analyze the body knowledge discovered by previous authors and papers.

Data was identified by searching in academic databases using keywords "Green Marketing" "Environmental" "Social" and "Sustainable".

Furthermore, papers were selected by relevance. The authors reviewed titles and abstracts excluding the irrelevant studies. For each relevant paper included in the literature review definitions, approaches, concepts, strategies, tools, and solutions were analyzed to enhance the ecosystem revolving around Green Marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

During the 70's only environmentalists were visioning sustainability as a realistic principle for the future. In fact, the foundations of Green Marketing can be traced back to the concern of environmental issues of the 1970's thanks to Hennison and Kinnear (1976) which brought the idea of "*ecological marketing... concerned with all marketing activities that have served to help cause environmental problems and that may serve to provide a remedy for environmental problems*".

A study conducted by Freeman (1989) highlights that the majority of consumers claim to be environmentalists. It details that consumers are concerned about the environment. This component affects substantially their choices in regards to products and services. They are willing to pay a higher price for them. Thirty years later, according to Eccles and Klimenko (2019), consumers are still complaining about a lack of sustainable-related products and services. It means that the marketers did not dedicate enough consideration and resources to the topic.

McDaniel and Rylander (1993) recognize the 90's as the "Earth Decade", when environmentalism became one of the most important oppositions for marketers. Three points are critical for setting up a Green Marketing strategy: product's environmental implications, consumer attitude regarding political and social beliefs, awareness of Green Marketing profitability, and it should be an integrated part of companies strategic plans. Two different approaches to Green Marketing are proposed: defensive strategy where companies do the minimum to meet the standards and avoid boycott and consequences, assertive strategy where companies get involved in order to perform a sustainable competitive advantage, and to be the first mover on markets.

Peattie and Charter (1994), define Green Marketing as "*the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way*". During the 90's the challenges for marketing seemed to be even bigger compared with what it used to be. In the short term, environmental and social issues have gotten to be major factors in the companies and the markets. Companies must respond to the changing consumer's needs, regulations and social issues, which reflects the expanding interest about environmental and social factors. In the long term, the interest in sustainability will drive companies to reshape the organizational setup and embrace the change, in those departments which support marketing and other core functions (Shrivastava, 1994).

The early stages of Green Marketing have been characterized by a strong focus on the final product and its specific physical features. The differences were highlighted on how the product was constructed, looking at the product characteristics, and its potential to influence consumers. In the second stage, there is a shift towards sustainability features with a focus on the products and services that maximize positive environmental and social impacts. This new and more holistic view of marketing represents a new way to value sustainability.

In the 90's, sustainability was still a vague concept with different interpretations. It was difficult to be measured, translated into action, understood, and delivered by companies and governments. A concrete framework that could be approved and applied to all fields of humankind, especially to the economy.

Polonsky (1995) defines "*Green or Environmental Marketing consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.*" The innovative point in the definition is the protection through the detrimental impact on the natural environment.

Due to the planet's limited resources, humankind must aim to maximize those resources finding the best way to achieve market objectives with minimum impact. Polonsky finds five causes to explain why companies are increasing the use of Green Marketing: *opportunity*, because market demands are changing so the companies see it as potential competitive advantage to satisfy consumers; *social responsibility* as the companies realize that they are important players in the society, and they are accountable for their environmental policies; *governmental pressure* is an incentive to shift to sustainability via regulations and subventions given from the establishment; *competitive pressure* is a major force because companies realize that competitors try to promote environmental behaviors and the strategy is a winning one; *costs* factors related to waste, or scarcity of a specific raw material could force companies towards sustainability.

Mendleson and Polonsky (1995) collect evidence that consumers' purchasing intention is related to the products' impact and they are willing to pay more for it. However, green products credibility is undermined because of greenwashing techniques used by some companies. Major barriers are created by the wrongdoing actors in terms of consumer trust, cynicism, and confusion.

