


Sustainability as a new business model: a brief analysis of natura's green marketing

  10.56238/tfisdwv1-137

Samantha Praxedes Constâncio

Interdisciplinary Bachelor's Degree in Science and Economics from the Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL-MG)

samantha.praxedes@sou.unifal-mg.edu.br

Kellen Rocha de Souza

PhD in Economics and docente at the Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL-MG)

kellen.souza@unifal-mg.edu.br

ABSTRACT

Since the interaction between consumer and seller, originating from the trade, has begun it has been that according to microeconomic concepts, as explained by the principle of optimization of supply and demand, the consumer always seeks the best consumption standards within his reach, as well as industry and seller seek to market the best one wants for their product or service to be purchased. To facilitate this interaction an important strategic tool promoted by human action is marketing, which exposes to its target audience the social value of a product to be chosen. With the increase of environmental awareness on the

part of some consumers, emerged in the 1990s the concept of green marketing, strategy implemented within a business and focused on plans and actions that benefit and prioritize the environment, whether in the production, operation or dissemination of the product or service. Given this context, the objective of this research is to present how sustainability can influence the decision and purchasing power of consumers, given the motivation and importance of sustainable consumption thinking, and to analyze the use of green marketing by Natura, considered pioneer in this area. The methodology used is the review of the Natura company's literature and analysis of information, such as business characteristics, its name, vision and image, advertisements and financial indicators, namely the variables of its consolidated net revenue, Consolidated EBITDA, consolidated net profit and average daily traded volume of shares in the years 2018 to 2020. This analysis shows that the implementation of green marketing in the business model can be a growing trend in the world and that it is essential that companies invest in this business tool, so that they can remain in the competitive market and preserve the environment.

Keywords: sustainability; marketing; green marketing; business; green economy.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is clear that for a company to achieve excellence in its business, its managers must draw up plans and strategies continuously aiming always to meet the needs and interests of its customers. Therefore, it is essential to study and collect data on consumer behavior in an uninterrupted way, because any change that surrounds the buyer, whether historical, economic, social or structural, can influence their consumption behavior.

Therefore, in the last century there has been a great acceleration in demographic, technological and industrial growth, which has enabled reflection and concern about the environment, quality of life and how human interaction interferes in the sustainability of the world (DALMORO; VENTURINI; PEREIRA, 2008). This is mainly due to the numerous practices of environmental exploitation carried out by man and how this affected the natural resources essential to humanity, such as flora and fauna (BEDANTE, 2004).

Thus, the behavior of a consumer niche currently focuses on sustainable consumption and environmental preservation, and as a buyer, it will give preference to companies that are socio-

environmentally responsible for what they sell. This behavioral trend, begins to require organizations to change their strategy and mode of production, in order to continue to retain their customers (DALMORO; VENTURINI; PEREIRA, 2008), employees and suppliers and also attract new potential consumers according to their wishes, which is fundamental to the company's goal of remaining firm in competitiveness and the realization of sales with consequent profit- obtaining.

Thus, the objective of this research is to present how sustainability can influence the decision and purchasing power of consumers, given the motivation and importance of sustainable consumption thinking, and to analyze the use of green marketing by natura, considered a pioneer in this area.

This research is organized into three more sections, in addition to this introduction. The second section refers to the reference that presents the concept of sustainability and its importance, the niche of consumers of which this present work is the object of study, and also briefly analyzes and describes consumer behavior from the era of the Industrial Revolution to the digital age and how companies can *implement marketing* within its strategic planning to meet the behavioral demand in the consumer's validity. The third section addresses the application of *green marketing* in organizations, as well as a case study on the subject, specifically from a Brazilian company considered a *pioneer of ecomarketing*, Natura. In the last section, to conclude this paper, the final considerations are presented.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In general, sustainability is seen and defined in different ways according to the lines of thought of several authors and by the historical moment to be taken into account. For author John Elkington, known as the "father of sustainability" and creator of *the triple bottom line*¹, sustainability is able to promote the balance between the three fundamental pillars of a country: economic and social environmental (ELKINGTON, 2001, *apud* SARTORI *et al.*, 2013, p. 2).

Article 225 of the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 states that the Public Power and the population have a duty to preserve and defend the right to the environment, guaranteed by this Constitution, namely:

All have the right to the ecologically balanced environment, well of common use of the people and essential to healthy quality of life, imposing on the Public Power and the collectivity the duty to defend and preserve it for the present and future generations (BRASIL, 1988, p.131).

Nevertheless, with the aim of contextualizing the existence and expansion of sustainability and sustainable development, there is the first event organized by the United Nations (UN), which took place in 1972 and brought together 113 countries to discuss environmental issues in the world and became known

¹ The term *Triple Bottom line*, proposed by John Elkington in his book "Cannibals with Fork and Knife" in 1994, indicates that corporations are focused on three values, namely economic, environmental and social value (BENITES; POLO, 2013).

as the Stockholm Conference (STATE CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, 2020). On this occasion, issues of international concern were addressed "especially in the trends to rationalize the use of natural resources, in industrial and urban planning, and in efforts to control pollution, especially air and marine" (BRASIL, 1972, p.6).

A few years after the Stockholm Conference, namely in 1983, the UN created the World Commission on Environment and Development (CMMAD), whose members were responsible for the preparation of the "Our Common Future" Report, which was only finalized in 1987 (SOUZA, 2013). This report is "responsible for the first official, formal and systematized concepts on sustainable development" (DALMORO; VENTURINI; PEREIRA, 2008, p.39). However, the concept of sustainability and sustainable development is still emerging and its use is common today (SARTORI *et al.*, p.2), and should be further explored and explained to people and organizations. According to CMMAD (1991, p. 46, *apud* SOUZA, 2013, p. 31) sustainable development can be explained as "one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the possibility of future generations meeting their own needs"

In 1992 CMMAD met again, this time in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and this event became popularly known as "Eco-92", in which it was responsible for bringing together 198 countries (STATE CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, 2020). On this occasion, important agreements were signed for the environment, such as the "Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Rio Declaration, the Declaration on Forests and Agenda 21" (State CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, 2020). Given this second convention organized by the UN, it is verified that sustainable development becomes more popularized and gains greater scope in society (SOUZA, 2013).

