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SUSTAINABLE MARKETING AS A KEY COMPETITIVE STRATEGY FOR BUSINESSES

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Abstract. *The article provides a comprehensive overview of the essence of sustainable marketing as a key tool in shaping business strategy and enhancing competitiveness, focusing on the principles of sustainable development and consumer expectations. The main objective of the article is to explore the essence, principles, and directions of potential sustainable marketing strategies aimed at meeting consumer expectations, increasing brand value, and strengthening business competitiveness. The literature review indicates debates and divergences in understanding and interpreting the essence of sustainable marketing, the application of potential strategies for sustainable development, and insufficient research on resilient marketing strategies that create value for businesses and consumers. The relevance of addressing the stated problem lies in the fact that sustainable marketing, aligned with the goals of sustainable development, should become a key instrument for providing conditions for competitive advantages of modern enterprises, enhancing the corporate image, and increasing business profit by creating value, improving relationships with customers and employees, and expanding growth opportunities. The article's analysis highlights the correlation between public perception and its impact on brand value growth. It is emphasized that the value of the brand largely depends on the active integration of social, environmental, and ethical aspects into the corporate business strategy. Special attention is given to the direct impact of highlighting corporate values and responsible activities on customer retention and loyalty. The article underscores how effective communication regarding these aspects can influence public perception of the brand and, consequently, its reputation and competitiveness in the market. The author substantiates the concept of sustainable marketing and the directions for the application of potential sustainable development marketing strategies, emphasizing the main barriers that may hinder the successful integration of sustainable development principles (pricing, productivity levels, and changes in consumer behavior). The research concludes that contemporary conditions demand innovative approaches to development from enterprises, and the transition to sustainable consumption and production requires a review of companies' market strategies. Marketing must be flexible and adaptive to changes in economic, environmental, and social contexts. In the context of sustainable development and focusing on consumer expectations, companies should consider innovation, collaboration, effective communication, and commitment as key elements of sustainable development business strategies, contributing to the growth of brand value and strengthening business competitiveness.*

Keywords: *sustainable marketing; sustainable development; strategy; business; competitiveness; image; brand.*

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**СТАЛИЙ МАРКЕТИНГ ЯК КЛЮЧОВА КОНКУРЕНТНА
СТРАТЕГІЯ БІЗНЕСУ**

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Анотація. У статті узагальнено питання щодо сутності концепції сталого маркетингу як основного інструменту у формуванні бізнес-стратегії та підвищенні конкурентоспроможності підприємств, зосереджуючись на принципах сталого розвитку та очікуваннях споживачів. Основною метою статті є дослідження сутності, принципів та напрямів застосування потенційних маркетингових стратегій сталого розвитку, що будуть націлені на очікування споживачів, зростання вартості бренду та зміцнення конкурентоспроможності бізнесу. Систематизація літературних джерел свідчить про дискусійність і розбіжності у розумінні та трактуванні сутності сталого маркетингу, напрямів застосування потенційних маркетингових стратегій сталого розвитку, не достатню дослідженість стійких маркетингових стратегій які створюють цінність для бізнесу та споживачів, готовність інтеграції концепції сталого розвитку у власну стратегію конкурентоспроможності. Актуальність вирішення поставленої проблеми полягає у тому, що сталій маркетинг, спрямований на цілі сталого розвитку, має стати ключовим інструментом забезпечення передумов конкурентних переваг сучасних підприємств, зміцнення іміджу та збільшення прибутку бізнесу шляхом створення цінності, покращення відносин із клієнтами та працівниками та розширення можливостей для зростання. Аналіз статті висвітлює взаємозв'язок між сприйняттям громадськістю та впливом цього сприйняття на зростання цінності бренду. Зазначається, що цінність бренду великою мірою залежить від активної інтеграції соціальних, екологічних та етичних аспектів у корпоративну стратегію ведення бізнесу. Особлива увага приділяється прямому впливу висвітлення корпоративних цінностей та відповідальної діяльності на утримання та лояльність споживачів. У статті робиться акцент на тому, як ефективна комунікація щодо цих аспектів може впливати на сприйняття бренду громадськістю та, відповідно, на його репутацію та конкурентоспроможність на ринку. Автором обґрунтовується концепція сталого маркетингу та напрями застосування потенційних маркетингових стратегій сталого розвитку при цьому робиться наголос на основних бар'єрах, які можуть стати перешкодою для успішної інтеграції принципів сталого розвитку (ціноутворення, рівень продуктивності та зміна споживчої поведінки). Дослідження зводиться до висновків, що сучасні умови вимагають від підприємств інноваційного підходу до розвитку, перехід до сталого споживання й виробництва вимагає перегляду ринкових стратегій компаній, маркетинг повинен бути гнучким та адаптивним до змін в економічному, екологічному та соціальному контексті. В контексті сталого розвитку та націленості на очікування споживачів, компанії повинні розглядати інновації, співпрацю, ефективну комунікацію та відданість як ключові елементи бізнес-стратегії сталого розвитку, що буде сприяти зростанню вартості бренду та зміцнення конкурентоспроможності бізнесу.

