



**Yashwantrao
Chavan
Maharashtra
Open University**

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Marketing Concepts

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UNIT 1: Introduction to Marketing Concepts

UNIT 2: Market Segmentation

UNIT 3: Product Concepts

UNIT 4: Marketing Channel Management

UNIT 5: Consumer Behaviour

UNIT 6: Branding and Packaging

UNIT 7: Pricing Strategies

UNIT 8: Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

UNIT 9: Digital Marketing

UNIT 10: Marketing Research

UNIT 11: Global Marketing

UNIT 12: Contemporary Issues in Marketing

UNIT 13: Services Marketing

UNIT 14: Relationship Marketing

UNIT 15: Retail Marketing

UNIT 16: Strategic Marketing

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BLOCK I: FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING

UNIT 1: Introduction to Marketing Concepts

- 1.1 Overview of Marketing
- 1.2 Origin of Marketing
- 1.3 Definition and Nature of Marketing
- 1.4 Scope of Marketing
- 1.5 Need for Marketing
- 1.6 Types of Markets
- 1.7 Demand and Supply
- 1.8 Need and Its Types
- 1.9 Marketing Management
 - 1.9.1 Marketing Concept
 - 1.9.2 Production Concept
 - 1.9.3 Selling Concept
 - 1.9.4 Societal Marketing Concept
- 1.10 Selling vs Marketing
- 1.11 Marketing Mix
- 1.12 Promotion Mix
- 1.13 Evolution of Marketing

UNIT 2: Market Segmentation

- 2.1 Introduction to Market Segmentation
- 2.2 Basis of Segmentation
- 2.3 Types of Market Segmentation
- 2.4 Targeting
- 2.5 Positioning
- 2.6 Behavioural Segmentation

BLOCK II: PRODUCT AND CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

UNIT 3: Product Concepts

- 3.1 Definition and Importance of Product
- 3.2 Types of Products
- 3.3 Product Concept
- 3.4 Product Life Cycle (PLC)
- 3.5 New Product Development Process

UNIT 4: Marketing Channel Management

- 4.1 Introduction to Marketing Channels
- 4.2 Channels of Distribution
- 4.3 Role of Channels of Distribution
- 4.4 Factors Influencing Channel Choice
- 4.5 Managing Channel Conflict

4.6 Channel Design Decisions

UNIT 5: Consumer Behaviour

- 5.1 Understanding Consumer Behaviour
- 5.2 Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour
- 5.3 Consumer Decision-Making Process
- 5.4 Psychological and Social Influences on Consumer Behaviour

UNIT 6: Branding and Packaging

- 6.1 Importance of Branding
- 6.2 Types of Brands
- 6.3 Brand Equity and Loyalty
- 6.4 Packaging and Labeling
- 6.5 Brand Positioning

BLOCK III: PRICING, COMMUNICATION, AND DIGITAL MARKETING

UNIT 7: Pricing Strategies

- 7.1 Importance of Pricing in Marketing
- 7.2 Factors Influencing Pricing Decisions
- 7.3 Various Pricing Strategies
- 7.4 Pricing Tactics and Adjustments

UNIT 8: Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

- 8.1 Concept of IMC
- 8.2 Components of IMC
- 8.3 Developing an IMC Plan
- 8.4 Evaluating IMC Effectiveness

UNIT 9: Digital Marketing

- 9.1 Introduction to Digital Marketing
- 9.2 Tools and Techniques of Digital Marketing
- 9.3 Social Media Marketing
- 9.4 Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

UNIT 10: Marketing Research

- 10.1 Definition and Importance of Marketing Research
- 10.2 Types of Marketing Research
- 10.3 Steps in the Marketing Research Process
- 10.4 Data Collection Methods

BLOCK IV: GLOBAL MARKETING AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

UNIT 11: Global Marketing

- 11.1 Introduction to Global Marketing
- 11.2 Challenges and Opportunities in Global Marketing
- 11.3 Strategies for Entering Global Markets
- 11.4 Global Marketing Environment

UNIT 12: Contemporary Issues in Marketing

- 12.1 Emerging Trends in Marketing
- 12.2 Ethics in Marketing
- 12.3 Sustainability and Marketing
- 12.4 Future Challenges in Marketing
- 12.5 Green Marketing

BLOCK V: ADVANCED TOPICS IN MARKETING

UNIT 13: Services Marketing

- 13.1 Introduction to Services Marketing
- 13.2 Characteristics of Services
- 13.3 Marketing Mix for Services
- 13.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction
- 13.5 Strategies for Managing Service Quality

UNIT 14: Relationship Marketing

- 14.1 Concept and Importance of Relationship Marketing
- 14.2 Strategies for Building Customer Relationships
- 14.3 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems
- 14.4 Measuring Relationship Marketing Success
- 14.5 Loyalty Programs and Retention Strategies

UNIT 15: Retail Marketing

- 15.1 Introduction to Retail Marketing
- 15.2 Types of Retail Formats
- 15.3 Retail Marketing Mix
- 15.4 Trends in Retail Marketing

UNIT 16: Strategic Marketing

- 16.1 Role of Strategic Marketing in Business
- 16.2 Marketing Strategy Development
- 16.3 Competitive Marketing Strategies
- 16.4 Evaluating and Controlling Marketing Strategies
- 16.5 Strategic Marketing in a Digital World

Unit 1: Introduction to Marketing Concepts

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will recognise key concepts and the nature of marketing.
- Students will explain historical developments in marketing.
- Students will distinguish between different marketing approaches, such as production, selling, and societal marketing concepts.
- Students will evaluate how product, price, place, and promotion interact in marketing strategies.
- Students will construct a simple promotional plan using the promotion mix effectively.

Structure:

- 1.1 Overview of Marketing
- 1.2 Origin of Marketing
- 1.3 Definition and Nature of Marketing
- 1.4 Scope of Marketing
- 1.5 Need for Marketing
- 1.6 Types of Markets
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 1.7 Demand and Supply
- 1.8 Need and Its Types
- 1.9 Marketing Management
 - 1.9.1 Marketing Concept
 - 1.9.2 Production Concept
 - 1.9.3 Selling Concept
 - 1.9.4 Societal Marketing Concept
- 1.10 Selling vs Marketing
- 1.11 Marketing Mix
- 1.12 Promotion Mix
- 1.13 Evolution of Marketing
 - Knowledge Check 2

- Outcome-Based Activity 2

1.14 Summary

1.15 Keywords

1.16 Self-Assessment Questions

1.17 References / Reference Reading

1.1 Overview of Marketing

Marketing is important to anyone who wants to be in business since it is the link between a business and its customers. It is a set of processes and activities employed in selling goods, identifying customers' wants, and developing mutually beneficial partnerships. Marketing is important for anyone who wants to be in business as it connects a firm's goods or services to consumers. It encompasses a set of processes and techniques employed in marketing goods and services, satisfying customers' needs and gaining their loyalty.

The Importance of Marketing in Business

In the modern business environment, marketing's significance cannot be overstated. Today's society, when consumers have many options available to them, makes marketing communication essential.

- Marketing assists companies in acquiring new consumers and maintaining and expanding their current customer base, which is vital for a business's long-term expansion.
- Businesses can develop a unique selling proposition that appeals to the target audience by creating a brand image and consistently and successfully marketing it. Increasing sales is directly impacted by marketing.
- A deep analysis of the market and consumers' needs can better satisfy the population's demands.
- Digital marketing offers organisations efficient promotional techniques to target consumers via social networks, e-mail, and other channels.
- Market research can be defined as the process of identifying and gathering information on customers' requirements, market trends, and competition.

1.2 Historical Background

The historical perspective of marketing offers a clearer picture of how it has developed from a simple business barter system to the present-day diverse promotional techniques. Marketing has always been the art of identifying the ways and means to satisfy consumers' wants and needs, but the approaches and methods have changed significantly over the centuries.

- **Origin of Marketing**

The concept of marketing can be said to have originated from the early societies that were involved in trade and commerce. It is important to note that in the early stages of trade, businesspeople displayed their products to entice consumers, and the only marketing tools available were signage and word of mouth.

- **Evolution of Marketing Practices**

- The mass media revolution in marketing took a significant turn in the twentieth century. Marketers were able to connect with a broad audience through radio and, subsequently, television. The marketing mix concept, sometimes known as the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion), first appeared in the middle of the twentieth century to provide the most fundamental framework for marketing strategy.
- Businesses altered their focus from earning sales to meeting customers' demands better than competitors during the post-World War II period as marketplaces became more crowded and competitive.
- The information technology revolution, which characterised the period at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, can be considered the most significant in terms of marketing history. Mobile and internet usage has greatly expanded the ways in which businesses communicate with and market to customers.
- Relationship marketing, which began to take shape at the end of the twentieth century, is another evolution in marketing tactics.

1.3 Defining and Nature of Marketing

Marketing is a complex and all-extensive function that is essential for any business organisation. It involves a wide range of activities aimed at responding to consumers' needs and turning the enterprise into a profitable one.

Marketing is a function, business, and academic management discipline that is primarily concerned with identifying needs, learning the processes required to satisfy these needs, communicating needs and fulfilling these needs to consumers and businesses, and developing a plan to profit from satisfying these needs.

Nature of Marketing

Marketing as a discipline is ever-evolving with the focus and mandate on the customer. It means recognising the requirements and wants customers might have and creating a product or service to fulfil them to the greatest extent and at the same time in the least amount of time. Marketing has a close relationship with the essential activities any organisation undertakes, such as product planning, establishing prices, placing, and promoting. All of these functions are synchronised via an advertising plan that fits a broad company's management goals.

Marketing also goes beyond the company's basic function of selling; it involves identifying new opportunities in the market, studying customers' behaviour, and making changes to account for changes in market circumstances. However, this necessitates creative, analytical, and strategic thinking since marketers need to change and reinvent themselves due to constantly evolving markets.

1.4 Scope and Importance of Marketing

Marketing is a core function of every organisation and can be described as an array of activities that help to build a business-client relationship. It is a complex concept well entrenched in all organisational activities and tends to intersect with functional areas such as product development and customer services.

Broad Scope of Marketing

1. **Market Research:** This is the very foundation of all marketing activities, including the identification of activities involving the collection and analysis of information about markets, customers, and competitors.
2. **Product and Service Management:** Marketing can be described as the formulation of ideas for products and services and their transmission into the market.
3. **Branding and Identity:** Brand management is a critical task in marketing that involves creating a particular brand image.
4. **Promotion:** This includes all activities designed to inform the target market about the company's products or services.

5. **Sales and Distribution:** Marketing also involves transferring products to consumers for consumption or use by consumers.
6. **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** Marketing actively participates in managing relations with customers, which are crucial activities in the firm.
7. **Pricing Strategies:** One of the four important components of the marketing mix, pricing defines the level of demand, sales, and profitability for the goods and services to be provided.

1.5 Need for Marketing

Markets are special and should be categorised according to their nature, which involves transactions within them. Marketing segmentation is the chief knowledge in marketing, and it becomes compulsory to distinguish between market classifications and characteristics.

1.6 Types of Markets

1. **Consumer Markets:** For personal consumption, these markets are comprised of individuals and households that obtain goods and services. Business consumer markets are the most popular type of market for B2C companies and aim to develop tangible and intangible marketing communication that appeals to both the business consumer's rational and emotional side.
2. **Business Markets:** They are also known as industrial or business-to-business markets and involve the buying and selling of goods/SVCs. Business markets are employed to create, sell, or consume other products.
3. **Global Markets:** As the world becomes more globalised, global markets are considered. These markets are concerned with the sale of products or services in other countries where a given business operates.
4. **Government Markets:** A government market refers to buying products and services from the government to complete its tasks.
5. **Nonprofit and Institutional Markets:** Other market segments include non-profit organisations and institutions like hospitals, schools, and charities.

1.7 Demand and Supply

Demand and supply are two very basic concepts in economics and form the core of market analysis. Marketing professionals must grasp these concepts to forecast the

market and align themselves to the likely conditions. It is interested in defining demand and supply, the factors influencing them and how they operate in markets.

Concept of Demand and Supply

1. **Demand:** Demand is the quantity of goods or services that customers can and are willing to buy at different prices over a specified period. It is the inclination to purchase the good and the readiness to do so at varying rates if necessary.
2. **Supply:** Supply refers to producers' ability, willingness, and capacity to produce and sell a given quantity of a product at various prices within a given time frame. Demand, on the other hand, is the ability, willingness, and capacity of consumers to purchase a particular product at a given price level during a specified period. The producer plans on placing more of a good on the market as the price of the good increases, which has a direct impact on supply. The upward-sloping supply curve illustrates this relationship.

Factors Influencing Demand and Supply

Several factors can affect demand and supply in the market:

- **Factors Affecting Demand:**
 - Price of the Product: As the price decreases, demand usually increases, and vice versa.
 - Income Levels: In most cases, high income leads to high consumption because people can afford products better.
 - Consumer Preferences: Fluctuations in consumer preferences can also affect demand. For instance, when people become conscious of their health, they may opt for organic foods.
 - Price of Related Goods: The demand for a product can be influenced by the prices of related goods, which can be complements or substitutes.
 - Future Expectations: Consumers may increase their current demand if they anticipate that prices will rise in the future
- **Factors Affecting Supply:**
 - Production Costs: As it gets more expensive for producers to deliver products at the same price, higher production costs might lead to a decrease in supply.
 - Technological Advancements: By increasing production efficiency, technological advancements can lead to an increase in supply.
 - Number of Suppliers: An increase in the number of suppliers typically improves the supply of a product, resulting in more competitive pricing.

- Government Policies: Supply can be impacted by government policies such as taxes, subsidies, and regulations. For instance, strict regulations may result in a decrease in supply, while subsidies may increase it.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

- **Fill in the Blanks.**

1. The marketing mix, often referred to as the 4Ps, includes Product, Price, Place, and _____. (Promotion)
2. According to the societal marketing concept, a company should balance the needs of customers with the needs of _____. (Society)
3. The historical approach where businesses believed consumers prefer products that are affordable and highly available is known as the _____ concept. (Production)
4. _____ involves the direct interaction between a salesperson and a customer to persuade the customer to make a purchase. (Personal Selling)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

- Create a timeline marking significant developments in the evolution of marketing from its origins to modern digital marketing.

1.8 Need and Its Types

In marketing, it is crucial to differentiate between needs and wants to create strategies that appeal to consumers and influence their behaviour. These concepts enable the marketer to satisfy the consumers' needs better and wants, intending to increase sales and customer loyalty.

Understanding Need and Its Types

1. **Needs:** In its simplest terms, a need is a fundamental necessity in life. Basic needs are required to allow life to continue and include food, water, shelter, and clothing. In the context of marketing, however, the concept of needs is broader and includes psychological and social needs that are essential for human welfare. These are not as obvious as the fundamental necessities of life but play a significant role in consumer Behaviour.
2. **Types of Needs:**

- Functional Needs: These are associated with a product's functional or useful characteristics. For instance, the use of a refrigerator is functional because it serves the purpose of preserving food.
- Social Needs: Social needs relate to the need to be accepted or to belong to a particular group. These needs can be met through products that boost social status or promote interaction with other people. For instance, dressing in fashionable clothes or possessing the latest smartphone model can be useful in meeting social needs.
- Emotional Needs: These needs are associated with searching for positive affect or avoiding negative affect. Products that provide happiness, contentment, or reassurance satisfy emotional needs. For instance, purchasing a luxury car may give one a feeling of accomplishment and self-satisfaction.
- Psychological Needs: These are the need for achievement, affiliation, and power. Consumer goods and services that they use to build self-assurance or personal development are classified as psychological needs.

1.9 Marketing Management

A company's approach to its consumers and market is shaped by its marketing management philosophies, which are guiding concepts. Every philosophy reflects a distinct strategy and point of emphasis for handling marketing-related tasks.

1.9.1 Marketing Concept

The marketing concept is a customer-centric philosophy that contends that fulfilling customer requirements and wants through marketing initiatives is essential to a company's success.

1.9.2 Production Concept

The production concept, which has its origins in the Industrial Revolution of the early 1900s, is among the oldest marketing management philosophies. This concept assumes that consumers favour reasonably priced and broadly accessible products.

1.9.3 Selling Concept

The selling concept is predicated on the notion that customers will not purchase enough of its products until a company engages in extensive marketing and promotion.

1.9.4 Societal Marketing Concept

By focusing on the welfare of society as a whole as well as the delight of individual customers, the societal marketing concept expands the marketing end.

1.10 Distinguishing Between Selling and Marketing

Distinguishing factors between selling and marketing are as follows:

Selling	Marketing
Selling is a single aspect of the marketing mix, specifically under the promotion element. It directly involves the techniques used to close a sale, such as presentation, persuasion, and negotiation skills.	Marketing incorporates all components of the marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) to create a unified strategy focused on satisfying customers' recognised needs and wants.
Selling is often transactional; marketing is relational.	Marketing strategies are designed to build enduring relationships with customers by consistently meeting their expectations and providing excellent service.
Selling activities are typically aligned with short-term business goals, such as meeting quarterly sales targets.	Marketing, however, is aligned with both short-term and long-term business goals, including market expansion, brand positioning, and customer relationship management.
In a selling-focused organisation, product development may be driven by what the business thinks it can sell effectively.	A marketing-oriented organisation bases its product development on market research to ensure the product meets customer needs and preferences, thereby enhancing the likelihood of its success in the market.
Some of the aggressive selling strategies might create negative impressions or even customer complaints if the goal is to make sales regardless of the customer's needs.	Marketing, with its integrated and customer-focused approach, tends to contribute positively to the brand's reputation and customer satisfaction.

1.11 The Marketing Mix

One of the key ideas in marketing is the "marketing mix," which outlines the tools at a company's disposal to control demand for its products or services. Product, Price, Place, and Promotion make up the marketing mix, which is also commonly referred to by the abbreviation "4Ps." In order to meet client needs and for firms to remain competitive in their respective marketplaces, these components can be handled and understood.

Components of the Marketing Thoroughly

1. **Product:** This component relates to the company's product offering, which encompasses all the characteristics, selling points, and benefits that consumers will derive from using the products.
2. **Price:** Pricing strategies are important because they determine how a consumer is likely to perceive a product. The price has to be in line with the positioning of the product and should be able to meet the expectations of the target market.
3. **Place:** This element, often referred to as distribution, focuses on the actions required to ensure that the product is supplied to customers in the right amounts, at the right time, and in the right place.
4. **Promotion:** This component comprises all activities designed to educate, convince and remind the target market about the company and its products.

Application in Strategic Marketing Planning

Incorporating the 4Ps into strategic marketing planning involves a series of steps that align the marketing mix with the company's broader strategic goals:

1. **Market Research:** Market research is the first step in determining the marketing mix since it helps a company learn about the customers' needs and wants and the existing competition.
2. **Segmentation and Targeting:** According to market segmentation, companies divide the market into various segments and decide which segment they want to serve.
3. **Marketing Mix Development:** Understanding the target market, the company forms a marketing mix:
 - **Product:** Ensure that the product developed meets the target market's needs.
 - **Price:** Set a pricing model that reflects the value of the product, affords the targeted market, and makes it possible to turn a profit.

- **Place:** Determine the appropriate channel of distribution based on the customer buying behaviour and the characteristics of the product.
 - **Promotion:** Create a promotion strategy that will be instrumental in getting the message across to the target consumers about the benefits of the product.
4. **Implementation and Control:** They are implemented once the marketing mix strategies have been created. This phase involves specifying how each of the marketing mix elements will be implemented.
 5. **Feedback and Adjustment:** The marketing mix is evaluated to monitor the effectiveness of continuous feedback from marketing communication.

1.12 The Promotion Mix

The promotion mix is the element of the marketing mix that addresses the communication side of the marketing process. It includes a set of techniques and methods used to inform, persuade, and remind prospective and current clients of a business's offerings.

Elements of the Promotion Mix

The promotion mix includes several distinct elements, each serving a unique function in the overall marketing strategy:

1. **Advertising:** This is sending messages through paid media to educate or influence the public about a product, service or brand. Advertisements can be carried out through TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, the Internet and other forms of outdoor media.
2. **Sales Promotion:** These are transient rewards meant to persuade customers to buy a product or service. Examples of sales promotions include coupons, discounts, competitions, flash sales, and other strategies that appeal to customers or provide instant value.
3. **Public relations (PR):** PR involves controlling a business's public image and fostering positive relationships with the general public, clients, partners, and the media. Press conferences, workshops, partnerships, public events, and press releases are examples of techniques.
4. **Personal Selling:** This is one-on-one product or service selling, where the salesperson must persuade the client to purchase.
5. **Direct Marketing:** Direct marketing aims to reach out to certain individuals directly to establish a lasting relationship with them and elicit a quick response.

- 6. Digital Marketing:** Although it was previously not regarded as a component of the promotion mix, digital marketing is now a crucial element in the contemporary world. It includes any form of electronic or online marketing communication, such as social media, email marketing, search engine optimisation, and online advertising.

1.13 Evolution of Marketing

Marketing history is a brilliant story that maps out how marketing techniques and methods have evolved to suit the consumption rate, advanced technology, and culture. This evolution can be divided into stages, with each stage having distinct characteristics and implementations that have always transformed the accumulated communication between firms and their clients.

The Production Era (Pre-1920s)

Before the 1920s, marketing was more of a production concept, especially during the early period of industrialisation. This period, known as the Production Era, was based on the belief that “supply creates its demand” (Say’s Law).

The Sales Era (1920s - 1940s)

Competition became more intense as production capacity expanded, and the Sales Era emerged in the 1920s through the 1940s. During this period, companies discovered that goods would not sell automatically but required forceful selling methods.

The Marketing Era (1950s - 1990s)

The Marketing Era began with a significant shift in how marketing was approached following World War II. The marketing idea, which places the needs and wants of the client at the centre of all business operations, was adopted during this era.

The Relationship Marketing Era (1990s - Early 2000s)

By the 1990s, the rapid advancement of technology, especially the rise of databases and information processing, led to the Relationship Marketing Era.

The Digital Marketing Era (Early 2000s - Present)

The advent of the internet and digital technology has ushered in the Digital Marketing Era, fundamentally transforming the marketing landscape.

- **Knowledge Check 2**
State True or False.

1. The selling concept focuses primarily on fulfilling customer needs and building long-term relationships. (False)
 2. Public Relations (PR) is used to manage the public image and cultivate a favourable relationship with the media and the public. (True)
 3. Demand increases as the price of a product increases according to the basic principles of supply and demand. (False)
 4. Direct marketing involves communicating directly with targeted consumers to obtain an immediate response. (True)
- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**
Sketch a basic promotional plan for a new eco-friendly product using at least three elements from the promotion mix.

1.14 Summary

- Marketing is a broad discipline that involves creating, communicating, and delivering offerings that have value to customers and other stakeholders.
- The concept of marketing has evolved from ancient trade practices to sophisticated digital strategies, influenced by technological advancements and shifts in consumer behaviour.
- Marketing is described as the task of identifying, anticipating, satisfying, and meeting customer needs and wants.
- As a functional area, marketing is involved in a wide range of activities, from market analysis to customer communication and management, across different levels of the organisation.
- The needs are basic and genuine, while the wants are culture and personality-influenced. Marketing strategies are developed to achieve both, making products and services desirable and essential.
- Understanding of the marketing mix, also known as the 4Ps, which include Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, is a model that guides organisations in the development of marketing strategies. All these elements have to be controlled in order to address the needs of the target group appropriately.
- The advertising promotion mix involves advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and digital marketing. The proper implementation of

these elements is necessary to ensure that the message is understandable, unambiguous, and persuasive to the target group.

1.15 Keywords

- **Marketing Mix (4Ps):** The mix of product, price, place, and promotion employed by a business to meet its marketing goals. These factors can be manipulated to control demand and satisfy customers' needs and wants.
- **Market Segmentation:** The act of breaking down a large consumer or business market into smaller parts of consumers based on some form of similarity. This assists businesses in targeting specific groups with their marketing and products more efficiently.

1.16 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the four components of the marketing mix?
2. How does digital marketing differ from traditional marketing?
3. What is market segmentation, and why is it important?
4. Explain the difference between needs and wants in marketing.
5. What role does consumer behaviour play in effective marketing?

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Unit 2: Market Segmentation

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify the components and benefits of market segmentation.
- Students will be able to describe the main criteria used for segmenting markets.
- Students will be able to analyse the approaches to targeting specific market segments.
- Students will be able to develop a positioning statement for a market segment.

Structure:

- 2.1 Introduction to Market Segmentation
- 2.2 Basis of Segmentation
- 2.3 Types of Market Segmentation
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 2.4 Targeting
- 2.5 Positioning
- 2.6 Behavioural Segmentation
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 Keywords
- 2.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.10 References / Reference Reading

2.1 Introduction to Market Segmentation

A marketing idea called market segmentation involves dividing a sizable market into smaller divisions. Since each subgroup has similar characteristics and needs, it is possible to market products and services to them.

- The segmentation process involves determining the various elements that influence consumer behaviour. These include demographics like geography, lifestyle, and values; psychographics like age, gender, and income; and behavioural traits like purchasing habits and usage frequency.
- Market segmentation is crucial because it helps businesses concentrate their marketing efforts on the target markets offering the greatest profit potential. The process of crafting communications that are pertinent to the target market is aided by marketing communication, which raises the likelihood of connecting with customers.
- Market segmentation has evolved over the years from simple techniques involving basic demographic data to complex techniques requiring complex data analysis. The first approaches were very basic and involved the use of obvious physical traits. Over time, due to the changes in technology and data collection methods, many organisations have upgraded their algorithms, including the use of machine learning.
- The alterations in market segmentation in present society are attributed to evolving digital marketing technologies. The Internet as a medium is characterised by a large amount of data that can be used to study customers. For instance, social networks are endowed with concrete information that marketers use to comprehend consumers and their activities.

2.2 Basis of Segmentation

This makes it relevant for every business entity to embark on the process with adequate knowledge and appreciation of the basics behind the segmentation process to target specific subgroups in the total market. The market segmentation criteria include the definition of certain attributes which may influence the customers' decisions and choices.

Common Bases for Market Segmentation

There are four different classifications of market segmentation: demographic, psychographic, geographic, and behavioural. Both are useful for other purposes, as they

help obtain other information about the consumer population, which increases the chance of successful marketing.

- 1. Demographic Segmentation:** This is arguably one of the simplest and most popular segmentation methods. It involves classifying the market according to variables like household size, age, gender, income, and educational attainment.
- 2. Psychographic Segmentation:** The second method is psychographic segmentation. Its elements are consumer behaviour, consumer attitude, consumer interest, and personality traits.
- 3. Geographic Segmentation:** Geographic segmentation is a type of market segmentation in which the market is split by geographical areas such as country, region, city, location, or neighbourhood.
- 4. Behavioural Segmentation:** This categorisation is based on the consumers' behaviour, consumption rate, consumer loyalty, and purchasing habits.

2.3 Types of Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is a crucial strategy that businesses can employ to target their customers. This strategy not only optimises the efficacy of marketing communication but also raises the chances of success in a variety of marketplaces.

