Environmental friendliness as a marketing strategy

Master Thesis within Business Administration

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Abstract

People in Sweden have become more aware and interested in environmental issues. This has led to an increased demand for environmental friendly food products. Previously the price often determined if a customer bought the product or not. During the recent years internet has become a more widely used media than ever before. This has led to that internet is one of the important tools to gather information and knowledge, among other things environmental issues.

With such aspects in mind the authors found it interesting to investigate if companies could use internet as a marketing tool for environmental friendly products. Therefore the purpose of this thesis is to:

investigate if and how companies display environmental friendliness in their marketing strategy and how it is presented on their company webpage’s.

In order to fulfil the purpose five general dealer’s home and webpage’s were examined. As a supplementing research one store for each of the five general dealers were visited and examined.

The used theoretical framework is focused on value and green marketing. How to create a specific value is often the core when formulating and creating a strategy for a company. Green marketing is such marketing that include environmental concerns in the marketing offers. The sales of ecological food has increased and according to SCB (2006) represented 6 Billions in revenue between 2004 and 2005. The literature indicates that green marketing have to change and become more like conventional marketing, in order to reach the larger consumer segments. As a supplement to this theory, a section with home and webpage design and chromatics are added.

The analysis and conclusion showed that there were some differences in how the researched companies used green marketing. Two of the companies used their webpage’s and displayed environmental awareness, while two had a clear focus on price. One company had a health focus. It was also found that there are differences between the messages and information on the home and webpage’s, compared to the findings in the stores. What also was found was that green marketing not only should target the already green consumers, but instead aim at the larger consumer segment. To do this green marketing should become more like conventional marketing and not only focus on the product, but also other value factors. The findings also suggest that the companies could use their home and webpage’s to a higher extent than they do today.
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1 Introduction

This chapter aims at giving the reader an overview of the paper. It contains a short background and problem discussion which are the fundaments for the research questions of this thesis. The chapter ends with a section containing important definitions for the understanding of this thesis.

1.1 Background

People in Sweden are getting more aware of the environmental issues every day. One only have to read in a daily paper to realize to what extent today’s society affect the environment, how the general public is becoming more aware of the problem and willing to do something about it. That humankind is disturbing the natural balance in the world by its way of living has been especially evident in recent years (Wood, 2007; Olijnyk, 2007). Earlier environmental changes and the human effect on the environment slowly appeared, making the effects less noticeably. The last year’s large natural disasters and climate changes, such as hurricanes and drafts, have elevated the general public of their impact on the environment. This is being displayed through great national attempts to create environmental protocols, reducing discharges and so forth. Such an example is “Agenda 21” which is environmental conventions, reached by the world’s governments in Rio in 1992. That agreement was followed up in Johannesburug in 2002, where a 10 year long program was created (SoU 2004:119). Furthermore the Swedish government has initiated changes in their environmental work in order to meet the demands from the agreements in Rio and Johannesburg, the European Union and the population (SoU 2006:39). But more importantly it has also created a strong sense of individual willingness to do something, to change behaviour in order to somewhat restore the balance in nature, or at least decrease the negative effects of the consumption society. People are becoming inclined to give up some of their personal comfort in order to be more environmental friendly. This can be demonstrated through travelling by bus instead of by car, by saving electricity, by buying environmental friendly products and by supporting products and services that are produced locally in order to reduce waste even though those efforts might mean higher prices and less comfort.

This change in the awareness of the environment has led to a shift in the demand for environmental friendly products from the public. Many grocery stores today provide organic-, echo-, toxic free products and so forth, as alternatives to the regular products. Which can be seen as a result of the environmental awareness of people and the increased demand for healthier food.

1.2 Problem Discussion

The change of which aspects that people value and consider when considering a purchase has created a new trend in the market. Whereas low price earlier often was a very important factor, issues such as how the item has been produced, what it contains and if there are any toxics or chemical additives in it has become determinant factors for a large group of people, whether to buy or not. However it should be said that even if the environmental issues are a concern, still the price is one of the most important determines for many people.

Traditionally marketing has focused on the marketing mix and the four P:s of marketing, product, price, place and promotion (Kotler, 2005). However a marketing approach focusing on creating customer value and relationships has attracted interest the last decades.
“Consumer value is the cornerstone of any marketing challenge”
Luas et al., 2007

Value can be created by focusing on the customer and building a trusting relationship that both parts benefit from. The approach has been widely investigated (Khalifa, 2004) and used within business to business marketing but it can be applied also to the consumer market. Environmental friendly awareness requires the customer to engage actively in order to gain information about the products features, origin and effect on the environment. The consumer does not base their purchase decision solely on factors that are easy to compare such as price. The purchase is built on deeper values which to a certain degree is a matter of interpretation. The bond between end customer and the dealer has thereby become less mobile and factors such as trust and relationship are significant factors.

Internet is an ever increasing media. The access and use of the Internet increase every year. 60 % of Sweden’s population used internet on a daily basis in 2006 (SCB, 2007). Many companies make use of a webpage to present them since it is a cheap marketing tool and an easy way for people to gain information.

Environmental awareness requires the customer to gather information why the Internet can be argued to be a useful instrument. Groceries and food are purchases that concern all parts of the population since everybody has to eat. With all those aspects in mind it is interesting to further investigate how and if environmental friendliness can be used by the general dealers for marketing purposes. Can the environment and an approach signalling environmental consideration be used as a way to position a company and can it thereby be a strategic tool?

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate if and how companies display environmental friendliness in their marketing strategy and how it is presented on their company webpage’s.

1.3.1 Research Questions

Based on the problem discussion and to fulfil the purpose of the thesis, the authors formulated the following research question;

- To what extent do general dealers use environmental friendly thinking in their marketing?
  - Do the general dealers communicate a message of environmental friendliness on their webpage’s?
  - Is the message portrayed in the webpage’s consistent with the message communicated in the general dealer’s stores?

1.4 Definitions

Environmental friendly: The term is only allowed to be used in association with a product/service if it enhance the environment or does not affect it at all (Konsumentverket, 2007).
Introduction

Ecologic: The definition concerns how cultivating and food affects the environment. Ecological agriculture is conducted in line with the nature. Chemical additives are replaced by using and stimulating natural processes. Ecological food contributes to decrease the impact on environment and allows animals to behave naturally (Konsumentverket, 2007).

Many consumers want to behave in a way that minimize how he/she affect the environment. A general consumer do not spend time and effort to investigate the difference between different definitions associated with environmental friendliness. Environmental friendliness, ecological and green terminologies are generally seen as words with the same or similar meaning. Environmental friendliness, ecology and green thinking will therefore all be used in this thesis as words that is good for the environment, and no difference will be made between them, even though there is an actual difference in the defined meaning of the words.

Homepage: The start or front page of a webpage.

Webpage: General definition of the entire site.

General dealer: Food retailer (Coop, ICA, Willys, Hemköp and Lidl)
2 Frame of Reference

This chapter present the theoretical framework that the method and analysis is built on. First general aspects of marketing such as value, different value strategies and the marketing mix are investigated and explained. Those views of marketing is used and built upon in the sections following which are investigating the history and present use of green marketing as well as internet marketing. This structure has been chosen in order to give the reader a chance to evaluate green marketing and environmental friendliness from a broad set of principles, starting broad to get narrower.

2.1 Marketing

For decades marketing has focused on attracting new customers, known in marketing theory as marketing mix management and the four Ps of marketing (product, price, place and promotion). During the last decade the focus has shifted towards issues concerning having customers and taking care of them, centering on relationships, networks and interaction (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995). Such type of marketing is referred to as relationship marketing. The focus has moved from firms and products to customers and value (Mele, 2007). Some authors even suggest that relationship marketing represent a new paradigm (Grönroos, 1994). It has become important for companies to create and sustain a relationship with all who they interact with, its suppliers, market intermediaries, the public and most importantly their customers (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). Marketing and marketers has come to understand the importance of valuing and maintain a long term relationship which is characterized by trust and loyalty. Instead of attaining new customers, which can be costly, but not really caring about them once they have made their purchase.

Value is an essential part of relationship marketing. A well known and successful marketing strategy has emerged which entail providing a greater perceived value to customers, compared with the value provided by competitors, so called superior value Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). Companies frequently enhance their productivity and quality in order to retain operational improvement. However operational effectiveness is useless unless it is appreciated by the company’s customers. An organization needs to identify its value strategy in order to act and support operations that are desired by the customers and thereby will be possible to translate into sustainable profitability (Porter, 1996). Conventional marketing and value can be translated to green marketing and environmental friendly strategies since eco-product customers often consider a broad set of factors, where other factors than just price may be relevant, when considering to purchase. This mean that customers that want to be environmental friendly value that the product and the way it is produced should be environmental friendly.

2.2 Value

“Consumer value is the cornerstone of any marketing challenge”
Lucas et al, 2007

Value is defined by Porter (1996) as the combination of the usefulness of the price and no-price benefits offered. Value is a relative measure since it is established by the targeted customer group through comparing and relating diverse marketing offers. Furthermore Porter identifies the term value driver as the feature of a product or service which is the greatest reason to choose exactly that offer. Such value drivers may be based on both emotional and rational incentives.
Walters (1999) suggests that value can not be defined without taking the costs of the offer into consideration. Therefore the value an offer possesses is defined by its advantages in comparison with its costs. Value can also be seen as the process from identifying customer needs and applicability for customers to customer’s satisfaction (Best, 2000). Efficient marketing is then to generate a set of benefits delivered to the customer at a certain, total cost which leads to a superior value for the customer.

A strategy based on value and added customer value include aspects such as identifying, producing and delivering a combination of benefits that are related to price and non-price that customers are looking for (Walters, 1999).

### 2.3 Strategy and Competitive Advantage

The purpose of a business strategy is to show how a corporation can continually create more value (Rodriguez et al, 2002). Which is accomplished through positioning the company, how attractive the industry is and how persistent the corporations supporting competitive advantages are. Also Porter (1996) suggests that value is strongly related to competitive advantage. A sustainable competitive advantage is a competitive advantage that is not momentary but continues to give the company a unique position which is beneficial and creates value. Such a sustainable competitive advantage is created through the corporation’s resources, capabilities and activities that are difficult to imitate and substitute by current or potential customers(Rodriguez et al, 2002). Successful marketing managers must identify and sustain competitive advantage in order to survive and prosper (Hamel & Prahalad, 1993). For a general dealer a strategy could be to become more green in the product range and thereby focus on selling environmental friendly and ecological food products. By being successful in doing so the general dealer could get a competitive advantage compared to its competitors.

#### 2.3.1 Sustainable Competitive Advantage through Strategic Pricing

One view of how a sustainable competitive advantage can be reached is through pricing. This approach stress that the price of a product or service should be based on the customers’ perceptions of the value, rather than the costs for producing and selling the offer (Nimer, 1975; Monroe, 1990). The perceived value is defined as the price a customer is prepared to pay for the benefits that the product delivers. The benefits and costs can be both direct and associated with the product (Monroe, 1990). The method can be used in several ways (Thompson & Coe, 1997). One common approach to using strategic pricing is by using the customer’s perception that a higher price means greater quality and thereby greater benefits. Another way of using the method quite differently is through producing the same items as a famous brand but settle on a lower price. Such a strategy is characterized by large quantities, similar or the same qualities but lower prices. Thompson & Coe (1997) stress how important it is to meet the customer’s needs in terms of quality, value and price in order to become successful in the long term, while simultaneously be profitable and secure a superior position. Meaning that pricing should be used in a dynamic way to meet the demands of the targeted customers.

#### 2.3.2 Sustainable Competitive Advantage through Adding Value

A competitive advantage that is based on value is characterized by the benefits, or qualities, that increase the attractiveness of the market offer to the targeted customers (Porter, 1996).
The concept of customer value as an essential factor to consider in gaining a competitive advantage has become constantly more important (Woodruff, 1997; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Porter (1996) means that being competitive is about being different. It requires choosing a different and special set of activities in order to deliver a unique combination of value. One example of such competitiveness is Ikea’s strategy. Ikea target young furniture buyers who want high fashion for a low cost. The company’s “do it yourself” policy entails minimal help from sales staff and require that the customer transport and assemble the items themselves. However the very same strategy also enable the company to have significantly lower prices than it’s competitors. Furthermore Ikea provide offer of childcare and extended opening hours, unlike other furniture retailers. This enables their targeted customer, the young working adult without nannies, to make their purchases at the time which fit them best. By being different Ikea has provided a value to their customers that differentiate the company from their competitors and make them successful.

2.3.3 Strategic Positioning

Strategic positioning is about building a picture of the market and the interrelationships between the targeted customers, competitors and the competitive advantage. The company should target a segment of the market where it can satisfy customer needs better than it’s competitors, based on the company’s distinctive strengths (Brooksbank, 1994). Strategic positions can emerge from three different sources; the customers need, the customer’s accessibility or the range of a company’s products or services. Needs-based positioning focus on if the company’s strategy is about serving most or all the needs of a particular part of it’s customers. Access-based positioning focus on customers that is accessible in different ways, which can be based on geography, how dense the customers are situated and so forth. Variety-based positioning centre on the product or service varieties rather than customer segments. It can be to produce only a subset of an industry’s products. A company can base it’s strategic position on one or a combination of the three (Porter, 1996).

Having defined positioning, Strategy can be identified as the creation of a unique, valuable position, involving a different set of activities (Porter, 1996). A company that chooses a set of activities that are different from its competitors, has positioned itself effectively strategically. If the same set of activities would meet all demands, needs, varieties and access everyone the need for strategic positioning would not exist as all companies would be able to perform all activities and operational excellence would determine success.