The lack of credibility is given by two causes, misleading behaviors, and a partial integration of eco-friendly products. This usually is because there is not a defined environmental awareness into

corporate culture. Consumer cynicism is caused by the impression that firms set out to jump on the green train for speculative maneuvers and not for real involvement. Finally, the confusion is created by a lack of information without clear and sharp guidelines, definitions, and concepts. A suggested solution could be creating strategic partnerships with environmental groups to improve the corporate image and consumer recognition. Other techniques are product endorsements, corporate sponsorships, and licensing of products. The potential benefits of alliances are enormous. The reliability is substantially increased. There is a major access to information and markets. The image of the company becomes better and the environmental awareness is spread thus, boosting public education.

In 1998, Green Marketing was still associated with traditional marketing. It is still Green Marketing with the little “g” recalled by Dobson’s (1990), the Green Marketing that considers only managerial approaches; is not a real Green Marketing with the large “G” that involves sustainability. Kilbourne (1998) propose a theoretical view of Green Marketing composed by a multidisciplinary approach of political, economic, and technological perspectives to overwhelm the dominant social paradigm (Kilbourne, McDonagh & Prothero, 1997).

The political and policy-maker component should mitigate the conflict between economic growth, environmental consequences, and moral and ethical behaviors to create a framework for sustainable growth.

On one side there are traditional marketing practices with the aim to satisfy the consumer preferences by economic metrics and analysis. On the other side there is the rational judgement that considers environmental and social consequences that cannot be measured with profitability tools. There are many conflicts between the classic economic paradigm and the sustainability concept. The accumulation of capital from continuous economic growth is not sustainable anymore. The result of this concentration is a maldistribution of wealth and development in the world.

The political component is fundamental to mediate economies and markets through normative rules. Some forms of environmental degradation are the result of market failures. People should be protected and they cannot be considered only a number and only as a consumer.

Peattie (2001) affirms that the 70’s developed practices to incorporate environmental concerns into marketing strategies, principles, and values. Marketing has gained traction and importance helping to understand the relationship between the environment, society, and the economy. It evolved over time, continuously shaping itself from the

concept of “Ecological Marketing”, moving into another dimension of “Environmental Marketing”. Marketing and marketers have not been static actors. With that the evolution has continued to adapt to the needs of customers and consumers. Taking into consideration more components they prepared the field for the design of the new “Sustainable Marketing”. The three stages have different driven forces and approaches for marketing:

- *Ecological Marketing* is driven by a wider initiative that aims to reduce the consumers’ dependence on non-green products or services.
- *Environmental Green Marketing* is driven by the idea to normalize environmental damages to create green opportunities and competitive advantage.
- *Sustainable Green Marketing*, a broader approach with the aim to create a sustainable economy.

The topic is in a continuous development, undergoing its fourth stage: ESG Marketing, defined as “*the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying the needs of customers and society, focusing on Environmental, Social, and Governance factors that generate positive and measurable impact.*” To deeply understand the implications related to ESG Marketing it is important to analyze the evolution’s steps of Green Marketing.

Green Marketing has been a major factor in stimulating unsustainable consumption; however, at the same time a potential positive factor in the market mechanisms to empower social and environmental issues. The first aim of Green Marketing has been to reduce the negative impacts on society and environment, caused by products and entirely production systems that did not follow any guidance aligned with environmental values.

According to Peattie (2001) the first stage is called Ecological Green Marketing. The Ecological Marketing is focused on energy resources, air pollution, oil and agro-chemicals issues. It is concentrated on environmental problems. From marketers’ point of view Ecological Marketing has a set of regulations’ constraints and increased costs. Not for all of them. There are some pioneers that strongly believed in environmental values and drove their businesses accordingly.

The second stage called Environmental Green Marketing developed during the 80’s. This decade was deeply signed by environmental accidents and damages portrayed by broad media coverage. The Environmental Age is characterized by:

- *Sustainability* - involves a sustainable approach to consumption and production. It focuses on natural resources, renewable energies, sustainable and viable pollution, and waste production. It is an innovative approach that

combines the physical environment with economy and society. Sustainability begins to create partnerships between companies, states, and environmental activists. It recognizes that unsustainable production and consumption are the reason for different environmental negative outputs.

