

# Green marketing for organic producers in Chiapas, from the eco-education perspective

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**— Abstract—**

Climate change, the destruction of forests, the pollution of rivers and oceans, the decrease in the ozone layer, and the increase in cardiovascular diseases, among other worrying signs, have caused more and more people to decide to consume eco-healthy products. This trend, which is pressuring companies to produce eco-friendly items, must be addressed by marketing and education. For this reason, in the last six years, we have collaborated with local organic producers, in a systematic work where students from the Bachelor of Communication of the School of Humanities of the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas have been involved to offer marketing proposals from green marketing. With this strategy, we have sought that students also become aware of environmental problems, from the perspective of eco-education and through practical proposals, like an axis of local and micro responses to global environmental problems. The methodological approach we use has been participatory action research, where producers have contributed knowledge, experiences, and points of view, which has resulted in a learning process around environmental education, as well as a marketing proposal for the entrepreneurs. On this occasion, we collect the results obtained from August to December 2019, where nine redesign proposals and commercial strategies were made based on elements of green marketing, such as ethical values, transparency, sustainable development, accountability, and social responsibility. The application of these strategies allowed to increase the sales of the producers in a variable percentage between 5 and 70%, and, above all, to stimulate the awareness for better coexistence with the planet on the part of young university students.

**Keywords:**

*Green marketing; eco-education; sustainable development; agroecological producers; Chiapas.*

On September 27, 1962, Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, the main text that denounced the use of pesticides in agricultural products and their consequences on the environment: death of birds, arid soils, and increasing pollution. Although the author was attacked and disqualified, in the long run, it was found that she was right. *Silent Spring* was the watershed of the new sensibility of consumers, who began to worry about taking care of the planet and leaving, as far as possible, a lower carbon footprint. The most interested were and are the young, aware that they will inherit a depleted, almost destroyed, and even hostile ecosystem. In this century, and especially since the year 2019, there were mobilizations in different parts of the planet to demand that governments assume agreements to reduce climate change. That same year, teenager Greta Thunberg gained notoriety for leading protests in different cities, also forcing governments, organizations, companies, and institutions to commit to greater care for nature.

There are reasons to worry about. The figures do not support optimism: 90% of residual discharges into rivers, lakes, and seas in Latin American countries are untreated (Olguín, *et al*, 2010); in the Mediterranean region, more than 90% of the original forest cover has been lost (Primack, Rozzi & Feinsinger, 2001); global air quality has deteriorated with the presence in the environment of aerosols, nitrogen oxides, and carbon oxides; electronic, space and radioactive waste degrades the environment and visual, light, and noise pollution multiplies.

The planet is threatened. In Mexico, six out of ten rivers are polluted (Conagua, 2017), it is projected that by 2020-2100 the average temperature could increase between 0.5 and 4.8 degrees and rainfall between 5 and 15% (Sosa-Rodríguez, 2015). Mexican consumers are responsible for 1.4% of greenhouse gas emissions, the largest agent of climate change, which places our country as one of the 15 main emitters (Delgado, De Luca & Vázquez, 2015). These attacks on the ecosystem have led to an increase in natural disasters, with an estimated figure of 200 to 400 per year (Holmes, 2008); there is the desertification of soils, where six out of ten hectares suffer extreme drought (Guerrero & Márquez, 2014) and a greater migration from places of risk (Ochoa & Ayvar, 2015). In this complicated scenario, the figures in Chiapas are also worrying. The Lacandon Jungle, devastated in 72.2% of its surface, "is mortally wounded", warns Jan de Vos (1988, p. 30); more than 20% of the basins are contaminated (Martínez, 2017); the Sabinal River, which crosses the capital of Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, is converted into a sewage drainage channel and is a flood factor; deforestation and pollution have placed the State at permanent risk with hurricanes, such as Mitch, Stan, Roxana, and Javier that have forced the displacement of people (Villafuerte & García, 2006; Rodríguez, 2017). Apart from these environmental problems, the population is in poor health; according to the

Mexican Diabetes Federation (2016), 10.3% of women and 8.4% of men suffer from this chronic situation due to overweight and obesity in 90% of cases. Likewise, Mexico ranks first in heart disease, second in diabetes and third in malignant tumors. According to health authorities, these comorbidities have caused 45.8% of deaths associated with the coronavirus (Poy & Sánchez, January 10, 2021).