2.4 Promotion

Promotion activities are such activities that have a direct and fierce impact on the targeted market. It is therefore important to carefully select which promotion activities to engage in (Herrera et al, 2002). In their market communication mix, Duncan and Everett (1993) bring up five main functions of marketing communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Advertising</th>
<th>4. Direct Marketing</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Sales Promotion</td>
<td>5. Packaging</td>
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<td>3. Public Relations</td>
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The intention with promotion is to directly communicate a message to the consumer and is a large part of the marketing mix and budget. (Blattberg, Briesch and Fox, 1995)

Advertising

Advertising itself both has strengths and weaknesses and the main use for advertising is to create brand awareness. But often advertising is and has to be complemented with for example sales promotion. This is mainly due to that advertising itself is unable to get the actual sale. Perhaps the most important strength with advertising is that it is fairly cheap compared to other market communication tools. Another weakness with advertising is that consumers in general mistrust advertising or are sceptical to it. If this is the case for a marketer he or she should try to communicate the message through channels that are more trust worthy or combine it in public relations campaigns. This is why it is important to know that advertising is a part of the communication mix and often have to be combined with other marketing functions. (Batra et al, 1996). Generally the impact of advertising may differ depending on if the company uses a push or pull strategy in their campaigns. It is important that the brand manager develops a coordinated marketing program. Batra et al (1996) mention that if a company develops a prestige product with a premium price it is important that the manager uses the advertising to reinforce the idea of quality and prestige. Dvorak (2007) proposes that the numbers of advertisements and the media they are portrayed in has increased. Newspapers, TV and Internet are flooded by adverts why people has become somewhat resistant to advertisement.

Sales Promotion

Batra et al (1996) divides sales promotion into two subcategories of promotion, consumer promotion and trade promotions. The first category deal with coupons, sampling and rebates and so forth, while trade promotions include slotting allowances, allowances for featuring the products in retail advertising. The goal with them is to get the consumers to try a product or repurchase it. Sales promotion is important from the aspect that it is more than often combined with the various types of advertising, which is also were the strength with sales promotions lie. This is also a good way to get consumers to try new products and create or generate awareness about them. Sales promotions are signified by that they are often run under a limited time, or that there are a limited supply of the products, which forces the consumer to act and decide quickly before the promotion ends or the dealer is out of stock. If a company with good public relations run a sales promotion, many consumers automatically assume that it has to be a good deal for a good product. Low & Mohr (2000) found that companies in average spend a majority of their marketing budget on sales promotions. However the outcome of such short time projects are not always associated with increased sales as a sense of persistence to the stress of sales promotion has appeared. The solution can be to focus on constant features instead.

Public relations

Earlier public relations has been used as a mean to enhance the company public image in the eyes of stakeholders such as employees, government, shareholders and so forth. This view on public relations are still widely used, but there is a new component added, marketing public relations. Today consumers are exposed to various types of advertising day in and day out. This has led to that many consumers do their best to avoid it or has a sceptical point of view to the messages advertising send. Because of this many consumers has become hard to reach in conventional ways. To reach out to these consumers many companies use parts of their communication budgets in the area of public relations for pure mar-
marketing purposes (Batra et al, 1996). Grunig (2000) means that the world is becoming increasingly globalized, why public relations can be used as a way to connect and interact with targeted customers. This can take different forms, such as sponsoring events and sports, product placement and company magazines (Batra et al, 1996). By doing this a company not only build brand awareness, but also generate a trustworthiness for the company or institution. This combined with advertising allow companies to reach the more sceptical consumers.

**Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing includes most of the types of electronic marketing, such telemarketing, TV, radio and direct mail and so forth. These types of marketing tools aim at generating a direct response to the communicated message. According to Batra et al (1996) direct marketing has two main advantages compared to regular advertising.

1. The ability to target specific, individual consumers, with an offer that is tailored to that consumer.
2. The ability to directly measure response.

Grunig (2000) means that Internet created new opportunities to communicate directly to customers and reach persons in different locations. Batra et al (1996) continues with that the goal of direct marketing unlike traditional mass media marketing, is not just to build awareness or change preference, but to generate an action. This can either be an order or a request for more information, a visit to a dealer or a store.

**Packaging**

The packaging is the ultimate chance for the producer to catch the customers eye when he or she is standing in front of the retail shelf and is about to choose. The package can tell the consumer what the brand represent and what the product is like, even before it is opened. Adamson (2007) means that the variations of the same product category today, is so great that the packaging must stand out and clearly attract the customers eye. Furthermore he states that a package that communicate simply and clearly what it contains and what it promises to deliver, is often the most successful. Packaging is a way for the brand to reinforce the difference between itself and the brand lying next to it. Present trends are green, smart and simple coverings. Many consumers today wants to be environmental friendly, but does not have the time or energy to scrutinize the package. Therefore the green features should be clearly and trustworthy marked. The coverings should also be smart in order to differentiate, adapted to the purpose and be easy to use (Adamson, 2007).

**Integrated Marketing Communications**

Above the components of the marketing mix are presented as separate functions, however it is important to know that good marketing communication programs succeed in combining these components in ways that support and reinforce each other. When dealing with marketing communications it is important not to only raise brand awareness, or get sales trial or repurchases, but to do all this at the same time. Batra et al (1996) argue that marketing communication material should attempt to reach the communication goals simultaneously. Lee & Park (2007) argue that all the messages communicated through different marketing channels needs to be integrated and convey the same message, in order not to confuse but attract the customer.
2.5 Green Marketing

Green marketing is marketing that include environmental issues in the marketing efforts. The main idea is that customers that are provided with information of the environmental effect of the products they are considering buying, can and will take this information into account when deciding which product to purchase. Those aspects will in turn make companies more inclined to produce products that are better from an environmental point of view (Rex & Baumann, 2007).

2.5.1 The History of Green Marketing

The first signs of interest in green marketing could be seen in the 1970s but it was not until the late 1980s and the 1990s that environmental friendly or ecological marketing gained attention from a broader audience. Researchers argued for a rapid growth in the use of ecological products which represented a shift in consumption behaviour (Prothero, 1990). Much research was conducted on the subject which identified a greater awareness of the environment from the public. Furthermore the findings showed an increased demand for green products from consumers and that people were inclined to pay additional costs for environmental friendly characteristics (Mintel, 1991). Furthermore the view of green management as a profitable strategy arose, since green corporations ideally use less raw material, waste less and produce less pollutions (Wasik, 1996). The interest in green marketing from corporations rose as a result of all of those aspects. Companies claimed to have changed to a more environmental friendly approach and promotion and advertisement containing green information rocketed (Crane, 2000). Companies such as McDonald’s, Merck and Quaker Oats were praised for their environmental efforts in terms of adopting environmental policies, recycling efforts, energy efficiency, corporate responsibility and so forth (Wasik, 1996). The positive response those efforts gave in the press were examples of how environmental efforts could pay.

However as research progressed, findings emerged showing that the positive attitudes toward environmental friendliness did not show in increased sales of green products. The actual growth of green consumerism was found to be very little and a difference between concern and actual purchase was identified. Although the market share of green products continued to slowly increase, the earlier boom or the remarkable growth of environmental products were no longer a reality (Peattie, 1999; Crane, 2000).

A dominating approach to green marketing that evolved during this period was the Holistic view. Representatives of the Holistic view meant that marketers and corporations adopting an environmental friendly strategy must, due to the nature of environmental issues, consider the entire chain of events the company enrolls in. How a product is made cannot be separated from how it is sold and how it affects the environment. According to the Holistic view events such as planning, production, product features, logistics, packaging as well as promotion and advertisement is a part of the marketing process (Wasik, 1996; Ottman, 1993). Green or ecological features signal genuine environmental benefits. It is therefore important for customers to be able to trust the dealer’s declaration of environmental friendly offers. As well as it is essential that the dealer provides information that enables the trust from the customer. Environmental friendliness is about ecological, sustainability regarding all the features of the product and the production process, therefore it is logical that green marketing concerns deeper aspects than just traditional promotion. Wasik (1996) means that eco labelling and certification is a way to practically verify the message communicated.
2.5.2 Eco Labels and Green Sales

Eco labels have emerged as the main marketing tool, since green marketing was introduced in the 1990s. However eco labels still represent a very small share of the total market which partly depends on the fact that they have been directed towards consumers that are very aware of environmental issues and their effect on the environment (Rex & Baumann, 2007).

This can be compared to the Swedish food retail industry where three large actors can be found. ICA controls about 35 percent of the market, KF and Axfood Sweden AB manage 20 percent each. (SoU, 2001:20) ICA is a cooperation consisting of individual dealers. Both KF and Axfood are organized under concept controlled chains. The food consumption in Sweden is only slightly growing and is not going through any large changes over time. However there are opportunities for growth. The industry has recognized the opportunity in exporting high quality products to new markets.

The sales of ecological food has increased constantly since the beginning of the 1990-ies. The increase was 15 % in 2006 and 8 % in 2005 according to Ekolantbrukarna (Svenska Dagbladet, 2007). The majority of the ecological food is sold at general dealers. The sales of ecological groceries represented 6 Billion SEK in Sweden in 2006. However this only represent 4 % of the total sales of the total grocery sales. The general dealers report that the sales of ecological products could be greater. However there are an insufficient number of ecological farmers and producers. Therefore the demand is greater than the supply. Ecological products have become a scarce commodity and existing products are always sold out. The general dealers report that ecological items such as dairy products, flour products and meat have a huge demand. One of the main reason why people argue for that they do not purchase ecological products is that they think ecological products are much more expensive compared to the conventional ones. But according to Konsumentverket (2004) there are very seldom large price differences between ecological and ordinary products. In most cases the difference is no more than 10%.

ICA is the largest general dealer of ecological groceries. The company sold ecological products for 900 Million SEK in 2006. Coop sold ecological products for totally 780 Million SEK in 2006, however COOP has the greatest variety in the supply of ecological groceries. Axfood, which is the supplier and owner of Hemköp and Willy's, are the third greatest actor in the market. Axfood sold ecological food for 250 Million SEK in 2006 (Svenska Dagbladet, 2007).

In the ecological product range that can be found in the general dealers stores most product categories are represented. According to Konsumentverket (2004) the three most common ecological products sold in the stores are, milk (1.5% vol.), coffee and hard bread.

Conclusively ecological products seems to be a growing segment in a quite mature market. Green marketing did not correspond to the expectations it were given in the 1990s. However the concept is now highly interesting again. The demand for ecological products is increasing from customers. Eco labelling has become the main tool to verify the ecological features of products.

2.5.3 Ecological Marketing Strategy

Making use of a marketing strategy is, as previously described, about measuring the demand from customers or anticipating a future demand, segment and target the market, and
thereafter positioning the company/product/service, which hopefully will result in a competitive advantage. Green marketing is presently the same as ecological labelling, in other words the product. The other three traditional marketing tools price, place and promotion has been left out which according to Rex & Baumann (2007) results in a position where it is doubtful if a competitive advantage is reached.

Solér (1997) propose that a decision to buy can be based on the situation, the context and the object; the consumer’s ability and motivation to process information or the person and its lifestyle. Price, quality and accessibility is important to various degrees for a customer considering purchasing environmental friendly products depending on how the consumer value environmental features and the reliability of those features.

The price of environmental friendly products are in some cases higher than the prices of the ordinary alternatives. Solér (1997) stress that the price of environmental friendly products has a large importance for different customer groups when considering to purchase. A higher price compared to the ordinary alternative can be determining factor for some consumers, verifying the accurateness of the products green features. Others do not consider the price at all but choose the environmental friendly alternative regardless. Some purchase green products when the price is comparable to the ordinary alternative. Quality is another determinant factor when considering buying environmental friendly products. Some customers are willing to accept lower quality (such as wash powder that does not remove all stains since it does not contain certain chemicals). Others are not willing to sacrifice their personal comfort and purchase the ordinary alternative in such cases. Accessibility is the third determinant factor when considering purchasing green products or not. Many persons view the effort to actively look for environmental friendly products as an obstacle. Such consumers are not willing to actively search for locations where green products are promoted or scrutinize products on the shelf’s which are poorly labelled or not actively promoted. Such consumers buy environmental friendly products that are easy to access and identify in the store. Consumers that are very dedicated to environmental friendliness are willing to sacrifice time and efforts to actively search and assure themselves of the validity of the green features.
Rex & Baumann (2007) suggest that green marketing could adopt and learn many tools and techniques from traditional marketing, in order to make use of other means than labelling in order to promote green products. Such efforts could be to address a broader range of customers, not only targeting green consumers by promoting the environmental friendly features of the product as one of the appeals of many. It could also be to engage more actively in the creation of the market and make strategic use of the traditional positioning strategies of price, place and promotion.

### 2.6 Internet Marketing

Nielsen (2002) means that Webpage’s are a valuable property of a company. The use of webpage’s and the services they provide increase every day. Potential customers use them to get an opinion about a company and its offers before conducting business. Therefore the importance of a company’s homepage cannot be measured in revenues from e-commerce, foremost it is the company’s face to the world.

The homepage (the front page of the webpage) is the most important page on any webpage (Nielsen, 2002). The homepage is the first page that come up when using the company’s online address. It is the page which gets more views from users than any other page. Users might also access other pages of the webpage directly when using links from search engines and other webpage’s. However the homepage is frequently used after having looked at the particular side of entrance, since the user can get a quick and good overview of the site by using it.

