الأخضر: كاستراتيجية علامة تجارية متكاملة

Green: As a Holistic Branding Strategy Mai Ali Mohamed Nada

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Abstract:

The research paper discusses sustainability and its utilization in constructing comprehensive brand strategies. It proposes dividing these integrated brand strategies into two fundamental groups: the hidden foundational elements (the heart and soul), which operate internally without public announcement but contribute to the cohesion of all internal and external brand transactions and activities. On the other hand, the visible elements group includes the marketing mix (comprising product, price, distribution, and promotion), followed by SWOT analysis (to clarify the brand's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). Subsequently, it addresses targeting, market positioning, and appropriateness.

The second set of foundational elements encompasses visible aspects (texture and feel), governing values, brand message and vision, brand story, name and logo, typography and design, color palette, and brand touchpoints.

The research paper concludes that both groups can be applied to sustainable brand strategies by investing in the emerging value derived from embracing environmental values to stimulate various aspects of brand building and interconnectivity.

The key findings of the paper emphasize four crucial points in green brand strategies: targeting, education, transparency, and consistency. Each represents a pivotal element in establishing brand credibility and validating all marketing communications.

Keywords

Green Branding, Eco-branding, Environmental Branding, Sustainable Branding.

1. Introduction

With the dawn of the twenty-first century, a new era of environmental economies has evolved, characterized by the rising of businesses' awareness of their social responsibilities in response of critical environmental issues, such as; the increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the hole in the ozone layer caused by CFC releases, widespread destruction of the rain forests, and the growing list of endangered species and ecosystems, to name a few. ¹ It became the key challenge for mankind to find more sustainable and equitable ways to produce, consume and live.

It is now a phenomenon of the fourth industrial revolution that forces business practices to be more consumer-oriented. Under such circumstances, new marketing concepts focus on business activities that are environmentally driven. Indeed, it is businesses' social responsibilities and cause alignment attitudes that shape brand images in the marketplace and moreover, in their audience minds and souls nowadays. Brands now adopt green approaches to add value to their products and services.² Nike, Microsoft, Apple, HP, IBM, Sony, Dell and Intel are some of the brands who exhibited successful green branding strategies.³

This research paper addresses the subject of Green, as a Holistic Branding Strategy. The paper intensifies the role of environmental branding approaches, and their impact on brands' competitive performances in the marketplace. The paper also suggests a holistic branding strategy that resonates with brands' social responsibilities, in the light of their sincere commitment towards environmental causes.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of this research paper can be stated in the research questions as follows:

- How would green branding provide a holistic and cohesive branding strategy, and how would that reflect on brands' marketplace resonance and competitive performance?
- How to employ environmental issues cause-alignment as an engagement catalyst, in order to build and maintain loyal clientele bases?

3. Aims and Objectives

This research paper shades the light on brands' constant pursue towards responding to their social responsibilities through honest and consistent adoption of green branding strategies. It also aims at suggesting a holistic branding approach based on socio-environmental considerations.

¹ The Marketing Book; Green marketing: Ken Peattie and Martin Charter, Edited by Michael J. Baker, Fifth Edition, Butterworth-Heinemann, Michael Baker, 2003, p. 726.

² Green Marketing; Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Ika Purwanti, et al., Manajemen Bisnis, Volume 9 No. 02, October 2019 ISSN (print) - 2089 - 0176 (online) 2655 – 2523, P. 177.

³ Green Marketing; A Conceptual Study: Pahuja, Monika, International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology (IJERT), ISBN: 978-93-83758-09-8, 2013, P. 235.

4. Hypothesis

The research hypothesis are as follows:

- "Green" can offer a profound basis for branding activities, as it provides an inevitable core value, which can be implemented in building brands' personas and marketplace competitive performances.
- Sincere and consistent cause-branding, ex; green branding, activities can strengthen brands' positioning, helping them washing reputational pitfalls and image disregards due to prior disparaged performances.
- Green products and services are widely regarded, while lots of consumers are willing to pay higher premiums when communicated properly.
- Green branding, exceeds adopting environmental values and point-of-views to affect brands' touch and feel assets.

5. Significance and Importance

Nowadays environmental branding is not advisable, instead, it became a norm.⁴ Businesses cannot ignore that cause alignment is now a must when articulating their core values, vision and mission statements. The significance of this subject matter exceeds financial revenues and marketplace competitive performances, as the consequences would impact the whole world existence and wellbeing.

6. Delimitations and Scope

This research paper is restricted to the subject of Green branding as a holistic branding strategy, in the time limits between 2018-2022.

7. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive approach in describing and analyzing the theoretical framework. An analytical approach of international green branding performances all over the world.

8. Literature Review

Businesses nowadays have to react to changing customer needs, new regulations and a new social zeitgeist which reflects increasing concern about the socio-environmental impacts of businesses. Green challenges now are exerting an influence on current marketing practices, while reshaping the marketplace competitional practices, and brand-costumer communications.⁵

⁴ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Green Marketing, The Academic Council of Karaganda Economic University Kazpotrebsoyuz (Protocol #9 from May 26, 2015), Prokopenko O.V., Ossik Yu.I., 2015, P. 12.

⁵ The Marketing Book; Green marketing: Op.cit., P. 727.

An example of brands' responsive attitudes can be traced in the case of Coca-Cola Company, which at first gained general confidence in the market due to its nonenvironmental practices. However, after some dissatisfaction exhibited by some groups of consumers and environmental organizations, the company has responded to their concerns about the massive use of metallic cans, sugar influence on tooth enamel, influences of drinks on a metabolic process in human bodies, caffeine content of the main drink etc. Coca-Cola considerably expanded its assortment, substituted bottles and started to produce a diet Coca-Cola sugar and caffeine free, and also green soda water and natural juices.⁶



Picture No.1 Pepsi Zero ⁷

Another example is Tata Motors Ltd., which has developed its showroom by using green items and elements, and showed ecofriendly atmosphere. Xerox represents a third example with its introduction of a "high quality" recycled photocopier paper in an attempt to satisfy the demands of firms for less environmentally harmful products. Mcdonald's also replaced its clam-shell packaging with waxed paper due to increased consumers concerns relating to polystrene production and ozone depletion.⁸

8.1. Green Branding Conceptions and Misconceptions

Resourceful enterprises view the raising awareness of environmental issues not as a threat, but rather; as an opportunity to satisfy the needs and desires of customers. Green branding works on discovering the life-time values people inherit, then enlarging such values over time, after that, utilizing the profits obtained from these main objectives to get new customers at a relatively low cost. The long-term goal of green branding is to generate sustainable profits from two groups of customers; current and new customers.