Thirty years after the Stockholm Conference and ten years after Eco-92, CMMAD meets again in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa to, among other issues, evaluate and implement the definitions established in Eco-92. (STATE CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, 2020). This time, the social mazela of poverty was taken into account, since according to CMMAD (1991, p. 10, *apud* SOUZA, 2013, p. 31) "a world where poverty is endemic will always be subject to disasters, ecological or otherwise", and the goal of halily reducing the number of the population without access to basic sanitation by the year 2015 (STATE CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, 2020).

Later, Rio de Janeiro once again hosted CMMAD, namely in 2012, in an event that became known as Rio+20, in reference to the 20 years since the realization of Eco-92. On this occasion, the emerging concept of green economy gains a more pronounced projection in this new convention, which again discussed sustainable development and also on the eradication of poverty (STATE CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, 2020).

By green economy, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2011, p. 2) understands that "which results in improved human well-being and social equality, while significantly reducing

environmental risks and ecological scarcity." Thus, the green economy began to be seen as a possibility of economic development based on three essential pillars, namely, "low carbon emissions, resource efficiency and social inclusion" (DINIZ; BERMANN, 2012, p.323).

However, despite the action plans and commitments promoted by CMMAD, the paths seem far from being completed, since governments still invest little in the green economy. According to a report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2020, the year of the start of the pandemic of the then new Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, which caused the disease called Covid-19, inequalities and devastation have become greater, and this moment should be used by governments to reverse these situations with green investment in "a unique chance to put their countries on sustainable trajectories that prioritize economic opportunities, poverty reduction and planetary health at once" (UNEP, 2021, p.1). This, however, did not occur, since "only US\$368 billion of a total of US\$14.6 billion of COVID-induced spending (rescue and recovery) in 2020 was green" (UNEP, 2021, p.1), and such investments could have been heavily invested, according to UNEP (2021), in low-carbon energy, green transportation (infrastructure for cycling and pedestrians), according to UNEP (2021), in low-carbon energy, green transportation (infrastructure for cycling and pedestrians), according to UNEP (2021), in low-carbon energy, green transport (infrastructure for cycling and pedestrians), regeneration of ecosystems and reforestation, renewable energy technologies, among other possibilities.

2.2 THE MARKET AND THE GREEN NICHE

It is a fact that the first market relations that have in history are as old as human existence itself, with its first interactions given through the exchange of goods between individuals, an action also known as barter. However, in addition to the market for buying and selling goods, there are also many others, perhaps less known or remembered, and according to Professor Carlos Frederico Uchoa (2016):

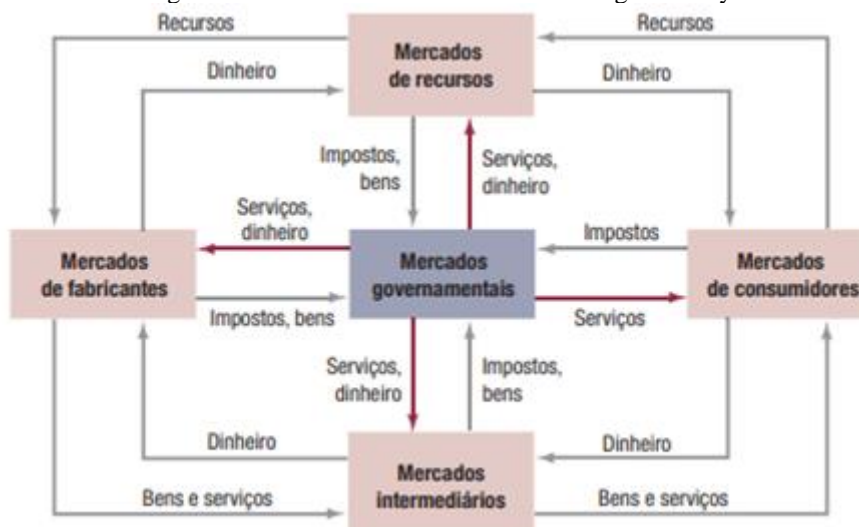
There are markets for everything. A market can be centralized, such as the stock market, or decentralized, like the labor market. We can define market as the place, or context, where buyers and sellers interact and unintentionally set price and amount of balance (UCHOA, 2016, p.25-26).

According to authors Kotler and Keller (2012), there are at least five markets considered basic with some flows that connect them in a chain. The first is the market of manufacturers with the objective of producing and selling, that is, individuals who seek the market of resources for the acquisition of raw materials, available labor and financial resources (KOTLER; KELLER, 2012). Next, there is the market for intermediaries, represented by individuals who purchase the intermediate and/or finished products/services produced, so that they are sold to the final consumer market (KOTLER; KELLER, 2012). Finally, there is the government market, which by its authority collects taxes and taxes from all integrated markets of this chain, in order to offer public services to the population (KOTLER; KELLER, 2012).

From the flow structure there is the interaction between the agents of an economy in an aggregate form, composed of companies and families, and represented illustratively in Figure 1. From this it is possible to observe how the process occurs and the flows between the existing markets, and it is a circular flow of income and through it it is possible to observe the relationship of fundamental macroeconomic identity: $\equiv \text{product} \equiv \text{income}$. In this sense, Figure 1 represents what Paulani and Braga (2012) affirm:

What actually circulates is money: the money that pays the production factors is the same that reverts to companies in the purchase of final goods and services. That doesn't happen with other assets. The factors of production make a single trip: from families to companies; final goods and services also make a single journey: from businesses to families (PAULANI; BRAGA, 2012, p.22-23).

Figure 1 - Flow structure in a modern trading economy



Source: Kotler; Keller (2012, p.6).