Inhabitants are obese. There are more and more inhabitants that populate every corner of the planet. From one billion inhabitants in 1800, there are currently more than 8 billion. Population obesity. And where there is civilization there is the testimony of destruction, parodying Walter Benjamin (2008). Another factor is the increase in life expectancy, but with a dependent, sick, and dementia old age between 5 and 8% (WHO, 2019). We indeed live longer, but in worse conditions; of the 12 million older adults in our country, 800,000 have been diagnosed with dementia.

### LIQUID OBESITY

There is an epidemic of obesity, not only in the sense of body overweight but of excessive consumption that generates waste that pollutes the environment. Jean Baudrillard (2002) considers obesity to be the constant of postmodernity; Baumann (2006) thinks is liquidity. Both obesity and liquidity go together and place society at risk (Beck, 2006). Baudrillard (2002) characterizes obesity as "saturation of a limited space" and at the same time as a metaphor for the "system of information, communication, hypertrophy, proliferation, and chain reaction" (p. 40). This excessive growth generates excessive consumption and waste in abundance. "The market", describes Octavio Paz (2014), "never stops and covers the earth with gigantic pyramids of garbage and waste: it poisons rivers and lakes; the jungles become deserted; plunder the tops of the mountains and the bowels of the planet; it corrupts air, earth, and water" (p. 118).

Everything solid vanishes into thin air points out Berman (1988) to refer to the experience of modernity. Heavy turns into liquid. Today, the gains come "from the unbridled speed of circulation, recycling, aging, discarding, and replacement – not the durability or durable reliability of the product" (Bauman, 2006, p. 19). Petrella abounds in those current economies that are focused on the production of the ephemeral and the volatile (in Bauman, 2005), in the logic of "maximum impact" and "immediate disuse" (Steiner, in Bauman, 2005). Liquid obesity emerges that alters the fragile ecosystem. But that heavy carbon footprint of the human being can be reduced. Practices harmful to ecological balance can be modified and one of the key disciplines is marketing, as a series of knowledge that must be taught to responsibly consume products that cause less damage to the environment. That market,

"which threatens the lives of men and animals and plants" is not "a natural or divine law: it is a mechanism invented by men" (Paz, 2014, p. 118). And if it has been invented by men, it can be modified.

A factor of change is the environmental education of transversality, as a strategic element to promote and create new sensibilities, values, and skills that seek a harmonious coexistence with the environment. Environmental education or eco-education is based on two principles: the incorporation of ethical values and the conception of the world as a complex system (Leff, 1998). In the late seventies, Arreola (1979) indicated that the university must influence doctors, engineers, or educators to "conserve and enrich the goods of nature and life" (p. 96). In this eco-educational perspective, there is a shift from the anthropocentric subject, focused on the improvement of the individual, to the "biocentric" or "ecocentric", which aims to "improve the life of ecosystems; respect the conditions and limits of nature" (Novo, 2009); in this new look, the human being is no longer the master of nature, but an integral part of it. Thus, the axes that underpin environmental education, formal or non-formal, are global responsibility, the differentiation between growth and development, the search for socially just and ecologically balanced societies, and the criticism of overproduction and overconsumption for the few and scarcity for the majority (Novo, 1996). Environmental education cannot be neutral, "nor can it be sustained in a vacuum. It is based on a deep ethic, which seriously compromises all those who participate in its programs" (Novo, 1996).

This process of awareness has been long, and it is normal that now when the ecosystem is threatened with an accelerated disappearance of non-domesticated animals, the presence of pandemics, the multiplication of fires, and the appearance of products with a high degree of contaminants, a citizen appears who seeks to satisfy their needs with products that have a low or no impact on nature. Apart from a better coexistence with the planet, people want to benefit from ecological inputs that have a positive impact on their health. Outstanding athletes, singers, and actresses promote these new beliefs. Global citizen organizations have also emerged, which disseminate environmental problems, raise awareness, and teach people how to act to care for and protect nature, and others that pressure – and demand – companies and governments to comply with protocols with little impact on the environment. This is how a new trend is configured and cataloged within *g-commerce* or green marketing.