In order to achieve their short-term and long-term goals, green brands develop a mystical relationship between green products and customers, as this spirituality would impose a significant positive influence on customer's willingness to purchase green products, as consumers with high feelings and sensitivity tend to behave in a way that matches their personal spirituality values.⁹

⁶ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 11.

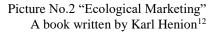
⁷ https://www.simplemost.com/coca-cola-replacing-coke-zero-new-recipe/

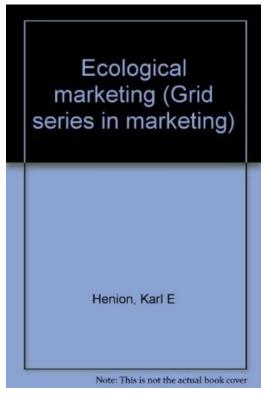
⁸ Green Marketing; A Conceptual Study: Op.cit., P. 235.

⁹ Green Marketing; Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Op.cit., P.p. 181,182.

8.1.1. Green Branding Concept Evolution

The term Green Marketing has got the attention of the general population in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first seminar on the subject was held in 1975 by American Marketing Association, in Texas, USA. The seminar resulted in one of the first books on Green Marketing titled "Ecological Marketing" by Karl Henion in 1976, after that several books were written addressing the subject. 10 In 1992, Ken Peattie, in the Great Britain, wrote the book "Green Marketing". Another book under the same title was wrote in 1993 by Acquelyn Ottman in the USA.¹¹





According to American Marketing Association, "Green Marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe". 13 Green marketing incorporates a vast range of activities that include; product modification, production process changes, packaging redesigns, product repricing and distribution policies, and advertising modifications. Terms like "corporate ecological responsiveness" and "environmental responsibility" are also considered in the terminology of green marketing.¹⁴

As for the concept of Green Branding, it can be traced back to 1988, when the first report on corporate identity was published by Ben & Jerry's company. The report exceeded the traditional financial report items, and discussed the influence of the company on the environment.¹⁵

8.1.2. Commercial and Nonprofit Green Branding

Green branding can be divided into commercial and non-profit. Commercial green branding deals with the production of green goods and services, the branding of natural resources and conditions, the branding of environmental quotas for emissions and dumps of

¹⁰ Green Marketing; A Conceptual Study: Op.cit., P. 233.

¹¹ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 9.

¹² https://www.biblio.com/book/ecological-marketing-karl-e-henion/d/1297004368

¹³ Green Marketing; A Conceptual Study: Op.cit, P. 233.

¹⁴ Ibid., P. 233.

¹⁵ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 9.

pollutants in environment, the branding of ecotourism, the branding of economic and environmental stimuli to carry out an effective nature-conservative policy etc.

Nonprofit Green branding on the other hand, includes scientific and public programs, environmental protection ideas, branding of investments into environmental projects at local, regional and state levels, branding of programs to create protected territories and reserves, activity of participants of wildlife preservation movements, branding of the politicians supporting environment protection, initiatives concerning restoration and keeping of ecological balance, branding of programs to create protected territories and reserves, branding of regions to attract manufacturers of green production to corresponding regions.¹⁶

8.1.4. Labels as Green Branding Indicators

Green Labels are a way of informing customers of products that meet specific environmental criteria, as well as help such products to stand out competitive marketplace. Green labels contribute in raising awareness of environmental issues; thus, they can be considered as catalyst in promoting better environmental standards within a specific product sector or geographical area. Green labels are also used in companies branding activities; as they help shaping the image of the company in its customers minds as one which cares about the environment and the consumer.¹⁷



Picture No.3 Blue Angel green label. 18

¹⁶ Ibid., P. 47

¹⁷ The Marketing Book; Green marketing: Op.cit., P. 751.

¹⁸ https://www.sciencephoto.com/media/889380/view/the-blue-angel-environmental-label

Labels has a significant role in green branding, with relevance to both promotion and logistics.

In **promotion**, green labels provide customers with trustworthy signal of environmental sensitivity. With a wide range of national labeling schemes such as "Blue Angel" scheme, a one that obtains a great deal of customers' trust. In logistics, labels provide customers with information to support their recycling behavior, as in the labeling of plastic containers to indicate the type of plastic used to simplify the recycling process.¹⁹ Labeling programs vary in terms of mandatory or voluntary, as many countries state what kind of information should be put down on production. The European Union, for example, requires that all washing machines and refrigerators on sale must have data on energy-use efficiency since 1996. On the other hand, environmental labeling has proven to be a very successful saleleveraging tool, as analyses of activity results of western companies' enterprises has shown an average of 10 to 15 percent sales income increase after receiving certificates and eco-friendly quality marks given to production.²⁰



Picture No.4 European Union energy-use efficiency label.²¹

8.1.5. Green Branding Failures and Misconceptions

Although green branding has proven to be a very promising branding approach, it has shown some difficulties in the marketplace competitions due to some failures and misconceptions. The false interpretations and deceiving accusations might ruin the businesses' reputations when spread in the marketplace through media or word-of-mouth communications. The major two green branding failures and misconceptions are; the accusation of greenwashing and the misconception of green myopia.

