CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTERS

Digital marketing for sustainability: A consumer-centric approach

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Sustainability, which involves conserving natural resources to maintain ecological balance for future generations, has become a pressing concern across all economic sectors, and particularly for business. This growing emphasis on sustainability could be attributed to escalating environmental issues, such as global warming, which pose an existential threat to consumers. In response, some consumers have made conscious decisions to opt for product choices and adoption behaviours that minimise their environmental impact. This shift has given rise to environmental consumerism, in which consumers increasingly demand that businesses not only reduce their negative environmental footprint but also contribute positively to society and to the environment (Thangam & Chavadi, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic poignantly highlighted the interconnectedness of human and environmental health, underlining the urgent need for sustainable practices. The crisis has emphasised the importance of adopting eco-friendly behaviours, reducing carbon footprints, and promoting environmentally responsible policies to mitigate the impact of future pandemics and to build a resilient future.

The lockdowns that were implemented to contain the spread of the virus created a unique opportunity to observe the effects of reduced human activity on the environment. As factories closed and movement restrictions were imposed, air quality improved dramatically, and water bodies became noticeably cleaner. This demonstrated the significant impact of human behaviour on environmental degradation, and highlighted the potential for sustainable practices and reduced emissions to improve air and water quality significantly.

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have also emphasised the importance of environmental sustainability, with goals such as SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action), and SDG 14 (Life below water) highlighting the need for sustainable practices and environmental protection to achieve a more equitable and prosperous future for all (United Nations. 2024).

The UN agenda emphasises the vital role of technology transfer and innovation in achieving these goals (Imaz & Sheinbaum, 2017), especially as the pandemic has underscored the importance of digital technologies in commercial activities, education, and societal participation (Clark et al., 2022; United Nations. 2024). Therefore, leveraging technology transfer and innovation is crucial for accelerating progress towards the SDGs, particularly in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and digital inclusion, which are essential for building a more resilient and equitable post-pandemic world (Hansen et al., 2023).

In response to the rapidly changing digital landscape and its growing influence, the Just Digital ethical framework aims to support the SDG 2030 Agenda. By identifying four key areas—equity, education, employment, and engagement—with specific indicators, it seeks to evaluate their impact on achieving the SDGs. These areas are interwoven across all SDGs to varying extents (O'Sullivan et al., 2021).

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Building on this foundation, the framework provides a guiding set of principles for ethical digital practices that prioritise human well-being and environmental sustainability. In this context, digital marketing can play a transformative role in promoting sustainable consumption patterns, enabling businesses to reach and engage with consumers in ways that support the SDGs and foster a more equitable and resilient world. Specifically, digital marketing could encourage environmentally friendly behaviours, such as reducing energy consumption, minimising waste, and adopting eco-friendly products and services. Moreover, it could facilitate technology transfer, supporting the adoption of clean technologies and sustainable practices, and advancing the achievement of the SDGs while upholding the principles of the Just Digital ethical framework.

Despite significant advances in marketing and sustainability, an observable gap persists between societal expectations and brands' ability to grasp and address emerging sustainability trends (Kim & Kim, 2023; Lim, 2016). This disconnect is alarming, as consumers increasingly prioritise sustainability and expect brands to contribute positively to societal and environmental well-being (Thangam & Chavadi, 2023; Spiliakos, 2018). Digital marketing, with its vast global reach and potential for engagement, is uniquely positioned to bridge this gap. However, research on the intersection of digital marketing and sustainability remains surprisingly limited (Arantes, 2022; Diez-Martin et al., 2019). As sustainability becomes a non-negotiable aspect of consumer–brand interactions, digital marketing strategies are crucial for maintaining competitiveness and fostering responsible consumer behaviours. Social networks offer a dynamic platform for engagement, but it is imperative that they are leveraged to develop sustainable communication strategies that promote environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The absence of a robust research agenda in this area is a glaring oversight, underscoring the urgent need to explore how digital marketing could be harnessed to drive sustainability and to create a better future for all.