On the other hand, tied to the interaction established by the market in the economy from the barter to the current globalization, it has been that consumers are numerous, dispersed and diversified in their purchasing requirements (CERETTA; FROEMMING, 2011) and this implies the existence of the division of some small groups of consumers, these being classified as niche markets, which literally means segmentation of a group of consumers who have common objectives and preferences. These niches now established are the object of study of companies that aim to offer their target audience what they hope to consume according to their interests.

Moreover, the preference of some consumers for sustainable and returnable products is part of the so-called green niche, considered as a current, growing and potential future segment in the market, although "still incipient what determines low volume of production and consumption, and is increasing, because it is within the urgent need for better indications of quality of life" (LAVORATO, 2004, p. 5).

Nevertheless, the Economic Sciences expose that one of the biggest problems of the market is the scarcity of resources, and the American economist Mankiw, considered exponent of neokeynesianism, explains that "scarcity means that society has limited resources and, therefore, cannot produce all the goods and services that people wish to have" (MANKIW, 2013, p. 4). Based on Mankiw's (2013) assumption

about scarcity in the economy, it is assumed that the finite resources provided by nature are an obstacle to the future of generations, both productive and quality of life, thus leading to society's need to manage and allocate its scarce resources. This reason, in turn, becomes one of the justifications for the emergence of the green niche in the market, to be explained by the first four principles of the economy, addressed by Mankiw (2013), and which boil down to the central idea of "how people make decisions". The first principle *addresses that people face tradeoffs*²; the second establishes that the cost of something is what you give up to get it; the third principle addresses that rational people think on the margin, and finally, the fourth principle indicates that people react to incentives.

2.3 ANDTHE RETURN OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The definition of consumer in the Consumer Protection Code is "every natural or legal person who acquires or uses product or service as the final recipient" (BRASIL, 2017, p. 12). It is noteworthy that consumers are responsible for leveraging the economy of their country and, in general, the world. It is then up to the entrepreneurs who sell services and products to understand how their loyal and potential customers choose what they will consume, because it is understood that "more than ever, understanding the consumer is recognized as a vital need not only for companies, but for the entire organization that assumes itself as market-oriented" (DUBOIS, 1998, *apud* VIEIRA, 2002, p.2).

According to economist Hal R. Varian (2003) the principle of optimization helps us understand and analyze the behavior of choice of human beings, since "people try to choose the best consumption pattern at their fingertips" (VARIAN, 2003, p.3). Thus, it is inferred that consumers, considered in microeconomic theory as rational and maximizing their utility function, will always choose the best baskets that are at their disposal in the consumer market and service provision, seeking their personal and social satisfaction through everything that surrounds them.

There are several theories proposed about how the purchase process occurs, in general, from the intention, which leads the consumer to the purchase of the product or service, to the post-purchase, related to the satisfaction and forms of disposal of the product. The cognitive theory known as "Perceived Risk" is one of the ways to explain the process of human choice, which has as its central idea the rejection and reluctance of people to acquire a certain product or service given a high level of risk to which it is exposed (MOWEN and MINOR, 2003), a risk that may vary according to the historical period experienced, economic situation and social well-being. In other words, it is a security-driven decision-making process. It is evident, therefore, in view of the above that understanding the consumer's behavior implies knowing the purchase process from beginning to end and also taking into account the historical period to which it is inserted, because for each moment of history society has certain behaviors, habits and demands.

² A term used in economic sciences to refer to a "situation of conflicting choice, that is, when an economic action aimed at solving a given problem inevitably entails others" (SANDRONI, 2005, p. 852).

Consumer behavior soon after the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, also known as "consumer 1.0" was characterized by the purchase based only on the product and with interest only in the technical specifications of the same and not in the value that could be added. It was considered by Kotler (2010), known as the *father of modern marketing*, as the time when industrial products were basic and had the function so only of serving the mass market (KOTLER, 2010). It is inferred that the buyer had restricted access to information, because this period was marked by the technology purely of industrial machines, and the meaning of the brand was not known. Due to this behavior, companies began to focus on productivity, since they were only concerned with producing as many products as possible, which in turn meant little diversification. Thus, such a position of the companies in this period can be confirmed by the speech of Henry Ford (1908 *apud* SANTOS, 2017, p.37): "the car can be of any color, as long as it is black".

In the 20th century, consumer behavior changed, with the buyer being termed "consumer 2.0". As once said that behavior changes in line with the historical period experienced, in this century we experienced the advent of information technology. From then on it is considered that buyers are well informed and can compare a greater number of offers of similar products and services (KOTLER, 2010) and, thus, this new behavior has enabled the amplification of competition between companies, as well as also provided a greater power of choice for the best option offered. Greater access to information was a consequence of the competitiveness installed in society, as well as the process of consumer choice has become more focused on meeting their needs, that is, the focus becomes the consumer himself and no longer the product.

Nevertheless, with increasing competitiveness the customer begins to demand more of the quality standard offered by companies and this with the purpose of choosing the best product or service to be purchased. With this the so-called "consumer 3.0", characterized by Kotler first in his *book "Marketing 3.0"* (2010), emerges in the transition from the 20th century to the 21st century, being considered the typical model of consumer characteristics today, where the focus is still on the buyer and the achievements of his needs and desires, that is, his self-realization. However, in this new model of consumption the buyer transcends his desires to human values, that is, in addition to longing for functional and personal satisfaction is also added spiritual satisfaction (KOTLER, 2010) and this fact in turn significantly increases the search of companies to conquer their customers.

Thus, issues such as ethics, morals, sustainability and social interaction have become mandatory differentials for entrepreneurs to include in their strategic plan, because consumer behavior also aggregates issues that surround them, being this determining factor in the process of choosing a product and/or service of a particular company instead of another. Tied to this fact, Kotler emphasizes that:

Increasingly, consumers are looking for solutions to satisfy their longing to transform the globalized world into a better world. In a confused world, they seek companies that address their deepest needs for social, economic and environmental justice in their mission, vision and values (KOTLER, 2010, p.22).