8.1.5.1. Greenwashing

The concept of Greenwashing was introduced in 1986 by Jay Westerveld describing hotel rooms calling upon guests caring of environment to refuse to change towels and bedclothes while staying under the claims of ecological compatibility, but in fact the practice only serves as a tool of hotel costs-reduction. Greenwashing concept has expanded to incorporate all green promotional activities that has no sufficient grounds, and that tend to deceive the customers and general public. Greenwashing is used to support the image of environmentally focused company, and to get political assistance in order to, hopefully, increase sales by presenting the

¹⁹ The Marketing Book; Green marketing: Op.cit., P. 751.

²⁰ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 100.

²¹ https://www.researchgate.net/figure/EU-energy-label-used-for-televisions fig4 281555543

enterprise in a favorable image. Unfortunately, the phenomenon has grown to increase by 79% between 2007 and 2009.²²

There are seven sins of greenwashing. The first sin is the **hidden-trade off**; when a brand hides important demerits of a product, while positioning it as green on the basis of one or more of its merits. The second sin is the sin of **no-proof**; when claims are released with no provable information to support. The third sin is the sin of **vagueness**; as the claim being obscure or broadly interpreted that it has no specified real meaning. The fourth sin is the sin of **worshiping false labels**; when the manufactures put false claims on their products. The fifth is the sin of **lesser of two evils**; as products with strong negative impact on an organism, e.g., nicotine, try to dignify their existence with green properties. The sixth sin is the sin of **irrelevance**; when the information upon which a product is positioned as green may be truthful and accurate, yet useless or untimely. The seventh, and last sin, is the sin of **fibbing**; and that's when enterprises just deceive the general public.²³

Greenwashing is a prohibited practice by most countries, e.g., in Australia any company found guilty of misleading customers by means of false claims about ecological compatibility faces fines up to \$1.1 million, and will be obliged to spread reliable data about their product environmental impact at its own expense.

Along with the legislative prohibition there are a public and professional one; public organizations spread information about the found-guilty enterprises, an example of this is the University of Oregon, which has created Greenwashing Index, a database where public uploads their daily examples. Another example is the Greenwashers documentary released in 2011.



Picture No.5 Greenwashing index rating scale, University of Oregon.²⁴

Professional production certifications also act a significant role in the greenwashing practices prohibition, regulating various variants of environmental labels.²⁵

8.1.5.2. Green Branding Myopia

Green branding Myopia is defined as "the misjudging or overemphasizing of improved environmental quality and customer satisfaction". Whirlpool's CFC is a clear example of green branding myopia. Whirlpool launched "Energy Wise" refrigerators in 1994, it was the first CFC free cooler, and one that was 30 percent more efficient than the U.S. Department of

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²² O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 110.

²³ Ibid., P.p. 111-113.

²⁴ https://www.greenwashing.fr/gw-index.html

²⁵ Ibid., P.p. 114-115

Energy's highest standard. Therefore, the company won the Golden Carrot; an award of \$30 million packages of consumer rebates from the Super-Efficient Refrigerator Program sponsored by the Natural Resources Defense Council. The case of green branding myopia occurred when the sales languished as the CFC-free benefit and energy-savings did not offset its \$100 to \$150 price premium. The markets outside the rebate program and the refrigerators did not offer additional features or new styles that consumers desired. ²⁶

Experts asserted that there are three important principles to be followed in order to avoid green branding myopia; consumer value positioning, calibration of consumer knowledge, and the credibility of product claims.²⁷

8.2. Branding Strategies' Structural Assets

Branding is "a disciplined process used to build awareness and extend customer loyalty. It is about taking advantage of every opportunity to justify why people should choose one brand over another". ²⁸ Therefore, a branding strategy is "the process whereby a company identifies which brand elements are necessary to create the appropriate and feasible brand proposition to the target group". ²⁹ In the same context, Environmental or Green branding is considered as a continuum of socially-ethic branding, which is defined as "the task of any company to establish needs, requirements and interests of the target markets, and to give a desirable satisfaction in more effective and more productive ways with simultaneous preservation or consolidation of well-being of the customer and society as a whole". ³⁰

A brand strategy builds on a vision that is aligned with business strategy, and emerging from companies' values and culture, this should be done in the regards of in-depth understanding of the customer's needs and perceptions.³¹ Effective brand strategies provide a central unifying idea around which all behavior, actions, and communications are aligned. The best brand strategies are so differentiated and powerful that they deflect the competition. They are easy to talk about and communicated both internally and externally.³² Branding strategies entail two different groups of assets that can be classified as:³³

- Branding Strategies' Structural Implicit Assets; The Heart and Soul group
- Branding Strategies' Structural Explicit Assets; The Touch and Feel Group (Brand Identity Building).

²⁶ Green Marketing & Brands – Insights: B.Premkumar, et al., 4th International Conference on Innovation Management Strategies for Emerging Paradigms, Thanjavur, 2012, P. 5.

²⁷ Green Marketing: Ozturk, Resul, The Effect of Special Shopping Sites on The Customer Satisfaction of The Logistic Service Quality in The Campaign Periods, 2020, June 5-7, Antalya, Turkey, P. 197

²⁸ Wheeler, Alina: Designing Brand Identity, 3rd edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., US., Canada, 2009, P. 12.

²⁹ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Strong Brands; How Brand Strategy and Brand Communication Contribute to Build Brand Equity(The Case Of Navigator), Master Thesis in Marketing, Faculty of Economics, Univ. of Coimbra, 2011, P.p. 17,18.

³⁰ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 11.

³¹ Wheeler, Alina: Op.cit., P. 12.

³² Ibid., P. 12.

³³ This classification is done by the researcher.

