

Green Marketing Strategies and Consumer Perception in Eco-Friendly Hotels

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DESCRIPTION

In an age defined by climate awareness and social responsibility, the hospitality industry is undergoing a critical transformation. Today's travelers are not only looking for comfort and convenience they're also seeking accommodation that aligns with their environmental values. As eco-conscious consumerism becomes mainstream, green marketing strategies are playing a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and preferences, particularly in the domain of eco-friendly hotels.

Green marketing refers to the promotion of products, services, or practices that are environmentally sustainable. For hotels, this may include advertising energy-efficient systems, zero-waste operations, use of non-toxic cleaning supplies, local sourcing of food, or carbon offset programs. However, the effectiveness of these strategies largely depends on how they are communicated and perceived by consumers.

A growing number of guests especially Millennials and Gen Z are inclined to book accommodations that demonstrate a clear commitment to sustainability. According to a recent global survey by Booking.com, nearly 70% of travelers say they are more likely to book a hotel if it has implemented eco-friendly practices. However, it's not just about saying the right words. Today's consumers demand transparency and accountability.

One of the most critical factors influencing consumer perception is credibility. Guests are skeptical of vague or exaggerated environmental claims. Terms like "green," "eco-friendly," or "sustainable" without supporting evidence can be perceived as greenwashing a damaging practice that erodes trust. Therefore, hotels must back their claims with tangible data, third-party certifications (like Green Key, LEED, or EarthCheck), and visual documentation of their initiatives. A well-designed sustainability report or digital dashboard can go a long way in building trust.

Another important strategy is the integration of green values into the brand narrative. Successful eco-friendly hotels don't treat sustainability as a separate initiative; they embed it into every aspect of the guest experience. From biodegradable toiletries and smart room technology to menus with local, organic ingredients, these features must be marketed not as

limitations, but as enhancements that improve quality of life for guests and the planet.

Moreover, storytelling is an incredibly powerful tool in green marketing. Rather than listing sustainability features in bullet points, hotels should tell engaging stories about how their practices make a difference. For example, a short video showing how food waste is composted and returned to a rooftop garden is more impactful than a sentence claiming "we compost." These stories not only humanize the brand but also create emotional connections that drive loyalty.

Digital platforms especially social media and hotel websites are the frontlines of green marketing. Social media allows hotels to showcase eco-initiatives in real time, engage with environmentally conscious travelers, and promote user-generated content that reflects genuine guest experiences. Influencers in the travel and sustainability space also play a significant role in shaping consumer perception, particularly when they validate a hotel's green credentials through independent reviews or collaborations.

However, marketing strategies must also take into account the nuances of consumer behavior. While many guests express a preference for sustainability, their actual purchasing decisions may still be driven by cost and convenience. This is why it's crucial for hotels to emphasize not just their environmental values, but also how these initiatives contribute to comfort, savings, and wellness. For instance, energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems can be promoted not only for reducing carbon footprint but also for enhancing guest comfort and reducing operational disruptions.

Equally important is internal alignment. Marketing campaigns that highlight green practices must be fully supported by staff training and operational excellence. Nothing undermines a green brand faster than a guest observing contradictory practices like plastic water bottles in a supposedly zero-waste hotel. Employees should be brand ambassadors who understand, support, and embody the hotel's sustainability message.

Finally, hotels must adapt green marketing to different cultural and regional contexts. In some regions, water conservation may

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Received: 06-May-2025, Manuscript No. JHBM-25-38073; **Editor assigned:** 09-May-2025, PreQC No. JHBM-25-38073 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 23-May-2025, QC No. JHBM-25-38073; **Revised:** 30-May-2025, Manuscript No. JHBM-25-38073 (R); **Published:** 06-Jun-2025, DOI: 10.35248/2169-0286.24.14.141.

Citation: Bennett E (2025). Green Marketing Strategies and Consumer Perception in Eco-Friendly Hotels. J Hotel Bus Manag.14:141.

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be more valued than carbon reduction; in others, community support and local employment may be top priorities. Tailoring the message to the values of the target demographic enhances resonance and perceived authenticity.

Green marketing is more than a promotional tactic it is a critical bridge between sustainability and consumer engagement in the hotel industry. Eco-friendly hotels that communicate their

initiatives with honesty, creativity, and consistency are better positioned to attract the modern traveler. In doing so, they not only gain a competitive advantage but also contribute meaningfully to a more sustainable and responsible future for the hospitality sector.