- *Clean technologies* - involves the design of products and systems that produce less pollution and waste.
- *Green consumer* - this idea is introduced by Elkington and Hailes (1988) affirming that consumer behavior could be influenced by environmental concerns.
- *Competitive advantage* - due to various Green Marketing success stories, it has been noted that environmental solutions lead to innovation and efficiency creating a lasting competitive advantage.

The Environmental Age strengthened the Green Marketing evolution with several outputs - global focus, new product introductions, promotional opportunities, emphasis on production, spotlight on packaging, new partnerships, and new information flows and requirements. The natural evolution from the environmental wave focused on trying to achieve sustainability. Fuller (1999) defines Sustainable Marketing as "*the process of planning, implementing and controlling the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: customer needs are met, organizational goals are attained, and the process is compatible with eco-systems.*" The Sustainable Green Marketing is characterized by a few new elements:

- *Product costs* – is considered the cost of environmental capital (companies usually consider only the cost of financial, human, and manufactured capital).
- *Emphasis on cost instead of price* – environmentally related products are more expensive, but more economical usage.
- *Better understanding of Environmental Marketing* – fits the physical environment in marketing strategies and models.
- *Industry structure* – the conventional supply chain is replaced by smart chains with focus on recycling principles.
- *Consuming Vs. Using* – requires shifting the emphasis from purchasing and consuming to using more durable products and services.
- *Products Vs. Services* – changes the mix of products and services by replacing the use of a product with a service.
- *Emphasis on Distribution* – delocalization, meaning shifting from global distribution chains to local high-tech technology and energy-efficiency.
- *Beyond the Niche* – requires mainstream environmental policies. The market pressure on

eco-friendly companies is immense and their existence is threatened daily.

Polonsky and Rosenberger III (2001) identify external and internal pressure elements that drive companies to go green. As external elements are part of consumer demands, competitors' greening actions, supplier requests. Cost and philosophy are the internal ones.

The big challenge of Green Marketing is to achieve the organizational objectives and consumers needs in a supplemental environmentally responsible way.

Menon and Menon (1997) propose to tackle this challenge by dividing Green Marketing activities in three levels - strategic, quasi-strategic, and tactical. The strategic level aims to change the corporate philosophy. The quasi-strategic level changes the business practices meanwhile, the tactical level changes functional activities. Those three levels are used to assess the amount of change required into companies to align to Green Marketing principles.

As a holistic and integrated approach, Green Marketing requires an entire eco-mindset and an involvement in the overall corporate philosophy, not only in just a few functional areas. Companies must incorporate environmental elements into internal processes at the initial stages of new product development, as well as, into complex processes that require innovative green designs.

Green positioning should ensure that all activities and behaviors incorporate environmental values into decision-making processes entirely. Usually green products or services have higher initial price expenses but lower long-term costs and are fundamental in highlighting the long-term benefits. Distribution is a key function to minimize environmental damages. Best practices suggest modifying packaging, integrating transportation systems, recycling products that cannot be reprocessed, and reducing waste.

Promoting Green Marketing is challenging because of greenwashing practices. The communication strategy needs to be substantive, delivering environmental information to consumers, and has meaningful connections with corporate activities. Environmental groups can be an added value by helping companies to understand and develop green solutions and by implementing green strategies and tactics.

Prakash (2002) focuses on the relationship between Green Marketing, public policy, and environmental issues because Green Marketing is a component of the organizational strategies that requires integration into traditional marketing mix in the public policy processes and in the industrial ecology and environmental sustainability of companies.

Companies can become green by working on the management system, on the organizational processes, and on the product.

