

## E K O N O M I K A

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### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AS SOCIAL ASPECT FOR BRANDING STRATEGY

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.9770/szv.2021.2\(3\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/szv.2021.2(3))

**For citation:** Šipilova V., Seydaliyeva M., Simakhova A. (2021) Environmental sustainability as social aspect for branding strategy. *Sociālo Zinātņu Vēstnesis / Social Sciences Bulletin*, 33(2): 56–76. [https://doi.org/10.9770/szv.2021.2\(3\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/szv.2021.2(3))

**Citēšanai:** Šipilova V., Seydaliyeva M., Simakhova A. (2021) Vides ilgtspēja kā zīmola stratēģijas sociālais aspekts. *Sociālo Zinātņu Vēstnesis*, 33(2): 56–76. [https://doi.org/10.9770/szv.2021.2\(3\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/szv.2021.2(3))

Gradual shifts in consumption philosophy towards environmental sustainability, stricter environmental regulatory measures and changes in economic relationships stimulate reconsideration of business approaches what requires reconsideration of marketing activities as well. Brand is a strong tool of marketing activities. Branding strategies allow for searching consumer interest and loyalty according to the modern trends and values. Although, at the core branding is used for gaining higher profit, nowadays, such topical social value as environmental sustainability receives higher attention from both consumers and producers, and activities towards increase of profit more and more need to be accompanied by environmental sustainability principles. Unfavorable climate change becomes as a core of social challenges among others what mirrors in increasing needs of social responsibility in business activities. In such context, environmentally sustainable consumption becomes as direction for branding activities. Interdependence between brand image and consumption indicates that branding is significant for encouraging environmentally friendly consumption behavior. There are obvious differences between promotion of products and services as basis using only economic stimulus or also environmental sustainability approach. These differences lie in values and accents required by the sense of nature preservation and social responsibility in consumption and production. For better branding practices, stakeholders need versatile knowledge about key features of traditional and green branding. The article aims to review the reasons for expansion of accents in branding towards environmental sustainability as social responsibility aspect and to present general characteristics and strategies for traditional and green branding. The authors suppose that the research results may be useful for marketing lecturers, students, business representatives and consumers.

**Key words:** brand, branding strategy, environmental sustainability, social responsibility, economic sense of a brand, marketing.

#### Vides ilgtspēja kā zīmola stratēģijas sociālais aspekts

Pakāpeniska patēriņa filozofijas pāreja uz vides ilgtspēju, arvien stingrāki vides regulējošie pasākumi un izmaiņas ekonomiskajās attiecībās rada nepieciešamību pārskatīt arī pieejas uzņēmējdarbības veikšanai, kas vienlaicīgi prasa arī mārketinga aktivitāšu pārskatīšanu. Zīmols ir spēcīgs mārketinga aktivitāšu instruments. Zīmola veidošanas stratēģijas ļauj meklēt patērētāju

interesi un lojalitāti atbilstoši mūsdienu tendencēm un vērtībām. Lai gan pamatā zīmolvedība tiek izmantota ar mērķi gūt lielāku peļņu, mūsdienās, līdz ar uzmanības pieaugumu tādai sociālai vērtībai kā vides ilgtspēja patērētāju un ražotāju vidū, aktivitātes peļņas palielināšanai arvien vairāk tiek papildinātas ar vides ilgtspēju principiem. Nelabvēlīgas klimata pārmaiņas kļūst par sociālo problēmu kodolu, cita starpā, kas atspoguļojas pieaugošajās vajadzībās pēc sociālās atbildības uzņēmējdarbībā. Šādā kontekstā videi ilgtspējīgs patēriņš kļūst par zīmola stratēģiju darbības virzienu. Zīmola tēla un patēriņa savstarpējā sakarība parāda, ka zīmols ir nozīmīgs, lai veicinātu videi draudzīgu patēriņu. Pastāv acīmredzamas atšķirības starp produktu un pakalpojumu pārdošanas veicināšanu, izmantojot tikai ekonomiskos stimulus vai arī vides ilgtspēju pieeju. Šis atšķirības slēpjas vērtībās un akcentos, ko prasa dabas saglabāšanas un sociālās atbildības izjūta patēriņā un ražošanā. Uzņēmējiem un patērētājiem, kuri ir ieinteresēti labākās zīmola veidošanas praksēs, ir vajadzīgas daudzpusīgas zināšanas par tradicionālās un zaļās zīmolvedības galvenajām iezīmēm. Raksta mērķis ir aplūkot iemeslus, kuru dēļ akcenti zīmolvedībā tiek paplašināti ar vides ilgtspēju un sociālās atbildības aspektu, kā arī parādīt vispārējās tradicionālās un zaļās zīmolvedības iezīmes un stratēģijas. Autori pieļauj, ka pētījuma rezultāti var būt noderīgi mārketinga pasniedzējiem, studentiem, uzņēmumu pārstāvjiem un patērētājiem.

