Rational consumption of resources as a factor in sustainable development of the service sector in modern realities

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Abstract. The growing scale of business of Russia's largest retailers leads to an increase in the need for energy and natural resources. Companies strive to create an optimized management structure to increase competitiveness in the market and ensure the sustainability of the company in the future. The authors analyzed the domestic experience in introducing and implementing programs aimed at rational consumption of resources by service sector enterprises.

1 Introduction

In the modern world, the relevance and value of issues of rational consumption of resources increase every year. Excessive production and irrational use of resources leads to increased energy consumption, increased greenhouse gas emissions, increased water use, etc., which in turn has a negative impact on the environment.

The main trends in the development of retail in the world are: changing customer priorities, the growth of online trading, the predominance of the share of marketplaces in the total volume of e-commerce, the demand for physical stores of various formats (discount, convenience store, etc.), as well as conscious, rational consumption aimed at increasing the efficiency of resource use.

Changing consumer priorities towards the environment and commitment to the concept of sustainable development influence the final choice of a particular company by the consumer.

According to The Future Shopper Report (2023), companies that implement a strategy of minimal environmental impact are the most sought after by consumers.

An all-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM) survey on environmentally friendly consumption in Russia (2021) and an analysis of consumer behavior of Russians (2023) revealed the following trend among consumers: more than half of the Russians surveyed pay attention to the environmental friendliness of goods and are willing to pay more for goods that are safe for the environment (Fig. 1).
The growing scale of business of Russia’s largest retailers leads to an increase in the need for energy and natural resources. Companies strive to create an optimized management structure to increase competitiveness in the market and ensure the sustainability of the company in the future. Greening and approaches to rational consumption of resources are present in the activities of many retail chains; however, the methods of their application and the degree of implementation within the business model of retail trade enterprises are different.

2 Materials and Methods

When conducting the study, general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis were used. The authors carried out the search using the following keywords: environmental management, ESG, trade, retail, secondary raw materials. The domestic experience in introducing and implementing programs aimed at rational consumption of resources of service sector enterprises, in particular the «Magnit», «Lenta» and X5 Retail Group retail chains, is analyzed. In the process of preparing the article, the authors carried out an analysis of scientific data and research for the period from 2021 to 2023.

3 Results and Discussion

The concept of «green» retail is considered in terms of environmental friendliness of the retail space, trade logistics and mutually beneficial cooperation of all participants in the supply chain. Edemskaya V.A., Davydova E.D., Sukhov F.I. (2022) propose a classification of large retail chains according to the degree of commitment to the environmental direction. Trading companies are conditionally divided into 3 groups: with a strong, medium and weak ESG position.

The peculiarity of environmental management at trading enterprises is the development of specific management decisions aimed at achieving the strategic development goals of the enterprise and not contradicting the preservation and restoration and ensuring the quality of the environment.
Let us consider the largest representatives of domestic retail: X5 Retail Group, «Magnit» and «Lenta».

Based on the results of the analysis of sustainable development strategies, reports on the implementation of the strategy for 2022, published on the official websites of retailers, we will compile a summary table containing information on the main areas of activity in the field of rational consumption of resources.

Table 1. Main areas of activity in the field of rational consumption of resources (compiled by the authors)

<table>
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<th>X5 Retail Group</th>
<th>«Magnit»</th>
<th>«Lenta»</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing energy consumption</td>
<td>Reducing energy consumption</td>
<td>Increasing energy efficiency</td>
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<td>Calculation of indirect greenhouse gas emissions, climate risk assessment</td>
<td>M i m i n i z a t i o n</td>
<td>Environmental impact on atmospheric air and climate in general</td>
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<td>Reduce waste volumes</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
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<td>Responsible water consumption</td>
<td>Water management</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Water conservation</td>
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<td>Development of sustainable packaging</td>
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Effective waste management and volume reduction is one of the key areas in reducing the negative impact on the environment. The main measures for effective waste management include:

– participation in government initiatives in the field of effective waste management;
– support for initiatives aimed at training the population in separate waste collection;
– improvement of a sustainable waste disposal mechanism;
– optimization of processes for collecting and sorting secondary raw materials;
– transfer/sale of secondary raw materials and food waste for further use;
– reuse of product packaging, etc.

Thus, «Magnit» pays special attention to the reuse of waste and sends almost the entire volume of secondary raw materials for recycling.
X5 Retail Group, in turn, pays special attention to reducing waste generation. Demand modeling based on big data, flexibility in assortment policy (depending on changes in customer needs), compliance with the necessary requirements for transportation and storage of goods help improve the accuracy of inventory management and reduce waste generation.

As part of its waste reduction initiative, «Lenta» is offering customers reusable packaging alternatives and the ability to eliminate paper receipts. To build interaction with consumers, the retail chain organizes environmental programs (separate waste collection «WALLET», Project «BOTTLE CAPS OF KINDNESS», separate waste collection «CLEAN GAMES», etc.)

One of the current areas of activity in the field of rational consumption of resources is reducing the volume of packaging waste, especially plastic. In trade, packaging is used not only for transportation, storage and protection of goods, but also for transmitting information about products and instructions to consumers. In the online retail segment, there is a problem of oversupply of packaging. For example, disproportion between the product and the box. Possibilities for solving the problem of redundant packaging: returnable packaging, transfer of packaging to the courier.

In order to improve continuously its activities in the field of sustainable development, X5 Retail Group is introducing innovative ways to optimize resource consumption.
4 Conclusion

Retail chains actively advocate the introduction of innovative technologies into their activities, which will minimize waste, reduce the environmental impact on the air and climate in general, ensure resource savings, and reduce financial costs. Many retail chains offer customers to stop printing a paper receipt in favor of an electronic one, thereby reducing the amount of paper waste.

The creation of Ecocenters in the largest cities of the country will make it possible to organize on one site a recycling area, a lecture hall, a recycling museum and stores of eco-products, clothing and books. Currently, there are 2 eco-centers operating in Russia, in Yekaterinburg (2021), St. Petersburg (2022).

By pursuing a competent policy in the field of sustainable development, retail chains can influence consumers, set environmental trends, increase environmental awareness of employees and consumers, and encourage suppliers and manufacturers of goods to use environmentally friendly technologies.

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