#### 2.6.1 Webpage Design

A webpage should be designed so it is possible to navigate the site easily. The content should be laid out and organized so it can be searched and easily found (McGovern et al, 2002). A webpage don’t necessarily need to be flashy or graphic or visually driven, the practical aspect of a webpage is more important. The site should be adapted to the user, so it is easy for the user to access information. Most people use the web to do things and find content. Usability is a crucial attribute on the web, if the users do not find what they are looking for they can turn elsewhere easily, it only takes one click (Nielsen, 2001). Nadkarni & Gupta (2007) found that goal-directed users find webpage’s with low complexity most satisfactory while experimental users were appealed by web-pages making use of animations, audio- and video formats and so forth. Goal directed users want to find the information they are searching for fast and easy why few colours, graphics and animations are desired. While those features enjoy and stimulate users visiting a web-page just for the fun of it.

Reading activities and search- and navigation activities are the two things that are most frequently conducted on webpage’s (McGovern et al, 2002). Therefore the organisation of the content should be such that it is easy to navigate and search. The most important factor for web design is simplicity. The online readers are marked by four characteristics:

- They know what they are searching for broadly but not exactly.
- They don’t read thoroughly. The online readers are practical, impatient and in a hurry, therefore they scan read.
• They are sceptical and conspicuous since they know that there are a lot of irrelevant and default information on the web.

• They are conservative. When online readers have found a webpage of like, they stick with it.

Therefore the most important characteristic of a webpage is to make it easy to read (McGovern et al, 2002). Simple guidelines are; dark text on bright background, sans serif fonts, and reasonable font sizes and so forth. Furthermore the designer needs to regard the fact that people scan read. Therefore the presentation and the content should be adopted to such behaviour, which can be through clear and attractive headings, summaries and short paragraphs. Marketers should not use webpage’s as they facilitate traditional marketing, which focus on gaining attention. When someone access an webpage they already have chosen to go there. The person has come to the site with a need, the webpage assignment is to full fill that need.

An good structure that is easy to follow is the most important feature of an webpage (McGovern et al, 2002). A good structure is in most cases the same thing as conventional structure. Users know that links they have used are purple and that unused links are blue. To change the colours of the links is not innovative, it just confuses the reader. Thereby not said that graphics are unimportant, but they should have a supporting role enhancing the presentation and content. Some characteristics that are often used and considered standard are:

1. Global navigation: The most important links, or headings, to other parts of the webpage. Those links are presented and look the same on every page (McGovern et al, 2002). The global navigation begins with a “home”-link which leads back to the homepage.

2. Masthead: Is area at the absolute top of the page. It contains a logo to the left and a search box on the left (McGovern et al, 2002). The search function is one of the most important functions of a webpage since it enables the users to find information easy and without effort (Nielsen, 2002). However in order for a search engine be functional for the users it must be designed so that the outcome of the search is structured properly and links to appropriate sides on the webpage. The masthead have become smaller as the art of web design has evolved, in order to maximize the amount of space that can be used to present information (McGovern et al, 2002).

3. Three-column navigation: The optimum way to present a maximum quantity of content in a manner that is easy to navigate and read is to present it in three columns (McGovern et al, 2002). The left column contains navigation, the middle reading content, and the right features.

Navigation is as previously stated a very important feature of webpage’s (McGovern et al, 2002). Following the characteristics above often allows the user to easily find the way and navigate the site. The navigation and search becomes more critical the larger a sit gets.

2.6.2 Homepage Design

The design of the homepage should resemble and represent the rest of the webpage (Nielsen, 2002). Therefore many of the characteristics described above are concern the homepage as well. However some homepage features are prominently important and might dif-
fer since it is the start page of the webpage, which should inform the users and direct them to the desired information. The homepage should not be too large and display the most important message. Information that is placed so that the users must scroll in order to reach it is viewed and used less frequently. The most important information, or the message that the company aims to convey should be placed in the top to the left. Too many colours, animations, type-sizes and so forth confuses the reader. A clear structure, using a few colours enables the user to quickly absorb the information and the message portrayed.

2.7 Chromatics (Science of Colours)

Colours play an essential role in how people perceive things (Fridell Anter, 2006). The existence or non-existence of colours can emphasize a form, structure or material. Furthermore, colours and the combination of colours are associated with different meanings, ideologies and concepts.

Traditionally colours has been divided into two large categories cold colours and warm colours (Gundersen et al., 1996; Küller, 1995). The warm colours are related to fire and the sun and are represented by the yellow, orange and red colours. The cold colours are connected to ice, snow and water and are represented by blue and green colours. Those scales of colours can also be labelled as active and passive colours. The term originate from the idea that the humanity’s way of acting and being depend on the colours of different phases of the day. The passive colours are blue, they have a calm and soothing effect and belong to the night. Dusk and the dark is a signal that it is time to rest and pulse and blood pressure falls. The active colours are yellow and are characterised by light, life, growth and are a signal for awakening and activity. Many phenomenons in society originate from those associations of colours. Red represents stop and green represent go in traffic lights. Cold and warm water or industrial warning colours are labelled the same way.
Figure 2.2 Colours and associated words (Gundersen et al., 1996, p. 22).

Some combinations of colours seem to belong together, they harmonise with each other (Steen in Fridell Anter, 2006). It can be colours in the same scale, meaning different shades of the same original colour but it can also be due to the strength of the colours, how white or how black they are. Such colours are automatically grouped together as a result of the natural function of the eye. By using combinations of colours that harmonise a sense of unification and balance can be created.
2.7.1 Theoretical Summary

The presented theory aim at giving the reader of this thesis a good background in order to follow and understand the concepts for the analysis of the thesis. What can be seen is that there is a gap in how conventional and green marketing are practiced and applied in the reality. In green marketing today there is a focus on the product, while promotion, place and price almost are left out. Also the way that green products are promoted differ from conventional products.

What is suggested by Rex and Bauman (2007), is that green marketing should become more similar to conventional marketing in order to reach more customer segments than the already green consumers. This is also supported by Solér (1997) who states that most consumers do not mind to buy ecological products as long as they are easy to find and access.

In the beginning of the theoretical framework value and competitive advantage are brought up. This is done in order to show the reader of the thesis that value can differ, depending on what type of consumer segment that is targeted. For the ecological and environmentally friendly consumers the main value of a product is that it is produced in an environmentally friendly way, which mean that the value is in the actual product. this green value is something that a company or general dealer could use to create and obtain a competitive advantage compared to its competitors.

The part with home and webpage design and chromatics enables the reader to understand how the researched home and webpage’s are interpreted and viewed.
3 Method

This chapter aims to describe how the information was collected and analyzed in order to fulfill the purpose.

According to Jacobsen (2002) most people can agree on that scientific research is a systematic research of one or several questions. What people however can disagree on is the term systematic research. The author argues that every day people are bombarded with information, but this information is not systematically collected. He continues with that science and research is characterized by that the collection, the analysis and the presentation of data is done in a systematic way.

When someone performs an empirical research, independent of what research method that is used, there is a risk that the result you will come to actually is created by the research itself. This is according to Jacobsen (2002) called research effect.

In order to fulfill the purpose, general dealers in Sweden will be investigated. This decision was made due to the characteristics of the thesis and the focus on green marketing. The interest of buying ecological and environmental friendly food products has increased dramatically during the 21st century. According to SCB (2006) sales of ecological products between 2004 and 2005 increased at a rate of totally 40%. Ecological meat increased by 94%, vegetables by 77% and other ecological products by 45%.

There are presently five large companies active on the Swedish market. In order to investigate their approach to environmental friendliness, their webpage’s will be studied. Webpage’s are one way for a company to communicate their strategy and message to their customers. Certainly not all customers who buy food visit the company’s webpage. But even so it can be seen as a portal for the company reflecting the image they want to portray. Further more webpage’s can be especially interesting to investigate considering the subject of the thesis, since customers valuing environmental aspects often make extra efforts to ensure themselves of the products content. The company webpage’s that are examined for this thesis is Coop, ICA, Lidl, Hemköp and Willys.

Further more when the webpage’s are examined and discussed the authors intend to take the research one step further. The second part of the empirical framework will contain a visit to the actual stores of the already examined general dealers. This is done to be able to compare the impressions and information that are collected on the webpage’s. The intention with this is to see if the same messages are sent on the two different marketing places and from this create a base for deeper discussions and analysis.

3.1 Method Used

The approach chosen to perform the investigation for this paper is viewing material published or presented on the companies’ webpage’s and how the interior and products are placed in the stores. The Internet is an interesting and developing media which is used increasingly frequently every year (SCB, 2007). It is a relatively cheap marketing tool which enables people to easily search and access information, which otherwise would have required much more effort to obtain. It is therefore interesting to investigate if general dealers use their webpage’s actively in order to communicate to their customers. It is especially interesting to view the webpage’s from a green perspective since an environmental approach I build on trust. The webpage’s are thereby a way to obtain information about environmental labels and specific products as well as the companies general green efforts. The
comparison of the information found on the webpage’s and the information found in the actual stores will make it possible to investigate if the messages are consequently communicated.

The research will be conducted in an qualitative manner. The research will be based on a few companies webpage’s instead of looking at as many as possible. This will be done partly because only a few general dealers exist in Sweden, therefore there are only a few actors which are large enough to actively use their webpage. Further more were the selection restricted to the five largest general dealers since the aim is to investigate a few actors thoroughly rather than many less completely. The intention and purpose is to investigate if and how companies use environmental friendliness in their marketing strategy. An in depth investigation and discussion of the findings will enable the purpose to be fulfilled and the research questions to be answered. There will however exist features of a quantitative approach in the research. This is due to that the researchers will use some of the findings in a quantitative way. It can for example be how many clicks it takes, on a company webpage, to find the required information or the number of hits a search for a specific word results in. According to Jacobsen (2002) one should not see qualitative and quantitative approaches as two opposites. Instead they should be viewed as two end points on a scale. By viewing it like this one can chose a qualitative method with quantitative features. Perhaps the largest difference between quantitative and qualitative approach is the degree of openness. While a quantitative method is not that open with already fixed and controlled alternatives a qualitative method is more open when the person conducting the survey or research does not control the answers to the same degree. Therefore it is argued that the approach for the paper is qualitative with a few elements of quantitative techniques.

3.1.1 Collection of Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework collected and used within this thesis has been gathered in two different ways. Partly has recognized authors within subjects such as marketing, value, green marketing and webpage design been used. The subjects has been thoroughly investigated through in turn tracing and investigating the references those authors have made use of. Furthermore has recent scientific articles been used in order to obtain the most recent findings within each area. Recognized academic search engines have been used in order to identify this research, among others Business Source Primer, Emerald, Academic Search Elite, Science Direct, and Blackwell Synergy.

3.1.2 Research Structure for the Webpage Investigations

When viewing webpage’s a person is bombarded with images and impressions. The messages that these send have to be interpreted and taken in consideration when conducting the research. So when viewing the webpage’s the researches intend to use a form of research structure that can be applied on all the companies. This is done to be able to give every researched webpage the same chance and fundamental base from the beginning. The structure used is presented below and also the reasons for using the question.

1. Do company X communicate a message of environmental awareness on their homepage?
Method

The webpage most important page is the homepage which is the entry and most frequently viewed (Nielsen, 2002). Therefore the question is used as a basis for the first impression of the company, if the company send a message of environmental awareness on their homepage. Often a consumer base their search on first impressions and also create a first opinion of the company, why it is of extra interest to investigate if environmental issues are considered to be so important that they should be communicated on the first page.

a. Is it easy or difficult to find information about company X environmental work?
Here the intention is to see to what degree the company uses environmental issues in their marketing. How important and seriously environmental issues are viewed can be identified through investigating how easy it is to find information about them.

b. Do company X show that it is a part of their strategy?
Based on the previous question this question takes it one step further and aim to find out if a consumer can see that this is a part of the strategy without reading the actual strategy. It can be manifested through if the company show that environment is important in terms of colours, how easy it is to find information, existence of a special environmental section and so forth.

2. Is it possible to search on specific words? What does the search show?

The intention with this question is to find out if a consumer can search after specific information regarding environmental work and products in an search engine at the webpage, and how it is displayed. Five words were chosen that are connected to environmental friendliness and is likely to be used by a consumer looking for information.

a. Miljö (Environment):
b. Miljövänliga produkter (Environmental friendly products):
c. Ekologiska produkter (Ecological products):
d. Miljömärkning (Environmental labelling):
e. Närproducerat (Locally produced):

3. Do company X have a range of environmental friendly products?

This question aim at finding out if the company have a special range of products that are environmental friendly, such as ecological products, and which information that can be found about them.

4. Do company X have an Environmental policy/strategy?

This question is used to first find out if the consumer can find and read the company environmental strategy. Second it can be used by a consumer to find out if a company actually work and live by the plan.

a. What does it say?

b. Do company X show or illustrate that they live by it?
5. **Other Comments**

This section gives the opportunity to make comments and to add additional information that can be relevant for the thesis. It could be issues that does not fit into any of the previous questions but still might be of interest for the thesis.

### 3.1.3 Research Structure for the Store Investigations

For the second part of the research, when visiting the actual stores, the following research structure was used as an foundation to originate from. The structure is used to view the general dealers with the same eyes and to give them the same opportunity when performing the research. Under each question a motivation of why the specific question is used can be found.

The research was only conducted in one store for each general dealer. Therefore it should be mentioned that the impressions and findings that was made are from the specific stores and may shift if another store should be examined in the same way.

1. **Do company X communicate a message of environmental awareness at the entrance?**

This question is used to identify if and how the store directly wants to send a message of environmental awareness to the consumer. The customer gets a first impression in the entrance which is essential for the view the customer develop about the store.