Ключові слова: маркетинг; сталій маркетинг; сталій розвиток; стратегія; бізнес; конкурентоспроможність; імідж; бренд.

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1. Introduction

In light of contemporary challenges in the economy and consumer behavior, the concept of sustainable development becomes not only a term but also an imperative for modern enterprises. In this context, competition is not limited solely to the quality of goods or services but also requires businesses to make a significant contribution to sustainability and ecological resilience. Thus, sustainability and resilience are becoming increasingly relevant in the modern world. More and more individuals and organizations understand the need to care for the preservation of natural resources, social responsibility, and economic stability to ensure harmonious development.

In economics, sustainability means that current generations have the opportunity to meet their needs without harming the possibilities of future generations. This includes the rational use of resources, the preservation of the natural environment, and the development of social infrastructure. Modern businesses need to understand that in this context, from small firms to multinational companies; it is worth adopting and developing strategies and development trajectories considering the principles of sustainable development at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

In other words, the questions of sustainable development, specifically not only understanding the principles of sustainability but also implementing them into the development strategy of modern businesses, are extremely relevant. As Hawken notes, “Since corporations are the dominant institution on the planet, they must honestly address the social and environmental problems that concern humanity”, meaning the preservation of the environment is a fundamental responsibility of enterprises [1]. Several global companies have already adopted such a strategy, as observed in the case of 3M Company (Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company), which recognizes that “businesses will have to embrace a moral imperative regarding planetary environmental issues” [2].

It is in this context that sustainability becomes not only the development of society but also approaches to business and marketing. Sustainable marketing serves not only as a tool for promoting products in the market but also as a business philosophy that takes into account its impact on the natural environment, society, and the environment. In the European Union, the philosophy of sustainable marketing has been dominant in companies engaged in business activities for over 40 years.

2. Aim and methodology of research, problem statement

The purpose of our research is to substantiate the essence, principles, and directions of potential marketing strategies for sustainable development, which will be aimed at meeting consumer expectations, increasing brand value, and strengthening the competitiveness of the business.

The theme of sustainable marketing is often echoed in the pages of our publications in the context of “green” marketing, frequently as a “trendy” topic. In scientific literature, there is insufficient research on the readiness of modern businesses to integrate sustainable development principles into their own strategies. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies in the scientific literature regarding sustainable marketing strategies that create value for the businesses and consumers.

3. Literature review and analysis of previous studies

P. Kotler is renowned for his contributions to the field of marketing since the 1970s when, together with Gerald Zaltman, he introduced the concept of social marketing [3]. This was an attempt to apply marketing principles to address social issues and enhance general well-being. P. Kotler emphasized the importance of integrating social and environmental aspects into marketing strategies to positively impact society and the environment [4]. As a result, social marketing has become an integral part of business rhetoric and scientific literature.

“The societal marketing concept holds that marketing strategy should deliver value to customers in a way that maintains or improves both the consumer’s and society’s well-being. It calls for sustainable marketing, socially and environmentally responsible marketing that meets the present needs of consumers and businesses while also preserving or enhancing the ability of future generations to meet their needs” [5, p. 35].

According to P. Kotler and G. Armstrong, as per the concept of sustainable marketing, a company’s marketing should support the best long-term effectiveness of the marketing system. The authors consider the concept of social marketing as one of the five principles of sustainable marketing [5, p. 641].