However, it is necessary to approach that despite the computerization and greater dissemination of the supply of products in the present time, the consumer also faces, as in previous centuries, the problem of restricting their income. This can be explained by the economic theory of the consumer and depends on the budgetary set of the buyer, which then becomes a restriction for the acquisition of a good (VARIAN, 2003), either by lack of money or by the misinformation that this lack causes people.

Similar to the above, journalist Lucianne Carneiro (2021) stated that the number of long-term unemployed reached 41.2% of the 14.4 million Brazilian unemployed in the second quarter of 2021 during the pandemic, a significantly high rate. This historical fact marked by the health crisis, as well as the others listed in this work, such as the Industrial Revolution, which enabled mass production, and also the technological and digital evolution, which introduced facilities and convenience in the acquisition of products and services, impact on the decision of choice of consumers. With minimum income factors, preference will be given to smaller amounts of goods, as well as those that offer lower prices, which consequently makes the values and desires of self-realization of consumers 3.0 cannot be contemplated completely.

Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of consumer behavior over time to the present day, differentiating the three types of consumers treated in this study. Thus, Table 1 considers Consumer 1.0 of the Industrial Age, which focused only on the product and that it was acquired solely for the purpose of acquiring; it also addresses Consumer 2.0 (Chart 1) that in the rise of the Digital Age places itself as the focus of its purchases, that is, it aims to supply its self-realization. Nevertheless, Table 1 then describes Consumer 3.0 whose focus is on the values that the products and/or services provide to him in conjunction with their self-realization.

Table 1 - Comparison between consumer behavior 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0

Historical period	Denomination	Focus	Main feature
It was industrial (18th century). XIX)	Consumer 1.0	Product	Consumption made with the aim of only acquiring goods
Digital age (18th century) XX)	Consumer 2.0	Consumer	Consumption in order to supply the self-realization of the individual
Actuality (18th century) XXI)	Consumer 3.0	Values	Consumption that transcends self-realization and adds social values to goods

Source: Own elaboration.

In addition to the names presented in Table 1, there is also the unfolding of Consumer 3.0 for Consumer 4.0, which is installed today and will have strong bases in the coming years. This is mainly due to the fourth Industrial Revolution in which we live, marked by the increasing immersion of the individual in the technological world. According to Kotler *et al.* (2017) people tend to be increasingly connected, and in this way their decisions are based heeding a lot on the social opinion about the product and the reputation of companies, which can be searched electronically easily by millions of users. Thus, it is possible to state

that "mobile connectivity allows consumers to access the wisdom of crowds and make better purchasing decisions" (KOTLER *et al.* , 2017, p.28).

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF *MARKETING* AND ITS EVOLUTION

The term *marketing* has several existing definitions and scopes, created by several authors and managers over time, since the beginning of the 20th century, in the United States, when an association on the subject was founded, that is, the American Marketing Association (AMA) (PINHO, 2008). The word *marketing* in Brazil appeared around 1950 and would be translated and used, initially, as marketing, however, this term did not become usual and thus prevailed the North American name (PINHO, 2008).

According to the American Marketing Association (2008 *apud* KOTLER; KELLER, 2012, p. 3) "*Marketing is the activity, the set of knowledge and the processes of creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offers that have value to consumers, customers, partners and society as a whole.*" According to Motta (1983 *apud* SCHIOCHET, 2018), the *concept of marketing* would be closely linked to economic theory, which worked through exchange and trade and focused on the problem of the distribution of products to people. More broadly, according to Kotler (2011, p. 27), "*marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups get what they need and want through the creation, offering and exchange of value products with another.*" Nevertheless, for Boone (2009, p.8):

Marketing is the process of planning, executing the design, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, products, services, organizations and events to create and maintain relationships that will meet individual and organizational objectives.

However, as changes occur in the social and organizational, theoretical and academic spheres, they also propose new concepts, focuses, applicability and *marketing goals*, so that it follows the context to which it is inserted (SCHIOCHET, 2018). Thus, we can divide *marketing into four phases*: 1st of production; 2nd of sales; 3rd *of marketing* and, 4th of the relationship, as summarized in Table 2 that addresses the *evolution of marketing through the four phases mentioned* and what was the focus of each phase in relation to sales and negotiations.

Table 2 - Evolution of *marketing*

Phases	Production - before 1920	Sales - before 1950	Marketing - from 1950	Relationship - from 1990
Period thinking and focus	A good product sells itself	Advertising and creative sales will lead to consumption	Consumer domain: need and satisfaction	Long-term relationship with consumers leads to success

Source: Adapted from Boone (2009) and Kotler (2011).

In a statement, it is clear that the *relationship between marketing* and consumer has become intrinsic according to the temporal evolution presented by Chart 2. This is because as stated in this study, the Historical period and socioeconomic conditions influence the purchasing decision. Therefore, mass

production until the 1920s (production phase of Chart 2) was provoked by the massive consumerism of the population that only cared about the acquisition and there were no great needs for persuasion by the seller, because the basic idea was that a good product sells itself.

Until the 1950s (sales phase of Frame 2), the desire for great consumption took greater awareness and required companies that their product and /or service be seen and desired, as soon as advertisements became an inseparable tool of their sales. After the golden years of 1950, *marketing begins* to meet the needs and interests of its customers through its values and tangible and intangible attributes in order to retain it in the long term, which is represented by the *marketing phase* of Frame 2. Thus, *marketing has become a strategic* tool for the relationship of brands with its customers, and "when a product does not have a brand it is seen by the consumer in a generic way, without affective attributions, so there will be no relationship and such product will not be recognized" (CLEMENTE; MELO, 2015, p.2)

2.4.1 *Green marketing*

In the foreground it becomes substantial to know the concept of corporate sustainability, to later analyze its applicability and how it is within an organization. According to Zacompe, Ensslin, L. and Ensslin, S. (2011, p.478), sustainability management integrates social, environmental and economic aspects "of business management in general and in particular, of corporate sustainability management". Thus, "today, sustainability in business is seen not as an environmental initiative, but as a business strategy that generates value from the search for better social and environmental results" (BENITES; POLO, 2013, p.831)

In view of the concept of corporate sustainability, at the same time there is the definition of social responsibility, which the Ethos Institute of Business and Social Responsibility (2012) considers to be:

(...) the form of management that is defined by the ethical and transparent relationship of the company with all the audiences with which it relates and by the establishment of business goals compatible with the sustainable development of society, preserving environmental and cultural resources for future generations, respecting diversity and promoting the reduction of social inequalities.

