Green Marketing as a Strategic Approach to Achieving Competitive Advantage in Emerging Enterprises: The Green Seal as a Model.

Ouarad housseyn*

Modern Economic and Sustainable Développent Laboratory

University Of Djilali Bounaama, Khemis Miliana (Algeria)

h.ouarad@univ-dbkm.dz Email address

Laidani ilyas

Modern Economic and Sustainable Développent Laboratory

Tissemsilt University , Ahmed ben yahia El wancharissi

laidani.ilyas@univ-tissemsilt.dz

Received:02/04/2026 **Accepted: 03/07/2026.** **Published: 20/11/.2026**

Abstract:

This research explores the pivotal role of sustainable marketing specifically the acquisition of eco-certifications and the 'Green Seal' in bolstering institutional competitiveness. The study highlights how these initiatives enhance operational performance by optimizing product quality and cost-efficiency, thereby elevating the organization's reputation among its target stakeholders. Consequently, startups are increasingly integrating green strategies as a primary market-entry tactic to navigate competitive pressures and ensure long-term viability. Furthermore, the paper delineates the procedural frameworks required to attain the Green Seal, illustrating its value as a potent marketing tool that grants enterprises a distinct strategic edge over their competitors.

Keywords: Green Marketing ; Competitive Advantage ; Green Seal .

Jel Classification Codes: M31, Q56 L25.

*Correspondingauthor. **Ouarad housseyn**

1. Introduction :

Startups face significant economic, social, and political challenges as a result of operating in an environment that can be classified as alienating for them, given their new market position. This requires them to adopt strategies that ensure their continuity and survival. Furthermore, if we look at individual behavior, it is characterized by irregularity, volatility, and rapid change, which forces organizations in general, and start-ups in particular, to pay attention to these tastes and keep pace with them. Today's consumer has shifted from purchasing what meets their needs and desires to a consumer who is conscious of their purchasing decisions. They purchase products that primarily ensure their safety and are more aware of those that preserve their surroundings. Therefore, they frequently compare products and organizations to see which one best fulfill this vision. Therefore, organizations, in order to uncover their potential, capabilities, competitive values, and market position to ensure their continuity, rely on numerous strategies, including green marketing, which demonstrates that the organization is accountable to its customers.

Green marketing, which falls within marketing, is a link between the green-oriented producer and the consumer, whether the conscious (green) consumer or the rest of the consumer, to change their attitudes. This is achieved by maximizing their benefits from the company's products and its green approach to the environment. However, the application of green marketing by emerging companies if what is being implemented is not announced and made known to customers and stakeholders. An effective method for this is obtaining special marks, signs, and labels attached to the company's products. The role of the label is to prove that the product is an environmentally friendly product. This mark is granted by reliable and recognized private organizations, including those that achieve appropriate profitability. Among these organizations are the International Organization for Standardization, the Green Seal.

Problem of the study

Organizations work to differentiate their products compared to competing products, through benefits, price, quality, brand strength, etc. However, with the modern trend of marketing, they are making great and costly efforts in the short term to prove their adoption of this trend (green marketing) in the eyes of consumers and society, by working to apply standards that qualify them to obtain green labels. Therefore, we can ask the main question: How does adopting green marketing in general and obtaining the green seal mark in particular contribute to achieving a competitive advantage for emerging organizations?

Sub-questions

- What are the factors influencing the adoption of green marketing?
- What is the role of green marketing in achieving a competitive advantage?

- What are the mechanisms for obtaining the Green Seal label?

Significance of the Study

Adopting green marketing and obtaining the Green Seal is important for organizations to promote their contributions to environmental protection. It serves as a publicity stunt for the modern economy and marketing, facilitating the conscious consumer's choice of products and attracting new consumers who embrace this approach by distinguishing the organization's products. This enhances the competitive position of customers.

