NOVA IMS
Information Management School

MDDM

Master's Degree Program in
Data-Driven Marketing

Green marketing as a guarantee of competitive advantages in the automotive sector:

B2B perspective

Pedro Afonso Pinto da Conceição

Master Thesis

presented as partial requirement for obtaining a Master's Degree in Data-Driven Marketing

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Green marketing as a guarantee of competitive advantages in the automotive sector.
B2B perspective

by
Pedro Afonso Pinto da Conceição

Master Thesis presented as partial requirement for obtaining the Master's Degree in Data-Driven Marketing, with a specialization in Marketing Intelligence

Supervised by
Marlon Dalmoro, PhD, NOVA IMS

July, 2024

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism, any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration. I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Rules of Conduct and Code of Honor from the NOVA Information Management School.
[Lisbon, 13/07/2024]

DEDICATION

To my parents, for their values, their example, for the motivation and for always believing in me.

To my siblings, for being the second example of everything I always wanted personally and academically.

To my girlfriend, for all the patience, help, support, and motivation.

To Pedro Marques, for all the shared knowledge of the automobile sector, for all the teaching and for being a professional model for me.

To all interviewees, for their willingness to accept and contribute to the study.

To the advisor of my dissertation, Professor Marlon Dalmoro, for his patience, mentorship, and availability.

A thank you will never be enough.

ABSTRACT

The theme of this dissertation is driven by the growing significance of sustainability within the automotive industry. The main objective of this research is to explore how Green Marketing enables competitive advantages from a B2B perspective, focusing on Ford Motor Company. Despite extensive literature on sustainability and Green Marketing, there is a gap in understanding how these concepts translate into competitive advantages in the B2B context. The methodology involves conducting interviews with dealership managers and B2B clients, framed by a theoretical model to investigate how Ford's Green Marketing initiatives leverage resources, market position and strategic performance. The results indicate that B2B clients recognize the adoption of Green Marketing as a valuable competitive advantage and that there is a gap between actual sustainable practices and client perceptions. This research contributes by highlighting the importance of training dealers to communicate the value of sustainability and demonstrating how environmental responsibility can enhance competitive positioning. In conclusion, this dissertation provides actionable insights for automotive managers, emphasizing the need for effective Green Marketing strategies to meet the evolving demands of sustainability-conscious consumers.

KEYWORDS

Green Marketing; Sustainability; B2B; Competitive advantage; Automotive sector.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

VRIN	Valuable, Rare, Inimitable and Non-substitute resources
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
B2B	Business to Business

1. INTRODUCTION

The theme of this dissertation arose from the increasing importance of sustainability. Companies are concerned with the environment and, mainly, with the adoption of strategies that enable the development of the organization along with sustainable development. From this perspective of sustainability, Green Marketing emerges as a fundamental partner. This is, then, the "holistic management of processes responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way" (Peattie, Charter, 2003, p. 35).

Despite substantial literature on sustainability and Green Marketing, there exists a significant gap in understanding how Green Marketing translates into competitive advantages specifically within the B2B domain. This research aims to address this gap by investigating how Green Marketing initiatives contribute to securing competitive advantages from a B2B perspective, with a focus on Ford Motor Company.

The study was delved into the theoretical underpinnings of Green Marketing and competitive advantage within the automotive sector. It explores how Ford's initiatives in green marketing, particularly in commercial and after-sales areas, utilize resources, enhance market position, and drive strategic performance to achieve competitive differentiation. The B2B context was scrutinized to understand how these initiatives are perceived and leveraged by dealership managers and B2B clients.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute valuable insights to automotive sector managers, enhancing their decision-making processes by deepening their understanding of Green Marketing, competitive advantage acquisition, and customer perception. The theoretical model of this study examines Ford, its B2B clients and Green Marketing. It highlights how this type of marketing can provide competitive advantage through enhanced resources, a strengthened market position and improved strategic performance.

The context of Ford Motor Company serves as a pertinent backdrop for this study, given its global presence and significant role within the automotive sector. Analyzing Ford's approach to Green Marketing and its implications for competitive advantage contributes with valuable perspectives to the broader discourse on sustainable business practices and strategic management in contemporary markets.

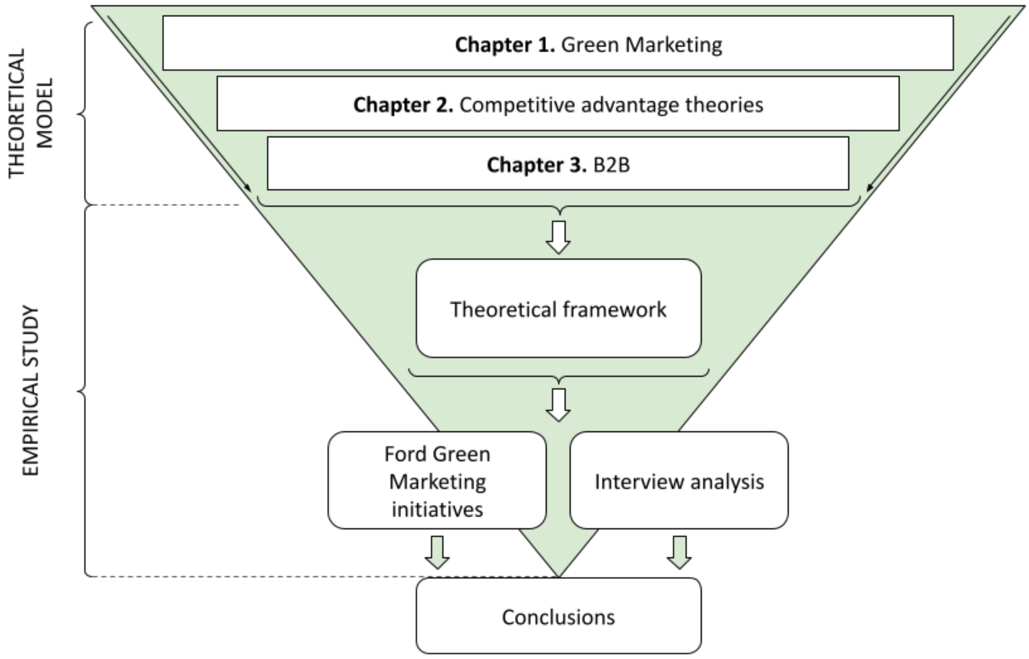

Figure 1 – Dissertation structure. Source: Own elaboration. Adapted from Conceição (2012).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this second chapter, the following topics were addressed: first, the concept of green marketing, as well as the strategic perspective that companies can use based on this type of marketing; secondly, the theories of competitive advantage, namely, Michael Porter's 5 forces and Hunt's theory of resource advantage; thirdly, the B2B relationship and how companies have taken it into account; Finally, the theoretical framework was presented and the bases of the research model explained.

2.1. GREEN MARKETING

For Dalmoro, Venturini and Pereira (2009) and since the Stockholm Conference in 1972, the current of thought has become not only economic but also socio environmental. In 1983, the World Commission on Environment and Development, held by the UN (United Nations), disseminated this line of thought through the creation of the *Brundtland Report*, responsible for the first concepts of sustainable development. That said, this report defined sustainable development as "the satisfaction of present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 43). As such, and since then, social responsibility, sustainable development and conscious consumption have become part of the day-to-day life of companies, society, and institutions. On the other hand, for Kotler and Keller (2006), Green Marketing began in the 90s. For them, the concept of green marketing only appeared after the creation of Planet Earth Day (April 22, 1970). They stated that the celebration of this day boosted the creation of sustainable products and marketing strategies, to respond to consumers environmental concerns. Continuing with the perspective of satisfying the needs of consumers and solving their environmental concerns, Prakash (2002) states that marketing whose orientation is to reduce the environmental impact plays an important role in satisfying the needs of the consumer and, in turn, enhances the achievement of results for the organization.

Therefore, from the intersection of sustainable development and the significant tool that is marketing, emerges the concept of Green Marketing. Over the years, various schools of thought have emerged regarding this type of marketing. In the 1970s, the focus was on pollution (Peattie and Crane, 2005). In the 1980s, new concepts such as clean technology, sustainability, and creating competitive advantages were added to the pollution theme (Peattie and Crane, 2005). Finally, in the 1990s, the focus shifted towards creating and maintaining a sustainable relationship with customers and society (Charter and Polonsky, 1999).

With all these lines of thought, Green Marketing increasingly becomes part of strategic design, with terms like "eco-friendly" gaining prominence (Simons, Slob, Holswilder, Tukker, 2006). However, the definitions of green marketing do not stop here.

For Churchill Jr. and Peter (2000, p.44), green marketing consists of "marketing activities aimed at minimizing negative effects on the physical environment or improving its quality". For Peattie, Charter (2003, p.35), this new type of marketing is defined as the "holistic management of processes responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way". For Dalmoro, Venturini & Pereira, (2009), green marketing consists of "the set of activities designed to produce and facilitate the commercialization of any product or service with the intention of satisfying human needs and desires with a minimum impact on the environment" (p. 41). In a different line of thought, and for Kotler (1995), Green Marketing arises when companies respond to the environmental concerns of the population through the development of ecologically safer products, recyclable and biodegradable packaging, greater pollution control and more concerned and efficient operations.

Now, if, according to Kotler (1995), Green Marketing is present when companies seek to respond to the environmental concerns of the population, it can be said that responsibility arises through decisions and actions that contribute to the well-being and interest of society and the organization itself. Karna, Hansen and Juslin (2003) argued that organizational strategy is increasingly closer to socio-environmental responsibility. That is, respect for society and the environment is now incorporated into a company's strategic decision. From this organization point of view, responsibility has three fundamental aspects: economic, social, and environmental. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defines corporate responsibility as a contribution to sustainable economic development by working with employees, their families, local community, and society to improve the quality of life (WBCSD, 2000).

In strategic terms, the first challenge at the market level lies in the use of Green Marketing without dispositioning the offer in terms of quality, price, and convenience (Saunders, McGovern, 1997). For Karna, Hansen and Juslin (2003), there are three essential conditions for the adoption of sustainable marketing strategies: the first is based on the consumer's willingness to pay for the environmental quality offered by the product or service; the second is based on the provision of reliable information about the product or service and its environmental attributes; and, finally, it is based on the protection of innovation against imitation by competitors. Continuing on this theme, Alessio (2004) defended three types of strategy that organizations can adopt: first, the defensive strategy, where companies admit their mistakes by omission and seek to correct them, as their strategic implementation is based on legal issues; second, the convenience strategy, where companies correct their actions based on external pressures; Finally, there is the proactive strategy, where companies lead by example when it comes to social issues.

According to Miles and Covin (2000), organizations can be of two types: conformist, where they only comply with laws and regulations; or strategic, where they maximize shareholder returns using proactive environmental strategies to create competitive advantages. Organizations can also be divided into three groups: proactive green marketeers, reactive green marketeers, and consumer marketers (Karna, Hansen, and Juslin, 2003). The pro-active redirects their activity based on sustainability; reactive uses sustainability considering legal aspects; and consumers have a low level of sustainability factors. It is possible, then, to mention that the theories of Alessio (2004), Miles and Covin (2000) and Karna, Hansen and Juslin (2003) are at the strategic point of proactivity and compliance with legal norms.

With all these schools of thought, and through the theory of Ottman (1994), it is possible to summarize in three points the importance of green marketing, both from a social and an organizational perspective. The first point is that companies that do not seek to respond to the environmental issues that are raised daily risk losing touch with their customers and, consequently, losing them. The second point, which states that the green quality of a product is fundamental and influence the customer's purchase decision. And, finally, the third point, which reiterates the importance of Green Marketing to strengthen the brand image, which ends up seducing the customer and building their loyalty.

