

## RESULTS AND PERSPEKTIVES

When determining the general outcome of the analyzed studies, it is important to understand that it is no longer sufficient to claim “organic” in order to identify and to sell organic products successfully. Further, to simply enhance organic claims with such terms as “organic + healthy, organic + tasty or organic + fair”<sup>1</sup> are also not sufficient tools to influence and to attract customers for organic products. Uncertainty and lack of credibility for “organic” claims on the show card or in labelling continue to be major issues. Consumers have had to face several sobering or alarming experiences in recent years. Mistrust is correspondingly high in today’s market. Therefore, study results indicate that for companies producing, processing and/or trading organic products, first priority must be consumer credibility. That is the fourth “G” (see figure 1) needed in the marketing concept for organics. Credibility is the basis on which all other marketing activities and content rely.



Credibility establishes the foundation for various types of marketing strategies to win consumers over to organic products. As mentioned above, the arguments designed to build up credibility have to be tenable and verifiable. In this age of internet 2.0, inconsistencies can immediately be revealed and spread throughout consumer markets. Therefore, the focus lies in a new dimension of honesty and integrity in business and with the consumers. Which strategies or marketing tools to

<sup>1</sup> REUTER, J. und DIENEL, W. (2006); DIENEL, W. und REUTER, J. (2007)

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utilize and which marketing concepts to choose in order to reach this desired credibility will differ for individual companies and organic products. However, according to the results of the studies, the direction remains the same in all instances. Sustainability in its original intent is the goal. Economic activities must give realistic consideration to environmental issues, social conditions and concerns, as well as moral and ethical issues including the idea that business practices do not harm others. The major challenge facing companies will be to integrate ecological, economical and social aspects of business<sup>2</sup>.

In order to enhance credibility of trading companies and their products, one idea would be to ethically certify organic products. Various instruments are available for certification, i.e. TÜV Nord-Cert GmbH in cooperation with the Association of Ethics of the German economy<sup>3</sup>.

To realize these steps will present some hurdles at first as consumers are not always willing to pay a higher price for their noble demands. One of the biggest challenges of this century will be to communicate global interrelationships in order to gain consumer understanding for a corresponding fair retail price. Without this comprehension, the system cannot work, as past experience has demonstrated.

It has been shown that marketing according to commonly held practices within the framework of the results of these studies, inherent significant savings. Under certain circumstances, standard marketing measures can be reduced or even abandoned, as their effects are significantly lower than earlier projections. Research has proven that personal communication with the consumer is the most important strategy for marketing organic products. It has also been shown by research, however, that communication content must be reconsidered. These concepts as applied in the past did not, or, only partially met customer needs; they did not fully consider impact. Studies revealed that the consumer was often not informed about other significant advantages of a particular product which had the potential to impact customer sales. Therefore, the singular criteria for purchasing a product became the price.

Significant work has yet to be done to design a well-planned customer marketing plan that is much more demand-oriented. Higher prices are often not the most significant barrier to increased organic product consumption; but rather, it is missing “key” selling points. The current market trend is ideal and is better than it has ever been. Consumer change in values, product quality requirements and “key” buying motives all point to the potential for expanding this market. Pioneers of the organic movement built up and stood for value and quality which a growing population of German consumers now seeks. The conventional food industry has recognized this and therefore, they have attempted to profit from this ‘value shift’ by using more or less ‘cute’ advertising concepts; or, occasionally copying ideas from the organic movement.

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<sup>2</sup> LZ (2008e)

<sup>3</sup> GOTTWALD, F.T. (2008)

The organic sector continues to be forced to set the standard without compromise and to fully retreat from utilizing unacceptable practices when producing and marketing organic products. Organic products today are not always the organics of the former “pioneering generation” even when labelled with the official organic “Öko-Siegel” of the government. The consumer seeks 100% organic without compromise when being asked to pay the higher prices. These concerns must be taken seriously and effectively. Timing is clearly crucial to impact current market trends.

#### Literature

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The whole marketing study (in german) can be downloaded under the address at the homepage of AgroMilagro research [www.agromilagro.de](http://www.agromilagro.de) .