

Chapter 12

The Impact of Social Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility on Energy Savings as a Competitive Strategy

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ABSTRACT

In today's globalizing world, corporate social responsibility has become a necessity for businesses. The corporate social responsibility approach, which is based on the principles of giving back to the society what it has taken from the society and observing the benefit of the society in the activities of the enterprise, has an important place in terms of promoting the products and services they produce in the market under the best conditions and strengthening the brand image. From this point of view, corporate social responsibility is seen as a valid practice to make a difference. However, businesses mostly carry out social marketing activities for this purpose. Thus, while trying to find solutions to social problems, they can obtain a competitive strategy. In this context, the aim of the study is to show that the energy crisis, which is one of the most serious problems of today, can be solved by raising awareness in consumers with corporate social response activities and social marketing methods.

INTRODUCTION

Businesses are organizations established primarily to generate income and achieve commercial goals. When we look at the historical process, at the beginning of the 20th century, while organizations posi-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8681-8.ch012

tioned their purpose as only making profit and making their owners, partners, and shareholders happy, from the middle of the century they are also faced with the reality that they are responsible to their employees, other businesses, society, environment, and consumers. While businesses were fulfilling their social responsibilities in certain areas with legal regulations, later, they started to carry out various social responsibility projects with their own will and decisions, especially in the areas in which they operate, or to take part in the projects as supporters. The main factors that led businesses to this, were their desire to cope with the increasing competition and to keep their brands alive (Sharma, 2019).

Today, businesses have become organizations that are aware of their social responsibilities while considering their economic benefits, and that show interest in the developments and changes within the business as well as outside. According to this discourse, the business is no longer defined as an organization whose purpose is only to gain financial gain, but also as an organization that has social responsibilities towards its stakeholders as well as financial gain. Fulfilling social responsibilities will not directly satisfy the stakeholders of a business financially, but primarily spiritually, and as a result of the practices, it will positively change the society's perspective on the business and their perceptions about their brands. In addition, recent studies have revealed that social responsibility practices influence consumers' purchasing behavior (Zaman et al., 2022).

Recent developments in the field of marketing and new elements added to the definition of marketing have led to significant changes in the marketing strategies of companies in terms of differentiation from competitors. Now, the focus of the marketing concept is the concept of "being value-based". To demonstrate this value, there is a prevailing opinion that institutions should contribute to the society in an economic sense as well as in a social sense. By acting with this awareness, institutions give weight to corporate social responsibility activities and can provide great benefits in the long term thanks to these efforts (He & Harris, 2020).

Today, the whole world is facing with serious energy problems, including rapid consumption of energy resources, deterioration in the ecosystem, increasing energy prices and climate change. In the last few years, when the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are added to all these problems, it is seen that the problems in the energy field continue to increase. While the world countries have been dealing with recovery activities with the decrease of the pandemic effect in 2022, the world agenda started to shake with the war between Russia and Ukraine this time. All these developments and the increase in energy demand have created a new crisis. The tension between Russia and Ukraine, which has been going on since February 2022, has not been resolved even after about seven months. Although this situation is evaluated from different perspectives such as geopolitical, strategic, economic and superiority strategies, it is seen that the issue of energy comes to the fore as a common problem of the whole world.

It was thought that the sanctions against Russia would weaken Russia and its economy in this process and cause it to end the occupation of Ukraine. While the USA and the UK increased their sanctions on Russian energy imports, they continued to have energy problems. Europe, and especially Germany, turned to natural gas as a carbon-free and more environmentally friendly fuel option, but the European Union met 40% of its natural gas imports from Russia, at the level of 80%. In addition to the natural gas shortage, it was seen that electricity problems were also on the agenda (Chew, 2022).

The effect of investments in Russian natural gas causes the search for alternative sources and increases oil and gas prices globally. On the other hand, it is seen that the sanctions could not prevent Moscow's progress in Ukraine and even revealed the discourse of nuclear war. All the global negativities and the Russia-Ukraine war once again brought up the seriousness of energy saving, renewable energy, climate change and environmental protection issues. Although different strategies are determined according to

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