**Atslēgas vārdi:** zīmols, zīmola stratēģija, vides ilgtspēja, sociālā atbildība, zīmola ekonomiskā jēga, mārketing.

### **Экологическая устойчивость как социальный аспект стратегии брендинга**

Постепенные сдвиги в философии потребления в сторону экологической устойчивости, более строгие меры экологического регулирования и изменения в экономических отношениях стимулируют пересмотр бизнес-подходов, что требует также и пересмотра маркетинговой деятельности, в том числе такого сильного её инструмента, как бренд. Стратегии брендинга позволяют идентифицировать интересы и определять лояльность потребителей в соответствии с современными тенденциями и ценностями. Хотя по сути брендинг используется для получения более высокой прибыли, в настоящее время такая актуальная социальная ценность, как экологическая устойчивость, привлекает повышенное внимание как со стороны потребителей, так и со стороны производителей, и деятельность, направленная на увеличение прибыли, всё больше и больше должна основываться на принципы экологической устойчивости. Неблагоприятное изменение климата стало одной из основных социальных проблем, что выражается в растущей потребности в социальной ответственности предпринимательской деятельности. В этом контексте экологически устойчивое потребление становится направлением для брендинговой деятельности. Взаимозависимость между имиджем бренда и потреблением указывает на то, что брендинг играет важную роль в стимулировании экологически безопасного поведения потребителей. Существуют очевидные различия между продвижением товаров и услуг с использованием только экономических стимулов и продвижением товаров и услуг на основе подхода экологической устойчивости. Эти различия заключаются в ценностях и акцентах, необходимых для сохранения природы и социальной ответственности в потреблении и производстве. Предпринимателям и потребителям, заинтересованным в улучшении практики брендинга, необходимы разносторонние знания о ключевых особенностях традиционного и зелёного брендинга. В статье рассматриваются причины, стимулирующие расширение акцентов в брендинге в направлении экологической устойчивости и социальной ответственности, а также представлены общие характеристики и стратегии традиционного и зелёного брендинга. Авторы полагают, что результаты исследования могут быть полезны преподавателям и студентам по маркетингу, представителям бизнеса и потребителям.

**Ключевые слова:** бренд, стратегия брендинга, экологическая устойчивость, социальная ответственность, экономический смысл бренда, маркетинг.

## Introduction

Traditionally, the main purpose of branding is to obtain maximum profit by placing a positive brand image in the minds of consumers. Furthermore, branding has social significance (Menshikov et al. 2017). Branding strategies, which are elaborated to increase profitability, usually, provide also social effects. In general, it is noteworthy to mention several possible social effects from brand development on society:

- the brands are the source of positive trends in indicators of social and economic development of the country, region, and community. In particular, there are observed improvements of indicators of social and economic development of the territory, revival of economic activity, increase in budget revenues, development of priority areas and industries, growth of the tax base, solution of social problems;
- creation of new jobs, expansion of qualification and professional opportunities, development of personnel potential, the growth of salaries;
- assistance in receiving sponsorship, voluntary contributions, etc., which will be sent to social and economic development of the country, region, and community;
- solving social, economic and energy problems of the country;
- development of territorial infrastructure;
- application of a rational approach to the use of the existing potential of the country, in particular it natural and climatic and energy resources.

The main task of branding strategy is to create the strongest possible brand by supporting the key values of the company's product. Many researchers in the fields of marketing, social communications, and psychology have studied the characteristics of modern brands, including D. Maloney (2015), D. Tombu (2009), K. Keller and D. Aaker (1992), D. Aaker (1995). The scientists O. Todorova (2014), N. Lund, S. Cohen and C. Scarles (2018) proposed new tools for branding to make it more attractive for society and consumers as storytelling. Such scholars as N. Irtlach (2015), O. Vlasenko (2007) and E. Romat (2016) studied the issue of brand strategy formatting. Such scientists as J. van den Bergh and M. Behrer (2011), M. Iqbal, A. Rasli and I. Hassan (2012), A. Panchenko (2016) and S. Veselov (2002) discussed the perspectives of branding in social sphere, for example for public institutions. Such scientists have studied social influence of branding as J. Bertilsson and J. Rennstam (2018), J. Hansen (2012), J. Hulberg (2006). The mentioned authors described sociological paradigms of corporate branding, value of branding, social factors of branding.

The branded products must be adapted to the demand of the current age category, as the generation of consumers is constantly evolving and transforming. J. van den Bergh and M. Behrer note that "each generation is a product of its time and, of course, those technologies, media, social characteristics and events that shaped them in a unique way" (van den Bergh, Behrer 2011: 20). In parallel, the current Age is characterized by necessity to introduce environmental sustainability principles in production and consumption processes and to use it as competitive advantage (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017) including all age categories of consumers.

The environmental issue within branding rises in context of social aspect because, nowadays, when the number of competing brands increases and the global consumer

goods market accelerates, scientists indicate that: “Modern consumers expect companies to be socially responsible” (Grazzini et al. 2021: 8). Nowadays, being socially responsible means incorporation of sustainability principles in business activities, including also marketing (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017). Taking into account negative effects from growing mass production and consumption on environment and climate change (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021), environmental sustainability gains attention from business with aim to increase its social responsibility and maintain consumers’ interest. R. Dangelico and D. Vocalelli (2017: 1275) highlight that: “Environmental sustainability is not just a passing trend but a key issue when designing, developing, and marketing new products”. Furthermore, countries and different regulators elaborate stricter environmental regulations what also encourages business to incorporate sustainability concept in development strategies (e.g., Loucanova et al. 2021, Groening et al. 2018).

In such conditions, business considers the ways for expanding of business strategies and branding by the environmental sustainability concept for addressing the growing interest in social responsibility (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017; Morea et al. 2021). It is noteworthy that social value of sustainable business activities manifest itself at different scales. For example, at the scale of local community initiatives (e.g., Dai, Hwang 2021, about youth-led bamboo craft sustainable brands and solving of social problems) and at the scale of multi-national corporations (e.g., Grazzini et al. 2021, about Corporate Social Responsibility policies in fashion industry).

