

## GREEN MARKETING IN THE ROMANIAN RETAIL

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**Abstract:** *Before the idea of green marketing, companies had to be concerned with what happens to a product during and after its useful life. Companies can manifest this concern by experimenting with ways to re-evaluate and redesign the life stage of the product. Life cycle reassessment focuses on environmental considerations in product development and design, including energy and material inputs and achievements in production, consumption, and disposal of waste products (1994 corporate environmental practices). The implementation of the principles of ecological marketing has been achieved since the 70's of the last century once the concepts of social and societal marketing have been delimited. The challenges that globalization and excessive environmental pollution have caused to contemporary organizations have required the implementation of new business models and rethinking the strategic approach to their work. They have generated the rational and sustainable use of resources, the reduction of waste resulting from production processes, educating consumers towards the development of a mentality in favor of responsible consumption, protection and respect for the environment and the adoption of measures by all stakeholders in value chains. designed to help protect nature. Good practices in implementing green marketing strategies provide a set of principles, guidelines for action that are useful to any organization that wants to meet the challenges of the present century. In this sense, it is imperative to develop a marketing mix adapted to the requirements of the bioeconomy. In this context, this paper aims to present trends and good practices in the field of bioeconomy in the context of the large volumes of data that organizations have to manage more and more often.*

**Key words:** *environment, marketing ecologic, organization, pollution, sustainability*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** I21, Q01, Q56

### 1. Introduction

Knowledge of nature without wisdom has brought ignorance to the risks of altering it and to which attention is drawn today (Burlacu, 2011). The human-environment balance has been broken by technological progress, economic development and the population explosion (Costanza, 2014).

The manifestations of the current ecological crisis consist in the depletion of natural resources and the increase in the rate of extinction of plant and animal species (disappearance of biocenosis spaces), in pollution that heats the planet and destroys the ozone layer and in overpopulation, its density making man unable to perceive the face. its due to anonymity, depersonalization of emotional relationships and inevitable aggression (Burlacu et al., 2021).

The current and future situation of the world economy is undergoing unprecedented changes and the right solutions are very difficult to find (Bran et al., 2020). They will lead to a new state of affairs that requires a change in global perspectives and vision and a new paradigm to guide the actions needed for this change (Profiroiu et al., 2020). Specifically, they require coordinated and flexible strategic responses that represent solutions from the factors involved in international affairs (Carballo-Penela, 2018). Water scarcity and pollution and the mentality that water is still an unlimited and worthless good, as well as air pollution which is the most vulnerable to pollution, complete the scientific picture of the current ecological crisis (Burlacu et al., 2020).

Finally, the overpopulation that exceeds the zero threshold of generational replacement is

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known as the current demographic drift from which Romania is no exception (Bodislav et al., 2019). The implementation by organizations of the principles of sustainable development must take place in all activities and processes adopted and implemented by them: supply, production, information, research, development, distribution, maintaining contact with suppliers and customers, etc. (Negescu Oancea, et al., 2020). A substantial concern is directed towards human capital and its development, seen as a strategic resource from the perspective of increasing the sustainability of economic agents (Iatagan, 2015).

At present, any organization seeking to improve its market position must consistently apply in its market strategy and principles of sustainable development, in particular those on environmental protection (Dabija & Pop, 2013), thus developing and strengthening its competitive advantages (Dima et al., 2020). The successful implementation of such an approach is, of course, a real challenge for marketers, the success being conditioned by the type of business managed on the target market and its dynamics, the strength of competitors and the organization's ability to adapt to a turbulent environment (Bodislav et al., 2020).

Within an organization, marketing is the function of creating, communicating and delivering to customers the value of the company's core product, thus supporting sales. Marketing has a product action area and an image action area (Kärmä, 2003). Product marketing controls the product from design, launch to end-of-life phase and possibly replaced with another product, controlling the product both qualitatively (changes over the life based on market information), as well as quantitative- market share. Image marketing is those activities that create product awareness through the brand or brand, using advertising and PR actions (Orzan et al., 2020).

## **2. Romania: Ecological past, present and future**

Romania was the object of forced industrialization, during the years of socialism, with a massive emphasis on the development of sectors that proved to be the biggest polluters of soil, subsoil, water, air, but also with massive contributions to the health of an extremely large number of Romanians (Bran et al., 2018). The chemical, petrochemical and metallurgical industries - such as those in Baia Mare, Copșa Mică, Zlatna, Ploiești Valea Călugărească and others- still had high levels of heavy pollution, despite the reduction of industrial activity after 1989. Mining activities in the past, as well as the current ones result in mountains of waste, the removal from the agricultural circuit of inseminated areas and, more recently, landslides that can threaten entire communities, as is the case of the massive landslide in Ocele Mari, Vâlcea County (Radulescu et al., 2020).

