

Promoting Sustainable Products: Community Engagement and Eco-Friendly Practices at Namira Ecoprint in Surabaya

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Ecoprint,
Sustainable, Marketing

Received : 20, August

Revised : 22, September

Accepted: 24, October

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ABSTRACT

The growing global concern for sustainability is particularly acute in the fashion industry, often viewed as a major contributor to environmental degradation. In response, eco-green products emerged, prioritizing sustainable practices and minimizing harm to the environment. To effectively market these products, it's crucial to enhance knowledge and skills in eco-green marketing. This community service program at Namira Ecoprint Surabaya aims to combine sustainability with effective marketing, raising consumer awareness about eco-friendly products and their benefits. This community service program has successfully raised awareness and understanding of effective marketing strategies, the advantages of sustainable products, and how eco-friendly products can stand out.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable environment has become an increasing global concern, especially in the fashion industry which is often seen as having a significant impact on environmental degradation. According to a UNEP report in 2019, the fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions and contributes 20% of the total industrial water pollution. Stemming from this condition, the concept of eco-green products was born, where fashion products are produced with a consideration for sustainability and minimizing negative impacts on the environment.

Eco-green products have become increasingly popular with the growing public concern for environmental sustainability. Using eco-friendly products can help a company look better. People are becoming more aware of how their choices affect the environment. Many are willing to pay more for products that are good for the planet. By offering these products, a business can attract more customers and improve its image. These products can also save money. They are often made from stronger materials, so they last longer. Also, they can use less energy to make, which helps reduce costs.

Eco-green products through ecoprinting have become an important part of supporting a sustainable economy, offering a more environmentally friendly alternative compared to conventional products (Irawan et al., 2024). Green economy is one of the current issues being discussed in the world. It is an economic concept aimed at improving social welfare and equality, while significantly reducing the risk of environmental damage. There are 15 indicators in the Indonesian Green Economy Index (GEI) that cover three pillars: economy, social, and environment, which reflect green economic development.

One business that is committed to this principle is Namira Ecoprint, a Surabaya-based company that uses the ecoprint technique in its production. This technique utilizes natural materials such as leaves, flowers, and tree bark to print patterns onto fabric without the use of chemicals, resulting in eco-friendly and unique products. Traditionally, batik has always been synonymous with the use of chemicals, such as the use of synthetic colors and "malam" materials for dyeing. Thus, the waste produced is very harmful to the environment. Besides, it has become a habit or custom in the chemical industry.

The Namira Ecoprint process has reflected these three pillars, from the production process that does not use chemicals, to the utilization of production waste for compost and its concern for the surrounding community. Namira Ecoprint produces a variety of eco-friendly products such as ecoprint fabrics, headscarves, ready-to-wear clothing, bags made from fabric and leather, men's clothing, and other accessories. Additionally, each Namira Ecoprint product is limited edition, making it unique and unreproducible by competitors.

The challenges faced by Namira Ecoprint include how to effectively implement sustainable marketing for eco-friendly products and how to promote the competitive advantages of these products. With the growing awareness of the importance of sustainability, there is an urgent need to improve knowledge and skills in marketing eco-green products. Previous research has shown that consumers now prefer products with high environmental values, as stated by

Maski Annisa & Purbo Jadmiko (2023), where the purchase intention for eco-friendly products is influenced by perceived green values and consumer effectiveness.

The main objective of this community service is to increase the added value of eco-friendly products produced by Namira Ecoprint through socialization of marketing strategies, and to strengthen the product's differentiation advantage to be more competitive in both local and global markets. Through this, it is expected that Namira Ecoprint can more effectively reach environmentally conscious consumers, while simultaneously driving greater value creation for its business. It is hoped that this community service can serve as a model that can be replicated for similar businesses seeking to combine environmental sustainability with effective marketing strategies, while also making a real contribution to increasing consumer awareness of the importance of products that support environmental sustainability.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

The community service program at Namira Ecoprint, located at Jl. Wisma Kedung Asem Indah Blok G/7, Kedung Baruk, Rungkut District, Surabaya, involves a collaboration between lecturers and students from the National Development University Veteran East Java and the owner and employees of Namira Ecoprint. This program aims to provide an understanding of both offline and online product marketing, and emphasizes the importance of long-term sustainability in eco-friendly products.

As people become more worried about the environment, businesses are trying to find ways to be greener. One way is to use products that are good for the planet. The demand for these products is increasing and will likely continue to grow. Eco-friendly products are made and used in a way that harms the environment as little as possible. They can be made from natural or recycled materials, designed to be reused or recycled, or use less energy. In addition, participants are also taught about product advantages so that they can compete with competitors in the market, which is delivered directly to the owner and employees of Namira Ecoprint.