Author's	Green marketing concept
Polonsky (1994)	"A set of activities designed to produce and facilitate the marketing of any product or service with the intention of satisfying human needs and desires while having minimal impact on the environment."
Kotler (1995)	"It comes when companies respond to the environmental concerns of the population through the development of ecologically safer products, recyclable and biodegradable packaging, greater pollution control, and more concerned and more efficient operations."
Churchill Jr., Peter (2000)	"Marketing activities aimed at minimizing negative effects on the physical environment or improving its quality."
Peattie, Charter (2003)	"Holistic management of processes responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way."

Table 6 – Green marketing concept evolution. Source: own elaboration.

2.2. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THEORIES

For Darmawan (2009a), competitive advantage is a comparison between the achievement of an organization and its competitors in an identical target market category. In the context of organizations, competitive advantage can be ensured by considering how products or services are offered in the market compared to existing competition. At this point, an organization secures competitive advantages if the adopted strategy is not perceived by competitors, making it difficult to imitate.

Within this topic, there are numerous definitions of competitive advantage. According to Poddar and Gadhawe (2007), a company's competitive advantage lies in its market strength, meaning that prices may be higher than competitors, but the benefits resulting from the quality of products or services justify the higher price. In another line of thought, Bordes (2009) argues that competitive advantage exists when a company can retain customers who are not concerned about price. David (2011), on the other hand, defines competitive advantage as everything an organization can do that other organizations cannot easily imitate. Lastly, according to Besanko et al. (2013), an organization has a competitive advantage when it achieves higher economic outcomes compared to other organizations.

In addition to all these definitions of competitive advantages, according to Porter (1985), there are three types of ensuring competitive advantages: through cost leadership, differentiation, or focus. Cost leadership occurs when an organization is more efficient than its competition. Differentiation happens when organizations can position themselves in relation to their competition in a way that allows them to have an image that sets them apart (Darmawan, 2005). This difference in brand image can only be achieved if continuous innovation, creativity, and learning are maintained and developed (Porter, 1985). Finally, the third type of ensuring competitive advantages (focus) considers the segment chosen by the organization for its operations. It occurs when an organization selects the right segment, the appropriate product for that segment, and its geographical location (Darmawan, 2014).

Author's	Competitive Advantage concept
Poddar and Gadhawe (2007)	It resides in market strength. The price may be higher than that of the competition, but the benefits are perceived by the customer.
Bordes (2009)	Loyalty and customers who are not concerned with price.
David (2011)	Everything an organization can do that other organizations cannot imitate.
Besanko et al. (2013)	It is guaranteed when the organization achieves better economic results compared to other organizations.

Table 7 – Competitive Advantage's Concepts. Source: own elaboration.

Since my theoretical model is based on three fundamental points, in the next three sections, competitive advantages that can be achieved through resources, market position, and strategic performance were discussed.

2.2.1. RESOURCES

Resources can be enhancers of competitive advantages. To achieve this, they must adhere to certain premises. For Hunt (2000), and with his resource-advantage theory, the premises are: heterogeneous and dynamic demand between and within companies; consumer information is imperfect and costly; human motivation is restricted to self-interest. The company's resources are financial (e.g. Cash resources, access to financial markets), physical (e.g. Equipment), legal (e.g. Trademarks, licenses), human (e.g. Skills and knowledge of employees) or organizational (e.g. Skills, control, policies and culture), informative (e.g. consumer knowledge and competitive intelligence) and relational (e.g. relationship with suppliers and consumers) and are heterogeneous and imperfectly mobile. The role of management is to recognize, perceive, create, select, and implement and modify strategies. Competitive dynamics provoke competitive imbalances, with endogenous innovation. For this author, resources are defined as tangible and intangible, at the disposal of the company, and enable the efficient production of a market offer that has value for its segments. When these resources make it possible to obtain comparative advantages for the company, they occupy market positions that enable them to guarantee competitive advantages in some segments that subsequently translate into superior financial performance.

In another theory and moving on to the VRIN Framework (Barney & Clark, 2007; Barney & Hesterly, 2012), competitive advantage and superior financial performance can only be secured if companies look for valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitute resources. They also argue that the resource-based theory takes the existence of heterogeneous resources and capabilities for granted and examines the impact of resources on firm's ability to secure competitive advantages.

The way in which competitive processes are generated is significantly influenced by five factors: firm's social resources, social institutions, the actions of suppliers and competitors, consumer behavior, and public policy decisions. Therefore, this R-A Theory shows how the competitive process contributes to organizational learning. It is through competition that companies learn, that gives them a market position and that they are given resources.

In conclusion, for an organization to ensure competitive advantages through its resources, these must adhere to a set of factors. Firstly, resources must consider three fundamental premises: heterogeneous and dynamic demand between and within companies; imperfect and costly consumer information; human motivation restricted to self-interest. Secondly, these resources can be financial, physical, legal, human, organizational, or relational. Thirdly, resources can be tangible or intangible, available to the organization, and when they enable comparative advantages for the company, they occupy market positions that ensure competitive advantages in some segments. Fourthly, competitive advantage and superior financial performance can only be secured if companies seek valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitute resources. Fifth and finally, competitive processes are influenced by the social resources of the organization, social institutions, actions of suppliers and competitors, consumer behavior, and public policy decisions.

2.2.2. MARKET POSITION

There are several positions that na organization can assume, after choosing the market in which it operates. As such, when chossing it, if the organizativo wants to ensure superior financial performance, it must focus, first, on the choice of the industry in which it operates and the strategy to be adopted (Porter, 1980; Porter, 1985).

For Porter (1980) and Schneider et al. (2009) and through the Theory of the 5 forces, the profit of a company belonging to an industry is determined by: the threat of new competitors, the threat of substitute products, the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of customers and the rivalry between competitors. The two authors also argues that companies, after choosing their industry of action, should choose between three generic strategies: the leadership by cost, where the product/service offered is, compared to the competition, cheaper; differentiation, where your product/service has characteristics that differentiate it from the competition; or by focus, where the company directs its activity to a specific segment of customers, perfectly understanding their needs and understanding them better than its competitors.

Each of these three possible strategies can enable different competitive advantages. Firstly, if an organization offers a good product at a competitive price, it gains a competitive advantage due to its low cost. Secondly, if the organization creates an innovative product, with disruptive characteristics, it guarantee a competitive advantage of differentiation compared to the competition. Finally, if the organization focuses its strategy on a niche market (e.g., luxury brand), it also ensures a competitive advantage over the competition by segmenting its market.

Concluding, to secure different market positions and subsequently ensure competitive advantages, the organization can choose among three generic strategies: cost leadership, differentiation, or focus (Porter, 1980; Schneider et al., 2009; Suwardi, Kusuma, Kartiko, 2021).

2.2.3. STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

Industry-based theory (Porter, 1980, 1985) has greatly influenced the area of strategic management. As such, there are three major currents of strategic thinking: adaptive marketing capabilities (Day, 2011; Day and Moorman, 2010; Moorman and Day, 2016); dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2014); adaptive marketing capabilities and dynamic capabilities (Hunt, 2000; Hunt & Madharavam, 2020; Hunt & Morgan, 1995, 1996, 1997). The first school of thought argued that companies can "adjust quickly to market changes" only if they "have a vigilant stance in the market," if they use "market experimentation enabling continuous learning," and if "their marketing style establishes relationships with partners adapted to market changes." The second school of thought tells us that dynamic capabilities are how companies perceive opportunities related to changing customer needs, creating value to meet those needs, and ultimately transform the company through continuous renewal. In the third current, the two theories explained above join and converge with the resource-advantage theory which, by renewing skills and capacities, enable a greater number of resources for the company.

This R-A theory gives great importance to the ability of companies to renew themselves. This renewal capability fosters proactive innovation by empowering companies to anticipate potential market segments, envision market offerings that may be attractive to those segments, and anticipate the need to acquire, develop, or create the necessary resources. That said, driven by the search for better financial performance, renovation skills contribute to making competition more dynamic in the search for resources and competitive advantages (Hunt, 2000).

For companies to achieve their goals, through strategic design and implementation, there is a set of marketing capabilities capable of propelling the company to high levels of strategic performance. These marketing capabilities are specialized marketing capabilities; product management; pricing management; channel management; marketing communication management; selling; and market research. Regarding specialization marketing capabilities, it is possible to mention that they are the basic processes used by an organization to combine and transform resources (Vorhies and Morgan, 2005).

The literature suggests that specialized marketing capabilities are based on the marketing mix: product, price, communication, and distribution (Hunt and Morgan, 1995; Vorhies et al., 2009). In product management, the process becomes one of adaptation, maintenance, and delivery of the product/service, to satisfy the needs of the consumer (Greenley and Oktemgil, 1997). Only a company with well-developed and efficient routines can produce and develop products/services that are attractive to consumers (Adler et al., 1996), as well as adapt existing products/services to changing consumer needs (Slater and Narver, 1995). In short, at this level of strategic performance, companies should focus their attention on perceiving the needs of consumers, belonging to segments that are their target (Dickson and Ginter, 1987).

From a pricing management perspective, price is quite important in consumer's minds. As such, for Dawar and Parker (2004), price is the key to the value delivered to consumers, considering existing offers. This directly impacts the cost and quality perceived by the consumer. The way companies manage the price of the product/service they are offering emerges as an important marketing capability (Dutta et al., 2003).

Regarding the management of the distribution channel, it is important to mention that companies that can relate well to the members of the distribution channels are able to guarantee a marketing capacity (Weitz and Jap, 1995). Therefore, they guarantee it if they can guarantee and develop mutually beneficial relationships with these members (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro,Cervera-Taulet, 2009).

As for sales, existing capacities are based on two elements: the first concerns the skills of the sales force (Brown et al., 1998), the way in which they can analyze consumer needs, provide information and work with current and potential consumers, to ensure that needs are met and develop skills in managing the relationship with their consumers. The second element concerns the structure needed to ensure efficient and effective sales force management (Challagalla and Shervani, 1996). As such, this point includes the existing training of the sales force, the development of management systems to verify its results and the effective development of coordination between the product, the brand, and the market managers.

Both elements are related to the company's ability to deliver value to the consumer and, consequently, ensure superior performance (Shapiro et al., 1997).

As far as market research is concerned, companies must have the ability to answer market-related questions (Vorhies et al., 1999; Mehta, Ali, Farooq & Tariq, 2020). The market research capacity that a company has involves the transformation of market questions into concrete research, into research plan designs, in collecting necessary data, in analyzing it, and then communicating the answers obtained to the questions asked (Moorman, 1995). This market research is related to the company's performance (Vorhies et al., 1999; Mehta, Ali, Farooq & Tariq, 2020).

In addition to marketing capabilities, a company that wants to ensure superior strategic performance must pay attention to cross-functional marketing capabilities. These are more complex as they integrate several specialized capabilities. The three most important cross-functional capabilities are: brand management, customer relationship management (CRM) and new product development.

Brand management capability includes the systems and processes used to develop, grow, maintain, and leverage the company's assets (Morgan et al., 2009). That said, brand management includes specialized marketing capabilities, such as market research, product management, pricing, and marketing communication capabilities (Aaker, 1991; Andriopoulos and Gotsi, 2000; Dash, Kiefer and Paul, 2021). This capability also ultimately combines inputs from existing research & development, accounting, production, and operations to develop and execute the brand strategy defined by the company (Aaker, 2008).

The CRM capability includes how the company identifies attractive consumers, initiates, and maintains relationships with them, and leverages these relationships for a profit perspective (Boulding et al., 2005; Reinartz et al., 2004; Srivastava et al., 1999). That said, this capability exists when there are inputs from sales reporting systems, market research reports, customer database analyses, customer service experience mapping, etc. (Morgan and Slotegraaf, 2011; Ramaswami et al., 2009).

Finally, in the ability to develop new products, a company ensures strategic performance when it creates new value offerings for its target markets (Griffin and Page, 1996; Ramaswami et al., 2009). To be able to guarantee value in their offer, companies must acquire knowledge of the market, from an intra and extra-company perspective (Moorman and Miner, 1997), integrating the knowledge obtained to create and acquire complementary products (Madhavan and Grover, 1998).

