

General electric (ge) and the 'green' movement essay sample



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Introduction

Since 1980s the market is taking a new environmental orientation. Every other company is going green in its operations and products. This has emanated from the increased consumer awareness of the effects human activities on the environment. As the world economy goes green, corporations have led the way, perhaps in a bid to win consumer confidence. The reawakening of green movement can be traced to 1970s oil crisis when the government enacted a law to reduce oil consumption and dependences. Consequently, American consumer became accustomed to anything that minimizes the use of fossil fuel.

During the 1980s, consumers became increasingly aware of the changes taking place in the environment and with corporations indicated for increased environmental pollution, consumers were calling for corporations to go green. As a result, many companies not only in the United States started going green. Today almost every company is marketing its products on a green platform. However there are serious ethical issues that arise from the green marketing. It has been claimed that most companies are going green as a marketing tool and not because their operations are really green. In other cases, green production has led to cutting down the number of jobs. This paper will review the green marketing strategy used by General Electric. The paper will look at the GE energy cutting bulbs but it will also at the ethical issues emanating from GE green movement.

GE Green Movement

General Electric Company is one of the leading manufacturers of electrical equipments in the United States. Headquartered in Fairfield, the company has long history spinning for a number of decades, and it has been a major employer in the country. Currently the company employs more than 319, 000 people and in 2006 it reported total sales of \$163. 4 billion.

General Electric is the largest and the most influential corporations in the country in terms of revenues, media operations and ownership. The company manufactures electrical equipment including lighting products and household electrical appliances. It also has a wide broadcasting network, NBC. (TIC, 2008)

Since the revolution of the green movement, General Electrical has strived to come up with a number of products and operations which ensure its inclination with the movement. GE manufacture jet engines, nuclear reactors which are all inclined towards the green movement. Apart from these the company is also associated with the production of energy efficient appliances which reduced the overall amount of energy that is expended by a single appliance. The company is also producing and marketing Compact Florescent Light Bulbs which apparently reduced the amount of greenhouse gas emission compared to its earlier bulbs (Gloede, 2007).

General Electric is also the producing leading photovoltaic system. This is the environmentally friendliest energy production systems in the world. GE also manufactures GE SmartCommand Dashboard which a new gadget used to rack energy usage and it assists homeowners to maximize the overall energy and water conservation (Gloede, 2007).

In achieving the dream of green home, GE has collaborated with a number of companies. It is working closely in a joint venture with Masco's Environment for Living program which has been committed to creation of ecoimagination initiative. GE has also invested a lot in mobilizing its resources, products, and expertise in its operation to ensure the success of the Green Movement.

Apart from its products, GE also launched a green initiative on its real estate. In 2007, GE Real Estate came up with an initiative that would utilize Ecoimagination initiative. The corporate initiative was designed to assist consumer to improve their overall green operation performance. This initiative would take several initiatives including lowering of the total energy consumption.

The GE green movement can be considered as one of the most efficient marketing tool. Since 2006, the company has doubled its sales of the environmentally friendly products to more than \$12 billion. The company is targeting to achieve an increase of \$20 billion in sales by 2010. The company has also continued to invest more than \$900 million every year in research to develop energy efficient green products (Environmental Leader, 2007).

Ethical implications

Like other corporate initiatives that have been criticized on ethical ground, GE initiative has also attracted a wide range of criticism. The general criticism on green movement and corporate social responsibility that leans towards green movement is that they are merely marketing gimmick that are meant to divert consumer attention from the real environmental effects <https://assignbuster.com/general-electric-ge-and-the-green-movement-essay-sample/>

of their operation. It is argued that the green movement is like any other movement that is meant to gain mass following and in most cases it lacks the basic ideals that can really show its "greenness". The green movement is therefore being used as a marketing tool to market the company appears good and concerned about the environmental changes but in reality, their operations are nowhere near green. A company that goes green should consider going green in all its operations.

The same allegations have not escaped GE green movement. Like other companies, critics have argued that GE green strategy is just a marketing gimmick and there are no real green initiatives. It has been argued that the green movement has been widely publicized especially after corporations realize increased sales of their green products.

GE has been faced with another challenge in its green movement. The company has been criticized for plugging into the green movement at the expense of the US jobs. The main question regarding the GE green move is – save the environment or save the U. S job? This is a hard choice that is facing the company and its employees (Communication Workers for America, 2007). It is a hard choice the company is forcing on the consumer as well as its own workers.

The ethical issue is that with every increase in total sales of its green product, someone loses a job in the company. Although the compact fluorescent last longer and uses less energy compared to the incandescent bulbs that the company has been manufacturing, the CFLs are ten times costly than the incandescent bulbs. The issue of concern is that these bulbs

are not manufactured in the United States but they are imported from china. The company has been requesting its consumers and employees to pledge going green but each pledge leads to job losses. When the European Union sanctioned a ban on Chinese manufactured CFLs, GE supported the move. We now wonder the ethical consideration behind its current importation of CFLs from China to the US market.

Conclusion

Since 1980s, the market has been changing drastically with increased consumer orientation towards the green movement. GE, which is a leading US company in manufacture of electrical products, has entered the green moment with a number of products and initiatives geared towards going green. However there are various ethical issues arising from its operation with some arguing that the green movement is marketing strategy. There are also serious concerns regarding its importation of CFLs from china leading to loss of jobs in its plants while it supported the European Union ban on CFLs from China.

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