Study objectives

The study aimed to investigate the following points:

- To understand the theoretical dimensions of green marketing and competitive advantage;
- To investigate the contributions of green marketing to enhancing an organization's competitiveness;
- To understand the role of the Green Seal label in an organization's marketing;

Theoretical framework of the study

Through this section of the study, we will attempt to provide a theoretical basis for the study variables (competitive advantage and green shopping)

2. Theoretical framework of the study

Through this section of the study, we will attempt to provide a theoretical basis for the study variables (competitive advantage and green shopping)

2.1 The concept of competitive advantage

2.2.1 Definition of competitive advantage

The concept of competitive advantage holds an important place in the field of strategic management and business administration, especially in light of the intensifying competition between institutions in the era of economic globalization. Many definitions of competitive advantage have been presented, some of which we summarize below:

Ansoff defines competitive advantage as the unique opportunities within a dual product/market niche that is growing. It aims to identify the product's unique attributes in the market that will give the organization a strong competitive position. This definition focuses on the product's competitiveness in the market.

Ali Al-Salmi defines competitive advantage as "the unique skill, technology, or resource that enables an organization to produce value and benefits for customers that exceed those offered by competitors, and that emphasizes its distinction and differentiation from the perspective of customers who accept this difference and distinction." Through this definition, he explains that competitive advantage is an organization's ability to provide greater benefits compared to its competitors.

2.1.2 Sources of competitive advantage: Sources of competitive advantage can be either internal or external.

Sources of competitive advantage can be either internal or external (Baghdad)

- External competitive advantage: This is based on the distinctive characteristics of the product and represents value to the buyer, whether by reducing operating costs or increasing operating efficiency.

- Internal competitive advantage: This is based on the organization's superiority in controlling manufacturing costs, management, or operating the product, which gives the product value through a lower cost than competitors.

Some believe that competitive advantage is achieved through the following basic forces (Boudisa, 2021, p. 127):

- Differentiation: Providing a distinct product in a different segment or market by developing the product to possess distinctive characteristics that provide competitive advantage in the market.

- Cost: Organizations have become focused on cost, believing that their mission is to control costs and deliver the product at the lowest possible and reasonable cost without compromising product quality. This includes all costs of related activities, a source of competitive advantage.

- Innovation: Offering a product that exceeds expectations for consumers and competitors, making it a common attraction that motivates consumers to consider consuming the product more.

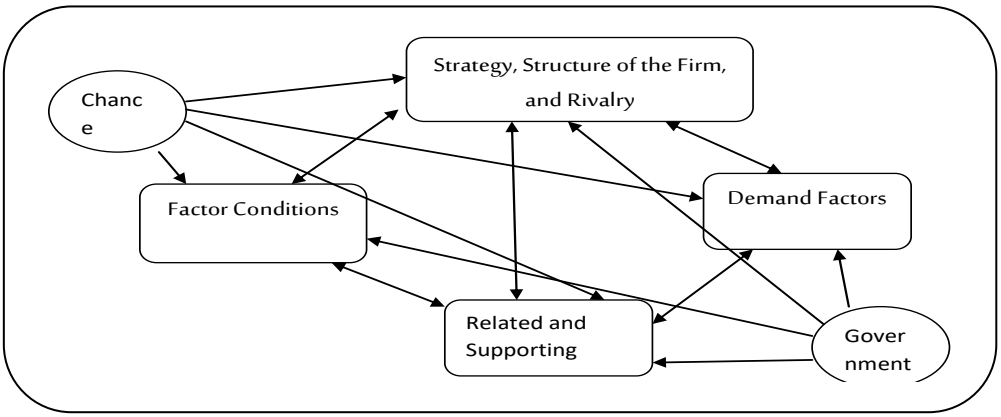
- Growth: Achieving competitive advantage through geographic expansion and targeting new markets.

We believe that the differing views on the sources of competitive advantage are primarily due to the approaches to building it, which we will discuss.

2.1.3 Determinants of Competitive Advantage

Michael Porter stated that there are four main elements by which competitive advantage can be determined. These elements are included under what is known as the Diamond Theory. These represent the basic determinants through which an organization achieves a competitive advantage. The following figure illustrates these factors:

Fig N° 1: Porter's Diamond Model



source :(Porter, 1990, p. 8)

- Factors of Production

From Porter's perspective, the concept of factors of production is more comprehensive than the traditional concept. In addition to traditional factors of production, such as human and natural resources and capital, it includes other factors such as infrastructure and advanced factors such as technological and technical knowledge and modern managerial expertise. According to Porter, competitors differ in terms of the availability of factors of production, their suitability, methods of combining them, and their cost. Therefore, the more these factors are available and the lower their cost, the greater the competitive advantage. However, this may be insufficient unless they are linked to efficient use and development (Bouazid, 2021, pp. 20-21).

