

The Role Mechanism of Green Consumption Concept on Marketing Strategy--Based on the Case Study of Starbucks

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing concern over environmental issues and the growing environmental awareness of consumers, the concept of green consumption has gradually emerged. This paper aims to further explore the internal relationship and mechanism between green consumption and marketing strategy, with a focus on social green sustainable development and the changes in consumer values, which can drive continuous innovation and development of marketing theory in the new era and enhance the market competitiveness and sustainable development capabilities of brands. Through a study of Starbucks, a global coffee chain giant, this paper summarizes the universal and practical experiences and models of green marketing strategies, providing valuable references for other enterprises in formulating and implementing marketing strategies in the wave of green consumption, promoting the industry's green transformation and development.

KEYWORDS

Green consumption concept; Marketing strategy; Starbucks; Sustainable development

1 Introduction

Since the 21st century, environmental issues such as climate change and resource depletion have become increasingly prominent, prompting consumers to reconsider their consumption behaviors' environmental footprint. The concept of "green consumption" has emerged, with its core focus being that consumers prioritize the environmental impact of products and services in their purchasing decisions, opting for brands with eco-friendly attributes, resource conservation, and responsibility. According to Accenture's 2023 Global Consumer Pulse Survey, more than 70% of consumers said they are willing to pay a premium for sustainable products, a trend that continues to rise ^[1]. Green consumption is no longer a niche market but a key force in reshaping the market landscape.

In this context, corporate marketing strategies are facing fundamental changes. The challenge for businesses is how to effectively integrate green consumption concepts into marketing strategies to achieve a win-win situation for both environmental benefits and business objectives. As a leader in the global coffee industry, Starbucks started its sustainable development practices early, invested heavily, and has a relatively comprehensive system, making it an invaluable example for understanding how the concept of green consumption specifically impacts various aspects of marketing strategies.

2 Definition of green consumption concept

The green consumption concept is a consumer philosophy centered on environmental protection and sustainable development. The international environmental organization "Friends of the Earth" defines green consumption as "avoiding the use of products that harm consumer health and the ecological environment, advocating resource conservation, reducing pollution, and choosing environmentally friendly products and services"^[2]. Chinese scholar Wang Ming argues that the green consumption concept emphasizes not only prioritizing the environmental attributes of products when purchasing, using, and disposing of goods but also guiding enterprises' production models toward green transformation through consumption behavior, achieving a collaborative environmental effect between the consumer and production ends ^[3]. This concept breaks the traditional consumption model, which only focuses on product functionality and price, incorporating ecological benefits as an important factor in consumer decision-making.

3 Connotation of green consumption concept

3.1 Ecological protection awareness

The primary connotation of the green consumption concept is ecological protection awareness, requiring consumers to recognize the impact of their consumption behaviors on the ecological environment and actively choose low-carbon, environmentally friendly products. For example, purchasing daily necessities made from renewable materials and reducing the use of disposable plastic products directly reduces resource consumption and waste emissions, alleviating ecological pressure.

3.2 Sustainable lifestyle

Green consumption advocates a sustainable lifestyle, encouraging consumers to pursue simplicity and moderation. From buying durable goods instead of frequently replacing new products, participating in second-hand item markets, to choosing public transportation or bicycles for eco-friendly travel, these behaviors reflect the concept of resource recycling and energy consumption reduction, making life and the natural environment coexist harmoniously.

3.3 Social responsibility

The green consumption concept also embodies consumers' social responsibility. By supporting environmentally friendly enterprises and green products, consumers cast a vote for environmental protection through their consumption behaviors, pressuring companies to improve production technologies and adopt green production methods. For instance, when consumers widely choose electric vehicles, it encourages car manufacturers to invest more in new energy technologies, promoting the entire industry's green transformation.

4 Impact of green consumption concept on marketing strategy

4.1 Changing consumer demand preferences

The rise of the green consumption concept has led consumers to place more emphasis on environmental attributes, sustainability, and other factors during purchasing decisions, rather than just product price and functionality. For instance, consumers are more likely to buy products with environmental certifications and are willing to pay higher prices for products made from renewable materials or low-carbon production processes. This shift in demand preferences requires companies to fully consider green elements in product development and design stages.

4.2 Promoting marketing concept innovation

Traditional marketing concepts focus on meeting consumer demand and generating profit, while the green consumption concept urges companies to incorporate environmental protection and sustainable development into their core marketing strategies. Companies need to shift from merely selling products to promoting a green lifestyle, emphasizing the positive impact of their products on the environment and society, thus shifting from a "product-centered" to a "green value-centered" approach ^[4].

4.3 Reshaping market competition landscape

In the green consumption market, companies that actively implement the green consumption concept and launch innovative green marketing strategies are more likely to gain consumer recognition and gain a competitive advantage. Conversely, companies that fail to adapt to the green consumption trend may face the risk of losing market share. The green consumption concept drives market competition to shift from price and quality competition to higher-level competition in green branding and green technologies.

5 Green consumption-based marketing strategies

5.1 Green product strategy

5.1.1 Green product and design

Companies should invest more in green product research and development, using eco-friendly materials, energy-saving technologies, and recyclable designs.

5.1.2 Green packaging design

Packaging, as an essential component of products, should adopt minimalistic, biodegradable, or recyclable materials to reduce packaging waste and environmental pollution.

