

THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN CSR AND MARKETING: SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING

O ELO PERDIDO ENTRE A RS E O MARKETING: O MARKETING DA SUSTENTABILIDADE

ABSTRACT Sustainable lifestyles are at the heart of the solution for solving the complex environmental and social problems we are facing. The corporate world has a crucial role to play in this realm, yet despite some exceptions, convincing business to do the shift of paradigm from a purely economic growth model to a more sustainable paradigm has failed until now.

Although marketing plays a major role in promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns, conventional marketing practices persist. This paper examines the fundamental reasons for the established economics and proposes a new kind of marketing for creating a more sustainable society. The paper begins with an overview of the current economic growth model in society, giving particular attention to the consequences of overproduction and overconsumption and to the sustainability issues of mainstream marketing.

The second part examines the current state of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the fundamental gap of coherence between CSR and marketing. The last part of the paper identifies sustainability marketing as a new orientation to help businesses successfully tackle environmental and social problems.

RESUMO Estilos de Vida Saudáveis são o coração da Solução para resolver os complexos problemas ambientais e sociais que enfrentamos.

O mundo corporativo tem um papel crucial a desempenhar neste domínio, no entanto, apesar de algumas exceções, convencer as empresas para realizarem uma mudança de paradigma de um modelo de crescimento económico para um paradigma mais sustentável falhou até ao momento.

Apesar do Marketing ter um papel significativo em promover uma produção sustentável e padrões de consumo, as práticas convencionais do Marketing persistem. Este artigo examina as razões fundamentais para o estabelecimento económico e propõe um novo tipo de Marketing para criar uma sociedade mais sustentável. Inicialmente, este artigo resume o modelo de crescimento económico da sociedade, analisando atentamente as consequências da superprodução e superconsumo e para as questões de sustentabilidade do Marketing.

A segunda parte, examina o estado actual da Responsabilidade Social Corporate e o GAP fundamental de coerência entre CSR e marketing. A última parte do artigo identifica o marketing sustentável como uma nova orientação para ajudar o mundo empresarial a resolver problemas ambientais e sociais com sucesso.

KEYWORDS

Business, Sustainability, Marketing,
Advertising, Corporate Social Responsibility

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Empresas, Sustentabilidade, Marketing,
Publicidade, Responsabilidade Social

MARIA MANUEL PEDROSA MSc Institute Corporate Responsibility Management da Steinbeis University Berlin. Germany



INTRODUCTION

To drive a shift from the current economic growth model to a more life conducive system it is imperative to achieve sustainable lifestyles through a whole new mindset of sustainable business management. Although corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies are already a widespread practice, they lack a systemic approach to achieve that ideal, being unable to deal with the extent and complexity of problems the planet is facing. The main reason lays in the fact that there is a never ending consumption stream trend, encouraged by most of the business companies through well-prepared and intense marketing communication strategies. In fact, marketing represents the key business tool for producing, selling and making profit. By doing so, it's been causing overproduction and overconsumption, putting high constraints on the natural resources of the planet, generating wide inequalities due to globalization and target market strategies, at the same time generating a very materialistic and individualistic society. Responsible marketing and communications practices as corollaries of sustainable management are crucial for achieving responsible consumer behaviours and sustainable lifestyles, but empirical observation suggests that conventional marketing is in place, despite the fact that companies report that they have CSR strategies and sustainable business practices. We argue that the gap of coherence between CSR and marketing should be urgently filled with sustainability marketing. The most recent text book of Belz and Peattie *Sustainability Marketing* (2011) is one of the main sources used to approach the concept of sustainability marketing because the research and guidance they offer are in our view of great relevance and one of the most comprehensive.

For the purpose of defining Corporate Social Responsibility we use the characterization proposed by Visser – Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility (CSR) –

which covers the 'what' and 'how' in a very comprehensive way: "CSR is the way in which business consistently creates shared value in society through economic development, good governance, stakeholder responsiveness and environmental improvement." (2011, p. 7).

1. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC GROWTH MODEL

CONSUMPTION KEEPS THE ECONOMY RUNNING

Levels of consumption are ever growing, generating a type of society in which we increasingly define ourselves by what and how we consume, in the social, cultural and political sphere (Crane & Matten, 2010). Supported in a potentially never ending growth, this is the economic model that persists although it has been categorically put in question in 1972 in the crucial report *The Limits to Growth*, by the Club of Rome, and since then reinforced in 1992 in the Earth Rio Summit ("The major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment are the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances", Agenda 21 - Chapter 4.3) and repeatedly underlined by countless specialists and studies. The

point to which these facts are neglected or denied by the corporate and economic interests is such that it was caricaturized by the economist and philosopher Kenneth Boulding: "Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist".