Every factor of production, whether material (such as raw materials) or intellectual (such as planning the production process), contributes to a certain degree to creating a competitive advantage. Each factor of production produces an advantage, called a comparative advantage. When combined with other comparative advantages, this advantage develops into a competitive advantage.

- Local Demand Conditions

Demand is the second characteristic of a country's state that influences competitive advantage. It provides the necessary impetus to improve competitive advantage. Furthermore, the characteristics of local demand contribute to shaping the distinctive features of local products, creating pressure to improve quality and increase rates of innovation and renewal (PORTER, 1986, p. 95), Local demand plays an important role in improving and strengthening competitive advantage. This is not only related to the size and growth of demand, but also includes the structure of demand, which reflects the nature of consumer needs represented in the type and various types of goods required (Bouazid, 2021, p. 21).

Domestic demand consists of two levels (Charles & Gareth, 2008, p. 290):

- Composition of Domestic Demand: This requires identifying the characteristics of demand, which we summarize in the following points:

A- Demand Segmentation: The market segments that constitute domestic demand are identified in terms of size (broad or narrow), and how they impact competitive advantage.

B- Customer Urgency: The higher the urgency, the more companies are encouraged to innovate and continuously improve.

C- Forecasting Customer Needs: Companies must focus on the customer and view them as the focus of their activity.

They must encourage company employees to adopt a customer-centric approach to thinking in order to obtain feedback from customers.

- Demand Size and Growth: This includes the following points:

A- Domestic Demand Size: The vastness of the domestic market, which provides the potential for economies of scale and the emergence of the impact of expertise, requires a huge investment in production methods, which translates into savings in productivity.

B- Customer Diversity: Customer diversity creates a favorable climate for creativity and innovation, and it also allows for enriched perceptions of expected product quality.

C- Demand Growth Rate: The rapid growth of the domestic market encourages companies to adopt new technologies relatively early.

D- Premature Saturation of Domestic Demand: This leads to companies' market shares growing at the expense of each other, intensifying competitive pressure, forcing weaker companies to exit the market. This saturation results in a smaller pool of competitors, but one that is more efficient, innovative, and adaptable. Saturation also prompts companies to penetrate foreign markets in an effort to maintain their growth.

Related and Similar Industries:

Related industries are those industries that share commonality with the industry in which the establishment operates, whether in terms of inputs, technology used, or distribution channels, as well as industries that produce complementary materials for that industry. Supporting industries are those industries that provide support to the relevant industry in terms of the inputs required for the production process.

This type of industry would allow the organization to form forward and backward relationships and integrations, resulting in advantages that are not available to the organization that does not benefit from these relationships, such as cost savings due to the (Charles & Gareth, 2008)use of joint production facilities, technical expertise, or distribution benefits (Bouazid, 2021, p. 21).

- **Corporate Strategy and Structure**:

The fourth determinant of competitive advantage in Porter's model is the competitive strategy and structure among organizations within a country. In their quest to gain advantages, countries adopt different management ideologies and approaches, which are reflected in the structure and strategy of their organizations. For example, he notes that engineers dominate senior management levels in countries that focus on improving manufacturing processes and product design, for German and Japanese companies. This contrasts with American organizations, where financiers dominate senior management. This may lead to maximizing financial returns in the short term at the expense of improving manufacturing processes and product quality. This has resulted in a relative loss of American competitiveness in many engineering-based industries .

These four main elements are intertwined with two secondary elements:

- Government intervention: represented by the creation of the institutional and legislative environment and its policies related to attracting investment and providing services, which can improve or hinder competitive advantage;

Chance intervenes: An example of chance is some sudden technological developments, such as the introduction of an advanced machine that speeds up the production process.

