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THE NEW RULES OF GREEN MARKETING- A BOOK REVIEW

Book review

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Abstract

This paper's purpose is to provide a review of the book "The New Rules of Green Marketing. Strategies, Tools and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding" (2011) written by Jacquelyn A. Ottman. In this sense, the book is analyzed from a personal point of view, but exposed as objective as possible. In recent years, people's attitude changed from skepticism to positivism in what concerns green products and the trend is to include them into their lives as usual commodities. This book essentializes the new guidelines of green marketing. The most significant benefit of reading this book is that it embodies theoretical aspects with practical ones, such as concrete examples of companies involved in the green market. The book addresses multinationals, enterprises, agencies, trade associations, NGOs, government agencies involved in the green marketing environment, professors, researchers, students or any individual having an affinity for green marketing in general.

"The New Rules of Green Marketing. Strategies, Tools and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding" (2011) is the result of over 20 years of experience of Jacquelyn A. Ottman as a consultant in green marketing. As the title of the book mentions, there are presented strategies, tools and inspiration for sustainable branding. Although the book refers mostly to the American context, it can be considered as a guide for a variety of groups, like: multinationals, enterprises, agencies, trade associations, NGOs, government agencies involved in the green marketing environment, professors, researchers, students or any individual having an affinity for green marketing. In what concerns the structure, the book has nine chapters and a one-page Conclusion part. A substantial appendix lists internet resources, organizations and books for further information related to the topic. Also, the format of the book includes also a "The New Rules Checklist", at the end of each chapter, consisting in appropriate questions to reflect on. Chapters are written in such a manner that they can be read separately. Also, paragraphs are characterized by coherence and clarity.

Chapter 1 Green is now mainstream underlines the fact that generations have always been green, from Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), to Generation X (born between 1964 and 1977), Generation Y (also known as Millennials, born between early 1980s and the early 1990s) and Generation Z. If Gen Ys do their shopping in a socially conscious way, for Gen Zs green is a component part of everyday life. We are facing the mainstreaming of the green because society nowadays starts to understand the negative influence of sustainability-related issues (like water quality, hazardous, toxic and nuclear waste, pollution derived from cars and trucks, water conservation, deforestation, global warming or climate change, overpopulation) and are involved by taking action. The rules are changing and shopping lists along with them (p.9). Under the new rules, businesses are discovering the even more attractive eco-opportunity for innovation that boosts top-line revenues. That's because green means doing things differently (p.17).

Chapter 2 We are all green consumers begins with a psychographic segmentation (based on lifestyle variables) done by the Natural Marketing Institute on the American population. Results show that 83% of them are some shade of green. The identified segments, from the greenest to the least green demonstrating environmental responsibility, are: LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) (19%), Naturalites (15%), Drifters (25%), Conventionals (24%) and Unconcerneds (17%). They are described in detail. In addition, the Ottman's Consulting proposes a segmentation by

green interests, from which, as consequence, resulted the following groups: resource conservers, outdoor enthusiasts, animal lovers and health fanatics. Consumers are more precautious nowadays, so they manifest interest in descriptors as pesticide-free, recycled and petroleum-free, not just comparing prices and searching for the well-known brand names. Consumers buy products primarily from individualistic reasons (e.g. protecting their health and of their children, saving money) and then for altruistic motives (e.g. environmental issues). "It's the early 21st century. Green is trendy. There is a cachet in being green. Green is cool" (p.41).

Chapter 3 The new green marketing paradigm reveals that "conventional marketing is out and green marketing and what is increasingly being called sustainable branding is in" (p.43). "A new paradigm has emerged requiring new strategies with a holistic point of view and eco-innovative product and service offering" (p.43). With a long-term orientation target, enterprises focus on three lines of contributing: profits, the company's contribution to society and the planet. After exposing seven winning strategies in what concerns the green marketing environment (e.g. establish credibility, be proactive, think holistically), the author presents a case study done on Method company (specialized in household and personal-care products) which puts into practice these strategies.

Starting with *Chapter 4 Designing greener products-A life-cycle approach* the book begins to be move towards a more practical direction by illustrating 15 strategies for sustainable product design (e.g. source reduce, fair trade, reduce toxicity, think global, grow local, extend product life or compostable). These strategies are detailed with concrete examples on companies like: Tiffany & Company, Hewlett-Packard, Nike, Clarins, Wal-Mart, Bosch, Nokia, Toyota or Phillips.