The stages involved in implementing this community service are as follows:

1. An initial survey is conducted to determine the model for implementing the service in the form of socialization.
2. Understanding and gathering information on the challenges and obstacles faced by Namira Ecoprint in running its business.
3. Determining the needs and expectations of Namira Ecoprint.
4. Developing relevant alternative solutions to the previously identified problems.
5. Implementing the activity through a combination of theory and direct practice to provide a real-world experience for participants.
6. Monitoring and evaluating the results of the socialization to assess the program's effectiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the community service program at Namira Ecoprint has yielded several significant achievements, particularly in terms of increasing awareness and understanding of marketing strategies, the benefits of product sustainability, and the differentiation advantages of eco-friendly products.



Figure 1. Implementation of Sustainability Development's Socialization

Offline and Online Marketing

One of the primary focuses of this community service is to assist Namira Ecoprint in optimizing its marketing strategy through two approaches: offline and online. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is essential for effective communication within and outside a company. It ensures consistent messaging across all channels, preventing confusion and promoting a unified brand image. IMC is not just a tactic; it's a strategic approach that helps companies achieve their goals (Evanthi & Azhar, 2023).

Offline marketing involves direct interaction with customers, such as through exhibitions, local promotions, and distributing flyers around Surabaya, even at exhibitions across Indonesia. This marketing aims to introduce eco-friendly products to local communities who may not be fully familiar with the concept of ecoprinting. During the service program, the team provided training on how to maximize offline marketing, including optimizing promotional materials such as brochures, flyers, and local advertisements that emphasize the added value of eco-friendly products.

On the other hand, online marketing is becoming increasingly important in today's digital era, especially in reaching a wider market. Online marketing allows businesses to connect with potential consumers in various regions, without being limited by geographic location. Therefore, online marketing is now very important due to the increasingly dominant digital consumption trend. Online marketing, also known as digital marketing, is a form of marketing that uses the internet and digital technologies to reach and engage customers. It encompasses a wide range of tactics and strategies aimed at promoting a brand, product, or service online. In today's digital age, online marketing is essential for businesses of all sizes.

By effectively leveraging online marketing strategies, businesses can build brand awareness, generate leads, drive sales, and achieve long-term success. Namira Ecoprint was provided training to increase its digital presence through the use of social media such as Instagram and e-commerce platforms. This step has proven to help increase consumer awareness in the Surabaya area about Namira Ecoprint's unique and eco-friendly ecoprint products.

Research conducted by Nugroho & Nasution (2024) shows that this online marketing strategy is effective in enhancing the brand image as environmentally friendly and provides a foundation for the implementation of marketing tactics. This is due to the ability of offline marketing to build personal relationships with consumers, while online marketing allows for broader and more measurable market expansion. By using platforms such as Instagram and marketplaces, Namira Ecoprint can reach younger consumers who are more concerned about environmental issues.

During the community service activities, the owner and employees of Namira Ecoprint, along with lecturers and students, conducted brainstorming sessions to discuss offline marketing strategies that could help strengthen relationships with local consumers, as well as online marketing strategies that would allow for market expansion and increased sales. Both approaches complement each other, where offline marketing helps build closer relationships with local consumers, while online marketing allows businesses to expand into larger markets. Namira Ecoprint has successfully created a marketing model that can be replicated by other SMEs operating in the eco-friendly product sector.

Long-term product sustainability

Eco-friendly products have added value that is not only related to the quality of the product itself but also to the positive impact on the environment and the sustainability of the business in the future. Namira Ecoprint has implemented the principle of sustainability at every stage of its production, starting from the use of natural materials such as leaves, flowers, and tree bark to print patterns on fabric, to the reduction of waste through the recycling of production waste.

The products produced by Namira Ecoprint are not only environmentally friendly but also unique due to the use of the ecoprint technique, which makes each product have a unique motif that cannot be replicated. By applying this concept, Namira Ecoprint is not only following the sustainability trend but also building a strong foundation for a long-lasting business in the future. The products made by Namira Ecoprint use the ecoprint technique, a method of printing patterns on fabric using natural materials such as leaves, flowers, and tree bark without using harmful chemicals.

This technique produces environmentally friendly products while minimizing negative impacts on the ecosystem. Products such as fabrics, headscarves, and clothing from Namira Ecoprint have an advantage in this regard, as they are able to meet the demands of a market that is increasingly concerned about environmental sustainability. Therefore, Namira Ecoprint can utilize this sustainability principle as a key element in their marketing strategy to increase long-term competitiveness.

According to research by Gazzola et al. (2020), products produced with attention to sustainability have a higher appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. They show that consumers tend to be more loyal to brands that support environmental sustainability.



Figure 2. The Process of Making Ecoprint Products

Eco-friendly products are not only sought after by consumers who care about environmental issues, but they also provide long-term benefits for the business itself. The socialization conducted in this community service program emphasized the importance of long-term product sustainability for business continuity. The owners and employees of Namira Ecoprint were given an understanding of how sustainability can be a determining factor in the success of their business in the future. This is based on the global consumer trend of increasingly choosing eco-friendly products.