8.2.1. Branding Strategies' Structural Implicit Assets; The Heart and Soul group

This research identifies Branding Strategies' Structural Implicit Assets as; "brand-building activities, that are designed not to be directly-communicated to customers, but rather to be conveyed via all branding practices". The essential role of these assets is to act as the heart and soul of all branding activities.³⁴ The items of this group can be described as follows:

8.2.1.1. Green Marketing Mix

Green marketing mix refers to the activities related to green values, and that are reflected in the implementation of 4P greens, that are green products, green prices, green placements, and green promotions.³⁵

8.2.1.1.1. Green Products

Some authors traceback the appearance of green products to the early 80s, when the public awareness of the harmful impacts of using aerosols on the ozone layer of the Earth has emerged.³⁶ That's when people started to classify products according to their degree of ecodestructive influence as; green and non-green products.

Non-green or environmentally-unsafe products are "those which working out, production, consumption and disposal total eco-destructive influence exceeds assimilation abilities of the environment". While **Green Products** or environmentally-appropriate products are "those that bring eco-destructive changes within assimilation abilities of the environment". Green products are cost efficient and environmentally safe during the phases of production, consumtpion and disposal. They are subdivided into environmentally-neutral and environmentally-focused.

Environmentally-neutral products production and consumption do not destroy environment, e.g.; packages that decay after usage into harmless mineral or organic substances. On the other hand, **Environmentally-focused** products production and consumption bring positive changes to the environment or prevent negative ones, e.g.; the equipment and fabrication methods of artificial ultrahard materials, instead of their extraction in mines or opencast mines.³⁷

The increase of environmental awareness and concern is creating demands not only for new products with green criteria, but also for reconsidering existing products and in many cases to be redesigned, reformulated or produced differently.³⁸

³⁴ Definition articulated by the researcher.

³⁵ Green Marketing: Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Op.cit., P. 182.

³⁶ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 9.

³⁷ Ibid., P. 56.

³⁸ Green Marketing & Brands – Insights: Op.cit., P. 3.

8.2.1.1.2. Green Prices

As a result of the high-cost prices of cleaner raw materials necessary for green production, the use of high-priced equipment, the large scale of research and control processes, the overall cost prices of green products are relatively higher than traditional ones.³⁹

On the other hand, consumers now are realizing that their resource-intensive lifestyles have long-term and far-reaching environmental impacts, and have created severe problems throughout the developed and developing world. Knowing that this eco-destructive impact on environment causes influence on a human body only in some period of time, consumers now are ready to pay for ecological compatibility of the product different price premiums that have various advantages. As people always actively counteract the negative phenomena expected in the near future, and simultaneously show certain indifference to the negative phenomena expected in the distant future, that resulted in higher willingness to pay for ecological compatibility of production which directly influences health, in comparison with that which produces indirect long-term effect. 40 The "win-win" argument for greening suggests that consumer demand for green products can allow for the addition of green price premiums, as applies to free-range eggs and dolphin-friendly tuna. This new behavior manifested itself not only in the willingness to pay an environmental price premium, but also in exhibiting a higher brand loyalty and greater involvement through word-of-mouth promotions.⁴¹

8.2.1.1.3. Green Placements

Green product placement is about the distribution and logistics reserves. The process of placement goes a long way from production to consumption, from the point of producers to the point of ultimate green consumers. Companies decide what proper channels of distribution to be employed considering product characteristics, consumer characteristics and market characteristics. The inclusive knowledge of the specific demographics and features of green consumers, helps green industries in the decisions of placement channels. Knowing that the majority of green consumers are above average-income people, the placement strategies for green products shall address their residences; fancy compounds and upscale neighborhoods more than any other destinations. By making attractive displays using recyclable materials to emphasize environmental and other advantages of their products, companies tend to attract their sincere environmentally-driven customers.⁴²

8.2.1.1.4. Green Promotions

Enterprises use promotion tools to communicate their internal environmentally-friendly policies to their audience, and give the impression of deep sensitivity to environmental issues. By creating a strong demand for more environmentally-sensitive products, sales can be

³⁹ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 65.

⁴⁰ Ibid., P. 70

⁴¹ Green Marketing & Brands – Insights: Op.cit., P. 4.

⁴² Green Marketing; Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Op.cit, P. 183.

increased, and business image can be strengthened among some other benefits.⁴³ The effective implementation of green marketing depends on good communication, as its success depends on educating and empowering consumers via green advertising messages. The ads used in green marketing shall display the company's image, and its responsibility towards the environment, promoting a green lifestyle by highlighting the products and services. Special sales promotions for eco-friendly products such as coupons, cash refunds, and offers also act to attract consumers. ⁴⁴ In a counter opinion, promotion is accused of trivializing the cause by presenting green products as oversimplified solutions to complex environmental problems. These claims fuelled concerns about 'greenwashing'. Some dexterous brands, such as the Body Shop avoided this situation by focusing on public relations and in-store communications other than publicizing them in media.⁴⁵

On-pack promotions are considered useful solution and effective means to influence consumer decisions, but there is a difficulty to explain a complex issue on a package that is also being reduced in size. Direct mail also is an effective way to target environmentally concerned consumers, but with the danger of being perceived as 'junk mailers'.

Two of the most successful environmental promotion approaches are sales promotions and sponsorships, as they have been shown to be very effective, but they need to be selected carefully to ensure the synergy with the promoted products. Personal selling has always proved to be important, but it requires the salesforce to be aware of the environmental implications of the company and its products and processes, this requires a sound deal of internal communication to properly educate the salesforce with the brands environmental standpoints. Public relations are another tool that can be used to communicate the company's commitment to environmental wellbeing, and to convey messages relating to good eco-performance.⁴⁶

8.2.1.2. Branding SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis helps businesses decide which strategy to implement to leverage their unique characteristics. By turning threats into strengths, and matching strengths with opportunities, it is possible to maximize the chances of success and increase sales.

Strengths. Are the characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others? They enhance product recognition, help product positioning, aid in the introduction of new products, give brands strong reputation that build brand equity.

Weaknesses. Are the characteristics that place the team at a disadvantage relative to others. These might include; complexity, expensiveness, maintenance and change difficulties, obscureness, weak distribution, and not adequate online presence.

⁴³ Green Marketing: Op.cit., P.p. 204,205.

