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## **Ecological aspects of marketing strategies in retailing. The experience of the Polish market.**

### **Introduction**

The contemporary generation only borrowed the natural environment from future generations and how each should be paid for borrowed it intact.

In a globalised economy, average consumption levels are on the rise due to increasing world population, and the expansion of middle and lower income consumers and of a general culture of consumption. However the crucial aspect is economic systems in industrialized societies based on consumption and production.

The awareness of the critical issues to prevent further damage of the environment differs in particular countries and social groups. But in general, the social attention and interest in these problems is constantly increasing.

In this area, the concepts of “environmental management” (“eco-management”) and a broad consideration of environmental issues in business appear with renewed forced in recent years.

Unfortunately, current consumption patterns are unsustainable, and the improvements in energy efficiency and the emergence of new technologies do not always outweigh them, resulting in increasing environmental damage. Therefore global consumption should be directed towards more environmentally friendlier products and services. For consumers this entails modifying the ways in which they choose, use and dispose of products and services.

Sensitivity to the ecology should not end with the production and distribution, but also spread to the household, its equipment ergonomics, functionality of packaging, the information utility of individual goods, as well as ways to prepare for holding a variety of packaging and waste to continue exploit the processing and in manufacturing processes.

In this context, retailers, and manufacturers must help the society reach this aims and encourage more sustainable consumption patterns.

In the field of marketing, special interest attracts the concept of “green marketing”. According to the American Marketing Association, green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Defining green marketing is not a simple task where several meanings intersect and contradict each other; an example of this will be the existence of varying social, environmental and retail definitions attached to this term. Other similar terms used are Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing.

Green, environmental and eco-marketing are part of the new marketing approaches which do not just refocus, adjust or enhance existing marketing thinking and practice, but seek to challenge those approaches and provide a substantially different perspective. In more detail green, environmental and eco-marketing belong to the group of approaches which seek to address the lack of fit between marketing as it is currently practiced and the ecological and social realities of the wider marketing environment (Belz, Peattie 2009).

The majority of people believe that ecological (green) marketing refers solely to the promotion or advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Terms like Phosphate Free, Recyclable, Refillable, Ozone Friendly, and Environmentally Friendly are some of the things consumers most often associate with green marketing. While these terms are green marketing claims, in general green marketing is a much broader concept, one that can be applied to consumer goods, industrial goods and even services. Thus, green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes of the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising.

The result of implementing green marketing could be eco-positioning of the company, creating and facilitating brand image as socially and environmentally (“eco”) responsible.

However all the activities require the support from eco-communication. To achieve eco-positioning, it is necessary to include ecological arguments in communication strategies (promotion etc.).

There are two groups of activities takes by companies in the field of “being environmentally friendly”:

- Independent initiatives of companies,
- Actions forces of stimulated by law.

However, the paper is focused on independent initiatives (independent from legal obligations) of companies or group of companies, particularly in contacts with final customers. Since the feature of the mass market is the separation of producer from the buyer, they usually do not have direct contacts. The contacts (purchase) is via wholesaler or retailer. Thus the Authors focused on the retailer-customer relations as the final step in customer decision making process.

Therefore the aim of the paper corresponds with the concept of green marketing and eco-communication and is going to investigate retailers position in promoting green buying.

The increasing retailers' interest in ecological issues has been observed in Poland since 2007-2008. Both European retailers, operating on Polish market, and local retailers proposed the individual environmental commitments. Submitted proposals are aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of the retail sector and its supply chain, promoting more sustainable products, and better informing consumers. In a majority of cases retailers are focused on energy efficiency, sustainable products and eco-design, product packaging and waste management. The other commitments regard to optimization and green innovation of distribution systems and logistics (namely transport) and increased use and production of renewable energy.

At operational level, it is manifested by using ecological aspects in communication strategies, the introduction of a healthy food (ecological "green" products), in limiting the use of plastic shopping bags and promoting multiple-type bags and organic cotton shopping bags. The retailers contributed voluntarily in this processes.

This phenomenon has led the Authors to a deeper reflection on the environmental activities undertaken by retailers. To what extent these actions are the result of economic calculation (the desire to lower operating costs)? Or is it a deliberate element of marketing strategy in retail-oriented positioning (value added), or create customer value through the arguments about the ecological nature?