“Sustainable marketing requires socially and environmentally responsible actions that meet the current needs of consumers and businesses, while also preserving or increasing the ability of future generations to meet their needs” [5, p. 627].

In essence, how sustainable marketing reflects the evolution of marketing concepts in the context of a comprehensive approach to sustainable development. It integrates elements of environmental marketing and social marketing, defining itself as a strategic approach to marketing aimed at creating a sustainable business and contributing to the sustainable development of society.

If we look at it more broadly, the concept of environmental marketing aims to develop and sell goods and services that have a lesser impact on the environment. Companies employing environmental marketing often emphasize responsible resource use, energy conservation, renewable energy sources, and other aspects contributing to environmental responsibility.

On the other hand, the concept of social marketing is oriented towards addressing social issues and improving societal well-being. Consumers are increasingly interested in how businesses impact social matters. Attempts to enhance the quality of life and address social problems through marketing initiatives fall within the realm of social marketing.

Summarizing the statements of Ph. Kotler and G. Armstrong and drawing from the concepts of environmental and social marketing, sustainable marketing integrates these concepts to create business models that not only meet consumer needs but also conserve natural resources and improve social aspects. This reflects a growing interest in ethical and sustainable consumption, where consumers prefer companies that take responsibility for their impact on the environment and society.

D. Fuller defines sustainable marketing as “the process of planning, implementation, and control of the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: (1) customer needs are met, (2) organizational goals are achieved, and (3) the process is compatible with ecosystems” [6]. This

definition takes into account not only customer needs and organizational goals but also considers interaction with ecosystems to ensure sustainability and the conservation of natural resources. Such an approach acknowledges the broader impact of business processes on natural ecosystems and defines sustainable marketing as part of a larger strategic approach to sustainable development.

D. Martin and J. Schouten note that “sustainable marketing (marketing for sustainable development) is the creation, communication, and delivery of value to the consumer in a way that enables the preservation and strengthening of natural and human capital by sustainability criteria. In sustainable marketing, all marketing processes are environmentally and socially safe and, at the same time, contribute to creating a society where the pursuit of sustainable development is the norm” [7, p. 6].

Y. K. Van Dam believes that “... sustainable marketing is a call to embrace the environmental and social constraints of traditional corporate marketing philosophy...” [8].

The authors [9] note “Sustainable marketing is the next natural step forwards, with an emphasis on progress towards greater sustainability. It is a broader management concept which focuses on achieving the ‘triple bottom line’ through creating, producing and delivering sustainable solutions with higher net sustainable value whilst continuously satisfying customers and other stakeholders”.

K. Peattie and F. M. Belz note that sustainable marketing involves a long-term orientation of marketing relationships, making it distinct from traditional marketing, which tends to have a short-term focus. The shift to sustainable marketing entails integrating social and environmental criteria into conventional marketing thinking and processes [10].

Based on the analysis of recent research and publications, it can be concluded that sustainable marketing, or sustainability in marketing, is indeed an evolutionary step in the contemporary approach to business. This concept goes beyond traditional marketing, which is geared towards short-term success, and considers long-term sustainability and responsibility.

The concept of sustainable marketing is a logical stage in the development of organizational strategies and business management. It emerged based on previous concepts such as traditional marketing, social-ethical marketing, and holistic marketing. This concept is grounded in the integration of marketing approaches within the context of relationships, recognizing the need to support sustainable social, ethical, and environmental development in society and the economy. Researchers consider them to be more ethical forms of marketing business that advance without depleting the environment while still satisfying the needs of current and future generations.

4. The main material research

According to Deloitte research, sustainable development is identified as a trend. Companies genuinely committed to achieving sustainable development demonstrate results that surpass market indicators. This enables companies to stay ahead of cultural trends. However, not everyone fully recognizes the benefits of such an approach [11].

Historically, the paradigm of sustainable development focused on addressing environmental issues and ensuring economic efficiency. Yet, in the course of its implementation, it became evident that the social dimension is also a crucial factor. Social justice, citizen participation in decision-making, human rights protection, and human

capital development have become key elements of sustainable development. Thus, the paradigm of sustainable development has transformed into a comprehensive approach that integrates environmental, economic, and social aspects. This allows for achieving a balance between development and resource preservation, improving quality of life, and ensuring fairness in the distribution of benefits while addressing social inequalities.