After the strategy is outlined and implemented, companies have results from their performance. As such, this performance can be divided into two types: product-market performance and financial performance. In the first type of performance, the buying behavior of consumers in their target market gives the company the perception of its positional advantage (Morgan et al., 2002). As such, by creating this positional advantage, the company's offering is positively perceived by consumers. In the second type of performance, organizational success is defined and measured in accounting terms, through cash flow and profit (Srivastava et al., 1999). As such, the efficiency with which the company generates cash flows and profit can be an important accounting indicator of financial performance.

2.3. B2B

The "Business to Business" concept is characterized by marketing activities of organizations that conduct business transactions with other organizations along the value chain (Turnbull and Leek, 2003). In this context, there are several factors that must be considered from the point of view of creating and maintaining relationships. As such, some of them are the value of relationships, trust, commitment, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Considering the value of the relationship, Anderson (1995) characterizes the relationship between two companies as a set of "interwoven business strands". For Flint et al. (2002, p. 103) the perception of value is materialized in "judgements or evaluations of what the customer perceives he has received from the seller".

Taking trust into account, and for Morgan and Hunt (1994), relationship marketing seeks to build lasting relationships of trust as a "key to mediation" or as a "necessary ingredient" (Ganesan, 1994) to develop successful relationships. Trust is, therefore, a crucial concept in business-to-business relations (Ganesan, 1994; Wilson, 1995; Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro, Cervera-Taulet, 2009). These schools of thought hold that both parties in a relationship should be vulnerable to some extent. This vulnerability is important to make trust an operational asset and to bring interdependence until the desired results are achieved.

Regarding commitment, (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Palmatier et al., 2007), this is a key mediation variable for relational marketing, as it is the belief (by at least one of the parties) that the relationship is so important that efforts to maintain it should be maximized. For Anderson and Weitz (1992, p. 191) and Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro and Cervera-Taulet (2009), the essence of all commitments lies in stability and sacrifice. As such, these authors define commitment as "the desire to develop a stable relationship, a willingness to make short-term sacrifices to maintain the relationship, and a confidence in the stability of the relationship".

As for satisfaction, it has been studied with a focus on the process-result and is defined by Hunt (1977) and Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro and Cervera-Taulet (2009) as the process of evaluating or measuring the shopping experience, where expectations are compared with the results obtained. In the B2B context, the "accumulative approach" theory has been the most advocated. Its definition is "a positive affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a firm's working relationship with another firm" (Anderson and Narus, 1990, p.45), for Chumpitaz and Paparoidamis (2004, p. 237) "is an overall evaluation of the total purchase, use and relationships experience with a product or service over time, as expressed by members of the buying decision centre".

About loyalty, for Heskett (2002, p. 355), this is "sine qua non of an effective business strategy". For Woodruff (1997) and Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro and Cervera-Taulet (2009), customer loyalty has proven to have a relevant impact on the company's performance and is considered a source of competitive advantage. These theories argue, then, that loyal consumers tend to develop actions that result in mutual benefit and that increase competitiveness and reduce transaction costs.

In an integrative analysis between the B2B context and green marketing, it is possible to say that, according to Perkins & Brewer (2010), B2B companies engage in environmental and social management through the supply chain and use social sustainability initiatives to cement buyer-supplier relationships. As far as sustainability is concerned, in this context, it translates into environmental initiatives that impact the company and its supply chain with the purpose of reducing the environmental impact on its activity, while transforming itself into competitive advantages. The benefits of this sustainability in the B2B context can be increasing sales (Fierman, 1991); increase consumer feedback (Franker, 1992); greater proximity to the consumer (Dean, Fowler, and Miller, 1995); improving competitiveness (Porter and van der Linde, 1995); and, finally, to enhance the company's image (Kolk, 2000).

In short, the biggest challenge that these companies have, in a world that is increasingly "environmentalist", is to convince the more rational consumer to purchase more expensive products/services, but which bring with them a greater respect for the environment (Mariados, Tansuhaj & Mouri, 2011).

On the other hand, the B2B customer journey is also important. During these journeys, the customer encounters three different phases: communication, service, and usage. Through the perception of quality that the customer has during these three phases, the use of the product they purchase ends up being perceived as more valuable (Lemke et al., 2011). Within this same journey, to make the purchasing process easier for the B2B customer, organizations should take the following four steps into account: map the journey, identify barriers, design solutions, and track customer progress (Toman et al., 2017).

2.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the theoretical research model (figure below), the automotive sector emerges as a context to understand how Green Marketing is worked. Based on an analysis of dealers and concessions, the aim was to define the competitive advantages that this type of marketing guarantees to dealers in three axes: resources, market position and strategic performance. Subsequently, and based on B2B clients, the goal was to verify the perception they have in relation to Green Marketing actions (carried out by dealers) as an ability to generate competitive advantages.

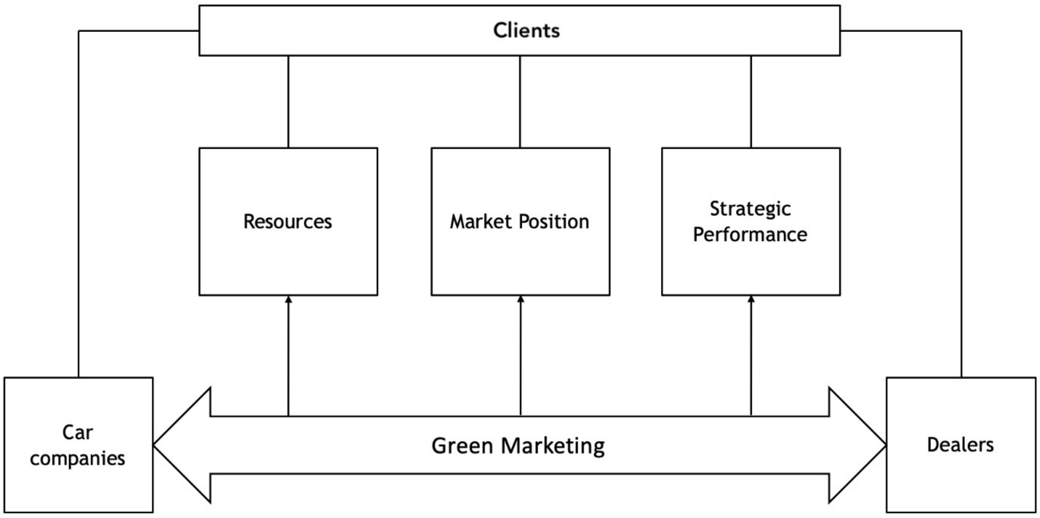

Figure 2 – Theoretical Framework. Adapted from Hunt and Morgan (1997).

In summary, the concepts of Green Marketing were organized in a chronological table. Next, the same method was applied: arranging different competitive advantage concepts in a chronological order. Finally, the necessary literature concepts were identified to develop a research model used subsequently.

3. METHODOLOGY

From the theoretical analysis carried out previously, it was possible to obtaine a set of important concepts to consider in the study conducted. Through the defined model, the study aims to justify the relevance of green marketing in securing competitive advantages in the automotive sector, specifically from a B2B perspective.

Since I have been working in the automotive sector for more than a year, at the LizDrive dealership, official representative of the Ford brand, I thought it would be good, in order to strengthen my research work, to justify the study of how Green Marketing guarantees competitive advantages in the automotive sector with the use of the perception, first, of FORD dealers and then, from B2B clients with a fleet also of this brand.

Ford was the brand chosen for this research because its strategic shift has been evident. In the commercial sector, Ford has launched new fully electric models (both passenger and commercial vehicles) and has outlined a strategic plan to produce only 100% electric vehicles by 2035. Additionally, in this sustainable transition, Ford has made significant strides in the aftersales area. New workshop programs have been created, such as "EasyFord," aimed at leveraging technological advancements to reduce the ecological footprint of workshops. Moreover, in the realm of respect for others and the environment, Ford has introduced a new program that revolutionizes customer treatment. Customers are no longer viewed as just customers; they are treated as guests. Dealerships now see and treat everyone who enters as part of the family. The primary goal is to transform a visit to the dealership into a memorable experience.

In this research, the case study methodology was used (Yin, 2008). For Joaquim Paulo Conceição (2012, p. 165), and supported by the author, this type of research "can be exploratory, explanatory and confirmatory in nature" and "represents a methodological approach to research that is especially appropriate when we seek to understand, explore or describe complex events and contexts".

The case study uses multiple sources of evidence or data, which makes it possible, firstly, to ensure the different perspectives of the participants in the study and, secondly, to obtain several measures of the same phenomenon, creating conditions for a triangulation of the data during the analysis phase. The data collection process ends up being time-consuming because the researcher is faced with the need to transcribe the results of the questions asked to the participants (Conceição, 2012). Also, for Conceição (2012), the generalization of the validity of a case study does not make any kind of sense due to the specificity of the case. However, there are case studies in which the results can be generalized when applied to other situations. This contempt for generalization is one of the prejudices that, according to Yin (1984), is "attached" to this type of research. To achieve this successfully, it is necessary to define the research plan clearly and rigorously.

As such, a type of qualitative research based on two interview models was carried out. The first one, held by five Ford Dealers representatives. Then, a second one was held for four business clients with a car fleet. Basically, these two interview models aim to interconnect because, considering the answers given by them, allows me to see how Green Marketing is worked by Ford and perceived by business customers.

As such, the first interview (directed to Ford) were based on: getting to know the interviewee (age, position, years in the sector); understand how the Ford representative perceives sustainability in the market where it operates; understand how the brand representative perceives sustainability as the basis of the "builders' activity"; and to place the main constructs of the theoretical framework, through the perception of the brand representative of the guarantee of competitive advantages by resources, market position and strategic performance.

In a second interview, to corporate customers with a Ford fleet, a cross-reference data was done being based on: getting to know the interviewee; understand how they understand Ford's communication of Green Marketing; understand if the customer has the perception that the brand wants with regard to sustainability as the basis of the brand's activity; understand whether the competitive advantages through the resources, market position, and strategic performance referred to by the brand representative are perceived by the customer.

The interviews were based on an interview script that was adapted to each type of interviewee, to collect data more effectively. The script for these interviews is in the chapter of the annexes, organized by interviewee.

To perceive competitive advantages considering the defined theoretical model (resources, strategic performance, and market position), nine interviews were conducted. Among these nine interviews, five were conducted with representatives from Ford (João, André, Miguel, Carlos, and Lúcio), and four were conducted with B2B customers (Francisco, Maria, Jorge, and Ricardo).

Name	Position	Seniority in the sector of activity	Interviewee role
João	Chairman of the Board of Directors of Grupo NOV Automóveis	26 years	Ford Representative
André	General Manager of LizDrive	10 years	Ford Representative
Miguel	Director of Grupo NOV Automóveis	7 years	Ford Representative
Carlos	Managing Partner of GesMo	27 years	Ford Representative
Lúcio	General Manager of MCoutinho	30 years	Ford Representative
Francisco	General Manager of Companhia Portuguesa	2 years	B2B Client
Maria	Managing Partner of Filomena Reis Unipessoal	6 years	B2B Client
Jorge	Manager of Inforquestion	13 years	B2B Client
Ricardo	Director of Fagir	8 years	B2B Client

Table 8 – Interviewees. Source: own elaboration.

Finally, a process of coding and categorizing the data was carried out based on the main constructs of the theoretical framework: resources, market position and strategic performance.

For Saldaña (2021, p. 9) "to codify is to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize". For Grbich (2007, p. 21), this process permits data to be "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation". For Bernard (2011, p. 338), it's "the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place". So, in conclusion, for Saldaña (2021, p.9) "coding is thus a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or “families” because they share some characteristics”. So, in this study, two groups were distinguished: the Ford representatives’ group and the B2B client’s group.