Without denying the positive effects of such activities on the environment, the Authors lead a broad discussion on the environmental themes and ecological aspects of marketing strategies in Polish retailing.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility & environmental protection**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. CSR policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism whereby business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards, and international norms. The goal of CSR is to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities and stakeholders. Furthermore, CSR-focused businesses would proactively promote the public interest by encouraging community growth and development, and voluntarily eliminating practices that harm the public sphere, regardless of legality (Griffin 2006, Mernatt 2009).

There are many different approaches to CSR. A more common approach of CSR is philanthropy. This includes monetary donations and aid given to local organizations and impoverished communities in developing countries. Another approach to CSR is to incorporate the CSR strategy directly into the business strategy of an organization (e.g. fair trade). However the CSR concept itself is not the main field of interest in that paper. Therefore the further analysis will be limited to the important element of CSR communication of environmental effects of a company's economic actions.

The study is focused on the attitude to environment as an area of corporate social responsibility. In this regard, usually examines the issues associated with waste disposal, emissions, safety policy in relation to the prevention of industrial accidents that may pose a threat to the environment, etc. Most of these actions are initiated by the regulatory sphere (government authorities), which in turn is influenced by the arguments of experts in the field of environmental protection.

Poland has a relatively comprehensive legislation on environmental protection. Therefore corporate businesses have series of obligations concerning waste, waste records, air pollution etc.

Hence a number of companies providing eco-consulting appeared on the market. This part of activities is not the result of CSR strategy, which by the nature refers to actions taken voluntarily. It is obligatory because of law. Whatever all of the activities can be used in marketing communication supporting the corporate image (brand image) based on “being environmentally friendly”.

Additionally some experts emphasizes that CSR and eco-positioning is not only a source of legitimacy but also a field of development of innovative products and services.

The main interest of this study is the customers attitudes toward environmental protection and marketing strategies based on eco-arguments. It includes implementing and promoting environmentally friendly packaging, dispensing of oversized packaging, collecting of used batteries etc, implementing and promoting eco-products (products environmentally friendly).

The Authors put a thesis that companies will voluntarily implement environmental arguments in marketing communication (eco-communication), if it is identifiable and relevant to customers. If the customers are in a state of unconsciousness or environmental awareness is low, the effectiveness of eco-communication will be low. Hence the company modify, restrict or withdraw eco-communication and will look for other communication schemes.

To support the research hypothesis, the concept of customers perceived value could be presented. Customer perceived value (CPV) is the difference between the prospective customer’s evaluation of all the benefits and all the costs of an offering and the perceived alternatives (Kotler, Keller 2009).

The customer gets benefits and assumes costs. The marketer can increase the value of the customer offering by some combination of raising functional or emotional benefits and / or reducing one or more of the various types of costs. Kotler and Keller distinguished four groups of total customer valued and four groups of total customers cost. The total customer value includes product value, services value, personnel value an image value. Total customer cost consists of monetary cost, time cost, energy cost and psychic cost (Kotler, Keller 2009).

The idea of “being environmentally friendly” could both increase total customer value (by supporting image value) and reduce total customer cost (by decreasing psychic cost).

As it was mentioned earlier, in the field of marketing, environmental aspects are widely used in the concept of “green marketing”.

In relation to retail sector, that is in the centre of our interest, green marketing refers to the process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits. Such a product or service may be environmentally friendly in itself or produced and/or packaged in an environmentally friendly way. The important is to transfer information to customers. Therefore retailers should increasingly communicate to the customers that their offer includes eco-products, that they work on reducing environmental pollution etc.

Eurobarometer survey on European’s attitude towards sustainable consumption and patterns showed, that more than 8 in 10 EU citizens felt that a product’s impact on the environment is important when taking a purchase decision (Eurobarometer 2010). This survey shows that a very large part of the population is interested in buying more environmentally friendlier products. It also shows that retailers have a unique opportunity to reach a number of people on a daily basis. Unfortunately, former Eurobarometer studies showed the wide gap between awareness and behavior of consumers. Therefore there is a need to study in-depth customers attitude to stimulate eco-promotion to modify not only customers eco-awareness but predominantly – customers behaviors and consumption patterns.