The big cities of Romania are, in turn, placed in the center of areas with environmental problems (Danciu, 2006). Environmentalists agree that the main environmental problems facing large cities are those with specific urban developments. The surface is small, the development was mainly vertical, the sanitation is defective, there are not enough green spaces, and the car traffic is intense, especially in the central areas (Bran et al., 2018). This has the effect of worsening air quality in urban areas, mainly through carbides. Specialists consider that the most polluted regions are Pitesti, Bacau and Bucharest, if we take into account the large number of large combustion plants, refineries, thermal power plants and chemical plants in these areas (Burlacu et al., 2018).

Bucharest has become a suffocating city, statistics show that pollution has reached critical levels, green space has halved, and the health of Bucharest residents is down. The capital far exceeds the allowed norms regarding air and drinking water quality and pollution level. The air breathed by the inhabitants of Bucharest is blowing 273 tons of dust, to which were added the noxious substances eliminated by the 1.5 million cars in the city, according to an Eco-Europe study.

With foreign financial and technological help, Romania is making great efforts to catch up with the European Union (Jianu et al., 2019). The first important progress was made in December 1995, with the adoption of the Framework Law for Environmental Protection.

According to the European Commission's Country Report, Romania has made progress in various areas of integrating the adoption of the community acquis. Regarding the integration of environmental policy with other policies, no significant progress has been made (Alpopi et al., 2018).

### **3. The impact of ecological problems on companies**

Environmental problems induce direct and indirect effects on companies. These, in turn, bring to the fore new requirements and challenges for ecological behavior on the part of companies. If we consider the ecological challenges for the management of companies, we can see that the depletion of natural resources requires a significant new orientation of entire economic sectors or even a threat to the existence of industries producing raw materials and processing.

Although progress has been made in substituting products that are harmful to the environment and health, it remains the mission of business management to subordinate their activities to the goal of environmental efficiency (Hartmann, J., & Vachon, S., 2018).

At the same time, companies face the social dimension of environmental challenges and demands. As participants in the creation of organic products, companies are dealing with an audience and consumers with a growing ecological awareness. This trend entails the tightening of ecological legislation, the sympathy for groups that militate for the protection of the environment and the quality of life, such as consumer organizations, ecological citizens' initiatives, associations for the protection of nature (Dabija, D.C., et al, 2018).

The company's value system is constantly changing. Part of this process of change is the growing value attached to the environment and the quality of life. The phenomenon is strong especially in developed countries, creating a discrepancy between ideas about social values and business objectives. In transition countries, especially if they are not part of integrated areas such as the EU, many companies, largely from developed countries, make their presence felt, including through the less environmentally friendly solutions they use and which have not been successful for some time in these countries. developed countries.

The strong positions held by multinationals in sectors of transition countries, such as tobacco products, cement, metallurgy, confirm these aspects. However, it is expected that soon, with the "de facto" economic integration of almost all European countries, the room for maneuver of those companies that take advantage of the opportunities given by looser or insufficient regulations will be drastically reduced. On the other hand, local companies in these countries will be obliged to pay due attention to the protection of the environment and quality of life, which become social demands and elements of their legitimacy accepted by society (Eneizan, B.M., & Wahab, K.A., 2016).

Environmental requirements have a major influence on the competitive environment. As a result, companies must increasingly consider the protection of the environment and health as a matter of strategic competition (Kuo, T.C. & Smith, S., 2018). Ecological management must include and maintain economic efficiency as a component of the company's strategy in terms of environmental protection (Ottman, J., 2004). Both aspects, environmental protection and economic efficiency, oblige the management of companies to change their mentality and see in protecting the environment and consumer health not only elements that limit the growth of the company, but especially as its premises.

#### *3.1. The social responsibility of the organization - a support tool in the development of ecological marketing*

The orientation of marketing to the ever-changing requirements of today's society requires increasing responsibility both at the organizational level (by positioning it as efficiently as possible towards an extremely dynamic environment) and at the level of society as a whole, Among the problems it faces are the negative result of the marketing approach. In order to solve the problems brought by the consumerist and ecological movements, companies must adopt marketing ethics

policies at organizational level and principles according to which to coordinate each employee, distributor, in carrying out its activity, advertising standards, customer service, pricing, product.

It is understandable that even the best principles cannot answer, and especially they cannot solve all the difficult ethical problems that the marketing manager faces. In a growing global competitive environment, the slightest advantage over a competitor can lead the consumer to your product or service, and having an advantageous environmental and social policy can help a lot. Companies capable of creating new values and applying socially responsible marketing are expected to conquer the business world.