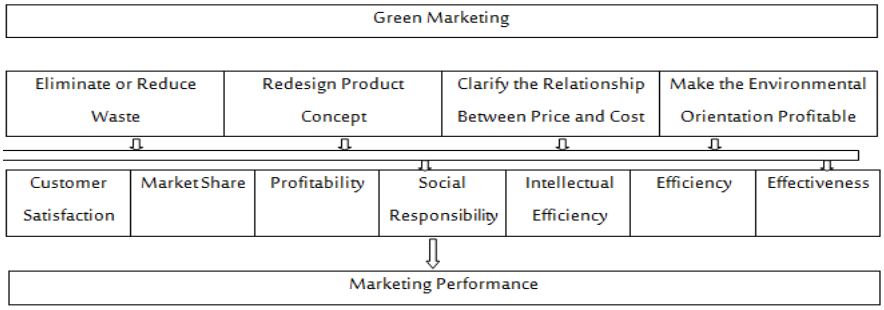
2. Green marketing concept

The concept of green marketing is derived from traditional marketing as the basis. It is the process of "practicing business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer user (Bashir & Qandouz, 2016, p. 43), However, despite the harsh criticism of the traditional marketing mix, which is considered to encourage the introduction of environmentally harmful products and a waste of natural resources, the green marketing mix is a creative management approach that aims to achieve a balance between market needs and environmental requirements. It is environmentally oriented in all marketing decisions related to the green marketing mix.

Green marketing is defined as "the process of planning, implementing, and controlling sustainability and the marketing mix in a way that satisfies three criteria: meeting consumer needs, achieving organizational objectives, and achieving compatibility with the ecosystem (Boudia & Tariq, 2019, p. 263).

This definition considers green marketing to be a comprehensive process that achieves three aspects: meeting human needs, achieving sustainability and profit, and contributing to environmental security. The concept of green marketing revolves around the principle of organizations' commitment to selling environmentally friendly products—those that are safe and harmless to the environment and humans—and to conducting marketing activities within a framework of respect and commitment to environmental responsibility and within specific controls to ensure the preservation of the natural environment and avoid harming it (Mustafa, 2014, p. 17).

Fig N° 2: Green marketing applications



source :(Youssef KafiArab, 2014, p. 18)

Green Marketing Foundations: Modern green-oriented marketing, which is demanded by green organizations around the world, focuses on three main foundations in addition to the traditional foundations of marketing and green marketing, which are represented by the four elements of the mix (4Ps), which are product, pricing, distribution, and promotion (Al-Bakri & Hadeel, 2015, p. 30). These foundations are:

A. Environment: Green marketing, in essence, is the marketing of products with a clear connection to environmental protection. The responsibility for obtaining these products falls on organizations that produce and market all environmentally friendly products, and convince consumers of their importance and the extent to which they preserve our planet. Marketers have therefore expressed the importance of these products, given the proliferation of products, increased competition, and a clear increase in environmental pollution. Therefore, the environment is the most important factor that must be preserved by all means and methods.

B. People (the public): Customers are the primary objective of any marketing process, and this may gain even greater importance with green marketing, as the needs and desires of green customers differ radically from those of ordinary customers . Therefore, identifying them in advance helps the organization formulate an appropriate marketing mix that aligns with these needs and desires (Zahra & Qassi, 2017, pp. 129-130).

C. Profit: The primary goal of any marketing operation is financial gain. This is included among any organization's objectives and at the top of its hierarchy of priorities. This is not surprising, as any organization, whether green or otherwise, seeks to increase its profits and deepen its market penetration through the largest possible number of members of society. Green organizations also seek to achieve profit, but in the long term. At the same time, they seek to serve society and the environment, as they offer products that preserve this planet on which we live (Al-Bakri & Hadeel, 2015, p. 31).

3. The role of green marketing in achieving competitive advantage

It is natural that institutions dealing with traditional products face fierce competition from their counterparts, but establishing the concept of green marketing will constitute an effective competitive strategy that makes other institutions unable to imitate it. Green marketing opens new market horizons that are

environmentally friendly, in line with environmental standards and legislation and far from traditional competition, in addition to achieving the satisfaction of consumers with environmental orientations and satisfying their needs in a safe manner, as well as improving and developing a good reputation for the institution's brand and products, which makes the institution a pioneer over its competitors from an environmental perspective in the market, i.e. achieving a competitive advantage (Zahra & Qassi, 2017, p. 132).