## GREEN MARKETING

Faced with this urgency to change consumption practices to preserve the ecosystem, a generation has emerged that demands healthy and environ-

mentally friendly products. Marketing has not remained on the sidelines and has appealed to the basic principles of corporate social responsibility. This specific practice is known as green marketing. Marketing, as a discipline, is not dedicated to creating desires, but to designing strategies to meet needs, related to food, housing, and shelter, green marketing seeks to meet those needs through "the rational management of resources and the implementation of activities that take into account future generations" (Unesco, 1977, p. 5). Ethical values, in this proposal, occupy a central place because it implies generating guidelines of non-formal education, which reconcile the passage of man with the proper march of nature for his survival; "marketing is no longer about seducing people with empty promises; it is about involving and educating them" (Grant, 2007, p. 48).

If for Kotler (1980) marketing is at the very origin of man, green marketing or environmental marketing is of recent appearance and is linked to the environmental concerns that were registered with greater emphasis in the mid-seventies. In 1976, Henion and Kinnear published the book *Ecological Marketing*. The true boom, however, began in this century, when the accelerated destruction of ecological goods was observed. For Ken Peattie (2001), in this century a third stage of green marketing begins, the so-called sustainable marketing; the first was characterized by the ecological marketing (focused on the demand for products), the second by the environmental one (focused on reducing damage to the environment) and the third, the sustainable marketing, which seeks balanced development in the various regions and communities of the world.

Green marketing has been defined from several perspectives. For Polonsky (1994), it is the set of "activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchange aimed at satisfying human needs or desires, so that the satisfaction of these needs and desires occurs, with minimal harmful impact on the environment"; Terrazas (2013), indicates that it is "a system of integration of activities and factors, organizations and individuals, aimed at generating, communicating and delivering value for both the consumer, the organization, society and the environment"; Calomarde (2000, p.22), defines ecological marketing as a mode of action to help the conservation and improvement of the environment to influence the sustainable development of the economy of society, "conceive and execute the relationship of exchange, with the purpose that is satisfactory for the parties that intervene in it, society and natural environment, through development, assessment, distribution, and promotion by one of the parties of the goods and services".

From these contributions, we can understand green marketing as the set of activities focused on satisfying the demands of consumers, through transparent, responsible, and ethical strategies, in the promotion of products

friendly to the natural environment, to promote a better quality of life for all the people involved in the production-consumption circuit.

Thus, green marketing has the following elements:

- 1) Ethical values
- 2) Transparency
- 3) Sustainable development
- 4) Accountability
- 5) Social responsibility

Green marketing implies a total ethical commitment to the pursuit of sustainable development. Ethical values must permeate each of the processes, from the conception of the campaign to its implementation; that is, to think also about the consequences of action, as proposed by Max Weber (in Comte-Sponville, 1998), and because "when we choose, we choose for all humanity", as Sartre later specified (in Camps & Giner, 1998, p. 45). That is, marketing, when assuming the ethical commitment, is concerned with the consequences of consumption and the very strategy of promotion and knowledge of the product.

Transparency has been a demand of society towards their governments. However, every company, public or private, commits to making its actions transparently.

The terms sustainable development and sustainability have been discussed a lot, but the first can be limited as a "sustained or sustainable development so that the production system works", while the second has as its purpose the "conservation of natural resources, through their rational and controlled use; that is, it is not a question of not using resources, but of doing so in a way that guarantees their conservation in the future" (Rivera & Blanco, 2017). Sustainable development is an aspiration, like democracy. The actors, who freely assume this form of production and coexistence with nature, try to reconcile development with the environment, to improve the lives of present and future generations. It is a values-driven organization. In this care for the environment, marketing must influence from the local to the global, in an expansive green wave that favors sustainability practices.

Green marketing proposes that the consumer must know how the process of elaboration or cultivation of the acquired product has been, which, to meet the green conditions, should have been manufactured or cultivated in friendly conditions with the ecosystem so that, once discarded, it generates little or no negative impact. It is not about diving into greenwashing, commercial tricks that some companies employ to hide harmful production systems.