4. RESULTS

In this chapter, Green Marketing initiatives Ford has implemented were understanded, both in sales and after-sales areas. Additionally, through conducted interviews, the way Ford has utilized resources, market position, and strategic performance to secure competitive advantages from two perspectives was explored: that of Ford dealers and B2B clients.

4.1. FORD GREEN MARKETING INITIATIVES (PRODUCT AND POST-SALES)

Increasingly, companies are concerned with sustainability and respect for the environment. As such, this brand was used as an example of sustainable transition, both commercially and after-sales. "Our scale and resources put us in an important position to drive change for the better – better for people, better for the planet and better for progress, taking climate change into account as we explore more sustainable manufacturing practices and take responsibility for our environmental and social impact. Our goal goes beyond simply building great vehicles" (https://www.ford.pt/experiencia-ford/sustentabilidade). To ensure this "change for the better", Ford aims to offer only 100% electric passenger vehicles from 2030 and to offer only 100% electric commercial vehicles from 2035. In addition to this, they also aim for carbon neutrality in all their production facilities. To highlight the importance of sustainability in today's world, Ford conducted a 2021 study of 14.000 adults across Europe to better understand consumer attitudes to climate change. However, having been carried out by the company OnePoll, the results revealed allowed us to conclude that 90% of Europeans feel responsible in the fight against climate change. Here, it is possible to check how important it is or can be for a company to adapt to more sustainable actions (https://www.ford.pt/experiencia-ford/sustentabilidade).

There are two main axes of action for Ford and any other car manufacturer: the commercial area and the after-sales area. In terms of the commercial area, and more specifically the product, Ford has the goal of selling 100% electric passenger vehicles by 2030 and 100% electric commercial vehicles by 2035. This growth, for Ford, cannot be done only with the offer of this product, there are measures that must be implemented for greater efficiency. That said, and so that consumers of the 100% electric Ford product can have confidence in their trips, in terms of charging stations, the brand has continued to expand the BlueOval charging network, which is accessible through the FordPass app. The interconnection of these two tools makes it possible for the customer to check at which station they can charge their vehicle, a total of 300.000 across Europe. In addition to this expansion of charging stations, Ford enters the market of energy companies, as a shareholder in IONITY, which is a company focused on 350kW charging stations and which has played an important role in this electric transformation. This company announced in November 2021 an investment of €700 million to accelerate and quadruple the number of high-energy charging stations to 7.000 by 2025. So, for Ford, driving a car responsibly is no longer just about safety, it's also about taking our health and the environment into account. And it was based on this belief that they created the "Park the Car Ford" program, a program for people with city activity, where the distance they travel does not exceed 5kms. For these people, the challenge was launched, from May 2022, to carry out these routes on foot or by bicycle, with the aim of promoting and ensuring healthier streets, healthier lives, and an increasingly green future.

Continuing with this commercial perspective, and although the sale of electric vehicles in Europe already accounts for a fifth of the market, it is necessary for the sale of fossil fuel cars to end in 2035, to be able to guarantee that polluting cars leave the market by 2050, the year in which Europe must guarantee zero carbon emissions. Ford was one of 15 car brands that volunteered to sell only electric cars in Europe over the next decade. In November 2021, at the climate summit in Glasgow, Ford joined 50 other organizations as part of a RouteZero collaboration, with the aim of reducing the carbon footprint associated with road transport by offering 100% electric cars (https://www.ford.pt/experiencia-ford/sustentabilidade).

With this primary goal of electrification, Ford, through the launch of models such as the Mustang Mach-e, the Ford Kuga Plug-in, and the new Explorer, passes on to consumers its dedication to reducing carbon emissions and offering alternatives to combustion-powered vehicles. In any case, and while electrifying, Ford, with its Ecoboost engine, also shows its concern for the environment, as this engine has as its main objective to reduce consumption and reduce carbon emissions. The brand has also had concerns regarding the ecological footprint in the production of its vehicles. As such, they are governed by three objectives: reducing waste, conserving water, and using renewable energy sources. This launch of electric products, the alteration and modernization of its engines and the constant concern for the environment, adds to the Ford product and to those who buy it, the value of sustainability and respect for it. The technologies that the brand offers to its consumers are also based on a sustainable vision. Technologies such as automatic start and stop or cruise control not only optimize the vehicle's performance, but also ensure an eco-friendly driving mode. On the other hand, apps such as FordPass and features such as Ford SYNC give consumers real-time information on fuel consumption, as well as eco-friendly driving tips, enabling informed decision-making, which directly contribute to an increasingly green driving experience.

About the aftermarket area and based on my knowledge acquired in almost two years in the automotive market, Ford has directed its action towards an increasingly sustainable context. In this context, and through the creation of a new workshop management model (called "EasyFord"), the brand has neglected the use of paper in favor of more digital means. There are two points of action where it is possible to verify this strategic change: the reception and the workshop. The first, where the service advisors (in the previous phase) had a greater "back office" workload, as all the documents resulting from a repair order would have to be printed, archived, and then divided and organized by year and alphabetically. The second, where everything that was workshop planning carried out by the workshop manager, would have to be recorded on a sheet, broken down by type of work to be carried out and, finally, placed on the board for each car maintenance technician. Now, with the entry of this new workshop program, service advisors now have a "digital library" where all customer information is stored and available for consultation and, on the other hand, car maintenance technicians now have tablets, where they can see their schedule for the day, that is, all the repairs they must make. This insertion into each one's tablet is done by the workshop manager. Here, with this example, it is possible to verify the respect that Ford has had for the environment, not only in the commercial area, but also in the aftermarket.

4.2. INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

As mentioned earlier, in this thesis five interviews with Ford dealer directors and four interviews with corporate customers were made.

4.2.1. RESOURCES

4.2.1.1. DEALERS

Considering what was stated in the literature review and based on the insights given by the interviewees (Ford dealership managers), interconnecting to the VRIN Framework (Barney & Clark, 2007; Barney & Hesterly, 2012) companies can only acquire competitive advantages if they combine their product with the characteristics of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitute resources. However, in the light of the interviews carried out, it was possible to verify that, in view of the product, there is general agreement. That is, all respondents have the opinion that, with the launch of the Mustang Mach-e and the Explorer, Ford has made great strides to add value to its new electric offer.

> *"The Mustang Mach-e and the Explorer are demonstrative of the strategy adopted. These products, which have traditionally been quite popular and polluting, are now able to communicate the new strategy more quickly and effectively. (...) Ford appears as the maximum exponent of change to green technologies."* – Carlos, Managing Partner of GesMo.

> *"I think it is one of the brands that is most trying to change its range to electric or electrified vehicles. It has partnered with Volkswagen, sharing platforms, trying to be a more competitive and sustainable brand."* – Lúcio, General Manager of MCoutinho.

In the first quote, it is possible to see that Ford chose to add value and rarity to the offer, when it took two iconic combustion models and put them back on the market, this time turning them into electric. Of course, these two models, in view of their image, wasn’t imitable. Now, in the second quote, with this sharing of platforms, Ford added value to its product by creating and closing partnerships with manufacturers known for the good manufacture of products.

In terms of financial resources, Ford may have secured a competitive advantage in that it was able to finance itself and invest in the production of its sustainable products.

> *"The first benefit was its position on the world stock markets when it announced its green strategy". This allowed for the means of financing for investment in the technology itself."* – Carlos, Managing Partner of GesMo.

In other hand, Ford may have secured a competitive advantage by transforming its iconic combustion models into electric vehicles.

> *"Having taken advantage of a product and a brand image that already existed (Mustang) and having, in essence, assured Mustang customers the brand image of modernity, aggressiveness, dynamism, or distinction."* – João, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Grupo NOV Automóveis.

4.2.1.2. B2B COSTUMERS

Regarding the B2B relationship and considering the interviews conducted with business customers, the design of products considering Green Marketing may make it possible to guarantee competitive advantages.

Therefore, in this market, everything that is based on sustainability, even a new aspect of hydrogen production, can guarantee competitive advantages to brands that place it in the product production strategy. They were able to add the differentiation value (because it is a new product) to the sustainability value.

> *"Thermal cars, electric cars already existed, and I think that hydrogen-powered cars will appear even faster than we are expecting. And so, yes, I think that with this diversification there will be a greater appetite for acquisition."* – Ricardo, Director of Fagir.

It is possible to verify not only the possible guarantee of competitive advantage by the sustainable differentiation of the product, but also the ability that a green product, in this case electric, gives to companies to ensure a more efficient quality-price ratio.

> *"I give preference to more sustainable cars, because I confirm that driving is equally comfortable and that, in financial terms, in our reality, it justifies it."* – Jorge, Manager of Inforquestion.

Sustainability is a concern of generation Z, and it's the generation most concerned with aesthetics and not only with the functionality of the car, but also with what it represents. In this case, the electric vehicles launched by Ford have not only sustainable characteristics and consumption, but also an attractive design that makes it possible to attract two types of customers: those concerned about the environment and those concerned about what the vehicle represents socially.

> *"Products based on green marketing, such as electric or hybrid vehicles, can attract consumers who are concerned about the environment and want to reduce their carbon footprint. But I emphasize that the product must be associated with an attractive design, with quality and that satisfies the desires of customers/potential buyers."* – Maria, Managing Partner of Filomena Reis Unipessoal.

For the resources to provide competitive advantages, the product must be related to its communication. Here, Ford may need to add more green products to its offering so that customers perceive it as a true green brand.

> *"If the product is well made and transparent, with clear and deep communication, I have no doubt that the appetite to buy will be strong. The way they are doing it, it's like any advertising campaign, just based on sustainability."* – Francisco, General Manager of Companhia Portuguesa.

Concluding, from the dealer’s perspective, Ford: added value to its products through strategic partnerships that enable knowledge sharing; may have secured a competitive advantage through self-financing and investment in the development of sustainable products; and could gain a competitive edge by converting its iconic combustion products into electric ones. On the other hand, concerning B2B clients: any sustainability-focused initiative can provide competitive advantages to automotive brands that integrate new sustainable production methods into their strategy; green products enhance competitive advantages due to their more efficient quality-cost relationship; and they believe Ford needs to expand its sustainable portfolio to enhance its perception as a sustainable brand.

Ford Dealers perspective	B2B perspective
Ford enhanced the value of its products through strategic partnerships with manufacturers known for their high-quality production.	Any initiative based on sustainability, including new methods of hydrogen production, can provide competitive advantages to brands that incorporate it into their production strategy.
Ford likely gained a competitive edge by securing its own financing and investing in the development of its sustainable products.	Green products enable companies to ensure a more efficient quality-to-price ratio.
Ford might have gained a competitive edge by converting its iconic combustion models into electric vehicles.	Ford may need to expand its range of green products so that customers recognize it as a genuinely green brand.

Table 9 – Resources Perspectives (Ford Dealers and B2B Costumers). Source: own elaboration.

4.2.2. Market Position

4.2.2.1. Dealers

Porter (1980) states that a company, to ensure competitive advantages, must choose between three generic strategies: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus.

From the interviews conducted, for most of the interviewees, Ford's strategy to guarantee competitive advantages is through differentiation. The brand has not been so concerned with reducing acquisition costs, but rather with adding a high sustainability value to these products, which justifies the price they charge.

> *"If sustainability is indeed a value perceived as very important to the buyer, he is willing to pay more to feel good and protect nature. (...) if the target it is aimed at recognizes that there is enough value in sustainability to be able to pay more for it."* – João, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Grupo NOV Automóveis.

But, on the other hand, with recyclable resources, you can also have a cost-efficient strategy because, with the production of electric vehicles and the change of the car's components to more environmentally friendly materials, the total cost of production ends up being lower than that of a combustion car.

> *"There is this idea that electric cars can even be expensive at the beginning of construction, but then in the medium term they are more durable and have much lower maintenance costs (...) And then the complexity of car maintenance also decreases."* - João, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Grupo NOV Automóveis.