In the process of expanding business activities towards sustainability, marketing and, particularly, branding as part of marketing activities, has fundamental economic and, especially, social role for the environmental sustainability due to its contribution to the concept of products and services, creation of a green market, communication with consumers, and increase awareness of consumers about environmental sustainability (Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017).

As R. Dangelico and D. Vocalelli (2017: 1264) indicate: “Further, developing green products/services would be useless for environmental sustainability unless these get widespread in the market”. Widespread of green products/services is of particular importance because sustainable activities in business are associated with additional risk (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021). For example, J. Doorn, H. Risselada and P. Verhoef (2021) highlight that “sustainable new product introductions achieve lower sales than their conventional counterparts” (van Doorn et al. 2021: 182), but at the same time “overall tendency in sales of green products is increasing” (Beriain Banares et al. 2021: 2).

Widespread of every product/service mostly depends on success of branding strategy. In turn, success of branding in terms of environmental sustainability needs clear application of the particular knowledge concerning branding process and peculiarities of branding with focus on environmental sustainability concern.

The article aims to review the reasons leading to expansion of accents in branding towards environmental sustainability as social responsibility aspect and to present general characteristics and strategies for “traditional” and “green” branding. The article is organized according to the aim set within the research. The second paragraph

presents a sense of branding and reasons for making accents on environmental sustainability as social aspect of branding activities. The third paragraph highlights key features of branding strategies a) traditional branding, when business aims to meet consumers' needs and gain higher profit and in b) green branding, when besides meeting of consumers' needs and gaining higher profit business contributes to the reduction of environmental impact of production and consumption processes. For the aim, the authors apply system analysis, scientific abstraction and synthesis, system generalization.

### **About branding and reasons for expansion of accents towards environmental sustainability: explanatory overview**

Initially, the product was purely practical. Goods were a mechanism for solving urgent problems and had no social, psychological, cultural or environmental connotations. With the development of economics, technologies, international relations, automation of production and digitalization a need for mass sales goods through marketing becomes widespread.

As A. van Riel, T. Andreassen, L. Lervik-Olsen, L. Zhang, S. Mithas and K. Heinonen (2021) write: "Historically, traditional marketplace roles advocated that firms produce, and consumers consume. However, in various sectors and industries, an unconstrained following of this narrow economic imperative has created substantial challenges for consumers, society, and the planet alike. Fast, efficient, and unrestrained growth in mass-production and consumption of standardized consumer goods and services has created industries that are in a large part unsustainable" (van Riel et al. 2021: 389).

Given direct dependence between increase in demand and the brand image in the eyes of the consumers, scientists consider marketing and, particularly, branding as significant for changes towards environmentally sustainable consumption (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017). Scientists understand sustainable consumption not through reduction in consumption, but through reduction of its environmental impact, thus focusing on sustainable way of consumption (Liobikiene, Bernatoniene 2017). That is why green marketing and green brands are necessary.

Scientists highlight evolution of definition of green marketing from focus on only inclusion of environmental issues in marketing strategies towards structured combination of customer needs, organizational goals and environmental issues (Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017). Green marketing has to work towards satisfying consumer needs in a profitable and sustainable way at the same time and, thus, green marketing is not simply a variation of traditional marketing but a new approach to production and consumption processes (Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017).

However, the reasons for reconsideration of approach to marketing activities lies not only in environmental but also in economic issues (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021). A. van Riel, T. Andreassen, L. Lervik-Olsen, L. Zhang, S. Mithas and K. Heinonen (2021) explain that the economic reasons for shift towards so-called socially responsible production and consumption lie in supposition that only focus on maximizing economic profitability is not socially efficient. Sustainable oriented responsible consumers will

become as main change agents at the markets. Brand is a tool for searching consumer interest and loyalty according to modern trends and values.

There is a diversification of the market due to the development of science and technologies and climate change introduces necessity in new features of goods. Modern society adapts to the fast pace of life and changes consumption values, which ultimately radically changes the philosophy of marketing and a key factor what is produced. The new philosophy is to produce and consume in a sustainable way.

In its sense, brand aims to offer a set of values and beliefs, a way of self-realization. Nowadays, brand can contribute to the society's intention to prevent climate change. A strong brand, traditionally the main indicator of quality, becomes an institution of lifestyle, when, nowadays, a modern lifestyle requires reducing of environmental influence of consumption and saving the nature. A general portrait of consumers committed to the values of sustainability demonstrates high involvement of millennials and almost equal interest among men and women (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021).

Branding is a process that aims to create an image of a product and an endorsement. In today's world, branding is devoted to health, beauty, impressions, image, ideas, and recently to the climate change. W. Landor, founder of one of the largest branding agencies in the world said: "A brand is a promise. By identifying a product or service and confirming its originality, the brand conveys sense of satisfaction and quality" (Jeffkins, Yadin 2003: 9). Brand is not just a logo, slogan, lettering, etc., it is a set of all business identifiers.

Everyday people see a huge number of brands around them, some of them are known all over the world, others only in a certain region, but they all have a very similar effect. Branding works indirectly by improving the perception of the company by potential customers, which ultimately improves the overall economic performance of the company. The strength of a brand depends largely on the loyalty of its consumers. The right image in the eyes of consumers can increase the demand for the product and the profitability of the brand, but an inadequately thought out marketing strategy can negatively affect interest in the product. In the case of green brands, negative effects may come from so-called Greenwashing activities, when firms over evaluate or incorrectly communicate environmental effects of their products and services (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017, about different meanings of Greenwashing).