○ Consumer Market Segmentation

Consumer market segmentation categorises the large market into smaller markets according to consumers' characteristics. This segmentation allows businesses to cater to the needs and wants of individual customers more effectively.

○ Demographic Segmentation

This means that demographic segmentation divides the market by well-defined, measurable variables, including age, gender, income, education level, size of family, occupation, and ethnicity.

○ Psychographic Segmentation

Psychographic segmentation involves portions of the market based on some customer traits that cannot be easily recognised compared to demographical ones. Another type of segmentation is based on life cycle, values, beliefs, interests, and personality.

○ Geographic Segmentation

Geographical segmentation classifies the market according to geographical locations. It can go from the general, such as country or region, to the specific, such as cities or

neighbourhoods. Geographical factors play a major role in consumer behaviour patterns because of the variation in culture, weather and economic conditions.

- **Behavioural Segmentation**

Behavioural segmentation is based on consumers' actual Behaviours and patterns, such as usage rates, purchase history, brand loyalty, and benefits sought. This segmentation is highly useful for customising marketing campaigns and product offers to fit customers' specific Behaviour patterns.

- **Business Market Segmentation**

While consumer market segmentation focuses on individual customers, business market segmentation targets groups within the professional or corporate space. This form of segmentation is crucial for companies that sell to other businesses (B2B) because organisational purchasing decisions often differ significantly from those made by individual consumers.

- **Firmographic Segmentation**

Firmographic segmentation is the equivalent of demographic segmentation in the consumer market. It categorises businesses according to company-specific characteristics such as industry, company size, location, type of business, revenue, number of employees, and market share.

- **Needs-based Segmentation**

Needs-based segmentation divides the market based on the specific needs and requirements of businesses. This approach is particularly effective because it addresses the underlying problems or goals that a business customer is trying to solve or achieve.

- **Transactional Segmentation**

Transactional segmentation focuses on the Behaviours related to the purchase process itself. This includes purchasing frequency, order size, payment terms, and sensitivity to pricing changes. Businesses might segment their customers based on who makes bulk purchases versus those who order in smaller quantities or who seek long-term contracts versus one-off purchases.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

- Fill in the Blanks.**

1. The process of dividing a market based on variables such as age, gender, and income is known as _____ segmentation. (demographic)

2. _____ segmentation categorises consumers based on lifestyles, values, and personality traits. (psychographics)
3. _____ are often used in demographic segmentation to define consumer groups. (age and income)
4. The segmentation that analyses customer behaviour like product usage frequency and brand loyalty is called _____ segmentation. (Behavioural)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Create a simple chart that categorises your family members into market segments based on age and favourite product type.

2.4 Targeting

Market targeting is one key step in market segmentation, which involves selecting customer groups that are likely to be receptive to the company's products.

Understanding Targeting in the Context of Segmentation

The process of market segmentation involves dividing the market into multiple categories based on demographic, psychographic, geographic, or behavioural traits. The next step in the process is targeting, which is deciding which of these segments to focus the company's marketing efforts on. This process is important because it prevents marketing to a huge public audience, which could be expensive and ineffective.

Criteria for Selecting Target Segments

Target market segment selection is crucial for marketing and a company's success.

Size of the Segment: The segment should be sufficiently large that the investment in marketing to it will be justified. It has to be large enough to offer a large possible market to generate profits.

- **Growth Potential:** In an ideal world, the target segment should be large and growing. A growing segment is more attractive because it means the business has a chance to grow with it.
- **Accessibility:** The segment must also be accessible through the company's marketing communication tools. It is futile to target a niche that does not have the potential to be influenced using the tools of the marketing communication mix.
- **Compatibility with the Organisation's Objectives and Resources:** The segment the company chooses to target should correspond to both the organisational goals and the strategic plan.

- **Profitability:** The segment should be in a position to at least possess the capacity to create sufficiently high-profit margins. This not only refers to the size and purchasing power of the segment but serves other factors like competition and resources needed to address the segment.
- **Competitive Advantage:** In this segment, the company must be able to establish a strong market position. This may be because the company has better products, new technology, improved customer services, or a stronger branding factor.

2.5 Positioning

Positioning is a technique of advertising and marketing that aims to create a specific image or identify a product or service in the minds of the target customer. Instead, it is about positioning a brand in a way that will allow it to adopt a posture that consumers prefer from its competitors.

The Role of Positioning in Market Strategy

Marketing location is also important when formulating the overall market strategy as it gives direction on how the product is positioned in the eyes of the target market. It determines the promotional messages that are used to let the customers know what makes the specific product special. It is calculated by the importance of the attributes that the target market possesses, which include quality, price, convenience, and reputation. The aim of positioning a product is to create a specific niche or value within the mind of a target consumer with the end view of increasing the consumption level and market control of the brand by the company.

Developing a Positioning Statement

A positioning statement serves the purpose of providing the audience with reasons why a certain product should be chosen. It states the characteristics of the product that set it apart from relative products and aims to meet the needs of the target customers. Here's how to develop a compelling positioning statement: The following guidelines are useful when crafting an effective positioning statement:

1. **Identify the Target Audience:** This will require defining the product's target market. This may include information on the market's characteristics, features, needs, and interests.
2. **Determine the Market Definition:** Mention the category of competition with which the product is competing within the market. In this manner, it is less difficult

to understand the position of the product in reference to the rest of the competitors in the marketplace.

3. **Clarify the Unique Value Proposition:** Determine which actions regarding the product can be tailored. 3. Clearly State the Unique Value Proposition. Finding the characteristics and selling aspects that make the product stand out from the competition is part of this process.
4. **Connect with the Customer's Needs:** Emphasize how the product solves important customer needs. Applying the value proposition to the target market requires this relationship.
5. **Summarize the Positioning Statement:** The last statement should be a single clear sentence summarising what the product provides, for whom and why this may be superior to other similar product alternatives.

2.6 Behavioural Segmentation

Behavioural segmentation is among the most effective tools of market segmentation in marketing since it categorises the market based on consumers' behaviour and their pattern regarding the use of a particular product or service.

Understanding Behavioural Segmentation

The behavioural segment is based on consumer habits in relation to a specific product or service. The criteria used in this segmentation type include:

- **Purchase Behaviour:** Consumer buying behaviour in terms of how they approach the purchase decision process, which could be the frequently buying consumer, first-time buying consumer, or a sporadic buying consumer. Companies can always use it to target one-off customers and turn them into full repeat customers or retain habitual customers.
- **Usage Rate:** People can be grouped according to how often they need a particular product. For instance, the 'frequent users' of a specific product may get different communication messages from those of 'infrequent users'. This can help companies prioritise their marketing efforts towards those who drive the most revenue.
- **User Status:** Identifying if consumers are regular users, potential users, first-time users, or former users. This helps customise messages that encourage adoption among potential users or win back former users.
- **Loyalty Status:** Consumers can be segmented by their level of loyalty, from brand loyalists, who always purchase the same brand, to switchers, who switch brands

frequently. Loyalty programs are often used to deepen relationships with brand-loyal consumers.

- **Benefits Sought:** Understanding the specific benefits that consumers seek from a product, which can vary widely even within the same product category. For instance, within the toothpaste market, some consumers might look for cavity protection, while others might prioritise whitening or sensitivity relief.

Application of Behavioural Segmentation

Behavioural segmentation allows companies to fine-tune their marketing efforts based on actionable consumer data, leading to more personalised and effective marketing strategies. Here are some applications:

- **Personalised Marketing:** By understanding the purchase Behaviour and benefits sought, companies can create highly targeted ads that speak directly to the consumer's needs, increasing the effectiveness of their marketing spend.
- **Customer Retention:** Analysing loyalty patterns helps in designing loyalty programs or retention strategies to increase customer lifetime value.
- **Product Development:** Insights from usage rate and benefits sought can guide product development to meet the needs of different consumer segments better.
- **Resource Allocation:** By identifying which segments are more profitable, companies can strategically allocate their marketing resources to maximise ROI.

• **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Targeting involves selecting one or more market segments on which to focus marketing efforts. (True)
2. A positioning statement should be vague to allow for broad market appeal. (False)
3. Behavioural segmentation includes analysing consumers based on their purchase Behaviours and loyalty status. (True)
4. Loyalty status in Behavioural segmentation refers to consumers' preference for products based on price only. (False)

• **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Think of your favourite brand and list whether it uses undifferentiated, differentiated, concentrated, or micromarketing strategies.

2.7 Summary

- Market segmentation is the strategy of dividing a broad consumer or business market into sub-groups of consumers (known as segments) based on some shared characteristics.
- Segmentation bases include demographic, psychographic, geographic, and Behavioural characteristics that affect consumer decisions and purchasing Behaviour.
- Business market segmentation includes firmographic, needs-based, and transactional segmentation, focusing on organisational characteristics and purchasing Behaviours.
- Targeting follows segmentation and involves selecting the segment(s) that a business will focus its marketing efforts on based on the potential for profit and alignment with business goals.
- There are several targeting strategies, including undifferentiated (mass) marketing, differentiated (segmented) marketing, concentrated (niche) marketing, and micromarketing, each suited to different business objectives.
- Effective positioning is communicated through a positioning statement and can be reinforced by various strategies such as differentiation, pricing, and quality enhancement.

2.8 Keywords

- **Market Segmentation** is the process of dividing a broad market into smaller, distinct groups of consumers who have common needs, Behaviours, or characteristics and tailoring marketing strategies accordingly.
- **Targeting**: The selection of specific segments on which to focus marketing efforts after market segmentation has been completed. This step determines where a business will concentrate its resources to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Positioning**: Developing a distinctive place for a product or service in the minds of potential customers relative to competing offerings based on unique attributes or benefits that resonate with the target segment.

2.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the main bases for market segmentation?
2. How does targeting improve marketing effectiveness?
3. What are the key differences between consumer and business market segmentation?
4. How do companies develop an effective positioning statement?
5. What strategies can businesses employ to position their products effectively?

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Unit 3: Product Concepts

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to define 'product' in a business context.

- Students will be able to classify different types of products.
- Students will be able to explain the product concept and its relevance to marketing.
- Students will be able to describe the stages of the Product Life Cycle (PLC).
- Students will be able to analyse real-world examples to illustrate PLC impacts on marketing decisions.

Structure:

- 3.1 Introduction to Product Concepts
- 3.2 Definition and Importance of Product
- 3.3 Types of Products
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 3.4 Product Concept
- 3.5 Product Life Cycle (PLC)
- 3.6 New Product Development Process
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Keywords
- 3.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 3.10 References / Reference Reading

3.1 Introduction to Product Concepts

In one of the most fundamental and foundational concepts of marketing and business management, there is an information gap regarding the understanding of what a product is and its significance. According to most authors, a product may be explained as an

object in a particular market where individuals purchase goods, services, or even a certain experience to fulfil a specific need or desire. In this chapter, the author gives a general concept of the idea that defines what a product is and why it is a tool crucial for business strategies. Products are not mere items to be traded in the market; they are central to the establishment of a company's image, communication with customers, and its competitive advantage over other firms.

Another viewpoint when considering product types is useful as it clearly demonstrates that there are two kinds of major product types: consumer goods and industrial products. Consumer goods, which are those products that are usually purchased for the use of the consumers, are further classified as convenience goods, shopping goods, and speciality goods. The marketing of each category differs due to consumer buying Behaviour and the frequency of the purchases made on food items. On the other hand, Industrial goods are defined as products that include commodities that are used in manufacturing different products or delivering services. This has the effect of allowing the marketing of the products and services to be done in the right manner and satisfying the respective markets.

3.2 Definition and Importance of Product

Anyone interested in marketing or business management should have a clear understanding of what a product is in business. A product is almost anything in the market that can be marketed to cater to a need or demand. This includes physical products like clothing and gadgets and abstract products such as services, events, and concepts.

Defining Product in Business

In business, the definition of a product is not limited to tangible objects and commodities only. It covers all types of products that can be taken to the market and sold. Products are created as a result of a process and serve as a key element in the marketing mix, often referred to as the "4 P's" These four elements include Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. In this regard, products are not mere goods; they are solutions to certain consumer needs and wants. They are created and marketed in such a way that they meet certain target customers' demands and wants.

Importance of Products in Market Dynamics

The importance of products does not stop at the level of the individual product or product category but permeates all spheres of the market. They are fundamental to business success because they directly impact several critical areas:

- **Customer Attraction and Retention:** Products are key to winning and maintaining customers. By satisfying the needs and wants of the customers, products aid in the creation of customer loyalty and the development of long-term business relations.
- **Market Differentiation:** Products offer an opportunity for segmentation in competitive environments. Businesses can differentiate themselves from others through product design, quality and functionality.
- **Revenue and Profitability:** Products are directly associated with the generation of revenues and the overall profitability of a business. The sale of products determines the profitability of companies. Product management, like innovation, pricing, and lifecycle management, can greatly improve the level of profitability and market share.
- **Brand Identity and Reputation:** Products are one of the most important elements of brand image and corporate image. Quality, ease of use, and functionality of products have an impact on the brand and, in turn, the public. Quality goods help a company gain a good reputation and build a strong brand image.
- **Market Positioning and Growth:** Product development and management are key in positioning products and the growth of the business. With new products or enhanced existing products, companies can expand their markets, address emerging customer needs, and remain competitive in the marketplace.

3.3 Types of Products

In the context of diversified market offerings, products can be grouped depending on their application, customers, and other attributes. Knowledge of these classifications is important for marketers since it determines the product plan, marketing plan, and sales technique.

Consumer Goods

Consumer goods are also referred to as the final goods that are purchased by the consumers directly. These are the items that consumers purchase for their use or consumption purposes. Consumer goods are further divided into three sub-categories based on the buying habits and the nature of the goods:

1. **Convenience Goods:** These are goods that buyers buy often with little or no thought put into the decision-making process.
2. **Shopping Goods:** Compared to convenience goods, shopping goods are purchased less frequently, and consumers spend more time comparing various attributes such as quality, price, and style.
3. **Specialty Goods:** A significant group of purchasers is willing to make a special purchasing effort for these products because of their unique characteristics or brand identification.

Industrial Goods

Products classified as industrial goods are those that are utilised for resale, business activities, or the production of additional goods or services. The demand for industrial goods, unlike consumer goods, is frequently derived from consumer goods demand. Industrial goods can be categorised into three main types:

1. **Raw Materials and Components:** These are basic materials and parts used in the initial stages of production. Examples include logs, iron ore, and electronic components. These goods are fundamental in manufacturing and often require companies to maintain strong relationships with suppliers.
2. **Capital Goods:** These are durable goods that make managing or developing the final product easier. They consist of structures, equipment, and tools. Capital goods represent a significant investment for any organisation, so purchasing them requires careful planning and evaluation of their long-term utility.
3. **Supplies and Services:** These goods include operating supplies that do not directly enter the production of other goods. Examples are lubricants, office supplies, and repair services. These are regularly consumed and replaced during business operations.

• **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. A product is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a ____ or want.
(need)
2. In marketing, products are not just objects but solutions to consumer ____.
(problems)
3. The product concept emphasises that consumers will favour products that offer the most ____, performance, and features. (quality)

4. Effective product management influences customer _____ and loyalty.
(satisfaction)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Create a visual mind map that outlines the key aspects of product concepts, including the definition of a product and its importance in the market.

3.4 Product Concept

The product concept is a cornerstone of marketing theory. It states that consumers will prefer products with the highest levels of performance, quality, and features. The success of any product in the market mostly rests on its superior capabilities and ongoing improvement, a concept that is firmly embedded in product-oriented marketing strategies.

Explanation of the Product Concept

The premise of the product concept is that a business should concentrate on creating a product with the best features, performance, and quality available, under the assumption that these attributes will draw customers on their own. According to this perspective, the product serves as the central component of the marketing process, and all strategies are intended to enhance the product's characteristics.

Relevance to Marketing

The importance of the product concept in marketing today can be explained by the fact that competition today is usually focused on product differentiation and when the market requires high quality and innovative characteristics. For instance, in the technology sector, Apple and Samsung aim to develop new products to appeal to consumers who are interested in the latest technological developments of smartphones.

Influence on Marketing Strategies

The adoption of the product concept significantly influences how marketing strategies are developed and implemented:

1. **Product Development:** Those organisations that have adopted the product concept are always willing to spend a lot of money on research to enhance their products and incorporate the latest technologies and features.
2. **Marketing Communication:** For companies that adopt the product concept, marketing communication strategies highlight the product's superiority and enhanced features.

3. **Branding:** The product concept influences the branding so that the brand image is associated with attributes such as quality, reliability, and innovation.
4. **Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty:** Organisations can increase customer satisfaction and build loyalty by constantly monitoring the quality and features of products on the market.
5. **Market Expansion:** Better product attributes also create new markets and segments, especially in the global market, since consumer needs or preferences may be different.

3.5 Product Life Cycle (PLC)

The Product Life Cycle (PLC) is one of the most important models used in marketing, and it refers to the cycle that products go through from the time of their introduction to the market up to the time they are withdrawn from the market. However, marketers need to understand the concept of the PLC so that they can employ appropriate strategies at each stage to maximise the product's lifespan and profitability. Typically, there are four key steps to the PLC: The introduction, growth, maturity, and decline are examples of stages.

Introduction Stage

The product is first offered to the market during the adoption stage. Since the primary goal is to create market awareness and demand for the product, awareness is also low during this period. Because of the expenses involved in creating and promoting the product, sales growth is always sluggish, and profit margins are typically low.

Growth Stage

The growth stage comes when the product is accepted and established in the marketplace. In this phase, the sales volume begins to increase, and the general profitability is achieved because marketing costs are distributed over a larger volume of sales.

Maturity Stage

The maturity stage is when the sales growth rate slows down, the product is accepted by the market, and the company enters a stage of competition. At this point, it may be impossible to penetrate further into the market, and the product has reached its optimum level of market penetration. While profitability is still a concern, the emphasis is placed on maintaining a company's market position while aiming at the maximum possible profit.

Decline Stage

Finally, many products enter the decline stage, where they experience a gradual decline in sales and profitability due to factors like technological advancement, changes in consumer preferences, stiff competition, or market saturation. At this stage, marketers must determine whether they can try to extend the product's life cycle by making changes or if it is time for the product to be replaced.

3.6 New Product Development Process

In order to create new products, gain a competitive advantage, and satisfy customer needs, organisations must prioritise new product development as a strategic success factor. The process of developing a new product to suit the market requires going through a number of steps. This is known as new product development. These stages assist businesses in mapping the development process, identifying when and how failure happens, and increasing the likelihood of success. This is a thorough synopsis of the process of developing new products:

1. Idea Generation

The initial stage of the NPD process is referred to as the idea generation stage. Ideation is a process of creating ideas for new ideas and collecting them from inside and outside sources, including workers, customers, competitors and research. The purpose is to generate ideas for potential products that have to be further analysed.

2. Idea Screening

Idea screening follows after completing a list of ideas generated, which yields possible ideas. This includes the evaluation process so that one can judge which of the ideas is feasible. Through the screening stage, the organisation seeks to remove solutions that are unimplementable or irrelevant to the organisation's strategy.

3. Concept Development and Testing

Identified ideas are developed into product concepts at this stage. In terms that the consumer can understand, a product concept is a more detailed version of the idea. Concept testing involves taking these ideas to the target audience and tracking their reactions and comments.

4. Business Analysis

Business analysis focuses on assessing the feasibility of implementing a product concept. This involves forecasting the sales, costs and profit that would be associated

with the new product. The aim is to guarantee that the product provides the required financial and strategic performance of the company.

5. Product Development

In the product development stage, the idea, which is the product concept, is translated into a tangible product. This includes making models and checking the product against the design specifications and the expected quality of the product in the market.

6. Market Testing

One of the stages of market testing is when a product is launched on a small scale so as to assess the market reaction and the possible problems that may arise. This stage helps validate the product and marketing strategies in a real-world setting.

7. Commercialisation

The full-scale product launch that occurs during the final stage of the NPD process is known as commercialisation. In order to present the product to the market, this stage involves ramping up production, distribution, marketing campaigns, and sales strategies.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Rapidly declining sales characterise the growth stage of the Product Life Cycle. (False)
2. Consumer goods are intended for the final consumer for personal use. (True)
3. Industrial goods include categories such as raw materials and capital goods. (True)
4. The product concept focuses solely on the cost-effectiveness of products to attract consumers. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

List three products you frequently use and classify them as convenience goods, shopping goods, or speciality goods, explaining why you categorised them this way.

3.7 Summary

- **Overview of Product Concepts:** This section establishes the basic definitions and classifications of products, emphasising their integral role in the foundation of marketing and business strategies.

- **Objectives of Understanding Products:** Emphasis is on familiarising the learner with specifications for different types of products to enable him/her to develop the right market mix strategies.
- **Defining Products:** Products are those that can be used to meet needs or wants. They are not limited to physical objects but include goods and services and virtually everything a business offers to the market.
- **Importance in Market Dynamics:** Products are essential for gaining customers, establishing competitive ground, and generating revenues, making them critical in organisational processes.
- **Consumer and Industrial Goods:** Products are broadly categorised into consumer goods for personal use and industrial goods for production and business operations, each with distinct market strategies.
- **Product Quality and Innovation:** This section emphasises that companies should focus on high quality, performance, and innovation in their products, assuming that these traits will inherently attract consumers.

3.8 Keywords

- **Product Life Cycle (PLC):** The stages a product goes through from introduction to decline, including Introduction, Growth, Maturity, and Decline. Understanding the PLC helps in strategic planning for marketing and product management.
- **Consumer Goods:** Products intended for personal use by consumers. These are further divided into convenience goods, shopping goods, and speciality goods, each with distinct marketing strategies.
- **Industrial Goods:** Products used in the production of other goods or business operations. These include raw materials, capital goods, and supplies and services essential for business functions.

3.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is the definition of a product in the context of business?
2. How do consumer goods differ from industrial goods?
3. What are the main stages of the Product Life Cycle (PLC)?
4. Why is the product concept important in marketing?
5. How do convenience goods differ from shopping and speciality goods?

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Unit 4: Marketing Channel Management

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify the different types of marketing channels.

- Students will be able to describe the roles channels play in distribution.
- Students will be able to assess factors influencing channel choice.
- Students will be able to resolve conflicts within marketing channels.
- Students will be able to apply channel management strategies to real-world scenarios.

Structure:

- 4.1 Introduction to Marketing Channels
- 4.2 Channels of Distribution
- 4.3 Role of Channels of Distribution
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 4.4 Factors Influencing Channel Choice
- 4.5 Managing Channel Conflict
- 4.6 Channel Design Decisions
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 4.7 Summary
- 4.8 Keywords
- 4.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.10 References / Reference Reading

4.1 Introduction to Marketing Channels

Definition:

Marketing channels, also called distribution channels, are the paths followed by products or services from the producer to the consumer. These channels include

intermediaries such as wholesalers, retailers, distributors, and agents who facilitate the distribution of the products.

Importance of Marketing Channels:

The importance of marketing channels cannot be underestimated. They act as the link between manufacturers and consumers, who are the ultimate users of the products. Marketing channels can help widen the market, increase customer access to products, and, in effect, increase the sales and profitability of the business. They are also important for market feedback, customer relationship management, and promotional support.

Marketing channels are an important field of study that helps to explain how various products are distributed from producers to consumers. This process also involves interconnecting agencies that form part of the final product's distribution chain. Some of them include transporting, storing, selling, and communicating not only with the manufacturer but also with the consumer. Marketing channels help ensure that the right product is available at the right time and place, satisfying the demands of the consumers.

4.2 Channels of Distribution

It is important to focus on the classification of distribution channels so that they can assist organisations in achieving their objectives while serving particular markets. A distribution channel refers to the system for moving products from the producers to the consumers, and they are categorised in terms of the number of times they are handled and the manner in which they reach the final consumers. In this section, the primary categories of distribution channels will be explained, and the characteristics and applications of each will be detailed.

1. Direct Distribution Channels

A direct distribution channel, on the other hand, can be defined as a channel of distribution where the manufacturer directly sells the product to the consumer without the aid of the intermediaries. This type of channel is used by firms that have the resources to invest in selling functions, distribution, and customer support activities. Direct channels can take various forms, including:

- **Online Sales:** Businesses avail of some of their services through the Internet, whereby customers can purchase products through the company's website or an

application. It has been widely adopted, especially with the advancements in the area of e-commerce within the business environment.

- **Factory Outlets:** Manufacturers have their outlets where consumers can make direct purchases of their products. It is mostly used when a business has stock that it needs to off or when its products are discontinued.
- **Direct Mail:** Products are brought to the doorstep of customers through brochures or any other marketing material, while customers can order products using the mail or through the telephone. While this method is not widely used in the current market, several specific markets use it, including special brands.

2. Indirect Distribution Channels

The distribution channels in which it is necessary to have one or several intermediaries between the manufacturer and the buyer are called indirect distribution channels. These can include a wholesaler, retailer or an agent who helps in the distribution of these products to the consumer. Indirect channels can be further classified based on the number of intermediaries involved:

- **One-Level Channel:** This channel of distribution involves one intermediary, the retailer who acquires products from manufacturers and then sells them to the end users.
- **Two-Level Channel:** This channel involves two intermediaries, the wholesalers and the retailers. This involves the mobilisation of the manufacturer who is supplying the goods to several wholesalers or directly to several retailers.
- **Three-Level Channel:** There are three levels of intermediaries in this channel: agent, wholesaler, and retailer. This agent facilitates the selling process of the manufacturer to the wholesaler and the wholesaler selling to the retailers. This form of distribution channel is widely used in global markets, and products are airlifted into foreign markets through agents.

3. Dual Distribution Channels

Using various market communication techniques, it is often observed that firms are capturing various market segments both through direct and indirect means. The strategy is known as dual distribution, and it allows the companies to deliver all their products to as many markets as possible to meet the consumers' demand.

4. Reverse Channels

Reverse channels, commonly referred to as return or recycling channels, include the flow of products from the consumer back to the manufacturer or another intermediary. This type of channel is crucial for returning, recycling and disposal of products.

5. Hybrid Channels

These are a mixture of both direct and indirect channels of distribution and are flexible and effective means of reaching the market. Some companies employing hybrid channels may own stores that sell online and also through retailers at the same time.

4.3 Role of Channels of Distribution

In this paper, distribution channels are critical in the flow of products from producers to consumers. They undertake various tasks and offer some crucial services that help facilitate the movement of goods. Knowledge of these functions enables firms to improve their distribution network and, hence, the market performance of the products.

1. Transactional Functions

The main activities covered by transactional functions include the buying and selling of products. These include:

- **Negotiation:** This involves agents and brokers who facilitate agreements between the manufacturers and the buyers of the products. This ensures that there is a consensus on the price to be paid, the time of delivery and the mode of payment.
- **Promotion:** Promotion is another element in the marketing mix that retailers and wholesalers commonly use in their bid to boost their sales. This can encompass such areas as advertising, using stands inside the stores, and promotions.
- **Risk-taking:** Intermediaries have to bear the costs that are normally associated with holding inventory. This includes the risk of loss, degradation or changes in demand for the assets.