⁴⁴ Green Marketing; Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Op.cit., P. 183.

⁴⁵ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P.p. 98,99.

⁴⁶ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P.p. 98,99.

Opportunities. Are the elements that can be exploited to the project's advantage. These elements work on positioning products in local and foreign markets, increasing contribution margin, control over pricing and primum behavior, control over distribution, using advancing technology to develop new products, growing demand from international markets, and using social media sites to reach new customers.

Threats. Are the elements that could cause trouble for the business or project. These elements could be free to information though Internet, changes of economic environment that could affect consumer loyalty, new better products and services at lower prices produced by the competitors, and changes in consumer trends and fashion. ⁴⁷

8.2.1.3. Consumer Segmentation

Market Segmentation refers to "the process of identifying groups of consumers; a market segment, to be targeted and addressed by the business communication according to some shared traits, such as; common needs, common interests, similar lifestyles or similar demographic profiles etc.". Market segmentation assumes that different segments require different branding programs, as diverse customers are usually targeted through various offers, prices, promotions, distributions or some combination of branding variables.⁴⁸

Types of Segmentation

Segmentation is divided into four subdivisions; Demographic, Geographic, behavioral and Psychographic.

- **Demographic segmentation.** Addresses consumer's demographic characteristics, such as; gender, age, social status, educational level etc. Typical green consumers seem to be female consumers, as women trust more in environmental appeals, and have well-developed instinct of self-and-family preservation. Green consumers are educated, rich, politically liberal. The age ranges for typical green consumers are from 30 till 49 with children.
- Geographic Segmentation. Deals with the geographic locations of target audience, as this would affect brand promotional and selling activities. Green consumers can live anywhere, because their believes can transcend any boundaries. Typical green consumers live in large cities, they can be found in Egypt in such cities as Cairo, Alexandria, and Hurghada.
- **-Behavioral Segmentation.** Works on the buying behaviors and customs of the target audience. Green consumers are those who participate in environmentally focused measures,

⁴⁷ Branding and Extroversion Handbook; A Guide for SMES, Erasmus, he European Commission, Project No. 2015-1-HU01-KA202-013605, P.p. 14,15.

⁴⁸ Mark Anthony Camilleri: Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning; In *Travel Marketing, Tourism Economics and the Airline Product,* Springer, Cham, Switzerland, 2018, p. 70.

and make environmentally focused purchases, and who are ready to pay higher premium for eco-friendly products.⁴⁹

- **-Psychometric Segmentation.** Deals with the target audience psychometrics which drive the purchasing behaviors and surge buying decisions. Green consumers prefer to choose green products under the assumption that all conditions are equal. Some of them exhibit irregular green feelings in terms of their habits and purchasing behaviors. Consumers can be classified in the terms of their psychometrics to:
 - True Blue Greens. They showcase strong environmental values that derive a feeling of responsibility for creating positive change in society and the environment.
 - Greenback Greens. They do not actively participate in the political activities, but are more eager to buy environmentally friendly products.
 - Sprouts. Believing in environmental causes, but do not practice it or buy green products. This type of consumers can be persuaded by proper branding.
 - Grousers. Uneducated in environmental issues, they think that green products performance is not as good as the substitute products.
 - Basic Browns. Do not care about environmental and social issues, as they are more concerned with daily worries.⁵⁰

8.2.1.4. Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is identified as; "the act of designing the company's offerings and image to occupy a distinct place in the minds of the target market."51 The main objective of positioning is to make customers more loyal, and less price-sensitive to a given products. Consequently, be less likely to search for other alternative products once they are satisfied.⁵²

8.2.1.4.1. Principles of Brand Positioning

Successful brand strategies rely on the five branding positioning principles that entail brands sustain their position in the marketplace, which are:

Consistency. Showcasing a holistic branding approach affecting all contact points of the brand. Clarity. Having easy-to-communicate and understand vision, mission, core values and core competencies of the organization.

Continuity. Developing trust by keeping promises, thus customers would know what to expect. **Visibility**. Increasing brand exposure and developing brand awareness.

⁴⁹ O.V. Prokopenko, Yu.I. Ossik: Op.cit., P. 61.

⁵⁰ Green Marketing; Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Op.cit., P. 184.

⁵¹ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., P. 35.

⁵² Differentiation Strategy and Impact On Business: Okeke, Obinna Tony, Strategic Journal of Business and Social Science (SJBSS) Volume 1, Dec 2018, P. 3.

Authenticity. Creating the feeling for the customer to own, use or direct a unique valuable product or service. ⁵³

8.2.1.4.2. Types of Positioning

Green brands can be positioned according to their eco-friendly functional or emotional attributes that would differentiate them from their competitors. **Functional positioning** works on enhancing products attributes by the environmental benefits coming from production processes or product usage. This type of positioning has some disadvantages; as it can be easily imitated, and if consumers are acting rationally, this can reduce brand differentiation.

Emotional positioning, on the other hand, is based on three possible types of benefits provided by the brand; a feeling of well-being, possibility of expression through consumption of green brand as a status symbol, and benefits arising from sensations and feelings experienced through the contact with nature. The strongest effect is obtained upon a combination of both types of positioning; functional and emotional.⁵⁴

8.2.1.4.3. Positioning Competitive Advantages

Brands position themselves against other brands, consequently; that requires a balance of ideal points of parity and points of differentiation within the given market and competitive environment. Establishing brand positioning starts with identifying the target market, the nature of competition, the points of parity (POPs), and the points of differentiation (PODs).⁵⁵

Competitive advantages are the bestselling and most remarkable points of differentiation the brands claim to inherit rather than their competitors. Efficient brand positioning requires a profound identification and specification of the brands' competitive advantages, consequently, communicating them to their target audience via internal and external channels.