Green marketing is synonymous with corporate social responsibility. Instead of being just a commercial strategy, green marketing becomes a



philosophy with values of urgent application to live in a friendly way with the planet. The advantage is that a company focused on healthy products starts from the objective of causing a beneficial impact on consumers. Social responsibility implies three levels of incidence: "primary (inherent to the activity), secondary (incidences of the activity on the groups with which it relates), and tertiary (improving the environment through actions other than the performance of the activity)" (Núñez & Alonso, 2006).

In short, a company does not have altruism as its primary purpose, but by matching social responsibility with commercial strategy (Núñez & Alonso, 2006) it will have a greater chance of success. Within this perspective of green marketing, the company is held accountable. Thus, a company dedicated to the sale of organic products presents a double proposal: on the one hand, sell and be viable as a business; on the other, to generate social change and contribute to the improvement of the global and local environment, "all with full respect for individual and collective rights" (Nelson, in Núñez & Alonso, 2006). The marketing strategy is therefore not traditional. Kotler and Zaltaman (1971), emphasize social change as one of the basic strategies of social marketing.

This work aimed to create marketing strategies, from the contributions of green marketing, to position agroecological producers in the local market, organized in Ecorgánicos Tuxtla, and at the same time, to raise awareness among the young university students who participated in the design of these campaigns, from participatory action research and eco-education, of the importance of socially responsible consumption and sustainable development.

## METHODOLOGY

This work is based on Participatory Action Research (PAR) considering that it is the groups of citizens who must identify the problems they face and, together with other actors or specialists, find answers. Within the perspective of participatory methodology, the problem must be studied and investigated to act. This is achieved only with the collaboration of those involved because they are the ones who live the problems, which have practical matrices and, therefore, demand solutions that affect daily actions. This responds to what Vio Grossi (in Alcocer, 1998) conceives as the characteristic of participatory action research: "the full participation of the community in the analysis of its reality, to promote social transformation for the benefit of the participants of social research at the community level" (p. 437).

From this approach, the first step was to know the field. To this end, fieldwork was carried out with consumer surveys, interviews with producers, and collective discussion meetings. In this process, weaknesses and strengths were detected in the positioning strategies of the different micro-



entrepreneurs; later, solutions were built, which are not definitive but have a positive impact on the subsistence and growth of a company.

From the PAR perspective, it was not sought to act in a large social conglomerate, but reduced, micro, both with students and producers, because we consider that the most effective social changes are not radical, but "pollinators" (Reguillo, 2017), which in the long run change structures of feeling (Williams, 2003). Thus, our main commitment is that students initiate pollinating activities in the care of the environment, that this becomes a swarm of positive changes for the ecosystem, and that consumption is not destructive or highly polluting, but that at that junction there is an alternative for the sustainable development of producers and a window of opportunity for the good health of people and the environment.

### *Eco-education*

In mid-2019, we started working on applied green marketing in a flea market of agroecological products in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. It was not the first time we had done this activity. In 2007 we made our first foray into this field with producers from other areas of the city. Our interest was, on the one hand, to apply the knowledge of the subjects of Advertising and Marketing taken at the School of Humanities of the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas and, on the other, to sensitize students to the environmental problem of the planet and the opportunity they must contribute to its solution. This project, which can be called "eco-education", is emerging, urgent, and alternative; we start from the certainty that the world will improve only with our action from the place we inhabit and through committed participation. Eco-education is based on verified and shared information, far removed from the evangelization (Grant, 2007) that characterizes some activists.

At the same time as analyzing consumption and marketing strategies, we decided to approach local producers, knowledgeable of our concerns. Chiapas has not remained on the sidelines in regards to that expansive green wave that we talked about at the beginning. Initiatives have emerged to produce and consume items that are friendly to the environment, health, and sustainability. Although there is a precedent of these proposals in the twentieth century, it was especially since the year 2000 that the networks of producers who seek to sell at fair prices, produce ecological items, and achieve the sustainable development of communities intensified. This is how the Red de Comida Sana y Cercana and the Red Mexicana de Tianguis y Mercados Orgánicos emerged in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, and in the city of Villaflores, the Tianguis Orgánico de Corazón.

When starting this project, the first step was to detect these networks in the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez. This is how we found four flea markets

focused on the sale of clean products: Ecotianguis Tuxtla (founded in 2007), Tianguis Solidario Kolping (2015), Tianguis UPA (2015), and Ecorgánico Tuxtla (2018). It is not the first time that we approached this sector, as we mentioned above, we have done it since 2017, but the flea markets have registered changes of location or name.