Nowadays, firms aware to be in line with environmental sustainability during gaining a profit and meeting society's needs. Firms also contribute to involvement of society in a sustainable way of consumption, because interest of consumers to follow sustainability goals differs despite of overall urgency of the issue. A. van Riel, T. Andreassen, L. Lervik-Olsen, L. Zhang, S. Mithas and K. Heinonen (2021) conclude that "consumers positively assess social sustainability initiatives in terms of social activities for local communities, supporting good causes (e.g., charities, sports, culture), and introducing new solutions to addressing social challenges, and environmental sustainability initiatives, caring for the environment, and prioritizing environmentally sustainable behavior in general" (van Riel et al. 2021: 396). Highly motivated consumers are able to boycott a brand or replace products they use in the case of unsustainable behavior of a firm (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021).

In turn, consumers with lower motivation towards environmental sustainability concept in consumption base their choice mostly on price rather than on environmental performance of products or services (e.g., Beriain Banares et al. 2021). In some extent, such choice may be explained with the fact that “better product environmental performance does not guarantee individual benefits to buyer” (Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017: 1270). Additionally, often consumers receive incomplete or even incorrect information about sustainable characteristics of products/services what reduces consumers’ believe and interest to the issue (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017, about Greenwashing). Partly, such incomplete knowledge may be improved through labelling. Product labelling according to sustainable characteristics may be as useful tool for choosing products. For example, scientists indicate positive effects from green products’ labelling not only for consumers, but also for economy and even regions, countries, and industries (e.g., Mazzocchi et al. 2021; Autzen, Hegland 2021).

Branding focuses on improving the company’s image, and corporate communications to reinforce its messages. Nowadays, when value of green product and services increases at global market (e.g., Loucanova et al. 2021), it is necessary to produce and promote the products in line with sustainability concept. As R. Dangelico and D. Vocalelli (2017) highlight: “This Age is characterized ... by the recognition that companies’ socio-environmental performance may lead to competitive advantage” (Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017: 1266). According to E. Loucanova, M. Supin, T. Corejova, K. Repkova-Stofkova, M. Supinova, Z. Stofkova and M. Olsiakova (2021): “The green brand image has become a differential strategy for many trade markets” (Loucanova et al. 2021: 3).

Branding involves various targeted marketing activities to create a long-term product advantage. Branding is implemented in the process of developing and implementing marketing communications: brand marks, trademarks, packaging, advertising appeals, other marketing activities that help to highlight the product and create a different image of the product in the minds of consumers (brands-image). A properly built image in a long-term project can strengthen the brand, which in turn brings a stable added value of the product. In the case of environmental sustainability, E. Loucanova, M. Supin, T. Corejova, K. Repkova-Stofkova, M. Supinova, Z. Stofkova and M. Olsiakova (2021) mention: “Green brands not only communicate brand features as traditional marketing does, but also offer a unique personal recommendation of the brand” (Loucanova et al. 2021: 3).

Thus, the brand can be defined as a set of functional, emotional, psychological, social and even environmental promises to the target consumer that are unique and meaningful to the customers best meet their needs. In addition, nowadays in context of climate change it has to correspond with the needs of the nature and society. Often brands create a lifestyle, which is desirable for consumers. Nowadays, lifestyle has to follow changes in climate and brands have to follow to this trend, not to create their own differentiated lifestyle.

In today’s information society, it becomes difficult to invent new products that are not on the market to satisfy people’s daily physical or social needs. Therefore, a new task of marketing is to play with human emotions and manipulate abstract quality

categories. For the green products, L. Grazzini, D. Acuti and G. Aiello (2021) demonstrate the key role of a perceived warmth by consumers by using the example of fashion industry (Grazzini et al. 2021).

Determining a key characteristic of a product or service is a critical component in choosing a product positioning strategy. Brand values are a unique combination of important values to consumers that will drive the company's policies on products and services, pricing, methods, and distribution channels. In case of green products, their positioning requires to cluster customers and to focus on psychographic variables more than on demographic variables (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017).

A successful advertising campaign brings the brand closer to the consumer by communicating the product or service and the interests of the target audience. D. Maloney (2015) believes that "brand loyalty is based on the acceptance of the brand's culture and values, on the belief that the brand contributes to the common good" (Maloney 2015: 44). For example, in case of green products and services, scientists highlight millennials as consumer group with strong interest in sustainable consumption, who even boycotting and replacing of brand, which misled or ignore their values (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021).

Consumers are faced with the task of not only choosing the company's brand from the many different options, but also trying it out, learning it, remembering it and preferring it. A necessary element in developing a successful brand is brand strategy. The brand must be closely linked to the overall business strategy and a company's positioning in the market place. It must be integrated with all other marketing and communications programs. Positioning or repositioning is the basis of a successful brand strategy. A complete brand communication strategy and program is developed to increase awareness of the brand attributes. The company's strategies should aim to create a strong identity that is rooted and recognized by consumers. Consumers determine the working dynamics that companies need to understand and to manage to ensure that people's needs are truly met. Consumers have become the basis for decision-making and any strategy aims to understand their needs and wants. Especially in a case of green marketing, business has to expand customer-oriented approach (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021).

In conclusion, it is noteworthy to indicate, that nowadays, there are environmental, economic and even social reasons for expanding traditional marketing activities towards green marketing activities. This intention finds roots in necessity to balance interests in economic profit, environment conservation and increasing value of socially responsible consumption. However, different preferences of consumers remain topical and not all consumers follow environmental features of products and services but base their choice on other factors (i.e., price, place, promotion). Thus, both approaches to branding still are applicable to business strategies and in the next paragraph, the authors indicate main characteristics of both approaches to branding – traditional and green.



