



Reporter: Osorio ESCOBAR, EDHEC

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CONSUMERS: FOLLOW OR ANTICIPATE THEM? AND HOW TO CONVINCE THEM?

The question raised is: are the consumers ready for green products? How will companies react to this? Are they willing to be more conscious of their responsibilities towards the consumption of eco-friendly products? According to the speakers, firms could replace their existing manufactured goods with environment-friendly products in order to push consumers to change their buying habits, although this may be seen as controversial. The growing trend of a greener awareness cannot be denied, but trying to hurry this transition by pushing products that are not demanded by the consumers could be viewed as unethical and could be also extremely dangerous for the companies if their competitors decide not to follow their example. Big corporations such as Kit Kat (Nestle) and Starbucks have produced green products and the results were very promising. Statistics show that 27% consumers are willing to consume green products if it's not too expensive.

Another idea was that companies could do more than politicians do; they have big responsibility to contribute to a change towards the sustainability of the environment. M. LAMBEAUX pointed out that companies could share commitment and communicate with the consumers about the "sustainable subject" and their green products in a smart way, point out the added value and how they really benefit the consumer, thus raise their awareness but also change the way they consume. Consumers will prefer sustainable brand in the next decade.

But in order to produce green products, big investments are needed in research and development, in production and marketing, however, with some mechanisms such as mass production, efficiency and quality assurance, these new ways to produce could be adopted faster and therefore the costs could be reduced rapidly. As for investors, more convinced by figures and results, nonetheless have long-term vision and know well what to invest. Moreover, companies should keep in mind that they need to educate their employees by explaining the environmental problems. Decisions have to be made from the high level.

Ideas of how to use new technology to anticipate and understand consumers. When consumers expect companies to behave in a more sustainable way, the companies should answer them proactively. To listen to consumers, companies should make the most of the Internet and social networks; firms should stay active online to catch trends and discover needs.