There are no clear empirical evidence that consumers are willing to pay more for green products than they would for a less-green comparable alternative product. However some retailers that build their marketing strategy on eco-arguments, calculate prices a little higher than conventional alternatives. The arguments provide the characteristic of the target group (eco-customers, eco-sensitive customers) that is willing to pay extra for green products.

However the growing controversy concerning eco-communication should be noted (Hanas 2007, Ottman 2008). It refers to misleading communication based on lack of customers’ awareness.

There are four general research hypothesis included into current study:

Hypothesis 1.

International retailers on polish market implement eco-communication more often than local retailers.

Hypothesis 2.

Polish consumers have a relatively low environmental awareness.

Hypothesis 3.

The scope of eco-communication in retailers' marketing strategies is determined by the target audience acceptance.

Hypothesis 4.

There is a gap between the scope of retailers' eco-communication, customers' attitudes and customers' behaviors towards green products and services.

### **Ecological awareness of polish customers**

The in-depth analysis of research studies and surveys conducted in Poland over the last decade leads to the conclusion that the impetus for socially responsible corporate behavior does not come from customers (Report "Responsible Business in Poland" 2009). The Institute for Sustainable Development carries out regular studies of environmental awareness of Polish society. The survey conducted in 2009 revealed that only 1,9% of Polish customers draw attention to environmentally friendly packaging, 4,5% - whether the product was manufactured in an environmentally friendly process.

Therefore, it supports the hypothesis concerning the discrepancy between corporate interest in implementing eco-communication, green marketing etc. and customers' interest. Despite growing corporate interest in CSR, there is a lack of mass customers (public) pressure on companies to be environmentally friendly.

Environmental awareness of Polish customers differs in social and age groups. According to research carried out by Gemius, only 16% of young Poles is familiar with the CSR concept, the vast majority of people aged 18-25 had never had contact with it. Few can successfully list some environmentally or socially friendly companies. Respondents more often associate CSR with ethical, honest and reliable business, taking into account the employees', customers' and community welfare.

The most important aspect in decision-making process is quality followed by price. More than half of young Poles is affected by brand and they declare checking product ingredients. Rarely they take into account broad aspects of CSR policy (environmental and social labeling takes into account 16%). Environmentally friendly packaging is important for 12% of young people. However it was just declaration concerning taking into account eco-packaging during decision-making process and not as final choice (Report “Young consumers on CSR, 2009).

In study conducted in Poland in 2009, the consumer ethics scale developed by Muncy and Vitell was used (Muncy, Vitell 2005; Grzesiuk, Wanat 2010). Table 1 presents selected findings relating solely to the behavior of young respondents who declared recycling and environmental awareness. The results indicated that almost half had no clear attitude towards products made from raw materials or products with “eco” labels.

Table 1. Recycling & environmental awareness

	Strongly believe that it is wrong			Strongly believe that it is NOT wrong	
	1	2	3	4	5
Buying products labelled as “environmentally friendly” even if they don’t work as well as competing products	3,9	12,7	46,1	24,5	11,8
Purchasing something made of recycled materials even though it is more expensive	4,9	10,8	46,1	19,6	15,7
Buying only from companies that have a strong record of protecting the environment	3,9	7,8	41,2	22,5	22,5
Recycling materials such as cans, bottles, newspapers, etc.	4,9	3,9	18,6	19,6	50

The above mentioned arguments supported the Hypothesis 2. The Hypothesis 2 was positively verifies. The ecological (environmental) awareness of polish customers is low.

### **Retailing in Poland – general outlook**

Retail sector generates ca. 12% of GDP In EU and employs 30 million people. However the impact of retailing on the whole economy should be analyzed from a broader perspective. Retailing should be perceived as a place of a direct contact between a customers and a product. Therefore retailing plays a significant role in shaping consumption patterns and buying behaviors. Through an accurate communication in sales outlets, retailing is able to



shape consumption into required direction e.g. encouraging people to identify, choose and use environmentally friendlier products and services by providing information, and in more general – to educate customers. The mentioned process could involve both promotion and merchandising.