The fact of the matter is that modern economy is structurally reliant on economic growth for its stability. As Galbraith (1998, p. 114) put it, "a high level of production is the keystone of effective economic security". When growth fails - as it did dramatically during 2008 and now again in some European countries - it provokes a domino effect: politicians panic, businesses struggle to survive, people lose their jobs and sometimes their homes. So, basically "questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries" (Jackson, 2011, p. 14). In a spiral like manner, the institutions of consumer society are designed to favour materialistic individualism and to encourage the relentless pursuit of consumer novelty because this is exactly what is needed to keep the economy going (Jackson, 2011).

Another key aspect of this model is the accepted notion that prosperity derives from a continuous economic growth expressed in the increase of the GDP (gross domestic product) per capita. This is one of the reasons why GDP growth has been the most important goal across the world from the last century until today (Jackson, 2011). Nevertheless, this is a one-dimensional metrics in which all economic activities associated with monetary values are added up indiscriminately while all non-monetary aspects of the economy are ignored, as it the case of the environmental and social costs (biodiversity loss, natural resources depletion, wars, illiteracy or health care). Paradoxically, by neglecting all these facets, they end up added as positive contributions to the GDP, as signs of a healthy economy (Henderson & Capra, 2009).

Considering this unsustainable panorama, an increasing number of specialists and organizations (Tim Jackson, Fritjof Capra, Hazel Henderson, the New Economics Foundation, Tomorrow's Company, and the Worldwatch

Institute among many others) argue in favour of adopting an holistic development indicator beyond GDP, as the GNH (Gross National Happiness) or the GPI (Genuine Progress Indicator) and developing a new kind of socially progressive growth, as suggested for example by the degrowth and qualitative growth supporters.

As environmentalist and entrepreneur Paul Hawken summarizes "At present we are stealing the future, selling it in the present, and calling it gross domestic product. We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future instead of stealing it (Assadourian, 2010).

THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE SERVICING ROLE OF MARKETING

The long lasting theory that sustains our consumption driven model and feeds the root of conventional marketing is that of the consumer sovereignty, that suggests that under perfect competition, consumers drive the market. They express their needs and desires as a demand and as a consequence companies will supply them with the goods and services they require (Crane & Matten, 2010). Under this assumption, the overproduction would be a natural consequence for providing goods and services for the market. Accordingly the blame rests on the consumers. The kotlerian definition of marketing in 2006 as the "social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others" serves this purpose.

Apart from the various limitations to the power and sovereignty of consumers (Crane & Matten, 2010, p. 368), that are not to be analysed in the scope of this article, one fundamental aspect, however, that brings us to our present problem of overconsumption is not explained in this definition: the way needs and wants of consumers arise. Depending on scholars views, overconsumption is interpreted according to opposed angles: the one, based on the above exposed concept of consumer demand, that considers the consumer and his desire of accumulation to be liable of the planet's serious unbalance; and

the other that sustains that corporate marketing follows a profit maximization model, by which the consumer is the mean to profit and therefore is artificially driven to buy and consume (Crane & Matten, 2010).

SUSTAINABLE ISSUES IN MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Neoclassical teachings about the forever servicing role of business towards consumers is continuously challenged by the fact that modern business produces numerous negative externalities and a host of goods and services of dubitable necessity; hence we have advertising and marketing in order to stimulate artificially demand where natural interest lacks (Dierksmeier, 2010). Every new consumer product is introduced after a meticulous puzzle of marketing mix along with an advertising campaign to raise interest or desire. When looking at any advertising expenditure data it is undeniable that this investment is of significant scale in the total expenditure of a company, meaning that it has a true strategic importance. Such expenses must be integrated with the theory of consumer demand, simply because they are too big to be ignored. This way it seems that wants are dependent on production. It accords to the producer the function both of making the goods and of making the desires for them (Galbraith, 1998).

