

# MARKETING TRANSITION TOWARDS CONSCIOUS MARKETING

An article of the Swiss Association of MBAs

---



Author  
**Engr. Gina Moyano, MBA**

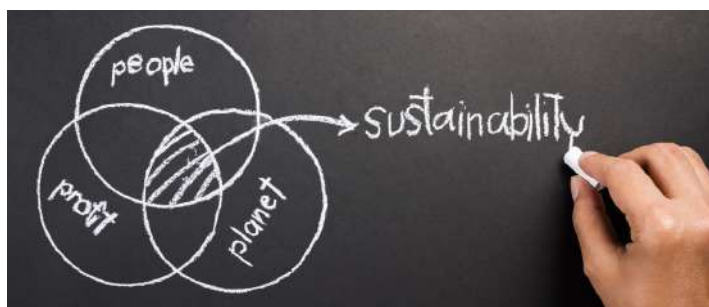
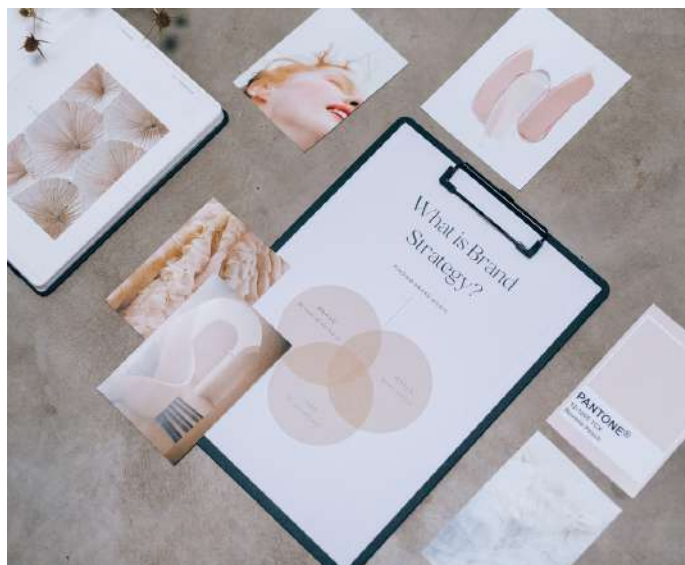
---

Society has been changing and as such also its needs. It is known that the effects of an activity have repercussions throughout the whole system. It has also been understood the importance of collaboration in order to achieve great improvements and it has been developed an awareness about the significance of having an active role in favor of the contribution to generate a positive impact towards the social and environmental priorities. Marketing in brand management has also been transformed in response to this evolution in perspective. As a result, in recent years the concepts of sustainable marketing and conscious marketing have become more relevant.

To understand what conscious marketing refers to, it is necessary to analyse its characteristics, challenges, evolution from what marketing was initially; and it is required to clarify why applying it as a central axis of brands can lead to obtain a substantial advance in the brands interactions with the society.

According to the AMA, "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (American Marketing Association)[i]. It can be said that to the collective of the society it is currently quite clear the marketing concept. Nevertheless, the term didn't always have the same application attributed to it nowadays.

[i] *American Marketing Association. (s.f.). What is Marketing?*



The perspective of what marketing represents has evolved since its inception when it focused on helping to sell what factories were capable of producing and when marketing had an approach that was from the company to the market. In other words, its main utility was to be able to rotate the product that the company produced. Later, the marketing perspective varied until it came to have the market as its primary focus, that is, the consumers. With this new consideration, marketing was centered in understanding the consumers and their interactions, which include demographics, market segments, consumer behavior, preferences and purchasing habits, purchase decision makers, among others.

Subsequently, marketing has transitioned towards a more holistic path that takes into account not only the company and consumers but also other stakeholders. Internal marketing, for example, considers company employees; social marketing covers the communities with which the brand interacts and ecological or green marketing contemplates the effects of the product in the environment in order to make a positive impact. In recent years, the sustainable marketing concept has become more applied.

Although the prominence of sustainable marketing in brand strategies has increased, this term is nothing new. As explained by Patrick E. Murphy (Murphy, 2005)[ii]:

*Sustainable marketing is the contemporary description of an "environmentally enlightened" approach to marketing that has been around for several decades. In the 1970s, the accepted term for emphasizing products that were environmentally friendly was "Green marketing" (Ottman 1993; McDonagh and Prothero 1997; Peattie 1992; Wasik 1996). More recently, the emphasis has shifted to the importance of sustainability of marketing activities. That is, the marketing efforts of any organization should be sustainable over an extended time period. The contemporary interpretation of sustainable marketing is that it should deal positively with the ecological environment and be sensitive to the needs of future generations.*

Thus, sustainable marketing does not take into account only the factor of the communities or the environment independently, but rather combines them in the triple bottom line scheme, which is the basis of sustainability, that considers the environment, the people and the financial component in the business model.

