

# Green Marketing- Myths and Realities

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**Abstract— Purpose:** At this moment in history, where there is abundance of alternatives that are green, the purpose of this study is to revisit the entire journey of green marketing since its inception in 1970s to the contemporary times, providing a critique to acknowledge the contribution of this marketing tool in bringing about a paradigm shift in both marketing strategies as well as purchase intentions.

**Approach:** This paper employs an exploratory research relying on secondary research by reviewing existing literature to provide significant insight into the evolution of green marketing and give some indication as to why, when and how of it.

**Findings:** The findings emphasizes on the need of firms for internalization and assimilation of their environmental mission and translating the same into subsequent business strategies for elevating the green purchase intentions.

**Practical Implications:** The paper provides an insight into the much debated but rarely concentrated marketing tool to address the environmental concerns and issues of sustainable development. It would benefit the practitioners in formulating strategies that would enhance green purchase decisions.

**Research Implications/limitations:** The generalization of research findings is questionable and the study needs further empirical evidences.

**Originality/value:** The paper provides a conceptual framework for understanding the operationalization and internalization of this green revolution by the firms and will be instrumental in formulating relevant hypothesis for more definite investigation.

**Index Terms—** Green Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Perceived Value, Green Marketing Tools.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the recent times, environmental concerns have not only become the burning issue for progress towards a more sustainable economy but also calls for some drastic changes in both theory and practice towards environmental management. One such sincere effort towards environmental management is Green Marketing. As society becomes more conscious of its need to save the planet earth, firms are left with no choice but to respond to the call of its stakeholders. Firms are in the process of taking some deliberate steps to incorporate the same into their organizational mission and institutionalize and

operationalize the same in their business strategies for achieving a better competitive edge over their competitors. They also view green marketing as a CSR initiative for discharging their responsibility towards the society from where they draw their inputs from and again release back their outputs. However, the fact that most of the firms are going ahead with it due to the pressure from regulatory authorities, competitors and more importantly due to the cost or profit issues involved in it cannot be undermined.

But then what is this buzzword green marketing all about??? According to the American Marketing Association, green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus green marketing is a holistic marketing concept that encompasses all those activities right from the production of the good till it reaches the final customer i.e it requires modifications in all the Ps of marketing mix -product, price, place, promotion, people, process, partnership, policy, purse strings as well as physical evidence as there has been increasing awareness among the general public about the environmental hazards of pollutants, wastages, effluents and so on and so forth, thereby leaving no option to the firms but to be sensitive towards these issues and shift to green goods and services

Element	Description
Product	Eco friendly products with little or no harm to the environment
Price	Though they are high priced than their conventional counterparts, still people would be more than happy to pay the premium price for the value derived
Place	Distribution logistics, ecological packaging
Promotion	Publicity of certifications, advertising, sponsoring natural environment
Public	All the stakeholders
Partnership	Green Alliances
Policy	Guidelines
Purse String	How much does this strategic effort cost? Who funds them?

Elements of Green Marketing Mix

However, it has got different interpretations when viewed from different perspectives. The synonyms coined for green marketing are environmental marketing and ecological marketing.

### Stages for green marketing:

Though this concept initiated in 1970s, but it gained momentum in 1980s, with a upsurge in green consumerism and resulted in enormous corporate homework as well as business and academic writing in the field of green marketing. However, despite of all the hype created, green marketing

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witnessed wide disparity between ecological concern and actual purchasing and the relevance of green claims subsided as it encountered a severe backlash in 1990s. But the advent of 2000, saw green marketing rising into prominence, thanks to the initiation of more upgraded technology, stringent laws of regulatory authorities and more importantly, a rise in global ecological awareness.

**Green Marketing Tools**

It is a well established fact that the consumer’s identification with the environment or the ecology is a consequent of his/her knowledge of the threats of ecological imbalance and hence the marketers are forced to focus their efforts on catering to the gratification of diverse and changing human needs causing no or minimal harm to the environment by dint of the manufacture, use as well as the disposal of the product in terms of consumption of energy, waste and effluents management, use of materials derived from endangered species or cruelty towards animals. Moreover, the firms need to concentrate on devising cognitive persuasion strategies to elevate consumer intellect with regards to going green and guide them to differentiate eco-friendly products from their conventional counterparts. Among the many tools used by the marketers for promoting this green concept, the most significant tools are eco-label, eco-brand, green packaging, and premium pricing and environmental advertisement.

Sl. No	Tool	Effectiveness
1.	Eco-labeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green product identification</li> <li>Consumers relate to the product</li> <li>Attention drawing and legible eco-labels</li> <li>Adequacy and accuracy of information on eco-labels</li> </ul>
2.	Green Packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on packaging</li> <li>Reuse and recycle the packaging after use</li> <li>Biodegradable packaging</li> <li>Emotional appeal</li> </ul>
3.	Environmental advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Credibility</li> <li>Psychological satisfaction</li> <li>Attractive and motivating as well</li> <li>Societal obligation</li> </ul>
4.	Premium Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological satisfaction</li> <li>True value creation</li> </ul>
5.	Eco-branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visibility</li> <li>Equity</li> </ul>

**Green Marketing Tools**

Above all these things, the firms cannot undermine the importance of concerns and beliefs of the people towards being ecofriendly thereby protecting the mother earth in order to survive and grow and this reflects in the consumer behavior pattern. Thus, it is evident that the firms need to rethink their existing strategies and bring about a balance between personal gains and harmony with the environment without undermining the customers values and beliefs towards ecological balance.

The green purchase intensions can be assessed from the following dimensions:

**Green perceived value** i.e. the consumers perception of the overall benefits of the good with regards to their environmental concerns and expectations.

**Green perceived risk** i.e. the adverse results corresponding to the buying behavior causing a harm to the environmental framework.

**Green trust** i.e. the credibility of the product which meets its brand promise of ecological balance.

**How to make green marketing successful???**

If we go by Chan (2004), it has been a neglected area by dint of insufficient green products and services in the market. With reference to Ottman and Peattie (1992) it is also attributed to market segments and cultures. The focus of the firms should definitely be on the customers- their needs, tastes and preferences but that alone would not serve the purpose. The firms need to be more responsible in their thoughts, promises and actions. Green marketing should not be used as a promotional tactics or stunt without any attempt to bring about any modification in the marketing mix decisions and its environmental impacts. Green marketing should adapt a holistic approach integrating the entire organization and providing for optimum utilization of all the resources for eco performance of the firm. Green marketing should be more like a clean slate reengineering for the firm to achieve a competitive edge through innovation and creativity. And the communication strategy that is used should aim to inform rather than just impress the consumers and there should be a strong drive to change markets rather than just changing goods and services. According to Berrett-Koehler (2011) responsible is the next frontier of green marketing. If we put everything together and observe, the most viable strategy for the firms is to incorporate the following things: 1) Being completely aware of their customer 2) Being honest to their customers while communicating and educating them 3) Standing by their customer to help them cope up in the transition period and taking care of switching costs and most importantly it would be a delight for the customers if they are credited for taking positive part in ecological protection.

**Conclusions and Implications**

This study reiterates the fact that though green marketing has rose into prominence in the recent times, but still it has a long way to go both in theory and practice. The present study highlighted the importance of environmental orientation of the firms for catering to the needs of the environment conscious customers by providing a framework for assessing the green purchase intentions to help the consumers to come to a tradeoff between their needs and desires and environmental harmony. It stresses the need for the corporates to travel that extra mile to bring about significant changes in all the activities of the organization thereby adapting a holistic

approach for achieving greater sustainability. However, this study needs further empirical evidences.

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