2. Logistical Functions

Logistical functions are related to the transportation of products and their storage. These functions are strategic to ensure that inventories are available in the right place at the right time.

- **Assorting:** Intermediaries formulate a bundle of goods, hoping to fulfil the requirements of a customer.
- **Storing:** Another important operational activity is holding, which is the action of stocking or storing goods before being sold to either the retailer or the end user.

Storage management should ensure that the products are properly stored and easily relocatable in the event they have to be dispatched.

- **Sorting:** Large volumes are segmented into smaller quantities that retailers or end users can individually manage, as the case may require.
- **Transporting:** Transporters are involved in the distribution of products from manufacturers to retailers and finally to consumers. This may require the use of a single transport mode or a combination of the transport modes, such as trucks, ships and planes, depending on the distance and the need for the delivery.

3. Facilitating Functions

The facilitating functions contribute to the actual distribution process by offering services that improve the supply chain.

- **Financing:** Credit terms are common among intermediaries, as they help manufacturers and retailers to finance their operations. This helps ensure a smooth flow of goods without financial bottlenecks.
- **Grading:** Intermediaries may sort products based on quality and grade, ensuring that consumers receive goods that meet specific standards.
- **Market Information:** Intermediaries collect and disseminate market information, including consumer preferences, competitor activities, and market trends. This information helps manufacturers and retailers make informed decisions about production, marketing, and inventory management.

• Knowledge Check 1

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Marketing channels ensure that products move from producers to consumers through various _____ such as wholesalers and retailers. (intermediaries)
2. Direct distribution channels offer better _____ over branding and customer experience compared to indirect channels. (control)
3. Distribution channels perform essential functions such as _____, promotion, risk-taking, assorting, storing, sorting, and transporting products. (negotiation)
4. The nature, complexity, and value of products influence the choice of _____ channels. (Distribution)

• Outcome-Based Activity 1

List two examples of products that would use direct distribution channels and two that would use indirect distribution channels, and explain why.

4.4 Factors Influencing Channel Choice

When selecting distribution channels, businesses must consider various factors that can influence their effectiveness and efficiency. Understanding these factors helps in designing a distribution strategy that aligns with product characteristics and market conditions. Here, we explore the key factors influencing channel choice, focusing on product and market factors.

1. Nature of the Product

The inherent characteristics of a product significantly impact the choice of distribution channels. Depending on the type of product, the handling, storage, and transportation procedures might vary significantly.

- **Perishable Goods:** Perishable goods like fresh foods and flowers require efficient distribution networks so that they can reach consumers promptly.
- **Fragile Items:** Items that are sensitive to handling, such as glassware and electronics, cannot be sold through just any channel. Proper packaging and handling procedures are paramount, usually requiring a direct distribution channel or a highly accredited third-party logistics company.
- **Bulk Commodities:** Products like furniture or industrial equipment that are usually big and bulky need to be delivered directly to the target location to reduce handling costs.

2. Complexity of the Product

This means that the complexity of a particular product will determine the level of specialisation needed in the distribution and selling of the same product.

- **Technical Products:** The direct channels or specialised intermediaries are useful for products that are technically challenging or need extensive support, for example, medical equipment, industrial tools, etc.
- **Customizable Products:** Products that are ordered as per the customers' specifications or are unique, like clothing that has been designed to fit a specific customer or a software program that has been developed for a particular business, are usually sold through direct channels. This makes it easy for the manufacturer to have a close working relationship with the customer in order to meet set standards.

3. Value of the Product

Another factor that determines the choice of distribution channels is the value or price point of the product.

- **High-Value Products:** Products such as luxury cars, jewellery, and electronics are usually distributed through direct and selective channels. This approach also maintains the brand image of the company and its products, as well as offers customised services to customers. For instance, Tesla markets its electric cars directly to consumers through its owned stores and an online portal, cutting out intermediaries such as car dealers.
- **Low-Value Products:** The indirect channel comprises the distribution of such products as household goods and basic clothing, which are relatively cheaper and used on a daily basis. These products have high volumes sold and require wide distribution and high accessibility. Companies such as Procter & Gamble sell detergents and toiletries through a vast outlet.

4.5 Managing Channel Conflict

Another important factor to consider in managing distribution channels is conflict that may develop between channel members. These conflicts can lead to inefficiencies in work and even damage to the people involved in relationships. Channel members should try to establish which factors cause conflict and then take action to rectify it for the benefit of channel flow.

Identifying Sources of Channel Conflict

There are various causes of channel conflicts, and the first stage in the management of channel conflicts is the identification of the causes. Here are some common causes:

1. Goal Incompatibility

The members in a channel may also have different objectives or targets in touch. For example, a manufacturer may have a strategic goal of reaching as many consumers as possible in their target market; a retailer may target to gain a high gross profit margin. Richards & Burchett also observed that cultural differences can cause tension in the organisation as the goals and objectives of one party would be opposite to those of the other.

2. Role Ambiguity

Role clarity is crucial in preventing misunderstanding and disagreement between channel members. When their delegated duties are clearly defined and do not overlap, the potential for conflict is significantly reduced. This is because when the parties are

clear on what the others are supposed to do, such as marketing or offering after-sales services, there is no room for confusion.

3. Resource Allocation

Resource allocation is a key driver of channel conflict. The questions that often spark disputes include which stores get space on the shelves, which brands receive promotional money, and which products get stocked in the first place. These resources, when used to support a channel member's own sales force, can lead to channel members vying for a larger share, thereby escalating conflict.

4. Territory Disputes

One of the areas of conflict within the channel is geographical territories that are granted to different channel members. Sometimes, there are territorial overlaps or unauthorised sales beyond the agreed zones, which can cause tensions.

5. Pricing Policies

Pricing policies, especially the use of discounts and promotions, are other areas that may result in conflict. This is because retailers may feel that they are being pushed aside by manufacturers who can sell directly to the consumer at a cheaper price or offer huge discounts to other retail merchants.

6. Communication Breakdown

Lack of communication can also lead to magnification of conflicts due to misunderstandings and differences in expectations. Effective and open communication should be employed amongst the channel members to ensure that there is a good relationship between them.

7. Strategies for Resolving Conflict

When the sources of conflict have been identified, it is possible to employ different measures to address the conflicts. Conflict management ensures that cooperation, trust and efficiency are maintained within the distribution channel.

4.6 Channel Design Decisions

Overall, channel decisions are important in any business that seeks to distribute its products to the target consumers. These decisions include choosing the right and best channels to employ in the distribution of products from the manufacturer to the final consumer. The process involves assessing the various factors, establishing goals, identifying possible channels of distribution, and determining the distribution strategy

that best suits the company's general plan. The following are the decision factors and processes in channel design decisions.

1. Setting Distribution Objectives

The first aspect of a channel design is the specification of distribution goals. These objectives should be in line with the corporate marketing and business strategies of the company and should include features like coverage, service standards, and costs.

- **Market Coverage:** List the areas and markets where it should be marketed and distributed when launching the product. For instance, a company may aim at intensive distribution (product to be sold in many outlets), selective distribution (product to be sold in a few outlets), or exclusive distribution, where a product is sold in one centre per region.
- **Customer Service:** Establish a range of quality services, time to deliver these services, inventory availability, and several services to be offered to customers. High customer service levels may be aligned with wider and often more sensitive distribution networks.
- **Cost Efficiency:** This is important in order to guarantee that the coverage of the market in its entirety and service delivery to the customers is done efficiently but at the least cost possible. Occasionally, efficient channels of distribution would lead to low transport costs, warehousing, and inventory.

2. Analysing Market Characteristics

This means that it is exceedingly crucial to give some consideration to what the market is like in order to establish an optimal channel of distribution. This includes the analysis of the consumers in the market, their competitors and the conditions within that particular market.

- **Consumer Behaviour:** Analyse the nature of the buying behaviour, beliefs and perceptions of the target market. This information is to ensure that any channel of distribution required to serve the consumers is in the right manner.
- **Competition:** This involves considering the format used by the competitors in selling their products or getting their services into the market. Observing how competition gets to the market may be insightful and helpful when determining the source of competitive advantage.
- **Market Conditions:** This result shows that many factors need to be considered in distribution, including economic, regulatory, and technological issues. For instance,

it may be desirable to employ lower-cost distribution types during recessionary periods, or high degrees of technology may give rise to new distribution modes.

3. Identifying Channel Alternatives

The next step after establishing objectives and categorising the market is to identify possible channel options. This involves having an appraisal of all the intermediaries that are available and then coming up with a list of the most appropriate ones for the business.

- **Direct Channels:** It is a method of communicating with clients and advancing merchandise directly to them without considering intermediaries such as wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. Direct channels can also be useful for branding and delivering better customer service, but they could be expensive in terms of systems implementation.
- **Indirect Channels:** Direct purchases via wholesalers, retailers, agents, and distributors. It can reach out to a broader market, and it can certainly make use of the knowledge and capabilities of intermediaries.
- **Hybrid Channels:** Direct and Indirect Communication: To achieve maximum coverage with minimum cost, both direct and indirect marketing communication must be used. For instance, a firm may communicate through the Internet (direct channel) and also through shops (indirect channel).

4. Evaluating Channel Alternatives

When potential channels are identified, they have to undergo evaluation against several factors that will provide a relative measure of the channel.

- **Cost:** Discuss the costs affiliated with each channel in regard to transport costs, storage costs, and intermediary costs. Choose the channel that you think will be best in its performance and economical to use.
- **Control:** It is also important to find out how much control the company is willing to undertake on the channels of distribution. Direct channels are superior to indirect channels because the latter means sharing some control with intermediaries.
- **Coverage:** Evaluate how well each channel ensures it covers the target market areas and reaches all the target markets.
- **Compatibility:** Compare and analyse how effective each of them can be for the company's type of product, brand image, and marketing strategy.
- **Flexibility:** Evaluate the flexibility of each channel to adapt to the changes being experienced in the market and their scalability within the business environment.

5. Selecting Channel Members

Choosing the right channel members is an important aspect of the distribution strategy's filtering. This means selecting the channel intermediaries that are capable of offering the functions required by the company's distribution channel.

- **Reputation and Reliability:** Based on the above points, it is suggested that friends or intermediaries with credible market reputations and past performance be selected. At the same time, reliable partners provide a stable supply of products and qualitative services to their buyers.
- **Expertise and Resources:** Choose appropriate intermediaries that have the necessary level of information and resources to manage the products and deliver them to the target consumer.
- **Alignment of Goals:** Ensure that the intermediate goals and objectives are not different from the company's goals and objectives. When the strategic objectives and performance measures are not aligned, tension will result, resulting in inefficient operations.

6. Establishing Channel Relationships

After deciding on channel membership, the next step is to establish and maintain good working relationships with the channel members. This involves goal steering, support, and synchronisation.

- **Contracts and Agreements:** Based on the relationship by signing legal documents that outline the responsibilities, privileges as well as expectations of the two parties. Clear agreement is a common-sense way to avoid misunderstanding and conflict.
- **Training and Support:** Provide training and support to channel members to ensure they understand the products and can effectively sell and service them. Ongoing support helps maintain high performance and alignment with company objectives.
- **Communication and Coordination:** Establish regular communication channels to keep all parties informed and aligned. Effective coordination ensures smooth operations and timely resolution of issues.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Economic downturns typically lead companies to expand their premium retail locations. (False)
2. Identifying the sources of channel conflict is crucial for maintaining smooth operations in the distribution network. (True)
3. Direct distribution channels always involve intermediaries like wholesalers and retailers. (False)
4. Setting clear distribution objectives helps in designing an effective distribution channel that aligns with the company's overall goals. (True)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Identify a company you are familiar with and describe one factor that influenced its choice of distribution channels.

4.7 Summary

- Marketing channels are pathways that facilitate the movement of products from producers to consumers, involving intermediaries like wholesalers and retailers. They ensure product availability at the right place and time, enhancing sales and profitability.
- Understanding marketing channels helps businesses design effective distribution strategies, optimise channel performance, and manage relationships within the network to achieve marketing objectives.
- Direct distribution channels involve selling products directly to consumers, offering higher profit margins and better control over customer experience. Indirect channels, with intermediaries like wholesalers and retailers, expand market reach and share distribution costs.
- Distribution channels are crucial in providing consumers with access to products and increasing the market reach, which improves the performance of existing channels.
- It emphasises that the nature, the extent of the complexity, and the value of the products to be delivered determines the right channel of delivery. Some examples

of products that fit well in a direct channel of distribution include perishable goods, fragile products, and those that are highly valued.

- That is, the decisions involve designating distribution objectives, evaluating market forces, identifying possible channels, and evaluating channel feasibility in terms of costs, control, coverage, compatibility, and flexibility.
- This implies that correct channel members, establishing positive working relations and accurate control and supervision of channel activities are fundamental to the running of distribution channels. Since constant change is the name of the game, it becomes critical to manage change and have ways to learn and adapt in order to sustain long-term success.

4.8 Keywords

- **Marketing Channels:** The flow of channels used in getting a product from the manufacturer to the consumer, with the help of middle agencies like wholesalers and retailers.
- **Direct Distribution:** A distribution network where producers deal with the end-users directly and eliminate the intermediary; it gives more control of branding and customers.
- **Indirect Distribution:** He also involves other channel members, such as wholesalers, retailers, and agents, to bring his products to market since the costs of distribution are otherwise very high and only reach a limited market.
- **Channel Conflict:** Disputes among channel members due to different purposes, roles, and task descriptions, equitable sharing of resources, and other matters that may slow down the proper functioning of the distribution channel.
- **Channel Design Decisions:** The act of choosing and organising the distribution channels by establishing goals, assessing the market factors, comparing and choosing between channel options, and developing effective and efficient channel relationships.

4.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are marketing channels, and why are they important?
2. How do direct and indirect distribution channels differ?
3. What functions do distribution channels perform?

4. How do product factors influence the choice of distribution channels?
5. What market factors should be considered when selecting distribution channels?

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Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to describe the concept of consumer behaviour.
- Students will be able to identify the factors influencing consumer behaviour.
- Students will be able to explain the consumer decision-making process.
- Students will be able to analyse the psychological and social influences on consumer behaviour.
- Students will be able to evaluate real-world examples of consumer behaviour in the Indian market.

Structure:

- 5.1 Understanding Consumer Behaviour
- 5.2 Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 5.3 Consumer Decision-Making Process
- 5.4 Psychological and Social Influences on Consumer Behaviour
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Keywords
- 5.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.8 References / Reference Reading

5.1 Understanding Consumer Behaviour

The decision-making process by which people, groups, and organisations choose, buy, use, and discard products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants is known as consumer behaviour. In order to explain consumer behaviour, this broad area combines principles from anthropology, psychology, sociology, and economics. To customise their services, products, and promotion strategies to match market needs, businesses need knowledge about consumer behaviour.

The domain of consumer behaviour encompasses a broad range of behaviours, including acts taken during the decision-making process and those taken after that. This involves understanding what consumers buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, and how often they buy it. This information is crucial to creating better marketing strategies that can increase customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Due to various causes, including economic growth, urbanisation, changes in lifestyle, and the influence of technology, consumer behaviour in the Indian market has changed. In terms of Indian culture, consumers are greatly influenced by customs like feasts and ceremonies. For instance, during Diwali, there is a comparatively large expenditure on multiple products, including electronics, apparel, and confections.

5.2 Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

Businesses stand to gain much from this because they will be able to comprehend some of the factors that could influence consumer behaviour. The four primary groups of these factors are personal effects, societal effects, psychological effects, and cultural influences.

Cultural Influences

One of the most important factors influencing consumer behaviour is culture. It includes all that a person is taught by their community in terms of customs, norms, ethics, and culture. A significant factor in influencing purchase decisions in India is the culture's emphasis on values, traditions, and family. Consumers frequently purchase more electronics, clothing, and candy products during the Diwali holiday.

Social Influences

Some of the social factors are social class, family and friends. In a country like India, where family relationships are valued, family is the largest single determinant of consumers' behaviour. For example, in India, parents and other family members can play a significant role in influencing the shopping choices of young adults. In joint families, which are common in India, several generations often contribute to the

decision-making process for shopping, leading to diverse preferences within the household.

Personal Influences

Individual factors, including age, employment status, lifestyle, and income level, also have an impact on consumer behaviour. The needs and wants of consumers vary by age group. The young may be more interested in fashion or gadgets, while the elderly may be more interested in healthcare products or house remodelling. In order to shift their products and marketing techniques appropriately, it is beneficial for firms to have a comprehensive understanding of what individuals of different ages want.

Psychological Influences

Psychological factors include motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes. Motivation is the drive within an individual that compels them to act to meet certain obligations. Maslow's most familiar model of needs, which ranges from the most basic physiological needs to self-actualisation, is often used to examine consumer motivation.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Consumer behaviour is a multidisciplinary field that borrows from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and _____ to understand how consumers make decisions. (economics)
2. During Diwali, consumers tend to spend more on items like sweets, clothes, and _____ as part of the celebration. (electronics)
3. Subcultures, such as regional and _____ groups, also impact consumer behaviour. (Religious)
4. Higher social status often leads to different purchasing patterns, with a preference for _____ products. (premium)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Identify a recent festival or cultural event in India and list three types of products that saw increased consumer demand during that period.

5.3 Consumer Decision-Making Process

Consumers go through several decision-making processes during and after purchase. By thoroughly understanding this process, businesses may create strategies to influence consumer decisions at different stages.

Problem Recognition

The first stage in the decision-making process is recognising a need or a problem. Both internal stimuli like hunger or thirst and external stimuli like ads or recommendations can trigger this recognition. For instance, a consumer may realise they require a new smartphone since their current one is broken or not performing up to par.

Information Search

As soon as a consumer perceives a need, they initiate the search for information that will help solve the problem. This search can be external, when the person looks for information from several sources, or internal when the person is looking for some memories of previous experiences. The use of word of mouth, social networks, and search engines for information is common among consumers in the digital age.

Evaluation of Alternatives

Following their information collection, consumers assess the many possibilities at their fingertips. Based on factors like price, quality, features, and reviews, they compare different products and brands. At this stage, you must consider the advantages and disadvantages of each choice. A consumer may, for instance, compare several smartphone models based on factors like pricing, camera quality, and battery life.

Purchase Decision

The ultimate decision-making stage for the consumer occurs during the purchase decision. Many variables, including promotions, pricing, and availability, may influence this decision. For example, if a phone is on sale or has attractive financing deals, a consumer may choose to buy it.

Post-Purchase Behaviour

Customers evaluate their level of satisfaction with the product after they have consumed it. They decide after the purchase, which allows people to determine whether they are happy with the product or if they are experiencing buyer's remorse. Dissatisfied consumers may return the product or write negative comments, but satisfied customers are likely to shop again at the store and recommend the store to others.

5.4 Psychological and Social Influences on Consumer Behaviour

This is because psychological and social factors shape the attitude, behaviour and perception of the consumers.

Psychological Influences

Psychological factors of consumer behaviour include motivation, perception, learning, attitudes, and beliefs. Consumers are concerned with meeting their needs and wants. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which categorises needs into basic and higher-order needs like physiological, safety, affiliation, esteem, and self-actualisation needs, offers a good place to start when it comes to understanding consumer motivation.

The reception that consumers give to brands and products depends on how they perceive information. It involves the selection, organisation, and evaluation of stimuli in the environment.

Social Influences

According to the analysis, reference groups, social status, and family status are the factors that have social consequences on consumer behaviour. Family plays a major role, particularly in collectivist countries such as India, where purchases made by an individual often depend on the family's decision. For example, an individual family member may be influenced in their decision to purchase a car by the family's need to have a particular brand.

Reference groups affect decisions and perceptions by establishing standards of behaviour. Such groups could be social (friends and workmates) or organisational (clubs and organisations). The availability of different opinions and experiences that consumers encounter on social media has boosted the influence of reference groups.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Both internal and external stimuli can trigger problem recognition in the consumer decision-making process. (True)
2. The post-purchase Behaviour stage determines whether consumers are satisfied with their decision. (True)
3. Family has little influence on consumer Behaviour in a collectivist society like India. (False)
4. Social status does not affect consumer behaviour. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Think about your last significant purchase and identify which stage of the consumer decision-making process took the longest for you to complete. Discuss why.

5.5 Summary

- Consumer behaviour involves the study of how individuals, groups, and organisations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants. It draws from disciplines like psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics.
- Understanding consumer behaviour helps businesses tailor their products and marketing strategies to meet the needs of their target audience, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. It includes examining what, why, when, where, and how consumers buy.
- Cultural factors, including values, beliefs, customs, and traditions, play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour. Festivals and subcultures also impact purchasing decisions.
- The consumer decision-making process starts with problem recognition, where a need or problem is identified. Internal or external stimuli can trigger this.
- Information search follows, where consumers gather information from internal and external sources to solve their problems. This can involve online reviews, social media, and recommendations from friends.
- The process continues with the evaluation of alternatives and the final purchase decision, influenced by factors such as promotions and availability. Post-purchase behaviour involves evaluating satisfaction, impacting future buying behaviour and brand loyalty.
- Social influences include family, reference groups, and social status. Family decisions, peer opinions, and social media significantly affect consumer behaviour, with social status guiding preferences for premium or essential products.

5.6 Keywords

- **Consumer Behaviour:** The study of how individuals, groups, and organisations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants.

- **Cultural Influences:** Festivals and subcultures in India heavily influence factors such as values, beliefs, customs, and traditions that shape consumer Behaviour.
- **Social Influences:** The impact of family, reference groups, and social status on consumer decisions, with family ties and social media playing significant roles.
- **Decision-Making Process:** The series of steps consumers go through before, during, and after making a purchase, including problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase Behaviour.

5.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is consumer Behaviour, and why is it important for businesses?
2. How do cultural factors influence consumer behaviour in India?
3. What role does family play in shaping consumer purchasing decisions?
4. Describe the consumer decision-making process and its stages.
5. How do psychological factors like motivation and perception influence consumer behaviour?

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Unit 6: Branding and Packaging

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to understand the importance of branding in the modern business environment.
- Students will be able to identify different types of brands and their characteristics.
- Students will be able to analyse the concepts of brand equity and loyalty.
- Students will be able to explain the role of packaging and labelling in product marketing.
- Students will be able to evaluate strategies for effective brand positioning.

Structure:

- 6.1 Importance of Branding
- 6.2 Types of Brands
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 6.3 Brand Equity and Loyalty
- 6.4 Packaging and Labeling
- 6.5 Brand Positioning
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 6.6 Summary
- 6.7 Keywords
- 6.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 6.9 References / Reference Reading

6.1 Importance of Branding

Regardless of the company's size or sector, branding is one of the most important factors. A strong brand gives companies a distinct identity and helps them stand out from the competition. The power of branding to leave a unique and lasting impression on customers is what makes it so important. In today's cutthroat market, branding is more than just creating a logo or phrase; it also involves developing a thorough identity that embodies the company's core beliefs and promises.

An established brand has the power to charge a higher price, cultivate devoted customers, and significantly differentiate itself in the marketplace. For example, brands like Tata and Amul have built a reputation for being dependable and trustworthy, which has helped them maintain a devoted customer base. Beyond the product itself, branding is important since it covers the whole customer experience with the business. Every touchpoint influences how consumers perceive a brand, from the quality of customer service to the website's usability.

It is very significant for branding to set and influence the expectations of the customers towards purchase. The need to build trust with the consumers necessitates consistent, quality and dependable messages that are all encapsulated in a brand. This element of consistency and creativity has ensured that brands such as Apple or Nike, for example, continue to maintain a strong hold on their market niches. Branding is about making clients develop an attachment to the product, making them feel that they are not only buying a product but are also becoming part of something bigger.

6.2 Types of Brands

Several types of brands exist depending on their function and their target consumers in the market. Knowledge about the various types of brands is important for organisations to plan their marketing appropriately.

Product Brands

Brand for products are unique product names or labels. These brands are supposed to make a particular product stand out from other similar products out there in the market. A product brand that has become almost synonymous with quick noodles in India is Nestlé Maggi noodles. In order to achieve this strong link in the consumer's mind, product brands focus on the key features and benefits of the product.

It is even more effective in product branding since it helps develop a strong market position for certain products. This makes it easier for businesses to create targeted

marketing strategies, as they can concentrate on consumers' needs and wants. For instance, Dove's product branding communicates its moisturising attributes to consumers who are in search of mild products.

Corporate Brands

Corporate brands reflect the total business and encompass the business's personality, philosophy, and spirit. The Tata Group is a good example of a corporate brand that sells a wide range of products and services, including travel and car brands. Corporate branding can significantly impact the perceived products and services of the company, especially in the area of consistent image and reputation.

Service Brands

Service brands are developed with respect to services rather than tangible goods. The following brands are based on the quality and reliability of the service that is provided. For example, ICICI Bank has established itself as a good service brand by focusing on the efficiency of its banking services and customer care services. This is especially important in industries such as banking, hospitality and telecommunications, where the service delivered to a customer is usually the primary product.

Personal Brands

Personal branding can be described as the process of promoting people and their careers as products. For political players, celebrities, and business professionals, developing a personal brand is common in order to gain power and influence. For example, Amitabh Bachchan is a famous example of personal branding in India. He is recognised not only for his acting career but also for his sponsorships and public appearances.

Geographic Brands

Geographic branding involves associating a product or service with a particular location. This type of branding leverages the reputation and characteristics of a place to enhance the appeal of the brand. For example, Darjeeling tea and Bikaneri bhujia are geographic brands that highlight the unique qualities of their regions of origin.

• Knowledge Check 1

Fill in the Blanks.

1. A strong brand not only provides businesses with a unique identity but also sets them apart from their _____. (Customers)
2. Product brands are created to distinguish a particular _____ from others in the market. (Product)

3. A well-established brand can command a _____ price, foster customer loyalty, and create significant market differentiation. (Premium)
4. Personal branding involves marketing individuals and their careers as _____. (Brands)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

List three well-known brands and identify whether they are product brands, corporate brands, or service brands.

6.3 Brand Equity and Loyalty

Brand equity refers to the value a brand brings to a product or service. It is an estimate of the brand's value and capacity to produce positive results for the company. Consistent quality, efficient marketing, and positive customer experiences all contribute to the long-term growth of brand equity.

Components of Brand Equity

Brand equity is composed of several key components:

- **Brand Awareness:** This is the degree of brand recognition and recall among consumers. The possibility that a brand will be taken into account when making a purchasing choice rises with brand awareness. For example, consumers searching for a soft drink are certain to think of Coca-Cola first due to its high brand recognition.
- **Brand Associations:** Consumers' associations with a brand are its characteristics and traits. These might include the brand's general views, psychological attraction, and functional advantages. BMW's brand connections, for instance, include performance, luxury, and innovation.
- **Perceived Quality:** How customers view a brand's general quality about its competitors. Customer preferences and purchasing behaviour are affected by perceived quality. For example, a major driving element to Apple products' high demand and premium cost is their perceived quality.
- **Brand Loyalty:** The level of a customer's attachment and dedication to a particular brand. Recurring purchases and brand referrals are more common among loyal customers. Starbucks consumers' high brand advocacy and frequent visits are indicative of their loyalty.