Social responsibility has been imposed both in the business world and in society as a necessary tool for identifying solutions to various social problems. The concept of corporate social responsibility first appeared in the 1950s and refers to the commitment made by them to society and the parties involved in actions in the field of economic activity (Douglas, S., Craig, S., 2010).

A main concern of organizations is the possible gain from these actions, materialized in the long run and not necessarily only digitally, but by gaining the trust of consumers an advantageous image among them (Song, M.L., et al., 2018). CSR incorporates multidisciplinary concepts, which is why it can be said that it supports the development of the organization's marketing, but CSR's actions also consider other departments, such as: production, human resources, financial accounting, etc. As well as the management system. And then, the role of marketing and especially of ecological marketing as a holistic approach and not departmental in this whole process is precisely that of noticing trends and connecting the organization to the environment in which it operates. CSR can be used, instead, as a strategic marketing tool capable of capturing a niche market or to obtain a very good reputation, significant competitive advantages.

In managing their problems, but also for the development and application of organic marketing, organizations must have a holistic vision and identify, anticipate and meet customer requirements and societal needs, in a profitable but also environmentally sustainable.

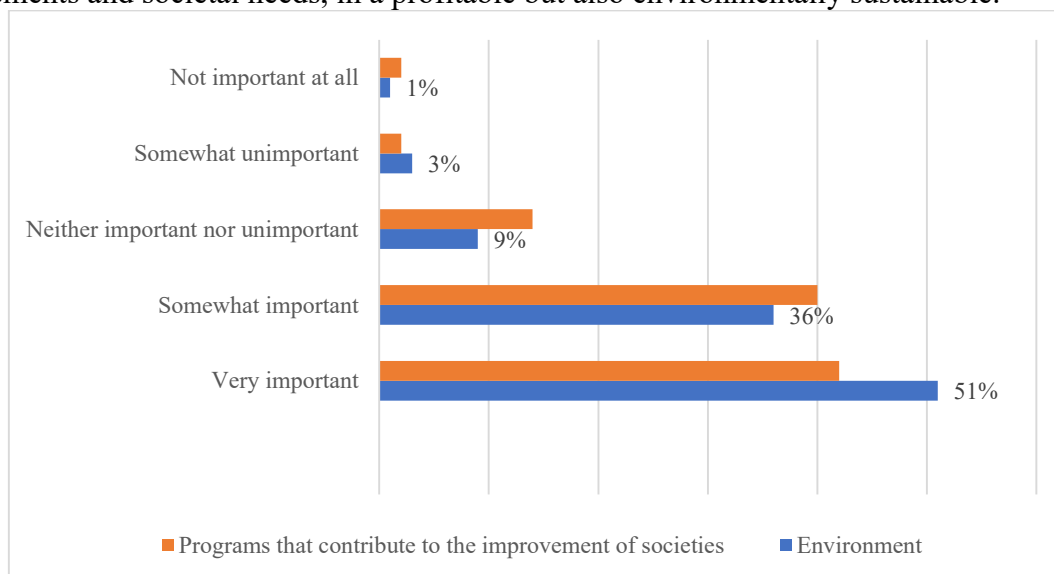


Figure 1. The importance of social and environmental projects carried out by companies for the choice of products and services by consumers

Source: <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire>

Regarding the ways in which the effects of global warming can be combated, 40% of consumers put in the first place the restrictive measures for companies in terms of harmful emissions for the environment. Other solutions that enjoy significant public support are: 38% say there is a need to find solutions to combat the effects of global warming through scientific research initiated by governments, 37% prefer waste recycling, 30% opt to encourage individuals through action of governments to adopt environmentally friendly behavior.

