

Distribution: theoretical spectrum

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With each business competing over the limited number of resources and space available, some businesses have found the need to work with other means than the traditional businesses that we once saw lining our streets. As business divided into how they did this, a spectrum of business appeared, with some falling at each end. It eventually came to be however, that these different and polar businesses began to become successful, but the ones that fell in the middle.

As businesses began to expand into the form we see them today, this theoretical spectrum continued to develop. All these businesses were united by their main goal however, and that was to answer the fundamental question of distribution: how are we going to get our product to the customer? Different businesses began to find different answers for this question, and thus formed this spectrum of businesses we see today.

Some businesses went the route of the "category killer" method. We see stores that use this model all the time, and these stores are quite successful. Stores like Wal-Mart, and the other massive consumer giants offer many different products under their roof, getting rid of the need for individual stores that sell various goods. This method brings everything the customer wants under one roof, making everything easily accessible and enticing for the customer. The customer no longer has to make several stops, they can pick up everything they need at one. This massive consumerist idea began to develop one end of the spectrum, and made it easy for consumers to have mass access to mass goods all at one time.

As this method for business began to flourish, other companies developed at the other end of the spectrum. They said, if those companies over there can bring everything together under one roof, why couldn't they bring everything

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together under a digital roof This type of thinking began to expand the Internet store wing of the spectrum, and led to the development of mass online stores, which didn't even require people to leave their homes at all. For the price of shipping, people could now order anything they wanted online, and could ultimately remove the hassle of the trip to the physical store. This idea was promising to many, who felt that buying online made everything much easier for the consumer. This idea continued as a response to the "category killer" model, as now not only could a business offer a wide array of goods, they could also offer them right in the customer's home. However, as this spectrum of big businesses at one end, and online business at the other, the businesses that fell in the middle began to become crushed. Long gone were the days of the mom and pop stores offering one type of good, or the road side stores selling wares. These small and usually local businesses could no longer compete with the giant companies, or the online market. This led to the decline of little businesses as they once were. The start up of new businesses fell, and people began to have to find other ways to sell wares. Also, this led to a decrease in competition, as the super stores would eventually cause the little stores to have to shut down, making them the only game in town. This was good news for the super stores, but bad news for everybody else.

However, albeit that, we still see businesses in the middle that continue to survive. Local stores can offer some things larger stores cannot, the charm of a smaller store, and also the knowledge base that comes from people knowing what they are selling, and concentrating on one product. This is appealing to the local customer, and can indeed help keep the little business alive. These traditional retailers need only offer better support, and a better

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knowledge base about their products, and hopefully this can help keep them afloat in the middle of the spectrum.

Sources:

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