- **Brand Assets:** Distinctive components that provide a brand with a competitive edge and increase its value, such as patents, trademarks, and unique technologies. For example, Nike's patented shoe technologies and trademarked symbol both support the company's significant brand equity.

Building Brand Loyalty

A crucial aspect of brand equity is brand loyalty. It refers to people's tendency to keep purchasing the same goods or services over time. Providing customers with a positive, consistent experience builds trust and happiness and is key to building brand loyalty. A variety of tactics can be used to build brand loyalty.

- **Quality Products and Services:** Consistently providing goods and services that meet or beyond customer expectations. For example, Toyota customers have strong brand loyalty because of the brand's dependability and quality.
- **Customer engagement:** Engaging with customers in person, via social media, email, and other means to build a strong relationship. For instance, brands like Zomato can only build audience relations by responding to customers on social media platforms like Instagram or Twitter.
- **Loyalty Programs:** We offer gifts and other different types of bonuses for multiple purchases and for sticking with our commitments. For instance, airline companies' reward programs, which involve giving 'frequent flyer miles' to customers, influence clients to take the same airline service in the future.
- **Personalisation:** Giving customers timely and relevant attention and recommendations is a way of making them identified and appreciated. For instance, tailored suggestions on what to watch help create a unique experience for the user and retain them.
- **Exceptional Customer Service:** Guarantee that the customer service is friendly and efficient and not only meets the customer's expectations but also has a certain degree of enthusiasm. For example, Amazon's customer relations function is considered to be rather fast at providing necessary information and eager to help with any problem.

6.4 Packaging and Labelling

This tuning is called the ‘marketing mix’, of which packaging and marketing are essential components. They are needed to safeguard the product, inform the buyers, and enhance its appeal, all of which will benefit the product's development. Appealing packaging and branding are other issues that can influence consumers’ purchasing decisions and brands' perceptions.

Functions of Packaging

Packaging serves several important functions:

- **Protection:** Packaging protects the items to prevent them from being contaminated, deteriorated or affected in any way when they are being handled, stored or transported. Essentially, where food products are involved, the air-tight packaging ensures the food’s freshness and extends its shelf life.
- **Information:** The packaging includes information about the product's contents, directions for use, and shelf life. This information assists consumers in making correct decisions when purchasing these products. For example, details of the dose and adverse effects of certain medicines are displayed in packs of these products.
- **Promotion:** Since it brings attention and leaves a good feel on the clients, this acts more as a form of advertising. Improve on the packaging so that the product stands out from the rest due to the attractive designs, colours, and graphics. For instance, children, especially young people, are attracted to the flashy appearance of the Frooti mango drink.
- **Convenience:** One of the most critical aspects that may be promoted by packaging is the aspect of convenience in the use of the product. Some are convenient to open, like tabs, resealable closures and ergonomic bases for end user’s control. The resealable packaging of cookies and snacks, for instance, helps preserve freshness and convenience.
- **Sustainability:** By using eco-friendly materials and cutting waste, packaging may demonstrate the brand's dedication to sustainability. Brands like The Body Shop, for instance, encourage environmental responsibility by using recyclable and biodegradable packaging.

Types of Packaging

There are several types of packaging, each serving different purposes:

- **Primary Packaging:** The first layer that contains the product before it is put in the final packaging for the consumer. Some examples of containers are bottles, cans,

and wrappers. Primary packaging is used to offer protection to the product as well as to provide relevant information to the consumer.

- **Secondary Packaging:** Extra protective covers that are added to offer further protection and pack several units of the product. Examples include but are not limited to Boxes and cartons. Secondary packing is usually used for branding and promotional activities.
- **Tertiary Packaging:** Transportation and storage packaging, which is commonly used for larger quantities of a product. Some of them are pallets and crates. Tertiary packaging is important to make sure that products reach their intended place without being damaged or affected in any way.

Labelling

Another significant feature of packaging is the labelling, which provides the customer with information that is in some way relevant to the product. Labels can include details such as:

- **Brand Name:** It gives the name of the brand that manufactures the specific product so that it may be easily recognisable.
- **Product Description:** A brief specification of the product containing information about the major properties. For example, the text on a shampoo package can look like “shampoo for hair, dry, moisturising.”
- **Ingredients:** A list of ingredients or material inputs used in the production of the item. It is especially important for food and cosmetics since people may be allergic to certain products or may not like certain ones.
- **Usage Instructions:** Guidelines on how to employ the product and the measures that have to be followed regarding it. For instance, a washing machine detergent package has printed instructions regarding the amount of detergent that needs to be used for a particular wash.
- **Warnings:** Details concerning safety that the consumer must be informed of. For instance, cleaning products could have labels that may cause a skin rash or carry slogans such as ‘harmful if swallowed, keep out of the reach of children’.
- **Manufacturing and Expiry Dates:** Certain aspects define when a product was produced, when it should be consumed, and by which date it becomes unfit for consumption. This is very useful, especially for food products that have a very short shelf life and sometimes drugs.

- **Contact Information:** The location details of the manufacturer or distributor and any contact details that the clients can use to reach the company for assistance. This helps the consumers seek assistance through a call or obtain further information regarding specific products.

6.5 Brand Positioning

Brand position, on the other hand, is the management process that aims to establish the character of the brand in the eyes of consumers. It involves placing the brand on a pedestal in relation to competitors and emphasising its strength and distinct superiority in bold highlights. It is important to note that branding in the target country strengthens a positive, memorable brand image.

Steps in Brand Positioning

The process of brand positioning involves several key steps:

- **Identify Target Audience:** However, brand positioning involves the identification of target customer needs, Behaviour, and interests that a brand is going to serve. It involves conducting surveys on the current market with the aim of gaining more information about the particular customer group that the brand targets to reach.
- **Analyze Competitors:** Criticising or evaluating competitors produces a clear identification of gaps or opportunities in the particular market. This strategy set enables the identification of the competitive environment as depicted in this study and helps formulate positioning strategies.
- **Define Unique Selling Proposition (USP):** This is its Unique Selling Proposition, which is the key to every brand's image and identity. The 'beliefs' question is answered by responding to 'Why should consumers buy this brand than any other?'
- **Craft Brand Message:** Communication and establishing a concise and meaningful brand proposition that communicates the USP and resonates with the target market. The message that customers get across at every touch point and all marketing communications should be consistent.
- **Implement Positioning Strategy:** Implementing the positional technique within the operations of advertising, promotions, packaging, and customer interface.
- **Monitor and Adjust:** The constant evaluation of the positioning strategy and its modification is based on received feedback from the consumers as well as the dynamics of the market.

Positioning Strategies

There are several strategies that brands can use to position themselves effectively:

- **Value-Based Positioning:** Focusing on the basic positioning strategy, which emphasises the brand's capability to provide more value to the customer by way of quality, function or price. For example, IKEA claims to be an organisation that offers affordable, stylish home furnishings.
 - **Benefit-Based Positioning:** Emphasising the aspect of 'What's in it for me' that the brand is offering to the consumer. For instance, while using Colgate toothpaste, the company is positioning it as one that offers superior oral health.
 - **Competitor-Based Positioning:** Directly confronting a competitor by focusing on points of parity that support establishing the brand as superior in a specific aspect. For instance, Pepsi always tries to match with Coca-Cola by branding it as a drink for youth and adventure.
 - **Lifestyle-Based Positioning:** Connecting the brand to a particular lifestyle or some certain values that would matter to the intended consumers. For example, Harley-Davidson associates the spirit of adventure and freedom.
 - **Niche Positioning:** Providing specialised products or services to a specific niche market. Rolex, for instance, positions itself as a premium watch brand aimed at high-end consumers.
- **Knowledge Check 2**
State True or False.
 1. Brand equity refers to the value that a brand adds to a product or service. (True)
 2. Tertiary packaging is the immediate container that holds the product. (False)
 3. Brand positioning is about creating an emotional connection with customers. (True)
 4. Secondary packaging is used for bulk transportation and storage. (False)
 - **Outcome-Based Activity 2**
Identify a product in your home and describe its packaging. Discuss how the packaging influences your perception of the product.

6.6 Summary

- Branding creates a unique identity for a business, setting it apart from competitors and ensuring recognition and recall among consumers. A strong brand fosters trust and credibility, enhancing customer loyalty and retention.
- Product brands are specific to individual products and aim to distinguish them from competitors, focusing on unique features and benefits. Corporate brands represent the entire company and reflect its values and culture.
- Brand equity measures the value a brand adds to a product or service through components like brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, loyalty, and unique brand assets.
- Building brand loyalty involves delivering consistent quality, engaging with customers, offering loyalty programs, providing personalised experiences, and ensuring exceptional customer service.
- There are three types of packaging: primary (immediate container), secondary (additional protective layers), and tertiary (bulk packaging for transport and storage).
- Brand positioning involves establishing a brand's identity and value proposition in consumers' minds, differentiating it from competitors by highlighting unique attributes and benefits.
- Effective positioning strategies can be value-based, benefit-based, competitor-based, lifestyle-based, or niche-focused, all of which aim to create a strong, favourable, and memorable brand image.

6.7 Keywords

- **Brand Equity:** The value that a brand adds to a product or service, measured through components like brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty.
- **Brand Loyalty:** The tendency of consumers to continue purchasing the same brand's products or services over time, driven by trust and satisfaction.
- **Packaging** is the process of designing and producing containers for products, serving functions like protection, information provision, and promotion.

6.8 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the key components of brand equity?

2. How does branding create a unique identity for a business?
3. What differentiates product brands from corporate brands?
4. Why is packaging considered a crucial component of the marketing mix?
5. What strategies can businesses use to build brand loyalty?

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Unit 7: Pricing Strategies

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to understand the significance of pricing in marketing.
- Students will be able to identify the key factors influencing pricing decisions.

- Students will be able to analyse various pricing strategies.
- Students will be able to apply pricing tactics and adjustments effectively.

Structure:

- 7.1 Introduction to Pricing in Marketing
- 7.2 Importance of Pricing in Marketing
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 7.3 Factors Influencing Pricing Decisions
- 7.4 Various Pricing Strategies
- 7.5 Pricing Tactics and Adjustments
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Keywords
- 7.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 7.9 References / Reference Reading

7.1 Introduction to Pricing in Marketing

Pricing is one of the decisive elements in the marketing mix, and it significantly determines the success of a product or service in the market. On the other hand, value management is a strategic concept that focuses on achieving an optimum value proposition, profit for the company and competition in the market. It excels in the act

of placing a price tag on a product or even on a service. Optimal pricing plans may help to attract more customers, improve brand awareness, and ensure profitability. Pricing is not just a means to an end in terms of income; it is a strategic resource for positioning, competitiveness, and perception management.

Definition:

The method of determining the amount of value that a company will receive in exchange for its goods or services is called pricing. It involves considering the prices set by rivals, the value that the customer attaches to the product, and the cost of production.

7.2 Importance of Pricing in Marketing

Pricing is a multifaceted problem that affects numerous company factors; it is not merely a figure on a price label. Here, let us consider several aspects that demonstrate how important pricing is to the marketing discipline.

- **Profitability**

The price is one of the factors that determine the profits made by the company. This means that the sales revenue depends on the price that is fixed on a particular product. Firms may choose to fix prices that will ensure that they achieve their desired profit levels based on the costs of production and consumers' price sensitivity. For instance, high-tech product manufacturing firms such as Apple set high prices for their innovative gadgets, ensuring high profitability is achieved.

- **Market Positioning**

Pricing helps position a product in the market. Premium pricing can make a product appear to be a status symbol, while a low price can appeal to price-sensitive customers. For example, Tata Nano was developed to be cheap for the average customer in India and was marketed as an economical car.

- **Competitive Advantage**

A carefully considered pricing plan can provide you with a competitive advantage. Businesses may draw customers away from competitors by carefully pricing their products. For example, Patanjali gained an important market share by delivering products at lower prices than well-known brands, affecting the Indian FMCG market.

- **Customer Perception**

Customer perception of a product's quality and value can often be affected by its price. A lower price might be an offer, whereas a higher price can represent better quality. To support their image of exclusivity and quality, luxury brands like Louis Vuitton, for instance, use high pricing.

- **Demand Management**

Demand may be controlled via pricing. If demand is stronger during peak seasons, prices may be raised to reflect this, while off-peak reductions may assist in boosting sales. Airlines frequently employ dynamic pricing, changing prices in response to demand and booking trends.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. The pricing strategy used by Apple, which involves setting high prices to create a perception of exclusivity and superior quality, is known as _____ pricing. (Premium)
2. In a _____ market, many sellers offer similar products, leading to minimal pricing power for individual firms. (Perfect Competition)
3. The cost of production is a fundamental factor in pricing decisions and includes materials, labour, and _____. (Overheads)
4. Tata Nano used _____ pricing to make it affordable to the average Indian consumer. (Penetration)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Research and list three examples of companies that use competitive pricing strategies in India.

7.3 Factors Influencing Pricing Decisions

Setting the right price is a complex task influenced by various internal and external factors. These factors must be carefully analysed to arrive at a pricing decision that meets the company's objectives while satisfying customer needs. The Factors Influencing Pricing Decisions are as follows:

- **Costs**

The main factor in calculating pricing is the cost of production. Businesses need to ensure that the price includes a fair profit margin in addition to covering all production costs, such as labour, materials, and overhead. To modify their product pricing appropriately, manufacturing firms, for instance, constantly monitor the prices of raw materials.

- **Competition**

Pricing decisions are significantly affected by competitor pricing strategies. Businesses must determine whether to equal, surpass, or undercut the prices set by competitors for similar products. In order to draw in more customers, online retailers like Amazon and Flipkart, for example, sometimes engage in price wars.

- **Market Demand**

A product's pricing is affected by demand. Where there is low demand, there may be a need to lower the price, while in the case of high demand, the price may be high. Sales promotions such as discounts are common during low-demand periods, while during the holiday seasons, when demand for devices is high, there is a tendency to increase the prices.

- **Customer Perception**

This is because customers' ability to pay is dependent on their perception of the product's value. Every business has to determine the value that customers place on the products it produces and price them accordingly. Customers may expect organic food brands to be healthier and eco-friendly, for instance, and this may lead to higher prices.

- **Economic Conditions**

Some of the factors that influence pricing decisions include inflation, purchasing power, and economic growth. In a recession, prices may have to be cut to ensure that customers continue to buy the products, while in a boom, consumers may be willing to pay a premium price for the products. Holders of luxury products, for instance, may opt to lower their prices to ensure that there is enough demand during lean periods.

- **Regulatory Environment**

This is because the prices charged for products and services may be influenced by governmental laws and policies. The effects of government policies, such as taxes,

charges for imported products, and price controls, must be considered. For example, in India, there are regulatory policies governing the pricing of essential drugs, and pharmaceutical companies have to adhere to these policies.

7.4 Various Pricing Strategies

There is a great variety of pricing strategies that can be used depending on the company's objectives, the current state of the market, and the amount of competition. The most common pricing strategies are outlined below.

1. Cost-Plus Pricing

Cost-plus pricing refers to a system where the selling price is arrived at by putting a standard markup over the cost of manufacturing. This basic strategy guarantees that one gets a certain level of profit and all the expenses are met.

2. Value-Based Pricing

Value-based pricing is one where the price of the product is set in proportion to the value that is perceived to be present in the product by the customer. In this strategy, it is all about the positive aspects and the value of the product as far as the customer is concerned.

3. Competitive Pricing

This is another type of pricing where charges are set based on the competitor's prices. Normally, when firms want to increase market share, they offer their products at equal to or lower than the prices offered by their competitors.

4. Penetration Pricing

Knowledge of price positioning means that a low price is fixed right from the onset in order to advance a company's market share and undermine the market share of other players. This strategy aims to capture the market and increase the market share before the gradual hike in prices.

5. Skimming Pricing

This pricing strategy involves setting high price levels in the first instance in order to bring down prices gradually later. This strategy focuses on those consumers who are willing to spend more money in order to get the first chance to buy a certain product.

6. Psychological Pricing

Pricing that takes into account customers' psychological reactions is known as psychological pricing. Strategies include placing prices slightly below a round number (for example, 999 instead of 1000) to appear lower.

7. Premium Pricing

To create a perception of high quality and exclusivity, premium pricing sets high prices. For high-end products and services, this strategy is common.

8. Economy Pricing

By reducing production and marketing costs to offer low prices, economy pricing targets customers who are price-aware. It is a common strategy in the budget and generic product categories.

7.5 Pricing Tactics and Adjustments

Besides choosing the right pricing strategy, businesses often employ numerous tactics and methods and make necessary changes to adjust their prices according to the market circumstances and the goals in the strategy field.

Discount Pricing

A discount is a campaign strategy in which goods are sold at cheaper prices to increase demand. We also have different types of price breaks, such as seasonal, clearance, and promotional price breaks.

Bundle Pricing

It is the strategy of collecting several products and services at a lower price than the price of each product when bought individually. This strategy convinces customers to purchase more quantities of the products.

Dynamic Pricing

Dynamic pricing changes prices depending on the current supply and demand variables. This strategy is most commonly applied in fields such as the airline and hotel industries, where prices fluctuate in accordance with bookings and vacancy levels.

Geographical Pricing

Geography at least offers different prices for the same product in other regions. This strategy again takes into account the consumption, availability, and competition factors existing in various areas of the country.

Promotional Pricing

Promotional pricing affects the prices by reducing them for a short time with the specific intention of increasing sales and attracting consumer attention. These strategies include popular features such as sales that last for a particular number of hours or days, getting one product at a lower price if you buy another product, etc.

Price Discrimination

Price discrimination is the practice of charging different prices for the same product to various customer categories with a willingness to pay more for higher prices. It is in this process that through the consumption capture of the consumer overindulgence, this financial strategy produces the most amount of income.

Captive Product Pricing

Captive product pricing involves setting low prices for the dominant product and setting high prices on the other related products which consumers are likely to purchase. By this, the customer is attracted to buy the product while they continue to generate profit by making the customer purchase such necessary accessories or materials.

Loss Leader Pricing

Loss leader pricing refers to situations where a company offers some goods at a subsidised price in a bid to attract attention and the hope that those people would buy other things they need from them.

Optional Product Pricing

Optional product pricing sets a low price for the core product and a higher price for add-ons and related products or services. This strategy of modifying the purchase according to the buyer's needs and constraints allows them to exercise a certain level of control over their purchase.

Segmented Pricing

Another pricing strategy is segmented pricing, where different prices are charged based on a customer's classification, which may include age, time, region, etc.

Freemium Pricing

Freemium pricing means that while some parts of the product or service are provided for payment, a basic form is offered for free. This strategy is well-suited to the use of digital goods and services.

Seasonal Pricing

Seasonal changes in prices occur because of the time of the year or even seasonality of demand. This strategy is particularly useful during the festive seasons or other busy times of the year when sales are high to avoid holding large stocks of a specific product.

Pay What You Want

Make the desired payment. For a product or a service, pricing gives the customer the ability to pay zero or any amount at all. This non-traditional exit strategy is based on the trust and goodwill of the customer.

Auction Pricing

The price can be determined through auction pricing, in which buyers offer different bids on a particular product, and the highest bid is the final price. In the cases when a firm is a monopoly, or a product that serves a number of clients is rather popular, this strategy is used rather often.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Cost-plus pricing involves setting a price based on the perceived value to the customer rather than the cost of production. (False)
2. Dynamic pricing adjusts prices based on real-time demand and supply conditions. (True)
3. Bundle pricing offers multiple products or services together at a higher price than if bought separately. (False)
4. Discount pricing involves offering products at reduced prices to stimulate sales. (True)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Identify and describe a real-world example of a company using dynamic pricing in the Indian market.

7.6 Summary

- Pricing is crucial for profitability. It determines the revenue generated from sales by setting prices that cover costs and yield profit margins.

- It helps in positioning a product in the market, with premium pricing positioning products as luxury items and competitive pricing attracting cost-conscious customers.
- Competitor pricing strategies and market demand significantly influence pricing decisions, requiring companies to match, exceed, or undercut competitor prices.
- Cost-plus pricing adds a markup to production costs, ensuring all expenses are covered and a profit margin is achieved.
- Value-based pricing sets prices based on perceived customer value, focusing on benefits and value rather than just production costs.
- Dynamic pricing adjusts prices based on real-time demand and supply conditions. It is commonly used in industries like airlines and hospitality.
- Bundle pricing offers multiple products or services together at a lower price than if bought separately, encouraging higher customer purchases.

7.7 Keywords

- **Cost-Plus Pricing:** This is a pricing method in which a fixed percentage (markup) is added to the total cost of production to set the final price.
- **Penetration pricing is a strategy in which prices are initially set low** to attract customers and gain market share quickly.
- **Dynamic Pricing:** A flexible pricing strategy that adjusts prices in real time based on demand, supply, and other external factors.

7.8 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the main factors that influence pricing decisions in a competitive market?
2. How does dynamic pricing benefit industries like airlines and hospitality?
3. Explain the concept of value-based pricing and give an example.
4. What are the differences between cost-plus pricing and competitive pricing?
5. How can penetration pricing help a new company enter a competitive market?

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Unit 8: Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to define the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).
- Students will be able to identify the key components of an IMC plan.
- Students will be able to develop a comprehensive IMC plan tailored to specific marketing objectives.
- Students will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of IMC strategies in achieving marketing goals.

Structure:

- 8.1 Concept of IMC
- 8.2 Components of IMC
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 8.3 Developing an IMC Plan
- 8.4 Evaluating IMC Effectiveness
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Keywords
- 8.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 8.8 References / Reference Reading

8.1 Concept of IMC

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is a strategic strategy that allows a company to plan, carry out, and monitor all of its marketing communications strategies and tactics. IMC aims to guarantee message coherence and supportive media usage. To optimise the impact on consumers and other end users at the lowest possible cost, IMC unifies all marketing communication methods, channels, and sources into a single plan. Advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and digital marketing are just a few of the communication disciplines that are evaluated for their strategic roles in IMC. These disciplines are then integrated to offer optimal communication impact and clarity and to ensure consistent communication. Different departments within an organisation were giving out mixed messages and, at times, even opposite messages to the consumers, which gave rise to the concept of IMC. The marketing communication process may be made seamless to consumers through the integration of all elements of the marketing communication and reinforcement of the brand across all channels.

It is crucial to highlight the significance of IMC in the present-day marketing context. A strategic and consistent marketing approach is beneficial to brands and businesses because consumers are bombarded with marketing information daily. By ensuring that every customer or prospect contact for a product, service, or organisation is relevant to that person and product over time, IMC contributes significantly to the building of brand equity. Because Ibc enables the reuse of ideas and material across several channels, it can result in more effective marketing communications by minimising costs and duplication of work.

IMC also seeks to achieve integration and coordination in various marketing communications. The overall promotional effect that is obtained when many elements are used in a coordinated manner is greater than the total of their separate effects. This enhances the overall impact of marketing communications, rendering them more powerful and effective in achieving the desired outcomes.

8.2 Components of IMC

The IMC consists of several components that are vital to the organisation's strategic plan. These components include advertising, public relations, direct marketing, personal selling, and digital marketing.

1. Advertising

Through different media channels, advertising is the paid, non-personal communication of a marketing message. This is one of the more visible aspects of IMC and includes television, radio, print, web, and outdoor advertising. The main goals of advertisement are to inform, to persuade, and ultimately to promote action. These are the requirements for advertising to ensure it delivers the right message to the appropriate audience at the right time: a strong creative message, proper target audience understanding, and appropriate media planning.

2. Personal Selling

Personal selling involves a sales professional and a potential customer interacting directly. Its effectiveness is very significant in IMC, particularly when selling high-ticket goods and services in the B2B markets. Personal selling also helps develop long-term relationships and provides quick feedback. Some of the job responsibilities of sales professionals include the following: Customer needs analysis, solution selling and sales closing.

3. Sales Promotion

Temporary incentives are the key to implementing sales activation in the promotion of sales. These can come in the form of rebates, coupons, competition, free samples and loyalty programs. They are particularly effective in creating a sense of urgency and encouraging trial and repurchase. By creating more incentives for customers to get into action, they can also be used to support other elements of the IMC plan, like advertising or personal selling.

4. Public Relations

Public relations (PR) involves the control and manipulation of a company's or brand's image within the public domain. Examples of PR activities include events management, crisis communication, media relations and community involvement. Public relations aims to cultivate and sustain a favourable perception of a company or individual, foster a positive attitude, and handle any unfavourable attitude. PR is linked to IMC since it ensures that all promotional activities are consistent with the central brand message and leverages the media to expand the reach.

5. Direct Marketing

Direct marketing also involves direct contact with consumers in order to elicit a response or a sale. Examples of this include direct mail, email marketing, telemarketing, and catalogue marketing. This is because direct marketing is very specific and

quantifiable, which makes it possible for advertisers to communicate their messages to particular audiences and review the outcomes. This important component of IMC allows for marketing communication activities to be personalised and also creates a direct line of communication with the consumer.

6. Digital Marketing

SEO, SEM, SMM, content marketing, and online advertising are a part of digital marketing. IMC is a strategic approach to planning and executing the promotional mix to create consistent and coordinated consumer communication through digital marketing. The advancement of the new media technology has revolutionised the marketing landscape and made it easier for the brands to get to their audience, gather information and measure the success of their advertisements.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) aims to ensure _____ of message and the complementary use of media. (consistency)
2. The rise of social media and mobile marketing has significantly impacted the practice of _____. (IMC)
3. Personal selling involves direct interaction between a _____ and a potential customer. (sales representative)
4. Sales promotion includes short-term incentives designed to stimulate immediate _____. (sales)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Create a short social media post that communicates a brand's key message. Ensure it aligns with the principles of IMC.

8.3 Developing an IMC Plan

An IMC plan ensures that all communication messages are relevant and harmonise with the target audience and with the main organisational goals.

1. Setting Objectives

The first step in developing an IMC plan is to set specific and achievable goals and objectives. These goals need to be specific, achievable, measurable, relevant, and time-

bound—in other words, SMART and aligned with the corporate strategy. These are usually the common goals of brand development, such as enhancing brand recognition, promoting sales, retaining customers, and gaining market share. The goals are helpful in establishing how well the campaign has done and in giving direction on the overall IMC plan.

2. Understanding the Target Audience

Understanding the target audience should be a key consideration when developing an IMC plan. It is in this process that the demographic, psychographic, behavioural, and search pattern analysis of the target audience must be conducted. Marketers need to know the media that is used by the target audience, what motivates them, and how they would want to be educated. It then becomes quite feasible to come up with the right messages that will suit the target group, hence enhancing the intended response.

3. Crafting the Message

The message is the key component of every integrated marketing communication plan. Said, if it is an argument, it should be consistent and convincing at every point of contact. Also, the message should be kept in accordance with the audience's requirements and goals, as well as the primary advantages of the particular good or service. It should also express the personality and the tone of its brand. It is innovative and involves analysing the target audience and the nature of the brand.