2. **Do company X have a range of environmental friendly products in store?**

The intention with this question is to see if the store sell environmental friendly and ecological products and also to what extend they do it. Solér (1997) stress that most customers are willing to buy ecological products but does not make any extra efforts to obtain them. Whether a store really tries to implement an environmental friendly strategy or just use talk about it can be viewed in the extent of provided environmental friendly products and how they are placed and labelled, enabling the customers to access them easily.

3. **How easy or difficult is it to find environmental friendly products?**

This question aim at finding out to what extend the store use ecological and environmental friendly products in the product range and how they are displayed in the store. The question connects to question 2 regarding whether an environmental strategy is really implemented or only communicated, which can be seen through how easy it is for the average customer to actually access ecological products.

   a. **Signs, Labelling, Specific (Green) Departments and Product placement?**
b. Does the general dealer have a information section with environmental information?

4. Do company X show in any way that they are working after their environmental policy? (if it was found on their webpage)

The purpose with this question is to see if the company policy is reflected inside one of the stores.

3.1.4 Aspects and Interpretations

During the research the authors of this thesis have tried to view all the content and information from a potential consumer perspective. The interpretations of how the webpage’s and the stores are viewed are based on the findings of customer behaviour, found in the theoretical framework. However one could not argue that the two authors represent the average consumer, but what has been done is that the research and findings are based on two different opinions of the impressions that can be received.

By working like this the used method becomes a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches. When performing a research you can either start from an already existing theory and test it, or you can go out in the reality and collect data that you later analyze and from that create theory. This is the main difference between deductive and inductive approaches (Jacobsen, 2002).

In the deductive approach which means that the research moves from theory to empirical findings. It can also be explained as a person collects knowledge in order to create expectations of the reality and then go out and see if the reality and the expectations are the same. Critics of this approach say that when a research is performed this way the researcher only look for the data he or she finds relevant and might support the expectations. By doing so one limits the data access and important information might be lost. It is argued that quantitative methods have to be deductive since they most often are limited from the beginning of the research. For example a survey already have fixed answers that the respondent can choose from. This is not the case for this research.

The inductive approach works the other way, it moves from empirical findings to theory. This mean that the researcher, without any expectations goes out in the reality and start collecting relevant data and information. Later he or she structures the gathered data and start to create theory from that. The purpose of doing this is not to limit what information the researcher is collecting. Critics of the inductive approach mean that it is impossible for an individual to go in the reality with a completely open mind. Independent on if they are aware of it or not, researchers will always have delimitations of what they find relevant or not. An inductive approach is more suitable for qualitative methods since it is more open to new and unexpected information. There are however a problem with that no researcher can be completely open, everyone have their limitations.

The discussion about qualitative and quantitative approaches in the method showed that a researcher does not have to choose to follow one approach, but can to some extend combine them. It is the same with the deductive and inductive approach. One can choose to have a more or less open minds when collecting data. This is what the authors chose to do for this thesis. When viewing and examine the webpage’s of the chosen companies the intention was to view them as open minded consumers that were searching for information within the topic of environment. However it was needed to have a structure to work from
when doing this, otherwise it would be easy for the researchers to move in with a too broad view. Another reason for using an organized structure was that the webpage’s should be looked at with the same view or from the same presumptions. To minimize the authors from controlling the research in to great extent the order of the researched companies was chosen by drawing lots. The order was:

1. COOP
2. Willys
3. ICA
4. Lidl
5. Hemköp

3.1.5 Trustworthiness and Relevance of Information

A research contains a method of collecting information. Independent of what kind of empirical information it is, it should fulfil the following two demands (Jacobsen, 2002);

1. It have to be valid and relevant.
2. The findings have to be reliable and trustworthy.

Validity

Validity and relevance of information and data collected for a research aim at making sure that the collected data really measures what was intended from the beginning and that what is measured on one data also can be applied on other data (Jacobsen, 2002 and Eliasson, 2006). It is also important to have and use the right equipment in order to be sure that the best possible outcome is received when collecting data (Eliasson, 2006). Further validity can be divided in two separate areas, internal validity and external validity. Internal validity focus on if what is measured really is what we think have been measured. External validity is about if the result from a limited area also is valid in other contexts. It also show if a result or an outcome can be generalized and be used in other situations. The external validity is also known as transferability (Jacobsen, 2002). The validity of the conducted research can be considered as high since the used method has a focus on a qualitative approach. This mean that the authors have conducted the research in a open minded manner. However this can also be what lowers the validity. The way that the research is conducted results in quite subjective findings that are interpreted by the authors. But this weakness is partly eliminated by the fact that a structure was used during the research. Further the authors believe that there is a degree of transferability of the findings and the way that the research was conducted. Since it is not the products itself that are in focus, but the way they are presented that is important, the result and used method also can be used on other industries.

Reliability

Reliability deal with if the research and used method can be trusted or not. Both Jacobsen (2002) and Eliasson (2006) bring up a basic question;

*Will the same result appear if the test or research is done a second time?*

If the answer is yes, the research can be seen as reliable. But if the answer is no the reliability of the research is low. The reason why the result differ from time to time can vary, but this indicate why it is important that research is done in the same way when they are conducted (Eliasson, 2006). Since the chosen method for this research has focused on a quali-
Method

tative approach it is problematic to say that the research has a high reliability. The presented findings has a very subjective value and consists of interpretations from the authors. However that is also the very strength of the chosen method. Data is not only collected but the meaning of the data is interpreted.

3.1.6 Use of Empirical Findings

The findings from the web research and the actual visit at the stores that are presented under the chapter empirical findings will be used for an in depth discussion. This discussion aim at answering the research questions and the purpose of the thesis. To make it interesting the authors first chose to compare the findings from the general dealers webpage’s with the findings from the store. For the second part the impressions between the five general dealers will be compared and analysed. The intention with using this order is to first see if the general dealers communicate the same messages on their webpage’s as they do in their stores. This analysis will be the base for the second part that aim at comparing the five general dealers with each other.
4 Empirical Findings

This chapter will present the findings that are found during the conducted research. Five general dealers have been investigated in two steps. First the general dealers’ webpage’s were investigated. Thereafter one convenient store of each general dealer were visited, in order to see if the findings corresponded to reality. The findings from each general dealer is presented separately. First a short introduction of the company is made. Then the findings from the internet investigation are presented and finally the findings from the visit to the convenient store are displayed.

The research has been conducted on five general dealers present in Sweden, Coop Willys, ICA, Lidl and Hemköp. All the dealers have been investigated from the same base and the authors have tried to find the answers to the questions presented in the method section. However when the research was conducted some of the questions could not be answered based on the information found on the webpage’s. Therefore the findings presented under some of the companies are less than others, what has been found is presented.

4.1 Coop

Coop Sverige is subsidiary to Coop Norden, one of the leading general dealers on the Nordic markets. Within Coop Sverige chains such as Coop Forum, Coop Bygg, Coop Extra, Coop Konsum and Coop Nära can be found. In turn Coop Norden is owned by KF which is a consumer corporative union. Under 2006 Coop Sverige had a turnover on 26 Billions and 8500 employees. Their vision is to create a better and safer daily life through profitable, membership owned stores. When they say better, they mean a broad supply, good prices and good service. By safer they mean, good product quality, honest product information, high demands on ethics, environment and health (Coop, 2007).

The first consumer corporative union was established in 1850. The intention with the corporative was to provide ordinary people with quality products to good prices. Later in 1899 KF was founded. Among other things KF was first on the Swedish market with supermarkets. During the 1980s the concern of environmental issues really started to spread and Coop was the first to offer consumers ecological products. Today consumers are more aware of what they are eating and want to know how their food has been produced and processed. Today Coop Sverige has the largest supply of ecological products on the market (Coop, 2007).

4.1.1 Findings from Coops Webpage

Date: 2007-11-13

Start time: 10.13

1. Does Coop communicate a message of environmental awareness on their homepage?

When first viewing Coops homepage the consumer do not get the impression of environmental work or awareness. The colours shift from blue to green with a white background. Also they do not have any direct offerings on environmental friendly or ecological products. This also means that a consumer not directly can see where he or she can find information about Coops environmental work.
Empirical Findings

a. Is it easy or difficult to find information about environmental work?

It is not hard to find such information but it requires that the consumer has a degree of understanding what he or she is looking for. It takes about 2-3 clicks to find this information. Under the heading “Om COOP” there is a whole section on ecology and Coop’s work within the area. It should be mentioned that when Coop talks about ecology, they also mean environmental work. Under this heading the consumer can find much information about environmental policy, ecological food, environmental labelling, ecological production and so forth.

b. Do Coop show that it is a part of their strategy?

By only looking at the homepage Coop does not send this message, this however is well compensated when the consumer has found the place for this information. Then Coop clearly and thoroughly presents what they want to do in the area of environmental work and how they are doing it. This is partly shown by that Coop has an environmental manager with its own heading under the ecology section. They have a clear focus on ecological work.

2. Is it possible to search on specific words? What does the search show?

It is not possible to do on the homepage since there is no search engine there so the consumer has to look under one of the headings to find this, for example “Om Coop”.

a. **Miljö (Environment):** Gave 87 hits. Here the consumer can find all sorts of useful information, from Coop’s broad environmental work to more specific issues such as environmental receipts.

b. **Miljövänliga produkter (Environmental friendly products):** Gave 2 hits. Both hits are irrelevant from a consumer perspective regarding product information.

c. **Ekologiska produkter (Ecological products):** Gave 25 hits. This search shows the hits it gave, clearly showed what products there is and Coop’s view on it. By searching on this the consumer can find most of the information that is within the area.

d. **Miljömärkning (Environmental labelling):** Gave 5 hits. When a consumer search on this he or she finds lot of relevant and useful information about the environmental labelling that Coop works with. For example one hit shows Coop’s environmental policy and what environmental labelling means from their perspective.

e. **Närproducerat (Locally produced):** Gave 3 hits. No one of these hits showed how and if Coop works with locally produced food.

3. Does Coop have a product range of environmental friendly products?

Coop has a broad spectrum of environmental friendly products, among other things they have their own brand that they call” Änglamark”. This however is not so well illustrated, so it requires that the consumer has a degree of awareness to find it even if it only takes two clicks to find it.

If the consumer clicks around on the webpage he or she can find a broad range of products for the consumer that wants to shop environmental friendly. Among other things the con-
sumer can find a clear list over what products that offers within the area. The webpage conveys a general impression of environment and ecology. It should however be mentioned that it is hard for the consumer to find information that verifies how these products are environmental friendly.

4. Does Coop have an Environmental policy/strategy?

Again this can be found under the ecology section so the consumer have to know what he or she is looking for if they want to take part of it.

a. What does it say?

“Coop Sweden and Coop Sweden subsidiaries shall take responsibility for the environment and contribute in affecting the society development in a more sustainable direction.” (Coop, 2007)

Coop Sweden and Coop Sweden subsidiaries shall in their markets be among the best in the area of environment. Environmental consideration shall be integrated in the business on the basis of the markets conditions. The efforts in the environmental area shall primary be preventive work.

b. Does Coop show or illustrate that they live by it?

The first impression is that Coop does not show or illustrate it. But if a consumer move on from the homepage and for example looks under the ecology section, Coop clearly show that they have a detailed plan of action within the area. They have a broad range of ecological and environmental friendly products and Coop also gives the consumer tips and advise how they can shop in a environmental friendly way.

5. Other Comments

It is important to mention that Coop differs between Environment/Ecology and Ethics. In the eye of the consumer these things often fall under the same area. But for Coop ethics is more focused on social responsibilities.

4.1.2 Findings from Visit to a Coop Convenient Store

Visit at company: Coop Konsum, in Torpa, Jönköping.

Date: 2007-11-27

1. Does Coop Konsum communicate a message of environmental awareness at the entrance?

The first thing that strikes you when entering the store is that the colours move in scales of green and white. This however has not anything to do with the environmental work from Coops side, but are the colours that they have used for a very long time. Inside the entrance there is an information disc of Coops environmental work and strategy. The first products inside the store are fruit and vegetables and here the consumer can find ecological and KRAV labelled products. The use of clear signs and posters are minimal and the consumer is not given a direct impression of environmental awareness.

2. Does Coop Konsum have a range of environmental friendly products in store?
In most of the product categories the consumer can find ecological and KRAV labelled products. There is however no direct departments that are used for these products, but the consumer can find them mixed with the ordinary product range. For example the ecological coffee is placed next to the ordinary coffee. One thing that should be noticed is that the authors could not find any fish products that fell within the area of environmental friendliness.

3. How easy or difficult is it to find environmental friendly products?

   a. Signs, Labelling, Specific (Green) Departments and Product placement?

First of there are no specific signs or departments for ecological products, the only outgoing product placement that were found was a very small cooling disk for KRAV labelled vegetables, but these products could also be found among the ordinary range of similar products. But in general to find ecological and environmental friendly products one has to look at and read on the product packaging. Some of the ecological products were of Coops own brand.

   b. Does the general dealer have an information section with environmental information?

As mentioned under question 1, the consumer can find this kind of information inside the store entrance. Here both product information and general information about Coops environmental work can be found in form of small flyers that the consumer can bring with him/her.

4. Does Coop Konsum show in any way that they are working after their environmental policy? (if it was found on their webpage)

When comparing the policies that were found with the impression of the store, the impression from the webpage was greater than the impression given in the store. A consumer is not given the same impression of the environmental work in the store as what was found on the webpage. Again however, a consumer can find the same information in the store, but the feeling that Coop Konsum live by it is not clearly communicated.

5. Other Comments

Can we get an inventory list of environmental friendly/ecological products?
How many articles does it contain?
Such list did not exist.
Another issue that should be mentioned is that when entering the store the authors took a flyer with the week’s offerings. In this flyer four ecological and KRAV labelled products could be found.