Chapter 5 Innovate for sustainability invites companies to link innovation with ecology to remain competitive, thing that leads to the appearance of the concept "eco-innovation", which can be defined as "innovating at the concept stage, or developing entirely new products and services (including materials and technologies) capable of performing the same function as existing one with significantly less environmental impact" (p. 89). In this chapter there are included five strategies for eco-innovation (e.g. develop new materials, restore the environment). For sustaining these theoretical strategies, concrete examples are offered. Here are to mention: Soladey, gDiapers, Coca-Cola, Nissan, Cengage Learning.

Chapter 6 *Communicating sustainability with impact* emphasizes the fact that “communicating environmental and social initiatives with authenticity and impact can help establish one’s brand in the vanguard of this important trend” (p.107). Also, achieving “to get the sustainability-oriented campaigns in front of the right people can be a challenge” (p.108). With the help of demographic variables this can be more easy to reach (e.g., new mothers, with a salary above the average, searching for organic baby food) than with psychographic variables (e.g., wildlife lovers, the chemically sensitive consumers). There are some conditions to fulfil in the process of communicating the green benefits to consumers and these are the Ottman’s fundamentals of good green marketing (e.g. must know what’s in it for *them*, in the sense that green products must accomplish first their primary functions, environmental benefits being a plus for them, in other words, companies should avoid green marketing myopia ; find you brand easily refers to the fact that these products should be “available on the websites or shelves at popular supermarkets and mass merchandisers, right next to the “browner” products they are designed to replace” (p.110). Also, Ottman proposes six strategies of sustainable marketing communication (e.g. know your customer, educate and empower, be credible). Three case studies are exemplified as applying mixes of these strategies: HSBC, (with its “There’s no small change campaign” which encouraged individuals and businesses in reducing their own carbon footprint, HSBC’s employers and employees doing the same, though), Toyota (with its quiet hybrid car, Toyota Prius, the slogan being: “Ever heard the sound a stoplight makes?”) and Procter & Gamble (with its Tide Coldwater).

Strong connected with previous chapter is Chapter 7 *Establishing credibility and avoiding greenwash*. In order not to be considered a “greenwasher”, there are five strategies to follow for establishing credibility for sustainable branding and marketing. Being transparent implies to communicate the good, but also the bad of the company, through a “radical transparency” (p.138). In this way, consumers know the company’s progress and trust in their products. Also, the company should not mislead with general remarks like “environmentally safe”, “Earth friendly”, “eco-friendly”, “we care about the environment”, “prevents pollution”, but to be more specific, by giving details and quantifying. Choosing a single or multiple-attribute label for the ecological products is a task that should be done under the auspices of relevancy.

Chapter 8 *Partnering for success* addresses the need to make partnerships with new corporate and social environmental stakeholders, because no company is solitary in this environment. In this

sense, the partners are: the general public, children and future generations, educators, environmental and social activists, church leaders, citizen journalists and bloggers, and other government groups. For each one of these groups are given concrete examples.

The final Chapter 9 *Two sustainability leaders that superbly address the new rules reveals two emblematic companies* gives the examples of The Timberland Company and Starbucks that put in practice the new rules of green marketing. “No company can be considered 100% sustainable- and these companies have their eco-shortcomings, too. [...] They superbly demonstrate how new strategies of green marketing can create jobs, build brand loyalty, and return hefty profits, all the while contributing to a more sustainable society” (p.182). Both companies have strong philosophies behind and have made more than sizing profits, through socially and environmentally actions. In order to reduce the environmental impact, Timberland Company switches to renewable resources, decreasing the impact of leather used in their products, while Starbucks launched in 2004 the hot cup made of 10% recycled material and in 2008 changed cups’ material from PET to PP (polypropylene), which is less toxic for the environment. Also, with the aim of reducing waste, Starbucks had a campaign in which consumers were encouraged to bring the reusable cups in exchange to a small discount of their drink. The care for the green areas is observed at both companies (e.g., for the Timberland Company is the Green Net program, consisting in volunteers sent to China to re-establish the grasslands where necessary; for Starbucks significant is the partnership with Earthwatch to replant rainforests). In order to meet the transparency criterion, Timberland pioneered the Timberland’s Green Index label which underlines the company’s footprint, like: climate impact, chemicals used, resource consumption and total trees planted to date. The label contains also a section with the Green Index rating. Timberland Company and Starbucks are present on the online environment to keep consumers up to date informed. In this sense, personal websites and Social Media platforms are used (e.g., Facebook, Twitter).

”The New Rules of Green Marketing. Strategies, Tools and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding” (2011) by Jacquelyn A. Ottman is definitely a book that one needs to have in the personal library’ shelf, as it is a real guide in green marketing. “Creating a sustainable society requires, among other things, that every one of us use only what we need and that we help to recapture resources for successive uses through recycling and composting” (p.155).