Green Marketing and the Source of Efficiency: Considering that efficiency contributes to building competitive advantages, "economic institutions can create two-dimensional value, one for their customers, by designing and offering products that protect the environment and consumer health, which enhances the growth opportunities of these organizations in the medium and long term. On another level, economic institutions can benefit from the advantages of green marketing to increase their market share. The green product policy is linked to the green operations and green distribution policies in achieving a competitive advantage for institutions, such that the latter adopt green production process systems through the use of clean or environmentally friendly technology or production methods that contribute to the rational exploitation of resources on the one hand and the provision of high-quality products justified by their high prices and promotional campaigns on the other hand."

4. Get the green seal

Green labels, or eco-labels, are nationally or internationally recognized symbols attached to green products to distinguish them and give them a distinct environmental identity. They serve as an invitation to green customers to prefer this product over other competing products. Thus, green labels serve as an identification and promotional tool that serves the organization's marketing interests by increasing sales and demand for its products, improving its reputation, and achieving environmental benefits through eco-friendly products. Among these labels is the green seal.

Green Seal: A mark awarded by a North American nonprofit organization, founded in 1990, the Green Seal offers more than 30 leadership standards to guide the development of more sustainable products and services. These standards are used in certification to help consumers and buyers identify more sustainable products and services. Its mission is to transform the economy toward a healthier, greener world.

Fig N° 3: green seal



Source : www.greenseal.org

The Green Seal certification is a global symbol that a product or service meets the highest standards of health and environmental leadership. The Green Seal is only awarded after testing and the product must pass through several stages, beginning with evaluation, followed by registration, periodic testing, and repeated field visits to these institutions.

Procedures for obtaining the Green Seal Certificate

There are a number of procedures through which the Green Seal certificate can be obtained, including (Mustafa, 2014, p. 94):

1. Classification of the product applying for the Green Seal and a statement of the associated standards classifies the product. If the product category does not fall within the approved standards, you can access the website (www.greenseal.org) to list it and determine the appropriate standards.

2. Submit the Green Seal application to complete the documentation procedures and pay the costs associated with the product evaluation.

3. The Green Seal Organization will send the audit card with the required data and the agreement for signature.

4. Submit the necessary data, as well as a sample of the product, and prepare for the field visit that the Green Seal Organization team will conduct to your organization.

5. After the audit and inspection processes are completed and the product's characteristics conform to the approved standards, the Green Seal certificate is granted. The product then has the right to use the Green Seal mark on the product, packaging, and in advertising campaigns. In the event of non-compliance, the Green Seal Organization will explain the reasons and obstacles to overcome, while ensuring the confidentiality of the test results and their non-disclosure to consumers. 6. Green Seal Organization staff provide technical advice on packaging design to incorporate the Green Seal mark and specify the accompanying text that identifies the environmental benefits of the products.

7. Green Seal Organization oversees and evaluates the product's continued compliance with Green Seal standards.

The organization's standards have been reviewed by external parties and found to meet the following criteria and guidelines.

- ISO 14020/14024 standards
- Global Ecolabeling Network's Internationally Harmonized Ecolabeling System (GENICES)

Green Seal and Competitive Advantage: Obtaining the Green Seal helps organizations achieve a competitive advantage, as the standards approved by the Green Seal Organization include criteria related to sources of competitive advantage, such as creativity, innovation, and quality. Only the safest, most sustainable, and most

effective products and services achieve the Green Seal. Companies undergo a comprehensive review covering everything from formulas to manufacturing practices (within comprehensive quality standards) to ensure they meet science-based standards.

Use of the Green Seal Mark: Using the Green Seal Mark on a product or service includes an explicit declaration that the product's properties comply with environmental requirements and that it is subject to the Green Seal Agreement. This provides an advantage over other products.

In addition, there is the benefit of free advertising and marketing on the organization's website for organizations that have obtained the seal..