Thus, the tool "*green marketing*", emerged in the 1990s and, therefore, is a relatively new concept in society and whose use was intensified by Al Gore, journalist, environmentalist and American politician, in the *film An Inconvenient Truth*, since it generated in people the mutual feeling of wanting to take better care of the place and country in which they live. *Green marketing*, also known as *ecomarketing*, has given rise to a great social awareness among some consumers, increasingly concerned about the environment and the impacts of anthropic activity on it.

Ecomarketing is then a strategy implemented within a business and focused on plans and actions that benefit and prioritize the environment, whether in production, operational or dissemination of the product or service. This is because it is the organizations' obligation to cause little, or no, damage to the

environment, and/or repair it, where applicable. Moreover, as competition in markets grows continuously, product differentiation and/or its production process is a decisive factor in choosing one company over another. Green *marketing*, in question, is often used as a differentiation so that one organization stands out in relation to others, because "the consumer market is increasingly informed and demanding. In this context, business planning is inevitable to survive in the midst of competition" (TAVARES; FERREIRA, 2012, p.25).

Nevertheless, the Federation of Industries of the State of Paraná (FIEP) released in 2019 a survey conducted by the U.S. research agency Union + Webster that showed or that 87% of Brazilians would prefer to acquire products and services from sustainable companies and that 70% of Brazilians say that they do not mind disbursing larger amounts for the environmentally friendly products (FEDERAÇÃO DAS INDÚSTRIAS DO ESTADO DO PARANÁ, 2019). Although the sample size of the research conducted has not been disclosed, and other information that may influence this result, such as income, schooling and age group of the interviewees, it is possible to observe a high intention to consume products and/or services from companies considered sustainable.

In this context of propensity to consume products from companies considered sustainable, advertising media are created to influence consumers, such as those described by Tavares and Ferreira (2012):

Green television programs, magazines specializing in the theme and an avalanche of ads that assume the socio-environmental issue as the main argument. The media and companies come together to offer content to viewers and consumers eager for more complex shopping knowledge and experiences (TAVARES; FERREIRA, 2012, p. 27).

Despite the actions of companies with regard to the preservation of the environment and/or advertisements conveyed demonstrating this protection, it is important to emphasize, however, that a company or company can develop the so-called *greenwashing*, or "green makeup" if it *uses green marketing* in order to promote its product or service in a misleading way to consumers.

Greenwashing translates in a simplified way, such as that company that preaches sustainability and beneficial actions for society, but that in fact its attitudes are incoherent with the discourse employed, that is, there is the application of a makeup in order to attract the consumer and thus hide the true deceptive intention, which is only profitability and not actions for the environment (TAVARES; FERREIRA, 2012). This misattitude is common in companies that want to attract customers with a misleading eco-advertising, but that as a consequence can tarnish the image of the organization in the long and indefinite term.

3 ANDALL OF THE CASE: APPLICABILITY OF *GREEN MARKETING* IN THE COMPANY NATURA & CO

In a similar way to the implementation of *green marketing* in strategic business planning, as a real case of the subject matter of this work, we will analyze the characteristics of business and visual identity,

namely, their social reason, vision, slogans and actions in the financial market of the multinational company of a corporation Natura. Created by Brazilian entrepreneur Antônio Luiz Seabra in 1969, Natura is currently considered the largest national manufacturer of toiletries, perfumes and cosmetics. In addition, it will be deepened in this case study how Natura applies and conducts its investments focused on sustainability, specifically with regard to its strategic behavior in the production and sale of its products and how they are offered to buyers in general, based on their advertisements and annual financial reports.

Considered as a *pioneer of green marketing*, Natura has been a publicly traded company since 2004, and thus has shares listed on the Novo Mercado, which is considered "the highest level of Corporate Governance of BM&FBOVESPA S.A.– Stock Exchange, Commodities and Futures" (MATOS, 2009, p.19), created in 2008 from the integration of the Commodities & Futures Exchange (BM&F) with the São Stock Exchange Paulo (BOVESPA). In addition, the company is present in several countries, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, the United States and France; has factories installed in the Brazilian cities of Cajamar and Benevides; and research and technology centers in São Paulo, Manaus, both in Brazil, and in New York, USA (NATURA, 2022).

As far as its expansion as a company, Natura & CO bought the British cosmetics company The Body Shop in 2017 and in 2020 acquired the American brand Avon Products, thus becoming the fourth largest in the industry in the world, according to forbes news channel (2020). In addition, the sustainable strategic aspect that the company decided to follow from its foundation to the current days is also responsible for the success of the brand, because for its managers sustainability is an inseparable part of the business (VIEIRA, 2017). Related to this fact, it can be seen that Natura's vision shows how it aims to be seen and allows identifying which relationships it intends to establish with the consumer, that is:

[...] become a brand of worldwide expression through its business behavior, and the quality relationships that are established through employees, products and services. Natura wants to be identified with the group of people who are committed to building a better world, creating bonds, friendships, valuing each human being for its uniqueness. (NATURA, 2011 *apud* GALHARDI, 2012, p. 84).