On a global scale, the principles of sustainable development were endorsed by the international community at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1992) and refined in the UN Human Development Report in 1994. The essence of the concept of sustainable development in its contemporary understanding lies in the need for balance and interaction among the social, environmental, and economic aspects of development. The primary goal is to meet the needs of modern society without harming the natural environment and ensuring opportunities for future generations to enjoy equal or better living conditions [12]. The signing of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and participation in the Action Program for the 21st Century affirmed Ukraine's commitment to work towards balanced development that takes into account social, economic, and environmental aspects.

The establishment of the National Commission on Sustainable Development in 1997 was a significant step in coordinating and implementing policies aimed at achieving these goals in Ukraine.

In 2015, within the framework of the United Nations Summit "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" in New York, the UN General Assembly approved 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [13]. Since 2015, Ukraine has initiated reforms aimed at implementing socio-economic transformations. The SDGs have been integrated into the state policy on the principle of "leaving no one behind." As a result of an inclusive adaptation process of the SDGs for Ukraine, considering the specifics of national development, a system consisting of 86 tasks with 183 indicators for monitoring was established.

In 2019, an analysis was conducted to assess the degree of incorporation of the SDGs into the national framework. Seventeen goals and 86 national tasks of the SDGs were incorporated into 162 legislative acts of the Government. To implement these goals and tasks, 1,394 tasks and 4,296 measures specified in these acts were directed [14; 15].

Goal 12 of sustainable development, "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns" [13, pp. 22–23], by 2030, has a significant impact on various sectors, including market management, consumer behavior, technologies, and business models.

This creates an important context for marketing activities. In particular, the shift towards sustainable consumption and production requires a reconsideration of companies' market strategies; markets must be able to respond to changes in consumer demand for sustainable goods and services. The development of sustainable consumption markets can create new opportunities for enterprises offering environmentally friendly products or services. Consumers are increasingly paying attention to the sustainability of products and production, and marketing must adapt to changes in consumer awareness and promote the choice of more sustainable options.

The advancement of new technologies that contribute to sustainable production can define the competitiveness of companies in the market. The transition to sustainable consumption may also require a review of companies' business models, especially those

focused on waste reduction and the environmental friendliness of production. Changes in environmental standards and requirements for sustainability can influence regulations and standards in various industries. Companies need to consider these changes in their marketing strategies and communication approaches with consumers.

Therefore, marketing must be flexible and adaptive to changes in the economic, environmental, and social context associated with the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 12.

For over 15 years, “CSR Ukraine” has been leading powerful sustainable development marketing in the CSR format in Ukraine. The Chair of the Board, Marina Saprykina, notes, “Sustainable development is about values. The values of leaders, teams, and stakeholders are reflected in the decision-making and strategies of the company to become more environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and transparent” [16]. Leading business schools, including Kyiv-Mohyla and Lviv Business Schools, actively discuss the CSR topic as well.

Research conducted by the “CSR Development” Center with the support of U-Report, an international youth project of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), on marketing sustainable development in the CSR format indicates a high level of awareness among young people about the need for corporate social responsibility. Consequently, this should encourage companies to practice socially responsible business conduct. Survey results show that 40.2% of young people know what corporate social responsibility is, and furthermore, 48.2% of surveyed youth would like to participate in corporate volunteering in a potential employer’s company. For 15.2% of the youth, corporate social responsibility is a decisive factor in choosing a potential employer. Additionally, environmental and animal protection activities of companies are important for the youth (30.9%), followed by career guidance and internship initiatives (27.3%), financial support for initiatives (26.6%), implementation of social projects (24.1%), conducting training, lectures, and workshops (22.1%), and consultations and pro bono legal assistance (14.1%) [17].

The results of the Deloitte study indicate that approximately 44% of Millennials and 49% of Generation Z rely on their ethics when choosing the type of work and companies they join (Deloitte, 2021). Forbes data reveals that 73% of Millennials are willing to spend more on environmentally sustainable products. At the same time, nearly two-thirds of Generation Z consumers do not buy products from brands that do not align with their values [18].

