

Décisions Marketing

Call for papers for special issue

Marketing and Sustainable Business Models

Guest editors

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Context of the special issue

The development of human activities and, above all, of economic activities produces positive and negative effects on their natural and social environment. The negative effects are increasingly visible and on an unprecedented scale. They lead us to question the sustainability of current modes of organisation and consumption and to call them into question. The ability to respond to climate disruption, resource scarcity, and the decline in biodiversity, as well as to issues of inequality, health, and poverty, are highlighted by the UN as guarantees of the sustainability of human development. The UN has identified 17 major issues to be addressed in order to reconcile prosperity and preservation of the planet ¹, which represent as many challenges to be met, and calls for cooperation between all actors, NGOs, private and public.

Questions of responsibility are not new in the field of management. Different streams of literature have developed that share the idea that organisations – first and foremost, companies – with their approaches to problems and their resources, are well placed to play their part in resolving these issues, and even to replace public policies (Porter, 2021). Social marketing has thus been structured since the 1970s to influence and change behaviour to improve health, protect the environment and communities (Kotler and Lee, 2008, p.7). Corporate Social Responsibility, recently complemented by ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) criteria, has developed on the basis of a desire to reconcile social, environmental and economic objectives. The Bottom of the Pyramid

¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

(BoP) approach has been proposing for the past twenty years to improve the lives of low-income populations by putting in place offers that are adapted to address issues such as poverty or access to healthcare, credit or healthy food. This is not philanthropy towards low-income countries, but highlights the opportunity for businesses to operate profitably while finding solutions to real consumer problems (Prahalad, 2004). More recently, there has been a growing body of literature on 'grand challenges' in management journals. They are defined as the obstacles that need to be addressed through coordinated efforts and whose resolution would have a major impact on today's societal problems (George et al., 2016, p.1881). Again, this approach assumes that economic activities can be reconciled with the resolution of societal and environmental issues. These different "solutions" to sustainability problems are not without limits. Banerjee (2003) thus criticizes a Western vision of nature in the idea of sustainability. Kaldewey (2018) points out the cultural changes brought about by the term 'grand challenges', which is marked by competition.

Beyond the approaches that are mentioned above, one possible way to respond to the challenges of sustainability is to reconsider the current business models in the different human activities in relation to their ecosystem (Snihur and Bocken, forthcoming). The concept of business model has become central to the way organisations think about their activities. It describes the way in which an entity (i.e., a company, an NGO, a cooperative, etc.) operates to ensure its mission(s) (Demil et al., 2018). It thus defines the process of creating value for customers, stakeholders integrating the ecosystem and the value capture process of the organisation. Beyond the concept, the business model today constitutes an integrated vision of the company, going beyond the silos of functions or disciplines, by dealing with the offer, the customers, the organisation, the resources and the financial dimension, in the same analysis.

In recent years, organisations have been confronted with business model innovation processes, defined as creating a new business model or leading changes in a company's business model (Foss and Saebi, 2017). New business models are those of new entrants to a sector, disruptors from an adjacent sector, or established companies that change the way they operate. Various marketing studies have investigated them in retailing (Coombes and Nicholson, 2013; Sorescu et al., 2011; Volle et al., 2008; Jocevski, 2020) or in the case of second-hand goods, for example (Yrjölä, Hokkanen and Saarijärvi, 2021). Marketing researchers have also analysed the destabilisation of business models, uses or practices induced by certain supposedly sustainable modes of consumption such as electric mobility (Von Pechmann et al., p.83) or packaging-free products (Daniel-Chever et al., 2022). Moreover, to capitalise on their sustainability efforts, companies need to present them in a meaningful way to consumers, i.e. translate them (Viciunaite, 2022). Some studies thus investigate the question of legitimacy, both in the discourses aimed at establishing the position of an actor on a market (Zaidi-Chtourou and Vernier, 2017) but also in the very development of sustainable business models (Press, Robert and Maillefert, 2020).

