

# A market research: the toothpick industry

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## **Introduction**

A toothpick refers to a small metal, plastic, wood, or bamboo stick that is used to remove detritus from an individual's teeth. This is usually done after meals. Apart from being used to remove food remains from the teeth, toothpicks are also used to pick up small appetizers such as olives or cheese cubes. Toothpicks can be used as cocktail sticks. In this case, a toothpick is usually cylindrical and short, and it is made up of wood with two sharp pointed ends. The cocktail stick is then used as a skewer where decorations such as cherries can be held in cocktails. During parties, foods such as pineapples, sausages, and diced cheese can be served using toothpicks. The modern eating habits have increased the consumer demand for toothpicks, a situation that has increased the production and marketing of toothpicks in many parts of the world (Petroski, p 13). In the United States, one of the leading producers of toothpicks is the Maine region.

Charles Forster who is considered to be the father of the American toothpick history worked from the Maine area. Globally one of the leading toothpick exporters is Brazil. The use of toothpicks by people began in the ancient civilization, with the toothpick being recognized as one of the oldest instrument of cleaning teeth. Having been used for cleaning before the invention of the toothbrush, toothpicks are known to have been used in almost all cultures.

In the 17th century, toothpicks were designed and used as luxury objects since they were developed from expensive stones and precious metals. In 1872, Silas Noble and J. Cooley patented the first toothpick manufacturing

machine. Due to the modern day development, numerous toothpick brands have been designed, manufactured, and marketed for consumer use. This has increased the market competition between the toothpicks and other products such as the toothbrush or dental floss.

However, the toothpick has remained competitive in the market. When it comes to the marketing of the toothpicks, it will be vital for it comesurer to put into place effective product promotion measures. For instance, through branding and advertising. It is very important for any potential investor in the toothpick industry to know that marketing the product will require a high level of creativity.

### **Factors that have increased the demand for toothpicks in the global market**

One factor that has increased the market demand of toothpicks is the peoples' changing eating habits. In the modern world, healthy eating has become a priority. By eating variety of food types, people are considered to practice healthy eating. This means that people are choosing to reduce the intake of sugars and fats, while increasing the intake of foods such as desserts, small appetizers, and cocktail food dishes. The handling and serving of these food dishes requires one to use toothpicks. In addition, high dental hygiene as a result of eating different variety of food types makes it necessary for people to use toothpicks. The development and manufacture of new brands of toothpicks has increased the effectiveness of toothpicks in various uses.

The consumers who use toothpicks are able to appreciate and acknowledge the efficiency of toothpicks due to new inventions. For instance, toothpicks

have been wooden for many years (Christy, p 664). However, the modern day toothpicks are also made from plastics. A Swiss Army Knife which is recognized for its quality, versatility, and dependability has a toothpick attached to it. A plastic toothpick that is attached on the knife's second blade enables an individual to carry out certain tasks. The availability of numerous brands of toothpicks in the global market has increased consumer consumption hence increased demand.

### **The Current Market Trends in the Toothpick Industry**

The global market trends have indicated that many nations have continued to be more dependent on the foreign trade when it come to the marketing and purchasing of goods or commodities. In the last one decade, many nations share of trade in the global economy has continued to increase. This is an indication that there has been increased economic growth in the nations (Julian, p 26). Globalization plays a vital role in the improvement of the economic performance of many nations. This in turn creates great business opportunities for new brands of products such as the toothpicks which can be introduced in the market.

The increased economic productivity of many nations in the world has increased the consumer purchasing power, which has increased competition between different brands of products in the market. Therefore, the introduction of a new brand of toothpick by an investor is likely to receive positive consumer response. The stiff competition and the increasing number of products brands in the market have led to fair and low prices of toothpicks in the market. The global economy has provided different producers with the

ability to create more jobs while at the same time lowering the unemployment rate.

The global economy has provided different producers with the ability to create more jobs while at the same time lowering the unemployment rate. The global economic growth has made many nations to be interdependent with other nations who are players in the world economy. This has led to great growth of particular nation's local economies. This supports increased consumption of products in the domestic market. When new products are introduced into a growing domestic market, it is likely for these products to be purchased at high rates. Therefore, producers are able to generate maximum returns from their products. This makes any investment in the toothpick industry feasible. In addition, this motivates the investors to put their financial resources to where they can generate maximum returns.

