

# The role of marketing and the marketing department

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Marketing is a process, involving all members of an organisation, aimed at satisfying the needs and wants of customers by focusing on the design, pricing, promotion and accessibility of products and services<sup>1</sup>.

The role of marketing is to attract and retain as many highly-satisfied customers by fulfilling (or even exceeding) customer wants and needs. Therefore, it is necessary to identify and acquire an understanding of the needs and wants of customers to provide the products and services that the customers demand.

Needs are fundamental feelings that consumers must satisfy e. g. thirst, whilst wants are the various preferences individual consumers have about how they want these needs satisfied e. g. different types of drinks. However, the amount of money a consumer has will determine their demand. Demand is a consumer's purchasing power; it determines, for example, what type of drink he can afford to buy<sup>2</sup>.

An additional role of marketing is to inform organisations of rapid changes occurring in the marketplace so that they can adapt to satisfy the changing needs and desires of consumers. Organisations need to have an understanding of their customers and be aware of any changing needs in order to be prepared to deliver such needs at an acceptable level<sup>3</sup>. This can be achieved by recognising and understanding the demands of customers as it assists in anticipating any changes that occur in consumer tastes<sup>4</sup>.

Successful organisations adopt, as a business-wide function, a marketing orientation that encourages commitment to identifying and satisfying the

needs, wants and demands of their customers<sup>5</sup>. Procter & Gamble "develop superior understanding of consumers and their needs" to improve the lives of their customers by providing products and services of superior quality and value<sup>6</sup>. This superior understanding enables an organisation to meet the distinctive needs of customers by segmenting the rapidly changing market in order to target groups sharing similar values<sup>7</sup>.

#### Figure 1: Structure of a Consumer-Centred Organisation<sup>8</sup>

Procter & Gamble contribute to the economic and social well-being of their employees, stakeholders and local communities<sup>9</sup>. The marketing role manages all the relationships shared between the organisation and its stakeholder groups. Marketing refers not only to a marketing function within an organisation but also to a marketing orientation that influences other activities of the organisation<sup>10</sup>.

The marketing role is to create a desire and demand for the organisations products and services by undertaking research into the marketing environment and buyer behaviour. This will assist marketing managers in deciding how and which products to promote to create an awareness, to the customers, of product offerings and benefits. Procter & Gamble's profound customer insight and observational research has managed to target a wide range of customers. The rigorous customer research and analysis improved both their product development and brand marketing activities<sup>11</sup>.

When Febreze and Swiffer were promoted as "allergen-reducing" products, Procter & Gamble conducted a survey on women to determine who they

turned to for health-related information. The survey showed that they turned to medical sources i. e. pharmacists, physicians and medical sites, whilst also consulting friends, family and the local TV news. Thus, in their resulting marketing campaign for the products Procter & Gamble included a partnership with Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) and got an AAFA member and a physician to serve as spokespeople on TV satellite media tours and radio news for the products<sup>12</sup>.

### Figure 2: A Model of Consumer Buying Behaviour<sup>13</sup>

When consumers are deciding on which product to buy, they usually search for information from a variety of sources, the most powerful being information heard from friends or family i. e. by word-of-mouth<sup>14</sup>. However, many marketing activities avoid information being transferred this way as it invites criticism, so they usually focus on one-to-one marketing. But research shows that marketing success depends on how well it reaches a group and not individuals; groups account for 80% of the influence on consumer purchase, whilst only 10% is attributable to one-to-one marketing activities<sup>15</sup>.

In 2001 Procter & Gamble designed a website, called Tremor, which till now has recruited around 250, 000 teenagers to receive product samples and coupons etc. in the hope that the teenagers will perform as "word-of-mouth" marketers. In 2005, Procter & Gamble launched a similar word-of-mouth marketing website, called Vocalpoint, which targeted mothers. By mid-2006 participants had expanded to 600, 000, a more effective marketing program

as most P & G products target adults. Furthermore, by creating these websites, which gave the customers a chance to share their opinions on the products etc, Procter & Gamble established a personal and emotional connection with the customers<sup>16</sup>.

Another marketing campaign formed by Procter & Gamble to form " a deep, emotional bond" between the customers and Pantene was " Pantene Beautiful Lengths" campaign, which encouraged people to cut and donate their hair to make wigs for women who have lost their hair as a result of cancer treatment. In the campaign Procter & Gamble got an actress to cut and donate her hair, on a TV show, to the P & G campaign<sup>17</sup>.

Lastly the role of marketing is to position products in the marketplace in a way that makes it more attractive to target consumers and better able to satisfy consumer demands. The marketing mix refers to the overall marketing strategy which controls product, price, place and promotion.

Product includes a number of elements which require consideration such as brand name, packaging, quality, delivery, warranty etc. The product mix is the total number of varying products an organisation has to offer. The size of the product mix can have a significant impact on an organisation's profitability because better-selling products can contribute for the unsuccessful items<sup>18</sup>. Procter & Gamble markets over 300 different brands to around 5 billion consumers worldwide<sup>19</sup>.

Price is the value placed upon the products and services exchanged between an organisation and consumers. Marketing managers must take into

consideration consumer perceptions on different prices for certain types of products. For example, consumers generally expect to pay within a certain price range for safety products and products for children to ensure they are of high quality.

Place involves deciding about how a product can be most effectively distributed to the final customer, whilst Promotion involves deciding what type of information should be used to encourage consumers to buy a product, what amount of information will be required, and how and where it should be presented. The four different types of promotion are advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations<sup>20</sup>.

Procter & Gamble were the first company to advertise nationally direct to consumers back in 1880, and furthermore they were the first company to sponsor radio and television dramas to target women<sup>21</sup>.