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THE ROLE AND PROSPECTS OF MARKETING ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In today's world, the global community has begun to prioritize the concept of sustainable development, which encompasses not only economic growth but also social equity and environmental protection. The “2030 Sustainable Development Goals” adopted by the United Nations in 2015 outline the main framework for global action in this direction. These goals have increased the responsibilities not only of states and international organizations but also of the private sector, particularly institutions operating in the field of marketing.

Marketing is not merely about promoting products and services; it is also a powerful tool for creating value for society and promoting responsible consumption models. As consumer demands and behaviors change, businesses must adapt their marketing strategies accordingly, taking into account ecological and social dimensions. In this context, developing and implementing marketing strategies aligned with sustainable development contributes to the long-term success of businesses as well as to the well-being of society.

Today, sustainable economic development is not measured solely by economic indicators. The concept of sustainable development is a globally significant approach that integrates economic, social, and environmental aspects. It is a model aimed at meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In realizing this concept, both governments and the private sector bear significant responsibility. In particular, the marketing field plays a vital role in this process.

Modern marketing goes beyond introducing products and services to the market and organizing their sale. It now encompasses building reliable and value-based relationships with consumers, enhancing social responsibility, addressing environmental concerns, and contributing positively to society. Within the framework of sustainable development, a new approach known as “sustainable marketing” or “green marketing” has emerged. This approach emphasizes not only the quality and price of a product but also its environmental impact, its alignment with social justice, and adherence to ethical principles during production and sales.

The primary goal of sustainable marketing is to attract consumers not only to the product but also to the values behind it. Nowadays, a growing number of consumers pay attention to whether a product is environmentally friendly, recyclable, and produced under fair labor conditions. These evolving consumer behaviors require companies to make significant changes to their marketing strategies. Marketing communications should no longer be solely sales-oriented; they must also educate, promote social responsibility, and encourage sustainable behaviors.

Some leading companies have achieved remarkable success in implementing sustainable marketing. For example, Unilever not only uses recyclable packaging in its products but also communicates this responsibility to consumers through marketing. Similarly, the clothing brand Patagonia encourages people to buy fewer products through its campaigns, aiming to influence

shopping habits. Such examples demonstrate that sustainable marketing impacts not only the environment but also societal values and enhances corporate reputation.

Interest in sustainable marketing is also growing in the Azerbaijani context. In recent years, positive initiatives such as promoting eco-friendly products, abandoning plastic bags, supporting social projects, and promoting the “Made in Azerbaijan” brand have gained momentum. However, more systematic and strategic approaches are needed in this field. Companies should not limit themselves to short-term advertising campaigns but should build brand identities based on lasting values.

Marketing also plays an educational role in promoting sustainable development. It can be used to shape public awareness, turn individuals into responsible consumers, and encourage companies to act more ethically and ecologically. Both traditional and social media play an important role in this process. The active engagement of younger generations on social media facilitates the spread of informative content on sustainability.

Nevertheless, challenges remain in the application of sustainable marketing. Sometimes companies resort to a tactic known as “greenwashing,” falsely presenting non-sustainable products and services with eco-labels. This undermines consumer trust and contradicts the very purpose of sustainable marketing. Therefore, transparency, honesty, and responsibility must be key principles in this field.

In conclusion, the concept of sustainable development and marketing activities are not separate from one another. On the contrary, marketing serves as a key mechanism for communicating this concept to society, gaining broad public acceptance, and implementing it in practice. Both consumers and companies prioritizing sustainability-based behavior is essential for building a healthy and balanced future. Marketing plays the role of both a driving force and a carrier in this transformation.

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