While discussing eco-communication in Polish retailing, the structure of the sector should be presented. There have been a lot of revolutionary changes in Polish retailing over the last two decades. It included ownership, organizational quantitative and qualitative transformation (Grzesiuk 2010). Despite of these, Polish retailing is one of the most fragmented in Europe. A characteristic feature is predominance of small family-owned retailers. Almost half of the retail space generate stores with less than 99 sq.m. Nearly 97% of shops belong to local retailers (not international). But the most important issue determining the strength of polish retailing is the scale of operations. As many as 98% of retailers are small family owned businesses with 1-2 stores. Only 0,36% of retail businesses has more than 10 outlets (Grzesiuk 2010). Simultaneously the concentration processes in retailing are strongly observed. In 2008 leading 20 retailers in food industry accounted for more that 40% of turnover.

It is worth mentioning that multinational retailers operating on Polish market are leading in eco initiatives and eco-communication. It is mainly because of the scale of their activities.

### **Eco-communication in retailing – European perspective**

In 2009, leading European retailers launched the Retailers' Environmental Action Programme (REAP), a voluntary initiative aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of the retail sector and its supply chain, promoting more sustainable products, and better informing consumers (*Retailer's Environmental Action Programme* 2010).

This programme brings together retailers' focus on reducing the environmental impact of the retail sector and its supply chain, and empowering the consumer to buy and use green products and services.

One of the actions taken by retailers' initiative is MAP. The Matrix of Action Points is an open, dynamic list of commitments on environmental targets made by individual retail companies and associations (Report Retailer's Environmental Action Programme 2010).

These actions are grouped into three categories:

- *What we sell*: includes actions aimed at selling lower impact, better performing products and services.
- *How we sell*: includes actions aimed at limiting environmental impacts from retailers' own distribution activities (stores, distribution centers, transport of goods) as well as limiting environmental impacts of operations through the supply chain.
- *How we communicate*: includes actions aimed at informing and influencing the consumer to make better choices and decisions in consuming, owning and using more sustainable products and services.

Retailers provided in-store communication on energy savings to customers, encouraging customers choice about ecological products, and stimulate reduction of plastic bags.

In November 2003 retailer in France decided to reduce plastic shopping bags by following action:

- Providing customers education about harmfulness of plastic bags to environment,
- Providing our clients with an extensive collection of reusable bags.

These actions are continued and more retailers from different countries are joining the initiative. The results of these campaigns show that French customers are relatively sensitive to environmental problems (see Table 2).

Table 2. The results of French retailing campaigns to reduce plastic shopping bags

	The reduction of plastic shopping bags (2003-2004)	The number of plastic shopping bags used in 2004
Auchan	-14,5%	3 mln
Carrefour	-18%	3,7 mln
Casino	-15%	b.d.
Champion	-20,5%	3,5 mln

Source: [www.wwf.fr](http://www.wwf.fr); [www.fcd.asso.fr](http://www.fcd.asso.fr); [www.fne.asso.fr](http://www.fne.asso.fr) ; date: 2010-04-13.

## **Eco-communication in retailing – cases from Polish market**

International retailers operating on Polish market implement eco-strategies and environmentally friendly solutions achieved in other markets. Referring to the mentioned MAP matrix, international retailers provide actions from all three groups: What we sell, How we sell and How we communicate. A good example of eco-strategy is Tesco (on Polish market). Tesco is constantly implementing eco-activities aimed at reducing environmental impact of consumption but simultaneously it is providing a broad communication and customers' education.

The following commitments seem to be appropriate to be selected as examples for good practice in all categories.

- What we sell. Tesco introduce “Tesco green living” – product line, series of organic products with high quality ingredients, completely safe for human and the environment.
- How we sell. Tesco has developed a new environmental store format and has achieved a substantial reduction in carbon emissions from new stores and distribution centers.

What is interesting, in 2009 Tesco edited special guidelines for employees, presented all store zone with possibility to save (optimize) energy. It was accompanied by special trainings for employees to show how one could optimize consumption of natural resources in work place (store).

- How we communicate. It should be underlined, that in customer eco-education and eco-communication Tesco seems to a leader on Polish market. There is a plenty of good ideas promoted in Tesco stores e.g. “ecological picnic”, “great collection of electro waste in Tesco stores”, “great collection of waste paper”, “eco-action – glass segregation”, eco-educational program for elementary and secondary school. Tesco website is full of eco-communication and provides information on energy saving, recycling, organic shopping bags, etc.

