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Green Communication of Sustainable Product Innovations

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Abstract

Sustainable Product Innovations (SPIs) can make a contribution to economic prosperity and Sustainable Development [Brundtland, 1987]. To date, however, few Sustainable Innovations have been received favourably by the market. It is believed that Green Communication with users and other stakeholders in the chain from an early stage of Product Development can lead to a breakthrough in the success of SPI's.

This article outlines the problem area of Green Communication that will be investigated in a PhD study at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering at the Technical

University of Delft and TNO Industry. Green Communication of SPI's is seen as an activity simultaneous to Product Development, and continues during the use and end-of-life phase of a product.

Sound interaction with stakeholders is necessary to offer added value in the chain. Communication of the green aspects is one part of this.

Experiences on the relationship between customers and environmental friendly products show that environmental behaviour lags behind the environmental awareness. This however provides a basis for green communication.

First of all aspects of a Green Communication Strategy are outlined. Prediction of the degree of acceptance and the level of use is very important for SPI's, because only in this way can the environmental gain be determined and its dispersion anticipated. Green Communication can support the rate of adoption and sustainable use and therefore sound interaction is necessary to adapt this to the needs and wishes.

Secondly a case study within 'the kitchen of the future' is analysed with reference to these aspects to make the problem area clear.

The third part of this article outlines experiences with the consumer in relation to products and sustainability, which counts in any case for environmental friendly products and Sustainable Product Innovations.

Fourthly a preliminary step model is presented for a Green Communication Strategy. This model will be applied to the case study for further research.