This vicious circle caused advertising to become criticized as being pervasive and intrusive, using techniques for shaping the values and desires of society in order to make us more acquisitive, selfish and superficial (Belz & Peattie, 2010). The belief that more wealth and more material possessions are essential to achieving the good life has grown widely across many countries in the past several decades (Assadourian, 2010). As a direct result of the mentioned pervasiveness, advertising seems to be an important factor in normalising particular cultural behaviours, attitudes and values. Alexander, Crompton, and Shrubsole (2010) in the joined WWF-World Wild Fund and PRIC-Public Interest Research Center report *Think of me as Evil?* highlight that there is clear evidence that

high levels of exposure to commercial marketing – the average adult sees around 3,000 advertisements a day according to some estimates – has an impact on a person's values. Greater exposure to commercial marketing is correlated with higher levels of materialism, and lower levels of concern about a range of "bigger than-self" problems, which would mean less concern with environmental and social issues, neutralizing the motivation to adopt more sustainable consumer patterns.

These questions and the role of advertising in contemporary society and the sustainability and ethical questions it raises are very well exposed and analysed in the above-mentioned report.

Marketing management as the key function for selling goods and services has also long been facing the critics of its environmental and social impact. In addition it also faces many ethical issues related to less trustworthy practices in the 4P's (lack of product safety; deception, perpetuating dissatisfaction or promotion of materialism in the marketing communications; excessive or deceptive pricing; gifts and bribes) in the marketing strategy (targeting vulnerable consumers or consumer exclusion) and in market research, mainly because of privacy issues (Crane & Matten, 2010). Therefore academics on marketing ethics refer the lack of trust in the advertising, public relations, and sales professions, concluding that marketing has long been perceived as among the least ethical of business functions (Crane & Matten, 2010, p. 340).

The critics can be broken down into an individual level and a social level: the use of *misleading or deceptive practices* that seek to create false beliefs about specific products or companies in the consumer's mind, in order to increase the will to purchase; and the so called *aggregate social and cultural impacts* of marketing communications on everyday life, particularly their impact in promoting materialism and reifying consumption (Crane & Matten, 2010, p. 347). Other specific concerns that are subject of strong debate deal with the impact on the advertising messages on children, the implications in child-

hood obesity or the stereotypical gender roles in many adverts and the endemic use of sexual imagery to sell products and services (Belz & Peattie, 2011, p. 178).

It is therefore unsurprising that many consumer perception surveys found that consumers are aware of the persuasive nature of marketing communications and end up trusting brands less. The recent financial crisis brought the issue of trust into sharper focus. In a recent Portuguese consumer survey from 2010 *Who trust advertising* 80 per cent of the consumers believe that brands only want to sell and really don't care about them and 79,5 per cent think that brands are only worried in selling their products and services rather than selling the product and service that is more adequate to their needs.

2. THE MAIN PARADOX THAT URGES FOR CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN CSR AND MARKETING

Given the before mentioned description, it is legitimate to ask what kind of Corporate Sustainability and Re-

sponsibility (CSR) is being applied by the corporate world, to what extent, and how is it being integrated in diverse business function, namely marketing. But the most pressing question would be as follows: are CSR and marketing compatible at all, since the first requires strategies for less consumption and production and the latter strives for the contrary?

To get an understanding for these issues we start with the following global assumptions of how CSR and marketing are ideally related:

As society and the business community begin to accept their moral obligation to pursue sustainable development, then companies will increasingly need to assess their position on specific environmental and CSR issues. This will require an integrated approach across functional areas including marketing, production and supply networks. (Charter et al., 2002, p. 15).

This kind of strategic approach to CSR adds social and environmental dimensions to a company's value proposition. When this is the case, CSR is closely associated with sustainability marketing. (Belz & Peattie, referring to the case of Whole Foods Market, 2011, p. 37).

At this point an unsettling possibility arouses: this would mean that when companies are implementing conventional marketing and communication strategies they are not embracing the idea of sustainable development in a systemic way, even so they hold that they are on the CSR path.

We will analyse this problem from a generic perspective of CSR and from a close up perspective of marketing.

CSR: THE NEED FOR A SYSTEMIC APPROACH

Many researchers and specialists suggest that current CSR is not being integrated in a holistic way, although companies seem to be committed and are doing a lot of efforts in the last decade. Precisely, considering the grow-

ing concern about sustainable development, the positive evolution of companies' commitment to it, by joining the Global Compact or the World Business Council of Sustainable Development (WBCSD) among others, the increasing practice of accountability by means of sustainability reports, the compliance to a collection of codes and standards and the wide stakeholder pressure like consumer association and watchdog organizations on issues such as consumer rights or production conditions, it would be expected that companies are embedding the major sustainability issues of their industry across all companies' sectors. But a recent 2010 McKinsey survey showed that companies are not there yet. While more than 50 percent of the executives considered sustainability "very" or "extremely" important in a wide range of areas, only 30 percent said their companies actively seek opportunities to invest in sustainability or embed it in their business practices (Visser, 2011, p. 164).