4.2 Willys

Willys is one of the leading general dealers with a focus on cutting prices. Their business can be found in 107 stores all over Sweden with a turnover on 13 Billions and has about 5000 employees. Willys started their business in 1975, but did not get the name until 1986. Today they are owned by Axfood. The business idea is to offer the consumers what Willys call, Sweden’s cheapest grocery bag and to provide the consumers with an inspiring store experience. Willys concern is to combine the lowest prices with a broad supply and range of products. Today Willys control approximately 8% of the market. (Axfood, 2007).

As Willys state themselves, they live for one thing only. To sell good food to a low price.

4.2.1 Findings from Willys Webpage

Date: 2007-11-13
Start time: 11.41

1. Does Willys communicate a message of environmental awareness on their homepage?

When first viewing the homepage a consumer could find it quite simple, but structured and easy to follow. The colours go in mainly red and white, which does not send a message of environmental awareness. However there are no signs of information about their environmental work or offerings, but the focus is on price.

   a. Is it easy or difficult to find information about environmental work?

A consumer can not find any information at all on Willys environmental work or similar. However the consumer can find a link to Axfood’s webpage were the information can be found.

   b. Does Willys show that it is a part of their strategy?

Willys do not show any of this. They have a clear, and only, focus on price and quality.

2. Is it possible to search on specific words? What does the search show?

They do not have a search engine. If a consumer has any questions he or she can e-mail them to the company.

3. Does Willys have a range of environmental friendly products?

When searching through the webpage a consumer will not find any information about such products or offerings. Again the overall focus is on price and quality.
Empirical Findings

4. Does Willys have an Environmental policy/strategy?

A consumer can not find Willys environmental policy or strategy. What is found is;
"We at Willys only works for one thing: To sell good food cheap."
(Willys, 2007)

5. Other Comments

There are links to Axfood’s webpage. Here the consumer can find most of the required information.

4.2.2 Findings from Visit to a Willys Convenient Store

Visit at company: Willys hemma, in Torpa, Jönköping.

Date: 2007-11-27

1. Does Willys communicate a message of environmental awareness at the entrance? (Colours, Layouts/signs, Structure)

The departments displayed right inside of the entrance are bread/crackers to the left and front and beverages to the right. Fruits and vegetables can be sighted behind the bread section. The interior is designed in orange with orange signs showing different product groups the larger product categories are displayed in different colours associated with that section such as green for fruit and beige for bread. Furthermore those are accentuated with pictures of such product. Willys therefore gives a neat and structured first impression. No message or signs of environmental friendliness can be seen or interpreted however.

2. Do Willys have a range of environmental friendly products in store?

The store does not contain a wide range of products within each category of product often only one alternative is presented or sometimes two, Willys cheap label and the market leading brand. Willys does not have any environmental friendly or ecological alternatives to the ordinary alternatives within most sections. Only three ecological products could be found in the store, during the visit, Coffee, Milk and Eggs.

3. How easy or difficult is it to find environmental friendly products?

a. Signs, Labelling, Specific (Green) Departments and Product placement?

Only three different ecological products could be found in the entire store. Those were placed among other similar products. No signs or placement accentuated their position. The products could only be recognized as ecological by the labels at the package.
Empirical Findings

b. Does Willys have a information section with environmental information?
The shop did not have any information section.

4. Do Willys show in any way that they are working after their environmental policy? (if it was found on their webpage)

No environmental strategy could be found at Willys webpage. The message communicated at the webpage are low prices which is the same message and impression given in the store. It can therefore be said that Willys follow the message conveyed at the webpage however no environmental aspect is to be seen.

5. Other Comments

Can we get an inventory list of environmental friendly/ecological products?
How many articles does it contain?

No list of the ecological products offered in store could be obtained.

The flyer with weekly special offers contained no offers of ecological products.

4.3 ICA

The ICA-concern (ICA AB) is the greatest actor in Sweden within retail trades. The group consist of the trading companies; ICA Sweden, ICA Norway and Rimi Baltic. The corporation has a total of 2300 stores in the three regions, some are owned by the company and some are privately owned. ICA also provides financial services to its Swedish customers through the ICA bank. Furthermore the company owns 5% of the 80 Netto stores in Sweden (ICA, 2007).

ICA was started in Sweden in 1917 by Hakon Swenson when he started “Inköpscentralen Hakonbolaget”. His original business idea was that the corporation would enable separate shop owners to do collective purchases, establishments and marketing. Today ICA AB is a joint venture, 40% is owned by Hakon Invest AB and 60% is owned by the Dutch Royal Ahold. The ICA-concern had a turnover of 67 395 million SEK and ICA Sweden had a turnover of 48 301 MSEK in 2006. The corporation has 1 397 stores in Sweden which are divided into four different types; ICA Nära, ICA Supermarket, ICA Kvantum and MAXI ICA Stormarknad (ICA, 2007).

4.3.1 Findings from ICAs Webpage

Date: 2007-11-13
Start time: 13.47
1. Does ICA communicate a message of environmental awareness on their homepage?

The homepage is present a lot of information. There are many small pictures and small headings. Even so the homepage is well structured in different sections and divided into different shades of red, ranging from orange to purple in combination with white. Furthermore, the headings in the top are carefully divided into categories that are relevant for the consumer which makes it easy to find the information that are wanted. However the homepage does not convey a message of environmental awareness and environmental thinking. However there is a link to ICAs environmental work on the homepage, which is clearly noticeable for the consumer since it is white and green. It is placed in the bottom of the homepage which shows that it is not considered to be the most important information the company want to communicate.

a. Is it easy or difficult to find information about environmental work?

There is an evident section and a link to ICAs environmental work on the homepage. It is not the first thing that the consumer notice since it is placed in the bottom of the page. If the link is used, the consumer is sent directly to the webpage section about ICAs environmental efforts. The section clearly portray how ICA view the environment and within which areas of environmental work they act. Information about ICAs environmental work can also be ordered.

It can be difficult for the consumer to find information about ICAs environmental work, if they do not notice the link on the homepage. Such information is not to be found under the headings in the top of the page. The environmental information is found under a heading called “Etik och Samhälle” (Ethics and Society) which in turn is found under a link called “Om ICA” in the top right corner which is not very easy to notice. The consumer has to click three times in order to reach the section about environmental friendliness, but probably more since it can be difficult to find.

b. Does ICA show that environmental issues are a part of their strategy?

There is a link on ICAs homepage which clearly send the user to the section about environment. This can be interpreted as an effort to portray an environmental friendly image and strategy.

2. Is it possible to search on specific words? What does the search show?

ICA has a search engine which enables the consumer to search for specific words. This is placed under the link “kundservice” and the user has to click one time in order to reach it. However the search engine only shows questions from customers and the answers to those made by ICA, it does not send the user to the section in ICAs webpage which concern the subject searched for. Many of the searches gave the same or partly the same result.

a. Miljö (Environment): Gave 44 hits. Those are structured under different categories such as shops, environment, general information and so forth.
b. **Miljövänliga produkter (Environmental friendly products):** Gave 72 hits. Structured in the same way as above. However all hits does not concern environment since the search engine targets hits both concerning environmental friendly and products. Hits can therefore relate to issues concerning products that are not specifically about environmental friendliness.

c. **Ekologiska produkter (Ecological products):** Gave 72 hits. Exactly the same hits as above. Also in this case can some hits be about products rather than ecology.

d. **Miljömärkning (Environmental labelling):** Gave 6 hits. All six are very relevant to the word searched for and the explanations given are informative. Concerns how ICA views specific labelling of environmental products and “Rättvisemärkning”.

e. **Närproducerat (Locally produced):** Gave 1 hit. Gives a thorough and informative answer about ICAs attitude towards products produced and sold close to the consumer.

3. **Does ICA have a range of environmental friendly products?**

ICA has a product range of environmental products. Information about those can be reached through three different ways if starting from the homepage. It is easier to obtain information about such products from the heading “butiker och varor” than from the link concerning ICAs environmental work. Offerings of products are the first thing that can be seen when using the link “butiker och varor”.

The customer must search a bit more to find information about ecological products or products with environmental labelling, about three clicks. However the information is structured logically under informative headings which make it easy to find it. ICAs brands for environmental friendly products are “ICA Ekologiskt” and “Skona”. It can be difficult to find information about specific environmental friendly products however since ICA focus on the environmental work rather than specific products.

4. **Does ICA have an Environmental policy/strategy?**

The consumer can find a link on the homepage which leads directly to information about the company’s environmental work. This section is creative and interactive which makes it amusing to at the same time as it is informative. Facts about environmental work, vision, goal and so forth can be found. A document containing 11 pages about ICAs quality-and environmental work can be downloaded. ICA has a written strategy published on the webpage which takes two clicks to reach. The section about ICAs environmental policy is the last part of the company’s extensive strategy. Which show that it is considered less important than many other strategic issues.

a. **What does it say?**

Social responsibility is a part of ICAs written strategy. The section contains statement such as that ICA should work to contribute to create a long term, sustainable society and that
the corporation should act to minimize negative effects on the environment, the company should also take responsibility regarding the circumstances of the production of the corporation's own products.

b. Do ICA show or illustrate that they live by it?

ICA conveys a strong image of taking the environmental work seriously. There are links to their environmental work on their homepage. They illustrate thoroughly how they work with products and suppliers. The consumer can get an insight into the entire chain of events concerning the company's products, from primary product to waste. The section about environment also has links to World Wildlife Fund (WWF) which they collaborate with, as well as links to their own environmental brand Svanen and their own climate site. Furthermore the company has an educational video about how the consumer can reduce waste and shop smarter.

5. Other Comments

4.3.2 Findings from Visit to a ICA Convenient Store

Visit at company: ICA Supermarket, in Torpa, Jönköping.

Date: 2007-11-27

1. Does ICA communicate a message of environmental awareness at the entrance? (Colours, Layouts/signs, Structure)

The ICA shop gives a bit of a messy first impression. The departments the customer meet when arriving through the entrance are bread to the left and dairy-products to the front. The space is small, messy and tight. White and red signs are seen everywhere which clearly describe the departments contents and different offers and properties of products. The first impression does not communicate a message of environmental awareness or friendliness. The impression is more directed towards price and products due to the red and white signs.

2. Does ICA have a range of environmental friendly products in store?

ICA has a wide range of ecological products within most product groups. Examples are dairy, products such as milk, cream, yoghurt, eggs, juice, coffee, flour, fish, meat, vegetables and fruits and so forth. Even a shopping bag in fabric marked “Shop environmental friendly at ICA” was clearly displayed at the register. It was placed visibly before the alternatives in plastic and paper.

Furthermore it is noticeable that ICA in most cases offer several ecological alternatives, both expensive, famous labels but also their own products. A noticeable cheaper alternative, produced and labelled by ICA is often presented to the more expensive product produced by a well known brand. Sometime is ICAs own product the only ecological alternative for a certain product group. This enables the customer to choose from a range of product rather than just choosing the only ecological alternative. Furthermore is the ecological alternative, especially if it is produced by ICA, in the same price range as the ordinary alternative. Finally some products can only be found as ecological alternatives, no “or-
Empirical Findings

dinary” alternatives exist. The only product category that did not have any ecological alternatives was the bread-section.

3. How easy or difficult is it to find environmental friendly products?

c. Signs, Labelling, Specific (Green) Departments and Product placement?

It is very easy for the customer to find environmental friendly products. The ecological products are placed among the ordinary alternatives. However the ecological products are in most cases marked out by green signs saying “Ecological” why environmental products immediately draw attention. Nearly all product categories contains at least one ecological alternative, in many cases several. Furthermore does ICA produce and sell a range of environmental products themselves as well as offer ecological alternatives produced by famous brands. The design of the packages is such that it is easy to separate from others and identify as ecological.

The store is small and tight but since it is clearly divided it is easy to find the different products. Three different types of signs are used, the white/red ones focusing on price and product, the green ones marked “ecological” which clearly point out environmental friendly products and black ones containing more text. The black signs give tips and information, many times about how the customer can act to reduce waste, save energy and so forth, sometimes they contain recipe tips. The different signs enable the consumer to separate and focus on the desired products.

Ecological products are displayed and exposed in the same manner that is used for ordinary products. Meaning that large amounts are placed in strategic places. Ecological juice was displayed on a separate wall, clearly drawing attention as well as ecological coffee and ecological bananas where laid out separately marked with large signs.

d. Does ICA have a information section with environmental information?

The shop did not have any section that contained environmental friendly information. However little black signs with tips where placed all around the store. Some of those tips contained information about how the customer can act smart every day in order to be environmental friendly such as reduce waste, save energy and so forth.

4. Does ICA show in any way that they are working after their environmental policy? (if it was found on their webpage)

ICA gives a greater impression of having a green profile in the store compared to the information displayed on their webpage. The information found on the webpage focused on how people can act and live in order to be environmental friendly. This image of ICAs environmental work was recognized in the little black signs found all over the store, many containing tips of how to act smart and environmental friendly.
The shop offers a large range of ecological products that are clearly marked with green signs all over the store. Many of the ecological products are produced by ICA themselves. Those factors show that ICA has a large interest in environmental friendliness and work actively to be perceived as green and ecological.

5. Other Comments

Can we get an inventory list of environmental friendly/ecological products?
How many articles does it contain?

Given some time, the shop owner could have managed to come up with a list of all ecological products. However the range of ecological products changes every week why such a list quickly would get out of date.

The flyer with weekly special offers contained two offers with ecological items, ecological date plums and ecological, dark bread baked in store. However the bread could not be found when the store was visited.