Greening the management system means to create the right conditions in the company to prioritize the greening shift of the organizational processes. Companies decide to green the management system, processes and products for market or non-market contexts. They need an integrated approach on both. On the market side, consumers pose to be the challenge. Being willing to pay a premium price for green products and services does not automatically convert into a sale because of benefit-cost calculations. Therefore, companies should understand if they are a motivating player on the market or if they are just an accessory player. On the nonmarket side, challenges are materialized by normative pressures or by stakeholders' demands. Policies could impact companies' budget demanding environmental standards or behaviors. As well, companies must respond to their stakeholders and take into consideration their preferences.

Greening the organizational processes means to redesign them with the aim to reduce environmental impact through new technologies, modifying or adapting processes. Companies choose green organizational processes to communicate to shareholders the commitment towards eco-friendly standards.

Charter (1992) proposes that it is possible to green a product by repairing, reconditioning, remanufacturing, reusing, recycling, and reducing it. Product greening is an efficient strategy for companies that aim to communicate brand attributes because enable them to link their corporate identity to green attributes and to play a key role in consumers' choices.

Incorporating environmental issues in the corporate strategy should not consider only the economic criteria, but rather also non-economic criteria that are worth under long-term perspectives.

Weiner (1993) argues that it is more efficient to use indirect costs or collective sacrifices alternatively to individual sacrifices as premium fees. The advantage stays in providing an institutional framework that will surpass being received by the citizens. Furthermore, institutional eco-friendly behaviors could influence citizens to adopt green behaviors. To this extent, Derksen and Gartrell (1993) shows communities with recycling programs in place are more willing to recycle compared with communities that do not have such programs.

Other Green Marketing strategies could be based on incentives frameworks. Consumers could be motivated towards green behaviors by modifying existing living patterns plus by undertaking structural changes. The marketer's job is to identify these patterns and design products and services accordingly.

Information disclosures could play a key role in the Green Marketing development with effective

communication strategies for customers, policy makers, and business executives. Disclosure could be voluntary or mandatory. Voluntary disclosures increase the credibility of companies that decide to disclose.

Ginsberg and Bloom (2004) divides the green companies' space into four segments accordingly with the company's strategies: *Lean Green*, *Defensive Lean*, *Shaded Green*, and *Extreme Green*. *Lean Green* segment is composed of organizations that are not focused on marketing their green initiatives merely are willing to reduce costs by strengthening efficiencies and creating a competitive advantage through lower costs. Their strategy is a long-term one and they try to anticipate the green regulations. They do not promote their green processes and they are not trying to set a differentiation strategy based on green attributes.

Defensive Green segment is based on precautionary measures and responses to market competitors. The aim is to strengthen the brand image being acknowledged that the green market is a strategic one with huge opportunities to grow and be profitable. They set up real environmental initiatives, but do not maximize it with strong differentiation strategies to not create overwhelming consumer expectations.

Shaded Green segment considers the green segment as an opportunity to have a competitive advantage through the development of innovative technologies and products. They invest in the long-term scenario, implementing a systemwide shift and environmentally friendly processes that require real commitment both financial and strategical. These kinds of companies have the capacity to truly differentiate their products or services, but they do not because their market strategy is based on enhancing other attributes and strengths. Green benefits are seen as secondary factors in the organizational strategy.

Extreme Green segments embrace a holistic approach to green values. Environmental issues are a major driving force of the business strategies and plans. There is a full integration of environmental and social values in the product life cycle. This includes pricing, quality management, manufacturing, and packaging. Usually these companies belong to niche markets and are extremely mission driven.

Gurău and Ranchhod (2005) studied a comparative analysis between British and Romanian firms on the international Green Marketing strategies. They propose two models to assess the general and competitive conditions of green markets. Consumers' attitude towards green and environmental standards (in terms of normative regulation) have been considered as variables to investigate general conditions. Intersecting the variables four types of possible green markets are

created. When low levels of demand find low levels of environmental standards the output is *Underdeveloped Green Market*, whereas, when the environmental standard variable is high the output is *Unfavorable Green market*. High level of demands intersecting low environmental standards creates *Emergent Green market* although when intersecting high environmental standards generate *Developed Green market*.

