

**ETHICS IN MARKETING****V.S. Dole**Neville Wadia Institute of Management Studies and Research, Pune  
vikas.dole@nevillewadia.com**ABSTRACT**

*There are several criticisms and claims regarding marketing that it is unethical. The common allegations are, it promotes consumerism, make unreasonable claims via advertisements and charges unethical pricing etc. Notwithstanding these claims, marketers need to be focused on improving their ethical practices. In today's environment, social and governance (ESG) world companies which pay attention to social and environment and governance themes are likely to get premium for their offerings. Practice of ethics in marketing will eventually benefit all the stakeholders – marketers, consumers and the society at large.*

**Keywords:** Marketing, ethics, pricing, advertising, ESG.

**Introduction**

Criticism against marketing (Vassilikopoulou, 2008) can be summed up as follows: (1) It supports materialism, hedonism, and eudemonism; (2) It produces pressure on consumers for the acquisition of goods; (3) It pollutes the natural environment; (4) It contributes to the exhaustion of natural resources; (5) It makes an expansion in the products final price because of the high production cost, which should be paid by the consumer; (6) It deceives consumers by projecting imaginary or no quality differences on the products; (7) It charms consumers into buying products that they may not actually need; (8) Advertising is ordinarily of bad taste and offends the masses; (9) The contribution of such a large number of intercessors during product distribution raises product prices; (10) Personal deals at times become too pushy and oppressive, thereby convincing the consumer to settle on buying decisions under pressure.

*Marketing Ethics*

Marketing ethics is characterized as the basic principles and values that govern the business that is occupied with promoting products or services to customers (Rajan (2016); Hunt and Vitell (2006); Laczniak and Murphy (2019); Brinkmann (2002); and Smith and Murphy (2012)).

*Principles of ethical marketing:*

1. All marketing communications share the common parameter that is truth.

2. Marketing Professional is limited by the highest standard of personal ethics.
3. Advertisers ought to be highly transparent about individuals whom they pay to endorse the products.
4. Consumers ought to be treated fairly based on the idea of the product and consumer.
5. The protection of the consumer ought not be compromised.

*Ethical Values in Marketing:* There are six marketing ethics where the advertisers should follow:

1. Honesty – Be forthright in dealings and offer value and integrity.
2. Responsibility – Accept consequences of marketing practices and serve the needs of customers of various types, while being good stewards of the environment.
3. Fairness – Balance buyer needs and seller interest fairly, and dodge manipulation in all forms while protecting the information of the consumers.
4. Respect – Acknowledge basic human dignity of the multitude of individuals involved through efforts to impart, understand and address issues and appreciate contributions of others.
5. Transparency – Create a spirit of openness in the act of marketing through communication, constructive criticism, action, and disclosure.
6. Citizenship – Fulfill all lawful, economic, altruistic and cultural responsibilities to all partners just as giveback to the local area and secure the natural environment

*Aspects of Ethical marketing*

**Consumer Orientation:** This is a socially responsible practice that organizations should put together approaches and operations with respect to a consumer perspective. It is not just the advertiser will discover the customers' needs, yet in addition take a look who are the clients.

**Innovation:** Improving products and services improves the experience for clients. And improving marketing strategies, policies, and brand personality, on an ongoing basis will position organization as an innovative encounter to be rehashed and passed on.

**Value of the product:** An organization that produces significant products and spotlights on customer pricing. Phenomenal encounters and incredible customer administration won't need to resort to pushy deals strategies and contrivances. Apple brand is acclaimed for having individuals cheerfully stand by in line for the time being to be first to claim an updated product.

**Sense of Mission:** An obviously defined corporate mission assist the organizations with being about their objectives, and practices. By putting the good of the local area and partners over profit, organizations will indeed see an increase in the quantity of consumers willing to pay premium prices for their products.

**Impact on Society:** Unlike traditional marketing center, which was cost reduction and profit increase, socially responsible advertisers are more centered around providing goods and services for consumer needs.