4.4 Lidl

Lidl was founded in southern Germany during the 1930s under the name Lidl and Schwartz. Later the company was divided in two business areas, low price under the name Lidl and Kaufland und Handelshof as supermarkets. In the early 1990s Lidl expanded outside Germany and today Lidl can be found all over Europe. Their goal and business strategy is to offer consumers a broad range of quality products to a low price (Lidl, 2007).

4.4.1 Findings from Lidl's Webpage

Date: 2007-11-13
Start time: 15.20

1. Does Lidl communicate a message of environmental awareness on their homepage?

When a consumer enters Lidl’s homepage he or she may get the feeling that the site is unstructured and a bit messy. The colour scheme shift between yellow, red and blue. When viewing the page it does not communicate a feeling of that the company has any focus on environmental issues and there are no offerings on environmental friendly or ecological products. There are however a clear focus on low price and other product offerings.

- Is it easy or difficult to find information about Lidl environmental work?

There are no references of Lidl’s environmental work on their homepage, however the consumer can find information on products labelled Fair Trade (2 clicks). Fair Trade mainly stands for healthy and quality products produced with social responsibility in mind. A small
Empirical Findings

section of this deal with ecological agriculture. It is not that easy for a consumer to find this information that only is displayed on one single row.

b. Does Lidl show that it is a part of their strategy?

Since this is just a short section mixed with other irrelevant information, it can not be argued that it is a part of Lidl's strategy.

2. Is it possible to search on specific words? What does the search show?

There is no search engine on the webpage.

3. Does Lidl have a range of environmental friendly products?

Other from products labelled with fair trade the consumer can not find information of this.

4. Does Lidl have an Environmental policy/strategy?
Such strategy can not be found on the webpage.

a. What does it say?

b. Does Lidl show or illustrate that they live by it?

5. Other Comments

4.4.2 Findings from Visit to a Lidl Convenient Store
Visit at company: LIDL, in Rosen, Huskvarna.
Date: 2007-11-28

1. Does LIDL communicate a message of environmental awareness at the entrance? (Colours, Layouts/signs, Structure)

The department’s right inside the entrance are bread to the front and beverages to the left. The interior design is made in LIDLs company colours blue and yellow. Ordinary price tags are yellow on blue background. Special offers are promoted with red and white signs. Large quantities are displayed on E-pallets in the end of the racks. Smaller quantities are displayed in the boxes they arrive in from the producer, they have just been opened in the top and the plastic has been removed. The products are not placed into shelves and carefully displayed. All those factors together contributed to the fact that no impression of warmth or cosiness are provided. The customer is not invited to a hospital environment. The focus is cheap products at low prices. Furthermore the cold environment gives an impression of lower quality standard, which is a feature that is not connected to environment.

2. Do LIDL have a range of environmental friendly products in store?
LIDL offers a few products that are environmentally friendly in store. Ecological milk and yoghurt can be found next to the ordinary alternatives in each section. Coffee filters labelled with “svanen” can are offered. The company has a section in the end of the first aisle that are distinguishly different. It contains a few items, coffee, chocolate, juice and tea, which are marked “fair trade”. This little section is promoted in black with a large sin and a special rack. However it is only the coffee that is environmentally labelled as well as fair trade labelled. The ecological coffee could not be found next to the ordinary alternatives.

3. How easy or difficult is it to find environmental friendly products?

a. Signs, Labelling, Specific (Green) Departments and Product placement?

The few ecological alternatives that are offered are not promoted in any way. They are placed in the same section as the ordinary alternatives but not marked with any special signs or placement which makes it hard to notice them. It can be very hard to detect the ecological coffee if the customer does not notice the fair-trade section since it is only exposed in that area and not next to the ordinary coffee.

e. Does the LIDL have a information section with environmental information?

LIDL does not have a section with information about their environmental work or products.

4. Do LIDL show in any way that they are working after their environmental policy? (if it was found on their webpage)

The total impression is that the company follow their strategy of low prices. The intention of working with fair trade that could be found on the webpage corresponds to the section in the store with a few fair-trade products. However only one of those four products are ecological as well. No further information to confirm LIDLs efforts to act socially responsibly or the could be found in that section.

5. Other Comments

Can we get an inventory list of environmental friendly/ecological products?

How many articles does it contain?

No inventory list of ecological products in store could be obtained.
Empirical Findings

No sheet with the weekly offers were provided in the store. Which is a sign of how LIDL try to cut costs in order to provide low prices. However large posters with the weekly offers could be studied in the entrance. Those did not contain any ecological products.

4.5 Hemköp

Hemköp is owned by the corporation Axfood (Hemköp, 2007). Axfood business idea is to create and manage chains of food stores (Axfood, 2007). Axfood are the owner of Hemköp and Willys within the segment of general dealers in Sweden. Axfood is Registered on the Nordic stock market, OMX in Stockholm. Axel Johansson holds about 45% of the shares and is the largest share holder. There is about 160 Hemköp-stores in different locations in Sweden. Hemköp had a total turnover of 5 829 Million SEK in 2006. Hemköp had about 3,5% of the total market share in 2006 (Axfood, 2007).

4.5.1 Findings from Hemköp’s Webpage

Date: 2007-11-13
Start time: 16.08

1. Do Hemköp communicate a message of environmental awareness on their homepage?

The page is black mixed with red and white colours. The homepage communicate quite a harsh and trendy message which does not feel related to food. The homepage has a good structure with informative and clear headings. The only thing issue concerning environment is a small animation about ecological meat and KRAV labelling, which is quite difficult to discover since it is placed far to the right and alters shape all the time.

The company conveys a message of healthy food but environment and ecology is not mentioned.

   a. Is it easy or difficult to find information about Hemköp’s environmental work?

No information about Hemköp’s environmental work can be found on the web-page.

   b. Do Hemköp show that environmental issues are a part of their strategy?

The only sign of any environmental concerns from Hemköp’s side is the poorly illustrated animation in the homepage about ecological meat and KRAV labelling which leads to an external side about ecological meat and KRAV labelling.

2. Is it possible to search on specific words? What does the search show?

There is a search engine on Hemköp’s homepage in the right corner, where search engines are commonly found.
Empirical Findings

3. Do Hemköp have a range of environmental friendly products?

Hemköp do not present any information about environmental friendly products, besides the animation and links to ecological meat, which are hard to find. Hemköp have a clear focus on healthy food and healthy products.

4. Do Hemköp have an Environmental policy/strategy?

Hemköp do not have a environmental policy strategy that is represented on the company’s webpage.

4.5.2 Findings from Visit to a Hemköp Convenient Store

Visit at company: Hemköp in Väster, Jönköping.

Date: 2007-11-27

1. Does Hemköp communicate a message of environmental awareness at the entrance?

When standing at the entrance of Hemköp you are welcomed by the fruit and vegetables disc. The information signs moves from red, blue to green depending on what products that are represented. The first feeling that struck the authors was that it is a smaller store, with a focus on quality rather than price. At the first glance they did not communicate a message of environmental awareness, but in the fruit and vegetables disc the consumer can find ecological products and also products that are KRAV labelled.

2. Does Hemköp have a range of environmental friendly products in store?
Empirical Findings

A consumer can find many products that are environmental friendly in Hemköps range of products. Most of the products are basic such as coffee, vegetables, rice and dairy products. There is however no ecological products with Hemköps own brand on. Both ecological and KRAV labelled food can be found.

3. How easy or difficult is it to find environmental friendly products?

   a. Signs, Labelling, Specific (Green) Departments and Product placement?

   In the store there are no direct signs that lead the consumer to ecological products but the consumer has to read on the product packaging. The ecological and environmental friendly products that exist are mixed with the ordinary ones, but are not to hard to find.

   b. Does the general dealer have an information section with environmental information?

   There were an information disc of how the consumer can shop and eat healthier, but this should not be mixed up with environmental friendly products.

4. Do company X show in any way that they are working after their environmental policy? (if it was found on their webpage)

   No such policy was found on the webpage when it was researched. What Hemköp pushed on was a clear focus on healthier products and this direction was clearly communicated in the visited store.

5. Other Comments

   Can we get an inventory list of environmental friendly/ecological products?

   How many articles does it contain?

   The store did not have such list.

   Also when entering the store the authors took a flyer with product offerings and in this two ecological products could be found.
5 Analysis

This chapter contains an analysis of the general dealers investigated. First each general dealer is investigated separately. Both the findings from the webpage, the store and how those messages correspond are analysed and compared to the literature brought up in the theoretical framework. Thereafter are the different general dealers compared to each other.

5.1 Analysis of the General Dealers Webpage and Store

In the empirical findings five general dealers’ home and webpage’s were examined. As a supplement to this one local store in the Jönköping region for each general dealer was visited and examined. The main findings were that two of the companies use environmental issues in their marketing, while two focused on low prices. A third approach was also found, one of the general dealers had a clear focus on healthy food products.

5.1.1 Coop

To summarize the first impression when visiting Coops homepage, a reader were not communicated any messages of environmental awareness. There were no headings or visible links that could be connected to Coops environmental work. The colours were scales of blue, green and white. According to Gundersen et al. (1996) these are cold colours that are associated with water, snow and ice. They are also known as passive or calm colours. This may be an advantage for Coop since the colours have a soothing effect on the reader. On the webpage there were some product offers, such as discounts and recommendations of the week, but none of these were of environmental or ecological kind. To find this type of information the reader had to click on a company information link. But when the reader finds the right place to look, there are a lot of information about Coops environmental work and the products they offer. According to Nielsen (2002) the company should place the most important information far up to the left on the homepage, but this is something that Coop have not done with the environmental information. Actually Coop have a wide range of ecological and environmental friendly products and gives the impression of high commitment to environmental issues on their webpage. A reader can also see that the environmental policy/strategy that Coop displays, run through the organization. Comments and information are constantly popping up. However it can not be claimed that Coop really shows or give the environmental friendly products the same space as the ordinary products.

What Coop definitely have succeeded with on their webpage is the search engine, which according to Nielsen (2002) is one of the most important functions of an informative webpage. When a reader search on specific words the given hits display very useful and informative details. This is a very good tool to find information about Coops environmental work and their environmental friendly and ecological products.

When comparing the findings on the webpage to the findings from the visit at the Coop Konsum store, some large differences can be found. In the store ecological and other environmental friendly products are not given the same attention as on the webpage. Even if many ecological products were found at the store, they were not promoted or displayed to a high extent. Ecological products were found in most categories, such as vegetables, meat, coffee, juice and so forth, but the placement and store signs did not give the ecological products much attention. The products were placed among the ordinary products and a visitor has to read on the packaging to find out if a product is environmental friendly or not. Solér (1997) stress that most consumers does not want to search or look for their
Analysis

products. Therefore it is not likely that many consumers will look for products with eco-labels. To get these customers to buy ecological or environmental friendly products the general dealer have to place and view them so that the consumers easily can find them. What was striking and consumer friendly was that in the entrance there was an information disc with small flyers that the consumer could take with him/her. These flyers contained information about Coops environmental work and also product information. From this it can be argued that Coop have taken their promotion of ecological products one step further. Instead of using only green marketing, Coop use more of a conventional marketing for their ecological products in the same way as they market ordinary products. However, from a consumer perspective the environmental friendly range of products were given much more attention on the company webpage compared to the attention they were given in the Coop Konsum store. This may confuse the visitor of what Coop actually stand for. Lee & Park argue that the messages send through the different communication channels in the communication mix, should be integrated.

In conclusion, when viewing how Coop promote and market their ecological and other environmental friendly products, they do, as seen in figure 2.1 by Rex & Baumann (2007), tend to use the Green marketing focus rather than the conventional marketing. The product range is more adapted to attract the already green consumers than appealing to the larger market segment. But Coop has taken one step closer to promote eco-labelled products in the same way as ordinary products on their webpage, however the message is still not consistent with the with how the products are displayed in the store.

5.1.2 Willys

When Willys homepage were visited, it quickly could be concluded that environmental awareness is not their first priority. There were no information or offerings on ecological or environmental friendly products. In general it was a quite simple homepage with few but clear links. The colours shift mainly in red and white, which according to Gundersen et al. (1996) is active and stimulating. When moving through Willys webpage, no information of the environmental work or ecological products could be found at all. Willys communicated a clear message, conveying that the products are price worthy and this they did in a very good way. A quote was found on the webpage, that describes Willys strategy in a good way;

"We at Willys only work for one thing: To sell good food cheap." (Willys, 2007)

An unsatisfying aspect when moving through the webpage was that there were no way to search for specific products or other information, since there were no search engine on the page. If a visitor has a question, he or she can e-mail the company with the question. According to Nielsen (2002) the search function is one of the most important functions on a webpage, which give the reader an opportunity to find facts and information quickly and easy. Nielsen also mentions that usability is crucial on a webpage, but it can not be said that Willys webpage was very user friendly. It did not feel like Willys used their webpage to the extent they could. It is as Nielsen says, a webpage should not be measured in revenue, but it is the company’s face to the world.

When comparing the findings from Willys webpage to the findings from the store the first impression was the same. Willys gave a neat and structured impression, but there were nothing that could be connected to environmental awareness. The main message in the store is consistent with the message communicated in the webpage, with a clear focus on low prices. What Willys has done is what Lee & Park (2007) suggest. The messages sent through the different channels of the communication mix are to a high extent integrated.
and therefore the visitors easily can understand what Willys want to communicate. In the store only three ecological products could be found, coffee milk and eggs. This confirms the findings from the webpage, that Willys does not put any focus on environmental friendly products. The products that were found, were placed among the ordinary products and were not to easy to find. According to Solér (1997) most consumers does not want to search and look for their products. These consumes only buy environmental friendly products if they are easy to find and access. It is the already green consumers that are willing to spend that extra time to search for products that are environmental friendly. This is consistent with what Rex & Baumanns (2007) suggest when they compare green marketing with conventional marketing. They argue that green marketing only focus on the already green consumers, and therefore not much marketing attention are given to the green products. This were realised quite well at the Willys store, where green products were not given any attention at all. Willys communicated their low price strategy in a clear and good way and they sent the message that green consumers were not the market segment that were targeted.