5. Conclusion:

Environmental issues are no longer a concern of governments alone, but have also become a concern for economic institutions, driven by consumer interest in this issue, which primarily concerns them. Therefore, institutions have taken the initiative to reconsider their social and ethical responsibility toward their customers and the environment, and to review their production practices. This is achieved by giving the environmental dimension a prominent place in their strategies, especially in light of the emergence of many parties concerned with environmental protection and calling for the necessity of preserving human life. Achieving a competitive position requires them to steer towards this principle. They cannot simply offer good products or follow marketing methods, but must offer something that addresses environmental preservation and protection and is consistent with new global environmental ethics and standards. This is achieved by implementing standards that guarantee their inclusion among institutions that have obtained green benefits, labels, and medals. This is possible by encouraging creativity and excellence in marketing their green products.

Through our study of the topic, we reached the following conclusions:

- The concept of green marketing emerged as an extension and continuation of the concept of social responsibility in marketing, based on environmental friendliness.

- The fact that an organization possesses quality products at reasonable prices is not sufficient for it to be a leader unless they are consistent with the new trend of conscious consumers seeking products that are friendly to themselves and their environment.

- The contribution of green marketing to improving the organization's image is sufficient to position it well in a competitive position.

- Obtaining the Green Seal provides a long-term moral and material incentive for the organization in the eyes of its customers and competitors.

- Although green products are more expensive than other products, they are more acceptable.

- Implementing green marketing ensures the organization's survival and continuity and provides it with the opportunity to enter the international market.

- Among the competitive advantages that green marketing can achieve are achieving a cost advantage, albeit relative, in addition to achieving positioning and image among customers.

Based on the findings of this study, the following practical recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of green marketing and achieve a competitive advantage in emerging enterprises:

-Develop a marketing plan for green products by creating advertising campaigns that highlight the environmental and health benefits of the products, as well as using social media and digital marketing to reach environmentally conscious consumers.

-Provide educational content about eco-friendly products on the company website and digital platforms.

-Integrate green marketing into the overall business strategy by linking green marketing performance to employee incentives to encourage commitment to environmental initiatives.

-Conduct regular surveys to measure consumer awareness regarding green products and the Green Seal.

6. List of references:

1. Al-Bakri, T., & Hadeel, A.-S. (2015). *The Green Marketing Mix and Renewable Energy.* Amman-Jordan: Amjad Publishing and Distribution House.
2. Baghdad, K. *Competitiveness of National Institutions in Light of Economic Transformations, First National Forum on the Algerian Economy in the Third Millennium, Blida,.*
3. Bouazid, W. (2021). *The Approach of Internal Resources and Competencies as an Approach to Competitive Advantage in the Algerian Economic Institution, a thesis submitted for a Master's degree in Management Sciences.* University of Setif 1.
4. Boudia Bashir و ،Tariq Qandouz .(2016) .*Principles and Implications of Services Marketing* .Amman-Jordan :Safaa Publishing and Distribution House.
5. Boudia, B., & Tariq, Q. (2019). Green Marketing Mix as a Tool for Achieving Environmental Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Industrial Economics , Vol 09* (N 1).
6. Boudisa, A. (2021). *A Study of the Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Dimensions on Achieving Competitive Advantage, Case Study, PhD Thesis in Business Sciences.* University of Blida 02.
7. Charles, H., & Gareth, J. (2008). *Strategic Management: An Integrated Approach, translated by: Muhammad Ahmad Sayyid Abd al-Mutaal.* Dar al-Marikh, Riyadh.
8. Mustafa Youssef KafiArab .(2014) .*Community Library for Publishing and Distribution* .Amman-Jordan: Arab Community Library for Publishing and Distribution.
9. PORTER, M. (1986). *Competitive Advantage: How to Stay Ahead of Your Competitors and Stay Ahead* (Inter-editions ed.).
10. Porter, M. (1990). New Global Strategies For Competitive Advantage. *Planning Review* , 8.
11. Youssef Kafi Mustafa .(2014) .*The Philosophy of Green Marketing* .Amman, Jordan: Arab Community Library for Publishing and Distribution.
12. Zahra, F., & Qassi, Y. (2017). Green Marketing as a Mechanism to Achieve Competitive Advantage for the Institution - Presenting the Experience of the Japanese Toyota Corporation -, an article. *submitted to Al-Ibda Magazine , Vol 7* (N 8).