



GREEN MARKETING PODCAST



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Welcome to the Green Marketing Podcast! I'm thrilled to have you join us in listening to today's podcast, where we dive deep into market trends and consumer behaviour and demand, company sustainability, and finally, in what contexts SMEs can effectively use green marketing to communicate effectively with customers that value sustainability. We will provide you with valuable insights on green marketing trends. Let's begin!

The analysis of market trends and consumer behaviour in the context of sustainable development for SMEs is crucial for the effective implementation of the green transformation. Each business is different, and even though consumer behaviours follow similar trends, SMEs should still carry out market research to appropriately target their own consumer segment for maximum effectiveness of any green marketing campaigns. For example, for brands that wish to market their product as luxury towards older generations, brown paper packaging even though green, could turn customers away. On the other hand, young people could be keener to buy such products as they understand the purpose of it more deeply, as packaging has been quickly changing to paper whilst they have been growing up, due to new regulations.



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Overall, customers are becoming more aware of the environmental and social impact of their purchases. As a result, there is a growing demand for products and services with a low carbon footprint, sustainable production, upholding and excelling the minimum worker rights, as well as ones that hold on to their sustainability pledges. Customers often look for products that have sustainability certifications such as Fair Trade or Organic labelling. You often see these certifications on foods. To put it into context, you may have seen the fair-trade label on bananas, coffee, or chocolate: the most commonly certified produce. The fair-trade label is not only for foods; it appears on gold, ready-made textiles, and even sports balls. The certification means fair remuneration, no forced or child labour, and protection against volatile market prices, to name a few.

The organic logo from the European Union can only be used when companies have fulfilled strict conditions on production, processing, transport and storage, over a certain number of years.

The logo can only be used on products which contain at least 95% organic ingredients and additionally, respect further strict conditions for the remaining 5%. Often, companies use the European Union label to present their produce as organic, however this can only be done with certification.

Nowadays, the use of the word 'organic' alone has been misused by companies in a term known as 'greenwashing'; deceptive use of green marketing to persuade the public that the product is environmentally friendly and sustainable. Companies that are aware of different labels or apply for certification can have a greater chance of gaining loyal customers and increasing their market share. Even if your company does not qualify for certification, customers appreciate transparency and future pledges on how your SME will work in a high standard. There is a variety of certifications available, not only on products but also services. We encourage you to carry out your own research on this, such as in ISO standards.



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Apart from certifications and labels, companies which use renewable energy in their products or services can showcase this as part of green marketing. Furthermore, companies that invest in photovoltaic installations, wind turbines or other forms of renewable or low-carbon energy alternatives can not only gain a competitive advantage, as customer know clean or low-carbon energy was used to create a product, but also may avoid penalties in the future as renewable energy becomes the baseline for business energy production, as well as have a greater potential in approval for loans from banks or investors; this can be key if you want to expand your business.

Analysing and taking into account these market trends and consumer behaviour will allow SMEs to effectively implement sustainable development and adapt to changing market expectations.

You may already be aware of some of the trends occurring. These include:

Consumers choosing plant-based diets, such as veganism, for health or environmental reasons, as well as the buying of local and seasonal food products to support local producers and reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to transport. According to data from Statista on 18 of the 27 EU countries, there are an estimated 6.62 million vegans as of 2023.

Customers also now prefer products with minimal packaging and avoid single-use plastic items and opt for reusable packaging instead, or products made from eco-friendly materials such as recycled paper and biodegradable plastics.



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There is an increased demand for clothes and accessories made from organic materials or recycled fabrics, produced by workers with fair working conditions. The World Wildlife Fund estimates that it takes 2,700 litres of water to make one cotton t-shirt. Information like this means consumers opt for second-hand clothing, or very high-quality products that can last a lifetime. Consumers demand that clothing or cosmetic products do not contain harmful substances, even if they are legal, and are not tested on animals, paying attention to companies with high ethics.

Furthermore, there is an increased demand for products and services that help save energy, such as smart homes, energy-efficient appliances and solar panels, as well as building materials which are environmentally friendly and long-lasting. For example, the UK Royal Institute of Foreign Affairs estimated that concrete is responsible for 4-8% of global carbon emissions. Customers understand this, especially in B2B context, and wish to use sustainable and low-carbon materials.

In summary, customers prefer companies that engage in social activities and support the environment. It is important to remain transparent, using appropriate labels to stay away from greenwashing claims whilst accepting that your SME is on a path to sustainability, and communicating this in your marketing. Consumers care about purchasing based on values such as social justice, ethical practices and sustainability, therefore green marketing is key to satisfy the changing needs of the market. We hope you enjoyed our discussion on current green marketing trends, and that you are leaving



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This podcast is part of project titled: green, sustainable and responsible business is the key to success. This project, co-funded by the European Union in partnership with Krea ASSOCIATION Poland and Edu SMART training centre limited Ireland. This podcast reflects solely the views of the author and the European Union is not responsible for any use of the information contained therein.