4.2.2.2. B2B COSTUMERS

Now, on this point, there are several opinions of the interviewees. The only brand that can differentiate itself from the rest is Build Your Dreams (BYD) because its entry into the market was based on a strategy of focus, where they direct all their marketing to a specific segment of customers, those who place sustainability as their main concern.

> *"I think that in this aspect, BYD's starting point has a big advantage over the others. It's a brand that was founded with the assumption of sustainability from the outset, which is a big difference compared to a Ford, for example (...) The brand image is soon created, and Ford has a brand image that is a bit more American, American muscle, the misconception that a car, a gasoline one, will always be more powerful than an electric car. (...) I also think that, from the outset, it is easier to create a brand with this sustainability value."* – Ricardo, Director of Fagir.

The interviewees believe that Ford may have had the ability to transform itself, moving from an American brand to a brand that produces models like those in the American market, but with environmental concerns.

> *"A brand that appeals to sporty performance cannot take off as easily as, for example, a Ford."* - Ricardo, Director of Fagir.

The B2B client perceive the differences that a manufacturer has compared to the competition, but what makes him buy a vehicle is the vehicle segment, the need that his company has, and which car is the most economical within this need. Therefore, in this case, a construction company must differentiate itself by the quality of the product and materials it uses or differentiate itself by the product's cost-of-sales leadership.

> *"I can perceive, I can differentiate, but when it comes to decision, what makes me choose the brand is the vehicle segment – that is, what need do I have? Within this need, what is the most economical car? Is it spacious? Is it a car whose materials have some quality compared to the proposed price? Does the partner I work with have the car?"* – Jorge, Manager of Inforquestion.

Brands can ensure competitive advantage through focus, as luxury brands target a niche target audience; and differentiation, to the extent that, if there is a clear perception of quality, considering the interviewee, the brand and its offer will be more attractive.

> *"The differences perceived through brand marketing can definitely influence my choice of brand when buying a car. This includes elements such as the brand's reputation, the image it projects (such as luxury, reliability, and innovation), marketing messages, and how they position themselves, relative to the competition. Brands that can*

communicate values that align with my own principles and needs are likely to be more attractive." – Maria, Manager of Filomena Reis Unipessoal.

A brand that adds the use of Green Marketing to its offer guarantees, from the outset, a competitive advantage.

"Without a doubt I would opt for those who use Green Marketing or Responsible Marketing. This use would make me choose the brand in question." – Francisco, General Manager of Companhia Portuguesa.

Concluding, from the perspective of Ford dealers: an automotive brand can secure competitive advantages by adding sustainable value to its product, thereby justifying the price; brands can implement a cost-effective strategy by utilizing recyclable resources. On the other hand, from the perspective of B2B clients: BYD is the only brand capable of distinguishing itself from others in terms of sustainability; Ford may have succeeded in transforming its iconic combustion models into electric ones; brands can differentiate themselves through superior product quality or efficient management of the quality-cost relationship; brands can ensure competitive advantages through focus and differentiation; and a brand that implements genuine green marketing strategies in its offerings can inherently secure competitive advantages.

Ford Dealers perspective	B2B perspective
The brand prioritizes adding significant sustainability value to its products, thereby justifying their pricing strategy.	Build Your Dreams (BYD) is the only brand capable of distinguishing itself from others because its market entry strategy focuses exclusively on a specific customer segment.
By utilizing recyclable resources, companies can implement a cost-efficient strategy.	Ford may have successfully transformed itself from an American brand producing traditional models to one that aligns with environmental concerns while still catering to the American market.
	The decision to purchase a vehicle hinge on factors such as the vehicle segment and the specific needs of the company, as well as which vehicle offers the most cost-effective solution within those parameters. Differentiation can be achieved either through the superior quality of the product and materials used or by leading in cost-effective product offerings.
	Brands can secure competitive advantages through focus and differentiation.
	A brand that incorporates Green Marketing into its offerings ensures a competitive advantage right from the start.

Table 10 – Market Position Perspectives (Ford Dealers and B2B Costumers). Source: own elaboration.

4.2.3. STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

4.2.3.1. DEALERS

Companies can only adjust quickly to market changes if they are vigilant about the market, if they use continuous experience, and if their marketing style establishes relationships with partners adapted to market changes (Day (2011); Day and Moorman (2010); Moorman and Day (2016). In this case, the major change in the market is related to respect for the environment. Within these new social concerns, and due to mandatory legal standards, Ford had to change its strategy quickly. As such, it advocated that, by 2035, it would only produce electric vehicles. Starting with the last point, and as already mentioned, Ford had the ability to share the production of vehicles with another brand, a brand that already has the knowledge. Therefore, as recommended, the establishment of relationships with partners, especially at such a technological time, of difficult monitoring, brought Ford a possibility of competitive advantage in sharing Volkswagen's know-how.

"It partnered with Volkswagen, sharing platforms, trying to be a more competitive and sustainable brand." - Lúcio, General Manager of MCoutinho.

From the point of view of strategic performance, this is always closely linked to the sales capacity of the sales force. On the other hand, the sales force cannot perform its work effectively and efficiently if it does not have, on the other hand, an organized support structure (Brown et al., 1998). The interviews support that the main driver of globalization of sustainability through electric vehicles is the sellers. They are the ones who must absorb all the existing knowledge in this matter: consumption, the type of route the potential customer takes, how an electric vehicle contributes to environmental well-being. These are all characteristics of the sales force or should be. And in addition to being an expert in sustainability, you should also combine the technological component, as all new electric vehicles add a large amount of new generation equipment. This thirst to learn sustainability, this desire to "sell electric" must be implemented by the company. The company must provide its employees with continuous learning tools, so that knowledge is never inferior to market developments. This perfect interconnection can and should generate competitive advantages.

"I believe that the dealers themselves, as larger representatives, especially with the sales force they have, can be more and more agents with the differentiating factor sustainability associated with Ford. So, a lot of what you can do to improve customers perceptions of the level of compliance or the importance that Ford places on sustainability has a lot to do with the role that the sales force of all Ford dealers has in front of them to use it as a key argument." – João, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Grupo NOV Automóveis.

To ensure good strategic performance, a company must possess three important capabilities: brand management, customer relationship management, and new product development. The first capability a company must have concerns the processes used to develop, grow, maintain, and enhance the company's assets (Morgan et al., 2009). As such, based on the interviews conducted, it was possible to verify Ford's strategy in this regard, as it has been taking consistent steps towards a sustainable path.

"Ford has taken steps towards the beginning of the electric path. Having electric cars, being more environmentally friendly. It was a bit behind the competition, but it is now returning to this situation." – André, General Manager of LizDrive.

"(...) it is a sign that Ford is also gaining a brand image where it associates and commits itself to sustainability and that, deep down, it is not only transforming this into a point of pride for the brand itself and the sellers but also a point of pride for the customer user who values this sustainability." – João, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Grupo NOV Automóveis.

These two quotes clearly show what the brand is doing in terms of managing its image. It has ceased to be an "Americanized" brand ("(...) because one of the brand's slogans was 'we are an American brand and we produce American cars", (André), to a brand of sustainable production, environmentally friendly, and with deep environmental concerns. Even if this change may have been made due to market legal requirements, Ford has been making great strides towards an increasingly green future.

Moving on to customer relationship management, and with Ford's sustainable transition, I can say that this was based on two main assumptions: legal changes and customer needs.

Legal changes:

"There is great pressure from the European Union, in terms of legislation, in what is its desire to reduce CO2 emissions." – Miguel, Director of Grupo NOV Automóveis.

Customer needs:

"Customers who have this profile of concern for future generations, their ecological footprint, the ability to make the planet last for more years." – Miguel, Director of Grupo NOV Automóveis.

Whether due to legal imposition or the perception of the new needs of these environmentally concerned customers, Ford has changed its strategy: it started to base its products on sustainability, meeting the needs of these new "green customers".

Regarding new product development, Ford was steps behind its competition, as it only launched one electric product and, for three years, did not launch any more. With increasing competition and all legal changes, Ford had to alter the basis of its activity.

"The Mach-e started to be compared with Tesla and, therefore, (...) there begins to be a significant competitor, which is the Mach-e." – João, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Grupo NOV Automóveis.

Besides the introduction of this product and the launch of the electric Explorer, as well as an extended range of electric commercial vehicles, Ford develop some components of the existing products.

"Sustainable materials in the construction of its cars, for example, using recycled plastics and biological materials for various components of its vehicles. Then, it has some engines, some technologies, such as the Ecoboost engines, which offer the best fuel economy and the lowest CO2 emissions." – João, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Grupo NOV Automóveis.

At this level of new product development, Ford has taken significant steps. It has boosted not only the sale of electric cars through its communication and new productions but also changed its polluting combustion engine production to a more environmentally friendly thermal solution. With the modification of existing products, ensuring the interest of a large portion of its customers, Ford achieved high levels of strategic performance when it created new offers for an already existing target. As such, this type of performance is based on the product and how it has adapted to the sustainable changes in the market.

> *"The adaptation to green technology of iconic products like the Mustang and the Explorer are demonstrative of the strategy adopted."* – Carlos, Managing Partner of GesMo.

4.2.3.2. B2B COSTUMERS

Regarding strategic performance, based on the insights given by the interviewees, the strategic shift of car manufacturers, based on Green Marketing, can ensure competitive advantages.

> *"Of course. At this moment, my hierarchy of priorities is as follows: first the brand, second who will sell me the brand, and third, the Marketing present in the strategy. That is, if there is effective communication of Green Marketing, it will bring me closer to the brand and make me want to know more about it and add it to my range of options for purchase."* – Francisco, General Manager of Companhia Portuguesa.

> *"In this perspective, I try to be smart in the choices I make, and I value very much the commercial relationships I establish with the partner. Many times, I may like a car from one brand more, but if the partner has a similar solution that is economically viable, I prefer to maintain the commercial relationship and buy the recommended car."* – Jorge, Manager of Inforquestion.

In these quotes in addition to sustainable communication, what is also important is how one is received at the time of purchase, how one should have knowledge of the sustainable product, and how this product is sold.

At this point, all interviewees believe that Green Marketing actions should always be supported by concrete actions.

> *"When a brand adopts serious Green Marketing initiatives, such as the development of electric vehicles, the use of recyclable materials, and sustainable production practices, this can positively influence my choice of brand. I consider sustainability important and value companies that demonstrate a real commitment to the*

environment. Therefore, if a car brand invests in green technologies and communicates this transparently and authentically, it can increase its attractiveness to me as a consumer. However, it is essential that these initiatives are supported by concrete actions and are not just a superficial marketing strategy." – Maria, Managing Partner of Filomena Reis Unipessoal.

There may be few brands that have outlined their strategy based on sustainability and environmental concern and not just on legal obligations.

"The strategy of the brands has been a bit at the speed of the regulator's decisions. For me, this is not the definition of strategy." – Ricardo, Director of Fagir.

Concluding, for Ford dealers: Ford secured competitive advantages through knowledge-sharing with Volkswagen; training its sales force can ensure competitive advantages; driven by both legal standards and new sustainable consumer needs, Ford shifted its strategy focus to sustainability; whether through the launch of new electric vehicles or the transition from combustion engines to more sustainable components, Ford adjusted its strategy to gain competitive advantage through sustainability; by altering its products, Ford achieved high levels of strategic performance by creating and offering new products that meet sustainable consumer needs. On the other hand, from the B2B perspective: strategic shifts based on Green Marketing can secure competitive advantages for brands; besides clear and transparent communication, it is crucial that customers perceive the sustainable characteristics of the product, highlighting the importance of the sales force; Green Marketing strategies must always be supported by tangible actions; few brands embarked on this sustainable path through strategic overhaul, with most starting due to new regulations.