5.1.3 Product life cycle management

Companies should follow green principles throughout the product life cycle, from raw material procurement and production to transportation, sales, and post-use recycling ^[6].

5.2 Green pricing strategy

5.2.1 Green cost accounting

When formulating prices, enterprises need to incorporate the additional costs incurred in the green production process—such as investment in environmental protection R&D, raw material costs, and waste disposal costs—into the accounting scope. Through clear cost analysis, enterprises can reasonably determine the prices of green products. This not only conveys the green value of products to consumers but also ensures the enterprises' profit margins.

5.2.2 Differentiated pricing

Enterprises should implement a differentiated pricing strategy based on the green level of products and their market positioning. For green products with high technological content and scarcity, a premium pricing approach can be adopted. For popular green products, enterprises can reduce costs through large-scale production and adopt penetration pricing to attract more consumers to try green consumption.

5.2.3 Price incentive measures

To encourage consumers to choose green products, enterprises can launch price incentive measures, such as providing discounts on green products, point redemption, and trade-in subsidies. These measures help enhance consumers' motivation to purchase green products.

5.3 Green channel strategy

5.3.1 Construction of online green e-commerce platforms

Enterprises can build specialized green e-commerce platforms or set up green product sections on mainstream e-commerce platforms to centrally display and sell their green products. By leveraging the advantages of the Internet, enterprises can analyze consumers' green consumption preferences through big data, conduct targeted promotion of product information, and improve sales efficiency. Meanwhile, green elements should be integrated into the platform interface design to create an environmentally friendly shopping atmosphere.

5.3.2 Layout of offline green retail terminals

Enterprises should select communities and business districts with strong environmental awareness to open green retail stores. The decoration of these stores should use environmentally friendly materials and be equipped with energy-efficient equipment to create green consumption scenarios. In addition, enterprises can cooperate with environmental organizations and public welfare institutions to organize green consumption promotion activities in stores, thereby improving consumers' awareness of green products and their purchase intention.

5.3.3 Construction of green logistics systems

Enterprises should optimize logistics and distribution links, adopt new energy vehicles for product transportation, and reduce carbon emissions during transportation. They should also rationally plan distribution routes to improve transportation efficiency and reduce energy consumption. At the same time, enterprises should promote recyclable packaging, reduce the use of disposable packaging materials, and realize the greenization of logistics links.

5.4 Green promotion strategy

5.4.1 Green advertising communication

Enterprises should disseminate the concept of green consumption and information about their green products through multiple channels, including television, the Internet, and outdoor advertising. The content of the advertisements should highlight the environmental advantages of the products and the social responsibility of the enterprises, arouse consumers' emotional resonance, and convey the concept of green consumption.

5.4.2 Green public relations activities

Enterprises should carry out diverse forms of green public relations activities, such as holding green product launch events, participating in environmental public welfare projects, and organizing green consumption seminars. Through these activities, enterprises can enhance their green brand image and strengthen consumers' sense of identification with and loyalty to the enterprises.

5.4.3 Green marketing experience activities

Enterprises should organize consumers to participate in green marketing experience activities, such as green product trials, environmental-friendly handmade craft workshops, and eco-farm visits. These activities allow consumers to personally experience the charm of green products and the joy of a green lifestyle, thereby stimulating their purchase desire. Meanwhile, enterprises should encourage consumers to share their experiences and feelings on social media to expand the influence of green marketing activities.

5.5 Conclusion

The rise of the green consumption concept has brought new opportunities and challenges to enterprises. Integrating the green consumption concept into marketing strategies is an inevitable choice for enterprises to adapt to market changes, meet consumer needs, and achieve sustainable development. By implementing green product, pricing, channel, and promotion strategies, enterprises can not only enhance their own brand image and market competitiveness but also

contribute to promoting environmental protection and social sustainable development. In future development, enterprises should continuously pay attention to the trend of green consumption, constantly innovate marketing strategies, and realize the coordinated development of economic benefits and environmental benefits.

6 Starbucks interview work

6.1 Interview purpose

The purpose of the interview is to gain an in-depth understanding of Starbucks' practices, challenges, and future plans regarding green marketing, exploring the impact of green marketing on consumer awareness and behavior.

6.2 Interviewees

The interviewees include Starbucks store managers, supply chain heads, marketing team members, and consumers.

6.3 Interview questions

Questions were tailored to store managers, supply chain leaders, marketing teams, and consumers to understand their experiences and views on Starbucks' green marketing efforts.

6.4 Interview implementation

The interviews combined online video calls and face-to-face meetings, ensuring detailed notes and recordings were taken to facilitate analysis.

7 Research conclusion

7.1 Green marketing enhances brand image and consumer loyalty

Starbucks' comprehensive green marketing efforts, from green procurement at the product origin to green operations at stores and effective green marketing communication, have successfully built a positive environmental brand image, increasing both purchase frequency and consumer loyalty.

7.2 Continuous innovation and improvement of green marketing

Despite successes, challenges remain in areas like biodegradable packaging and encouraging consumer participation in green actions. Starbucks needs to continue investing in research, green technology, and product innovation.

7.3 Green marketing's positive social and industry impact

Starbucks' green marketing not only brings economic benefits but also contributes to environmental protection. Its experiences in green supply chain management and green store construction provide a valuable model for the coffee industry and other sectors to adopt sustainable practices^[5].

References

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