In the 2010 UN Global Compact-Accenture CEO study, the largest on sustainability to date, there are contradictory findings that indicate the complexity of achieving sound CSR implementation. Although 81 percent of the CEOs report that sustainability has been fully embedded into the strategy and operations of their company, the qualitative interviews carried out with CEO indicate that executives are still struggling to approach the sustainability issues as part and parcel of core business and for many businesses, even among the more progressive members of the Global Compact, sustainability is still regarded as a separate or insipient strategy in itself, rather than being embedded across all corporate and functional strategies and business plans. In fact this should not be a surprise because corporations are more than ever under a multitude of different sort of pressures – from short-term shareholder interest to public reputation risks – which cause corporate leaders to struggle between sustainability decisions and financial and economic interests. This state of affairs is reinforced by other findings in this same survey. CEO recognized that there are significant barriers to an integrated

approach to sustainability. 'Competing strategic priorities' was mentioned as the top two barrier (48 percent of the responses) followed by the 'lack of recognition from financial markets' (34 percent of responses). These shortcomings in 'walking the talk' were already highlighted in 2009 by editor Daniel Franklin in *The Economist's World in 2009 Yearbook* (p. 18):

Many companies pretend that their sustainability strategy runs deeper than it really does. It has become almost obligatory for executives to claim that CSR is "connected to the core" of corporate strategy, or that it has become "part of the DNA". In truth, even ardent advocates of sustainability struggle to identify more than a handful of examples.

This critical vision is shared by Jeffrey Hollender in his foreword for *The Age of Responsibility*, the latest book on CSR of Visser (2011, p. xiii):

Most companies did what companies do: they create an office or a department to deal with Corporate Responsibility (CR) and told it to grow CR initiatives. But this compartmentalized approach had the effect of decoupling innumerable CR agendas from their company's actually daily workings and left programs trapped "inside the box" where nothing meaningful could happen.

In *The Age of Responsibility* Visser (2011) offers a very compelling argumentation that traditional CSR like it has been practised until today has failed because it did not reach to tackle the most pressing problems of the world. Companies are under what he calls the three "curses of CSR 1.0": *peripheral CSR*; incremental CSR and unecologic CSR. In the curse of peripheral CSR, CSR is, at worst, limited to the public relations, marketing or human resources department, as an "add-on", used explicitly to improve brand equity or the company's reputation. At best, CSR is integrated in the management systems, but fails to change the strategic direction or the harmful effects of its processes, products and services.

In the curse of *incremental CSR*, CSR fails to significantly change companies' largest negative impacts, which are associated with the nature of their business or the consumption driven lifestyle they promote, or the impacts of their resource and energy intensive processes, products and services. The outcome of this performance is that this kind of CSR "does not produce the scale and urgency of response that is required nor does it reach the root of business's systemic unsustainability of the growth obsessed capitalist global economy" (Visser, 2011, p. 127).

The curse of *uneconomic CSR* is that the praised 'business case' for CSR is indeed not obvious and practised as it is commonly assumed. First, according to Visser, is that there are too many variables involved to isolate the impact of CSR on financial performance, except through very specific examples like eco-efficiency. Second, with very few exceptions, Visser casts doubts on whether the markets are consistently rewarding sustainable and responsible performance by companies.

As a response to this CSR failure, Visser advocates a radical shift of paradigm in business with a systemic approach, which he coined CSR 2.0.

MARKETING: MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES OR THE CENTRE OF THE BUSINESS STRATEGY

Marketing can be defined both as a business philosophy and a collection of management techniques (Charter et al., 2002). Regarding the strategic decision potencial of marketing in companies' overall decision making it is relevant to analyse it in this light. Marketing defined as a business philosophy was well resumed by Drucker as the "whole business seen from its final result, that is from the costumer's point of view". This broader scope seems to be extremely relevant for today's business because of the importance of brand and corporate trust and reputation.