Nevertheless, the brand name itself induces the characteristic of its products to be sustainable and natural, as well as its slogans – such as "Well-being well"; "the world is more beautiful to you"; "nature generates beauty" – which put the environment and social well-being present at all times. Therefore, it is evident that the brand in question uses ecopropaganda for the persuasion of consumers, in view of the green niche that is its focus audience, and for this it uses visual devices with colors and shapes that pass on the idea of commitment to nature and society, as can be seen in the advertisement of Figure 2. In the background there is the presence of the green color of the leaves that refer to nature and flora, the model ahead as a reference to the people belonging to the Amazon, in addition to the persuasive textual devices such as the product name "Flor do Luar" and its persuasive description "Discover the mysteries of the richest garden on the planet, the Amazon" (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Natura's Ekos Flor product advertising campaign



Source: Silva (2016).

Natura uses ecological packaging in its products with renewable post-consumer materials, such as Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) and glass (LIMA, 2020) as an example of advertising shown in Figure 3. At the bottom of this advertisement, according to Figure 3, there is the abundant presence of the blue color, with the purpose of referencing the ocean, several plastic bottles and the following text "7 tons of recycled plastic", a reference to the large amount of waste that is being recycled and thus not inadequately disposed of in the oceans. These elements used in the advertisement of Figure 3 aim to demonstrate to the consumer the actions beneficial to the company's environment, which are to remove plastics from the Brazilian ocean and recycle them in order to be able to manufacture the packaging of its product.

Figure 3 - Natura Kaik Oceano product advertising campaign



Source: Ycar (2021).

Nevertheless, the company is considered the first in the world to offer refills of its products (LIMA, 2020) and has, according to the company itself, more than 100 products in its portfolio with refill option (NATURA, 2019). In addition, Natura has not tested its products on animals since 2006 and acquires raw materials from suppliers who also do not practice animal testing, as well as uses 100% vegetarian products (NATURA, 2019), facts that are evidenced in advertisements and descriptions of the packaging of the brand's products.

Therefore, Natura discloses its products and socio-environmental actions to its potential and effective customers through the means it has, such as social networks, magazines, portfolios, advertisements, articles, by the consultants themselves who sell the products, among other means of communication. As already addressed in this work, the current consumer prioritizes receiving as much information as possible from the product that has the potential for purchase choice, and this is done rationally and consciously according to the principles of microeconomic theory.

In addition, Natura also invests in innovation in a number of areas, such as business innovation through the wide sales modalities (direct, e-commerce and retail), innovation in sustainability (traceability of ingredients and materials, without testing on animals, recycled packaging after consumption and renewable origin), innovation in products (phytocosmetics, biotechnology, bioagriculture), innovation in operations and logistics (has a mesh that delivers in 100% of the Codes of Postal Address (ZIP Codes) in Brazil or other areas of the distribution chain) and digital innovation (digital platforms developed especially for natura beauty consultants and end consumers) (NATURA, 2022). Such actions, in turn, are important for their permanence in the market because, as already mentioned, society experiences the digital age in which "the company wants to ensure that its customers have the best experiences anywhere at any time" (LIMA, 2020, p.21).

The raw material for the production of its cosmetics comes mainly from natural and renewable ingredients, such as the Ekos brand that has the UEBT (Union for Ethical Biotrader) label, which recognizes the use of ingredients of sustainable origin and maintains an ethical relationship with the supplying communities (NATURA, 2020). In addition, Natura has a policy called "Carbon Neutral", where the company accounts for all the carbon extracted for its production and when there is the emission of pollutants that can not avoid nature is rewarded, in a way, with projects that generate social and environmental benefits, such as, for example, in the generation of jobs, training, technology transfer, strengthening of the local economy, women's empowerment, protection of biodiversity and water resources (NATURA, 2020).

Given these and other possible actions, in 2017 the corporation Natura was awarded by Exame Magazine as the most sustainable company of the year and on January 21, 2020 was recognized for the eleventh time as one of the most sustainable companies in the world by the media and research company Corporate Knights, Canada (NATURA, 2020). For the evaluation of companies, Corporate Knights uses as criteria indicators related to energy consumption, water, amount of solid waste generated, innovation capacity, salaries, job safety, percentage of women in management, among others. Natura was also the first

publicly traded company to obtain the B Corp label, which recognizes companies that are committed to integrating their financial results to the generation of socio-environmental results (NATURA, 2020).

Finally, in an annual report of natura in 2020, it can be observed that the strategies for aggregation of new companies and innovation of the company, even in pandemic times, generated a positive impact and growth of economic indicators, efficiency and actions, when compared to the two years immediately preceding 2020, according to data shown in Table 1. In this are presented the results, in millions of reais, obtained by Natura in relation to its consolidated net revenue when making its sales, deducted taxes, discounts, rebates and returns; as well as the consolidated Earnings *before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization*, which refers to earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (also known as Lajida in Portuguese); consolidated net income and, finally, the average daily traded volume of shares of the company. These indicators analyzed together and over the years, allows us to observe financial and economic issues of the organization, such as its solvency and annual revenues, for example.

Table 1 - Economic indicators (R\$ million) of Natura in the years 2018 to 2020

	2018	2019	2020
Consolidated net revenue	13.397	14.445	18.345
Consolidated EBITDA	1.846	1.905	3.464
Consolidated net income	548	392	1.102
Average daily traded volume of shares	59	129	343

Source: Natura Annual Report (2020).

Moreover, through the economic indicators of natura company shown in Table 1, referring to the years 2018 to 2020, it is notorious the significant increases (in millions) of the variables between the years considered. Such growth of Natura can result, among other possible factors, from its management forms, strategies and innovations. Nevertheless, the economic performance of Natura in the years 2018 to 2020 can also indicate the importance of the business model focused on sustainability, tied to *green marketing* , the focus theme of this research.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In summary to the issue of strategic management tied to *green marketing* in the business sphere it is evident that the development of sustainable strategies for the sale of a product or provision of services is relevant in today's society, since it is a relatively new concept and tends to grow exponentially in human thought. As stated in this article, social awareness is notorious and has firm bases on socio-environmentally sustainable actions and choices, at least in some consumer niches.