To assess the competitive conditions of green markets the variables used are intensity of the competition and the market size. Intersecting the variables four types of possible dimensions are created. When low intensity of competition finds small market size the output is *Niche opportunity*, whereas, when the market size is big the output is *Strategic opportunity*. High intensity of competition intersecting small market size creates *Saturated market*, although when intersecting big market size generates *Competitive Challenge*.

Peattie and Crane (2005) identifies five strategies which have been used by companies professing to be Green Marketing strategies. They are anything but Green. Those strategies are: *Green Spinning*, *Green Selling*, *Green Harvesting*, *Enviropreneur Marketing*, and *Compliance Marketing*.

Green Spinning defines an approach where a company engages in a public relations offensive by using print and digital materials. Green Spinning uses lobbying to tackle the public skepticism about their environmental behavior. This reaction focuses on reputation and image and does not involve organizational processes, products, services, or governance. This strategy is doomed to fail because it is not going to convince anyone in the long-term. *Green Selling* consists in highlighting the environmental features of existing products or services and selling them by adding green themes to promotional campaigns. This approach is sales oriented and its scope is to promote without getting into product development. It is indeed an opportunistic response towards environmental concerns.

Green Harvesting defines the behavior of companies that are using green principles and optimizing their processes to achieve cost savings, but they do not use it to give to customers a cheaper product. On the contrary, they keep the green products at premium prices taking advantage of it in terms of cost-reduction and short-term profitability. This strategy is doomed to fail because without continuing to massively invest in green processes the cost-reduction is going to be less and less till the point of when the strategy loses momentum within the company.

Enviropreneur Marketing is the case of a committed entrepreneur who seeks to bring innovative green strategies. This category is divided into boutique entrepreneurs who start from a small start-up and corporate entrepreneurs who

start from a bigger organization. Usually, both categories implode forgetting the consumer. The boutique entrepreneur fails because they direct the focus on rushing the growth and opening new locations. The corporate entrepreneur fails trying to shift the focus towards green lines which eventually are deleted or absorbed into conventional ones. The Enviropreneur Marketing starts well but fails in the long-term because they do not understand the customer and do not educate themselves on the products.

Compliance Marketing includes companies whose only connection with green is responding to regulations. After aligning with the requested standards, they try to take advantage of this situation to promote their green behaviors. This strategy is passive and there is no advance towards innovation.

In order to not fall in those five situations, Green Marketing strategies should initiate with the focus on the customer and their comprehensive needs. It is a long-term perspective that involves a massive use of a company's resources and innovation. This approach involves redefining the products and services with a greater focus on them, mixing with the willingness to invest in product development and organizational processes.

Furthermore, the emphasis should be on the benefits of the product. Advertising must aim to inform and not to only to get attention. Is it extremely important to look beyond current needs by focusing on the future, shaping accordingly the products, and educating the audience. Finally, companies have to take more responsibilities by focusing on costs instead of price and transfer the financial advantage to the customers.

Based on the idea of professor Theodore Levitt (1960) that introduced the concept of marketing myopia to refer to businesses that focus only on the product features putting the consumer benefits in second place. Ottman, Stafford, and Hartman (2006) affirm that Green Marketing must have the objective to satisfy environmental quality and customer satisfaction together. Giving more importance to one at the expense of the other could turn into Green Marketing myopia. Many products have failed because of the focus on green features of the product over the consumers' needs. There are five features that green consumers desire from green products: efficiency and cost effectiveness; health and safety; performance; symbolism and status; and convenience.

Charter, Peattie, Ottman, and Polonsky (2002) define marketing as the interface between consumption and production. It is the mediator between consumers and companies. Green Marketing includes environmental efforts pushing companies to realize products with green features for green consumers. This relation between the consumer and the product is fundamental; focusing

on the consumers, several studies (Meyer, 2001) shows that the market size of green products has not changed over the decade from 1990-2000. The real sales of G=green products are smaller than consumer purchase intention reported by surveys.