On this occasion, we set out to work with Ecorgánico Tuxtla. We talked to them to detect problems that warranted some intervention. From the perspective of the IAP, "it is not about studying problems of scientific interest or issues that concern a group of researchers, but the problems that the people involved consider important because they have to do with issues that concern their own lives" (Ander-Egg, 2003, p. 6). Ecorgánico Tuxtla brings together twelve producers who sell their items on Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in a local neighborhood of socioeconomic level C- (according to the segmentation of the Mexican Association of Research Agency, AMAI). We chose to collaborate with this group because its members were participatory and eager to define problems and find answers together. The IAP bets that participatory action is "on a relatively small scale (neighborhood, rural community, organization, etc.). Otherwise, people's participation in the investigative process becomes very difficult and often impossible" (Ander-Egg, 2003, p. 7).

Once nine of the twelve producers agreed to work with us, we began to attend as participating observers. We were well received. We had no impediment in developing our activities and finding the most pressing problems faced by a producer with these characteristics. We identified, in the first stage, that the greatest difficulty is the lack of positioning; they don't sell enough because they are not well known. This was a constant in the talks with the producers: "we need to sell more, we need people to know us, to know that here we have good products for their health and the environment" (informant 1).

Although the nine producers aspired for more sales, there were particularities in each of them. Therefore, we decided that teams of two or three students would collaborate with each producer, that they would understand it, that they would listen to the problems, that they would detail them and that, together, they would offer solutions. The producers of Ecorgánico Tuxtla appointed a representative to supervise the process and exchange information about the flea market.

Due to the training of this producer, who is a university professor, we achieved an important interaction and it made it easier for the students, as participating researchers, to become more immersed in the problem. As we pointed out, we sought to offer solutions to producers and at the same time raise awareness among young university students of the environmental gravity that the planet is going through and that they become a factor of

change. Learning, thus, was built from several perspectives: with the contribution of the producers and their purposes of obtaining profits from the sale of green products, capitalizing on their positioning experiences and, with that of the students, when analyzing these problems in the classroom and proposing viable strategies from the subjects of Advertising and Marketing.

The marketing strategy was based on the principles mentioned above, based on ethical values, transparency, sustainable development, accountability, and social responsibility. These principles are related, they are even confused, but it is the least important because they are all combined in a new producer-consumer strategy based on trust. Ottman (2011), recommends that the consumer should be educated and empowered, engage the community and be credible. With Ecorgánico Tuxtla we translated these principles into the promotion of sustainable practices, eco-design of recyclable and reusable packaging, fair trade, and responsible elaboration practices of the global thinking and local acting circuit.

Promoting responsible consumption implies using eco-design because the first approach to the product is with the eye. That is why we believe that the use of recycled products should be a commitment of producers. We found that most of them, although they strove to produce beneficial items for the environment and health, the packaging they used was conventional. Packaging represents 40% of the manufacture of plastics (Navia & Villada, 2013), has a high impact on pollution.

A first task was to raise awareness in this aspect and, although they were not unaware of the characteristics of recycled and recyclable packaging, they argued that they raised the cost of production. Various proposals were studied, alternatives were sought and, although they are producers that have small profit margins, they were willing to make changes in the packaging. It was not an easy step, of course, and at a distance, we are not sure that it has been fully adopted, but if they assume it as a permanent bet, it will have better results in the long run and will be more congruent in ethical values.

In guerrilla marketing, we proposed another principle of green marketing and environmental movements: think global, act locally, through the dissemination of information on the displacement-contamination of goods. A local product generates less impact on the environment because of its local belonging since it ceases to be "all circulation" (Sierra, 2000). That is why we inform people about this urgency to change habits. Beyond the fact that they visited Ecorgánico Tuxtla, our purpose was for them to think about their consumption and the consequences of that consumption. Marketing should not be seen as a discipline just for selling; it is also an instrument to induce responsible consumption. In that process, the students became advocates for this committed sustainability proposal.