[ii] Murphy, P. E. (2005). *Sustainable Marketing*. *Business & Professional Ethics Journal*

Sustainable marketing and conscious marketing may sound similar, this is in part in view of the fact that sustainability has a consciousness for all stakeholders and the environment. However, conscious marketing goes more related with the essence of the company. As Carolyn Tate stated (Tate, 2015) [iii]:

*Conscious marketing is about building a company, products and services with deep regard for the customer while engaging with, and taking care of, all the stakeholders in the ecosystem. It is about building something so good that it requires minimal investment in mainstream promotional activities.*

In the book *Conscious Marketing* it is also explained that the brand instead of being a merely product is a representation of a cause or a movement. It allows people to connect with their inner values and it generates a sense of belonging. "Conscious marketing is about ensuring your marketing strategies are aligned with your higher purpose" (Tate, 2015).

It can be also said that a difference between conscious marketing and sustainable marketing is that as a result of conscious marketing the brand and company are going to be sustainable because they seek to generate a positive impact derived from the company and brand purposes and values.

Another characteristic of conscious marketing is that it has at the center of the concept scheme the personal values of the brand and/or company. Those values are the basis for the why (purpose), what (product) and who (people), and are the core of a complete and conscious approach to marketing.

[iii] Tate, C. (2015). *Conscious Marketing: How to Create and Awesome Business with a New Approach to Marketing*. Wiley.

[iv] Indeed Editorial Team. (03 de 2023). *Conscious Marketing*.

## **ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC OF CONSCIOUS MARKETING IS THAT IT HAS AT THE CENTER OF THE CONCEPT SCHEME THE PERSONAL VALUES OF THE BRAND AND/OR COMPANY.**



So people are buying the cause that is reflected on the product, they buy what the brand believes in and what it stands for.

Among the derived benefits from applying the perspective of conscious marketing is the increase in positive relationships "conscious marketing can help establish more positive and insightful relationships with target markets" (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023)[iv]. It also makes it easier for companies to promote important societal issues and to create ethical brands.

However, applying conscious marketing requires preparation. It is not as immediate as preparing a campaign for the next week or the next month, it doesn't represent a series of tools that can be communicated to the marketing team, and it is not a new business model for which the product and the value chain must be restructured. The preparation goes beyond the strategies and tactics, it comes from the brand essence and includes the generation of a

synergy throughout the team behind it. Achieving this can be challenging, time consuming, and might require internal work to be done both by the team as a whole and individually by each person of the team. The results in the responses and perceptions from the stakeholders towards the brand after applying conscious marketing can be appreciated in the medium term. Probably not all the organizations and brands are willing to this restructuring from the essence and they might opt for specific initiatives with social or environmental causes. Although, if it is desired to implement a true positive impact in the society, it is necessary to at least reflect on approaches such as the ones of sustainable marketing and conscious marketing.

This new marketing viewpoint also represents a challenge for companies when it comes to defining who is going to lead the company or brand and how is this person going to reflect his/her values and purpose in each point of contact. Ideally, the personal philosophy of the person who leads the company or brand is going to be aligned with that of the entity he/she represents. What's more, that person should have done the inner work of finding his/her purpose, of knowing his/her values in order to integrally reflect them to others through the daily work dynamics.

Currently, with the evident climatic and social priorities, perhaps the traditional marketing conception is not enough to achieve a positive and transcendent impact in the society. For that reason, it is important to question from each professional platform if the perspective

***Ideally, the personal philosophy of the person who leads the company or brand is going to be aligned with that of the entity he/she represents.***

with which marketing is being developed is the ideal one to get the desired beneficial effect. In brand management, the marketers should not be satisfied with reaching short-term commercial and brand image objectives. Instead, they must ensure the well-being of all the stakeholders with whom the brand interacts, they should protect the ecosystem and safeguard its balance, they should create marketing campaigns based on values and purpose and they should build a cause that will stick around for the long haul. This transition may not necessarily be accomplished overnight, but taking small steps certainly goes a long way.

#### ***About the Author***

*Gina Moyano is a marketing and sustainability professional with more than 15 years of international expertise in Latam, North America and Europe in various sectors such as FMCG, Consulting and Academia.*