How have changes in the marketing mix affected cafe culture in the 21st century

For the marketing people the definition of Marketing is summarized into putting the right product to the right person, in the right place, at the right price and time (McDaniel and Gates, 2003). The marketing mix is a powerful combination of tactics used by a business to achieve its objectives by marketing its products effectively to a target customer group. However, it is the way that the customers perceive these tactics that is responsible for the formulation of a culture around the product. More specifically, as far as the coffee marketing mix is concerned, the coffee product becomes the Customer Value. The price of the coffee is the monetary cost to the customers, Place, depicts the convenience that a customer can find the coffee that they prefer and its availability. Promotion is seen as the way coffee companies communicate with their customers, and increase the attractiveness of their products.

Process on the other hand, is for the consumer the effort that they have to make, which could be the waiting time and the fast service in a coffee shop- important attributes in the 21st century, due to the increasingly fast pace of life. Also people in a cafe depict for the customer the quality of service, which has to be adjusted to the image of the company. Finally, physical evidence as created from the logo and the brand image of the coffee company -the sign that promotes awareness of and loyalty to the brand together with the architecture, created atmosphere of the coffee shop and those are connected to the personality reflection. But how the cafe culture in our century has been affected upon the change in the marketing mix that coffee companies have created The word ??? coffee??™ does not (bring in mind) implies anymore the once inky- black coffee pumped with frothy milk.

Instead consumers have increased their sophistication in coffee drinking and indulge in more complex pleasures of brewed coffee. For this shift primarily responsible are the coffee outlets with the great plethora of coffee product variations that they offer, which are combined with the artistic enhancement with impressive creamy decorations from coffee specialists. This range of variation is part of their effort to create a coffee that could keep every coffee-lover delighted, as it creates the feeling that they have their personal, customized coffee, which fully satisfies their preference. Moreover, a usual trend particularly in the big cafe chains, such as Costa Coffee and Starbucks, is to offer together with their beverages a variety of pastries and snacks to satisfy all their customer needs. Thus, many people have replaced their once snacking store with the cafes that offers options for both, as this increases convenience and decreases effort. The rising cost of the coffee beans has been a problem for the coffee companies, and is reflective of the fact that increasingly wealthy ??? developing??™ economies such as China and Russia are increasingly importing the higher-quality Arabica bean, pushing up prices as a result. (Coffee – UK – April 2011 Mintel Report) The pricing strategies between the cafe differ significantly, with the larger coffee chains to adopt a higher pricing, compatible with the premium image that they have created for their products (e.

g. Costa Coffee). However, they try to compensate their customers with higher volume of product and they usually offer a range of different sizes, with different pricing. That way, they create the consumer the impression that they can choose to pay accordingly of the quantity they want to drink for their favourite, premium quality coffee. One of the most important

elements of the marketing mix that has great influence on the 21st cafe culture is the place.

Coffee-serving outlets have so deeply penetrated markets in many urban centres that it is not unusual to see coffee shops on opposite corners of the same intersection. All the big cafe chains have established their presence in various parts of each big city they operate, thus increasing the availability of the preferred products from the consumers and decreasing their effort for having to move to the nearest shop. The high availability has also resulted cafe visits to become a ubiquitous and, for many, an indispensable part of daily life, as not only it is a morning habit in the way to work, but has been established in the people??™s minds as a great opportunity to relax or read a book in the closest cafe during the work break or in their free time.

Furthermore, for the social character that the cafes have acquired in the people??™s minds during the 21st century, has also accounted the atmosphere they create. For instance, the Starbucks stores do not just sell coffee; they sell an atmosphere. Coffee shop today serve as social hubs, by creating an atmosphere of people gathered together, an opportunity to socialize and make small talk with friends.

Coffee shops are not targeting just the coffee lovers but they try to create a cosy and attractive atmosphere that will render them the friends??™ meeting point. An additional cultural attribute is the correlation of the brand image and the consistent atmosphere that a cafe outlet offers, with self-branding tendency (Hoeffler and Keller2002), which refers to the process in which consumers match their own self-concept with the images of a certain

coffee company. Therefore, a customer of Costa Coffee cafe feels that he obtains a privileged class status, compatible to the luxury image of Costa Coffee, whereas customers of Starbucks are the trendy ones who chose Starbucks as the place to chill and chat. It is worth also to discuss the change in lifestyle of people towards a more internet oriented entertainment. Of this cultural change has taken advantage the majority of coffee shops that now offer Wi-Fi accessibility, but mainly it is the reason of the wide spread of Internet cafes especially for the young ages. Despite the name ??? cafe??™, those shops, only seldom imply that a person is going there to enjoy a coffee.

It is a new concept instead based on the social character of the traditional coffee shops to attract people with similar interests-Internet lovers- to gather together in an atmosphere though that does not promote any social interaction. Promotion plays also a very significant role in the way people have altered their cafe culture. It is the most effective tool that creates the desired image in each coffee shop. It is the tool to make the consumer aware of the variety of product options that he can chose and present it in an irresistible way. Moreover, sometimes it is necessary the consumer to be motivated or simply be made aware about what made coffee worth a higher price. The Fair trade and ??? Green Coffee??™ promotions of Starbucks differentiate the Starbucks??™ coffee for the consumers who opt for higher quality.

A promotion for charity activity or environmental responsibility of a coffee company could be very important to persuade conscious on these issues consumers. Finally, the people working in a cafe can become very important

assets for a company, as consumers are more demanding towards a better and faster quality of service. Courteous and helpful staff, who can advise the customer on its choice of coffee, can be the reason for repeated purchases of a customer, since it is a part of the need for customized servicing of the consumers today. Besides, as coffee lovers have increased their demand for perfection of taste in their coffee, and the different flavours that coffee outlets offer want to create not only satisfied but delighted customers, more and more cafes employ people that have specialized in coffee making so as to transform coffee making in an art. ReferencesMcDaniel, C. D ; Gates, R.

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