The Kantar Purpose 2020 study identified a direct correlation between public perception and the impact of that perception on brand value growth. Companies that received high public ratings for their impact showed impressive brand value growth of 175% over 12 years. In contrast, companies with low positive impact demonstrated only a 70% growth [19]. This suggests that a positive reputation in the public eye and a company’s interaction with society can have a significant impact on its financial success and competitiveness. The growing emphasis on social responsibility and brand values indicates that consumers and investors increasingly value companies that actively pay attention to the social, environmental, and ethical aspects of their activities.

The results of the PwC Global Consumer Insights Pulse Survey 2021 indicate a significant impact of corporate values on consumers. According to this data, 53% of respondents have decided to support companies “very often or often” that have strong corporate values and demonstrate a commitment to acting right [20]. This suggests that

consumers are becoming more conscious and demanding, considering not only the quality of goods or services but also the ethical and social aspects of company activities. Companies that actively highlight their corporate values and engage in responsible practices have the opportunity to gain and maintain consumer support and loyalty.

The following figures also illustrate the substantial influence of corporate values on consumers in both the United States and the United Kingdom. In the United States, 77% of consumers are motivated to make a purchase, taking corporate values into account [21]. This indicates that the majority of consumers generally consider brand values as an important factor in their purchasing decisions. In the United Kingdom, 74% of consumers also consider corporate values before making a purchase [21]. This confirms a similar trend among British consumers who actively consider brand values in their purchase decisions. Both figures demonstrate the growing consumer demand for social and environmental responsibility from companies. Additionally, 57% of consumers in the United Kingdom stated that companies should be socially and environmentally responsible [21], emphasizing the increasing awareness and demand for sustainability and social responsibility in business.

Modern consumers are increasingly interested in the values and principles reflected in the business practices of companies. Enterprises that actively support socially significant initiatives, such as equality, environmental protection, or charity, can attract consumers who share similar values. When a company reflects the values and beliefs of its audience in its products and services, consumers are more likely to choose that company over competitors. Such consumers feel a stronger emotional connection and loyalty to the brand, which can lead to repeat purchases and recommendations to others. Companies that respond to societal needs and align with values may be more competitive in the market. They can effectively respond to changes in demand and devise innovative solutions that meet consumer needs. Consumers tend to support companies that actively engage in social and environmental initiatives. This helps businesses create a positive image that can influence their reputation and be favorable for business [22].

At the current stage of business development in the context of globalization, the formation of sustainability principles in modern consumers, and investors, and on the path to achieving sustainable development goals, sustainable marketing can be considered as one of the tools to achieve them.

In general, sustainable marketing is the promotion of environmentally and socially responsible products, processes, and brand values. It is an approach to advertising, sales, and consumer demand that is based on a balanced approach to meeting the needs of modern society while ensuring the sustainability of natural and social systems. This approach considers not only economic aspects but also social responsibility and the impact on the environment, requiring a long-term orientation in building relationships.

According to Belz and Peattie, the entire marketing process, from market research aimed at identifying customer needs to building loyalty, should be directed toward achieving a vision of sustainable development. The authors argue that it is essential to integrate classical sets of marketing ideas to develop the concept of “Sustainable Marketing” (Fig. 1). According to this model, sustainable marketing is seen as macro-marketing that influences the system as a whole, including value chains, businesses, or even industries [23].

In modern conditions, looking at the “consumer” solely through the lens of their needs

and desires, we lose sight of the complex interconnections with other aspects of society and the ecological system that influence their decisions and actions. The widely accepted view of the consumer remains narrow, underestimating their interaction with the surrounding environment and society, which ultimately shapes their behavior.

In the face of growing consumer interest in ecological responsibility and social justice, contemporary companies need to focus on implementing strategies that go beyond mere engagement. Their strategies should be aimed at informing and persuading consumers about their sustainable development initiatives. That is, aligning the company’s vision for sustainable development with consumer expectations becomes a crucial step in creating business value. This approach opens up opportunities for companies not only to implement effective marketing strategies but also to actively contribute to the formation of a society focused on more sustainable and responsible consumption.