The transformation of business models towards sustainability is certainly the form of innovation with the most stakes today and the most potential impact in the face of current challenges. Different terms have been proposed to study this type of transformation (from "sustainable business model" to "business model for sustainability"). The integration of sustainability is now a central theme for companies in many sectors (see for example

Deloitte's report, *Global Powers of Retailing, 2022*²). The objective of a sustainable business model is to pursue environmental and social objectives alongside economic ones (Bocken et al., 2014). Most often, a sustainable business model is associated with limiting the use of natural resources in the company's value creation and capture processes (Schaltegger et al. 2016). But a sustainable business model can also be oriented towards the social dimension. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank in 1976 and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, is considered to be the inventor of the idea of "Social Business". A social business is an enterprise that sells goods and services, has expenses and generates income, and seeks to repay its investors, but whose primary objective is to serve society and improve the fate of vulnerable people (Yunus et al., 2010).

In both social and green business models, the role of marketing and its interactions with other business functions, but also with stakeholders, is largely redefined or needs to be redefined. The aim of this special issue is to understand how marketing and consumer research can contribute to a better understanding or to the emergence or improvement of sustainable business models. This may include analysis of the design and development of products and services, distribution and supply chain, relationships with customers and partners, the role and organisation of marketing and communication functions in addressing these issues, or specific issues for certain sectors (e.g. platform economy, tourism, digital...).

Expected contributions

This special issue "**Marketing and Sustainable Business Models**" is open to different types of contributions. In general, research is expected to better understand the evolution of marketing and its practices in the face of the evolution of business models towards sustainability or the contributions of marketing and its practices to sustainable business models.

The expected contributions could, for example, concern the following themes (non-exhaustive list):

- Consumer engagement in sustainability
- Transformations in the supply chain and relationships within ecosystems
- Product or service innovation
- Transformations of the marketing function in the context of sustainability
- New sources of value
- The monetisation of sustainability
- Reactivation of old practices as a basis for new business models
- Consumer perceptions
- Greenwashing practices
- The role of information technology
- The development of new markets
- Barriers to sustainability (internal or consumers')
- Ongoing sectoral transformations towards sustainability
- The evolution of indicators associated with decision making

² <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/global-powers-of-retailing.html>

All analytical frameworks and all types of methodologies are welcome. All sectors of activity and all types of organisations can be involved.

If you have any doubt about an original idea for a contribution, please do not hesitate to summarise it in a maximum of one page and to propose it by e-mail to the guest editors who will answer you about its suitability for the editorial line of the special issue.

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About Decisions Marketing

Décisions Marketing (DM) is a scientific journal of the French Marketing Association (afm), whose mission is to disseminate research results oriented towards marketing decision making.

The articles published are based on research that deals with concepts and methods relevant to marketing decision making with a clearly stated problem and a potentially critical vision.

Proposals for papers should present original views and be based on a rigorous methodology. It is recommended that the methodology be presented in detailed boxes to facilitate the readability of the paper. The implications for decision making should be extensively developed. They may concern companies and organisations in the broadest sense, but also public authorities, consumers or citizens.

In general, the proposals should be able to answer easily the following two questions: "What was not known before this research and is now known?" and "Why was it important to know this?". The contributions of the research should be stated in the abstract.

Proposals can be submitted to the journal in either French or English. In both cases, the final version will be translated into the other language, at the author's expense.

Submission rules for this special issue

Proposals for articles are subject to *Décisions Marketing* usual evaluation process and must respect the journal's rules of presentation, as specified on its website (<https://www.afm-marketing.org/fr/content/presentation-de-la-revue-dm>).

The article in its submission format must not exceed 20 pages [Times New Roman 12 font, 2.5 cm margins on each side, 1.5 line spacing]. These 20 pages include tables, figures and references. They do not include the title page and abstracts. The total number of words must be less than 8000. Bibliographic references (in SAGE - Harvard format) must not exceed 35. Proposals that do not comply with these rules will be rejected.

Proposals must be submitted before **September 30th 2023** on the platform of the journal *Décisions Marketing* in the Special Issue section:

<https://dm.manuscriptmanager.net/sLib/v4/login.php?paramScreen=ZA/5EL8dCldVxaYmMeUBf4ci5y+quleJnQRuT1GLhFY=>

A tutorial on the use of the submission platform is available at the following address <https://manuscriptmanager.nickelled.com/author-online-submission>