**Review of Literature**

There are several articles on ethics in marketing. Below are the abstracts of a few.

Stoll (2002), has posited that organizations that contribute to charitable organizations properly trust that their philanthropic work will likewise be good for the bottom line. Advertisers of good corporate conduct should be particularly cautious, notwithstanding, to market such conduct in a morally acceptable fashion. In spite of the fact that advertisers ordinarily participate in mild deception or take artistic license when marketing goods and services, these sorts of practices are undeniably more morally troublesome when used to showcase good corporate conduct. I contend that albeit

mild deception is not considerably worrisome as for the marketing of most goods and services, it is a far more prominent moral blunder to utilize such strategies in the marketing of good corporate character.

According to Palmer and Hedberg (2013), an orthodox view in marketing ethics is that it is morally impermissible to market goods to specially vulnerable populations in manners that exploit their vulnerabilities. In his particular article "Marketing and the Vulnerable," Brenkert gave the principal considerable protection of this position, one which has gotten a grounded see in marketing ethics. In what follows, we illuminate marketing to the vulnerable by basically evaluating key components of Brenkert's overall contentions.

Payne and Pressley (2013), have argued that the reason for this paper is to build up a single code of ethics that could be utilized paying little heed to the situation of the marketing professional. The paper initially gives a writing survey of exploration in the zones of ethics pertaining to marketing professionals. Then a survey of a wide assortment of codes of business ethics, marketing ethics, model codes, and professional ethics delivers that, while there are a few differences in how the codal principles are introduced, there are adequate likenesses in the codes' principles of professional conduct to justify the consideration of a single code of marketing ethics. The authors make an endeavor to determine the most prominent, efficacious principles of ethics and to shape a single code of professional conduct for marketing students, educators and practitioners – paying little heed to their territory of strength.

Tsalikis and Fritzsche (2013), have opined that as of late, the business ethics literature has detonated in both volume and importance. Due to the sheer volume and variety of this literature, an audit article was considered significant to give center and clearness to the region. The current paper audits the literature on business ethics with an extraordinary concentration in marketing ethics. The literature is separated into normative and exact sections, with more emphasis given to the last mentioned. Despite the fact that the majority of the articles manage the American reality, the

greater part of the information gained is effectively adaptable to other nations.

### Analysis

Ethics have been as of late typified in the marketing field. Businesses that show social and environmental affectability are considered to have a competitive advantage. The opponents of marketing denounce it for being unethical, ruining the natural environment, attacking people in general with ludicrous advertisements and encouraging materialism in numerous manners. On the other hand, marketing strategies and practices have been to a great extent responsible for the high standard of living today. The backers of marketing likewise point out that a definitive objective of marketing is customer satisfaction. It is hard to get an unmistakable conclusion and to indicate precisely whether marketing is ethical or unethical. Marketing is a fair serving of the combined interests of sellers, buyers and citizens. It must be conceded that marketing doesn't support every one of the accusations for being unethical as there are no proof for proving these assertions and additionally there are research studies and contentions that confirm the opposite. Today's consumer is well

informed and well educated and can pick and pass judgment on marketing practices. Notwithstanding, regardless of these views, marketers should attempt to advance more the ethics of marketing. Social and environmental issues could be more broadly incorporated in business' products and services. Organizations ought to embrace ethical strategies in light of the fact that the advantages are various. Additionally, ethics would improve their market position contrasted with their immediate competitors. On top of that, ethical strategies could improve the social and governance aspects.

### Conclusion

Despite several criticisms of marketing and advertising, there is no clear answer whether marketing is ethical or otherwise. Notwithstanding, marketers need to be doubly conscious of these allegations and roll out ethical strategies for their businesses not only in terms of profits but also in terms of planet or people. These ESG focused marketing strategies will bridge the ethical shortcomings if any and would benefit businesses, consumers and the overall society.

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