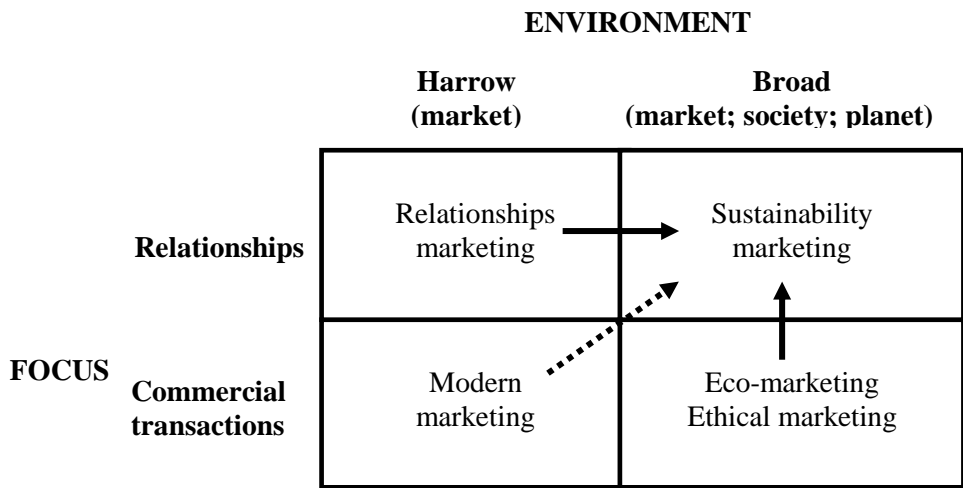


Fig. 1. New concept of sustainable marketing
 Source: [10, p. 9]

Contemporary marketing demands a high level of responsibility from professionals – not just to capture consumer attention but also to create a sense of real connection with the surrounding world beyond the artificial environment that encompasses them. It is crucial for marketers to offer consumers not only products or services but also the opportunity to touch upon meaningful values and ideals.

In a world where consumers increasingly value the emotional and ethical aspects of their purchases, companies must consider innovation, collaboration, effective communication, and commitment as key elements of sustainable development business strategies (Fig. 2).

Innovation allows the creation of products that meet modern consumer demands, collaboration stimulates development toward sustainable production and consumption, and effective communication builds trust and establishes a connection between the brand and the consumer.

The focus on sustainable development has become a fundamental aspect of companies’ competitiveness, as consumers increasingly consider ethical and environmental issues in their choices. Thus, marketers act not only as communicators between products and

consumers but also as drivers of positive changes in consumer behavior and attitudes toward the environment.

It is known that marketers refine strategies in the four key marketing areas, known as the “4Ps” – Product, Price, Place, and Promotion – aiming to increase brand awareness, boost sales volumes, and enhance profitability. The marketing mix, which encompasses these four components, forms the basis for a sustainable and effective marketing strategy.

In the context of sustainable marketing, which differs from the traditional approach, the key factor is a commitment to sustainability principles. The primary goal of such marketing is not only to increase sales volumes but also to strengthen the brand identity, instill trust among stakeholders, and ensure open and honest communication. Companies should regularly inform consumers about their efforts in social responsibility and environmental sustainability. Radical transparency involves a high level of openness with stakeholders, which is a crucial aspect of sustainable marketing principles.

Changes in the marketing approach are driven by shifts in consumer behavior. The traditional “4P” marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), which has long defined business strategy, is now giving way to a new approach – the “4C” sustainable marketing mix (Solution for Customers, Cost to Customers, Convenience, Communication).