Davis (1993) argues that companies must calibrate their actions keeping customers in the first place, understanding, and satisfying their needs.

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) intentions do not necessarily mean actions and they are determined by different factors such as attitudes, perception, and subjective norms. The same consumer may purchase or not a green product depending on the different scenarios, not depending only by his/her characteristics.

Rex and Baumann (2007) argue that part of the solution could be focusing on ecolabelling, finding that it is the more effective communication instrument to give information and advance green product knowledge during a purchasing situation. They offer two prospective to enhance Green Marketing:

- informing the consumers who are using ecolabels.
- strengthening the evolution of green supply and demand through traditional marketing strategies and marketing mix.

Companies must not take for granted the existence of green consumers. Their needs should be analyzed to design and promote the products accordingly. It is required a shift of industries' approach to green, moving from a passive rejection of green, to an active will to design and produce green. A well-established green consumption system is far from reality, even if ecolabels are a powerful feature of Green communication and are doing a fundamental campaign of education and advocacy towards customers. A great effort can be done but is not feasible to achieve high market shares only counting on ecolabels.

From a marketing point of view, ecolabelling provides product's technical information, but does not make the product any greener. To achieve sustainable green production and consumption, companies need a larger green market size. It is possible by applying the traditional marketing rules as marketing strategy and marketing mix, focusing in depth on the analysis of consumers' needs.

Grant (2008) proposed a grid to present the four main strategies of Green Marketing. Consumers and citizens are related to potential passive or active behaviors of companies. The combination of the two variables generates: *Green Brands*, *Setting New Standards*, *All Doing Our Bit*, and *Networked Resource System*.

Green Brands offer ecological advantages for customers that are willing to make it a priority. The segment is composed of companies that target both retail consumers and B2B clients. It is a passive behavior.

Setting New Standards means to give examples and to lead the industry in the Green direction. It is a passive behavior that aims to citizens.

All doing our bit consist in promoting messages and sharing activities that reduce the environmental impact, as co-sharing services, or recycling procedures. It is an active behavior that aims to consumers.

Networked Resource Systems involved tech development. Those technologies could be to enhance the efficiency of all industrial processes and reach a high level of sustainability, reducing waste, and redundancy. Furthermore, the web gives the opportunity to share, rent, use, and re-use. It is an active approach that involves everyone. Is the technology going to save the planet?

Green Marketing observed an evolution during the first decade of the 21st century. Thanks to advanced technology, stricter legislation on environmental standards, and a closed media attention, green products improved and gained consumer purchasing preferences. Lee (2008) studies the factors that influence green purchasing behavior, testing seven environmental predictors that affect purchasing behaviors. The outcomes are the following in order of intensity: *social influence*, *environmental concern*, *concern for self-image*, *perceived environmental responsibility*, *perceived effectiveness of environmental behavior*, *environmental attitude*, and *perceived seriousness of environmental problems*.

The purchasing behavior is driven by emotional involvement rather than rationality. To have a successful marketing campaign the key factors are:

- Network between peers for product presence and social influence.
- Emotional appeal towards environmental concerns.
- Strong branding image focused on the concern of environmental protection.
- Environmental efficacy, given the perceived effectiveness of the adopted environmental behavior.

Green marketers should exploit social marketing and introduce environmental messages into networks in order to empower by word of mouth, peer to peer connections, using emotional promotions, propose an appealing green image and the perception of environmentally and socially positive purchasing.

According to Polonsky (2011) Green Marketing should be integrated by transformative changes with the purpose to create value for the environment, as well as individuals and society. The concept of Transformative Marketing is different from traditional marketing, which is focused on consumption. Transformative Marketing tries to enhance the quality of life and improve the environment.

Green Marketing is guilty of not achieving long-term benefits, and failure is driven by the behavior of consumers, companies, and governments that applied an anthropocentric approach.