The quality of a given product that has been offered in the market determines whether the product receives positive or negative consumer response in the current market. While the high quality product receives positive consumer response, poor quality products receive negative response. The high quality products encourage consumer loyalty and trust. Consumers who have bad experiences with certain products tend to avoid buying the products again, and this undermines the customer loyalty towards that product. By producing products that satisfy the consumer needs, a producer will therefore be able to earn customer loyalty. An investor in the toothpick industry will be required to produce toothpick brands that will satisfy the customers' needs so that the investment

becomes beneficial to him or her. By promoting customer loyalty, an investor will be able to establish a steady customer base.

Stiff competition between different product brands is very common in the current market. Due to the competition, only producers or manufacturers who offer high quality products at fair or low prices are able to compete favorably with the rival products. An investor who intends to market toothpicks will be required to win customer loyalty. Furthermore, the investor should undertake certain measures that will increase her or his chances of out competing the other product brands being offered in the market. The market trends have shown that, the cost that a producer incurs to win new customers is greater than that of maintaining the existing customers. An investor in the toothpick industry should aim at attracting and maintaining customers, while at the same time attracting new customers.

Advertising and branding of toothpicks will be very important in promoting the quality of the product, as well as a high consumer purchasing rate. Toothpicks are currently being purchased in high numbers due to their crucial role in improving the oral health of the consumers with minimal expenses. Many people all over the world have embraced different toothpick brands because they are convinced that toothpicks improve their oral health with them incurring minimal expenses. For instance, consumers who use toothpicks to manage their oral health have admitted that the use of toothpicks lowers the dentist bills. Many studies that have been conducted on the efficiency of toothpicks as compared to other products such as floss have indicated that the toothpicks work much better in improving dental

health. All products in the market are offered to the customers for consumption due to the value the products add to the customers lives. The toothpicks have been acknowledged for their high value to the customers. Different toothpick brands have been acknowledged by the customers for promoting good oral health through the stimulation of gums, helping in the removal of plaque, and tartar build up. Since the toothpicks assist the customers to reduce dental suffering and pain, the product due to its high value to the people is likely to receive positive customer response and high demand.

Many brands of toothpicks are currently being offered to the consumers. For instance, custom imprinted and customized toothpicks are currently offered in the US market by the Colorado- based Wagner Match Company and the Indiana- based Extra Mile Promotional Products (Douglass, np). Many toothpick manufactures win customer loyalty and strive to maximize their financial returns by providing their customers with toothpick use information together with oral care tips. This has been very instrumental in showing and convincing their customers that the manufactures cares for their oral hygiene. The investor in the toothpick industry can be able to market their toothpick brands by ensuring that the product instructions are accompanied by the producers' imprinted business name. By so doing, many toothpick investors are able to make ideal advertising of their products. These types of custom printed toothpicks have become very common in the market due to their great use during special functions, anniversaries, and weddings. Flavored and decorative toothpicks have been purchased at a high rate for use in celebrations or other public occasions.

### **Challenges facing a new Investor in the Toothpick Industry**

As a new investor in the toothpick industry, there are various challenges that one is likely to face when marketing a given brand of toothpick. One major challenge that an investor will be facing is how to effectively compete with other brands of toothpicks already in the market. In the current competitive market, the supply and demand for goods or commodities is very essential. In the toothpick industry, there is stiff competition between the different toothpick brands in the market. Various toothpick brands are available for different uses. For instance, while some brands have been designed for oral hygiene, others have been designed as skewers. Many manufactures offer different brands of toothpicks to attract and retain customers and it will therefore be a great challenge for new investors to offer high quality brands of toothpicks in order to compete favorably with other brands in the market. The stiff competition will also bring another challenge to the new investor; how to take risks and make changes in the product so that he or she will generate maximum financial returns by increasing the market share. For example, there will be need to produce and sell new brands of toothpicks from those that are currently in the market. These include, custom imprinted toothpicks, nostalgic flavored toothpick and engraved sterling silver toothpicks. Coming up with new and high quality brands of toothpicks will also be a challenge to the new investor.

The investor should aim at offering high quality brands of toothpicks. However, there is need for a producer in the toothpick industry to offer high quality toothpicks at affordable prices to the consumer. One factor that determines the price of a product in the market is the cost of production.