Implementing the principle of sustainability in product production can help businesses like Namira Ecoprint to face future challenges. The fashion industry, in particular, faces criticism related to environmental impacts due to the use of harmful chemicals and production waste (Nurhayati et al., 2023). Namira Ecoprint is able to offer a solution through the chemical-free ecoprint production process and a focus on recycling production waste (Manik et al., 2024).

In this way, Namira Ecoprint can continue to grow while maintaining a balance between profitability and environmental sustainability. This community service program also provides practical guidance for Namira Ecoprint to integrate sustainability into their marketing strategy. The implementation of this socialization has strengthened the awareness of the owners and employees of Namira Ecoprint regarding the long-term benefits of sustainability. They now realize that focusing on sustainability can provide a greater competitive

advantage in the market, especially among environmentally conscious consumers.

Product Differentiation

Product differentiation is one of the main focuses of the community service program implemented at Namira Ecoprint. Product differentiation is a key strategy to create added value for consumers and maintain a competitive advantage in the market. The products produced by Namira Ecoprint use the ecoprint technique, a natural method that utilizes leaves, flowers, and other natural materials to print patterns on fabric. Product differentiation is a marketing strategy that involves creating a unique product or service that stands out from competitors in the marketplace. This uniqueness can be achieved through various factors such as:

- **Features:** Offering unique features or benefits that competitors don't provide.
- **Quality:** Providing a higher quality product or service than competitors.
- **Design:** Creating a distinctive and appealing design for the product or service.
- **Branding:** Building a strong and recognizable brand identity.
- **Customer service:** Offering exceptional customer service that exceeds expectations.
- **Distribution:** Distributing the product or service through unique channels.

Product differentiation is important because it increased brand loyalty that customers who perceive a product or service as unique are more likely to be loyal to the brand. Through Product differentiation, business can set higher prices that differentiated products can often be priced higher than generic alternatives due to their perceived value. In te other hand, product differentiation can give a company a competitive edge over its rivals.

Then, by offering a unique product or service, a company can capture a larger market share. The aim of product differentiation is to create a unique product or service that stands out from competitors in the marketplace. This uniqueness can be achieved through various factors such as features, quality, design, branding, customer service, or distribution.

In essence, product differentiation is about creating a compelling reason for customers to choose your product or service over others. By understanding your target market and identifying their needs and preferences, you can develop a differentiation strategy that sets your business apart and drives success. The uniqueness of each motif, which cannot be identically replicated, is one of the advantages that sets Namira's products apart from others in the market. Ecoprint products made by Namira are able to attract consumers who appreciate artistic design and sustainability, thus helping to create a loyal market share.



Figure 3. Various Kinds of Leaves for Product Motifs

The implementation of a differentiation strategy not only affects the production process but also marketing. This community service program provides training on how Namira Ecoprint can leverage its unique products in marketing strategies, both offline and online.

One of the methods taught is storytelling marketing, where the story behind the environmentally friendly and unique ecoprint production process can be used to attract consumers. In this case, the differentiation of Namira Ecoprint products lies not only in the unique motifs but also in the production process that supports environmental sustainability. Environmentally friendly production process makes their products more attractive in a market that is increasingly concerned about environmental issues (Abdullah et al., 2024).

The main advantage of Namira Ecoprint's product differentiation is the use of natural materials without chemicals, which aligns with the global trend towards environmentally friendly products. Namira Ecoprint products are able to meet this need through innovation in production techniques that minimize negative impacts on the environment.

In this community service program, the team also emphasized the importance of highlighting the eco-friendly aspects of Namira products in all promotional and marketing materials. This creates added value for consumers who want to support products that align with sustainability principles. The implementation of environmentally friendly principles as part of the differentiation strategy will increase the attractiveness of the product among consumers who are more concerned about sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the community service program at Namira Ecoprint has yielded significant results, particularly in terms of increasing the awareness and understanding of owners and employees regarding marketing strategies, product sustainability, and environmentally friendly product differentiation. Offline marketing socialization helps strengthen personal relationships with local consumers, while online marketing enables market expansion and significant sales growth.

By leveraging digital platforms such as Instagram and other marketplaces, Namira Ecoprint is expected to reach younger consumers who care about environmental issues. By implementing sustainability principles in production, Namira Ecoprint's products have become a key element that can increase their product attractiveness in the local market and compete with competitors. By using natural materials and recycling production waste, Namira Ecoprint is able to maintain a balance between profitability and environmental responsibility.

As a unique business, product differentiation is an important factor in Namira Ecoprint's marketing strategy. The uniqueness of unrepeatable ecoprint motifs and the use of natural materials without chemicals are very strong selling points. Given the success of this community service program, Namira Ecoprint is expected to expand its collaboration with other SMEs in the environmentally friendly products sector. This collaboration can create mutually beneficial synergies, share knowledge, and expand market share for both parties.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express their deepest gratitude to all parties who have provided support and assistance, enabling this community service program to run smoothly and according to plan.

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