4. Selecting the Communication Channels

IMC is made up of a message that is the central focus of any planned and executed integrated marketing communication. In short, if it is an argument as a subject, then it should be coherent and persuasive at all points of interface. It also refers to the necessity of addressing the message according to the needs and purposes of the audience as well as the strengths of the particular good or service. It should also be able to capture the personality and the tone of the brand it is advertising. It is unique since it requires the consideration of the target group and the type of brand to be advertised.

5. Budgeting and Resource Allocation

The plan should also reflect the amount of money available and the various resources that should be used in the IMC process. To achieve the goals and objectives of each component in the IMC strategy, the marketer must have sufficient funds for each activity, which makes it necessary to allocate the resources properly. This comprises the amount of money set aside for each mode of communication, the cost of producing the communication instruments, the cost of acquiring space or time in the mass media, and

other requirements that would be required in the process of implementing the plan. That is why budgeting is an essential element of the IMC plan, as it is relatively easy to implement without seriously depleting the budget.

6. Implementation and Execution

Once the IMC plan has been developed, the next steps are to implement and execute the plan as planned. This involves the management of programmatic control and the overall supervising of all the advertising efforts in a given organisation with a view of ensuring the implementation of all aspects of the IMC plan as designed. This involves integrating and incorporating several functions and departments, which include marketing, selling, public relations and digital. The IMC plan cannot be implemented in the wrong way. This calls for good project management and communication.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is necessary to monitor and evaluate it to determine the viability of the IMC plan. In this case, it involves tracking those features that are useful in identifying whether the campaign is fruitful or not, which is known as KPI. Some of the known measurements are social media interaction, website traffic, top-of-mind awareness, sales, and ROI. This can be done through regular monitoring in order to make changes to the campaign using data gathered or to confirm that the overall IMC campaign is effective.

8.4 Evaluating IMC Effectiveness

For anyone to make the right decision in the establishment of the subsequent IMC campaigns, an assessment of the IMC plan must be made. It is also important to note that when using the IMC strategy, there are a number of indicators and KPIs that need to be included in the success analysis.

The actual planning of IMC has undergone a significant shift due to the use of contemporary technologies and analytical data. Consumer activity is monitored in real-time, which relays real-time information to the marketers so that no detail is left out in customising the marketing messages and improving the effectiveness of the marketing campaigns. Similarly, IMC is on an upward trajectory in adopting AI and ML for better targeting and marketing processes.

Due to this, it makes sense to evaluate IMC to make proper decisions regarding what campaigns to run next. As we have seen, there are quite a number of factors and KPIs to take into account when assessing the IMC strategy's efficacy.

1. Brand Awareness

An IMC plan focuses on various elements, but the overall goal is brand awareness. This may be evaluated through monitoring social media activities and website views or through a survey. In establishing that the IMC strategy is capable of communicating with and, indeed, engaging the intended audience, one finds an increased propensity of the audience to associate with the brands in question. Marketing departments may prove brand name recognition, brand reach, and brand engagement from social media analytics and Google Analytics.

2. Sales and Revenue

Sales and revenue are commonly used and unique objectives that can be helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of an IMC plan. The overall increase in sales and revenues demonstrates that the IMC strategy is generating consumer response, thereby spelling out successful ROI. This is because every marketer knows that he cannot implement an IMC plan without considering the records of the sales and the revenues produced.

3. Customer Engagement

Another component that can be utilised to assess the IMC plan is the engagement of a particular customer. This may refer to customers' comments, Email Open and Click-Through rates, as well as social media engagement rates. More customer involvement means that the target customers are being accessed in a timely and positive way through the implementation of the IMC plan, which enhances a positive IMC brand relationship.

4. Return on Investment (ROI)

In particular, from the standpoint of the financial effectiveness of the IMC plan, the return on investment or ROI deserves to be highlighted. The last framework of IMC is ROI, which calculates the money that the campaign generates for the business and the money that the business spends on the campaign. A value greater than zero shows that the overall IMC plan is having an impact and generating a positive return. The marketers may decide on their marketing budget by employing estimates of ROI to declare the cost of the varied communication modes.

5. Market Share

Another notable factor considered in the evaluation of brands' competitiveness in the market is market share. Market share is a more concrete and effective measure in assessing how well the IMC plan is being implemented, especially the idea that an increase in the market share signifies proper placement and promotion of the brand. The IMC plan will be used to determine the effectiveness of the brand in relation to competitors through the analysis of market share data by marketers.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Setting clear and measurable objectives is the first step in developing an IMC plan. (True)
2. An increase in market share suggests that the IMC plan is ineffective in positioning the brand. (False)
3. ROI measures the profitability of the IMC strategy by comparing the cost of the campaign to the revenue generated. (True)
4. Consistency in messaging is not important in an IMC plan. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Identify and list three key performance indicators (KPIs) you would use to measure the effectiveness of an IMC plan.

8.5 Summary

- IMC is a strategic approach to managing marketing communication activities. It aims to create a consistent message across the promotional mix and is designed to have a greater influence on consumers by establishing a single marketing message.
- Advertising is a form of communication that includes paid messages that are transmitted through media channels. They are non-personal and can be done through television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet, and billboards. Its purpose is to inform, appeal, and persuade the consumer.
- Personal selling involves a face-to-face selling process between a salesperson and the client, making it easier to adapt to the client's needs, respond to their questions, and establish rapport. It is most suitable for use in business-to-business markets and for high-value products.
- Sales promotion involves offering short-term incentives such as discounts, coupons, contests, and loyalty programmes, all of which are aimed at increasing sales immediately. These promotions complement other IMC activities in that they offer consumers other reasons to act.
- The first step in creating an effective IMC plan is to set measurable objectives that are in tune with the overall business objectives. Learning more about the target

public is always important to developing messages that will help achieve the intended responses.

- Budgeting and resource allocation help determine whether each of the IMC components is adequately funded. Implementation and execution need to be coordinated with other teams, while monitoring and evaluation ensure that the campaign is optimised.
- Brand awareness can be assessed by using questionnaires, social media metrics, and website visits. The impact of greater reach and resonance with the target audience is reflected by greater brand awareness.

8.6 Keywords

- **Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC):** This is an overall marketing strategy that uses different elements of marketing communication to create a single marketing message that has the greatest impact on the consumer.
- **Advertising:** An individual paid media communication tool used to generate awareness and interest through media touch-points like television, radio, print, and online.
- **Sales Promotion:** Temporary promotional tools such as offering rebates and vouchers and holding promotional events to boost sales and complement other marketing strategies.

8.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), and why is it important in today's marketing landscape?
2. Describe the key components of an IMC plan and provide examples for each component.
3. Explain the steps involved in developing an effective IMC plan.
4. How can brand awareness be measured and evaluated in an IMC strategy?
5. Discuss the role of personal selling in IMC and its benefits.

8.8 References / Reference Reading

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Unit 9: Digital Marketing

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to understand the fundamental concepts of digital marketing.

- Students will be able to identify and use various tools and techniques of digital marketing.
- Students will be able to apply social media marketing strategies effectively.
- Students will be able to implement SEO and SEM strategies to improve their online presence.

Structure:

- 9.1 Introduction to Digital Marketing
- 9.2 Tools and Techniques of Digital Marketing
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 9.3 Social Media Marketing
- 9.4 Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 9.5 Summary
- 9.6 Keywords
- 9.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 9.8 References / Reference Reading

9.1 Introduction to Digital Marketing

Digital marketing has changed the way businesses deal with their customers considerably. Digital marketing involves conveying marketing messages to potential consumers through digital mediums such as the Internet, social media, emails, and

websites, as opposed to physical mediums like newspapers, television, and billboards. It is important to note that with the advent of smartphones and the internet, digital marketing has become an important part of modern business strategies.

Digital marketing refers to the application of computers and the Internet in the marketing of goods and services. Businesses use web-based technologies such as search engines, social networks, e-mail, and their websites to build relationships with current and prospective customers. Due to the rapid expansion of internet users due to the digitalisation process, digital marketing is an essential tool for all types of businesses in India.

The benefits of digital marketing include the following:

- Expanding its client base helps businesses in creating relationships with customers across the globe. Compared to traditional marketing, it costs less and often generates a higher return on investment. Since digital marketing offers measurable outcomes, companies can monitor and assess their performance in real-time.
- Targeted advertisement is another advantage of digital marketing. Companies can segment their target market in many ways depending on the tool and strategy used, including demographic, psychographic, behavioural and many more.
- Digital marketing is on the rise in India. Following China, India has the second-largest internet population of over 560 million users. Companies have a good opportunity to establish themselves among this huge audience. Smartphones have become popular in the country, and affordable internet connections have led to the growth of digital marketing in India.

9.2 Tools and Techniques of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a broad concept that involves different tools and strategies for attaining specific marketing objectives. Hence, to build effective digital marketing strategies, you need to familiarise yourself with these tools and methods.

Website Development and Management

A company's website is its main virtual store. It often provides the first interaction of a business with prospective clients. Having a website that is flexible, well-designed, and easy to use is very important. Website development involves the creation of a visually appealing and easy-to-navigate website that is responsive to both mobile and desktop devices.

Content Marketing

Content marketing also aims to build and maintain an audience by providing informative, relevant, and regular content. The goal is to encourage the consumer to perform actions that are profitable to the seller. The content can be in blogs, articles, podcasts, films, infographics, and many other forms.

Content marketing requires identifying the target audience's needs to ensure that their demands are met fully. It involves producing content that addresses these questions, provides the answers, and positions the company as a subject-matter expert in the given field. Some of the tools that can assist in planning, creating, and evaluating content marketing are HubSpot, BuzzSumo, and Google Analytics.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is one of the most effective forms of digital marketing. It creates relationships, generates and manages leads, and involves targeted email distribution to a list of subscribers. One way that communication can be customised is through email marketing, and this may have a great impact on consumers.

Several factors are essential for email marketing campaigns to work effectively: a clean email list, interesting content, and deliberate scheduling. Various email marketing tools are available in the market, such as Mailchimp, Constant Contact, and SendinBlue, which offer complete campaign management, right from designing the email to tracking the campaign.

Pay-Per-Click Advertising (PPC)

In a pay-per-click internet marketing strategy, marketers are charged a fee each time their ads are clicked. This is an unconventional way of acquiring website traffic compared to the natural way. Google's search engine results may contain ads placed through Google Ads, the most popular PPC platform.

PPC advertising offers control over spending, clear, measurable results, and an immediate entry point. It is crucial to approach the task of creating ads carefully and keep track of the results to ensure that the ads are effective and generate a reasonable profit. Companies can easily run their PPC campaigns with the help of tools such as Google AdWords, Microsoft Ads, and Facebook Ad Manager.

Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is a business model that uses other people or companies (affiliates) to market your products or services. Affiliates are compensated based on the commission earned per sale made through their marketing campaigns. Since there is no

significant initial investment, companies can achieve higher revenues and attract more customers by applying this volume-based marketing technique.

Affiliate marketing requires creating a program where affiliates may register and receive marketing materials. Programs such as ShareASale, CJ Affiliate, and Amazon Associates offer systems for overseeing affiliate programs, monitoring sales, and releasing commissions.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

- **Fill in the Blanks.**

1. Digital marketing leverages digital channels such as search engines, social media, email, and _____ to reach potential customers. (billboards)
2. Tools like WordPress, Wix, and _____ simplify the process of website development and management. (Squarespace)
3. In content marketing, tools like HubSpot, BuzzSumo, and _____ help in planning, creating, and measuring the effectiveness of content marketing efforts. (Google Analytics)
4. Successful email marketing campaigns require a well-maintained email list, compelling content, and _____ timing. (Random)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Create a basic website mockup using a free tool like Wix or WordPress and share the link with your class.

9.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing involves using social media platforms to promote products or services, build brand awareness, and engage with customers. Social media has become an integral part of people's daily lives, making it a powerful tool for businesses to reach and connect with their audience.

Popular Social Media Platforms

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube are all well-liked social media networks in India. Businesses need to select the appropriate platform for their target audience, as each has distinct features and user demographics.

- **Facebook:** With a population of over 300 million Indians, Facebook is a versatile tool where people can share any information and content, including text, photos, videos, and live streams. Businesses aim to target their audience, and they can do so by posting advertisements, joining communities, and creating pages.
- **Instagram:** Especially beneficial for companies that can utilise high-quality images and videos, Instagram has become famous for its focus on visual material. Additional ways to communicate with the followers are provided with features like Stories, IGTV, and Reels. Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms with young people.
- **Twitter:** This platform posts tweets or brief communications in real-time. Businesses can use it successfully to engage in dialogue, share information, and connect with influencers. The hashtag function on Twitter makes it easier to reach a larger audience interested in particular topics.
- **LinkedIn:** Ideal for B2B marketing, hiring, and thought leadership, LinkedIn is mainly used for professional networking. Businesses may connect with other experts, share industry ideas, and post job vacancies.
- **YouTube:** YouTube is a platform for video sharing That enables businesses to produce and share video content, including how-tos, product evaluations, and behind-the-scenes shots. It is an effective tool for reaching a wide audience, with over 265 million users in India.

Strategies for Social Media Marketing

A well-planned approach is necessary for social media marketing to be effective. The following are some important strategies:

- **Content Planning and Creation:** Create a content calendar to help you organise your posts ahead of time. Aim for informative, interesting content that speaks to the target audience's interests. Images and videos are examples of visual content that frequently performs better on social media.
- **Engagement and Interaction:** Social media is a two-way avenue for communication. Reacting to messages, mentions, and comments from followers promotes community building and connection building. Another way to increase engagement is to host surveys, Q&A sessions, and contests.
- **Influencer marketing:** Businesses may reach a larger audience by working with influencers who have a sizable following. To be authentic, influencers may post real content that can market the firm's products or services to their followers.

- **Advertising:** Some of the advertising options that social media platforms offer include sponsored posts, display and video ads. Targeting choices allow businesses to show ads to specific demographics, interests, and behaviours, meaning that the right audience will be exposed to advertisements.
- **Analytics and Monitoring:** Monitor social media platforms daily using the platform-provided analytics or other tools, including Hootsuite and Sprout Social. It is made possible by the understanding of which strategies are effective and which are not through metrics such as engagement, reach, and conversion.

9.4 Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

SEO and SEM are two fundamental components of digital marketing, both of which aim to make a website more visible on SERPs. While SEM relies on paid advertisement to appear in search engine results, SEO aims at improving organic search rankings.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO refers to the process of enhancing the ranking of a website in the natural or unpaid section of the search engine. This means that on-page, off-page, and technical SEO techniques should be employed in the best way possible.

- **On-Page SEO:** In order to rank higher and attract more relevant visitors, this involves optimising certain web pages. Included in the important elements are:
 - **Keyword research:** Finding relevant keywords that attract the attention of possible buyers. The correct keywords may be found in programmes like SEMrush and Google Keyword Planner.
 - **Content Optimisation:** Content optimisation involves producing relevant, high-quality content that organically includes target keywords. The audience should receive value and information from the content.
 - **Meta Tags:** Optimising meta titles and descriptions to include target keywords and promote click-throughs from search results.
 - **URL Structure:** Clean, descriptive URLs that include target keywords are used in the URL structure.
- **Off-Page SEO:** This is the activity that is performed outside the website, which impacts the website ranking; this is commonly the process of link building from other reputable websites. It is for this reason that the following strategies are part of the recommendations;

- **Link Building:** Gaining reliable websites to link back to a high-quality website. Backlinks can be obtained through partnership, influencer marketing, and guest blogging.
- **Social media:** Visibility of content should be promoted, especially on social media platforms, to increase web traffic.
- **Technical SEO:** This involves enhancing the site's content structure and coding to make it easy for the search engine to index the site.
 - **Site Speed:** Ensuring that the website's page load is fast is crucial since slow-loading sites can negatively impact the outcome.
 - **Mobile-Friendliness:** Ensuring that the content is viewable and navigable on the website on a small screen and is satisfactory.
 - **XML Sitemaps:** To help the search engines crawl and index all the pages of the website, prepare an XML sitemap and submit it to the search engines.
 - **Robots. Txt:** Using the Robots.txt file to guide the search engines on which pages to crawl and index from my web.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

In SEM, paid advertising is employed to increase the visibility of the SERP. The most common form of SEM is the PPC model, in which companies bid on keywords to place their advertisements alongside the search results whenever a consumer searches for a particular term.

- **Keyword research:** The success of SEM depends on the choice of keywords for bidding. Google Ads Keyword Planner is one tool that can help identify the right keywords with the right search volume and competition level.
- **Ad Creation:** Creating catchy ad text that appeals to readers' emotions and includes the target keywords. The inclusion of clear and relevant advertisement messages with clear and compelling calls to action should be made.
- **Landing Pages:** The first step is to create landing pages that are supposed to meet the goals of the ads and ensure that users have a seamless experience. The landing page can be a product, a form, or a subscription to a newsletter, and it should correspond to the ad to sell a product or a service.
- **Bidding Strategy:** Based on the campaign's aims and goals, choose the right bidding strategy. These include manual bidding, in which the companies set their prices for the terms, and automatic bidding, in which the platform ad justifies bids to achieve the best results within the set budget.

- **Ad Extensions:** Ad extensions enhance the visibility of the advertisement and provide additional details. Site links, callouts, and location extensions are examples of common extensions.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Tracking and evaluating campaign results on a regular basis to pinpoint areas in need of development. Key indicators include conversion rate, cost-per-click, and click-through rate (CTR). Comprehensive insights into campaign performance may be obtained using tools such as Google Ads and Analytics.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Social media marketing only involves using platforms like Facebook and Instagram. (False)
2. Influencer marketing can help businesses reach a wider audience and enhance credibility. (True)
3. Search engine optimisation (SEO) involves using paid advertising to increase visibility on search engine results pages. (False)
4. Regular monitoring and analysing campaign performance is crucial for improving digital marketing strategies. (True)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Choose a brand you like and analyse its social media strategy, noting how it engages with its audience.

9.5 Summary

- Digital marketing utilises digital channels such as search engines, social media, email, and websites to connect with customers, providing a broader reach and measurable results.
- In India, the digital revolution has led to a significant increase in internet users, making digital marketing a crucial tool for businesses to tap into the growing online market.

- The benefits of digital marketing include cost-effectiveness, targeted advertising, and real-time interaction, enabling businesses to engage directly with their audience and refine strategies based on analytics.
- Content marketing focuses on creating valuable, relevant content to attract and engage a target audience. Tools like HubSpot and Google Analytics aid in content planning and measurement.
- SEO refers to the process of improving websites for better ranking on organic search engine results pages through on-page, off-page and technical optimisation for better visibility and quality traffic.
- SEM also encompasses paid media techniques such as PPC to promote website placement on SERPs; it is a time-consuming process that involves identifying appropriate keywords, developing ads, and analysing their performance.
- SEO and SEM are equally important for enhancing online presence, and applications such as Google Keyword Planner and Google Ads are useful for monitoring and enhancing promotional campaigns.

9.6 Keywords

- **Digital Marketing is the process of advertising goods or services through digital mediums such as Pay-per-Click, social media, e-mail, and websites.**
- **SEO (Search Engine Optimisation):** Techniques used to improve a website's visibility and ranking on search engine results pages organically.
- **PPC (Pay-Per-Click):** This is a model of Internet marketing in which advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. It is commonly used in SEM.

9.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the primary benefits of digital marketing compared to traditional marketing?
2. How can businesses optimise their websites for better search engine rankings?
3. What are some effective content marketing strategies for engaging a target audience?
4. Explain the role of social media in digital marketing and how businesses can leverage it.
5. What are the key differences between SEO and SEM?

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Unit 10: Marketing Research

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to define marketing research.
- Students will be able to describe the different types of marketing research.
- Students will be able to outline the steps in the marketing research process.
- Students will be able to explain various data collection methods.

Structure:

10.1 Definition and Importance of Marketing Research

10.2 Types of Marketing Research

- Knowledge Check 1
- Outcome-Based Activity 1

10.3 Steps in the Marketing Research Process

10.4 Data Collection Methods

- Knowledge Check 2
- Outcome-Based Activity 2

10.5 Summary

10.6 Keywords

10.7 Self-Assessment Questions

10.8 References / Reference Reading

10.1 Definition and Importance of Marketing Research

Researching products and services through systematic data collection, analysis, and interpretation is known as marketing research. This information may be used by

businesses to help improve the management of strategies and decisions since there will be enhanced insight into customers' demands, preferences and behaviours. In other words, marketing research is crucial for the identification of market trends, evaluation of marketing impact and exploration of marketing opportunities.

There are several reasons why marketing research is important. In the first dimension, it assists companies in targeting and analysing their consumers. The problems and issues that consumers have can be understood by the business so that changes can be made concerning the needs of its customers through the identification of who they are, their needs and the ways in which they behave. Marketing research gives valuable information about the clients and the market. This is the knowledge that is needed for competitive advantage, product differentiation, new product development, and enhancement of existing ones. Marketing research assists in the assessment of marketing communications exercise. It may also help corporations improve marketing communication and garner higher efficiency for their marketing messages by measuring customer satisfaction and brand identity.

10.2 Types of Marketing Research

Marketing research can be divided into several types based on its goals, data collection techniques, and analyses. Some of the most common categories include exploratory, descriptive, causal, and predictive.

Exploratory Research

When there is little to no information available on a problem or scenario, exploratory research is done to investigate it. Its goal is to produce ideas and insights for more research. Focus groups, in-depth interviews, literature reviews, and other approaches are frequently used in exploratory research, which is qualitative. Finding possible problems, coming up with theories, and understanding the background of an issue are all benefits of this type of research.

Descriptive Research

The goal of descriptive research is to characterise a population's or phenomenon's features—questions like who, what, where, when, and how are answered. Much of descriptive research is quantitative and includes secondary data analysis, observational studies, and surveys. This type of research provides great depth to the market, search profiles, and customer types.

Causal Research

Explanatory research, another name for causal research, aims to demonstrate cause-and-effect connections between variables. Testing theories and determining the impact of one variable on another involves carrying out experiments and quasi-experiments. Through causal research, the effectiveness of market strategies and interventions must be understood.

Predictive Research

Statistical models and algorithms are employed in predictive research to predict future trends and behaviours. To create predictions, it involves looking at past data and finding patterns. Demand forecasts, sales estimates, and market trend analysis all benefit from predictive research. Businesses employ predictive research to foresee shifts in the market and take preemptive measures.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

- Fill in the Blanks.**

1. Marketing research helps businesses understand consumer needs, preferences, and _____. (behaviours)
2. Exploratory research is often _____ and involves techniques such as focus groups and in-depth interviews. (qualitative)
3. _____ research aims to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. (Descriptive)
4. Marketing research provides businesses with insights into their competitors' strategies, strengths, and _____. (weaknesses)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

- Identify and list three companies in India that you think rely heavily on marketing research and explain why.

10.3 Steps in the Marketing Research Process

The market research process step involves a number of processes that direct researchers from defining the problem to delivering the results. The following are the main steps in the marketing research process:

1. Defining the Problem

The first step in the market research process is to define the problem or research aim precisely. This involves problem identification, determination of the information to use, and development of research objectives. The research is targeted and appropriate if the problem statement addressed in the study is clear and well-stated.

2. Developing the Research Plan

The research plan is the next step after the problem's definition has been determined. It involves deciding on the type of research method to be adopted, the choice of data collection tools, and the number of samples and sampling techniques to be used in the study. It also includes the strategy to be used and all the things needed to facilitate the research's conduct.

3. Collecting Data

The data collection stage is arguably one of the most fundamental stages in conducting market research. It includes the administration of questionnaires, interviews, Internet data, and observations, as well as data collection of secondary data. This means that the validity of the conclusion made by the researcher depends highly on the quality and reliability of the data that is collected.

4. Analysing Data

The process that comes after data collection is data analysis, the process involves using mathematical and statistical tools. Data analysis refers to the techniques of categorising and interpreting data with the aim of expressing the information in a more meaningful way. This step helps establish the type of data in question and identify various patterns, trends, and even relationships.

5. Presenting the Findings

The last step of marketing research is reporting the results to the relevant parties involved. This involves the production of a detailed report, which comprises the following components: the executive summary, analysis, and conclusion/recommendation. The report should be well-written and free from unnecessary writing, and it should have recommendations that the key decision-makers need to implement.

10.4 Data Collection Methods

Data gathering is one of the most significant responsibilities of the marketing research process. This research gathers information to meet its objectives through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and experiments. Secondary data collection is the process of collecting data through other sources like trade or academic journals, government documents, and report data sources from the Internet.

Surveys

Paper questionnaires are one of the most commonly employed data-gathering techniques in market research. In the case of quantitative data, they consist of systematically asking a set of questions to several respondents. Various methods can be applied to conduct surveys, including postal, telephone, face-to-face, and web surveys. Questionnaires are useful for rapidly and inexpensively accumulating large amounts of information.

Interviews

Interviews are one of the tools used to collect qualitative data and involve direct communication with the respondents. They can be conducted in a structured, semi-structured, or unstructured way, depending on the focus of the research. Interviews offer a much deeper understanding of respondents' views, decision-making processes, and behaviours. They are helpful in developing a broad knowledge of the subject matter and as a way of finding out more about the research topic.

Observations

Observation is a data-gathering technique that focuses on observing events and people's actions in their natural setting. Depending on the purpose of the research, it can be classified as structured or unstructured. Unlike self-reporting, observation is more likely to provide real-time data, which is important when analysing actual behaviour.

Experiments

Experiments in causal research affirm causal relationships by providing data to support hypotheses. They also include changing one or more variables to observe the effect that one variable has on another. These can be conducted in the actual environment (field experiments) or a controlled environment (laboratory experiments).

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data collection is a process that involves using data that has already been collected from various sources. Some examples include online databases, industry

magazines, firm records, and government reports. Secondary data is also useful in marketing research because it is often cheap and can be easily obtained. Researchers are required to ensure that the data collected is relevant, correct, and trustworthy.

Data Collection in the Digital Age

The process of data collection has evolved in the age of digitalisation, which has informed marketers of better ways of gathering information. There is always a huge amount of data posted on social networking sites, e-business sites, and reviews, and this data can be analysed to understand customer behaviour. The information on customer interactions, preferences, and comments in real-time could be collected through CRM systems, social media analytics, and Google Analytics.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Defining the problem is the first step in the marketing research process. (True)
2. Data collection methods only include surveys and interviews. (False)
3. Observations provide real-time data and are useful for studying actual behaviour. (True)
4. Ethical considerations are not important in data collection. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Conduct a short survey with your classmates about their favourite mobile phone brands and present your findings in a brief report.

10.5 Summary

- Marketing research is a systematic process of acquiring data and information to be used in marketing activities. It is useful in understanding consumer needs and wants, which is vital for the formulation of business strategies.
- Marketing research helps define and analyse markets that may be of interest to the business so that products and services can be produced and delivered according to consumers' needs. It offers insights into market developments and consumer behaviours that are critical for product design and market strategy.
- Identifying the problem is the initial step in the marketing research process, and it involves gaining insight into it. This step helps define the research goals and

determine what information is required to achieve them. A well-defined problem statement serves as a framework on which the entire research process will be based.