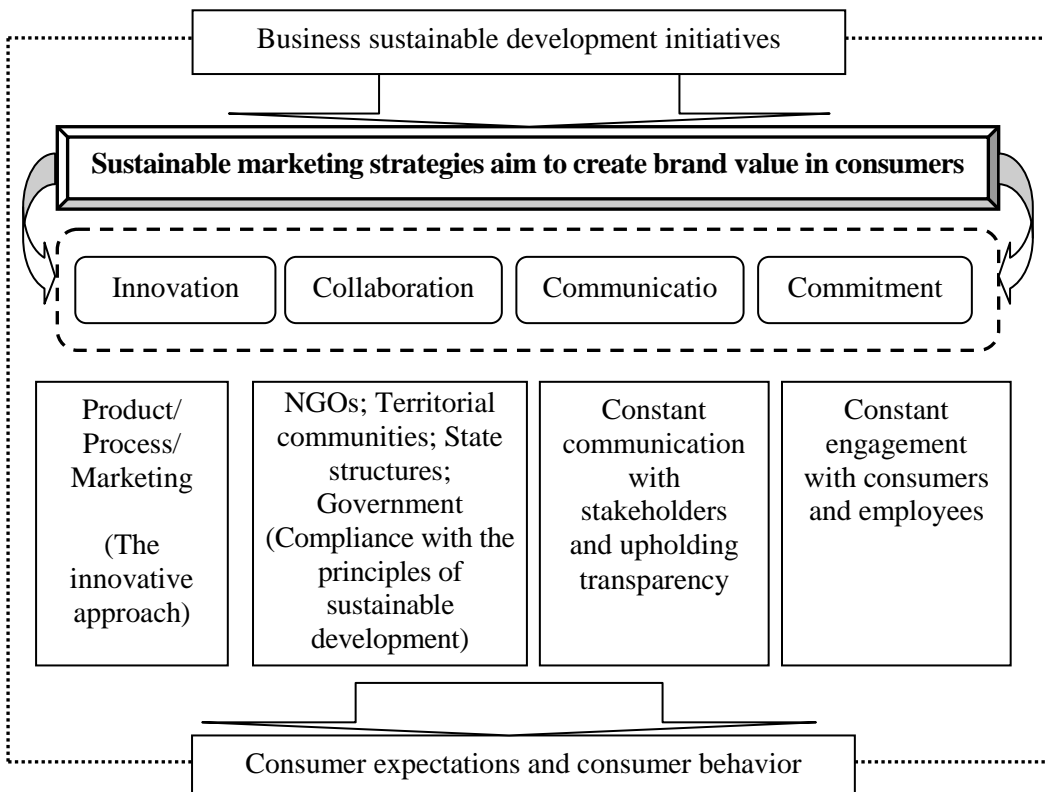


Fig. 2. Sustainable Marketing Strategies
 Source: Developed by the author based on [23]

The “Solution for Customers” approach is characterized by a focus on creating products that not only meet specific needs but also address customers’ specific problems. This enhances interaction with the audience and fosters loyalty.

“Cost to Customers” signifies a shift in understanding the value of a product. Now, it’s not just the price that is important but also how the product brings value and solves problems.

“Convenience” takes into account the growing importance of ease of interaction and product usability, meeting modern consumer demands for speed and efficiency.

“Communication” highlights the role of active, effective information exchange in building customer relationships and shaping a positive brand impression.

The shift to the “4C” marketing mix reflects the real need for businesses to adapt to a new economic environment. All these elements interact, creating the foundation for a successful and ethically oriented marketing strategy in the context of sustainable development.

In the context of developing sustainable marketing strategies, it is particularly important to consider three main barriers that may pose challenges to the successful integration of sustainable development principles. These challenges include pricing considerations, productivity levels, and changes in consumer behavior.

First and foremost, pricing determines the economic aspect of aligning sustainability with business models. The cost of producing and selling goods and services that adhere to sustainable development principles may be higher, posing an additional challenge for marketers in planning competitive pricing.

Price is a recognized barrier for many consumers considering the purchase of sustainable products and services. According to statistics, a significant number of consumers perceive environmentally friendly products as too expensive. These products often come with higher price tags than their standard counterparts. The premium pricing policy makes these sustainable products inaccessible or unattractive to most consumers. This is particularly relevant during economic downturns when price barriers become even more challenging, complicating the affordability and interest of consumers in choosing environmentally sustainable options.

The second barrier is associated with maintaining a high level of productivity when implementing sustainable practices. In many cases, preserving production efficiency and ensuring a high level of product quality in line with sustainable development principles is not an easy task.