There are two types of competitive advantages; temporary and sustainable. Most competitive advantages are temporarily, as they result in high profits, but these profits attract competition, and competition limits the duration of competitive advantage in most cases. On the other hand, some competitive advantages are sustainable as competitors are unable to imitate them, or no one conceives of a better offering. The most important differentiation factor here is the efficiency in communicating these competitive advantages into the media. ⁵⁶

8.2.1.5. Brand Personality (Persona)

Brand personality is "the associated personality of a brand as a set of human demographics; age, gender, social class and race. It also includes human lifestyle characteristics, such as

⁵³ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., P.p. 17,18.

⁵⁴ Green Marketing; Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Op.cit., P. 185.

⁵⁵ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., 2011, P. 35.

⁵⁶ Green Marketing; Strategy For Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage In Industry 4.0: Op.cit., P. 178.

activities, interests, and opinions". Profound brand personalities incorporate human personality traits such as extroversion, agreeableness, dependability, warmth, concern, and sentimentality. Brand personalities are used to personalize brands, in the sense of visualizing abstract intangible assets and characteristics in a more concrete tangible appearance, thus customers interact with brands as if they were human being.

The big Five brand personality dimensions are the most important personality factors that explain 92% of the variance between the brand personalities. Sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness are the big five factors, and they include 15 facets and 42 traits.⁵⁷

Green brand personalities help brands to promote their products, while also attracting new customers to switch to products that are eco-friendly. This will benefit the company on the long run by ways of profits, and can be utilized in differentiating brands' products among competition. There are six personality dimensions that can be associated with green brand personality, they are; sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication, security, and compassion.⁵⁸

8.2.1.6. Brand Equity

Brand equity is "the financial value of a brand which provides capital/value to products and services".⁵⁹ It can also be described as the differential impact of brand knowledge on consumers' response to the brand marketing. Brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand, and holds some favourable positive strong and distinctive brand associations in the memory. There are multiple factors that contribute to brand equity such as; brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty, and perceived quality etc.⁶⁰

Brand equity can be seen from different perspectives such as marketing and financial. According to the marketing perspective; brand equity is defined as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, which adds to, or detracts from, the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to the firm's customers'. The financial perspective, however, defines equity as "incremental discounted future cash flows that would result from branded product revenue, in comparison with the revenue that would occur if the same product did not have the brand name".

It is the ultimate goal of every brand to go popular, and to earn such popularity in a positive manner. Obtaining green brand equity means that a brand has fulfilled the needs of its customers, and simultaneously, given more attention to the environment. In the last decades, businesses shifted from brand equity to green brand equity, as a response to the increase of

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⁵⁷ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., P.p. 31,32.

⁵⁸ Acharya, Anitha and Gupta, Manish: Green Business; Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications, Vol. 3, Information Resources Management Association, 2019, p. 156.

⁵⁹ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., P. 38.

⁶⁰ Branding and Extroversion Handbook; A Guide for SMES, Erasmus, Op.cit., P. 41.

awareness towards environmental issues and consumer demand for eco-friendly products. Customers are motivated by companies to respond to their green marketing efforts, and prefer their products and services on the basis of environmental compatibility, even if in higher premiums.61

8.2.2. Branding Strategies' Structural Explicit Assets; The Touch and Feel group - Brand Identity Building

This research identifies Branding Strategies' Structural Explicit Assets as; "brand-building activities, that are designed to be directly-communicated to customers. The sum of such activities forms the brand's specified identity, that should come in alliance with the implicit structural assets". The structural explicit assets can be in the form of verbal, visual, audio communication, or else a hybrid of two-or-more of them. The essential role of these assets is to act as the touch and feel of all branding activities. 62 The items of the explicit brand structural assets can be described as follows:

8.2.2.1. Brand Core Values

Brand Values are "the states of mind that are important to consumers, and that are used to decide the vision and mission of a brand". Brand values determine brand attitudes and behavior. 63 In that sense, green brand values are "the overall values consumers gain by using a brand's green products and services". They represent the sum of the financial, environmental, social, information and functional benefits that the product or service can offer to the consumers, and upon those benefits, consumers evaluate the offerings given form positive or negative attitudes.

Brand values have their effects on financial aspects, and also on the organizational behavior and enclosing ethics. That is why there are several studies that identify reasons for going green of corporations like stakeholder suppressions, ethics-regulatory compliance programs, crucial events, and top management attempts.⁶⁴

8.2.2.2. Brand Mission and Vision Statements

A brand's mission statement is the "articulation of values, objectives and approaches of a brand, and how they are planned to be reached on short-term basis". While a Brand's Vision statement is the articulation of "the brand's aspirations of how reaching its values, objectives and approaches will impact on the environment in the far future". A vision statement is more abstract and long-term oriented than a mission statement.

⁶¹ Importance of Consumer-based Green Brand Equity; Empirical Evidence, Khandelwal, Utkal, in.sagepub.com/journalspermissions-india, Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad, Vol. 23, Issue 1, SAGE, 2019, P.p. 83,84. ⁶² Definition articulated by the researcher.

⁶³ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., P. 36.

⁶⁴ Akkucuk, Ulas: The circular Economy and Its Implications on Sustainability and The Green Supply Chain, Kuscu, Asli (article writer) InfoSci®-OnDemand, US.,2019, p. 17.

Mission and vision statements play a critical role in business communication channels, whether internal; between management and employees, or external; between brands and their customers.

Many businesses around the world have adopted mission statements with environmental values as a top issue on their agendas, as brands now focus on the social strategy activities, and philanthropic values in their pursue for shaping their competitive advantages. Going green is allocated in most of mission and vision statements in businesses around the world, in the light of endless meanings and interpretations of the concepts of ethical behavior, social responsibility and protection of the environment. Mission and vision statements must be perfectly articulated, and constantly revised and modified in response to changes within the organization and its environment. ⁶⁵

8.2.2.3. Brand Story

A brand story is "a company-designed story about the brand that consists of a plot, actors, causality, and temporality". Brand stories can convey information about brands" founders, the evolution of brands, or they can portray characters interacting with the brands and consuming them enjoyably. 66 Brand stories contribute in adding favourable and unique associations to a brand in ways that increase the brand equity. A brand story imbeds brand's implicit assets in a framework that allows it to convey aspects of the brand's founder, heritage, challenges, mission and values, and the emotional and functional benefits it offers.