Nevertheless, to remain in any competitive market and become an exponential business, organizations must invest in *marketing*, as it is through this tool that a market segment is persuaded. It is also worth mentioning that the *support of green marketing* in strategic plans can be used as a differentiating factor, considering that the choices that a company makes and the actions it adopts are often analyzed by

its target audience, which is therefore a decisive factor for the consumer during the process of choosing between a company when faced with similar products or services in quality and price, differing only in how the company deals with social and environmental issues.

On the commitment to such issues, the present work observed the corporate *policy and marketing strategy adopted by the cosmetics* company Natura & CO. However, some care should be taken into consideration by companies, to avoid misleading advertising and that this *image of greenwashing* does not interfere with the success of the organization. Moreover, the consumer himself concerned with environmental issues should also pay little to pay to the real actions carried out by companies and not only for what they use in their advertising campaigns.

Due to the current pandemic of Covid-19 and the growing unemployment in Brazil and amplifies inequality and disinformation, it is a fact that not all people will be able to consume the baskets of goods they want, this being one of the impasses to the full institution of green consumption. However, the study of consumer preferences indicates that despite this impasse, when this portion of the population, which is still treated as a niche, has greater opportunities for consumption, it may give preference to the green market, because such action can transcend its self-realization and allows the consumer to put into practice their intended social values.

Thus, it is inferable that an organization that implements *green marketing* within its management can obtain much more success and prominence in the market in which it is part, which, however, depends on many other specificities. In addition, such organization influences the process of choice and the way of acting of its customers and other companies that wish to follow its policies and actions. Although it was widespread in the twentieth century, *green marketing* expands through generations of buyers and entrepreneurs, which can be concluded in this way that it is a concept that tends to remain persistent in the present and in the future.

REFERENCES

BEDANTE, G. **A influência da consciência ambiental e das atitudes em relação ao consumo sustentável na intenção de compra de produtos ecologicamente embalados**. Dissertação (Mestrado em Administração), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2004.

BENITES, L; POLO, E. A sustentabilidade como ferramenta estratégica empresarial: governança corporativa e aplicação do triple bottom line na Masisa. **Revista de Administração da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria**, v.6, 2013.

BOONE, L.E. **Marketing contemporâneo**. São Paulo: Cengage Learning, 2009.

BRASIL. **Código de Defesa do Consumidor** - Lei no 8.078/1990. Disponível em: <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/533814/cdc_e_normas_correlatas_2ed.pdf>. Acesso em: 26 ago. 2020.

BRASIL. **Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil**, 1988. Disponível em: <www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Constituicao/Constituicao.htm>. Acesso em: 17 dez. 2021.

BRASIL. **Relatório da Delegação do Brasil à Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Meio Ambiente**, 1972. Disponível em: <https://cetesb.sp.gov.br/proclima/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2013/12/estocolmo_72_Volume_I.pdf>. Acesso em: 18 dez. 2021.

CARNEIRO, L. Pandemia intensifica desemprego de longa duração no país. **Valor Econômico**, 08 set. 2021.

CERETTA, S; FROEMMING, L. Geração z: compreendendo os hábitos de consumo da geração emergente. **Revista Raunp**, n. 2, 2011.

CLEMENTE, G; MELO, C. A Identidade Visual como uma Ferramenta de Fidelização com o Consumidor. Estudo de Caso: Natura Cosméticos. In: **XVII CONGRESSO DE CIÊNCIAS DA COMUNICAÇÃO NA REGIÃO NORDESTE**. Intercom. Natal, 2015.

DALMORO, M; VENTURINI, J; PEREIRA, B. Marketing Verde: responsabilidade social e ambiental integradas na envolvente de marketing. **Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios**, v.11, n.30, 2009.

DINIZ, E; BERMANN, C. Economia verde e sustentabilidade. **Estudos Avançados**, v. 26, n. 74, 2012.

FEDERAÇÃO DAS INDÚSTRIAS DO ESTADO DO PARANÁ (FIEP). **87% dos consumidores brasileiros preferem comprar de empresas sustentáveis** – Fevereiro de 2019. Fiep, 2019. Disponível em: <https://agenciafiep.com.br/2019/02/28/consumidores-preferem-empresas-sustentaveis/#> Acesso em: 05 dez. 2021.

INSTITUTO EHTOS. **Indicadores Ethos-sebrae de responsabilidade social empresarial para micro e pequenas empresas**. São Paulo, 2012. Disponível em: <https://www3.ethos.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/IndicadoresEthos-Sebrae_2012_PORT.pdf>. Acesso em: 16 jan. 2022.

KOTLER, Philip. **Administração de marketing: análise, planejamento, implementação e controle**. São Paulo: Atlas, 2011.

KOTLER, Philip. **Marketing 3.0: As forças que estão definindo o novo marketing centrado no ser humano**. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2010 – 4ª impressão.

KOTLER, P; KARTAJAYA, H; SETIAWAN, I. **Marketing 4.0**: Do tradicional ao digital. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Sextante, 2017.

KOTLER, P; KELLER, K. **Administração de marketing**. São Paulo: Pearson, 2012.

LAVORATO, Marilena. **Marketing Verde**: Oportunidade para atender demandas. SOCIOAMBIENTAL ON-LINE, 2017. E-book. Disponível em: <http://socioambientalonline.com.br/wpcontent/uploads/2017/04/Ebook_Mkt_Verde_Atlas1.pdf>. Acesso em: 21 ago. 2021.

LIMA, L. **Marketing de responsabilidade socioambiental corporativa**: caso na natura cosméticos. Dissertação (Graduação em Ciências Contábeis), Centro Universitário Fames, Fortaleza, 2020.

MANKIWI, Gregory. **Introdução à economia**. São Paulo: Cengage Learning, 2013.

MATOS, B. **A evidenciação voluntária do capital intelectual de natureza social e ambiental da empresa Natura cosméticos S.A.** no período de 2003 a 2008. Dissertação (Graduação em Ciências Contábeis), Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, 2009.

