

Ecological Seals of Quality Under the Aspect of Marketing in the German Clothing Industry

Jan Peter Danz

(Löhrelen 119, Wuppertal, Germany)

Abstract: The present dissertation deals in a special way with ecological seals of approval from the point of view of marketing in the German clothing industry. After the ecology factor has been classified, it is related to marketing and discussed. This provides an introduction to the subject at hand. This is followed by an insight into ecological seals of approval in the German clothing industry.

The presentation, which is characterized by a theoretical implementation, then leads to the topic of the aspect of the image.

Then strategies in marketing are shown. Fundamentally, the questions that describe the influences of the ecological seal of approval are investigated.

Finally, a conclusion regarding this topic is carried out and future prospects in this area are shown.

Key words: economics; management; German clothing industry; marketing; ecology

JEL codes: F200

1. The Ecological Factor

It should be emphasized that an important factor in terms of marketing in the German clothing industry is the factor of ecology. With increased influences and increasing aspects in the corporate environment, as well as constantly growing demands of the respective clientele, also due to various influences in this industry, the ecological area is becoming inevitably important.

For the German companies in the clothing industry, the ecological factor and the use of low-pollutant and pollutant-free materials, especially in relation to the entire market, is a very important issue.

It is of importance to mention that the German clothing industry is an industry that mainly produces only little amounts of clothes in Germany due to financial reasons. The main production is located in Eastern Europe, Asia and also in parts of North Africa. These increased foreign productions also increase the influencing factors of the risks in the productions and production facilities for many business areas.

Therefore an important point is the absence of pollutants in the products and the environmental impact, which is often caused by the productions in the respective production countries. There often exist only very little to none environmental regulations in the respective production countries. This is often due to the fact that governments in these countries hardly want to prescribe regulations for the investing western companies, as these

Jan Peter Danz, B.Sc., PgD, MBA, M.Sc.; research area/interest: management (international), economics, economy development, marketing. E-mail: janpeter.danz@gmail.com.

guarantee jobs and tax revenues in said country.

2. Ecological Seals of Quality

In order to make these subject areas as transparent as possible to the market and to the customers, marketing seals of approval are very popular means that can support and guarantee the quality of the products in various directions.



Figure 1 Famous Ecological Seals of Quality

For companies in the German clothing industry, these quality seals are used pretty strong as marketing tools, also with the emphasis on the ecological focus. This makes the consequences of globalization stand out clearly. Customers in Germany are relatively keen on ecological factors and are therefore considered sensitive customers. Their attention is very accurate regarding the ecological quality seals and quality checks. Customers often reflect this picture with regard to their purchase decision. Quality, also with regard to the ecological factor, is very important for the customer, but in the end it is not the completely decisive purchasing aspect.

An implementation of the quality seal in the marketing or in the marketing strategy is extremely valuable. It is very important for the company to have a positive image as a factor in the guarantee of success, which is normally reinforced through said quality seal.

In addition, it is obvious that the ecological factor has become a very important aspect in the marketing of the German clothing industry. The importance has become more intense due to various influencing factors, especially with regard to marketing communication.

The most well-known certification in Germany is the “ÖkoTex Seal — Confidence in Textiles”, which is awarded by the Hohenstein Institute. Internationally this seal appears with the name “Confidence in Textiles”.

3. The Aspect of a Positive Image

Image building is a very important aspect in the German clothing industry, because the image represents a size that is relevant to success, and ultimately also economic. In marketing, the focus is on credibility. Defining a positive image for a company is the goal of a long-term process. One, where companies do have to take into

account, that this process might easily take years. The process itself can often be very complex due to the fact that it is influenced by many variable market factors. In order to be successful, the marketing of a company in said industry must reflect positively on the market in the long-term, in this case through ecological factors.

For that reason it is important for companies to build a positive marketing despite possible critical factors. This includes the intelligent execution of this management. For the German clothing companies, for example, it is of special interest to focus on positive things. Many companies are therefore not very interested in showing customers foreign productions, since this is often clearly a negative example, which could result in a negative image or in bad publicity.

A wide variety of influences, including globalization, have contributed to the fact that the image of the company, which is shaped by marketing, has become more important in the companies of the German clothing industry. This also applies to the ecological factor.

Nevertheless, criticism of the image can often be found. These criticisms regarding the image building lies above all in the uncertainty of the consumers. They are also caused by factors related to sustainability.

The image is an important element that can certainly often be improved in terms of marketing.

4. Marketing Strategies

The marketing strategies of the German clothing industry can be very complex and differentiated. Companies must focus their strategies primarily on reaching the customer, who is ultimately the focus of the strategies and is an important factor—for the success of a company. Above all, successful competitive strategies have to bring competitive advantages concerning the long run (Grandke, 1999, p. 60). Some of these strategies can also be attacked by ecological seal factors. The planned procedure, which can be carried out through different implementation by various German clothing companies, is very much focused on the customer they want to reach, especially in the area of ecological seals. That often gives the strategies a particularly important task.

In addition to many strategic decisions, which are mostly made long-term, marketing in the area of ecology often has to react flexibly to short-term circumstances. The strategies in marketing are very changeable and often develop in parallel with technological progress and in this case with advancing fashion. Of course, this also applies to the German clothing industry. In many cases, however, you have to act very flexibly to guarantee the success of the company, which is almost always the focus.

5. Conclusions

It should be noted that ecological seals certainly have an impact on marketing. Marketing for ecological seals and the basic strategies of the company must be well-coordinated areas of a company to be successful. Many factors are important here. The strategies, not only with regard to ecological seals, are primarily geared towards the customers of the German clothing industry.

Strategies in this area must also be designed in a way that they reach customers as successfully as possible as well as more flexibly in the future. This is not least due to the increasingly striking competition in this area. For the future, this means that the ecological seal of quality will become more important.

References

Grandke Sven (1999). *Strategische Netzwerke in der Bekleidungsindustrie*, Wiesbaden, Springer Fachmedien GmbH.