If apart from sharing this information about green habits, the person who received brochures or listened to our information approached Ecorgánico Tuxtla, that was an extra benefit. One in ten people to whom we talk about the benefits of green consumption and flea markets visited the facilities. These guerrilla marketing practices were carried out in the vicinity of Ecorgánico and that is why it was possible to determine the percentage because several of them we accompanied to introduce them to the producers.

A new type of consumer has emerged that seeks to reduce consumption, austere and minimalist, who prefers to pay higher prices for clean products, that can be recycled and improve health, in a trend of a fair price. The Natural Marketing Institute of the United States (in Ottman, 2011), has classified green consumers into five: 1) *Lohas* (*Lifestyles of health and sustainability*), educated people, little concerned about prices and inclined to green products; 2) *Naturalites*, less educated, but concerned about chemical components in products; 3) *Drifters*, young people concerned about the environment; 4) *Conventionals*, adults, mostly retired, with desires to inherit a future less hostile to the new generations, 5) *Unconcerneds*, less concerned, but with environmental practices.

The green consumer is not considered, as such, a consumer or at least an indiscriminate consumer; he wishes to reduce his consumption and be a citizen partner with the future of the ecosystem. Thus, a new concept of necessity emerges, based "not on the desires of a few, but the needs 'of all', essentially of the poorest" (Novo, 1996). The green consumer protects natural resources, enjoys animals, tries to take care of their health, and practices sports. He is concerned about his physical well-being, relating in a friendly way with the planet and supporting small producers. That wave of people concerned about the environment, which emerged in developed countries, today has expanded, and in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the capital of the poorest State in Mexico (with 76.4% of poverty, according to Coneval, 2018), this segment has also appeared, minority, it is true but visible. In two surveys, the first applied to 137 customers of Ecorgánico Tuxtla and 400 citizens of the neighborhoods around the selected sale point, both applied in September 2019, we found that of the people who consume green products, 46% do so for health; 26% for supporting producers, and 19%, for environmental benefit.

Green marketing should educate how to reuse. In this aspect, the producers of Ecorgánico had a long experience: they made discounts to those who carried their containers or bags in a permanent promotion of reuse. We took advantage of this experience in the classroom to talk about the damage caused to the environment by plastic items and the obligation to reuse bottles, containers, and bags.

Another linked practice is composting. We did not have much to do in this field either, and it was the producers who taught us to use waste

products to form composts. This, of course, is only achieved with biodegradable products, such as fruits, vegetables, or food scraps. Composting can also be used as an element of new marketing trends; where there was decomposition, different visions may arise from the promotion of articles. Flea market members periodically offer courses on composting or growing vegetables at home.

Since they are local micro-enterprises and the product of personal effort, advertising and marketing are intuitive. Producers set up a stand with the material they can and, if in the long run they make a profit, incorporate some changes, improve their facilities, look for a name and a slogan. These microenterprises are fundamental to the productive force of the country, generating 41.8% of jobs (Condusef, 2015). Therefore, another element that we consider in our campaigns is the artisanal characteristic, which in the face of modernity is overshadowed, but which for years has represented the livelihood of thousands of Mexican families. By consuming these items from small producers, the local economy is also strengthened. We believe that an advertising and marketing campaign should appeal to the feeling of locality, richness, and diversity of artisanal products, with emphasis on the local contribution to the common welfare.

In the experience of the organic local flea market, the spirit of solidarity is awakened. We highlight that in promotional campaigns. There is also an invitation to return to the lost, to the *vintage*, to the nostalgic for artisanal, healthy, and shared production; to know the producer, who is willing to show the place where he grows his products or where he makes them. This leads to a more lasting relationship between producer and consumer.

The treatment and unique and personal location, is what makes the flea market stand out from the standardized stores. This allows advertising proposals to highlight the small and slow production, in contrast to the globalization of shopping centers. For this reason, local products are not cheap; consumers know this, and that is why they must be given added value.

Approaching local production means knowing cultural traditions, rescuing assertive forms of cultivation, and incorporating those that have been useful in groups in other parts of the world. We do not use the word organic in marketing campaigns due to the restrictions of the use of this term in national and international regulations, which require certifiers and payment of duty that would raise the price of the products too much; therefore, most artisanal producers are left out. However, other words evoke health, sustainability, transparency, and social responsibility such as "ecological", "eco-organic", "green" or "sustainable."

