

## **Sustainable Marketing: Let's Accelerate Transformations!**

**Deadline for submissions: January 8, 2022**

**Papers may be submitted in French or English.**

### **The guest editors for this special issue of RAM are:**

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Sustainable marketing is based on the premise that the influence and power of marketing and its tools can be used to develop and promote market and consumption models that are in step with environmental and societal issues. It consists in a proactive approach and a process that create value in a combined and systematic way (1) for the business, (2) consumer, and (3) environment and society. Concretely, it translates into the integration of sustainability issues at the heart of the brand's strategic vision by defining a long-term purpose and materializes through the different dimensions of marketing-mix, but also through the support provided to consumers to favor sustainable consumption practices (Dekhili et al., 2021). This approach is in keeping with the definition of marketing adopted by the American Marketing Association in 2007 and the concept of positive marketing (Gopaldas, 2015).

Given the climate emergency, the pressing ecological expectations of citizens and the imperatives of sustainable development, the question is no longer whether marketing and sustainable development should be conciliated. The issue is now to drive forward research on the approaches and tools allowing for the efficient integration of sustainability at the heart of marketing practices and to accelerate societal transformation. These questions become major given the current and future transitions in consumption behaviors stemming from the pandemic (He and Harris, 2020).

In fact, the environmental and social concern of consumers is growing (Obsoco/Citeo, 2021); however, the sustainable product market is estimated at less than 4% worldwide (Delmas, 2018). For example, in the field of agri-food, the organic food market tripled between 2010 and 2019 in France, but only represents 6% of household food consumption (Agence Bio, 2021). Similarly, sustainable practices at the consumption and post-consumption phase can be improved: only one out of two French systematically sorts his or her household waste (Citeo, 2020), for example. These data confirm the green gap persistence (Elhaffar et al., 2020).

Research highlighted the various challenges for green market development, such as cognitive biases (Brough et al., 2016; Luchs et al., 2010), consumers' lack of trust in green communication (Cronin et al., 2011), the relative efficiency of ecolabels (Dekhili and Achabou, 2015) and price sensitivity (Lombart et al., 2020). More recently, conceptual frameworks and research agendas specific to certain dimensions of sustainable marketing were developed (i.e., Eckhardt et al., 2019; Vadakkepatt et al., 2021; White et al., 2019). They advocate the idea that marketing can be an actor in the creation of a better world (Chandy et al., 2021; Dekhili, 2021).

Accordingly, the purpose of this special issue is to highlight the marketing approaches and practices that make an efficient contribution to societal transformation. To accelerate this transformation, papers focusing on topics anchored in the "strong sustainability" perspective are especially encouraged, for example: demarketing, reduction of materialism and psychological ownership (Morewedge et al., 2021), liquid consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2017), economy of functionality or circular consumption (Selvfors et al., 2019).

Submissions may be conceptual or empirical, with no relative restriction in the type of methodology used. In keeping with the definition of sustainable marketing adopted and its aim, and without this list being exhaustive, the submissions can address the following themes.

### **1 – Transforming consumption practices**

How can we overcome stereotypes surrounding sustainable consumption and responsible consumers? What is the role of psychological ownership, and how do the new forms of access-based consumption make it evolve? How can voluntary simplification in consumption and alternatives to purchasing new products (repair, second hand items, access-based consumption, etc.) be fostered and what licensing effects or cognitive biases may be operating? How can the efficiency of green nudges be improved?

### **2 – Deploying a sustainable marketing and brand management strategy**

How can the company's societal responsibility and corporate purpose be integrated in the brand strategy? How can sustainable brand equity be built? How can we align the pillars of brand identity around sustainable positioning and transfer them into consistent and relevant images? What are the complementarities between the altruist benefits and individual benefits of a sustainable offer for efficient positioning?

### **3 – Implementing a sustainable innovation strategy and actions**

How can we adapt the ideation and screening methodologies to foster attractive ideas with societal value? How can digitalization and technology 4.0 accelerate sustainable innovation? How can we improve consumers' acceptability of new offers linked with circular economy, namely those leading to new business models such as second life models, functionality economy and PSSs (Product-Service Systems) geared toward use and results?

#### 4 – Integrating sustainability in the price and distribution policy

How can retailers integrate sustainability in merchandising practices and customer experience (bulk, consignment, layout of the retail space, etc.)? And what would be the impacts on retailers, consumers and society? How can we foster price fairness? What are the positive and negative impacts of low-price strategies on sustainable practices?

#### 5 – Deploying responsible and efficient communication

How can we overcome consumer skepticism toward societal communication? What stakeholders (influencers, scientists, NGO, authorities, etc.) are likely to increase message acceptability? What are the determinants of eco-certification efficiency? What are the alternative strategies to lend credibility to sustainable offers? Beyond the business sphere, how can integrating marketing reflection in the communication of policymakers make environmental and social measures more efficient?

Any questions regarding this special issue can be addressed to either of the three guest editors in chief:

- Prof. Sihem DEKHILI: [sihem.dekhili@unistra.fr](mailto:sihem.dekhili@unistra.fr)
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#### Submission process

The proposals must follow the [RAM author guidelines](#) and should be submitted to the electronic platform [mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ram](https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ram).

The platform will be opened as of **July 15, 2021**, and the submission deadline is **January 8, 2022**. The manuscripts can be submitted in French or English.

The RAM's special issue "Sustainable Marketing: Let's Accelerate Transformations!" will be published online during the **first semester of 2023**. Accepted articles will be published in French and English.

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