Good stories, that are well-structured and well-told, can influence how customers think about a brand. Some studies have shown that a successful relaunch and reviving of long-abandoned brands, has converted them into 'retro' brands through telling persuasive brand stories. Some brands even include short stories on fast-moving consumer good FMCG packaging, as they can create positive impacts on consumers' perceptions of product values, attitudes and behavioural intention responses to the brand.⁶⁷



Picture No.6 An example of FMCG packaging story.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Going Green of Mission and Vision Statements; Ethical, Social, and Environmental Concerns across Organizations: Yozgat, Ugur and Karatas, Nilgün, The 7th International Strategic Management Conference, Turkey, December 2011, P. 1359.

⁶⁶ Fakiha, Mohammed Abdulwahab: Understanding Brand Story Conceptualisations; Brand Practitioner Perspectives, PHD., School of Economics Finance and Marketing, College of Business, RMIT Univ., Australia, 2018, p. 1.

⁶⁸ https://in.pinterest.com/pin/fmcg-packaging-design--351210470945751869/

8.2.2.4. Brand Name and Tagline

Brand names decisions are made in consideration of some factors, that are; target market, the product or service, and the brand heart and soul assets.⁶⁹ Brand names shall be timeless, tireless, and easy to say and remember. They play a differential role in the marketplace, while communicating messages, and facilitating brand extensions. There are seven types of names that are founder, descriptive, fabricated, metaphor, acronym, magic spell and a combination of two or more of them.⁷⁰

Brand names are hardly remembered solely without their tagline recalls. Nike tagline "Just do it" always pops in mind whenever the name Nike is mentioned, this is the case with almost every acknowledged brand. A tagline or a slogan is "a short, simple, clear, catchy and colorful word or sentence, that gives assurance about the quality, quantity or reliability of a brand's product or service".

A tagline has to be direct, short and easily remembered, and can draw attention to the strength of the product or the brand. Taglines and slogans act to fill the gaps between brands and their associated customers, as they help customers to remember the branding messages, then eventually, develop a positive attitude towards the brand. Idiomatic slogans are charged with emotions and become psychological motivations. The product of the strength of of the strength

8.2.2.5. Logo and Typeface Design

Logos are the brands' graphical representations. They are also the starting points of color and design choices that to be integrated in the brands' visual identity. ⁷³ A logo is a "symbol, a graphic and visual sign which plays an important role into the communication structure of a brand". ⁷⁴ Logos can be in varies types, such as; letter marks, word marks, pictorial marks, abstract marks, emblems, etc.

A logo font, and a brand font are two typeface usages to be implemented in identity design. When choosing the brand typeface, it is very crucial to consider its aesthetic and associated meanings. **Aesthetic meanings** are those of the actual shape and appearance of the characters themselves; their visual characteristics such as line thickness, corner smoothness, width, height and etc. These are the specific traits that give a typeface its personality.

A typeface **associated meanings** are either association of personality or convention. **Associations of personality** are connived via the subjective traits of the characters, while the **conventional meanings** result from the shared knowledge, i.e., an arbitrary link established by

⁶⁹ Branding and Extroversion Handbook; A Guide for SMES, Erasmus, Op.cit, P. 21.

⁷⁰ Wheeler, Alina: Designing Brand Identity, 4th edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., US., Canada, 2013, P. 23.

⁷¹ Advertising Slogan; It's Emphasis and Significance in Marketing: Op.cit., p.p. 37,38.

⁷² Ibid., p. 45

⁷³ Branding and Extroversion Handbook; Op.cit, P. 27.

⁷⁴ Logo design and the corporate identity: Adîr, George et al., World Conference on Design, Arts and Education (DAE), Volume: 51, 2012, P. 650.

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frequency of use. The connotations typefaces carry can alter the meaning of the message or the brand. Studies have shown that, consumers look to the text that goes beyond the text's actual content when building up on the semantic connotations of a typeface.⁷⁵

8.2.2.6. Brand Color Palette

Colors are used by brands to attract their consumers, and reach them in a deeper, and more affectionate level. Color is used strategically in retail, food and beverage, home improvement, and pharmaceuticals to communicate personality, status, and build a relationship with consumers based on sincere loyalty. Brands conduct color research that can best meet their objectives of appealing to consumers in order to insure the most effective color implementation.

Color perceptions and preferences are affected by factors, such as; age, gender, and cultural differences. Studies have shown that color preferences of individuals change during their life spans. Preference for the color blue, for example, decrease steadily from teenage to nineties, while the popularity of green and red increases with ages in both genders. Younger children are more attracted by strong, warm, and intense colors, while over the years those colors became less violent with softer shades.⁷⁶

Many studies have focused on color selections for certain businesses, and they asserted that a certain color is not tied to a particular business. The red color, for instance, is used in the logotypes of fast-food companies, e.g., McDonalds, Burger King, KFC, DQ etc. It catches the attention of customers, yet is not pleasing to look at for an extended period, which leads to customers soon leave the restaurant and leave space for others in a phenomenon named; fast turn-over rates. The red color denotations are the feeling of power, energy, passion, love, motivation, and aggression or danger, that's why it is found in many beverage franchises, and fast-food chains, e.g., Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Red Bull, automotive and racing industries, e.g., Toyota, Mitsubishi, Honda, Formula 1, broadcasting, e.g., CNN, BBC News, entertainment/music groups, e.g., Rolling Stones, AC/DC, Epica, Iron Maiden, footwear, e.g., Puma, Diesel etc. The percentage of color shades to be used depends on emotions and feelings that are intended to evoke.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Visual analysis of typeface management in brand identity: Irma, Puskarevic et al., 7th nternational Symposium on Graphic Engineering and Design, Novi Sad, Serbia, 2014, p. 428.