## ECOCAMPAIGNS APPLIED IN ECORGÁNICO TUXTLA

In the joint marketing and advertising campaign proposal, due to the lack of resources, we develop guerrilla marketing techniques directly with regular customers or potential customers, as well as permanent promotions on social networks, especially Facebook and Instagram. The first objective was to spread the existence of Ecorgánico Tuxtla and, later, of the ten producers. The target audience was middle-class people, interested in health care and the environment.

The campaign began with the video "Multiplica bienestar para todos los chiapanecos"; followed later, in a second stage, by 10 ad videos of the various stores, under the title of *Conoce a tu productor*, which addressed the production process, ingredients used, and health benefits (<https://www.facebook.com/ecorganicotuxtla/>). As a third stage, the image of each store was redesigned to reposition them; special labels were drawn up for each product, with a brief description of the manufacturing process and the affiliation code of the articles.

### *Amaranto Camila*

This microenterprise, created in Ocozocoautla, Chiapas, in 2018, is dedicated to the production of energy bars, cookies, wafers, and churritos of organic amaranth. Amaranto Camila was promoted on Facebook and Instagram, with the image and design approved by the producer and the students, which influenced 50% of its sales.

### *Stop Plagas*

Although Stop Plagas had a name, it lacked a logo and slogan. The purpose of this producer was to design the image of his small business; for this, a photographic portfolio was created that was promoted on Facebook, an ad, and a workshop on how to control pests with agroecological products. These strategies allowed them to increase their sales by 15%.

### *Corazón de Tierra*

Founded in 2012, Corazón de Tierra is dedicated to the development and marketing of organic products for personal hygiene. In the case of this microenterprise, with another group of students, its institutional logo was developed four years ago. On this occasion, a new design was proposed, both in the logo and on the labels of the products and for its holistic approach to health, a triptych, a catalog, and a photographic portfolio of

its products were designed. This material was promoted on Facebook from September 1st to November 19, 2019, a social network where 102 messages were published, and it was possible to increase from 173 to 334 followers. Corazón de Tierra was placed as a reference point in Google Maps and flyers were designed, which were distributed at the points of the greatest confluence of the city and places near the flea market. This increased sales by 70%, according to the producer.



Figure 1. Cards proposal for Corazón de Tierra. Source: Own elaboration

### *Del Huerto*

Dedicated to the cultivation and marketing of agroecological products, this microenterprise did not have a corporate identity, so it was necessary to propose elements of uniformity, such as shirts, caps, and aprons with a defined image. Together with the owner, the slogan "Fresco sabe mejor" was created, and freshness was used as a guiding concept of the advertising campaign. It also highlighted local consumption and a fair price. On Facebook, they offered 20% discounts on purchases of products such as radishes, cabbage, lettuce, mushrooms, tomatoes, broccoli, spices, and corn, with a 20% increase in sales.





Figure 2. Sign proposal for Del Huerto's sales point. Source: Own elaboration

### *La Dolce Vita*

La Dolce Vita, a micro-enterprise founded in 2014, is dedicated to producing, processing, and marketing honey and its derivatives. Its two marketing lines focus on health care and personal care products, such as masks, scrubs, sunscreens, soaps, shampoos, and flu medicines. The proposed slogan was "Un zumbido de sabor" and the guiding concept: "Todo para el cuidado de tu familia." The company redesigned the logo and created a photographic catalog and advertising with defined patterns in color and typography. The promotion, like the other microenterprises, was carried out on the street and social networks, with a 50% increase in sales.



Figure 3. Logo proposal for La Dolce Vita. Source: Own elaboration

### *Leche y Miel*

This microenterprise, dedicated to the sale of organic coffee, oat *meal pancakes*, corn cakes, and juices, did not have a corporate image, nor did it have a name. So, we worked with regular consumers and owners. From a brainstorm came the proposal of Leche y Miel because those are the main ingredients in the elaboration of their products. Once the corporate image was designed, we captured it in signs and ads that we promoted in social networks and neighborhoods, which had a 60% impact on the increase in sales.