But according to the leading marketing scholar Grönroos marketing is a discipline in crisis. For him, conventional marketing is loosing its credibility and the marketing

function is in decline (2006). In a study of large US firms reported by McGovern et al. (2004), less than 10 percent of the boards' time is spent discussing marketing and customer-related issues (Grönroos, 2006). In another US poll almost half of CEOs interviewed make the point that marketing organizations need improvement (Grönroos, 2006). A McKinsey study from Europe echoes this view and indicates that over 50 percent of CEOs interviewed in the study have a negative impression of their marketers (Grönroos, 2006).

Yet marketing should be related to strategy and not only occupy itself with tactical issues (Grönroos, 2006) because marketing relates to almost all business areas – from design, to production, client service and disposal of a product or service. In fact, marketing is linked to the whole life cycle of a product or service, turning it into a centrepiece of 'business-as-usual-management'. This would mean that any company adopting a CSR strategy and sustainable business management should inherently be adopting a sustainable and responsible marketing strategy.

Belz & Peattie went further, suggesting "the marketing strategy of a company reflects its overall corporate strategy and objectives, its vision, mission and values" (2011, p. 126).

Similarly the WBSCD (2005) gives marketing a strategic place in business, holding that companies create competitive advantage by understanding the shifts in society. Society trends are the foundations of marketing strategy, and the emergence of sustainable development as a matter of public and corporate concern is one such change in the marketing environment.

Based on these two conceptual approaches, it is logic and legitimate to suppose that any company that has questionable marketing and advertising practices in place is mirroring its true vision and positioning, regardless of having code of conducts, sustainability reports or fulfilling the requirements of various social or environmental standards. This incoherence carries high risks of reputation and distrust, two facets that are of top

concern in today's business. So, considering the initial assumption in this chapter that CSR and marketing are closely related when there is a systemic approach we may assume that we face the following shortcoming:

If CSR is lacking a systemic approach, than marketing as a centrepiece of the business strategy is probably a visible reflection of the absence of this holistic model and is probably not addressing the companies' sustainability issues. This would signify the missing link, the lack of coherence between the companies CSR strategy and marketing that needs to be closed.

Giving the crucial importance of these issues and the questions it raises we suggest that there is need for further debate and further sustained empirical research to ascertain and assess this 'cause-and-effect' relation of CSR and Marketing.

3. CHANGING THE ROOT OF MARKETING

A QUESTION OF MINDSET

Given this understanding, how can the existing marketing and communication practices of companies be harmonised with their CSR strategies? For Belz & Peattie (2010) a transformation of mindsets must be undertaken: "changing our production and consumption systems cannot be achieved without changing marketing mindsets and practices, and forever abandoning the assumption that the issue at the root of marketing activity is 'how to sell more stuff to people' ". The idea of changing mindsets to achieve sustainability among all actors

in society, but particularly among leaders and in corporations, is a keystone for scholars and researchers (Doppelt, 2009; Critchley & Casserley, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Visser, 2011; Voegtlin et al., 2010).

Addressing the needs and limits of nature and tackle the multiple social issues while exceeding costumer expectations will require fundamental change, full of complexity in various forms. At a micro-level it means re-evaluating product and service portfolios, as well as the way these products and services are created, produced and marketed, which can be a complex challenge to marketers. It involves, for example, looking at the sort of impacts for costumers and other stakeholders or accounting for the environmental and social externalities of the products, which these managers are simply not accustomed to consider. It would take marketers outside of their traditional frame of reference (Charter et al. 2002). At a macro-level we are dealing with a list of huge obstacles spanning from fear of an economic system failure, lack of leadership, shareholder profit maximization perspective to poor information and education of business managers as well as of governments. Achieving the transformation before is becomes to late to avoid significant environmental, social and economical upheaval will require marketing thinking to break out of the habits of mind and constraining assumptions of conventional, unsustainable marketing.

OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING

Belz & Peattie (2010, p. 257) hold that barriers to transform conventional into responsible marketing strategies fall into three main categories:

- *Individual barriers*: lack of awareness, unwillingness to change, fear about necessary changes and how to deal with them, and extra-work added to daily business.
- *Organizational internal barriers*: short-term perspectives focusing on economic aspects, faith in technology and market solutions, and lack of a

clear business case, especially for marketing management

- *Organizational external barriers*: lack of consumer interest, lack of investor interest, lack of coherence in public policies and regulations, especially regarding products.