5.1.3 ICA

The findings showed that ICAs homepage does not convey an overall message of environmental friendliness. The page was coloured in different shades of red which according to Gundersen et al. (1996) are activating and stimulating. This combination of harmonising colours also made the information on the homepage easy to separate and find. The information focused on stores, food, financial services and recipes. However there were an apparent link to ICAs environmental work on the homepage. It was green which clearly distinguished it from the other information. It could be seen as an effort to portray a message of environmental friendliness. However it was placed in the bottom and the visitors had to scroll down in order to see it. Nielsen (2002) means that information that is placed so that the users must scroll in order to reach it is viewed less frequently. The placement of the link in the bottom of the page showed that ICA did not consider environment to be the most important message. Furthermore the placement might mean that many users does not view it at all.

The information about ICAs environmental work was displayed in an interactive way. It was more entertaining to read than plain text. However it could be hard to find if the link on the first page would not have been noticed. The environmental section was placed under the heading Ethics and Society. The company had small pieces of information about environment, ecology and energy in many sections of the webpage and the text beside the parts about environment. This gave an impression that the company tried to incorporate environmental thinking in all aspects of their organisation. General information about environmental products could be found but no specific lists of ecological products. The webpage contained an interactive film about how consumers in their everyday life can act more environmental friendly and energy saving. With those aspects in mind it could be seen as an effort to position ICA as a company with a genuine environmental thinking. Green aspects run through all the parts of the organisation, it is not just restricted to the section of environmental products. Solér (1997) states that many customers wants to buy environmental friendly products but does not have the energy to look and search actively. ICAs efforts to incorporate the environmental aspects in all parts of their presented information on the webpage could be seen as a way to create a competitive advantage. The visitor does not actively have to request green features and look for green products since the company tried to inform the consumers of it. Furthermore the environmental work were included in all parts of the company. This means that the visitor can behave in their ordinary manners
and still be a bit more environmental friendly. Aspects such as that the search engine did not link to different parts of the webpage but tried to answer general questions about environmental friendly acting, support such a conclusion. ICAs effort is to educate, and through that create trust and loyalty among customers rather than pinpoint specific green products and sell those. However another aspect of this approach is that very conscious customers looking for specific product information, will not find it, and be let down.

The first impression of the visit to the ICA store did not convey a general message of green thinking. The store seemed small and messy. However the impression changed a few steps into the store. The store used three different types of signs which made it easy to separate the messages they represented. One of those types of signs was green, marked “ecological” which made it very easy to separate ecological products from the ordinary alternatives. The supply of ecological products were broad. Some products only had one green alternative, no ordinary alternative existed. Other product categories contained several green product alternatives in different price ranges. Furthermore were ecological products promoted in special areas on several locations in the store. Those factors together gave a genuine impression of environmental friendly awareness and an over all green strategy. Considering the small space of the store, ecological issues, products and messages were given a much attention. This made the store seem very directed towards environmental friendly thinking. Then again the use of three different types of signs made it easy to look for the desired items. A visitor looking for green products can search for the green signs. A visitor belonging to the customer group proposed by Solér (1997) who does not have an interest to purchase ecological products can select the white and red signs. ICA can therefore also be said to try to appeal to several consumer segments.

The impression given on the webpage were more than fulfilled in the store. The impression that the company tried to position itself through incorporating green aspects in all sections not only the green products could be identified also in the store. The black signs containing tips about energy-saving, reducing waste and so forth mixed with recipe-tips conveyed an environmental thinking that stretched towards more areas than the ones strictly concerning products. However the message sent on the webpage did not entirely correspond to the message in the store. The webpage focused on environmental responsibility in a more general way while the focus on ecological products were greater in the store. The variety of green products were wide and the manager could have come up with a list of labelled green products, if he would have been given some time. The sheet containing weekly offers contained two ecological products. All of those factors signal an environmental friendly awareness through, according to Rex & Baumann, (2007), the most frequently used tool for green marketing, eco labelling. Lee & Park (2007) suggest that all messages sent through different channels of the marketing mix must be integrated in order to not confuse the customers. The differences between the messages accentuated in the webpage and the store were such examples that could confuse customers. However similarities also existed, the store was small and crowded, but organized through different signs and labels. That could be recognized on the homepage as well which is packed with information. The organization through colours and sections enabled the visitor to select the desired information there, as well as it could be done in the same way in the store.

5.1.4 Lidl

When entering Lidls homepage, the visitor is not given the impression that Lidl is working actively with environmental issues. The page were a bit chaotic with a lot off product offerings and other information about news and so forth. From a visitors perspective this may
be confusing. According to Nielsen (2002) to many colour combinations and animations may confuse the reader. This was the feeling that the visitor could get when viewing Lidl’s home and webpage. The colours go in yellow, red and blue which are the company colours. There were no sign of green, which could have lead to the assumption that it had something to do with environmental work. What Lidl did quite good was that they in a clear way displayed their strategy with low prices for the products. Nielsen (2002) argue that the most important information that the company wants to communicate, should be placed in the top to the left. Lidl did this, the visitor could easily see what Lidl focus on, prices.

The only thing that could be connected to some sort of environmental work or product offerings was a small part about Fair Trade. This is a sort of labelling that focus on social responsibility in the region the products come from. A small part of this is that some of the Fair Trade labelled products is produced on an ecological basis. However the reader could not find information of what type of products with this label Lidl offered. Further more a visitor could not find any information at all about Lidl’s environmental strategy or policy. This is something that a company should give access to on their webpage, since it gives a lot of information and also gives the company credibility.

Another thing that Lidl did not have on their webpage was a search engine. If they would have had one, the visitor easily could have found out if Lidl had any information about ecological or other environmental friendly products. A search engine is according to Nielsen (2002) one of the most important functions to have on the webpage. It allows the visitor to quickly find what he or she is looking for. Since this function was missing, the reader had to find its way through the many links that exists on Lidl’s webpage.

When comparing the findings from Lidl’s webpage to the findings from the visit at the store, the general impression were consistent. The strategy was just as clear in the store as on the webpage. There was an obvious focus on low prices. Also the colour range portrayed on the webpage were consistent with the colours used in the store, yellow, red and blue. There were however one main difference between the webpage and the store. In the store Lidl had some ecological products such as milk and coffee. These products were not given much attention or space on the product shelves, but were placed among ordinary products so the visitor had to look closely to find them. This goes in line with Rex & Baumann (2007) thoughts about the traditional marketing compared to green marketing. Lidl has their focus on ordinary products and it is those who are promoted, not the ecological products. There were a few Fair Trade products in the store, however it was only the coffee that was eco-labelled.

5.1.5 Hemköp

The first thing that stroke when entering Hemköps homepage, was that Hemköp was trying to communicate a trendy feeling of fashion, however that is in no way connected to food. Otherwise the homepage had a clear and easy structure that did not take any effort to follow. There were however only one thing that could be connected to environmental friendly or ecological products and it was a small animation that constantly reshaped, placed far to the right. According to Nielsen (2002) a company should place the most important information up to the left on a homepage and webpage to draw the reader’s attention to it. He also argues that animations and too many colours can confuse the reader, since it is difficult to know what wants to be communicated with the animation. An ordinary reader would not likely even have seen the real message with the animation on the
webpage, since it looked more like a commercial clip. It was only detected since the webpage was scrutinised. Aside from this a visitor could not find any information about ecological or environmental friendly products on the webpage. Hemköp did not present their environmental policy or strategy at all. Also according to Nielsen an informative and user friendly webpage should contain a search engine so that the visitor easily and fast can find what he or she is looking for. Hemköp’s webpage did contain this function, but it was only linked to specific local stores with articles containing the search word. This made it hard to find the information about environmental friendly products, which Hemköp as a company can offer.

When comparing the findings on the webpage to the findings from the Hemköp store, there are both similarities and large differences. To start with a visitor quickly could identify the focus on healthy food that also was found on the webpage. This should however not be confound with environmental friendly products. The healthy food concept was given a lot attention on the webpage and it was the same in the store. What was surprising when walking in the store, was that there were a lot of ecological products on the shelves. On the webpage no information could be found about this, but in the store most product categories also had an ecological alternative. It should be mentioned that the ecological products that were found were not of Hemköp’s own brand, but others. The ecological products were not given any special attention in the store, but were placed among the ordinary products and there were no signs that pointed them out. Solér (1997) argue that most customers does not want to spend time to search or look for products in the store. Many people want to shop environmental friendly products, but do not spend time looking for them. In order to get those customers to buy ecological products Hemköp should use signs and better product placement for the ecological products. The visitor could identify the ecological products on the product packaging were an eco-label could be found. This way of identifying products is confirmed by Rex & Baumann (2007) who mean that eco-labelling is the most common way to verify the ecological features of a product. Disregarded from that Hemköp had two separate eco-labelled products in their weekly flyer. They did not promote ecological or other environmental friendly products to the same extend as ordinary products. This is in line with what Rex & Baumann (2007) suggest when they compare green marketing to conventional marketing. The ecological products are marketed to the green consumers and not the bigger mass and are therefore not given the same marketing attention.

Conclusively Hemköp had a focus on healthy food concepts, rather than environmental friendly products and this were how they profiled themselves; as the healthy alternative. Then again it should be said that healthy food is not the same as environmental friendly food.

5.2 Comparison between General Dealers

Two distinct marketing strategies can be identified from the analysis of the general dealers investigated. The two largest general dealers, ICA and Coop, can be placed in a category of companies who use environmental friendliness as a marketing tool, strategy and mean to add value. Willys and LIDL can be placed in a group on the opposite side of the scale. Those two companies do not make use of environmental friendliness in their marketing strategy. Quite the opposite those two general dealers make use of a traditional marketing strategy, emphasising low prices. The fifth company investigated, Hemköp, does not belong properly to any of the categories. The company make use of a special and distinctively different set of methods.
The two largest general dealers on the market, where the ones who were found to utilise an environmental friendly approach. ICA controls about 35 % of the market and Coop manage about 20 % of the Swedish food retail industry (SoU, 2001:20). The webpage belonging to those two general dealers contained thorough information about their environmental work, ecological labels and to some degree ecological products. A strategy of adding value through providing their customers with green and more environmental friendly products could be identified in the investigation of the webpage’s. The impression obtained on the webpage’s also corresponded to the impression given in the stores, to a great extent. This group of companies has positioned themselves through trying to meet the demands of the large group of customers, proposed by Solér, 1997, who are inclined to purchase green alternatives but are not willing to make any extra efforts to obtain those products. ICA and Coop enables such customers to purchase environmental friendly items by providing a great extent of products within most product categories. Those products are placed next to the ordinary ones in order to make them easy to find. Both companies has created a competitive advantage through adding value.

ICA is the company who gives the impression of using environmental and ecological thinking to the highest extent. It can be seen through their efforts to try to create an impression of environmental friendliness, which is incorporated in large parts of the company. The impression is that the strategy is to, step by step, act more environmental friendly as well as help the customers to behave in the same way. Contrary to promoting a certain supply of green products but not let any environmental friendly aspects be seen in the ordinary efforts and campaigns. ICA is also the only company who actively highlights environmental friendly products in the store through special signs and by promoting them on the most attractive promotion areas, where ecological products seldom can be seen. Rex & Baumann (2007) propose that eco labelling is the most frequently used tool for green marketing but that all aspects of the marketing mix should be used in order to obtain a competitive advantage. ICA is the company who gives the impression of incorporating other aspects than just eco labelling in order to position and separate themselves from other general dealers, to the highest extent of the companies investigated. Creating a long lasting and sustainable relationship with their customers which are built on trust. Coop gave a great impression of environmental awareness on their webpage, however it was not realized in the store, to the same extent as in the case of ICA. Coops webpage was very instructive regarding different labels and specific products which gave a great impression of environmental awareness. It was harder to identify green products in the Coop Konsum store since they were not promoted at all. ICA provided several ecological alternatives in many cases within each product category while Coop frequently provided only one green alternative. Coop where the only store investigated who provided a special green shelf section with ecological fruit and vegetables. Such section should appeal to the customer group identified by Solér (1997) as very environmental aware, only purchasing ecological products. Those customers can thereby find what they are looking for in one place, while the largest customer segment that will search in the ordinary section will miss the ecological products. Coop was also the only company who provided an information section where facts about eco labels could be found, enabling the customer to ensure themselves about what to search for. Those factors together indicate that Coop is trying to differentiate from ICA, through targeting the more genuinely green customer. Such customer can find thorough information regarding specific products and labels on the webpage. However the companies green approach is not fully realized in the store since the products are not marked out and can be hard to find. Coop is using green marketing in the traditional way, which entails eco labelling. A more active use of environmental aspects in all their marketing efforts could attract a larger customer segment. Finally it should also be said that even though ICA and Coop where
found to belong to a group which utilized green marketing, they also make use of traditional marketing, focusing on price and quality, thereby addressing other customer groups than environmental aware as well.