Ford Dealers perspective	B2B perspective
Ford gained a competitive advantage through sharing Volkswagen's know-how.	The strategic shift of car manufacturers towards green marketing can indeed secure competitive advantages.
The company should equip its employees with continuous learning tools. This seamless integration can and should lead to competitive advantages for the company.	In addition to sustainable communication, it is crucial how customers perceive the sustainable product at the point of purchase, their understanding of its sustainability features, and the effectiveness of the sales process for such products.
Ford has made significant strides toward a greener future.	Green Marketing initiatives should always be backed by tangible actions.
Whether driven by legal requirements or the evolving preferences of environmentally conscious consumers, Ford has shifted its strategy to focus on sustainability.	There are likely only a few brands that have developed their strategy around sustainability and environmental concerns rather than solely complying with legal obligations.
Faced with intensifying competition and evolving regulatory landscapes, Ford had to fundamentally rethink its business strategy.	
In addition to introducing new products such as the electric Explorer and expanding its range of electric commercial vehicles, Ford has also developed components for its existing products.	
By modifying existing products to cater to a large portion of its customer base, Ford has achieved significant strategic performance. This success stems from its ability to create new offerings that align with sustainable changes in the market.	

Table 11 – Strategic Performance Perspectives. (Ford Dealers and B2B Costumers). Source: own elaboration.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the interviews conducted, most manufacturers, particularly Ford (which was the focus of the study), have made product changes. They transitioned from combustion products to fully electric and environmentally friendly products. These new electric products bring new sustainability components, whether using recyclable materials or materials of non-animal origin. Mechanically, since Ford still produces combustion cars, they developed an engine, the Ecoboost, which not only saves fuel consumption but also reduces CO2 emissions transmitted to the atmosphere. Continuing with this trend in marketing strategies, Ford has also presented responsible mobility solutions, such as car-sharing services and urban transport solutions, to reduce the impact generated by the circulating fleet. Other brands, like Volvo, have also stopped using animal-origin leather, opting for synthetic leather, recyclable plastics, and even denim. Additionally, all Volvo dealerships are required to report their ecological footprint, that is, their fossil fuel consumption, the portion of this consumption from renewable sources, the type of energy powering the service vehicles of the sales force, and water consumption. It was also observed that all the marketing strategies might not have originally stemmed from creativity and environmental respect. Except for some brands like Tesla or BYD, which "were born" electric, many others changed their strategy due to legal imposition.

In terms of resources, Ford added value and rarity to its offerings by introducing American electrified vehicles to the European market. By forming partnerships with other manufacturers, they also added value to their product by acquiring new know-how. The brand may have secured a competitive advantage after consolidating in the global markets when it announced its green strategy and then, with that profitability, self-financed and invested in product construction. From a business customer perspective, it was noted that more manufacturers might secure competitive advantages through differentiation, as hydrogen or new low ecological footprint technologies might enter the market faster than expected. It was also generally opined that competitive advantages are secured through quality, sustainability, and attractive design. If the communication is transparent and based on genuinely sustainable products, a manufacturer might have a competitive advantage over others. It was also observed from the dealer’s perspective that Ford's differentiation strategy is not based on price but rather on its justification. That is, by adding sustainable value to the product, the selling price becomes more justifiable and fairer. In this same strategy, Ford and any other manufacturer might secure competitive advantages through cost efficiency in constructing electric vehicles with more environmentally friendly materials, enabling lower production costs. From a B2B perspective regarding market position, it was noted that some manufacturers use the focus strategy, being "born" electric and already targeting a specific type of customer: those who prioritize sustainability above all. Conversely, manufacturers differentiate themselves by the quality of their products and materials, and luxury, reliability, and innovation can be tools for ensuring competitive advantages. Green marketing as a strategic tool initially guarantees competitive advantages. In terms of strategic performance, based on interviews with dealers, win-win relationships (such as the partnership between Ford and Volkswagen) with other manufacturers can be successful strategies in a constantly changing market. The tools provided by dealers or the brand itself to the sales force should be part of the strategy as they can guarantee competitive advantages by adding greater knowledge to a greater willingness to sell sustainably. Although Ford was steps behind the competition by only having one electric vehicle, it has now moved forward, and with the adaptation and introduction of new electrified products, it may have ensured higher levels of strategic performance. From a B2B perspective, Green Marketing can bring higher levels of strategic performance; the relationship created with partners and customers enhances the creation of competitive advantage; Green Marketing must be supported by concrete actions. Finally, it can be noted that this sustainable strategy is not, for everyone, something created out of genuine respect for the environment.

For the managers of the companies surveyed, manufacturers are ensuring competitive advantages primarily through differentiation. And differentiation through the green product, 100% electric, with recyclable materials and respect for the environment. Additionally, the potential future competitive advantage resulting from the creation of a hydrogen-powered car was discussed. Secondly, competitive advantage through quality, sustainability, and attractive design was also perceived by the respondents. Not only perceived but "demanded" in terms of brand choice. Thirdly, transparent communication based on concrete sustainability actions was perceived and demanded by respondents to enhance competitive advantages. Lastly, the quality of the products used, luxury, reliability, and innovation were also perceived as competitive advantages.

In conclusion, synthesizing the interviews conducted above allows me to suggest to automakers, especially Ford, the integration of three fundamental elements: sustainability, design, and customer relationships. It is evident that we are living in an increasingly technological world with growing socio-environmental concerns. Therefore, if brands align the continuous evolution of the market with the willingness to provide training tools to their sales force, these sales force will have greater knowledge and motivation to "sell electric." This will not only elevate the company's strategic performance but also lead to higher financial performance levels. Moreover, if Ford can achieve its proclaimed goal of 100% electrification by 2035, I believe it will become a niche brand, catering to a specific segment of customers, thus securing competitive advantages. Finally, given that environmental concerns are more prevalent among Generation Z, who are not only concerned about the environment but also about the social implications of purchasing a material good, I advise Ford to maintain and expand the sophisticated design of the Mach-e to other automobile models it markets.

Based on these conclusions, I can identify some contributions to management that arise from it:

- It is proven that B2B clients recognize the adoption of green marketing as a competitive advantage to be valued;
- There is a gap between the reality in product manufacturing (e.g., using sustainable materials) and the complete perception of B2B clients regarding sustainability efforts. Therefore, it is very important to train dealers to be true missionaries of the added value provided by the brand's sustainability;
- Training the sales force is essential for understanding the distinctive factors related to Green Marketing, so they can convey this to customers during the sales process. Otherwise, this perception of added value through Green Marketing will never reach customers, as seems to be the case with Ford;
- Even if there are other competitive advantages, environmental and social responsibility must add to these competitive advantages, as they are mandatory requirements for new generations of automotive consumers, whether B2B or B2C (Business to Consumer);
- Besides the sustainability factor, I suggest that manufacturers, particularly Ford, pay attention to the relationship created with their customers, as well as the design of these new sustainable products. If the products are attractive, green, and the sales force is empathetic/relational, a real differentiating factor will clearly emerge;
- Compared to brands that were "born electric," other brands should accompany electrification with a stronger focus on communicating the sustainability of their products, as customers see them as traditional and less sustainable brands.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

After identifying the concept of Green Marketing, competitive advantages, and developing the necessary concepts for conducting the research model (resources, market position, and strategic performance), nine interviews were conducted.

After conducting these, it was possible to conclude that, from the perspective of Ford representatives, in terms of resources, the brand added value to its products through strategic partnerships; it may have secured a competitive advantage through its own financing to subsequently invest in the development of its sustainable products and the electrification of its iconic American products. On the other hand, from a market position perspective, and also for Ford representatives, the brand prioritizes adding sustainable value to its products to justify its pricing strategy. For them, the use of recyclable resources could enable the company to implement an efficient cost strategy. Finally, in terms of strategic performance, Ford representatives believe the company may have secured a competitive advantage when it implemented a knowledge-sharing strategy with Volkswagen. If continuous training is part of the strategy, the company could secure future competitive advantages. Whether due to legal requirements or evolving consumer needs, Ford has shifted its strategy to focus on sustainability. Increasing competition has led the brand to rethink its strategy. The strategy of converting iconic combustion products to electric ones and changing the engines could ensure competitive advantage and high levels of strategic performance.

On the other hand, from the perspective of B2B clients, in terms of resources, any sustainability-based initiative, such as new methods of car production, can guarantee competitive advantages. Green products can ensure the company has a more efficient quality-price ratio. Ford should expand its green product portfolio to be perceived as a truly sustainable brand. From a market position perspective, also from the B2B perspective, BYD is the only brand capable of distinguishing itself from others as its market entry was always based on a specific customer segment. Ford may have succeeded in its transformation regarding the adaptation of iconic products, as it maintained the "American" market and secured entry into a new one. The decision to purchase a vehicle, i.e., the differentiating factors are the vehicle segment, the company's needs, whether the vehicle offers the best quality-price ratio; and differentiation can be achieved through superior product quality and materials used or cost-benefit leadership. Car brands can ensure competitive advantages through differentiation or focus, and a brand that incorporates Green Marketing into its offering have, at the outset, a competitive advantage. Finally, in terms of strategic performance, business customers believe that a strategic shift considering Green Marketing can guarantee competitive advantages. For them, it is important to perceive the product as sustainable, understand its sustainability characteristics, and the effectiveness of the sales process for these products. They also believe that Green Marketing actions should always be supported by tangible actions, and finally, they believe that few brands have developed their strategy based on the evolving concern for the environment, as they believe this was done only due to legal imposition.

6.2. LIMITATIONS

Although I gained valuable insights from conducting this study, several limitations emerged. These were the limitations found:

- Lack of Ford representatives involvement;
- The inability to conduct all interviews in person;

On the other hand, and also through the limitations mentioned above, it was possible to leave some suggestions:

- To make the study more comprehensive, it would have been beneficial to include responses from individuals with responsibilities at Ford. This would provide a clearer understanding of what is being done in terms of Green Marketing and how the company aims to distinguish itself from other brands;
- If all interviews had been conducted face-to-face, without any responses via text, the content would likely have been more engaging and detailed;
- The study did not use a quantitative model to examine the relationship between sustainability and the achievement of objective competitive advantages for the B2B segment. Incorporating such a model could provide more concrete data and insights.

These limitations should be considered in future research to enhance the understanding and scope of Green Marketing strategies and their impact on competitive advantages.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Alessio, R. (2004). Responsabilidade social das empresas no Brasil: reprodução de postura ou novos rumos? Porto Alegre: EDUPUCRS.

Anderson, E. and Weitz, B. (1992). "The use of pledges to build and sustain commitment in distribution channels", Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XXIX, February, pp. 18-34.

Anderson, J. C., & Narus, J. A. (1990). A model of distributor firm and manufacturer firm working partnerships. Journal of Marketing, 54(1), 42–58.

Anderson, J.C. (1995). "Relationships in business markets: exchange episodes, value creation, and their empirical assessment", Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 23, pp. 346-50.

Anderson, J.C. and Narus, J.A. (1984). "A model of the distributor's perspective of distributor-manufacturer working relationships", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 48, pp. 62-74.

Anderson, J.C. and Narus, J.A. (1990). "A model of distributor firm and manufacturer firm working partnerships", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 42-58.

Andriopoulos, C., & Gotsi, M. (2000). Benchmarking brand management in the creative industry. Benchmarking: An International Journal, 7(5), 360–372.

Bain, J. S. (1956). Barriers to new competition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bain, J. S. (1968). Industrial organization (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Barney, J. B., & Clark, D. N. (2007). Resource-based theory: Creating and sustaining competitive advantage. New York: Oxford University Press.

Barney, J. B., & Hesterly, W. S. (2012). Strategic management and competitive advantage (4th ed.). Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah.

Barney, J. B., & Ouchi, W. B. (1986). Organizational economics. San Francisco, CA: JosseyBass, Inc.

Bernard, H. R. (2011). Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (5th ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Besanko, D., Dranove., D. & Shanley, M. (2013). Economics of Strategy, New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Bordes, J. (2009). Building and Sustaining Competitive Advantage, Hawai: Atlantic International University Honolulu.

Boulding, W., Staelin, R., Ehret, M., & Johnston, W. J. (2005). A customer relationship roadmap: What is known, potential pitfalls, and where to go. Journal of Marketing, 69(4), 155–166.