### “Traditional” and “green” approaches to branding: general characteristics and strategies

Scientific literature contains a knowledge on different branding strategies, e.g., corporate branding (e.g., Balmer, Podnar 2021), place branding (Sipilova, Baldi 2012), city branding (e.g., Florek et al. 2021), branding strategy for SME (Malaska et al. 2011), international branding (e.g., Tsai 2011), and even personal branding (e.g., Oshiro et al. 2021) etc.

In general, concrete branding strategies may be characterized by their usage for reaching economic benefits. Although, nowadays, branding strategy may be developed with expanded aim and focus on environmental sustainability.

In context of the present study, the authors consider two approaches for branding strategy development:

- “traditional” point of view, when branding strategies are elaborated and applied for reaching only economic benefits, i.e., when business aims to meet consumers’ needs and gain higher profit;
- “green” point of view with expanded aim, when besides meeting of consumers’ needs and gaining higher profit business contributes to reduction of environmental impact from production and consumption processes.

The authors do not aim to compare both approaches, but highlight their key features understanding that green branding may be as a part or continuation of traditional approach in a company and that traditional approach still is topical due to differentiated interest from consumers.

In the paragraph, the above-mentioned approaches are characterized by their sense and strategies applied for product promotion. Given that branding strategies are highly diversified (e.g., corporate, place, city, personal, international, green, for SME, for TNC etc.), the authors choose concrete branding strategies for the consideration. As far as environmental sustainability as social dimension in consumption is topical to all continents, the authors focus on the example of international branding strategies for presenting “traditional” point of view and green branding for “green” point of view.

Usually, the decision to choose a branding strategy is made, when a company develop or purchase a new product, service or restructure an existing portfolio of brands. The success of branding depends on the ability to maintain a relevant and attractive value proposition of the brand in the long time, in other words, on the ability to maintain its relevance in a rapidly changing competitive environment.

**“Traditional” approach to branding strategy.** Economic sense of a brand is understood as brand equity, which consists of such elements as brand value (separate asset that can be included in the balance companies), brand strength (degree of consumer’s commitment to the brand), brand image (set of impressions and consumer associations that caused by the brand) (Pomaz, Shingirey 2014). Carrying about the mentioned elements contributes to profitability of a firm.

Brand value ensures several economic benefits for business:

- the difference in the value of the goods of a particular brand and non-brand goods, multiplied on sales volume;
- reducing the cost of promotion (marketing tools);
- opportunity to enter new markets at low cost;
- trade levers, as manifested in the fact that the distribution channels are more positive respond to well-known branded products;
- increase the margin of goods (buyers are willing to buy branded goods for more high prices);
- sales growth;
- brand distribution.

Branding strategy is necessary to find, maintain, and improve positions of certain products/services at the market. This may be ensured through brand strength. The strength of the brand characterizes the commitment of consumers of a brand. In the practice of marketing, there are five characteristic features of the brand or “attributes of the strength of the brand” (Pomaz, Shingirey 2014: 8–9):

- branded goods are able to occupy a larger market share than similar goods that are promoted under the brand without a branding strategy;
- demand for goods promoted under leading brands increases more intensively than demand for goods promoted under the brand without a branding strategy;
- a brand in its segment can be positioned in a higher price range compared to similar products promoted under the brand without a branding strategy;
- the presence of strong brands in the brand portfolio of the company simplifies trading with independent distributors, as the brand brings high profits from one meter of retail space;
- brands have the majority of consumers (25–50%), absolutely loyal to the brand, so these consumers are willing to give up or postpone the purchase than to choose another product (in conventional brands, this level is in the range of 10–15%).

Such benefits motivate firms to develop and strengthen brand at both local and foreign markets.

The margin of an organization with a good corporate image when selling its products or services is higher, because, of course, will be able to set higher prices compared to similar products. The benefits of a good image are expressed in higher profits, as the organization can afford to realize price strategy. A good corporate image will contribute to the fact that investors will be interested in the company by contributing capital (Seydaliyeva 2020).

Recruiting the most qualified and capable staff is one of the advantages of a brand with a good image in the market. Not everyone can afford to hire qualified staff to conduct their business and management. Once a brand is formed in the minds of consumers, it occupies a space that needs to be developed and taken care of. The idea is to create a profile with its own identity, stable and differentiated, which creates value for society. The factor of differentiation is necessary in the company because it affects the image of brand that is created in the minds of society.

Strong brands also contribute to the formation of national culture and image of the country. Many companies use the effect of the country of origin of the brand to promote their products on the world market and increase profits. The country's image and the export of brands influence each other, because if the country's image improves, a cyclical mechanism is launched: the country promotes brands, and brands promote the country. The well-known scheme looks like this: "a commodity is what is produced; a brand is what is sold" (Seydaliyeva 2020: 18).

Thus, the role of branding in the global market is extremely high, and it is an obvious factor in the competitiveness in the global economy. The brightest example for branding strategies relates to international branding usually applied by TNC (also MNC).

There are several types of international branding strategies used by companies (e.g., Antropova, Voznaya 2015): strategy of international brand, global brand, transnational and multinational brand. The choice of a strategy depends on the type of product and its characteristics, as well as the choice of the target audience and not all approaches can be applied to any product or service.