MOWEN, J.; MINOR, M. **Comportamento do consumidor**. São Paulo: PHB, 2003.

NATURA. **Contra testes em animais**. Natura, 2019. Disponível em: <<https://www.natura.com.br/blog/sustentabilidade/contra-testes-em-animais>>. Acesso em: 23 set. 2021.

NATURA. **Inovação**. Natura, 2022. Disponível em: <<https://www.natura.com.br/inovacao>>. Acesso em: 13 mar. 2022.

NATURA. **Natura é uma das empresas mais sustentáveis do mundo**. Natura, 2020. Disponível em: <<https://www.natura.com.br/blog/mais-natura/natura-e-uma-das-empresas-mais-sustentaveis-do-mundo>>. Acesso em: 23 set. 2021.

NATURA. **Refil: conheça produtos natura que têm essa embalagem consciente**. Natura, 2019. Disponível em: <<https://www.natura.com.br/blog/sustentabilidade/refil-conheca-produtos-natura-que-tem-essa-embalagem-consciente>>. Acesso em: 23 set. 2021.

NATURA. **Relatório anual Natura 2020**. Brasil, 2020. Disponível em: <https://static.rede.natura.net/html/sitecf/br/11_2021/relatorio_anual/Relatorio_Anual_Natura_GRI_2020.pdf>. Acesso em: 23 jan. 2022.

NATURA. **Sustentabilidade**. Natura, 2020. Disponível em: <<https://www.natura.com.br/sustentabilidade>>. Acesso em: 22 de set. 2021.

NATURA conclui compra da Avon e cria 4ª maior empresa de beleza do mundo. Forbes, 2020. Disponível em: <<https://forbes.com.br/negocios/2020/01/natura-conclui-compra-da-avon-e-cria-4a-maior-empresa-de-beleza-do-mundo/>>. Acesso em: 23 jan. 2022.

PAULANI, L; BRAGA, M. **A nova contabilidade social**: uma introdução a macroeconomia. 4a ed. São Paulo: Saraiva, 2012.

PINHO, J.B. **Comunicação em marketing**. 9ª ed. Campinas: Papirus, 2008.

PROGRAMA DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS PARA O MEIO AMBIENTE. PNUMA. **Caminhos para o desenvolvimento sustentável e a erradicação da pobreza**: síntese para tomadores de decisão. 2011. 52p.

PROGRAMA ESTADUAL DE MUDANÇAS CLIMÁTICAS DO ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO (PROCLIMA). **Conferências Internacionais** – Março de 2020. Proclima, 2020. Disponível em: <<https://cetesb.sp.gov.br/proclima/conferencias-internacionais-sobre-o-meio-ambiente/>>. Acesso em: 09 out. 2021.

SANDRONI, P. **Dicionário de economia do século XI**. 3a ed. Rio de Janeiro: Sindicato Nacional dos Editores de Livros, 2005.

SANTOS, J. **Cor e comunicação**: A experiência da cor preta. Dissertação (Mestrado em Comunicação), Escola Superior de Artes e Design (ESAD), Portugal, 2017.

SARTORI, S; LATRÔNICO, F; CAMPOS, L. Sustentabilidade e desenvolvimento sustentável: uma taxonomia no campo da literatura. **Revista Ambiente e Sociedade**, v.17, n.1, 2014.

SCHIOCHET, R. A Evolução do Conceito de Marketing “Verde”. **Revista Meio Ambiente e Sustentabilidade**, v.15, n.7, 2018.

SILVA, C. **Natura lança Ekos Flor do Luar em evento para a mídia especializada**. Perfumart: a arte de se perfumar. Disponível em: <<https://www.perfumart.com.br/noticias/natura-lanca-ekos-flor-do-luar>>. Acesso em: 23 jan. 2022.

SOUZA, K. **Economia verde e docoupling**: uma aplicação para o setor canavieiro do Brasil. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências: Economia Aplicada), Universidade de São Paulo, Piracicaba, 2013.

TAVARES, F; FERREIRA, G. **Marketing verde**: um olhar sobre as tensões entre greenwashing e ecopropaganda na construção do apelo ecológico na comunicação publicitária. *Revista Espaço Acadêmico*, n. 138, 2012.

UCHOA, Frederico. **Economia das Organizações**. Salvador: FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS CONTÁBEIS, 2017. E-book. Disponível em: <https://educapes.capes.gov.br/bitstream/capes/174985/4/eBook_Economia_das_Organizacoes-Ciencias_Contabeis_UFBA.pdf>. Acesso em: 05 dez. 2021.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP). **Estamos no caminho para uma recuperação verde? Ainda não** – Março de 2021. Unep, 2021. Disponível em: <<https://www.unep.org/pt-br/noticias-e-reportagens/comunicado-de-imprensa/estamos-no-caminho-para-uma-recuperacao-verde-ainda>>. Acesso em: 21 nov. 2021.

VARIAN, H. **Microeconomia: Princípios Básicos**. 7ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 2006.

VIEIRA, R. Natura é a empresa mais sustentável do ano. **Exame**, 2017. Disponível em: <<https://exame.com/revista-exame/a-empresa-mais-sustentavel-do-ano-natura/>>. Acesso em: 22 set. 2020.

VIEIRA, V. Fazendo uma revisão nas áreas de influência no comportamento do consumidor. **REAd**, v.8, n.5, 2002.

YCAR. **Natura prevê reciclar 7 toneladas de plástico em um ano com embalagens de Kaiak Oceano**, 2021. Ycar, 2021. Disponível em: < <https://www.ycar.com.br/natura-preve-reciclar-7-toneladas-de-plastico-em-um-ano-com-embalagens-de-kaiak-oceano/>>. Acesso em: 13 mar. 2022.

ZACOMPÉ, F; ENSSLIN, L; ENSSLIN, S. Desenvolvimento de um modelo para avaliar a sustentabilidade corporativa. **Produção**, v. 22, n.3, 2012.