Brown, S. P., Cron, W. L., & Slocum, J. W. (1998). Effects of trait competitiveness and perceived intraorganizational competition on salesperson goal setting and performance. Journal of Marketing, 62(4), 88–98.

Buzzell, R. D., Gale, B. T., & Sultan, R. G. M. (1975). Market share – A key to profitability. Harvard Business Review, 53, 97–106 (Jan–Feb).

Challagalla, G. N., & Shervani, T. A. (1996). Dimensions and types of supervisory control: Effects on salesperson performance and satisfaction. Journal of Marketing, 60(1), 89–105.

Charter, M. (2003). Green marketing. In Baker, M. (Ed.). The marketing book. Gran Britannia: Ed. Butter Wealth.
Chumpitaz, R. and Paparoidamis, N.G. (2004). “Service quality and marketing performance in business-to-business markets: exploring the mediating role of client satisfaction”, Managing Service Quality, Vol. 14 Nos 2/3, pp. 235-48.
Churchill Jr, G.A.; Peter, P. (2000). Marketing: criando valor para os clientes. São Paulo, Saraiva.
Conceição, J. P. C. (2012). A Utilização do Marketing Interno na construção de uma cultura empresarial comum: o caso Grupo Lena.
Conner, K. R. (1991). A historical comparison of resource-based theory and five schools of thought within industrial organization economics: do we have a new theory of the firm?. *Journal of management*, *17*(1), 121-154.
Dalmoro, M., Venturini, J. C., & Pereira, B. A. D. (2009). Marketing verde: responsabilidade social e ambiental integradas na envolvente de marketing. *RBGN: Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios*, *11*(30), 38-52.
Darmawan, D. (2005). Top of Mind Brand Vs Bottom of Mind Brand, Journal Media Komunikasi Ekonomi dan Manajemen, 3(3), 51–57.
Darmawan, D. (2009a). Pengantar Bisnis, Jakarta: Spektrum Nusa Press.
Darmawan, D. (2014). Perilaku Konsumen. 1st edn, Surabaya: Metromedia.
Darmawan, D., & Grenier, E. (2021). Competitive advantage and service marketing mix. *Journal of Social Science Studies (JOS3)*, *1*(2), 75-80.
David, F. R. (2011). Strategic Management Concept and Cases, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
Dawar, N., & Parker, P. (1994). Marketing universals: Consumers’ use of brand name, price, physical appearance, and retailer reputation as signals of product quality. Journal of Marketing, 58(2), 81–95.
Day, G. S. (2011). Closing the marketing capabilities gap. Journal of Marketing, 75(4),183–195.
Day, G. S., & Moorman, C. (2010). Strategy from the outside in: Profiting from customer value. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
Dean, T. J., Fowler, D. M., & Miller, A. (1995). Organizational adaptations for ecological sustainability: A resource-based examination of the competitive advantage hypothesis. Working paper, Department of Management, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (TN).
Dickson, P. R., & Ginter, J. L. (1987). Market segmentation, product differentiation, and marketing strategy. Journal of Marketing, 51 (2), 1–10.
Dutta, S., Zbaracki, M. J., & Bergen, M. (2003). Pricing process as a capability: A resource-based perspective. Strategic Management Journal, 24(7), 615–630.
Fierman, J. (1991). The big muddle in green marketing. Fortune, 123, 91–101.
Flint, D.J., Woodruff, R.B. and Gardial, S.F. (2002). “Exploring the phenomenon of customers’ desired value change in a business-to-business context”, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 66, pp. 102-17.
Ford Motor Company (2022). Sustentabilidade. Ford Portugal. https://www.ford.pt/experiencia-ford/sustentabilidade.

Frankel, C. (1992). Blueprint for green marketing. American Demography, 14, 34–38.
Ganesan, S. (1994). “Determinants of long-term orientation in buyer-seller relationships”, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 1-19.
Gil-Saura, I., Frasquet-Deltoro, M., & Cervera-Taulet, A. (2009). The value of B2B relationships. Industrial Management & Data Systems, 109(5), 593-609.
Grbich, C. (2007). Qualitative data analysis: An introduction. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Greenley, G., & Oktemgil, M. (1997). An investigation of modulator effects on alignment skills. Journal of Business Research, 39(2), 93–105.
Griffin, A., & Page, A. L. (1996). PDMA success measurement project: Recommended measures for product development success and failure. Journal of Product Innovation Management, 13, 478–496.
Heskett, J.L. (2002). “Beyond customer loyalty”, Managing Service Quality, Vol. 12 No. 6, pp. 355-7.
Hunt, H.K. (1977). “CS/D overview and future research directions”, in Hunt, H.K. (Ed.), Conceptualization and Measurement of Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction, Marketing Science Institute, Cambridge, MA, pp. 455-88.
Hunt, S. D. (2000). A general theory of competition: Resources, competences, productivity, economic growth. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
Hunt, S. D., & Madhavaram, S. (2020). Adaptive marketing capabilities, dynamic capabilities, and renewal competences: The “outside vs. inside” and “static vs. dynamic” controversies in strategy. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *89*, 129-139.
Hunt, S. D., & Morgan, R. M. (1995). The comparative advantage theory of competition. Journal of Marketing, 59(April), 1–15.
Hunt, S. D., & Morgan, R. M. (1996). The resource-advantage theory of competition: Dynamics, path dependencies, and evolutionary dimensions. Journal of Marketing, 60(Oct.), 107–114.
Hunt, S. D., & Morgan, R. M. (1997). Resource-advantage theory: A snake swallowing its tail or a general theory of competition? Journal of Marketing, 61(3), 74–82.
Hunt, S., & Morgan, R. M. (1995). The comparative advantage theory of competition. Journal of Marketing, 59(2), 1–15.
J.C. Lewis Ford. (2023). Ford's green initiative: Sustainable and eco-friendly options. https://www.jclewisford.net/blog/ford's-green-initiative%3A-sustainable-and-eco-friendly-options.
Jacobson, R. (1988). Distinguishing among competing theories of the market share effect. Journal of Marketing, 52(Oct.), 68–80.
Jacobson, R., & Aaker, D. A. (1985). Is market share all that it's cracked up to be? Journal of Marketing, 49(Fall), 11–22.
K. Peattie, A. Crane. (2005). Green marketing: legend, myth, farce or prophecy?, Qualitative Market Research, An International Journal, 8(4), p. 357-370.
Karna, J; Hansen, E.; Juslin, H. (2003). Social responsibility in environmental marketing planning. European Journal of Marketing, Bradford, v. 37, n. 5/6.
Kolk, A. (2000). Green reporting. Harvard Business Review, 78(1), 15–16.

Kotler, P. (1995). Administração de Marketing: análise, planeamento, implementação e controlo. 4 ed. São Paulo: Atlas.
L. Simons, A. Slob, H. Holswilder, A. Tukker. (2006). The Fourth Generation. New Strategies Call for New Eco-Indicators, Environmental Quality Management, 11, p. 51-61.
M. Charter, M. Polonsky. (1999). Greener Marketing: a Global Perspective on Greening Marketing Practice, 2nd edition, Greenleaf, Sheffield.
Madhavan, R., & Grover, R. (1998). From embedded to embodied knowledge: New product development as knowledge management. Journal of Marketing, 62(4), 1–12.
Mariadoss, B. J., Tansuhaj, P. S., & Mouri, N. (2011). Marketing capabilities and innovation-based strategies for environmental sustainability: An exploratory investigation of B2B firms. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *40*(8), 1305-1318.
Miles, M. P., Covin, J. G. (2000). Environmental marketing: a source of reputational, competitive and financial advantage. Journal of Business Ethics, Dordrecht, v. 23, n. 3, p. 299-311.
Moorman, C. (1995). Organizational market information processes: Cultural antecedents and new product outcomes. Journal of Marketing Research, 32(3), 318–332.
Moorman, C., & Day, G. S. (2016). Organizing for marketing excellence. Journal of Marketing, 80(6), 6-35.
Moorman, C., & Miner, A. S. (1997). The impact of organizational memory on new product performance and creativity. Journal of Marketing Research, 34(1), 91–106.
Morgan, N. A. (2012). Marketing and business performance. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, *40*, 102-119.
Morgan, N. A., & Slotegraaf, R. J. (2011). Marketing capabilities for B2B firms. In G. L. Lillien & R. Grewal (Eds.), The B2B marketing handbook. Northampton: Edward Elgar.
Morgan, N. A., Clark, B. H., & Gooner, R. A. (2002). Marketing productivity, marketing audits, and systems for marketing performance assessment: integrating multiple perspectives. Journal of Business Research, 55(5), 363–375.
Morgan, N. A., Vorhies, D. W., & Mason, C. H. (2009). Market orientation, marketing capabilities, and firm performance. Strategic Management Journal, 30(8), 909–920.
Morgan, R.M. and Hunt, S.D. (1994). "The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 58 No. 3, pp. 20-38.
Ottman, J. A. (1994). Marketing verde. São Paulo: Makron Books.
P. Kotler, K. Keller. (2006). Marketing Management, 12th edition, Pearson/Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
Palmatier, R.W., Dant, R.P. and Grewal, D. (2007). "A comparative longitudinal analysis of theoretical perspectives of interorganizational relationship performance", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 71 No. 4, pp. 172-94.
Peattie, K. (1995). Environmental marketing management: meeting the green challenge. London: Pitman.
Penrose, E. T. (2009). *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*. Oxford university press.

Perkins, Miller Kathleen, & Brewer, Bill (2010). Sustainability in the B2B world. www. triplepundit.com/2010/08/sustainability-in-the-b2b-world, retrieved on September 13, 2011.
Poddar, R. & Gadhawe, S. (2007). Competitive Advantage: An introduction, Icfai University Press.
Polonsky, M. J. (1994). An introduction to green marketing. Electronic Green Journal, Los Angeles, v. 1, n.2.
Porter, M. E. (1980). Competitive advantage. New York: The Free Press.
Porter, M. E. (1985). Competitive strategy. New York: The Free Press.
Porter, M. E., & van der Linde, C. (1995). Green and competitive. Harvard Business Review, 73, 120–134.
Prakash. (2002). Green marketing, public policy and managerial strategies, Business Strategy and the Environment, 11(5), p. 285-297.
Purmonen, A., Jaakkola, E., & Terho, H. (2023). B2B customer journeys: Conceptualization and an integrative framework. *Industrial marketing management*, *113*, 74-87.
Ramaswami, S. N., Srivastava, R. K., & Bhargava, M. (2009). Market-based capabilities and financial performance of firms: Insights into marketing's contribution to firm value. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 37(2), 97–116.
Reinartz, W., Krafft, M., & Hoyer, W. D. (2004). The CRM process: Its measurement and impact on performance. Journal of Marketing Research, 41(3), 293–305.
Roquebert, J. A., Phillips, R. L., & Westfall, P. A. (1996). Markets versus management: What 'drives' profitability? Strategic Management Journal, 653–664.
Rumelt, R. P. (1991). How much does industry matter? Strategic Management Journal, 12,167–185.
Saldaña, J. (2021). The coding manual for qualitative researchers.
Saunders, T., McGovern, L. (1997). The bottom line of green is black. 10th ed. New York: Harper Collins.
Schneider, A. B., Carneiro, M. L., Serra, F. A. R., & Ferreira, M. P. (2009). Estratégia competitiva: Michael Porter 30 anos depois. *Revista de Administração da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria*, *2*(2), 298-326.
Shapiro, B. P., Slywotzky, A., & Doyle, S. X. (1997). Strategic sales management: A boardroom issue. Strategy and Business, 8, 29–36.
Simão, L., & Lisboa, A. (2017). Green marketing and green brand–The Toyota Case. *Procedia manufacturing*, *12*, 183-194.
Slater, S. F., & Narver, J. C. (1995). Market orientation and the learning organization. Journal of Marketing, 59(3), 63–74.
Srivastava, R., Shervani, T. A., & Fahey, L. (1999). Marketing, business processes, and shareholder value: An organizationally embedded view of marketing activities and the discipline of marketing. Journal of Marketing, 63(SI), 168–179.
Teece, D. J. (2014). The foundations of enterprise performance: Dynamic and ordinary capabilities in an (economic) theory of firms. Academy of Management Perspectives, 28(4), 328–352.