### *Mi Tiendita Verde*

With this microenterprise, we achieved, for a month, a reach of 2,170 people, important number for a business that did not have a greater presence in digital social networks. Before the promotion, a corporate identity manual was designed, which highlights the logo on t-shirts, cups, and labeling for shipping products, such as bags, bottles, and biodegradable packaging, with a 20% increase in sales.



Figure 4. Mi Tiendita Verde's Facebook Redesign. Source: Own elaboration

### *Quesabrosas*

This micro company was named Quesadillas Fanni, but during this process, we saw the need to change its identity to Quesabrosas. The promotion of the new image took place in the neighborhood where the flea market is located and on social networks. The result was a 40% increase in sales in this store, according to the comparison made by the owner of the facilities.



Figure 5. Promotional designs for Quesabrosas. Source: Own elaboration

### *Rancho San Marcos*

The products of this micro company are artisan and ecological cheeses and yogurts, as well as hen and quail eggs. With Rancho San Marcos, flyers, videos, a photographic catalog, and new product labeling were made, where the green characteristic of its products was highlighted, which allowed a 5% increase in sales.

At the end of this eco-learning process and five-month advertising and marketing campaigns (August-December 2019), the approach was encouraging for students and the flea market. Producers saw their sales grow by a variable percentage between 5 and 70%. It was not the same for everyone, because some postponed the agreed changes due to the lack of economic resources. This situation of economic fragility forced the development of campaigns in neighborhoods and social networks, with an emphasis on guerrilla marketing strategies. Green products and the location of the flea market were promoted, since the main problem detected was the ignorance of the location of Ecorgánico.

Students worked on weekends and holidays to contribute to the achievement of the marketing strategies presented; "I thought we would only do internships in the classroom, but when we faced reality as if we were already working for a company, it filled me with excitement; the good thing is that our proposals delighted the honey producer" (informant 2). "At first I didn't want to sacrifice my weekends but seeing that all the proposals we presented to the producer, who listened to us, supported us, and enriched them, gave me more security, but above all commitment not to fail him, so I didn't mind arriving, even if I was tired or sick" (informant 3).

The relationship that was established between students and producers of Ecorgánico Tuxtla was not always smooth. Some producers did not collaborate as expected. However, the results have been satisfactory; the students dared to make short-term marketing and advertising proposals, and most importantly, they became aware of the environmental problem and that they must be engines of change.

## CONCLUSION

The environmental problem forces disciplines focused on marketing and education to rethink their actions, propose new models, and influence in a micro, pollinating way, the improvement of our habitat through responsible consumption, to reduce the liquid and destructive obesity. From this perspective, we involved our students to participate in a flea market of green producers so that they know forms of production based on solidarity because in these centuries-old forms of association we can obtain lessons in civics, sustainability, and responsible consumption. We work with Ecorgánico Tuxtla, a collective willingness to learn, collaborate, accept, and contribute to proposals to improve their sales.

We know that these times demand an urgent reengineering of marketing, which is experiencing moments of profound, revolutionary transformation because our common home is in danger. Thus, marketing must show us ways for responsible consumption, fair trade, and sustainable development.

The future must be of inhabitants highly committed to sustainable development and friendly coexistence with the environment. This commitment cannot be temporary but lasting in the face of increasingly scarce resources and permanent threats such as the pandemic that we have just experienced due to the coronavirus. Organic crops will not save the planet on their own if they are not linked to other healthy practices, reasonable consumption, and a greater possibility of recycling and composting.

These pollinating practices that we start are a way of assuming our space on the planet, acting within our community, global thinking; all of

which must be promoted in schools, with scientific information, so as not to accommodate closure and stubborn evangelization.

These new practices will bring benefits to everyone on a planet that urgently calls for new measures, more boldness, and commitment. Hope is built on young people. Therefore, this work seeks the individual, micro, and pollinating transformation of these people who are just beginning to travel the world and who in their path will know how to fill them with creative proposals and invite more walkers to sow the landscape with innovative and hopeful ideas, where they listen to each other, in a cooperative action research, holistic, and transparent process that promotes sustainability and social responsibility.

We believe that there are loopholes for well-founded hope, that it is still possible to have a positive impact on the environment, because the planet's future is not at stake, of course, it will continue to exist beyond us, but the elements that make possible the enriching, fair, and committed life with the communities and with the environment are at stake.

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## ANNEX

### *Participating students*

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