Two of the companies investigated, Willys and LIDL, did not make use of green marketing at all. Those two companies can be placed in a group of companies who add value for their customers by focusing mainly on a low price strategy. Both companies show through their communicated strategy as well as the messages they try to convey, that they provide the same quality at lower prices. No information about environmental friendly strategy or products could be found on their webpage’s. Both stores contained an absolute minimum of ecological products such as coffee, milk and eggs. Those are the most frequently purchased ecological products and can therefore be seen as ordinary supply. Those companies do not in any way try to create a deeper, trusting bond to their customers, but build the customer loyalty on the factor of price. Solér (1997) identified one customer group who do not buy environmental friendly products and who view price as the determinant factor. Willys and LIDL will appeal to this customer category but risk missing out on the large customer segment, customers who do purchase ecological products but are not willing to make any extra effort to obtain them. Such customers can easily find what they are looking for at ICA or Coop among the ordinary alternatives.

The fifth general dealer investigated, Hemköp, can not be placed entirely under any of the two types of strategies identified, but constitutes an own group. It is not possible to find information about Hemköps environmental work on their webpage. The only information there is leads to specific stores and their environmental efforts. The company is trying to position itself through being small stores close to the customer. An animation about ecological meat can also be found. It shows that the company’s environmental efforts concentrates on food produced close to the customer. This approach can appeal to environmental aware customers in terms of short production chains and thereby origin of product and reduce of waste. Locally produced items explains to some degree why the message sent on the webpage does not correspond to the findings in the Hemköp store where the supply of environmental friendly products were equivalent to the supply found in the Coop Konsum store. However many items were found in the store that are produced and sold nation wide, which could have been promoted on the webpage. The webpage clearly communicated a message of health. Health and environmental awareness are closely related. Less waste and toxic is good for the health. However the health-concept promoted through Hemköp concentrates on how to eat in order to feel better, meaning less calories, sugar and so forth. This is what differentiated Hemköp from the other four general dealers investigated. Still if not viewing the information thoroughly, the impression given conveys a message of environmental friendliness even though the actual information does not contain it. This concept is also clearly found in the store. Hemköps strategy can therefore be identified as adding value through a health-approach. Which might fool many customers, belonging to the large segment of being interested in environment but not willing to sacrifice too much time, into thinking that the company are more environmental friendly than they actually are.

In the theoretical framework Nielsens (2002) thoughts regarding a company homepage and webpage are presented. He argues that the homepage is the company’s face to the world and therefore it should be used efficiently. When comparing Willys, and Hemköps webpage’s to ICAs and Coops webpage’s, it can be concluded that both Willys and Hemköp do not use their webpage’s to the extend they could. On the webpage’s a consumer or a reader should be able to find the information that he or she is looking for. Either by that the in-
formation is presented in a clear and structured way, or by using a search engine on the webpage. This ICA, but mainly Coop has succeeded with. It is quite easy for a reader to find desired information, either by clicking through the webpage, or by using the search engine. In the middle Lidl can be found. They use their webpage to promote products and other offerings, but the page is not very informative for the visitor who want to find information regarding, as in the case for this thesis, environmental products or such.
6 Conclusion and Discussion

This section concludes the thesis and presents the major findings as well as the authors thoughts about the results and the possibility to develop approaches concerning environmental friendliness. Finally empirical and theoretical contributions are presented.

The objective of this thesis has been to investigate if and how companies display environmental friendliness in their marketing strategy, which has been realized through investigating five general dealers webpage’s and by comparing if the message sent can be identified in a real store.

Two categories of companies were found in the analysis, those who use environmental friendliness in their marketing to some extent, and those who solemnly focus on price and product. The two companies who do use environmental friendliness as a part of their marketing strategy showed clearly on their webpage’s that green thinking is a part of their approach but it is not their main focus. Quite good and extensive information could be found but it was not promoted in the sections which first drew the visitors attention. The investigations of the webpage’s did not entirely correspond to how the environmental focus can be perceived in the stores. Furthermore are environmental products portrayed as something extra and exclusive which is directed towards those who either is willing to pay more, or those who have a great environmental concern. Rex & Baumann (2006) mean that environmental marketing need to make use of all the tools of traditional marketing in order to be successful, price, place, product and promotion. Today green marketing mainly focus on the product. Of the companies investigated, ICA can be said to be the general dealer who has made the greatest impression of working towards that direction. Information regarding environmental issues could be found in all sections of the webpage, not only in the section about environment. The focus is even greater in the store where many ecological products are provided and clearly marked with signs. However in order to make environmental friendly products competitive, compared to regular products, they must be viewed as a natural alternative. Many consumers still automatically view environmental products as more expensive, and might not even compare the actual price differences, which often are the same or slightly higher. The ordinary alternative is chosen because it is good, accessible and does not cost a load of money.

Ecological products can be viewed as the ordinary alternative by actively promoting them as ordinary products are promoted. The products that are endorsed and actively advertised in weekly offerings and campaigns will become familiar, not extraordinary and exclusive. Ecological products that are placed in the best promotion areas are likely to be seen and bought. Many customers does not have the patience, time or awareness to actively search for green products. Examples of how environmental friendly products can become standard are the most frequently bought products, milk and coffee. Those have been actively promoted and provided in large quantities. Therefore even the companies who did not display an environmental strategy provided ecological milk and coffee. Ecological milk and coffee have become a regular product which is demanded and can not be constituted with low prices.

In order for ecological products to become standard and a basic need the issue of the supply must be solved. There is already today a shortage of many ecological products. However the example of milk can be brought up as a solution yet again. When the ecological milk first became available, the demand was great and the producers had difficulties to provide sufficient amounts. Given some time, the demand has made it profitable to change
traditional production to ecological production. Which also has provided the farmers who used to produce ordinary milk, which was no longer wanted, with work. If the general dealers marketing strategy create an image of environmental products as ordinary and thereby increase the demand, like the case with milk, then there will be too many producers of ordinary products but too few of ecological. The resolution is of course simplified but possible as it would be a process of transforming the strategy and supply step by step and starting with a consumer demand.

An additional approach, besides the two major dominating, where found during the research. Hemköp did not have a focus on price neither could hardly any information about environmental products be found on the webpage. The company actively promoted a health strategy. Health and environmental friendliness are often associated with each other. Less additives and chemicals are good for the health and so forth. The health approach on Hemköps webpage were displayed in the same way as environmental friendly issues often are, why it is even more likely that ecology and health could be mixed up. Hemköps health approach does only contain information about good and bad food in terms of fibre- and fat contents and so forth. Still they are likely to attract many of the customers, who are not experts but just choose the seemingly good products which are promoted. This issue however highlights a possible opportunity to further deepen the environmental strategy. As ecology and green products become ordinary products, the competitive advantage, connected to an environmental friendly approach will slowly dissolve. As the general awareness becomes greater, focus towards products that are both ecological and healthy could be a way to differentiate. Another aspect of ecological food is that many people argue for that it is healthier to eat. In an article in Svenska Dagbladet (2007) it is argued that conventional fruit and vegetables contain chemicals and other toxic pesticides, while ecological products do not contain this. However the research how this will affect people are not yet competed. To combine the aspects of both healthy and ecological food could be a strategic concept for a general dealer since it combines the value for both environmental and health aware customers.

What have not been analysed or discussed so far is how environmental friendly and ecological products can be used for social responsibility issues. This can be divided in two areas, local and global. On a local level ecological production can contribute to improve the surroundings and land. Ecological processes and products should not contain any chemicals and the agriculture should be conducted in line with natural processes. By supporting ecological production, the problem with over fertilization in lakes and land can be reduced. The emission of chemicals used for insect infestation will also most likely be reduced. This is a way to improve the living standards on local level. The same aspects can be applied on a global level. Another aspect on the global level could also be what the Fair Trade labelling, found at Lidl, stands for. By purchasing imported ecological products, with for example Fair Trade labelling, from under developed countries, the consumer helps improving the living standards for people in those regions.

One interesting aspects of the findings is that the group that utilises green marketing consists of the two largest actors within the Swedish food retail industry. Axfood who owns both Willys and Hemköp controls about the same market share as Coop. However this market share is divided into the two companies which are substantially different and quite segmented. This can be interpreted in several ways. Does a food retailer have to be of a certain size in order to be able to implement a green marketing strategy successfully? Even though the ecological food segment is growing, it is still a small segment. ICA and Coop are large enough to be able to implement and market several strategies simultaneously at-
tracting several consumer segments. While the smaller general dealers investigated, Willys, Hemköp and Lidl, have a clearer niche and are directed towards one separate customer segment. With those aspects in mind, which growth possibilities do the investigated general dealers have? One interpretation could be that the smaller companies have to target a wider set of segments in order to reach a greater market and be able to grow. However the three smallest companies are also the three youngest companies in the Swedish market. Therefore it could be argued that they have not yet had the time to reach the size that they can, by using their existing strategies. The fact that general dealers with a delimited, segmented market, such as low price and health, exist, brings about the fact that no general dealer with a genuine green strategy exist. Could it be possible to explore a part of the food retail industry where no company presently exist? Could a general dealer only selling ecological products be successful and profitable? The findings showing an increased interest in ecological food every year, support such a suggestion. Such food stores should technically appeal to many customers since they thereby could be certain to shop environmental friendly, without having to read labels and look for ecological signs. A chain with such stores have to be very trustworthy, since it would loose reputation if media found out that the company does not implement the green strategy it claims. An example of this is the media attention ICA got in December 2007, after a program showing that some ICA stores changed the date labelling on meat products that had expired. It would furthermore be a challenge to market such a store concept. It would be essential to ensure people that the ecological food does not have to be substantially more expensive or different from regular alternatives. It would have the same features, or even better containing more nutrition’s, enabling customers to shop environmental friendly in an easy way.

The findings could also be viewed from a conjuncture perspective. The economical situation in Sweden and the industrial world is presently good. It can therefore be argued that people have the money to consider environmental issues when purchasing. Such a perspective suggests that environmental friendly aspects will be of small priority when a recession arrives. Then again factors such as a sustainable environment, the finding that ecological food are not substantially more expensive than regular alternatives and the fact that the sales of ecological food continued to increase during the recession in 2001, contradict such suggestions.

In the analysis it is shown that the researched companies use their webpage’s to different extent. The home and webpage are tools that can be used both as an effective marketing instrument and also as a way to communicate and increase the service level for existing or potential customers. It was mainly Coop and ICA that really used their home and webpage’s to communicate their messages about environmental or ecological products and other environmental work. Willys, Hemköp and Lidl did not use their webpage’s to the extent they could. Today it is more common than ever that consumers use company webpage’s to find information or look for inspiration regarding environmental friendly products. Therefore it can be concluded that while ICA and Coop uses their webpage’s to a quite high extent, both in an informative way, but also as a useful marketing tool. Willys, Hemköp and to some extent also Lidl does not use their webpage’s to such extent as they could do. It is as Nielsen (2002) says, the company homepage is the face to the world. Since the usage of internet is only increasing, this part of marketing is so far not utilized to the degree it could be within the food retail industry. The general dealer who actively starts to use it’s webpage for marketing purposes, could thereby gain substantial advantages, venturing into areas where its competitors are not operating.
6.1 Empirical Contribution

There are several actors which the result of this thesis could be of interest for. Certainly the five investigated general dealers could benefit from taking part of the results and conclusion and further investigate them and act upon them. The results can show the general dealers how the message they try to convey really are perceived, and if it correspond to their intended strategy. This thesis could help those general dealers to further develop their environmental friendly marketing and how they can profit from it.

This thesis could also be interesting for other general dealers, which has not been investigated. By taking part of the information, those competitors could gain knowledge about green marketing are perceived and how other general dealers work with environmental issues. Those competitors could develop environmental friendly marketing strategies and detect areas within green marketing that has not been covered by other general dealers so far, by utilizing the findings of this thesis.

Finally consumers who are interested in environmental friendly issues could benefit from the findings. Consumers who want to know more about green marketing and how existing general dealers work with environmental issues today could, easily access such information by exploiting this thesis.

6.2 Theoretical Contribution

This thesis also has an academic value. First and foremost it contribute to increase the knowledge of how existing marketing theories are utilized in reality within the food industry and suggest how those could be developed. Secondly the thesis also is built upon the opinion and interpretations of two students regarding both the green theoretical framework as well as implemented green marketing. These opinions and interpretations contributes to the understanding of how both theoretical and realized messages can be perceived. The institution of marketing science might find it interesting to take the thesis one or two steps further and put the findings in a more general context and compare industries. Furthermore could this thesis be a base for further studies. Future students could use this thesis as background for future work, such as deeper understanding for environmental issues within the food industry or how to send and interpret marketing messages, both conventional and on the web. An example of interesting further studies could be how the differences between health and environment are perceived and how these determents can interact.
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References


Appendix 1, Coop, Homepage
Appendix 5, Hemköp, Homepage
Appendix 6, Webpage Research Structure

1. Does company X communicate a message of environmental awareness on their homepage?
   a. Is it easy or difficult to find information about company X environmental work?
   b. Do company X show that it is a part of their strategy?

2. Is it possible to search on specific words? What does the search show?
   c. Miljö (Environment):
   d. Miljövänliga produkter (Environmental friendly products):
   e. Ekologiska produkter (Ecological products):
   f. Miljömärkning (Environmental labelling):
   g. Närlänskorta (Locally produced):

3. Does company X have a range of environmental friendly products?

4. Does company X have an Environmental policy/strategy?
   h. What does it say?
   i. Do company X show or illustrate that they live by it?

5. Other Comments
Appendix

Appendix 7, Store Visit Research Structure

1. Does company X communicate a message of environmental awareness at the entrance?

2. Does company X have a range of environmental friendly products in store?

3. How easy or difficult is it to find environmental friendly products?

   j. Signs, Labelling, Specific (Green) Departments and Product placement?

   k. Does the general dealer have an information section with environmental information?

4. Do company X show in any way that they are working after their environmental policy? (if it was found on their webpage)