The book proposed here, titled *Digital marketing for sustainability: A consumer-centric approach*, would comprehensively explore how digital marketing could promote sustainability from a consumer perspective. It would examine strategies, tools, and technologies that empower consumers to make informed, sustainable choices and to contribute to achieving SDGs. Recognising our interconnected world and the need for innovative strategies, the book would highlight digital marketing's role in bridging consumer expectations and corporate sustainability efforts. It would explore how these strategies could build trust, foster brand loyalty, and drive sustainable practices. Covering topics from consumer decision-making to data analytics, gamification, and AI, the book would aim to provide fresh insights and practical guidance for academics and practitioners to align business success with broader societal and environmental goals.

We welcome high-quality submissions that explore the intersection of digital marketing and sustainability. These would include theoretical and empirical studies, practical case analyses, industry insights, and policy evaluations.

We are particularly interested in contributions that:
- Address real-world sustainability challenges through digital marketing strategies.
- Offer actionable advice for managers, investors, and policymakers in both developed and developing countries.
- Employ a variety of research methodologies, such as quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and meta-analyses.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

We invite structured chapter abstracts of between 600 and 800 words that address the following research topics (among others):
- The role of digital marketing in addressing consumers' sustainable consumption shifts
- Consumers' perceptions of brand online sustainability communication
- The role of digital marketing in empowering consumers to make informed, sustainable consumption decisions
- The impact of brand digital marketing sustainability communication on brand relationship quality dimensions
- How consumer-generated sustainability content influence online consumers' sustainable consumption intentions

- The gamification of green: Engaging consumers in sustainable actions
- The impact of blockchain-enhanced supply chain transparency on consumer trust in sustainable brands
- Empowering consumers for sustainable choices
- The rise of conscious consumption communities
- The impact of digital marketing on promoting sustainability advocacy among consumers
- Chatbots in digital marketing: Driving sustainable consumer engagement
- Leveraging data analytics for personalised, sustainable marketing strategies
- The role of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in promoting sustainable consumption

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and we would welcome submissions on related topics.

The structured abstract, including title and tentative outline, should address the following key sections:

- **Title:** A concise and informative title that accurately reflects the content of your research.
- **Author's biography:** A brief overview of the author's qualifications, including their academic background, research interests, and relevant publications highlighting the author's research interests, to show that their work aligns with the book proposal, in no more than 200 words.
- **Introduction and purpose:** Briefly introduce the research topic and its significance. Clearly state the research question or objective(s).
- **Design/methodology:** Briefly describe the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques used.
- **Originality and contributions:** Explain how your research would contribute to the existing body of knowledge and what would make it unique. Highlight the originality or novelty of the research. Discuss the potential implications or practical applications of the findings.
- **Tentative outline:** Provide a brief outline of the proposed chapter, including the main sections and subheadings.

Submit chapter proposals as a Microsoft Word attachment to isoldel@uj.ac.za and daniel.maduku@ udst.edu.qa by 15 January 2025. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by 20 February 2025. Further guidelines for chapter preparation and key terms will be provided upon acceptance.

Final chapters should be 5,000 to 7,000 words, including references, tables, and charts, and must be original works based on conceptual analysis, case studies, or qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research. Chapters will be subject to a double-blind peer review, and should adhere to appropriate methodologies. The abstract submission must detail ethical clearance procedures.

TENTATIVE PROJECT TIMELINE

The projected completion date for the book is November 2025. Key milestones are:

- **Call for chapter abstracts:** 31 October 2024
- **Submission of abstracts:** 15 January 2025
- **Notify the authors of acceptance of the abstract:** 20 February 2025
- **Draft chapter submission:** 5 May 2025
- **Reviewer feedback provided to authors:** 31 July 2025
- **Final chapter submission:** 31 August 2025
- **Final review and submit to publisher:** 30 September 2025
- **Publication date:** early November 2025/ December 2025

TARGET AUDIENCE

This book is aimed at a diverse audience, including academics studying sustainable development and digital marketing, government departments overseeing environmental policies, and retailers and corporations that are committed to sustainability. It would also be helpful for students exploring the role of digital marketing in promoting sustainable consumption. *Digital marketing for sustainability: A consumer-centric approach* would offer insights into how digital marketing could advance sustainability, align business strategies with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and meet the evolving demands of informed, conscious consumers (United Nations, 2024).

REVIEW PROCESS

All abstracts and final chapters will undergo a double-blind peer review by expert reviewers in the field *before* publication.

Publisher: Proposed Springer/Palgrave

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