Turnbull, P. W., & Leek, S. (2003). Business-to-business marketing: Organizational buying behavior, relationships and networks. In M. J. Barker (Ed.), The marketing book (pp. 142–169). Oxford, England: Butterworth-Heinemann.
Vorhies, D. W., & Morgan, N. A. (2005). Benchmarking marketing capabilities for sustained competitive advantage. Journal of Marketing, 69(1), 80–94.
Vorhies, D. W., Harker, M., & Rao, C. P. (1999). The capabilities and performance advantages of market-driven firms. European Journal of Marketing, 33(11/12), 1171–1202.
Vorhies, D. W., Morgan, R. E., & Autry, C. W. (2009). Product-market strategy and the marketing capabilities of the firm: Impact on market effectiveness and cash flow performance. Strategic Management Journal, 30(12), 1310–1334.
Walter, A., Ritter, T. and Gemu¨nden, H.G. (2001). “Value creation in buyer-seller relationships”, Industrial Marketing Management, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 365-77.
Weitz, B. A., & Jap, S. (1995). Relationship marketing and distribution channels. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 23(4), 305–20.
Wilson, D.T. (1995). “An integrated model of buyer-seller relationships”, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 6-19.
Woodruff, R.B. (1997). “Customer value: the next source for competitive advantage”, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 139-53.
World Business Council for Sustainable Development – WBCSD (2000). Building a better future: innovation, technology and sustainable development. Paris.
World Comission Environment and Development – WCED (1987). Our common future. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Yin, R. K. (1984). Case study research, design and methods. London: Sage Publications.

ANNEXES

Entrevista a André, Diretor Geral da LizDrive

Boa tarde, André. A primeira pergunta que temos aqui é a sua idade?
Qual o seu cargo na LizDrive?
E há quanto tempo?
Como sente o mercado em relação à ótica da sustentabilidade? Quer na parte comercial, quer na parte do pós-venda.
Acha que um produto sustentável deve ter um custo de aquisição superior?
Pensando como cliente, se fosse comprar um carro hoje, tinha a sustentabilidade no seu pensamento?
No que diz respeito à Ford, acha que a sustentabilidade dos produtos ou serviços está a ser bem comunicada e que faz com que agregue valor à oferta, ou acha que não está a ser tão bem comunicada?
O que acha que eles estão a fazer para utilizar ferramentas de gestão sustentável?
No que diz respeito à comunicação dos produtos sustentáveis e à utilização do green marketing pela Ford, acha que esta comunicação está a tornar os produtos atrativos? Isto é, se fosse cliente, teria vontade de comprar um produto Ford por ser sustentável?
E consegue-me dizer as diferenças que a Ford tem face à concorrência neste ponto?
Então acredita que em termos de performance estratégica da Ford, se a marca aliar o Green Marketing à estratégia, vai ter melhores resultados?
Sente que as ações de Green Marketing têm capacidade de gerar maior performance financeira?

Entrevista a Miguel, Administrador do Grupo NOV Automóveis

Boa tarde, Miguel.
Qual a sua idade?
Qual é o seu cargo na instituição Grupo Nov Automóveis?
Há quanto tempo exerce a sua atividade aqui nesta empresa?
Queria lhe perguntar como é que sente o mercado automóvel em relação à ótica da sustentabilidade?
Se estivesse na pele do cliente, na decisão de compra, a sustentabilidade para si seria um fator importante?
Acredita que um produto sustentável deve ter um custo de aquisição superior?
A perceção de valor sustentável está ajustada face ao produto ou ao serviço, neste caso, no ramo automóvel?
Acha que o Green Marketing está a ser colocado em prática pela Ford? Por exemplo, quando pensa na Ford, já pensa em produtos sustentáveis?

E acredita que quando essa comunicação começar a ser colocada em prática, a potência e a aquisição de um produto Ford irá aumentar por parte dos consumidores?
Nas marcas que o Grupo NOV Automóveis representa, acha que a Ford ainda está a passos atrás da concorrência no que diz respeito à sustentabilidade? Que vantagem competitiva consegue atribuir à Ford?
Neste caso, acha que o Green Marketing articulado com a gestão estratégica está bem presente na Ford, mesmo que ainda não esteja a ser colocada em prática este tema da sustentabilidade? Não.
Acredita que a Ford está a delinear os seus objetivos, o seu plano de ação tendo em conta a sustentabilidade e o Green Marketing?
Sente que as ações de Green Marketing geram maior performance financeira?

Entrevista a João, Presidente do Conselho de Administração do Grupo NOV Automóveis

Boa tarde. Qual a sua idade?
Qual o seu cargo no Grupo NOV Automóveis?
Como sente o mercado em relação à ótica da sustentabilidade?
A decisão de compra dos clientes tem a sustentabilidade como pedra basilar?
O produto sustentável pode ter um custo, um preço de venda maior?
A sustentabilidade dos produtos Ford, quer na parte comercial quer na pós-venda, é bem comunicada e permite a perceção do valor acrescentado?
Como é que perceciona a sustentabilidade comunicada pela Ford?
Sente que as construtoras estão a utilizar a sustentabilidade como forma de gestão?
A comunicação de produtos sustentáveis da Ford, fazem-no adquirir ou ter apetência a aquisição de um produto Ford?
Que diferenças, na base da sustentabilidade, a Ford tem face à concorrência?
Estrategicamente falando, de que forma perceciona a alteração e performance estratégica da Ford através do Green Marketing?

Entrevista a Lúcio, Diretor Geral da MCoutinho

Boa tarde, Lúcio,
Que idade tem?
Qual o seu cargo na empresa MCoutinho?
Há quanto tempo exerce a sua atividade neste setor?
Como é que sente o mercado em relação à ótica da sustentabilidade?
De que forma as "construtoras" estão a alterar a sua forma de gestão para colocar a sustentabilidade como base da sua atividade?
Sente que a sustentabilidade no setor automóvel é bem comunicada?
O que é feito, atualmente, pela FORD, em termos de green marketing?

Como é que acha que a FORD tem procurado garantir vantagens competitivas por meio dos recursos (humanos, técnicos ou financeiros), nos últimos anos, utilizando o green marketing?
Como é que acha que a FORD tem procurado garantir vantagens competitivas por meio da posição de mercado (diferenças face à concorrência), nos últimos anos, utilizando o green marketing?
Como é que acha que a FORD tem procurado garantir vantagens competitivas por meio da performance estratégica, nos últimos anos, utilizando o green marketing?

Entrevista a Carlos, Sócio-Gerente da GesMo

Boa tarde, Carlos,
Qual o seu cargo na empresa GesMo?
Há quanto tempo exerce a sua atividade neste setor?
Como é que sente o mercado em relação à ótica da sustentabilidade?
De que forma as "construtoras" estão a alterar a sua forma de gestão para colocar a sustentabilidade como base da sua atividade?
Sente que a sustentabilidade no setor automóvel é bem comunicada?
O que é feito, atualmente, pela FORD, em termos de green marketing?
Como é que acha que a FORD tem procurado garantir vantagens competitivas por meio dos recursos (humanos, técnicos ou financeiros), nos últimos anos, utilizando o green marketing?
Como é que acha que a FORD tem procurado garantir vantagens competitivas por meio da posição de mercado (diferenças face à concorrência), nos últimos anos, utilizando o green marketing?
Como é que acha que a FORD tem procurado garantir vantagens competitivas por meio da performance estratégica, nos últimos anos, utilizando o green marketing?

Entrevista a Ricardo, Administrador da Fagir.

Qual o seu cargo na empresa Fagir?
Há quanto tempo é que exerce a sua atividade nessa empresa?
Sente que as construtoras podem estar a utilizar a sustentabilidade como forma de gestão?
Sobre os produtos sustentáveis, nomeadamente viaturas elétricas ou viaturas híbridas, acha justificável estes produtos serem mais caros?
De que forma perceciona o Green Marketing transmitido pelas marcas automóveis?
A produção de carros elétricos e consequentemente a sua venda, aumentará a performance financeira das empresas construtoras?
Mas acredita que a conceção destes produtos, tendo em conta o Green Marketing, ou seja, produtos elétricos com reduzidas emissões de carbono, podem fazer com que exista uma maior apetência à aquisição de um automóvel?
Acha que existe alguma marca no mercado cuja oferta sustentável se consiga diferenciar das outras?

Do ponto de vista estratégico, consegue visualizar a alteração estratégica das marcas com base na sustentabilidade, quando delineiam o seu plano de ação?

Entrevista a Francisco, Diretor Geral da Companhia Portuguesa

Boa tarde, qual o seu nome, que cargo exerce e há quanto tempo na Companhia Portuguesa?
Como é que perceciona a sustentabilidade comunicada pelas marcas automóveis?
De que forma acha justificável um produto verde ser mais caro?
De que forma acha que este produto aumentará a performance financeira das construtoras?
Sente que as construtoras estão a utilizar a sustentabilidade como forma de gestão?
Em que medida perceciona o Green Marketing transmitido pela Ford e por outras marcas?
Os recursos, isto é, os produtos (tendo por base o green marketing) fazem-no adquirir ou ter mais apetência à aquisição de um produto automóvel?
As diferenças que uma construtora tem (tendo por base o green marketing) face à concorrência são percecionadas por si e fazem-no escolher a marca?
Estrategicamente falando, de que forma perceciona a alteração estratégica das construtoras através do green marketing? Isso fá-lo escolher a marca?

Entrevista a Jorge, Gerente da Inforquestion

Boa tarde. Que idade tem?
Qual o seu cargo na empresa Inforquestion?
Há quanto tempo exerce a sua atividade neste setor?
Como é que perceciona a sustentabilidade comunicada pelas marcas automóveis?
Acha justificável um produto verde ser mais caro? Porquê?
Acredita que esse produto aumentará a performance financeira das construtoras? Porquê?
Sente que as "construtoras" estão a utilizar a sustentabilidade como forma de gestão? Desenvolva...
Em que medida perceciona o green marketing transmitido pela FORD/por outras marcas?
Os recursos, isto é, os produtos, (tendo por base o green marketing) fazem-no adquirir ou ter mais apetência à aquisição de um produto automóvel?
As diferenças que uma construtora tem (tendo por base o green marketing) face à concorrência são percecionadas por si e fazem-no escolher a marca?
Estrategicamente falando, de que forma perceciona a alteração estratégica das construtoras através do green marketing? Isso fá-lo escolher a marca?

Entrevista a Maria, Sócia-Gerente na Filomena Reis Unipessoal

Boa tarde, que idade tem?
Qual o seu cargo na empresa Filomena Reis Unipessoal?
Há quanto tempo exerce a sua atividade neste setor?

Como é que perceciona a sustentabilidade comunicada pelas marcas automóveis?
Acha justificável um produto verde ser mais caro? Porquê?
Acredita que esse produto aumentará a performance financeira das construtoras? Porquê?
Sente que as “construtoras” estão a utilizar a sustentabilidade como forma de gestão? Desenvolva...
Em que medida perceciona o green marketing transmitido pela FORD/por outras marcas?
Os recursos, isto é, os produtos, (tendo por base o green marketing) fazem-no adquirir ou ter mais apetência à aquisição de um produto automóvel?
As diferenças que uma construtora tem (tendo por base o green marketing) face à concorrência são percecionadas por si e fazem-no escolher a marca?
Estrategicamente falando, de que forma perceciona a alteração estratégica das construtoras através do green marketing? Isso fá-lo escolher a marca?

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação

Universidade Nova de Lisboa