- Surveys are one of the most used data collection techniques, and they involve a set of questions to obtain quantitative information. These can be online, telephone, face-to-face, or mail surveys.
- Interviews are face-to-face communication with respondents and can be of an open-ended, closed or semi-closed nature. They offer a detailed understanding of respondent perception, reasons, and behaviour, which makes them ideal for studying issues of concern.
- Observations involve monitoring and documenting behaviour and occurrences in their environment, hence giving real-time information. This type of research method can be either structured or unstructured and is beneficial in observing the actual behaviour of the people instead of what they have to say about it.

10.6 Keywords

- **Marketing Research:** An orderly process of identifying, compiling, analysing, and interpreting information on marketing products and services to make business decisions and formulate strategies.
- **Exploratory Research:** A type of marketing research that is conducted to gather information about a problem or situation in which there is limited knowledge about the issue, and the study might involve the use of a qualitative approach.
- **Descriptive Research:** A type of research that seeks to identify the state of a population or phenomenon and often employs questionnaires, observation, and record reviews.
- **Causal Research:** Also known as explanatory research, this type seeks to establish cause-and-effect relationships between variables through experiments and quasi-experiments.
- **Data Collection Methods:** Various techniques are used to gather information for marketing research, including surveys, interviews, observations, and secondary data analysis.

10.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is the role of marketing research in business decision-making?
2. How does exploratory research differ from descriptive research?

3. What are the key steps involved in the marketing research process?
4. What methods can be used for collecting primary data in marketing research?
5. Why is ethical consideration important in data collection?

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Unit 11: Global Marketing

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to understand the concept of global marketing.
- Students will be able to identify challenges and opportunities in global marketing.
- Students will be able to develop strategies for entering global markets.
- Students will be able to analyse the global marketing environment.

Structure:

- 11.1 Introduction to Global Marketing
- 11.2 Challenges and Opportunities in Global Marketing
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 11.3 Strategies for Entering Global Markets
- 11.4 Global Marketing Environment
 - Knowledge Check 2
 - Outcome-Based Activity 2
- 11.5 Summary
- 11.6 Keywords
- 11.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 11.8 References / Reference Reading

11.1 Introduction to Global Marketing

Global marketing is the marketing of several nations using marketing concepts. Marketing coordination is required by this strategy to appeal to international markets while maintaining a coherent brand message. Global marketing is not limited to selling a product or service in a foreign country, but it also involves understanding other cultures, economic conditions, and laws.

As a result of the rapid advancement in technology and communication, companies may now enter the global markets more easily. At present, companies can target customers worldwide through e-commerce and digital marketing capabilities. Another advantage

has been the expansion of better access to global markets due to the development of international trade relations and the elimination of trade barriers.

Market saturation at home is a major driver of global marketing. Companies look outward to expand the market of customers and increase revenues when opportunities in the home market are limited. For instance, successful international marketing strategies have made Indian corporations like Tata Motors and Infosys as leading contenders in the worldwide market.

11.2 Challenges and Opportunities in Global Marketing

Challenges in Global Marketing

1. **Cultural Differences:** One of the greatest barriers to international marketing communication is culture. This is because consumer behaviour and feelings are always influenced by a country's cultural beliefs, values, and practices. These cultural peculiarities have to be known in order to develop the right marketing strategies. That is why what may be adopted as a successful marketing campaign in India will not be connected to American consumers.
2. **Legal and Regulatory Differences:** The legal and regulatory environment remains a major and distinct aspect of the international environment. Each country has its system of legislative regulations associated with business and promotional activities, rules of product quality, and legislation on protecting consumer rights. It becomes a legal requirement that organisations implement legal awareness and compliance strategies to address such laws, which may be complicated and bulky.
3. **Economic Factors:** Factors such as inflation, currency rates, and economic stability could be among the potential sources that affect international marketing. First, fluctuations in currency rates could undermine the company's price strategies and profitability; second, economic instability in certain regions could threaten the company's operations. This also means that some corporate actions must be controlled in accordance with fundamental economic forces.
4. **Language Barriers:** Another conflict that comes about with global marketing is language differences. Marketing depends a lot on conveying messages to the targeted audiences, and language often comes in the way of passing efficient and clear messages. As for this, businesses need to employ professional translation and localisation of advertisements to make sure that the targeted society understands the idea well.

5. **Logistics and Supply Chain Issues:** Having several supply chains and logistics for the manufacturing and distribution plant in more than one country might have been a challenge and complex. They need to know the current position of the stocks, how to clear them through customs and get the products to the final consumer as soon as possible. Today's market calls for sustainability of the supply chain so as to meet consumer requirements and remain relevant in the market.

Opportunities in Global Marketing

1. Access to New Markets: The global marketing concept has advantages, such as the potential to target more customers. Companies can extend their customer base and increase their sales and revenue potential by expanding operations in foreign locations. This growth can also assist in diversifying risks by extending activities across several locations instead of being concentrated in one market.

2. Increased Brand Recognition: Such global marketing can help companies build their reputation and brand identification on an international level. A competitive advantage could be sustained, and customer loyalty could be achieved in a company through a powerful global brand. Nike and McDonald's, for instance, have marketed themselves around the globe and over a certain period, these brands have been able to cultivate consumers all over the world.

3. Innovation and Learning: Familiarity with various markets and consumer preferences can help generate new products and sales methods. For instance, global marketing allows for creativity and knowledge since firms can glean information from various cultural settings and demand patterns.

4. Economies of Scale: When companies expand their operations to other countries, economies of scale can be achieved by increasing the volume of production and spreading the fixed costs. As a result, efficiency may improve, and expenses may be lowered.

5. Competitive Advantage: Global marketing might give companies an edge over rivals by assisting organisations in distinguishing themselves from competitors. Companies may be able to attain a strategic market position and gain customer loyalty by providing customers with differentiated products and services that would address the needs of global consumers.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Global marketing requires understanding diverse cultures, economic environments, and _____ frameworks. (regulatory)
2. One of the primary benefits of global marketing is access to a larger _____ base. (Customer)
3. _____ differences are one of the most significant challenges in global marketing. (Cultural)
4. Exporting is a _____ strategy that allows companies to test international markets. (low-risk)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Create a list of five Indian companies that have successfully entered global markets and identify the strategies they used to expand internationally.

11.3 Strategies for Entering Global Markets

Exporting

Exporting is usually the initial form of engagement in international operations. It refers to the manufacturing of goods within a country and exporting the products to other countries. Exporting is a low-risk strategy that enables firms to gauge the potential of foreign operations without committing a lot of capital to the effort. It can be either direct, where the company sells its products directly to the overseas buyer, or indirect, where the services of export agents or trading companies are used.

1. Licensing and Franchising

Licensing requires a foreign company to assume the responsibility of producing and selling a company's products in exchange for royalty payments.

A classic example of a company that has relied on franchising to expand its operations worldwide is McDonald's. To enter many markets, McDonald's has remained operational and loyal to its image through collaboration with regional partners.

2. Joint Venture and Strategic Partnership

When firms enter into joint ventures and strategic alliances with local partners, they can be a source of important local market knowledge, resources, and contacts.

Strategic alliances are less restrictive in nature and do not require equity investment. Joint ventures involve the formation of a new entity owned by strategic partners.

3. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

The FDI process is defined as the act of investing directly in a foreign country through the establishment of a new firm or the acquisition of an existing firm. Although this is even more potentially rewarding and operationally more versatile, this form calls for a great outlay of capital. It can be used in establishing new production facilities, in the acquisition of companies, and the formation of new companies through the establishment of new sub-companies.

4. E-commerce and Digital Marketing

However, it is also important to acknowledge the changing reality of e-commerce and other digital marketing strategies, which have shifted their approach to global marketing. This means that through digital marketing channels and internet platforms that present an online interface with the clients, businesses can now effectively target clients across the globe. The overall advantage of this approach is its full coverage of foreign markets and comparatively lower costs when venturing into those markets.

5. Strategic Acquisition

In the context of a specific foreign market, a strategic acquisition means the purchase of an already-formed business. This approach can also give you an immediate connection to customers, market knowledge, and presence. It also allows for quicker entry than when beginning new operations from the ground.

6. Greenfield Investments

The creation of new operations from the ground up in foreign investment markets is known as “greenfield investments.” Companies can build structures and processes to suit this method, allowing for full management of corporate activities. It does, however, require a considerable time and money investment.

11.4 Global Marketing Environment

Economic Environment

Global marketing strategies are influenced by the economic environment and how they are prepared. Some factors that may affect spending power and consumer demand include economic factors like growth, income, inflation, and foreign exchange rates.

However, companies must track these factors so that they can change their marketing strategies.

India ranks among some of the largest markets globally. Coupled with a highly progressive growth rate, this has been an opportunity for most businesses today. Such expansion has been advantageous to companies like Hindustan Unilever, as they have been able to manufacture fairly affordable, quality products that meet the needs of the Indian consumer.

Political and Legal Environment

Political and legal factors can greatly influence the marketing initiatives of multinational companies in various countries. The government must place restrictions on market entry and access and the flow of goods through rules and policies that affect the market. Companies must solve such dilemmas, and they must always consider whether they are compliant with local legislation.

Cultural Environment

Cultural considerations are relevant to international marketing because consumers' behaviour, preferences, and channels of communication differ across countries. Before businessmen attempt to devise marketing strategies that would work with consumers in a certain country, it is imperative that they undertake a cultural examination.

Technological Environment

Today, there has been a shift in the marketplace due to the impact of technology. Due to the advancements in information technology, transportation, and communication, it is quite possible for companies to access and serve the global markets. Businesses must adapt to technological advances for their marketing strategies to be effective.

Competitive Environment

Firms experience competition in global markets, which means they have to find ways to stand out. Marketing strategies can only be effective if one understands the competition and all the players involved in the business.

Factors Relating to the Environment and Social Setting

It is noteworthy that environmental and social factors play a significant role in the formation of global marketing strategies. Due to their increased awareness of the environment, customers are increasingly demanding sustainable practices and products. Sustainability has to be incorporated into marketing for consumers to be content and for businesses to be environmentally compliant.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Exporting involves producing goods domestically and selling them to foreign markets. (True)
2. Licensing and franchising always require significant capital investment. (False)
3. Cultural factors have no significant impact on global marketing efforts. (False)
4. Technological advancements have made it easier for companies to reach and serve international markets. (True)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Identify one global company and analyse how it has adapted its marketing strategy to a specific cultural market

11.5 Summary

- Global marketing is the process of marketing a product across borders. As such, it involves using marketing concepts in different countries, and the different cultures and economic systems of the different countries need to be considered. Businesses use technology, and barriers to international markets are decreasing to access clients abroad.
- Global marketing can only be achieved by overcoming certain barriers, including cultural differences, legal barriers, and economic barriers. Marketing is an essential function that requires strategic management to ensure that it is relevant to the target markets.
- Culture plays a role in the marketing of products and services across different nations, and this makes it important to undertake a research study to understand the cultural practices of other countries so as to market products and services to them appropriately. Failure to understand these categories can impede consumer interactions.
- Exporting is generally the first step in the internationalisation process since it enables a firm to manufacture at home and sell overseas. This approach is relatively low risk and can be either direct or indirect.
- Licensing and franchising facilitate international expansion with less capital outlay because they provide rights to foreign entities. Another key success factor that

McDonald's has embraced is the franchising strategy, which helps the company uphold its brand identity across the globe.

- Foreign political and legal systems, such as the barriers to trade and policies, play a critical role in marketing. These are some of the complexities and legal requirements that firms need to understand and meet for them to operate effectively in the global environment.
- Culture plays an important role in the buying process and influences consumers' decisions, which is why organisations need to take it into account. Knowledge of cultural dimensions is useful when trying to create a message that appeals to local consumers.

11.6 Keywords

- **Global Marketing:** Applying marketing concepts across various countries involves knowledge of various cultures, economic systems, and legal systems.
- **Cultural Differences:** Differences in social beliefs, attitudes, and practices affecting the buyers' behaviour and market demands, requiring marketing-targeted approaches.
- **Exporting:** This approach involves making products locally and then exporting them to other countries. It is commonly employed when a business is just starting to expand internationally.

11.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the key components of global marketing, and why are they important for international business?
2. How do cultural differences impact global marketing strategies?
3. What are the main challenges companies face when entering global markets?
4. Explain the concept of exporting and its significance in global marketing.
5. How do licensing and franchising differ as strategies for global market entry?

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Unit 12: Contemporary Issues in Marketing

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify emerging trends in marketing.
- Students will be able to analyse ethical considerations in marketing practices.
- Students will be able to evaluate the role of sustainability in marketing strategies.
- Students will be able to discuss future challenges faced by marketers.
- Students will be able to explain the principles and practices of green marketing.

Structure:

- 12.1 Emerging Trends in Marketing
- 12.2 Ethics in Marketing
 - Knowledge Check 1
 - Outcome-Based Activity 1
- 12.3 Sustainability and Marketing
- 12.4 Future Challenges in Marketing

12.5 Green Marketing

- Knowledge Check 2
- Outcome-Based Activity 2

12.6 Summary

12.7 Keywords

12.8 Self-Assessment Questions

12.9 References / Reference Reading

12.1 Emerging Trends in Marketing

Technological advancement has, to some extent, disoriented the approach that organisations use to operate and engage their customers. As a result of the integration of digital technology into all aspects of business activities, new marketing strategies have emerged, and they are focused on digital media. In today's world, the most popular among all the ways to get to the target customer base are used by businesses, such as e-mail marketing, content marketing, social networks, and search engines. This has also led to the development of big data analytics, which makes it easy for organisations to gather and analyse large amounts of data to be used in getting an understanding of the consumers. In turn, using the results of user data analysis, organisations can create effective targeted advertising campaigns that will be interesting to specific individuals. Especially in the context of the Indian market, the tendency has been more defined as a result of increasing internet and Smartphone access. The availability of the Internet has made many online stores like Flipkart and Amazon rely on the Internet to access the market in various parts of the country through consumer data. Besides, the growing

usage of mobile wallets such as Paytm and Google Pay has made these transactions less troublesome and has contributed to the overall experience of the e-commerce activity. In recent years, brands have made influencer marketing a huge trend, and they use the popularity of social media influencers to advertise their products. Influencers are individuals with many subscribers on social networks such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok who can make their subscribers buy certain products. These influencers collaborate with businesses to create organic content that would appeal to their audience. It is most effective with the young market segment since people trust referrals from influencers more than they trust ads. Some of the successful application areas of influencer marketing for brands are Nykaa and Amazon in India, which boost sales and brand awareness.

We will learn that influencer marketing has the following advantages: increased brand credibility, higher engagement rate, and targeting niche audiences. However, it also brings some problems, including the credibility of the endorsements of the influencer and the risks related to the actions of the influencer. To manage these risks, companies employ strict vetting procedures and policies that determine how they engage with influencers.

12.2 Ethics in Marketing

- **Honesty and Transparency**

Ethical marketing is built around two major principles – the principles of truthfulness and openness. The consumer also desires truth from brands, and this is reflected in their advertising and other forms of communication. Highly unethical tactics such as deception, concealed charges, and false representations may greatly hurt a company's image and erode customer trust. Providing customers with accurate and easily understandable information about goods and services is an important element of ethical behaviour in marketing. To maintain their customers' trust, companies like Patanjali Ayurved need to ensure that any promises they make regarding the natural and chemical-free nature of their products are true.

- **Respect for Consumer Privacy**

Consumer privacy has become a significant concern in the contemporary world due to the widespread use of the internet. In order to market to customers, companies collect large amounts of customer data so that they can get to know them.

Nevertheless, it is important to reason about this data adequately and ensure consumer protection. Some examples of ethical marketing include asking the consumers for their permission before collecting their data, informing the consumers of the purpose of collecting the data, and ensuring that the data is well-guarded so that unauthorised people cannot access it. The need to safeguard consumer information is evident in legislation such as the Personal Data Protection Bill in India and the General Data Protection Regulation in Europe.

- **Social Responsibility**

Social responsibility means considering the effects of marketing initiatives on the environment and society. Organisations are experiencing increased pressure to act responsibly to address issues such as community, labour, and the environment. Ethical marketing practices include using products from fair trade, encouraging the use of environmentally friendly products, and supporting charity events. The moral aspect is also seen in the CSR programs that Tata Group supports, such as education and health.

- **Avoiding Exploitation**

Ethical marketing should not take advantage of vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, or those who are economically unstable. Marketing communication should not be deceptive, and the products should not be harmful or unsuitable to the targeted consumers. Companies should also refrain from appealing to the consumer's fears or from capitalising on the consumer's doubts.

- **Fair Competition**

For the market to be strong, the competition must be equal. Ethical marketing involves competing with other businesses without engaging in unlawful strategies such as damaging the competition's products, underselling competitors, and misleading consumers. Rather than employing illicit strategies to outcompete rivals, business organisations should focus on distinguishing their offerings based on quality, uniqueness, and price. To ensure equal opportunities for all businesses and equal grounds for competition, the Competition Commission of India monitors and fosters competition law and policy in India.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. The rise of _____ has reshaped traditional marketing strategies by leveraging digital platforms to reach a broader audience. (social media)
2. _____ and machine learning provide insights into customer preferences and Behaviours, revolutionising marketing strategies. (Artificial intelligence)
3. Ethical marketing practices ensure companies operate with integrity and _____, fostering long-term relationships with customers. (transparency)
4. The _____ sets guidelines for responsible advertising in India, ensuring that ads are truthful, non-offensive, and not misleading. (Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI))

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Create a short social media post promoting an ethical product, ensuring the message is clear and transparent.

12.3 Sustainability and Marketing

Sustainable Product Development

Eco-friendly product design and manufacturing are essential parts of sustainable product development. These include ensuring products are recyclable or can be disposed of safely, reducing waste, and using environmentally friendly raw materials. Companies are adopting sustainable strategies as they continue to meet the needs of their customers, who are willing to purchase green products.

Green Packaging

The application of sustainable resources and non-toxic processes in packaging items is known as “green packaging.” It minimizes the use of packing material and uses packageable, reusable, degradable, or recycled material. The effort to reduce the impact of packaging on the environment has shifted to the use of new materials for packaging, like edible packaging and plant-based packaging.

Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Sustainable supply chain management, on the other hand, involves the incorporation of sustainable supply chain management principles in sourcing raw materials, processing, distribution and disposal of a product. This consists of lowering the impact of carbon emissions, cutting down the levels of wastage, and working closely with ethical and environmentally conscious suppliers. To enhance the sustainability of supply chain

management, organisations are also putting into practice some measures such as responsible purchasing, ethical trading and those that support the circular economy.

Consumer Awareness and Education

Another element important in promoting sustainable marketing is ensuring the development and strengthening of customer awareness about sustainable marketing. Ad companies may develop advertisement messages that not only educate the consumer on how to make proper decisions regarding the welfare of the planet but also influence how the consumer should act properly and make them more conscious of the public interest that is involved in using that particular product. It is more possible to achieve this across multiple customer touch-points like the packaging, social media, and advertising.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate entities that incorporate CSR policies understand society and the environment as areas of interest impacted by business operations. This encompasses social purposes that are applicable to society, like volunteering, giving out donations to charity, or supporting social causes. It is to be noted that CSR policies can bring about an improvement in the brand image of the company, generate customer loyalty, and have a constructive impact on society. Infosys and TCS are top organisations in India that have established effective benchmark CSR initiatives aimed at the environment, health, and education sectors.

12.4 Future Challenges in Marketing

Technological Advancements

Technology is hence described as evolving at a fast speed and as a net bulb or a problem dependent on marketing's perception, for marketing. Due to changes that are taking place globally, the marketing environment is experiencing an evolution with other technologies such as blockchain, artificial reality, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. As for the latter, it remains the role of marketers to be informed regarding ongoing developments and their proper utilisation. On the same note, technological advancement also comes with a certain disadvantage since it is now very fast, huge costs are incurred to purchase new technology and to undertake training of employees and to adhere to the latest trends in the market. For instance, AI can help improve the marketing of services like customer support and differentiation, but it will be costly and will need talent.

Data Privacy and Security

In particular, there is growing concern regarding data protection and privacy in circumstances where organisations collect and analyse more customer data. Marketers encounter such complications and regulations to avert releasing such information and to uphold consumers' trust. Companies are required to implement bureaucratic procedures for data processing to abide by rules from the GDPR and the PDPB. Given that these regulations have not been repealed, these concerns are constant for marketers when it comes to keeping consumers informed and combating cyber threats.

Changing Consumer Preferences

The needs of consumers are always shifting for many reasons, including but not limited to changes in the economy, culture, and advanced technologies. For marketers to continue doing their business, they have to be prepared for such changes and be conscious of them. When it comes to the analysis of consumer behaviour and its potential changes in the future, marketers have to change their strategies and ways of evaluating the obtained information and, finally, start exploring the markets permanently. For instance, during the COVID-19 epidemic, most firms have realised a need to advance in digitisation, which is borne by increased e-commerce and contactless payment demands.

Globalisation

However, it must be noted that globalisation has benefits and also some inconveniences, as firms are targeting new opportunities and markets and face such challenges as cultural differences, legislation, and competition with global players. This is because, today, marketing is confronted with new and complex regulations and issues, and it is being implemented in emerging markets. Acquiring consciousness of cultural trends, developing international relationships, as well as understanding strategic marketing strategies are key to succeeding in the global context. The list of companies that have changed their marketing strategies depending on the different countries is endless; companies including McDonald's and Coca-Cola are just but a few examples to be considered.

Environmental Sustainability

This is because the general public has awakened to some level of environmental consciousness, and they expect organisations to offer products and services that are friendly to the environment. Marketing managers are faced with the interesting and delicate proposition of achieving the objective of sustainability together with that of

profitability. This involves issues such as environment-friendly marketing, minimising the emission of carbon, and encouraging the use of sustainable products. There are also other challenges that companies encounter, such as greenwashing, whereby some organisations provide fake information that they are environmentally conscious. Ongoing consumer connections and reasonable long-run sustainability profitability mean constructing credibility and truthful sustainability initiatives.

12.5 Green Marketing

Definition and Importance

This is the process of selling merchandise and services that do not harm the earth and its resources. It involves drawing attention towards environmental features like reusable input resources, environment-friendly packing and energy-efficient products.

Green marketing focuses on communication and sales to environmentally conscious customers and sets the brand apart from other brands. These are the reasons green marketing is crucial for helping protect the environment, being a legal requirement, and improving the image of a company. Some of the benefits associated with organisations that participate in green marketing include The establishment of a loyal customer base and capitalising on the swelling market for eco-friendly products.

Green Marketing Strategies

These are some of the green marketing strategies that companies can use to market their products and attract consumers who are sensitive to the environment:

Product Design and Innovation

Reactivity is asserted as a significant principle of green marketing strategies. Companies could provide products that are made from recycled materials and are friendly to the environment, products with low energy needs, and products that, for each life cycle, would impact the environment little. To substantially decrease environmental impacts, for instance, incorporate environmentally friendly materials or create products that can easily be recycled. Examples of such innovations include ChotuKool, an energy-efficient refrigerator that was designed for rural India and Fevicol products developed by Pidilite.

Eco-Labeling and Certifications

Eco-labeling involves providing information to consumers about the ecological effects of products through labels and certificates. These labels may make consumers confident that the products they use conform to certain environmental specifications and hence make informed decisions. Some of the recognised signals of a product's environmental

and social sustainability are the Energy Star label, Ecomark label, and Fair Trade label. Organic labelling in India is the labelling of products under the National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP) and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

Sustainable Packaging

The general idea behind sustainable packaging is to minimise the effects of packaging materials on the environment. Companies may wrap their products in recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable materials. Reducing packaging waste and adopting packaging that is as simple as possible may also be relevant to sustainability goals. The Paper Boat, a famous Indian company specialising in biodegradable packing, and Amul, using recyclable packing for dairy products, are examples of sustainable packing management in India.

Green Advertising and Communication

In many marketing communication platforms, green advertising emphasises the environmental benefits of products. One way that this can be done is by encouraging the use of sustainable aspects in advertisements and social media posts, as well as other materials. It is argued that using green communication may improve brand image, which is crucial for the development of trust among consumers. For instance, Tata Steel, in its “Greenfection” campaign, emphasises its interest in sustainability and environmental protection.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Sustainable marketing aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs. (True)
2. Greenwashing involves making accurate and truthful claims about a product's environmental benefits. (False)
3. Consumer scepticism about green marketing can be overcome through transparent communication and genuine commitment to sustainability. (True)
4. Higher costs in implementing sustainable practices make green marketing an impossible strategy for companies to adopt. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Identify one company that successfully implements green marketing strategies and list two of their sustainable practices.

12.6 Summary

- The digital transformation has reshaped marketing by using social media, mobile marketing, and e-commerce to reach wider audiences and personalise campaigns through big data analytics.
- AI and machine learning are revolutionising marketing with tools that predict trends, personalise customer experiences, and automate interactions, such as chatbots and precise customer segmentation.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives align with ethical marketing, promoting transparency, fairness, and social responsibility through activities like community development and ethical sourcing.
- Sustainable strategies include eco-friendly product design and packaging, ethical supply chain management, promoting sustainable consumption, and ensuring corporate transparency in sustainability efforts.
- Two good examples of companies that have engaged in sustainable marketing are Unilever and Tata, which have adopted sustainable practices like the use of renewable energy and fair treatment of employees, respectively.
- The shift in consumer behaviour requires marketing that is more adaptable, flexible, and relevant in delivering brand messages that are more genuine and responsive to social, economic, and technological factors.
- Green marketing principles are based on environmental responsibility, truthful marketing communication of ecological advantages, non-deceptive marketing communication, and encouraging innovation in green marketing.
- Some of the challenges include Consumer scepticism, the relatively high cost of sustainability, and, lastly, how to make green products affordable to more consumers.

12.7 Keywords

- **Digital Transformation:** The infusion of digital technology into most aspects of marketing has profoundly changed how companies function and create value for consumers via social media and e-commerce platforms.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The application of AI in marketing to gather, forecast, and leverage consumer data for marketing communication and interaction, improving the impact of marketing approaches.
- **Ethical Marketing:** Marketing strategies that involve telling the truth, being open and ethical, and ensuring that businesses are not misleading and are trustworthy in the long term to consumers.

12.8 Self-Assessment Questions

1. How has digital transformation impacted traditional marketing strategies?
2. What are the key benefits of using AI and machine learning in marketing?
3. What ethical issues can arise in marketing, and how can companies address them?
4. Why is sustainability important in marketing, and what are some sustainable marketing strategies?
5. What challenges do marketers face with the rapid pace of technological advancements?

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Unit 13: Services Marketing

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to define the core concepts of services marketing.
- Students will be able to identify and explain the unique characteristics of services.
- Students will be able to analyse the components of the marketing mix for services
- Students will be able to evaluate service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction.
- Students will be able to develop strategies for managing and improving service quality.