The global strategy is to expand the positioning of the international brand, which is unified for all countries. The main reason for choosing this strategy is the versatility of the product and the strategy aimed at maintaining the value of human communication. Companies that use a global approach use the same name, logo and slogan around the world. Companies decide to use identical brand communication, the same principles of strategy and positioning, given the growing role of internationalization of lifestyles, the tendency to adhere to common standards for the certain products and services. The creation of a strong brand requires a synthesis of high quality product and emotionally informative component of the brand. Today's consumer needs an interesting marketing solution. Quite often, a successful marketing move is to create an association of a product with the history of its appearance, a certain way of life or brand of the country. The global strategy is well suited for product categories in which there is a great similarity of buyers from different countries.

An example of using a transnational strategy is to promote a brand through advertising featuring national stars or celebrities, in which case the brand and market offer are adapted to local conditions, and the concept of branding and business principles are the same for all countries.

If it is necessary to adapt the marketing strategy to different markets, the approach of a multinational brand is used. Multinational strategy – implementation of different strategic approaches and brand development policies in different countries, adaptation of the brand and marketing activities to domestic markets – nations and regions.

There are features of national markets that should be considered when choosing a product positioning strategy only in a particular country. However, for example, IT companies use an international brand strategy without adapting marketing strategies to different local conditions, because brands and products are unique and do not face serious competition in foreign markets. The following table demonstrates more detailed example of branding strategies for entering a new market or expanding the existing portfolio of brands by using the case of TNC.

Table 1

**Branding strategies for entering a new market or expanding the existing portfolio of brands (the case of TNC)**

	Acquisition of a brand (cross-border mergers and acquisitions)	Development of own local brand	Withdrawal of own international brand	Subbrand development
Advantages	Obtaining the earned share in the market and loyal consumers; The existing brand corresponds with the needs of the local market; Automatic reduction of competition; Saving time on market research, development brand and its promotion.	Ability to manage the new brand from the moment of creation; Possibility to offer to the market new brand, which expresses new associations at the market; Absence of time restrictions; Risk reduction of cannibalization inside brand portfolio of TNCs.	Low costs; Brand awareness in the local market and the presence of a loyal group of consumers; Growth in the value of the international brand; Improving the image of TNCs.	Relatively low costs; The impact of the existing brand image on potential consumers; Presence at the market with loyalty to the main brand of local consumers; Easy integration into the existing brand portfolio; Low risk of failure due to the use of the existing reputation of the main brand.
Disadvantages	High costs; The need to adapt the new brand to the existing portfolio; Risk of cannibalization within the brand portfolio of TNCs; The risk of reducing the effectiveness of brand portfolio management; The need to change the management system to adapt to complicated brand architecture (relationships between them); The risk of reducing the profitability of some brands.	High costs; High competition among brands already available on the market; Competition between the company's own brands.	The need for significant changes in positioning brand for adapting it to needs of local market; The risk of rejection of the international brand by local consumers.	Lack of development of new brands with unique characteristics; The risk of no differences between different subbrands in the perception of potential consumers; Risk of switching consumers to subbrand from the main brand and zero increase in market share; The negative impact of subbrand failure on the parent brand.

Source: Seydaliyeva 2020.

According to the research made by N. Stukalo, A. Simakhova and H. Shmarlouskaya (2019), the brand creates barriers in the market for competitors, facilitates the company's introduction to the world market of new products and allows you to actively explore new niches in this market, helps the company to survive global financial and economic crises with less losses, allowing to distance a product in the competitor's product market and supports economy socialization (Stukalo et al. 2019).

Given in the Table 1 information indicates the presence of a large number of shortcomings or obvious benefits for different branding strategies depending on a case of each company. That is why choosing the optimal way to enter a new market, it is important to analyze comprehensively all available factors, to conduct an impact assessment a specific method for a portfolio of brands based on long-term results.

A balanced approach to the choice of method of brand portfolio development can increase the company's profitability and ensure its growth in the future. The above some aspects of the mechanism for promoting international brands are, but theoretically, the promotion of international and national brands is not much different from each other. In both cases, the main effort should be to create the strongest possible brand by supporting the core values of the company's product.

The authors highlight the following advantages of using the concept of branding in the strategies of TNCs with positive economic effects:

- identification of goods on the market;
- creating a holistic image;
- providing additional income;
- ensuring good sales;
- formation of consumer loyalty;
- rapid recovery after the crisis;
- protection of the manufacturer;
- increasing the company's market capital;
- simplified process of bringing new products to market;
- increasing the corporate spirit;
- attracting investors;
- reducing communication costs.

The mentioned benefits demonstrate economic character. Additionally, a company may follow environmental sustainability principles in a branding strategy. For this, it is necessary to understand principles of environmental sustainability in branding. In case of green marketing, approaches to branding strategies are expanded with the environmental issues, which have to be balanced with consumer needs and profitability of business activities. In case of big corporations, scientists indicate on differentiated experience.

Modern consumer society expects that activities of TNC (also MNC) are in line with sustainability concept (e.g., Riikinen et al. 2017). Such expectations are linked with negative environmental effects from activities of big corporations in host countries (e.g., Xia, Xiuzhi 2010). According to the practice, TNC include green marketing activities in global strategies for overcoming criticism and expand market share (e.g., Xia, Xiuzhi 2010). However, scientists indicate on negative effects from Greenwashing

realized by big corporations in host countries (Yang et al. 2020). Positive experience indicates on growing sustainability reporting by MNC, however this activity differs across sectors of economy (e.g., Kolk 2010). In the case of environmental sustainability, A. Kolk (2010) indicates that MNC reports about their: "... commitment and outlined activities undertaken to prevent environmental pollution..." (Kolk 2010: 367). Scientists also conclude about "good level of attention" of MNCs to circular economy principles and reporting about their commitment to, for example, eco-design, reuse, low energy consumption, zero emissions (Morea et al. 2021: 1).