Tesco introduce special shopping bag called “bag for life” and according to company's declaration, over 750 thousands bags were sold and the company achieved 30% reduction in plastic shopping bags in Poland.

In 2011 Tesco started a new campaign within Clubcard loyalty program. It introduces special “green points” for shopping selected products (eco-friendly). Each three months customers could exchange green points into coupons of value and spend them on shopping

in Tesco stores. The green points system covers 270 environmentally friendly products and the group will be expanded in the future.

As it was mentioned earlier, international retailers are pioneering eco initiatives. Local Polish retailers are following this eco-strategies, however on significantly smaller scale.

The local supermarket operator “Piotr i Paweł” (“Peter and Paul”) declares that ecology is not just a fashion but also a philosophy of living. Hence the retailer offers a wide choice of healthy food, organic products manufactures with the reduced level of chemical ingredients. They are sold under private brand “products naturally positive”. “Piotr i Paweł” also support the use of organic shopping bags.

In 2010, under the programme “Green basket” conducted by students of the University of Gdansk, and sponsored by Unilever, small shops could increase their sales, opting for the ecological modernization of equipment. The “Green basket” programme was carried out for small grocery stores. Their owners were encouraged to ensure that 10% of stores’ turnover for two days, were spent on the environmentally friendly investments in shops. To encourage them to do so, students led a broad campaign to promote these shops among local consumers. Thanks to the wide promotion retailers get tangible benefits - both financial (increased turnover), and image. Through intensive refrigerators were exchanged into more eco-friendly or bulbs to more energy efficient.

There are also many legal obligation concerning ecology. Annually, the Polish paper mill gets close to 180 000 tons of recycled packaging, and almost 30 000 tons of plastic from the large retailers (hyper-and supermarkets). Stores with a sales area of more than 2000 square meters are required (legal obligation) to maintain separate collection of packaging on products that are in their offer at its own cost. In practice, there are two possibilities: own collection of packaging waste, organized at the back of commercial premises and mostly on transport packaging and packaging waste selective collection from clients, implemented in the shops or in front of the shops.

Today, the main effects are obtained from a collection packs. In the coming years, however, will require greater retailers’ activity in the development of separate collection of packaging from customers. Awareness of responsibilities for waste management, not only in large retailers but also among small retailers and the need to implement new solutions and

programs in this area, as well as the need to join the network in action and eco educational programs will increase in the future.

### **Reserved – case study**

LPP SA is a Polish company whose field of activity concerns designing and distributing of clothing. It currently owns five clothing brands and manager 600 showrooms in Poland and other neighboring countries. The main market is Poland and the leading brand – Reserved.

In 2009 Reserved became a partner in “Grey seal protection” programme by WWF Poland. The project was focused on protection and reconstruction of population of grey seal in Baltic Sea. Within the project Reserved withdrew gratis shopping bags from stores and offered paid paper shopping bags but the profits from sales of bags were spent on grey seal protection.

Analyzing the project from marketing view, Reserved undertook a wide marketing initiative to support its eco-image. Although the price for that image was paid by the customer.

The initiative proposed by Reserved assumed that participation in the rescue of endangered species, grey seal, would provide a value for customer. Following the Kotler’s concept of value added, the value of participation in the eco-project will increase the value of brand’s offer and therefore it will increase the total customer satisfaction. This argument would be correct if customers would perceive the cost of buying shopping bags (the price) as small in relation to the potential benefits and if the psychological loss that the customers bears (e.g. something was free and it was changed) was small.

The Reserved experiences showed the mentioned assumptions were wrong. The company faced a strong stem of customer dissatisfaction. It was expressed both in direct relations (customer-shopping assistants) in stores and very strongly on the Internet (Internet blogs). In 2010 Reserved withdrew the project and again offered gratis paper shopping bags.

Customers’ eco-education is essential for the mass acceptance of legal obligations. Especially that being eco-friendly incurs additional costs for customers. It should be noted that Reserved target market is young (20-30 years old). As indicated in Table 1, young customers in Poland represent rather neutral attitudes towards the environmental arguments. It was probably the reason of failure. For future recommendation, retailers should definitely participate in eco-communication and eco-consumption-education stimulating and encouraging customer

choice but the key success factor is customers' acceptance. The retailers eco-programs should be designed with special attention given to creating additional value for customers.