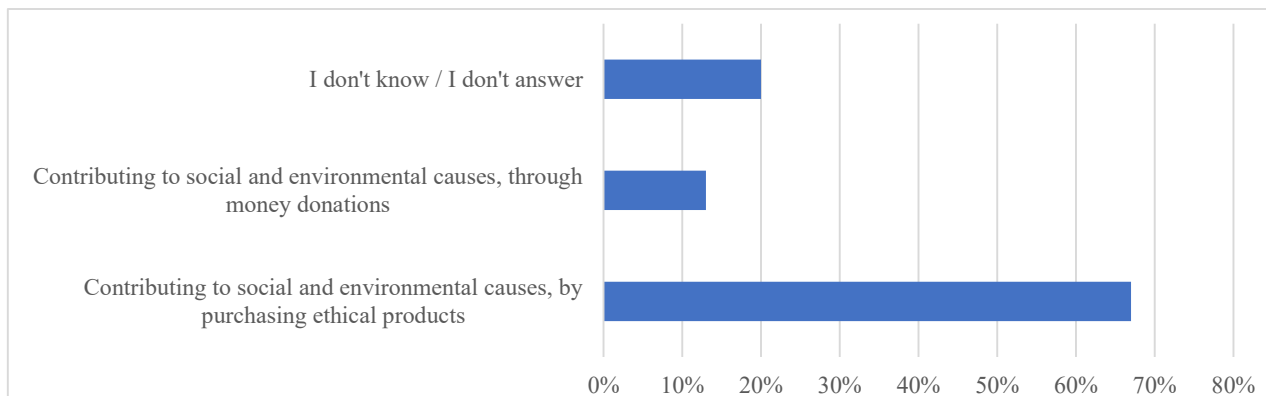


Figure 2. Ways to combat the effects of global warming

Source: <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/>

The research also studies the consumer's attitude towards the way the products are obtained. When asked what they are willing to do to support social or environmental causes, the majority of consumers (67%) opted to purchase "ethical products".

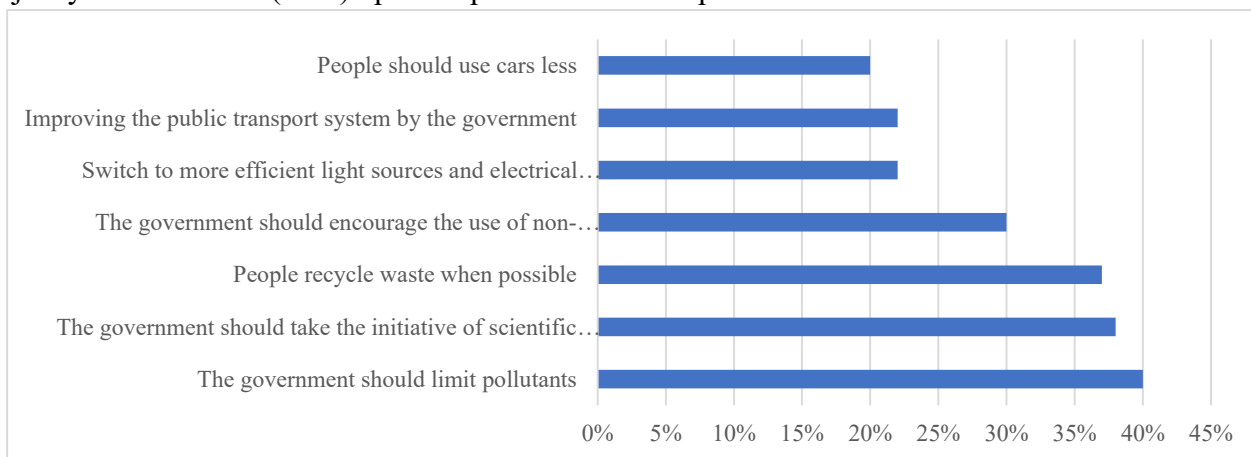


Figure 3. Opportunities for consumers to support social or environmental causes

Source: <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/>

#### 4. Conclusion

Environmental degradation has intensified as the industry has developed. Thus, with the industrial age, it was seen as a priority issue by people who no longer wanted an increasingly technologically advanced lifestyle, but also a healthy one. As there were changes in the mentality and implicitly in people's lifestyles, the concept of marketing was taken to another level, including this ecological side. As time has passed, the evolution and the degree of pollution of the Planet have increased, the definition of the concept of ecological marketing has become more and more complex.

Nowadays, there are many organic marketing campaigns that aim to raise alarm signals that people's lifestyles seriously endanger the quality of the environment and thus their long-term

health. The principles of organic marketing take into account the development and promotion of sustainable consumption regardless of the type of services considered.

Sustainable marketing will control the entire consumer value chain, promoting business models that eliminate waste and optimize resource transformation. By implementing it, economic organizations enhance their institutional image in terms of capitalizing on attributes that resonate with social responsibility and economic sustainability.

Companies that adopt the principles specific to green marketing are also becoming more credible in dealing with state bodies responsible for implementing environmental policies, with NGOs or representatives of various communities active in managing global environmental issues or promoting sustainable resource consumption.

Companies looking to gain competitive advantage based on increased sustainability in relation to the environment have an increased chance of success in terms of differentiation from the competition. As the market evolves and the consumer develops an optics in accordance with such values, companies will have to adapt and incorporate in their business strategies the sustainable model according to the principles of organic marketing. Good practices in this area are closely correlated with the widespread use of new technologies, such as massive data. They involve changing the managerial perspective of enterprises, integrating the principles of sustainability into the marketing mix, educating consumers towards adopting a healthy lifestyle and stronger involvement in communicating on social channels the new values adopted by organizations. Social responsibility, anchored in the important realities for the Romanian consumer, will become a standard of excellence that can ensure any economic agent an adequate positioning on the market and the premises for an optimal future evolution.

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