Marketers must highlight the advantages of their product and its sustainable stance, especially when it comes to establishing premium prices. One of the main tasks is to emphasize that environmentally friendly products have long surpassed the realm of drawbacks. Historical examples show that in the 1970s, green laundry detergents were developed in response to concerns about the use of phosphates, which caused significant environmental harm and clothing pollution. However, modern environmentally friendly products have overcome these challenges, providing high quality and efficiency.

It is important to note that initially, organic products had a reputation for having a taste reminiscent of cardboard, but modern technologies have allowed improving the quality

and taste of such products, making them more attractive to consumers.

It is essential to consider that some environmentally friendly products may initially raise doubts among consumers due to certain features, such as the green glow from energy-efficient light bulbs. Some consumers may harbor doubts about the effectiveness of green products compared to their conventional alternatives, despite the success achieved in improving the performance of these goods. Thus, standards and benefits of environmentally friendly products should be presented in an accessible and easily understandable form to dispel doubts and build positive perceptions among consumers.

Equally important is the change in consumer behavior. Implementing sustainable solutions may require a shift in consumer awareness and preferences, posing a challenge for marketers in creating strategies that are not only effective but also align with new perceptions and customer needs.

Practices of sustainable development imply that consumers need to alter their habits and adopt new approaches. Waste recycling, turning off lights when leaving a room, adjusting thermostats in winter, and using recyclable bags for shopping – these aspects all require individuals to change their consumer behavior. This change is typically a gradual process, as consumers need time to unlearn old habits and adapt to new ones.

In particular, the current generation (Generation Y) is characterized by a quicker acceptance of sustainable development practices. One reason for this is that they are not as strongly tied to old, inefficient habits. Instead of resisting changes needed to support sustainability, representatives of this generation have a more open attitude toward innovative ideas and adapt more quickly to new, beneficial practices.

Overall, implementing sustainable practices in business is not just a process that can be adopted in a month or a year. It requires a comprehensive transformation of the business model and additional, sometimes significant, investments. Moreover, the costs associated with implementing these practices often outweigh the profits derived from them.

5. Conclusions

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that now is the time for companies to start practicing sustainable marketing.

Sustainable marketing in our time dictates the necessity to refrain from traditional approaches and adapt to the growing awareness of consumers and their desire to support environmentally responsible brands. The increasing demands for products that not only meet needs but also aim to preserve natural resources creates a need for companies to reconsider their marketing strategies.

To remain competitive in this environmentally oriented environment, companies must employ sustainable marketing as a strategic tool. Supporting initiatives aimed at sustainable development allows companies to actively influence society while simultaneously building a positive image. Transparency and accountability become key elements in sustainable marketing, as consumers increasingly value openness regarding production processes and the ethical conduct of companies. Emphasizing values over profits underscores the importance of sustainable development, attracting the attention of consumers who seek collaboration with environmentally responsible enterprises.

Educating customers about issues related to sustainable development becomes a necessity

in the context of sustainable marketing. Consumers who understand the significance of their choices in supporting sustainable development show a willingness to engage with brands that share their values.

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Our research shows that the main arguments for the development and implementation of sustainable marketing strategies for modern businesses are: Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Sustainable marketing aims to achieve the triple bottom line, which involves generating profit (economic sustainability), preserving ecological integrity (environmental sustainability), and considering social aspects (social sustainability)); Creation of Sustainable Solutions (The focus is on developing and offering products and services that take into account ecological and social aspects, promoting sustainable resource use and societal development); Higher Net Sustainable Value (Sustainable marketing recognizes that sustainability may include costs beyond simple pricing ethics, considering the impact on the environment and social responsibility); Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction (Recognizing the importance of interacting with customers and other stakeholders, taking into account their values and expectations in the context of sustainability); Product Lifecycle Management (Viewing a product or service as a system with a lifecycle and managing this lifecycle to minimize negative environmental impact and maximize benefits for consumers).

Companies that actively implement sustainable marketing and take into account changes in consumer demand and awareness are considered leaders in the field of sustainable development. Their strategies consider not only economic benefits but also have a long-term positive impact on the surrounding environment and society as a whole.

Therefore, sustainable marketing not only contributes to the sustainable development of businesses but also has a significant social impact by encouraging companies to act responsibly and ethically. Such an approach can be crucial for companies, as consumers increasingly evaluate not only the quality of products but also how companies interact with the world.

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