⁷⁶ The Value of Color Research in Brand Strategy: K. Cunningham, Meagan, Open Journal of Social Sciences, Dec. 26, 2017, p.p. 186,187.

⁷⁷ How Color Shapes Brand Identity: Elesini, Urška Stankovič et al., Conference on Information and Graphic Arts Technology, 7–8 June 2018, Ljubljana, Slovenia, P. 2.





Picture No.7 Burger King red usages in designs and interior designs. 78 79

8.2.2.7. Brand Communication Touchpoints

Brand communication is an important tool by which organisations inform, teach, persuade and remind consumers about their products. It represents the brand voice and tone, in order to establish a dialogue and build relationships with consumers. Brand Communication mix consists of seven major modes of communication, which are:

Advertising. Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.

Sales promotion. Short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of a product or service. **Events and experiences**. Company-sponsored activities and programs designed to create brand-related interactions.

Public relations and publicity. Programs promoting or protecting company or product image. **Direct marketing**. Use of mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, or Internet to communicate directly with specific customers and prospects.

Personal selling. Face-to-face interaction with prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions, and procuring orders.

Packaging and points of sale displays. Packaging is considered a good starting point in the touch and feel green branding endeavors. As it can be done safely without risking of customers disaffection. Enterprises has started to reduce the use of raw materials by changing their packages that can reduce direct or indirect distribution costs.⁸¹

⁷⁸ https://adsofbrands.net/en/ads/burger-king-it-s-not-a-secret-it-s-real-fire-1/13281

⁷⁹ https://brainstation.io/magazine/burger-king-debuts-touchless-restaurant-concept

⁸⁰ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., P. 51.

⁸¹ Green Marketing: Op.cit., P. 205.



Picture No.8 An example of an eco-friendly packaging.⁸²

Varian Medical Systems, which is a leading manufacturer of medical scanning equipment, redesigned the shipping packaging for its products to enable nesting of multiple boxes or return and reuse, and thus produced a worthwhile cost savings. Sometimes this might go the wrong way, leading to some unpleasing results, as in the case of Sony when experimented with reclaiming and reusing packaging materials for its television sets, the procedure ended up with a customer misconception that the product inside the packaging was also not new. The misleading in Sony's case came as a result of a lack of proper education of the customers preparing them to rightfully conceive the massage. ⁸³

Greening is not always a rewarding process, as reducing package thickness for instance can also reduce the resources consumed in manufacturing and also the energy used in distribution, but, on the other hand, it can increase the level of in-channel waste as a result of the reduced level of protection for the products.⁸⁴

Brand communications contribute to brand equity by creating brand awareness, crafting brand images, eliciting brand responses, and/or facilitating a stronger consumer-brand connection.⁸⁵

⁸² https://www.packsize.com/blog/eco-friendly-packaging-tips-costs-materials-and-more/

⁸³ The Marketing Book; Green marketing: Op.cit., P.p. 747,748.

⁸⁴ Ibid., P. 750.

⁸⁵ Daniela Yasenova Baeva: Op.cit., P. 51.

9. Conclusion

Green branding, as all branding strategies, can be divided into two groups; The heart and soul structural assets, including the marketing mix, brand SWOT analysis, segmentation, positioning, personality and equity. The second group is the touch and feel structural assets, such as brand core values, mission and vision statements, brand story, brand name and tagline, logo and typeface design, color palette, and brand communication touchpoints. Green branding strategies follow the same pathway as ordinary branding strategies, but with the emphasis on three pillars; that are: Segmentation, education, Consistency.

Segmentation. Identifying green customers is crucial for any branding strategy. Green customers are classified under five main types. For blue greens, green back greens and sprouts; efforts have to be paid in order to communicate brands; green values, vision and mission statements, with great emphasis on taglines and slogans. As for grousers and basic browns; more efforts have to be paid on direct communications and interactive websites. It is also advisable to utilize endorsements of community beloved celebrities and opinion leaders.

Education. Spreading awareness of environmental causes plays a perilous role in green branding strategies. By default, people are not welling to pay premiums until they are convinced that their responses will have a tremendous impact on their and their children's future. Explaining the urgency of the cause while demonstrating the procedures taken will assure customers that the brand deserves their full respect and loyalty. Some brands use this to wipe out a disparaged history using the same course of actions. In fact, cause branding, whether green or not, can be considered as a resourceful branding tactic for big and small brands as well. Education can be done through printed materials, or online platforms. Creating demand for green products and services is the ultimate goal of green brands, while also assuring them that green metrics will not affect performance and quality. Using imagery that is environmentally driven is a good way of communicating environmental concerns.

Transparency. Transparency refers to brands' honesty and sincerity. It is very crucial for a brand to keep transparent to its core values on all its levels of performance. Once a brand faces accusations of not being transparent enough, that would radically reflect on its image and marketplace reputation. Accusations of greenwashing for instance, would ruin a brands perceptions causing revenues-decline with a chance of being publicly humiliated. Brands might face some legislative issues for betraying their customers trust and good intentions.

Consistency. Consistency refers to brands transparency and authenticity. Brands claiming environmental stances have to prove their honesty and consistency or otherwise jeopardize their marketplace reputation. Consistency should be embraced in all marketing activities and brand performances. It shall be seen in vision and mission statements, and in stationary and corporate designs. Generating a brand sub-logo; a one that is driven from the original logo can be considered. Taglines also may be generated in order to reflect brands' green ethics and values. It is of the highest importance for brands to understand that the core procedures to be

adopted are to be honest and true to their customers. Using green technologies is a great way of conducting green branding strategies. Funding and sponsoring scientific researches help brands prove their transparency. Visual identity also must be consistent with brands' core values, while additionally reflecting their taste and aesthetic appeals.

10. Research Recommendation

This research paper recommends green branding strategies to prevail the field of branding, and to be taught in academies as course projects. The research also recommends a legislation to be coined that inclines companies to adopt green strategies in alignment with the while world's orientation towards sustainability.

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