The fact of the matter is that for marketing professionals the pursuit of sustainability – as admittedly for the rest of other business managers – takes them into unknown territory and confronts them with many new and difficult questions as exemplified:

“What are the benefits of incorporating social, ethical and environmental issues in day-to-day-decision making? How can business identify and make the most of the opportunities arising from the new agenda? How can the companies address these issues without being accused of ‘bandwagon jumping’ or superficial responses? (Charter et al., 2002, p. 9)

To overcome these hurdles, Belz & Peattie (2011) defend what they call the *six essentials* for achieving internal change, which in our view can be applied to any business field whilst focusing on the specific aspects of each management area: a *committed CEO*, whose role in leading the change through inspiring and supporting the wave of change is decisive; *sustainability change agents*, defined as motivated managers at all levels and fields to whom the CEO gives power and resources to instigate and drive internal change; *empowered employees*, by means of information, education, and training; *sustainability marketing information systems* like life cycle assessments, stakeholder engagement and all sorts of comprehensive research and information that give marketing decision makers an understanding of how socio-ecological problems turn into market issues and vice-versa; *corporate sustainability mission* that synthesizes the company's proposition for contributing to a more sustainable world helping and energizes and motivates employees; and *sustainability incentive struc-*

ture providing immaterial and material rewards for the achievement of sustainability objectives.

SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING: THE MISSING LINK

The good news is that some sustainability marketing concepts are already being comprehensively studied and proposed. At this point it is relevant to give a sustainability marketing definition. Charter et al. (2002) derive the concept from the definitions of green and ecological marketing. While green marketing is characterized by a focus on environmental issues, and reducing environmental damage, sustainable marketing is the next natural step forwards, with a broader management concept focused on achieving the ‘triple bottom line’, “through creating, producing and delivering sustainable solutions with higher *net* sustainable value whilst continuously satisfying costumers and other stakeholders.” (p. 12). Belz & Peattie (2011) prefer to switch the concept ‘sustainable marketing’ to ‘sustainability marketing’ because the former may be used in the sense of ‘durable’ or ‘long-lasting’ which could give the impression that it is a kind of marketing to ensure long-term relationships with costumers, without any particular relation to sustainable development. By contrast, ‘Sustainability Marketing’ clearly relates to the sustainable development agenda, defined as building and maintaining sustainable relationships with costumers, the social environment and the natural environment.

This new kind of marketing should be the businesses’ strategic tool to address the sustainability issues while delivering solutions to our needs. Belz & Peattie gave it a detailed characterization that resonates the three pillars of the sustainable development circle model. They defined it as *ecologically oriented*, taking account of the ecological limits of the planet, *viable*, from a technical versus an economic perspective, *ethical*, in promoting greater social justice and equity and *relationship-based* focusing on the relationships between businesses and their costumers and other stakeholders rather than in terms of economic exchanges (Belz & Peattie, 2011). In

this sustainability-oriented vision of marketing a collection of responses for sustainable development can finally flourish, like the life-cycle assessment, cradle-to-cradle, the Bottom of the Pyramid as a market for enhancing quality of life and alleviating poverty and inequality, as to mentioned a few.

To complements the *six essentials* of Belz & Peattie, the WCBSD (2005, p. 16) show the holistic connection that has to be enhanced between marketing and strategy and the external change that companies need to foster which. They recommend that marketing strategy should respond to the wider environment in which the company is operating, namely aligning it with the company's strategy, values and culture; helping to deliver sustainable returns to investors; addressing customer and consumer needs and informing and educating people about the impacts of their purchasing practices; identifying and responding to emerging societal trends, and exploring the opportunities to deliver products in collaboration with the communities in which the company operates; responding to governmental and regulatory expectations; and influencing the public policy agenda.

4. CONCLUSION

At least partially, the problems of overproduction and consumption have a solution in the shift of paradigm from conventional marketing to a socially and environmentally responsible marketing approach as a means to achieve a much more sustainable society.

In this paper we have shown the main aspects of the current mainstream economic and marketing trends that are likely to undermine a long-term survival and the possibility of prosperity if the business world do not adopt

alternative paths. CSR needs to reach the heart of business strategy to truly meet marketing management and generate coherence and authenticity. We have also identified the main barriers that are hampering the fundamental shift to sustainable marketing management.

In our view sustainability marketing would represent the business area that is meant to foster more sustainable consumption patterns, on one side by producing and offering product or services to solve societal or environmental needs and on the other by creating awareness and driving consumers to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Different authors and institutions are already focusing on this vision of sustainable management. The main step now is urgent and should be taken by the corporate organisations.

