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Business Management

Standard Level

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Research Question: To what extent can changes in consumer behavior affect Starbucks' progress toward its sustainability goals?

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Introduction

Starbucks Corporation began its journey in 1971 in Seattle's Pike Place Market as a single coffee shop. Today, it's grown into the world's largest specialty coffee chain, serving millions of people every day. (Starbucks, 2025) Starbucks built its global reputation not only on their premium coffee but also on its commitment to maintain a sustainable business. For a business, sustainability means operating in a way that balances environmental responsibility and social impact. However, this also could mean that Starbucks' progress toward sustainability heavily relies on consumer behavior, which is easily prone to change. For example, modern consumers are increasingly seeking brands that demonstrate environmental responsibility. These consumers prefer products with recyclable packaging, ethically sourced ingredients, and low ecological impact. This approach enables Starbucks to offer a diverse range of products, including handcrafted drinks, bakery treats, packaged coffee, ready-to-drink beverages, and even branded merchandise. Starbucks has responded to this shift in consumer behavior by introducing initiatives such as reusable cup programs, innovative menus, and better customer service. This paper explores the extent to which these changes in consumer behavior accelerated Starbucks' sustainability initiatives and evaluates the benefits and drawbacks this approach might have. This is important because the consumer population is what can make or break a business, so it is important to adjust policies based on the majority of public opinions. By analyzing Starbucks' efforts alongside consumer trends, it will be easier to understand how evolving preferences are

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