This in turn depends on the cost of raw materials and that of the production process. It will be a challenge for the investor to produce high quality toothpicks at a low cost of production so that the toothpicks are offered in the market at an affordable price for the consumers. Whether wooden or plastic, an investor will be required to offer toothpicks at a fair price for the consumers. Building customer loyalty is very crucial for any producer or manufacturer to succeed in business. For many toothpick producers, they have tried to win customer loyalty by producing high quality and different brands of toothpicks. In addition, the toothpicks can be offered in the market at a fair price. The quality of the toothpick product that the investor will be offering in the market will be required to satisfy the customers' needs, which leads to customer loyalty. For example, flavored toothpicks are now being offered in the market for use during celebrations or parties.

To win the customer trust and loyalty, the investor will have a great responsibility to offer toothpick brands that will satisfy the need of the customers, while at the same time ensuring that the corporate objectives are met. Developing an effective advertising strategy will be a challenge to the investor. An effective advertising strategy creates awareness to the potential consumers. This is very critical in persuading the customers to purchase the product. On the other hand, an ineffective advertising strategy will undermine the success of the toothpick product in the market.

### **The Best Marketing Strategy for the Investor in the Toothpick Industry**

The investor in the toothpick industry will require a good marketing strategy. But before developing a marketing strategy, it will be very crucial for the investor to conduct a thorough reconnaissance study in order to identify

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customer needs, which toothpick brands are being offered in the market, and at what price the brands are offered. This will shed some light for the investor on how he or she can compete favorably in the market with the other brands. For instance, the bamboo toothpicks that are currently being offered in various markets are preferred by the customers for use during the dinner parties. In addition, cinnamon toothpicks that are produced and marketed by Juju Stx are sold at \$4.99. These toothpicks are preferred for being harder than the normal toothpicks, as well as their ability to freshen the breath longer. Other brands of toothpicks that are currently in the market are those from the Thunder Group. These toothpicks are double pointed and are sold at a fair price. In order for the investor to compete with these toothpick brands, it will be essential to produce high quality toothpicks at a selling price that will attract the customers and retain them (Steib, p 32).

The investor who plans to venture into the toothpick industry will require a steady customer base. Since the investor will be entering a new market, there will be need for the investor to persuade the customers to purchase the new toothpick product. Apart from getting positive customer response, the investor will need to maintain a good customer relationship with the new and the existing customers. The cost of attracting new customers is often higher than that of maintaining customers; hence the investor will be required to build customer loyalty. This can be done in various ways. The investor will be able to win customer loyalty by reaching out for steady customers through good communication, offer good customer service to meet the customer needs, give customer incentives (discounts) and create

product awareness. If these measures are integrated into the marketing strategy, then the investor will have his or her chances of succeeding in the business increased (Petroski, p 33).

Creating toothpick brands that symbolize value and high quality need to be integrated in the development and implementation of an effective marketing strategy. Creating brand recognition in customers will depend on the accumulated experiences that the customer has had with the products. The investor must be able to brand the toothpick product he /she will be offering in the market so that it creates a customer relationship that is based on trust. The toothpick brands should be a representation of high quality, good values, and creative ideas. For instance, if the investor decided to produce and market plastic toothpicks, this brand should be a symbol of quality. The toothpick product will then be able to compete favorably with other plastic toothpicks in the market industry.

An effective advertising strategy will be required by the new investor.

Advertising creates awareness in customers about the product, where to find it, at what price, and the benefits of the products to the customers.

Advertising in the contemporary world has been made easy by modernization and globalization. The online advertising has become a very common and effective means of marketing a product. In addition, radio and television adverts can create awareness about a product while at the same time building customer care and loyalty. By combining all these marketing strategy into one will be very vital for the investor to venture and remain in the toothpick industry.

## **Conclusion**

The global market has become very competitive. Many companies are producing different brands of product with the aim of getting a high market share and maximizing their financial returns. The economic growth that is being witnessed in the domestic and global markets has attracted new investors. The toothpick industry is one example of an industry where producers are reaping huge financial benefits. Based on the current market trends, a new investor can succeed if he/she overcomes several challenges. In addition, developing an effective marketing strategy for the toothpick product will be vital for the investor to succeed.

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