Transforming Green Marketing is challenging, and the solutions must be calibrated to the complexity of problems and factors. There are three possible actions to shift Green Marketing into Transformative Green Marketing:

- Marketers should find ways to communicate the added value resulted from the integration of environmental and social concerns.
- Effective education of human-environmental relations through advocacy programmes that includes stakeholders.
- Green Marketing should focus on the human quality of life and environmental protection, forgetting the short-term value and over-consumption.

Rahbar and Wahid (2011) consider *Eco-labelling*, *Eco-branding*, and *Environmental Advertisement* as tools to solve the Green Marketing paradigm and find a feasible way to raise perception, awareness of green products and drive the consumers' purchase behavior towards eco-friendly products. Given the complexity of consumers' behavior is not meaningful to generalize; the diversity of cultural and demographic context should be considered and translated into different variables; does not exist any marketing tools applicable to all situations.

Eco-labelling, Eco-branding, and Environmental Advertisement are studied to enhance consumers' knowledge about eco-friendly products and services. Eco-labels are used to promote the identification of green products and to diversify from conventional products. Their main functions are to inform together with enhancing the quality and value of green products. Eco-label is a powerful tool that helps consumer's decision-making by giving them precious information. Eco-branding refers to brands aligned with the environment and helps customers to differentiate from conventional products. Environmental Advertisement is used to introduce green products to eco-friendly consumers through media and green techniques. Rahbar and Wahid (2011) run an analysis to understand how these three tools are related with the consumers' purchase behavior. They affirm that eco-labelling and eco-branding are positively significant variables while Environmental Advertisement is not significant. Environmental Advertisement does enhance the consumers' knowledge about Green products but does not influence their purchase intentions due to low credibility of Green advertisements.

Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) analyze the predominant definitions of Green Marketing and their evolution during the different ages and stages since its introduction. The definition has changed

over time due to the raising relevance of environmental sustainability and Green Marketing strategies. Compared with the beginning there are many ways of segmenting Green audiences and consumers and the relevance of green brands has increased hugely giving options of differentiation. The market has many types of green products and services and consumers are willing to pay an extra for green products feeling responsibility towards the environment. Supply chain and vendors play a key role in the green development, ecolabels, and environmental advertisement are essential tools to sustain the market. All of this means that the interest towards environmental sustainability is growing and is going to be a key component in the design, development and market of new products and services.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzes and synthesizes the evolution of Green Marketing since its emergence. The authors confirm a growing interest towards the topic with an evolution of the conceptual meaning. Sustainability, environmental responsibilities, and social implication are not a passing trend, but are growing even stronger and well-integrated within companies' strategies. The review analyzes definitions of Green Marketing, concepts, strategies, tools and mistakes. It is a useful reading for researchers, managers, and scholars willing to extend their knowledge. The paper highlights various perspectives, shows that consumers shift the focus from specific physical features to maximize positive environmental and social impacts. Since the first definition of Hennison and Kinnear (1976) evidence indicates that consumers are willing to pay a premium price for green products. That does not involve strictly the product features, but involves the entire process including the perception of the brand and how committed and loyal it is towards the cause. Many companies are early adopters of this new attitude and their long-term bet is paying well. Going green gives competitive advantage and the pressure on non-green businesses is becoming huge. A rewarding procedure adopted by some "early birds" is to have the endorsement of environmental activists and groups that somehow guarantee the well-doing of the brand. On the other side, there are many businesses that have exploited the green path with the only purpose to take advantage and fool customers and competitors. These behaviors have done damages to all green players, creating rejection, cynicism and confusion. It is challenging not only for businesses but also for governments and societies overall. Policymakers should embrace the change, as well as build strong frameworks to provide a sustainable business environment for

companies. The partnership public-private is fundamental to shape these ideal conditions. In authors' point of view, now after forty years of continuous transformation, the system is at the point that is much needed a common framework that defines without approximation the lines that should be followed by governments, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations and businesses to measure the positive impact of products, services and processes. Different entities already started to build such tools, but there is not consistency between procedures and visions. The authors' solution involves a framework built on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. If the United Nations is not able to start the conversation between all actors involved, who is?

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