Structure:

13.1 Introduction to Services Marketing

13.2 Characteristics of Services

- Knowledge Check 1
- Outcome-Based Activity 1

13.3 Marketing Mix for Services

13.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

13.5 Strategies for Managing Service Quality

- Knowledge Check 2
- Outcome-Based Activity 2

13.6 Summary

13.7 Keywords

13.8 Self-Assessment Questions

13.9 References / Reference Reading

13.1 Introduction to Services Marketing

A specialised area of marketing called "services marketing" is dedicated to promoting and selling "intangible goods," or performances or experiences, as opposed to tangible items. Services cannot be seen, felt, or kept like visible goods. Building and maintaining a strong relationship between the service provider and the consumer is the major goal of service marketing since it guarantees that the customer's wants and expectations are either met or surpassed.

In India, the services sector has grown significantly and now contributes to more than half of the country's GDP. Industries such as information technology (IT), telecommunications, healthcare, tourism, and financial services have expanded rapidly, emphasising the importance of effective service marketing. Companies in these sectors must focus on providing high-quality services to stand out from competitors and build a loyal customer base.

13.2 Characteristics of Services

Understanding the characteristics of services is essential for effective marketing. Services differ from goods in several fundamental ways, impacting how they are marketed.

- **Intangibility**

Being intangible, services are not able to be seen, felt, or owned. It is difficult for clients to assess services before purchasing because of this feature.

- **Inseparability**

Unlike goods, which can be produced, kept, and then consumed, services are usually consumed immediately with their production. A haircut, for instance, is both produced and consumed simultaneously. Because of their inseparability, customer-provider interactions are essential to the overall service experience.

- **Variability**

Services are highly variable and can differ from one service provider to another or from one customer experience to another. For instance, the quality of food and service at a restaurant can vary depending on the chef or the waitstaff. Service providers must focus on standardising their service delivery processes to ensure consistent quality.

- **Perishability**

Services are perishable and cannot be inventoried or stored. An unoccupied hotel room or aircraft seat represents lost revenue that cannot be restored. Service providers must manage demand and supply effectively, using strategies such as dynamic pricing or promotions to optimise capacity utilisation.

- **Ownership**

Unlike products, services do not result in ownership. When a customer buys a service, they are essentially paying for access or a temporary experience. For instance, purchasing a gym membership provides access to the gym facilities and services but does not result in ownership of the equipment.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Services marketing focuses on the promotion and sale of _____ goods.
(Intangible)

2. The primary goal of service marketing is to establish and maintain a strong relationship between the service provider and the _____. (Customer)
3. Services are _____, meaning they cannot be seen, touched, or possessed. (intangible)
4. Services are typically produced and consumed _____, unlike goods that can be made, stored, and later consumed. (simultaneously)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Please discuss an example of a service you recently used with a classmate and identify its core and supplementary services.

13.3 Marketing Mix for Services

To handle the unique issues posed by services, the traditional marketing mix, or the 4 Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), has been increased to 7 Ps.

Product

In services marketing, the 'product' is the service itself. It includes the core service, such as transportation in the case of airlines, and supplementary services, like in-flight entertainment. Service providers must ensure their core and supplementary services meet customer needs and expectations.

Price

Due to their intangible and perishable nature, pricing strategies for services are more complex. Service providers must consider factors like demand fluctuations, competition, and the cost of service delivery. In value-based pricing, prices are set based on the customer's perceived value, and in dynamic pricing strategies, prices are adjusted based on capacity and demand.

Place

Services could refer to online banking/telemedicine or physical spaces such as hospitals/banks. One thing that service providers must always consider is the convenience of the customers.

Promotion

In services marketing, promotion is the process of informing the target market about the service's benefits and merits. This can take the form of advertising, public relations, personal selling, and Internet marketing, among others. Because services are non-tangible, marketers use referrals, examples, and word of mouth to establish credibility.

People

'People' are one of the key success factors in service marketing since the service is provided by persons who are in direct contact with clients. The skills, attitude, and behaviour of the employees play a very crucial role in contributing to the quality of the services being offered. Training and development programmes are necessary for a firm to guarantee that the employees can deliver quality service at all times.

Process

It describes the manner in which activities, procedures, and mechanisms are arranged to deliver services. To enhance service delivery, well-coordinated, friendly service processes have been implemented in the organisation. For instance, efficient check-in processes that have been integrated into the hotels have a very positive impact on the customers.

Physical Evidence

These are the tangible components of the overall service environment that customers can use to judge the service. Examples include the atmosphere of a restaurant, the cleanliness of a healthcare facility, or the format of a website.

13.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction and service quality are two closely related concepts that are critical in delivering services to any organisation. Achievements of the organisation's goals and objectives lead to high customer satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth.

Dimensions of Service Quality

The quality of service is defined with the help of five attributes, which are known as the SERVQUAL model:

1. **Tangibles:** The tangible elements of the structure and design of the buildings, the people who work there, equipment and tools, and communication media. For instance, modern-looking equipment and a clean environment in a gym can effectively increase the perceived quality of the service.
2. **Reliability:** The ability to render the service promised according to the required quality and standard. A courier service, for example, is considered more credible if it often delivers items on time.
3. **Responsiveness:** A readiness to help customers and provide services on time. A bank might be deemed responsive if it answers customers' questions.
4. **Assurance:** Employees' expertise, politeness, and ability to inspire confidence and trust. For example, a physician's skill and bedside manner can reassure patients.

5. **Empathy:** Providing customers with individualised, caring services. Empathy is demonstrated, for instance, when a hotel remembers the preferences of frequent visitors and makes them feel unique.

Measuring Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction measures the degree to which the service exceeds or meets the client's expectations. Surveys, feedback forms, and customer interviews are just a few of the ways it can be assessed. Net Promoter Score (NPS), Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT), and Customer Effort Score (CES) are often used as key metrics.

Increased customer satisfaction has several benefits, including better support, positive word of mouth, and a competitive advantage. Satisfied customers become loyal customers who recommend the service to their friends and relatives; hence, it reduces marketing costs and increases sales. For instance, patients who are satisfied with the services they receive will be willing to revisit the same healthcare provider and even refer other people to the same practitioner.

13.5 Strategies for Managing Service Quality

Controlling service quality is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage and satisfying customers. Several methods can be used to manage and enhance service quality.

- **Employee Training and Development**

The main cost of delivering high service quality, which is also an essential element of service-dominant logic, is the cost of staff training and development. The training activities should aim to improve the technical competencies, customer relations competencies, and product competencies of the workforce.

- **Standardisation of Service Processes**

Routine service processes must be standardised since this assists in delivering quality service every time. This involves developing policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for various service activities and making sure they are implemented throughout the organisation.

- **Use of Technology**

Technology can further be used to improve the service quality of an organisation. For example, the application of customer relationship management (CRM) systems

assists in monitoring and enhancing customer interactions as well as services. Also, the mechanisation of repetitive operations can result in better productivity and fewer mistakes.

- **Continuous Improvement**

This means that after the delivery of services, there is a constant review of the quality of the services to check whether they meet the required standard of quality. This can be done through feedback, performance checks, and comparisons with other organisations in the same trade.

- **Customer Relationship Management**

The need to manage service quality implies the need to possess skills and knowledge in relationship marketing. This involves understanding the customer's needs, addressing their concerns professionally and dealing with their needs politely and professionally.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. The expanded marketing mix for services includes seven Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence. (True)
2. The physical appearance of the service environment solely determines service quality. (False)
3. Continuous improvement involves regularly assessing service quality and making necessary adjustments. (True)
4. In services marketing, the 'product' refers to physical goods. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Create a brief survey with three questions to measure customer satisfaction for a service you recently used, and share it with your classmates to gather responses.

13.6 Summary

- Services marketing focuses on promoting and selling intangible goods, such as experiences or performances, rather than physical products. It aims to build strong relationships between service providers and customers by meeting or exceeding customer expectations.

- The services sector in India has grown significantly, contributing to over half of the GDP, with industries like IT, telecommunications, healthcare, and tourism expanding rapidly. This implies that services marketing is essential for industries to create unique market niches and customer loyalty.
- Some services are created and consumed at the same time, which underlines the necessity of direct interaction between the service provider and consumer to guarantee satisfaction.
- In services marketing, ‘product’ refers to the actual service and any added related services that can be grouped into core and supplementary services. Demand, competition, and delivery costs are important aspects of service pricing strategies, and common methods include value-based and dynamic pricing.
- Customer satisfaction can be assessed through feedback in the form of questionnaires, feedback forms and interviews, with the common parameters being NPS and CSAT.
- Standardisation of service processes means that the organisation should have standard operating procedures (SOPs) that would be applied across all service activities. Factors like CRM systems and automation are the major drivers of improved service quality and delivery.

13.7 Keywords

- **Intangibility** refers to the nature of services that cannot be seen, touched, or possessed, making them challenging for customers to evaluate before purchase.
- **Inseparability:** Highlights that services are produced and consumed simultaneously, necessitating close interaction between service providers and customers.
- **SERVQUAL Model:** A framework for assessing service quality using five dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.

13.8 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the unique characteristics of services, and how do they differ from tangible goods?
2. How does the intangibility of services impact marketing strategies?
3. Explain the importance of customer interaction in service marketing.

4. What are the components of the expanded marketing mix (7 Ps) for services?
5. How is service quality assessed using the SERVQUAL model?

13.9 References / Reference Reading

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Unit 14: Relationship Marketing

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to define the concept of relationship marketing.
- Students will be able to explain the importance of relationship marketing in today's business environment.
- Students will be able to identify strategies for building and maintaining customer relationships.
- Students will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems.
- Students will be able to analyse the success of relationship marketing through various measurement techniques.

Structure:

14.1 Concept and Importance of Relationship Marketing

14.2 Strategies for Building Customer Relationships

- Knowledge Check 1
- Outcome-Based Activity 1

14.3 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems

14.4 Measuring Relationship Marketing Success

14.5 Loyalty Programs and Retention Strategies

- Knowledge Check 2
- Outcome-Based Activity 2

14.6 Summary

14.7 Keywords

14.8 Self-Assessment Questions

14.9 References / Reference Reading

14.1 Concept and Importance of Relationship Marketing

Definition of Relationship Marketing

The goal of relationship marketing as a strategic approach is to build, nurture, and improve enduring relationships with customers. This differs from traditional transactional marketing, which centres on acquiring new customers through one-time sales promotions and advertising. Instead, relationship marketing emphasises customer retention, satisfaction, and loyalty, viewing customers as long-term assets who provide ongoing value to the company.

The evolution from transactional to relationship marketing reflects changes in the business environment and consumer behaviour. In the strongly competitive market, information on current clients can be cheaper than searching for new clients. Moreover, today's consumers are knowledgeable and have high levels of demand concerning their needs and preferences. Firms have realised that a long-term relationship is a more effective way of encouraging customers to make repeat purchases, hence increasing loyalty.

Benefits of Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing is advantageous to businesses in many ways, such as:

1. **Increased Customer Retention:** Business organisations can substantially enhance their customer retention if they focus on relationship marketing. Retained customers are loyal to the brand and are likely to buy the firm's products several times.
2. **Enhanced Customer Satisfaction:** Organisations can increase customer satisfaction when their needs and wants are accorded the highest priority. Satisfied customers will recommend a company, as this is the best way to tell others how they were served.
3. **Higher Customer Lifetime Value:** A long-term client uses more of a business's products or services in the long run, increasing their overall value. This may lead to higher profitability and sales of products or services to consumers.
4. **Cost Efficiency:** It is often more expensive to attract new customers than to retain the old ones. Relationship marketing, which focuses on encouraging customers to purchase products more often, reduces marketing and sales costs.
5. **Positive Word-of-mouth Marketing:** There can be no better advertisement than when satisfied and loyal customers recommend the products of a particular business to others.

Emerging Trends in Relationship Marketing

It is these two factors that make the relationship marketing environment dynamic all the time, i.e., technological advancements and shifts in consumer behaviour. Some of the trends that have emerged are the following:

1. **Digital Engagement:** In the contemporary world, business organisations are increasingly adopting social media platforms, mobile applications, and online communities to interact with customers. These are real-time digital engagements that also provide an individualised touch.
2. **Data Analytics:** Data analytics can help companies gain more insight into customers' behaviour, choices, and tendencies. This information can be processed for a better understanding of customers and enhancing their experiences, as well as for marketing.
3. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI technologies like chatbots and recommendation systems have become popular to deliver customer-specific services and customised product suggestions, which leads to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.
4. **Omnichannel Marketing:** The foundation of an omnichannel approach, both online and offline, is an integrated approach to multiple contact points with a

consumer. This consistency benefits customer relations and helps build customer loyalty.

- 5. Customer Advocacy Programs:** Word-of-mouth communication can be reinforced by asking satisfied customers to join the ranks of the company's promoters. Referral programs provide incentives for customers to bring other clients, share testimonials, and share the work on social media.

14.2 Strategies for Building Customer Relationships

A range of measures for achieving customer needs and preferences is required to develop robust customer relations. This is a summary of the previously listed techniques:

Personalisation

Personalisation involves modifying the products, services, and even the messages that are sent to customers based on their specific requirements. Customer analysis and data analysis can help with this. To increase customer commitment and enhance the buying process, online stores like Amazon India use client data to provide customers with niche recommendations.

Implementing Personalisation

Implementing personalisation needs a structured approach:

- **Data Collection:** Through a variety of touchpoints, including website interactions, mobile apps, and in-store purchases, gathering data on customer preferences, past purchases, and behaviour.
- **Data Analysis:** Analysing the gathered data to find trends and patterns that might guide customisation strategies.
- **Customer Segmentation:** To design marketing strategies that are specifically targeted and segment customers based on their preferences, demographics, and behaviour.
- **Personalised Communications:** To improve engagement and happiness, customising communications, offers, and suggestions for every customer segment.

Customer Engagement

Social media, emails, and face-to-face communication can easily engage many customers, strengthening the relationship between the two parties. Businesses can communicate with customers, respond to their complaints, and solicit feedback via

social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This two-way communication fosters a sense of friendship and loyalty among customers.

Digital Engagement Strategies

Digital engagement involves using online platforms to connect with customers:

- **Social Media Engagement:** Engaging with the posts by liking, replying, and commenting on messages, statuses, and comments posted by followers on different social media platforms.
- **Email Marketing:** Reviewing customers' previous purchases and preferences and providing them with newsletters, updates and specific offers on a regular basis.
- **Content Marketing:** Developing posts like blogs, videos, Infographics, etc., that bring value and solve the problem that a customer might be facing.
- **Online Communities:** Using social networks to consolidate the customer base and having an Internet Island where customers gather and exchange their experiences and problems.

Quality Customer Service

That is why it is necessary to understand that building lasting relationships lies in superior client satisfaction. Businesses should also invest in training their customer service representatives to enable them to handle questions and concerns in a well-organised manner. For instance, Tata Motors has a dedicated customer service team that addresses customer concerns promptly, ensuring a positive experience for their clients.

Enhancing Customer Service

Enhancing customer service involves several key practices:

- **Employee Training:** Establishing provisions that require CRTs to undergo training periodically so that they can be properly employed to deliver good customer service.
- **Customer Feedback:** Some of the traditional CRM strategies include Gathering data from customers to determine weak points that need to be addressed.
- **Service Standards:** Defining clear regulations that cover customer service procedures to ensure standardisation is observed.
- **Proactive Support:** Providing immediate assistance through live chat, chatbots, and self-help that reduces the time it takes to solve any customer complaint.

Loyalty Programs

The use of loyalty programmes locks the customer in continuing to buy products from the firm by providing incentives for the same. These programmes often involve discounts, special offers, and the accumulation of points to work towards a certain amount that can be redeemed. Major Indian merchants such as Pantaloons and Shoppers Stop have put in place loyalty programmes that provide a range of advantages to their devoted customers, encouraging repeat business and enduring relationships.

Designing Effective Loyalty Programs

Meaningful rewards and incentives that resonate with clients should be available through effective loyalty programmes. Successful loyalty programmes often have the following components:

- **Relevant Rewards:** Offering rewards that align with customer preferences and needs enhances the program's effectiveness. Discounts on commonly purchased items, for example, can be offered by a supermarket retailer.
- **Easy Participation:** Ensuring that customers can easily join and participate in the loyalty program encourages higher enrolment and engagement.
- **Clear Communication:** Regularly communicating the program's benefits and updates to customers keeps them informed and engaged.
- **Personalisation:** The program's appeal and efficacy are increased by tailoring rewards and offers based on specific consumer data.

• Knowledge Check 1

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Relationship marketing focuses on creating, maintaining, and enhancing _____ relationships with customers. (long-term)
2. The shift from transactional to _____ marketing reflects changes in the business environment and consumer behaviour. (relationship)
3. Personalisation involves tailoring products, services, and communications to meet the specific needs of _____ customers. (individual)
4. Companies can use social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to _____ with customers. (interact)

• Outcome-Based Activity 1

Create a short list of at least three companies you regularly purchase from and describe one relationship marketing strategy each company uses.

14.3 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are technology solutions that help businesses manage their interaction with existing and potential customers. Such systems offer the company a customer database that factors interaction records, sales, and customer service in one place.

Benefits of CRM Systems

The key advantages of CRM systems are as follows:

1. **Enhanced Customer Service:** In the case of giving out unlimited customer information, organisations can easily and promptly address customers' inquiries and complaints.
2. **Improved Sales and Marketing:** CRM systems allow the organisation to follow sales leads, manage marketing processes, and analyse customer information to reveal patterns and potential developments.
3. **Increased Efficiency:** Implementing business processes and other repetitive tasks through CRM systems helps to save time that can be used more efficiently.
4. **Better Data Management:** CRM systems offer the customer record a single location for all customer information, which should give accurate and easy access to data.

Implementing a CRM System

The process of CRM implementation can be split into several stages:

1. **Needs Assessment:** The company's needs and goals need to be identified to determine the most appropriate CRM system to apply.
2. **System Selection:** Depending on the needs assessment, companies can choose the right CRM system. Some of the famous CRM systems in India include Zoho CRM, Salesforce, and Fresh Works.
3. **Customisation and Integration:** The above-chosen CRM system should be configured to the company's business processes and interact with other systems and databases.
4. **Training and Adoption:** The CRM system should be used optimally, and employees should be made to understand it. Promoting the adoption and usage of the proposed system is vital for its success.

5. **Continuous Improvement:** The long-term effectiveness of the CRM system is ensured by its constant update and improvement based on user feedback and the shift in business needs.

Real-World Example: Zoho CRM in India

Zoho CRM, as an example of the CRM system developed in India, is implemented in organisations of different sectors. To improve their sales and marketing functions, companies can apply tools such as lead management, sales forecasts, and customer analytics that are available in Zoho CRM. An example of an e-commerce company is a well-known Indian company that applies Zoho CRM to monitor sales leads, control customer interactions, and assess customer data, which enhances customer relations and increases sales.

Advanced CRM Features

CRMs currently in use are built with a wide range of features that help improve their effectiveness.

1. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** CRM systems with Artificial Intelligence (AI) allow one to save time on routine tasks, get some prognosis, and offer clients unique solutions.
2. **Mobile Access:** Mobile CRM software applications increase the responsiveness and effectiveness of the company by allowing sales and customer service personnel to access customer information and conduct interactions while on the move.
3. **Social CRM:** Integrating social media sites with CRM solutions enables organisations to listen to and engage with customers on social media platforms, providing an expanded customer perspective.
4. **Integration with Other Systems:** To enhance the quality of input data and to facilitate business processes, the CRM system can be integrated with other business applications such as marketing tools and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP).

14.4 Measuring Relationship Marketing Success

It is essential to evaluate the success of relationship marketing campaigns and make changes where necessary. When assessing the outcome of relationship marketing activities, a number of indicators and several tools can be used.

Customer Satisfaction

The authors note that the key to relationship marketing is customer satisfaction as a measure of its success. This can be gathered from questionnaires, feedback questions and information found on the internet that will be beneficial. For instance, we can see the net promoter score (NPS) that can be used to identify the satisfaction and loyalty levels among companies. Traditional NPS questions customers in a quantitative manner and asks the customer to indicate on a scale of 0 to 10 how likely they are to recommend the business to others. By doing so, businesses themselves may understand the buyers' attitudes better and see the potential for doing things wrong and improving on those aspects.

Tools for Measuring Customer Satisfaction

There are various tools and methods which are available in order to monitor the level of satisfaction of the customers:

- 1. Surveys and Questionnaires:** Through the use of questionnaires and surveys, organisations will be able to see the extent of satisfaction of their customers so that they can know some of their weaknesses.
- 2. Online Reviews and Ratings:** Reviews on the ever-active Google, Yelp, or any social media platform can help identify customers' sentiments and levels of satisfaction.
- 3. Customer Feedback Forms:** To allow customers to leave their comments, it is suggested that feedback forms be placed on the website, applications, and in-store locations.
- 4. Customer Interviews:** Interviews are one research technique for obtaining qualitative information on the consumer experience and satisfaction with the company.

Customer Retention Rate

This is the ratio of the number of customers who transact business with the company within a stipulated timeframe to the total number of customers. The retention rate is the major way to measure success in relationship marketing. Businesses can calculate the retention rate using the following formula: the total number of customers at the start of a given period is multiplied by 100, and then the number of customers retained is divided by the product of the first amount.

Importance of Customer Retention

In business management, customer loyalty is one of the keys to success.

1. **Cost Efficiency:** As much as it costs more to retain clients than acquire new ones, the former strategy is more cost-effective. Loyal and steady customers are more likely to generate repeat business and steady revenues.
2. **Positive Word-of-mouth:** Customer satisfaction and customer devotion will increase the growth achieved through organic means, and customers are more likely to recommend the company to others.
3. **Higher Customer Lifetime Value:** Customer loyalty leads to higher consumption rates in the long run, which automatically enhances customers' lifetime value and company profitability.

Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)

During the entire period of a customer's relationship with the business, it is expected to gain a total dollar amount of revenue referred to as Customer Lifetime Value or CLV. To more precisely evaluate the long-term profit from the customers as well as the effectiveness of the relationship marketing strategies, the customer lifetime value can be computed. CLV may be calculated by multiplying three figures, namely, the average purchase value, the frequency of purchases per year, and the average longevity of the customer.

Churn Rate

The churn rate is the proportion of customers who no longer engage in business with the company during a specific period. A low churn rate is a sign of the efficiency of relationship marketing initiatives. Churn rate means the number of customers lost in a given period, with the total number of customers at the start of the period multiplied by 100, which is how businesses can calculate their churn rate.

Reducing Churn Rate

Several approaches are known to help in decreasing the churn rate:

1. **Proactive Customer Support:** Offering support before the customer raises the concern and addressing the customer's complaint in a timely manner can effectively reduce the churn rate.
2. **Regular Engagement:** Keeping customers interested and loyal is achieved through continued communication, attractive products and services, and updates on the current ones.

- 3. Feedback and Improvement:** Some of the ways to reduce customer churn include the practice of seeking feedback from customers more often and incorporating the feedback received into the system.

Real-World Example: Measuring Success in the Indian Telecom Sector

In analysing the effectiveness of relationship marketing strategies, firms in the Indian telecom sector, including Airtel and Jio, use numerous measures. For instance, they establish a customer's lifetime value, monitor retention and churn rates, and measure customer satisfaction through questionnaires, feedback forms, etc. These measures help them determine the areas that require enhancement and make more effective decisions to enhance the efficiency of their relationship marketing efforts.

Advanced Measurement Techniques

Modern methods of measuring the success of relationship marketing are as follows apart from the traditional measures involving business profitability:

- 1. Customer Journey Mapping:** Businesses can comprehend the various stages and contacts that a consumer has with a brand when using the customer journey map. With a view to improving the general customer experience, this information can be used to discern issues.
- 2. Sentiment Analysis:** Sentiment analysis can help obtain information about the customer's attitudes and emotions by analysing mentions in social networks, reviews, and comments. This information can positively enhance joyful feelings and negatively alter painful feelings.
- 3. Predictive Analytics:** This also means that businesses can do a lot to retain customers by analysing their behaviour and identifying possible churn problems.

14.5 Loyalty Programs and Retention Strategies

Loyalty programmes and retention strategies are crucial elements of relationship marketing since they help to achieve multiple sales from the same customer.

Designing Effective Loyalty Programs

It was found that customer loyalty programmes should offer the right incentives to the customers. This paper identifies that key characteristics of successful loyalty programmes include the following:

- 1. Relevant Rewards:** Reward programs should be developed to offer preferred and useful incentives to customers for increased efficiency. An example is a grocery store where the store manager encourages specials on items that are usually purchased.
- 2. Easy Participation:** This allows the customers to enrol in the loyalty program easily, and hence, they will participate in the program in large numbers.
- 3. Clear Communication:** Sharing the program's benefits and latest information with the customers ensures they are in the loop.
- 4. Personalisation:** By using particular information about customers, the program increases its popularity and effectiveness when offering specific rewards and promotions.

Types of Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programmes can be of different types, and here are some of them which can be employed by businesses:

- 1. Point-Based Programs:** All customer purchases accumulate points, which are redeemable for rewards or even discounts. Shoppers Stop's "First Citizen" program is an example of this kind.
- 2. Tiered Programs:** Customers also have various statuses depending on how much they spend and are provided with better services for better status. For example, Consider the case of Taj Hotels' "Taj InnerCircle" program.
- 3. Cashback Programs:** Cashback is another similar concept where customers are returned part of what they spend, such as the Paytm cashback offer.
- 4. Subscription Programs:** Clients pay a fixed price for their products, which requires them to pay a few extra bucks to enjoy the next big deal. For instance, there is Amazon Prime from Amazon India.

Retention Strategies

Apart from loyalty programs, other strategies can be employed by the business to ensure that the customer stays with the company for a long time.

- 1. Customer Feedback:** In seeking and addressing customer feedback, the company shows how much it cares about their input, and customers are loyal.
- 2. Customer Education:** Ensuring that clients have adequate knowledge to maximise the use of the company's products and services enhances customer satisfaction.

- 3. Exclusive Offers:** Loyal customers are those who will come back again and again, so it's a good idea to offer them exclusive options to make a purchase even before the product is out on the market or give them a few discounts.
- 4. Personalised Communication:** It is critical to chat with customers through messages or offers and deliver the desired content to build a good and loyal relationship.

Implementing Retention Strategies

Strategies for retaining customers are not easy to put into practice, and they follow several stages.

- 1. Understanding Customer Needs** Market analysis of customer demands and expectations to determine what they want and what they are willing to get.
- 2. Segmenting Customers:** Establish general customer retention approaches by segmenting customers based on their needs, age, and activities.
- 3. Developing Personalised Offers:** Creating specific communication strategies and promotions that are relevant to each customer segment.
- 4. Monitoring and Improving:** Monitoring the performance of retention strategies and making changes based on key findings and customer feedback.