It is not easy to frame the big issues involved in this due to the complexity of the questions involved and the daunting challenge that represents a shift of a whole long lasting well-woven social and economic model. It is therefore urgent to develop more research to examine and clarify the issues and contradictions that underlie CSR versus marketing and communication strategies and consumers' perception of companies' sustainability positioning among other pressing questions that are preventing us to move to a sustainability pattern of thinking and behaviour.

REFERENCES

- Assadourian, Erik (2010). *The rise and fall of consumer cultures*. 2010 State of the World: Transforming Cultures – from consumerism to sustainability. World Watch Institute. 3-20
- Assadourian, Erik (2010). *Business and Economy: Management Priorities*. 2010 State of the World: Transforming Cultures – from consumerism to sustainability. World Watch Institute. 83
- Belz, Frank-Martin and Peattie, Ken (2011). *Sustainability Marketing – A Global Perspective*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Boulding, Kenneth (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2011 from the World Wide Web:
<http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/new-economic-model>
- Charter, Martin; Peattie, Ken; Ottman, Jacqueline and Polonsky, Michael J. (2002) *Marketing and sustainability*. The Centre for Sustainable Design
- Crane, Andrew and Matten, Dirk (2010). *Business Ethics. Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Critchley, B. & Casserley, T. (2011). *Essay: Rethinking leadership for a sustainable future*. Ethical Corporation, June 2011, p. 39–41. Retrieved August 17, 2011 from the World Wide Web:
<http://www.edgeequilibrium.com/resources/rethinking%20leadership%20ethical%20corp%20june11.pdf>
- Dierksmeier, Claus (2010). *The Freedom-Responsibility Nexus in Management Philosophy and Business Ethics*. Retrieved March 20, 2011 from the World Wide Web: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1731587
- Stonehill College - Department of Business Administration: Working Paper Series
- Doppelt, B. (2010). *Leading change toward sustainability. A Change-Management Guide for Business, Government and Civil Society*, chapter 5. Retrieved October 30, 2011 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.csrinternational.org/publications/chapters-2/>
- Franklin, Daniel (2009). The year of unsustainability. *The World in 2009 – The Economist*, 18
- Galbraith, John K. (1998). *The affluent society*. London: Penguin Books
- Gomes, António (n. d.). *Do we trust advertising – survey 2010*. GSF Metris. Retrieved May 15, 2011 from the World Wide Web:
http://www.apan.pt/conferencia2011/pdf/apres_antonio_gomes.pdf
- Grönroos, Christian (2006). *On defining marketing: finding a new roadmap for marketing*. Hanken Swedish School of Economics, Finland. Volume 6(4): 395–417. Retrieved September 24, 2011 from the World Wide Web: www.sagepublications.com
- Capra, Fritjof & Henderson, Hazel (2009). *Qualitative Growth*, Institute of the Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). London. Retrieved November 22, 2011 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.icaew.com/□/media/Files/Technical/Sustainability/Qualitative%20Growth.ashx>
- Jackson, Tim (2011). *Prosperity without Growth*. London: Earthscan.
- Jon, Alexander; Crompton, Tom; Shrubsole, Guy (2011) *Think of me as evil?*. Public Interest Research Centre and WWW-UK. Retrieved November 10, 2011 from the World Wide Web:
http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/think_of_me_as_evil.pdf
- Kegan, R. & Lahey, L. L. (2009). *Immunity to Change. How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization*. Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation
- UN Global Compact & Accenture (2010). *A New Era of Sustainability: UN Global Compact-Accenture CEO Study*. Retrieved 15 October, 2010 from the World Wide Web:
http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/news_events/8.1/UNGC_Accenture_CEO_Study_2010.pdf
- Visser, W. (2011). *The Age of Responsibility. CSR 2.0 and the new DNA of Business*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Voegtlin C., Patzer, M & Sherer, A. G. (2010). *Responsible Leadership in Global Business: a Contingency Approach*. IOU Working Paper No. 106. Working Paper Series. Zurich: Institute of Organization and Administrative Science, University of Zurich. Retrieved August 14, 2011 from the World Wide Web:
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1567996
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2005). *Driving Success: Marketing and Sustainable Development*. HRT the Prince of Wales's Business & the Environment Programme and University of Cambridge – Programme for Industry.
- Worldwatch Institute. 2010 State of the World: Transforming Cultures – from consumerism to sustainability.