The next paragraph demonstrates main features, which usually have to be taken into account, when a company realizes branding strategy with focus on environmental sustainability.

**"Green" approach to branding strategy.** Strategic branding is gaining an important place in the formation of competitive advantages. According to R. Dangelico and D. Vocalelli (2017), nowadays a way towards competitive advantage is linked with socio-environmental performance of companies as well. As A. van Riel, T. Andreassen, L. Lervik-Olsen, L. Zhang, S. Mithas and K. Heinonen (2021) highlight, the reasons for shifting a focus on green marketing are grounded not only in environmental, but in economic issues as well, when only maximizing economic profitability appears as socially inefficient (e.g., van Riel et al. 2021). Thus, economic approach to branding strategies of a business should be expanded with environmental sustainability concept.

On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to identify, distinguish and remember products, existing services, activities or organizations. Environmental sustainability concept may be as key direction in their choices across diversified offer, given that environmental conservation become very urgent issue.

Nowadays, scientists introduce understanding that "environmental sustainability is the third aim beyond consumers' satisfaction and company profitability" (Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017: 1274). For this purpose, traditional marketing is not enough and significance of green marketing increases. The environmental sustainability within branding activities appears in context of social aspect because, as L. Grazzini, D. Acuti and G. Aiello (2021) indicate, modern consumers requires companies to be socially responsible. The ways, in which companies may increase their social responsibility relate to the reduction of environmental effects from mass production and consumption. In turn, green marketing communicates these efforts with consumers and help companies to declare their rising social responsibility and care about future generations.

Social aspects of brand development are social responsibility, social values, and image of brand. In case of environmental sustainability, the choice of consumers relates to only environmental features of products or services. However, not all that is good for nature may be functionally acceptable and interesting to consumers. Additionally, usually consumers have positive attitudes to green products and services, but do not consume according to these emotions. For example, R. Dangelico and D. Vocalelli (2017) devote attention to the mentioned issues in their research by indicating that in case of green marketing it would be more preferable to focus on the purchase perception rather than on understanding of buying behavior. On the other side, such activities as Greenwashing rises skepticism of consumers about green brands.

One of the most significant distinctive features between traditional and green marketing relates to the overall behavior and image of a company. In case of green marketing, it is not enough to improve only environmental effects from production and consumption, a company has to become more sustainable itself. In this context, social aspect of green brands rises due to attention from consumers not only to a product, but also to production, promotion, marketing, and daily operations of a company as whole. In such case, green brand become as not only a lifestyle creator to consumers, but a company also has to follow values promoted by such brand in all daily operations. If companies, which practice green marketing are green by themselves, this positively affects green brand's image, rises green brand equity and consumers' loyalty (e.g. Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017).

As scientific studies indicate, green brand and their developers are able to contribute to solving of social problems at local and global levels. L. Grazzini, D. Acuti and G. Aiello (2021) write: "... sustainability-related activities tend to direct the company's resources to the improvement of social welfare by addressing social or environmental issues" (Grazzini et al. 2021: 4).

For example, Y. Dai and S.-H. Hwang (2021) demonstrate how microenterprises contribute to the solving of social problems. In their research Y. Dai and S.-H. Hwang (2021) present how through development of sustainable brands of bamboo based environmentally friendly products youth community contributes to preservation of culture, sustainable local development, environmentally friendly lifestyles, and additionally to expansion of involvement of society in dialogue and activities towards solving of social problems.

One more evidence for positive social effects from green brands lies in consumers' ethical characteristics. As R. Dangelico and D. Vocalelli (2017) mention in their study, consumers are able to pay more (usually products of green brands are more expensive) in case of contribution to charity and other socially responsible activities through their purchases. Consumers with sustainable values care about animals' wellbeing and fair-trade conditions, which are declared and communicated with consumers through sustainable certification (e.g., Mazzocchi et al. 2021).

There are several tools for development and promotion of green brands and they differ from traditional approach by their sense. The following table presents overview for approaches for green marketing activities (Table 2).

Table 2

**Green marketing activities overview: mix, targeting and orientation**

Green marketing mix	Green marketing targeting	Green marketing orientation
<p>Product – features of green products relate to improved environmental and societal effects (e.g., less pollution, waste reduction, less used energy resources, recycled materials, healthy features etc.).</p> <p>Price – usually consumers are sensitive to price and in case of green products prices usually are higher. The task of green marketing is to balance interests of the certain consumer groups and positive environmental effects.</p> <p>Place – use of Internet and new technologies for selling green products are understood as ways with lower environmental effects.</p> <p>Promotion – the process of promotion of green products differs from promotion of standard products. The process has to include environmental efficiency in each step of operation (packaging, transportation etc.) as well as credibility of information through using, for example, ecolabels.</p>	<p>Tactical targeting – advertising with green focus.</p> <p>Quasi-strategic targeting – developing a green brand in addition to existing brands.</p> <p>Strategic targeting – launching a new green strategic business unit. It is necessary to expand targeting from the focus on only green consumers towards consumers of standard products as well.</p>	<p>Strategic green marketing orientation – contribution to the overall progress in environmental sustainability (i.e., investments and collaboration choices based on environmental issues).</p> <p>Tactical green marketing orientation – attempts to reduce own (from business activities) environmental impact (i.e., use of electronic and digital solutions, paperless policy, recycled or reusable materials for daily needs, clean production process).</p> <p>Internal green marketing orientation – investments in human capital (i.e., recruitment of employees with eco-friendly behavior, motivation of employees to contribute to environmental sustainability).</p>

Note: mentioned approaches also may be considered as branding strategies to entering the markets of green products.