The mentioned examples support the hypothesis of a wider use of environmental arguments by international retailers.

### **Research results - discussion**

In the period of January 2010 and July 2010 pilot study was conducted (In two cities: Szczecin and Stargard, North-West Poland).

The study was designed to collect and analyse information gathered from questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed on parking places in front of the supermarkets. The total number of 177 questionnaires was included into the statistical analysis. Respondents at the age of 21-69 gave their opinions and answered questions covering wide aspect of consumer behaviors. Eco-awareness was only one of the subjects included into the study.

There were two main goals of the project (in the field of eco-awareness):

- Customer attitudes towards eco friendly products in store's offer,
- Customer attitudes towards eco-communication and eco-activities undertaken by retailers.

Over 80% of responders declared that stores should offer free of charge shopping bags. For the majority (70%), the type (character) of the bags is not important (whether its paper shopping bag, plastic or organic plastic bag). Only 15% of participants underlined that free of charge shopping bags should be limited or completely withdrawn from stores. Respondents showed an opinion that retailers who charge customers for shopping bags and communicate that it is due to environmental care, in fact make profits on sale of shopping bags. This opinion was shared by 86% of those who previously vote against limited access to free of charge shopping bags.

These results show that even if Polish customers are interested in environmental problems they are not willing to pay additional costs. It refers to financial cost (price) and to emotional and organizational costs (convenience).

The results of the selection preferences for products labeled as organic indicate respondents' polarity. Almost 43% responded customers indicated that they were looking for organic products on the shelves. At the same respondents noted that this argument is important in certain product categories.

Among the companies that respondents considered as being eco-friendly, food manufacturers prevailed. These results should not be surprising given the fact that Polish consumers have highly ethnocentric attitudes toward food (they prefer Polish food products and are actively searching for food from Polish). As many as 82% of respondents indicated that Polish food producers are offering organic products, while the environmental attribute to foreign food producers pointed out less than 6% of respondents. A high percentage of respondents (55%) said that in the shops in Poland there is no problem in finding organic food products, while 33% admitted that said before that they were not looking for such products.

It seems justified to assume that Polish consumers position Polish food products as organic and not looking at this topic for additional information. Such statements support the inference concerning knowledge of signs (symbols) transmitted to a product possessing ecological certificates. As many as 77% of those who declared the view that Polish food producers are offering organic products, could not simultaneously describe any eco-label, which should be in this case on the product. These results do not negate the need for eco-labeling, then opted for 92% of respondents.

At the same time respondents quite clearly stated that organic products are more expensive or much more expensive than others. In the group of people looking for organic products such opinion expressed 68% of respondents, in the group of people for whom eco-friendly arguments are irrelevant - as much as 79% of respondents.

About the construction of energy-efficient stores have heard of only 3% of the respondents, about the possibility of putting waste equipment of household appliances free in the store knew less than 13% of respondents. The most common effects of retailers eco-communication were the reduction of consumption of disposable shopping bags, of which 96% of respondents had heard.

Research shows that a leading argument in the communication strategies of retailers in the Polish market is price. As many as 86% of respondents said that retail advertising primarily shows the price of the product (product group). Only 1.7% of respondents said they had contact with retail eco-advertising referring to the ecology/environment. At the same time it should be noted that respondents saw no need to change the way retailers communicate with the market. In addition to finding that “it is generally too much advertising” (up 95.5% of respondents think that there should be a limited amount of advertising broadcast on TV, radio and newspapers), the respondents believed that advertising should include specific information. The information is an attractive price of the product (50% of respondents).

### **Final conclusions**

In conclusion, it must be noted that the presented choice of examples need to be supported by broader national survey. However they allow for some preliminary inferences and give recommendations for future research. The presented results show a gap between the activities undertaken by the retail sector and the expectations of customers. The retail sector appears to be the initiator of eco-communication, encouraging customers to participate and support these actions. The intention of the companies is extensive use of environmental themes in marketing strategies for creating value for customers. In turn, customers in the Polish market have relatively low environmental awareness, especially if there is a need to incur financial costs (additional fees, cancellation of existing privileges). Market experience shows that ecological arguments are not clearly identified by clients as an added value. It is assumed that with increasing environmental awareness of consumers, retailers will increase using environmental arguments in the communication strategies in the Polish market.

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