

ABSTRACT

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Environmental Perspectives on Marketing of Freight Transports The Intermodal Road-Rail Case

This thesis explores Swedish companies' demand for transports that are better from an environmental point-of-view. The negative environmental effects of the increased amount of transports, especially those on road, must be reduced in order to obtain a sustainable transport system. One way is by moving more freight off the roads and by rail instead. The environmental aspect is a potential competitive advantage that intermodal road-rail transports may capitalize on in order to develop marketing strategies based on differentiation. The purpose is to explore the potential of using environmental arguments in the marketing of these transports.

A main theoretical model for the marketing of environmental advantages in freight transportation is elaborated, based on a theoretical framework of marketing, logistics, purchasing and environmental management. However, the main empirical contributions of this thesis consist of the results from data collected through a telephone-initiated survey among shippers having transports exceeding 150 km. These results provide basic data which are used to estimate the total freight flows in terms of volume, destinations, lengths and transport modes. The principal contribution though, is the survey results reflecting the attitudes and preferences of shippers regarding environmental considerations, also in combination with price and service quality.

All results are examined in the light of the opportunities and barriers for marketing of intermodal road-rail transports. A selection of indicators is entered in the main theoretical model so different segments of shippers are classified based on their environmental needs, their priority of price and their potential for intermodal road-rail transports. All together, a resulting total marketing priority matrix for marketing efforts of intermodal road-rail transports based on environmental advantages is presented. The main target groups would be large manufacturing companies, but also medium manufacturing companies and large wholesale companies. This customer segmentation can be used in a differentiated marketing strategy including transport service differentiation and marketing communication. The aim is a perceived customer value for the shippers. The results are discussed in terms of a marketing context among transport sellers, but may also be useful to other parties interested in developing a sustainable transport system.

Key words: freight, transportation, transport market segmentation, green purchasing, sustainable logistics, shippers' buying behavior, environmental management, green marketing

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