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**Article**

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# SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MARKETING

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The evolution of the business world in harmony with the principles of sustainability has been increasingly significant in our century. Displaying a planned, integrated and properly coordinated entrepreneurial orientation toward environment protection, the involvement in the actions initiated by the local community and by society in general or supporting and streamlining one's own economic activity on a lasting basis represent key elements whereby a business can achieve harmonious increase in time, a synergic evolution and even competitive advantage. There is, however, a major problem, namely, the sustainable development directions and principles are difficult to understand and, in particular, to apply to entrepreneurial decisions and marketing strategies so as to ensure the investment and financial capital to support the organization's activities and identify the consumers willing to pay the price of sustainability.

It is impossible to define objectives capable of meeting such requirements and successfully implement strategies ensuring a healthy growth and constant development without referring to the sustainability of the actions made and their impact on the environment, human society, the company's employees and the effectiveness of the activity conducted. In this issue, the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal hosts a number of original studies which contribute to the application of the concept of sustainable marketing and its facets to different economic sectors from a business marketing point of view. The research made by the authors is both transnational and transdisciplinary, capturing in a harmonious way the various facets of sustainable business marketing.

In the article *Towards Sustainable Marketing: Strategy in Slovak Companies*, the authors use the binary logistic regression to approach the relationship between the marketing philosophy and the sustainability in the Slovak companies of different sizes and highlight the major influencing factors (the legal form of organization, field of activity, the share of foreign capital, form of ownership). The paper has its own contribution, alongside other European papers, in highlighting the role of sustainability in strengthening and developing viable marketing strategies.

The cross-border research conducted by a group of Italian and Romanian authors points to the ways of *Applying of Qualitative Risk Analysis as a Tool Adopted by Public Organizations for Evaluating "Green Projects"*. The authors conduct a careful marketing analysis of the modalities for the evaluation of various risk categories found in the public projects implemented in the urban and peri-urban food sector in order to identify models of good practice in compliance with sustainable development principles. The authors' approach is highly original because they develop a *probability-impact* matrix for the projects concerned.

The Serbian authors propose a journey through the sustainable lifestyle marketing of individuals (*Sustainable Lifestyle Marketing of Individuals: The Base of Sustainability*),

thought of as an activity based on people's opinions and interests and conducted in order to develop, communicate and maintain a sustainable lifestyle. It pertains to daily family activities, the consumption and/or long-term use of various products and services, the adoption of a sustainable way and/or behaviour in society and the living environment. The conclusions of the research highlight the contribution of this reasoning to the better use of resources and to the creation of added value for the members of society.

A well-documented and interesting insight into green marketing is provided by a group of four authors from Craiova who propose a *Matrix Model for Choosing Green Marketing Sustainable Strategic Alternatives* which organizations need to generate competitive advantage. The model is based on the general principles of marketing and is correlated with the organizations' sustainability strategy. Thus, the model may identify the vectors used to generate competitive advantage in approaching target markets.

Sustainable business marketing is important in many fields of activity as it drives the activity of organizations. Their organic growth is approached from the point of view of an *exploratory sustainable marketing in tourism (Sustainability and Organic Growth Marketing: An Exploratory Approach on Valorisation of Durable Development Principles in Tourism)* by a group of authors from Brasov. In their paper, the authors attempt to highlight the ways in which durable development principles can be applied in tourism so as to expand the businesses and increase their development opportunities. The article is based solely on qualitative marketing research and proposes methods to assess and audit this action.

A country's economic growth is based on the ability of companies and enterprises to survive and, in particular, to cope with the ups and downs of an ever-changing environment. Special attention is paid to *contemporary marketing practices in Romanian start-ups*, approached by four Romanian authors from the point of view of *sustainable entrepreneurial convergence (Converging Sustainable Entrepreneurship and the Contemporary Marketing Practices. An Insight into Romanian Start-Ups.)*. The exploratory research was based on the study of the manner in which young Romanian entrepreneurs apply marketing in their own enterprises and of the interrelationship with the aspects that define sustainable entrepreneurship. People are the most relevant and significant sustainable resource of start-ups.

A group of authors from Bucharest have proposed a genuine piece of interdisciplinary research in accounting about *Marketing Communications of Value Creation in Sustainable Organizations by Means of Integrated Reports*. By adopting a quantitative and qualitative approach, they recommend the use of integrated reports from 95 organizations with experience in sustainability reporting to investigate the ways in which the information conveyed helps create and strengthen entrepreneurial value. The research represents a relevant example of how to join harmoniously the economic disciplines to pinpoint the good practice in Romanian organizations.

The implementation of a *sustainable marketing strategy* cannot be achieved without the *reporting of non-financial performance indicators*, which represent a *useful tool (Reporting of Non-Financial Performance Indicators – A Useful Tool for a Sustainable Marketing Strategy)*. Based on the information from non-financial reports of 19 international organizations, the researchers select a range of environmental and social indicators by means of which they assess the activities that contribute to the development of sustainable marketing

strategies. The indicators providing positive information about the investigated aspects are viewed as more important than those providing negative information.

Another group of authors analyse *The Impact of Corporate Sustainability Strategies on the Financial Performance of Romanian Companies in the Context of Green Marketing*. The analysis provides an insight into the corporate sustainability actions of various Romanian companies and identifies the elements whereby such actions are approached from the perspective of sustainability principles. The research focuses on a range of actual actions taken by the 31 companies concerned and on symbolic actions communicated via specific sustainable development commitments.

Any organization cannot implement sustainable marketing strategies without controlling them properly. The authors of the article on *The Role of Marketing Audit in Evaluation Sustainable Marketing Performance in Romanian Organizations* propose, with the help of exploratory quantitative analysis, to highlight the role and the place of this procedure in the investigated companies. The research reveals a number of pertinent conclusions about the role and importance of marketing audit in the evaluation of performance in various organizations and provides significant managerial and theoretic implications.

A change of mentality is required on the part of all interested actors in order for them to adopt a conception of sustainable marketing. This conception refers to a holistic understanding of a business where all stakeholders are involved in a partnership cooperation. The business marketing approach goes beyond the microeconomic level of products, services and/or offers and that of enterprise functions and includes corporate aspects about the sustainability of human, material, financial, information etc. resources as well as the synergic integration of macro- and mezo-economic levels. In order to achieve true sustainability, the business must harmonize with the marketing actions of various partners who are not always driven solely by an economic motivation to ensure the continuity of their actions. Territorial communities, civil society, governmental and non-governmental bodies, international organizations and institutions, international fora need to carefully monitor and properly audit all actions and activities of an organization that implements sustainable strategies for approaching the market in line with the integrated marketing thinking and philosophy.

**Dan-Cristian Dabija,**  
**Associate Editor**