SUSTAINABLE ONLINE PRODUCE: GREEN MARKETING & KEY VARIABLES INFLUENCING CONSUMER PURCHASING

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Background:

- Consumers' growing interest in organic food is not translating into actual purchases with online retailers.
- Creating Green Marketing strategies could help raise sales.
- My research aims to identify the factors that influence consumer buying behavior.

Research Question:
What are the key variables of green marketing that influence consumer purchasing behavior in the context of sustainable food consumption?

Methods:

- My Internship: Constructed a marketing & demographic analysis with my site supervisor for Kitsap Fresh Local Food Online (KF), an online food retailer at Kitsap County.
- Segmented 1,558 Kitsap Fresh buyers into 4 groups based on their shopping frequencies and surveyed them to learn about consumer motives.
- Identified Kitsap Fresh consumer characteristics to explore relevant consumer insights (See Fig. 1).
- Interviewed 9 consumers about their perceptions towards food sustainability.

Results:

1. Primary Market Drivers: “Local” and “Organics”
Consumers favor “local organic” food labels when purchasing from online food retailers (See Fig. 2)

2. Transparency of Food Production Practices
Sustainable online food businesses could provide customers with sufficient information about food production practices.

3. Clarities & Cohesiveness of the Mission Statement
Online organic food companies need to have a clear mission statement addressing the core values of buying locally.

4. Target Marketing and Promotions
Leveraging word-of-mouth effect and strategically promoting within the target community could significantly raise awareness and drive website traffic (See Fig. 3).

Recommendations:

1. Including "local" and “organic” food labels in product descriptions.
2. Incorporating videos that showcase farming methods and farmer anecdotes to explain food production practices and the problems farmers encounter during planting.
3. Stressing the core values of buying locally in the mission statement.
4. Exploring communities of potential target audience on social media platforms and engaging them to enhance the overall company visibility.

Significance:

- Close the knowledge gap between consumer perceived values and company initiatives.
- Address consumer hesitant arising from unclear food production practices.
- Capture a wider audience of organic eaters and farmers.
- Encourage businesses to develop more effective Green Marketing strategies.

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