Source: compiled by the authors based on Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017; Papadas et al. 2017, 2019; Mazzocchi et al. 2021.

Image of a brand is a set of psychological and social characteristics that express the basic values, attitudes and lifestyles of the target market. They should reflect the most significant (strongest and most obvious) characteristics of personalization and sociality of consumers in the target market. This provides the actualization of such socio-psychological mechanisms in the perception of the consumer at the level of the conative component of the brand image, such as self-presentation, self-monitoring and self-verification. In case of green marketing, it is noteworthy that green brand contributes to emotional fulfillment (e.g., Dangelico, Vocalelli 2017), as for example, green brand as a feeling of well-being, green brand as a status-symbol for self-expression, usage of green brand for good feelings through the contact with nature. Although,



focus on only emotional presenting of green brands is not enough and functionality with positive effects on environment has to be reached, for example, through the life cycle of product. R. Dangelico and P. Pontrandolfo (2010) highlight significance of environmentally friendly characteristics of a product in phases of “before usage”, “during usage”, and “after usage”.

Such complex approach to green marketing activities is highly differentiated from traditional approach. Firstly, branding of green products requires wider investments in support of environmental features of a product. Secondly, it requires additional attention for communication about environmental products' features also for less interested consumers. Third, companies need to incorporate environmental sustainability in their daily operations not only in products' features.

Nowadays, social aspect of branding strategy selection plays a key role and has to be devoted to social responsibility, social values and brand image in complex.

## Conclusions

Nowadays, consumption and production processes are challenged by increasing role of social responsibility. At the moment, the most urgent aspect of social responsibility rises from unprecedented situation with climate change. This, promotion of products and services need to focus not only on pure economic accents, but also on environmental sustainability. Consumers' interest in green products and services as well as amount of sales are increasing. Therefore, firms need a knowledge about marketing strategies suitable for expansion of traditional marketing activities and introduce the third aim, i.e. to reduce environmental impact of consumption and production. Scientific research results highlight that approaches to traditional and green marketing differ by their sense. However, both approaches still are topical and demonstrate differentiated socially responsible effects.

Branding is proved tool for promotion of products and services, at the core, for gaining higher profit. If the goal of the brand is to be socially influential, then one must decide where the brand has an advantageous and differentiated position. It must be inclusive and accessible to all communities, taking in to account the different needs of communities. For example, through building of special relationships with communities for which the brand is particularly relevant and providing those communities with products or services that meet their specific needs. Most people are more likely to support brands that align with their values. Brands need to convince their customers that they have made the right choice and make it as easy as possible for them to remain loyal to the brand, rather than considering other options.

In case of traditional branding, brand is a tool for ensuring increase of profit at the home and foreign markets. Realization of branding strategies contributes to such economic dimensions as ensuring growing income, increasing market share, attracting investments, increasing sales etc. At the present, these activities meet growing attention to environmental sustainability and necessity to realize them with care about environment.

In case of green branding, not only an increasing interest from consumers affects intentions to create green brands. Gradually, environmental regulatory measures become stricter and criticism from environmentally friendly oriented communities rises. Additionally, scientists highlight also economic reasons for expanding accents in branding towards environmental sustainability (e.g., see Riel et al. 2021). These activities stimulate interest of firms in products and services with better environmental features for maintaining or improving their competitive advantage. R. Dangelico and D. Vocalelli (2017) indicate that socio-environmental performance of business may lead to competitive advantage. As a result, activities oriented on environmental sustainability direct firms' resources to improvements in social welfare by addressing social or environmental issues (e.g., Grazzini et al. 2021).

Interconnection between consumption and brand image in the eyes of consumers leads to the understanding that marketing and, particularly branding, is significant tool for changes in consumption behavior towards environmental sustainability concept. Green brands support values of environmentally friendly oriented consumers and communicate, educate and expand this knowledge among less interested part of consumer community. For business, being in line with environmental sustainability means not only reduction of environmental effects from products and services but also reducing own environmental impact not only in production and promotion processes but also in all daily operations. This is the main and the most obvious difference from traditional approach. Other differences specifically relate to the market segmentation and communication of products features with consumers. In addition, companies need to focus possible functional mismatches of benefits of products for environment and consumer needs, because not all what is desirable for environment functionally is acceptable for consumers.

In conclusion, it is noteworthy to indicate that positive social effects are possible in case of both approaches to branding activities, i.e. "traditional" and "green". However, exclusive focus on economic profitability, nowadays, experiences pressure from environmentally friendly oriented consumer community, environment regulators and even economic relationships. In context of unfavorable climate change, environmental sustainability is at the core of positive social effects in consumption and production processes. In case of environmental sustainability, branding activities remain the same at their sense but they are directed towards expanded aim and apply differentiated tools. In other words, green marketing is based on different values and use different accents than traditional marketing and these differences appear from necessity to combine profitability, consumer needs and nature conservation.

The article has highlighted reasons for expansion of traditional marketing activities towards green marketing activities and presented general characteristics and strategies for "traditional" and "green" branding. The knowledge may be useful for marketing lecturers, students, business representatives and consumers.

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