Chapter 9
Green Brand Personality:
Its Relevance to the Green Marketing Practices

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ABSTRACT

The main purposes of this chapter are to define a green brand, describe its characteristics, and outline its implications. This chapter would help readers understand the need for studying green brand personality and appreciate its importance in the current market scenario. Moreover, it provides a detailed outline of the ways and means that companies can use to market such brands. It highlights the steps companies can take to increase the sales of green brands and get an edge over non-green brands. In addition, it explores certain best practices in the industry to illustrate how well green products can be sold without compromising on sales targets.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing strategists have long achieved competitive advantage by assigning a set of personality characteristics to their brands (Aaker, 1997). Conventional brand-personality strategies focus on products or services and their corresponding utilitarian benefits. However, a recent sharp rise in the number of similar brands coupled with globalization has made it difficult for the marketers to distinguish their brands on the basis of functional attributes alone.

Therefore, the marketers are increasingly realizing the need of attaching symbolic meanings to their brands to achieve brand distinction. One of the emerging ways to fulfill the need for brand distinction is by promoting green marketing – a set of activities to generate and facilitate an exchange to satisfy human needs or wants so that the products cause minimal damage to the environment (Acharya & Gupta, 2016; Polonsky, 1994). Marketers need to know when and how do customers relate themselves to green

brand personality and its impact on the purchase decision. The objective of this chapter is to identify the benefits of green brand personality on companies marketing practices. It helps the companies to promote their products and also attracts new customers to switch to products which are environmental friendly. This will benefit the company in the long run by way of profits and also helps them to distinguish their products from that of their competitors.

The six dimensions of green brand personality proposed by Acharya and Gupta (2016) were security, sincerity, competence, sophistication, compassion, and excitement. Dimensions sincerity, competence, and excitement, capture the innate part of human personality, whereas sophistication, security, and compassion tap a dimension that individual's would like to have.

NEED FOR GREEN MARKETING

Companies are now getting inclined to green marketing mainly because of four reasons. These include rise of green consumers, government initiatives, thrust by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and change of lifestyle. Each of these has been detailed below:

- **Rise of Green Consumers:** Consumers are aware of the environmental degradation that can happen if they use non-green products (Zhu & Sarkis, 2016). Not surprisingly, according to a survey conducted by Cone Communications in 2013, as much as 71% of Americans are inclined to buy green product (Walker, 2013). More recently, Nielsen global online study reported that almost three out of four respondents were willing to pay extra price for buying green products in 2015 (Global, 2015). It was also found that Millennials were also particularly passionate about sustainability while shopping and were interested in buying green products in order to save the environment.
- **Government Initiatives:** Governments around the world are responding positively to the call of the United Nations (UN) for taking green initiatives to control global warming (Bhattacharya, 2016). Indeed, the main agenda for the UN conference in September, 2015 in Paris was to give countries an opportunity to join Paris Agreement to overcome climate change. A major decision was that developed countries would share a major chunk of monetary cost relating to supporting green initiatives (Davenport, Gillis, Chan, & Eddy, 2015). Countries have already started providing funding for this purpose. For example, the Federal Government of Canada offers incentives and funding to boost research and development in Canada. These are relating to conducting research on those products that run on clean energy (Natural Resources Canada, 2016).
- **Thrust by Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Organizations:** NGOs and nonprofit organizations have come forward in support of going green (Kleindorfer, Singhal, & Wassenhove, 2005). These organizations are popularly termed as green NGOs (Herrera, 2010). For example, Carbon Trust, a nonprofit organization based in UK helps companies in formulating strategies with respect to overcome climate change. It had worked with product carbon footprinting which contributed to PAS 2050, a standard for product life cycle. Similarly, Conservation International a NGO advises Starbucks on issues relating to sustainability. EarthShare, another NGO, is famous for developing package of services which helps its clients in implementing green activities in their organizations. Rainforest Alliance has been working with leading brands which produces chocolate, coffee, and tea in sourcing raw materials which are sustainable.

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