

Abstract:

We investigated the possibility to create markets for environmentally friendly grown flowers and plants by combining a push and a pull strategy. Consumer research revealed that the main pull should come from a target segment (one-fifth of the population) of heavy flower users that are either affectively or cognitively involved with the natural environment. Subsequently, a positioning was elaborated for environmentally friendly flower retailers, together with a marketing plan and a business plan. The marketing plan was executed and five stores were found to be willing to participate in a test market. Consumers' evaluations of these stores and their assortments during the test-market period reveal, that the operationalisation of the Milieukeur-bloemist was probably too modest and conservative in this project. Nevertheless, 11% of the respondents indicated that they would especially look for a Milieukeur-bloemist when the florists that they regularly attend would not be there for one reason or the other. The stores and the flowers were evaluated slightly more positive than regular florists and flowers, at the expense of slightly higher perceived prices. A literature study and interviews with chain members on the costs of fixed relationships in the chain revealed that it is not likely that collaboration in chains for environmentally friendly flowers and plants could lead to win-win situations for chain members at the moment, neither in financial terms nor in the context of long-term collaboration. Overall, we conclude that the time does not seem to be ripe yet for a Milieukeur-bloemist chain.