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The Conscious Consumer's Perceptions: How Awareness Levels of Sustainability Actually Impact Consumer Choices/Purchasing Practices

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Project: The Conscious Consumer's Perceptions: How Awareness Levels of Sustainability Actually Impact Consumer Choices/Purchasing Practices

Name: Caroline Hughes

Year: 2020

Summary

Overview

As a student in the School of Journalism and New Media, I will receive my Masters of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications August 2020. In order to experience the full breadth of the program, I aim to conduct field research at various environmentally conscious companies through support of the Graduate Student Council (GSC). This GSC project will ultimately explore attitudes toward sustainable consumption and identify the level of impact environmental marketing has on purchase decisions. By analyzing current marketing strategies with the suggested brands while dually examining target audience responsiveness, receptiveness and purchase behavior, I aim to reveal the depth of consumer awareness around sustainability.

Intellectual Merit

The object of this GSC project is to examine the relationship between business marketing strategy and consumer awareness, specifically in the field of corporate sustainability. Moreover, this project intends to reveal the level with which conscious consumer's purchase decisions rely on environmental marketing methods. In a field that is vastly ever-changing, marketers often struggle to understand responsiveness to messaging. Though recent technological advancements have positively contributed—social media platforms, data analytics, and the like—businesses are vying to apprehend where efforts should be focused. This GSC project will in turn strive to uncover the 'sweet spot' around green messaging in the fashion industry. In order to do so, primary data will be collected in the form of case studies, surveys and interviews, with statistical techniques used for analysis. The most notable research method will be a case study of Patagonia, a company long known for their innovation and stewardship. Pioneers of environmental and social responsibility, Patagonia will serve as a dynamic overview of corporate marketing practices in the conscious space. In addition to this research method, I will conduct various surveys and questionnaires to acquire conscious consumer insight. For the purpose of the research study, it is best to define the 'conscious consumer' as an individual "engaging in the economy with more awareness of how consumption impacts society at large" (Wong, 2019). These consumers make premium purchase decisions based upon well-understood company practices, such as sourcing, ethical labor and environmental impact, of which I seek to further identify (Chaubey, Dimri, & Manchanda, 2008).

External Opportunity

Each fiscal year (May 1 – April 30th), the Patagonia Retail Grants Program monetarily supports grassroots campaigns, upwards of \$12,000. I propose to apply for and host panel events throughout the nation, open to the public through registration, based upon various sustainable themes. Panelists would include local thought leaders and business owners adapting green initiatives into their companies. Academically, this opportunity will delve deeper into the educational component of my marketing research, creating opportunity for individuals to learn more and get involved in local green initiatives. The application due date is April 30th.