Advanced Retention Techniques

Modern strategies for customer retention are based on using technology and analysis of customer relations:

- 1. Predictive Analytics:** There are things that organisations can do to mitigate customer churn; this is where business sectors make use of predictive insights to assess customer behaviour and identify possible churn problems.
- 2. Personalised Marketing Automation:** To enhance customer interactions and loyalty, send automatic marketing messages based on the customer's activity and interests.
- 3. Gamification:** To enhance customers' engagement and fun, some of the features of gamification, such as incentives, badges, and challenges, can be incorporated into loyalty programmes.
- 4. Customer Loyalty Software:** Introducing in place customer loyalty programme software to manage customers' behaviour, control the customer behaviour, and assess the programme's performance.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems help businesses manage their interactions with current and potential customers. (True)
2. The churn rate measures the percentage of customers who continue doing business with the company over a specific period. (False)
3. Loyalty programs do not influence customer retention or satisfaction. (False)
4. Predictive analytics can be used to forecast customer behaviour and identify potential churn risks. (True)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Identify and list three benefits of using a CRM system for a business.

14.6 Summary

- A retention-based marketing approach that aims to ensure that companies foster and develop long-term relationships with customers rather than trying to develop short-term ones.
- The advantages of this approach include more customer loyalty, improved satisfaction levels, increased customer worth, cost-savings, and favourable customer references.
- In India, relationship marketing is crucial across sectors like retail, banking, and telecommunications, with companies implementing loyalty programs and personalised services.
- Providing consistent communication and exceptional customer service, along with implementing effective loyalty programs, drives repeat business and long-term relationships.
- CRM acts as a tool for companies to organise customer relationships; it becomes the integral database of an organisation to organise and manage customer services, sales, and data.
- Major CRM activities include the identification of requisite needs analysis, system adoption, configuring and customisation, organisational deployment and employee training, and evaluation and enhancement.

- Advanced techniques like customer journey mapping, sentiment analysis, and predictive analytics provide deeper insights into customer behaviour and potential risks.
- Companies like Airtel and Jio use these metrics and techniques to identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions, enhancing their relationship marketing strategies.

14.7 Keywords

- **Relationship Marketing:** An enterprise-wide perspective involving the continuous development and sustaining of strong, profitable, and mutually beneficial partnerships with customers rather than acquiring new ones.
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems:** Solutions that support communications between firms and customers and supply a facility for compiling the data of sales transactions for efficiency in delivery and service, as well as data organisation.
- **Customer Retention Rate:** A usable metric that shows the level of effectiveness of relationship marketing within a particular period as it gives the percentage of customers who continue to do business with a firm.

14.8 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Define relationship marketing and explain its importance in today's business environment.
2. Discuss the benefits of personalisation in building customer relationships.
3. Describe the steps involved in implementing a CRM system.
4. Explain how customer satisfaction can be measured and its significance in relationship marketing.
5. Outline the key elements of an effective loyalty program.

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Unit 15: Retail Marketing

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to define retail marketing and its importance.
- Students will be able to identify different types of retail formats.
- Students will be able to apply the retail marketing mix in practical scenarios.
- Students will be able to analyse current trends in retail marketing.
- Students will be able to evaluate the impact of trends on retail marketing strategies.

Structure:

15.1 Introduction to Retail Marketing

15.2 Types of Retail Formats

- Knowledge Check 1
- Outcome-Based Activity 1

15.3 Retail Marketing Mix

15.4 Trends in Retail Marketing

- Knowledge Check 2
- Outcome-Based Activity 2

15.5 Summary

15.6 Keywords

15.7 Self-Assessment Questions

15.8 References / Reference Reading

15.1 Introduction to Retail Marketing

The overall procedure involved in communicating the available products and services to consumers is referred to as retail marketing. This process involves several activities that create awareness of the product for consumers, increase their attachment to the product, and subsequently, purchase it. Retail marketing, in its simplest form, is all about identifying the needs and wants of consumers and getting products to where they are most wanted. In the current world of business competition, retail marketing plays a significant role in determining the success of any retail firm. Retail marketing is a very extensive field that includes factors such as visual merchandising and digital marketing, aiming to provide consumers with a seamless shopping experience.

Retail marketing has gone through a transformation over several years in the Indian context. While conventional or organised retail stores were the hallmark of the Indian retail industry, a new form of retailing through malls, supermarkets, and the Internet is also available. The behaviour of consumers, new technologies, and the greater use of the internet are also a reason for this change. Retail in the current world is adopting advanced technologies and different strategies to attract and maintain the consumer, which makes retail marketing very competitive and ever-changing.

The main objective of retail marketing is to generate customer value and retailer value. Apart from presenting the best products, this also involves the provision of excellent services in the stores to make shopping enjoyable. Essentially, it means that by understanding the customer requirements, retailers can easily adjust their marketing

approaches to create good customer relations, create and sustain customer loyalty and repeat business.

Furthermore, retail marketing is also used effectively for brand creation. Retailers can build up a good brand image with the help of a target group of consumers through regular and effective promotional activities. This involves social media profiles, advertising and promotional strategies, and the structure and organisation of the stores. The problem is that for a retailer, it is much easier to attract and retain customers if it has a well-developed brand that will help it stand out from the competitors.

15.2 Types of Retail Formats

Retail formats can be defined as the various configurations and approaches retailers use to organise their offerings and promote them to customers. Each carries certain advantages and is directed to different groups of customers. The main types of retail formats include: The main types of retail formats include:

Traditional Retail Formats

Earlier retail formats have remained the key aspects of the retail industry for many years. These include:

- **Mom-and-Pop Stores:** These are localised retail shops with majority ownership by Indians, and they are common in both the urban and rural areas of the country. They provide personalised service to their clients, and they especially target the needs of the local people. Even today, modern retail formats have emerged; the neighbourhood stores sustain themselves because they have strong bonds with their customers and have good locations.
- **Kirana Stores:** These stores are independent small shops located in the neighbourhood, and they sell a plethora of daily-use products. Due to their ease of availability and flexibility, they have a significant position in India's retail structure. Kirana stores are famous for their close contact with customers coupled with highly sought-after credit sales facilities.
- **Street Markets:** Hawkers' products are found in many cities in India in their traditional open-air markets known as bazaars. These are typically characterised by an active atmosphere and haggling, and in these markets, one may find foodstuffs and fabrics, among other items. Street markets are considered the most genuine and are frequented by residents as well as tourists.

Modern Retail Formats

In the emerging economy and growing urbanisation, channels of modern retailing standards have emerged in India. These include:

- **Supermarkets and Hypermarkets:** These are very big stores where customers can browse and select whatever they want. They are usually classified as electronics stores, supermarkets, and other general stores. Such outlets are Big Bazaar and Reliance Fresh. Supermarkets and hypermarkets are retail stores where everything needed is purchased under one roof at reasonable prices and with a large number of products to select from.
- **Department Stores:** These stores, such as Shoppers Stop and Lifestyle, offer everything from readymade garments to cosmetics, from home furnishings to home appliances, under one roof. They provide a convenient shopping experience with a focus on quality and variety. Department stores often feature exclusive brands and offer a premium shopping environment.
- **Shopping Malls:** Malls are large complexes that house multiple retail stores, entertainment options, and food courts. Examples include DLF Mall of India and Phoenix Market City. They provide a one-stop destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment. Shopping malls attract a diverse range of customers and offer various amenities to enhance the shopping experience.

Non-Store Retail Formats

The rise of the internet and technological advancements has given birth to non-store retail formats, including:

- **E-Commerce:** Online shopping platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart have revolutionised retail by offering a convenient and extensive range of products. Customers can take advantage of services like easy returns and home delivery while shopping in the comfort of their own homes. In India, e-commerce has seen significant growth driven by increasing internet penetration and smartphone proliferation.
- **Direct Selling:** Through catalogues or home demonstrations, this involves selling products to consumers directly. Companies like Amway and Tupperware use this model to reach customers. Direct selling allows for personalised interactions and product demonstrations, building trust and customer loyalty.
- **Television Shopping:** Channels like HomeShop18 and Naaptol allow consumers to shop for products advertised on TV, offering the convenience of shopping without

leaving their homes. Television shopping combines entertainment and retail, providing a unique shopping experience.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Retail marketing involves understanding consumer needs and strategically positioning products to meet these _____. (requirements)
2. Mom-and-pop stores are small, family-owned stores that offer _____ service and cater to the local community's needs. (personalised)
3. E-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart have _____ retail by offering a convenient and extensive range of products. (revolutionised)
4. Traditional retail formats include Mom-and-Pop Stores, Kirana Stores, and _____ Markets. (street)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Identify and list three traditional and three modern retail formats in your local area and describe one unique feature of each format.

15.3 Retail Marketing Mix

The retail marketing mix comprises various elements that retailers use to attract customers and drive sales. These elements, often referred to as the 4 Ps, include Product, Price, Place, and Promotion.

Product

The basis of the retail marketing mix is the product. Retailers are required to offer a range of products that satisfy the requirements and preferences of their target customer base. This means decisions are made on the range of products, the number of products, their quality, and the way they are grouped. In India, retailers need to factor in the consumers' preferences, and these may differ from one state to another. For instance, a supermarket in south India is more likely to display different brands of rice than a supermarket in the northern part of India.

Price

Pricing is an essential component of the retail marketing mix because it relates to consumers' decisions on purchasing the product. This means that retailers need to

establish prices that are affordable to consumers while generating a profit. Pricing policies can be more or less specific depending on the characteristics of the product, its targeted audience, and competition. Common pricing strategies include:

- **Penetration Pricing:** To attract clients and gain a larger market share, prices are reduced. Small and medium enterprises that intend to penetrate the market fast in order to increase their consumer base often use this strategy.
- **Skimming Pricing:** Selective targeting of consumers who are willing to spend a lot more money on a new or distinct product by starting with high prices and then reducing them. Strategy is often used for innovative products or those with a strong brand.
- **Competitive Pricing:** Pricing strategies that directly relate the retail prices to the prices that the competitors offer while making sure that the retailer is offering reasonable prices for the products as per the market rates. This approach requires continuous monitoring of competitors' prices and market conditions.
- **Discount Pricing:** Offering products at reduced prices during sales or promotions to attract price-sensitive customers. Discounts can be seasonal, festival-related, or clearance sales to clear out old inventory.

Place

Place, or distribution, refers to the locations where products are sold and the methods used to get them to customers. Effective distribution makes it easy for customers to make purchases and ensures that products are available at the right time and place. Retailers must carefully select store locations based on factors such as foot traffic, accessibility, and target market demographics.

Retailers can use multiple outlets, apart from physical stores, to access a large market. These are websites, store applications, and social media accounts. Due to the rising popularity of omnichannel retailing, customers can now shop online and buy offline or the other way around since consumers are provided with a seamless shopping experience across the channels.

Promotion

Promotion, on the other hand, refers to all the activities that inform the customers of the value of a product and make them purchase it. The promotion normally increases sales and helps in creating a loyal customer base for the product. Key promotional activities include:

- **Advertising:** Employing print media, radio, television and online media. Due to the diverse system of language and culture in India, regional advertising is effective.
- **Sales Promotions:** These promotions promote the general use of products by giving specific and general promotions, discounts, and coupons. They create a feeling of urgency that might help increase sales in the short term.
- **Public Relations:** Promoting the brand through press releases and events and ensuring its good image in the community.
- **Personal Selling:** Dealing directly with the customers through sales representatives who can understand and advise the clients individually.

15.4 Trends in Retail Marketing

The retail industry environment is dynamic due to factors such as consumer Behaviours, innovations in technology, and changes in markets. The following are some of the trends that are common in retail marketing;

Omnichannel Retailing

A retail strategy in which several sales channels are used simultaneously is known as omnichannel retailing, which ensures a seamless interaction between the customers. In this way, consumers can engage with the brand at multiple points of contact, both in the physical environment of a store and in digital space, on social networks, on the Internet, and in applications for mobile devices. In that way, it can be seen that retailers will be able to enhance the satisfaction of customers through the implementation of omnichannel strategies since consumers will have more convenience and flexibility. For instance, they may search for a particular product using a website, use a mobile application to confirm the availability and then buy it physically from a store.

Personalisation

Personalisation is the act of customising the shopping experience according to clients' inclinations and actions. Retailers provide individualised offers, discounts, and information based on analysing clients' data through data analysis and AI. Myntra and Amazon, the two prominent e-commerce companies in India, deploy personalisation to provide goods and promotions based on the buyer's previous activities.

Sustainability

Purchaser consciousness of sustainability has risen considerably, and retailers are implementing environmentalism. This encompasses using environmentally friendly products, recycling some of the used products, and the right acquisition of the products. If sustainability is a priority for retailers, they can appeal to environmentally sensitive consumers and develop a good reputation. For example, Fabindia is an Indian retail brand that aims to preserve the traditional skill of handicrafts and produce sustainable products that the modern consumer accepts well.

Technology Integration

Technology is transforming the retail landscape, enabling retailers to enhance customer experiences and streamline operations. Key technological trends in retail marketing include:

- **Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR):** Retailers use AR and VR to create immersive shopping experiences. For example, Lenskart allows customers to try eyewear virtually using AR technology. These technologies can enhance online shopping by providing interactive product visualisation and virtual store tours.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Retailers can offer personalised customer service and support thanks to chatbots and virtual assistants based on AI. It is also applied in demand forecasting, inventory management, and creating and implementing unique marketing methods.
- **Internet of Things (IoT):** Smart shelves and inventory sensors are other IoT devices that make the supply chain more efficient and enhance the accuracy in the management of inventories. Through minimisation of out-of-stock cases and increased client satisfaction, the technologies allow for real-time monitoring of stock status.

Social Commerce

As its name suggests, social commerce involves using social media sites to market and sell products. Most merchants employ social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to communicate with customers, advertise, and even make sales. Since a number of new business people and small-scale industries are also marketing their products or services through these social media portals, social commerce has gained importance in India.

Experience-Driven Retail

Consumers today care more about experiences that are exceptional compared to material goods. In order to attract and maintain the customers' attention, retailers are

focusing on creating engaging and appealing shopping experiences. This includes events that can be physically attended, live performances, and touching/feeling activities. To influence customers and develop a sense of loyalty towards their brand, for instance, sports retail chain Decathlon uses in-store events such as workshops.

Localisation

Localisation relates to meeting the expectations and needs of a particular country or region and involves adapting goods, operations, and promotional techniques. In a diverse country like India, localisation is crucial for success. Retailers must consider regional differences in tastes, languages, and cultural practices when developing their marketing strategies.

Health and Wellness

Growing awareness of health and wellness has impacted consumer preferences and shopping habits. In response, retailers offer a wide range of health-related products and services, including organic foods, exercise gear, and wellness services. Demand for health-related products and services has increased even more as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Ethical Consumerism

Ethical consumerism is the practice of making judgements about what to buy based on ethical factors, such as employment practices, animal welfare, and fair trade. Customers are willing to pay more for ethically produced goods and are increasingly seeking out products that reflect their values.

Mobile Commerce

The proliferation of smartphones has made mobile commerce, or m-commerce, a significant trend in retail marketing. Consumers browse products, compare prices, and make purchases using mobile devices. Retailers need to optimise their websites and apps for mobile users, providing a smooth and convenient shopping experience.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Personalisation in retail marketing involves tailoring the shopping experience to individual customers based on their preferences. (True)
2. Competitive pricing involves setting high prices initially to target consumers willing to pay a premium. (False)

3. Sustainability has become a significant concern for consumers, leading retailers to adopt eco-friendly practices. (True)
4. Omnichannel retailing refers to using a single sales channel to provide a shopping experience for customers. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Research a retail brand that has successfully implemented an omnichannel strategy. Prepare a brief presentation on how this strategy has improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.

15.5 Summary

- Retail marketing concerns itself with communicating and selling products and services to consumers, increasing their attachment to particular brands and encouraging their purchase. It is always important to identify customer needs so as to position the products well in the market.
- The expansion of retail marketing in India has shifted from Talking traditional markets to Modern Retail Formats, such as Malls, supermarkets, and E-Retailing. This slide is brought about by market behaviours, technologies, and Internet connections.
- Retail marketing seeks to add value to both the customer and the retailer. It involves providing goods and services that meet customers' expectations, which is critical in nurturing brands and customers' loyalty.
- Supermarkets, hypermarkets, departmental stores, and shopping malls have given the consumer a one-stop shopping idea where they can fulfil all their needs in one place. The strategies are quality, diversification, and a luxurious atmosphere in the shopping centre.
- Pricing strategies like penetration pricing, skimming pricing, competitive pricing, and discount pricing facilitate the determination of appropriate prices, which in turn attracts customers and increases profitability among retailers. Understanding local price sensitivities is crucial.

- Effective distribution ensures products are available at the right place and time, enhancing customers' convenience. The rise of omnichannel retailing integrates various sales channels to provide a smooth shopping experience.
- Sustainability and technology integration are significant trends in retail marketing. Retailers adopt eco-friendly practices and leverage technologies like AR, VR, AI, and IoT to enhance customer experiences, streamline operations, and build a positive brand image.

15.6 Keywords

- **Retail Marketing:** The process of promoting goods and services to meet consumer needs, enhance brand loyalty, and drive sales.
- **Omnichannel Retailing:** A strategy that integrates multiple sales channels to provide a smooth shopping experience across physical stores, online platforms, and mobile apps.
- **Personalisation:** Tailoring the shopping experience to individual customer preferences and behaviours using data analytics and artificial intelligence.

15.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the key elements of the retail marketing mix?
2. How has retail marketing evolved in India over the years?
3. Explain the concept of omnichannel retailing and its benefits.
4. What are the different types of retail formats and their characteristics?
5. How do retailers use personalisation to enhance customer experience?

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Unit 16: Strategic Marketing

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify the role of strategic marketing in business.
- Students will be able to develop effective marketing strategies.
- Students will be able to analyse competitive marketing strategies.
- Students will be able to evaluate and control marketing strategies.
- Students will be able to integrate strategic marketing in a digital world.

Structure:

16.1 Role of Strategic Marketing in Business

16.2 Marketing Strategy Development

- Knowledge Check 1
- Outcome-Based Activity 1

16.3 Competitive Marketing Strategies

16.4 Evaluating and Controlling Marketing Strategies

16.5 Strategic Marketing in a Digital World

- Knowledge Check 2
- Outcome-Based Activity 2

16.6 Summary

16.7 Keywords

16.8 Self-Assessment Questions

16.9 References / Reference Reading

16.1 Role of Strategic Marketing in Business

Strategic marketing is not just a fundamental aspect of business management, it's a key to long-term success. It encompasses the planning, development, and implementation of marketing strategies aimed at achieving long-term business goals. By aligning marketing strategies with overall business objectives, companies can create sustainable competitive advantages, instilling confidence in the audience about the future of their business.

In the Indian context, strategic marketing is particularly significant due to the diverse and dynamic nature of the market. India, with its vast population and varying consumer preferences, offers both opportunities and challenges for businesses. Strategic marketing helps companies classify the market and reach the appropriate consumers with the right marketing message to promote their products or services.

Market segmentation is one of the most important tasks of strategic marketing, and it involves its enhancement. The process of dividing the market into distinct groups is based on behavioural, psychographic, regional, and demographic factors. For instance, Hindustan Unilever Ltd. (HUL) applies market segmentation to satisfy different market segments by using different brands, including Dove, Lux, and Lifebuoy, which are known to target different demographics and psychographics.

Strategic marketing, beyond segmentation and positioning, includes a crucial element—constant assessment of the marketing operations. This ongoing evaluation keeps the marketing functions in line with the organisational goals and objectives, ensuring that the execution of the strategies yields the expected outcomes. This reassures businesses that they are on the right track, and if not, they can make corrections where necessary. Strategic marketing is a broader concept that defines and implements a company's market goals and objectives by segmenting the market, selecting the appropriate position, managing the brand, evaluating the company's marketing performance, and

encouraging innovation. Marketing strategies are useful for businesses to enhance their competitive advantage, develop powerful brands, and attain long-term market dominance.

16.2 Marketing Strategy Development

Developing a good marketing plan is one of the key factors that shape the success of any business organisation. Marketing targets, market investigations, and other approaches that enable marketers to achieve the targeted group of consumers are some of the systematic steps involved in marketing. The foundation on which the marketing strategy is laid is the analysis of the firm's mission statement, vision statement, and general business goals.

Setting Marketing Goals

Marketing objectives are the first step in formulating a marketing plan, and they must be clear and realistic. These objectives have to be measurable, specific, achievable, relevant and have defined time frames (SMART). SMART goals provide marketing initiatives with direction and allow for measuring progress with enhancements made over time.

Conducting Market Analysis

Market analysis is one of the most crucial initial processes when developing a marketing plan. It comprises analysing the competitors within the selected marketplace, as well as studying the market itself, the customers, their requirements, and their actions. Different methods may be used in market analysis, including SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social, and Technological).

A SWOT analysis will help businesses identify their internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats.

Defining the Target Market

Target market identification follows the market analysis process when the latter is complete. This involves determining the right niche markets that the business wants to penetrate. From the demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural standpoints, it should be easy to define a target market. Companies can come up with

better marketing concepts that appeal to their targeted consumers due to the identification of the target market.

Formulating the Marketing Mix

The marketing mix, commonly referred to as the 4Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, should be developed after the target market has been identified.

- **Product:** The product strategy focuses on decisions surrounding the features, design, quality, and branding of the product or service being offered.
- **Price:** The customer strategy involves identifying the correct price that will attract clients while allowing the company to make profits. The pricing strategies that can be employed depend on the competition and the position of the product or service being offered in the market.
- **Place:** The place strategy involves identifying the right channels to get the product to the customers. This includes a selection of platforms where the product will be sold, such as online shops, physical shops, or both.
- **Promotion:** The key objective of the promotion strategy is to create awareness and stimulate demand. This strategy involves developing and implementing communication plans, including internet marketing, sales promotions, public relations, and advertising.

- **Implementing the Marketing Strategy**

The next step is implementation after the marketing mix has been formulated or created for the strategy. This involves implementing the planned activities and marketing initiatives to achieve the marketing goals. For the strategy to be on the right track, successful implementation consists of the involvement of many departments and teams, in addition to constant evaluation and review.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Marketing Strategy

The final step of a marketing strategy involves evaluation, which consists of tracking and measuring how effective the approach has been. This includes measuring and evaluating certain parameters such as marketing revenue, market share, cost of customer acquisition, customer retention rate, and return on marketing investment. These data may help businesses assess the performance of their marketing efforts and adapt their approach accordingly to optimise results.

- **Knowledge Check 1**

Fill in the Blanks.

1. Strategic marketing helps businesses understand their market environment, identify opportunities, and respond effectively to _____ demands. (market)
2. One of the primary roles of strategic marketing is to facilitate market _____, which involves dividing the market into distinct groups. (segmentation)
3. Setting _____ marketing goals provides a clear direction for marketing efforts and helps in tracking progress over time. (SMART)
4. Effective SEO strategies include keyword research, content optimisation, link building, and _____ SEO. (Technical)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 1**

Please discuss with a classmate how a company like Tata Motors might segment its market for a new electric vehicle.

16.3 Competitive Marketing Strategies

Various companies need to adopt competitive marketing strategies to counter their rivals and gain a competitive edge in the market. Such strategies include assessing the competitive landscape, identifying the main competitors, and developing plans to overcome them. Some of the competitive marketing strategies that can be used are focus leadership, differentiation, and cost leadership.

Cost Leadership Strategy

The cost leadership strategy involves achieving the lowest cost within the industry in question. Organisations can sell goods or services at a cheaper price than competitors through achieving economies of scale, increasing efficiency, and reducing costs. This is especially useful when clients shop for the best deal in price-sensitive markets.

Differentiation Strategy

Differentiation strategy, on the other hand, is the process of providing products or services that are not easily found in other companies. This can be achieved through brand identity, customer service, innovation, and product quality. It enables businesses to target clients ready to pay for differentiated products via the offer of a unique value proposition.

Focus Strategy

Focus strategy must involve selecting a specific niche market and ensuring that the marketing activities are compatible with it. Differentiation focus and cost focus are the two subcategories of this strategy. Differentiation involves offering a different product

or service to a particular market segment, while cost focus is the strategy of being the producer with the lowest cost in a given market segment.

Competitive Positioning

Competitive positioning involves describing the nature of the business that the business wishes to occupy in the market in relation to other competitors. Brand positioning creates a perception in the mind of a customer that differentiates a business from rivals, hence achieving a competitive advantage.

Competitive Analysis

This goes to show that creating competitive marketing strategies cannot be done without competitive analysis. It encompasses identifying key rivals, assessing their competitive advantage and limitations, and identifying their positioning and strategy in the market. By gaining knowledge about competition, companies can discover ways to differentiate themselves from competitors and develop ways of overcoming competitors.

16.4 Evaluating and Controlling Marketing Strategies

Marketing analysis and control is an important process by which it can be determined whether marketing activities are in line with corporate goals and producing the necessary outcomes. This involves developing targets, assessing marketing communication efforts, evaluating results, and identifying areas that require changes for enhanced performance.

Setting Performance Metrics

The evaluation of marketing strategies begins with the establishment of performance standards. These should be specific, measurable, and in tune with the marketing goals. Some of the most common measures include sales revenue, market share, cost of customer acquisition, customer retention ratio, and return on marketing investment. These can also help businesses set objectives and measure the rate of their progression and the efficiency of their marketing techniques.

Monitoring Marketing Activities

The next step is to monitor marketing activities, having set the performance parameters for the function. This includes gathering information regarding a range of marketing activities, such as the amount of products sold, the number of visitors to a website, engagement levels of a brand's social media accounts, and feedback from customers.

The above activities can be closely monitored to swiftly identify deviations from the planned direction in businesses and correct them promptly.

Analysing Marketing Outcomes

The evaluation process is a critical step that includes the analysis of the outcomes of marketing activities to compare the effectiveness of the marketing strategies implemented with the set objectives. It is beneficial for businesses since they are in a position to understand what strategies are effective and what strategies are not, so they are in a position to make good decisions depending on the kind of marketing strategies they are going to adopt in the future.

Making Adjustments to Marketing Strategies

Businesses must alter their marketing strategies according to the analysis's findings. This can mean readjusting the marketing dollar allocation, changing the promotional mix, modifying product characteristics, or exploring market opportunities. Companies that adapt and respond to market changes may continually improve marketing performance and create greater results.

Continuous Improvement and Feedback Loop

It is an integral component of the assessment and control of marketing strategies, which is known as continuous improvement. Through a feedback loop, businesses can begin to learn from their marketing endeavours and slowly adapt and improve over time. It involves conducting a periodic check on key performance indicators, listening to customers and other stakeholders, and adopting techniques that will improve marketing efficiency.

Some organisations, such as Infosys, for example, regularly conduct customer satisfaction surveys and feedback sessions with clients to identify their needs. This feedback is used to develop and maintain closer ties with the client, improve the quality of service delivery, and develop better marketing strategies.

16.5 Strategic Marketing in a Digital World

In the contemporary world of digital transformation, strategic marketing has added many more platforms and technologies to its sphere. Digital marketing has expanded the target audience, communicated with customers, and assessed the effectiveness of marketing initiatives more accurately since it became an integral part of the general marketing process.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a digital marketing strategy vital to brand advancement. Customers are likely to engage with their audience, market their brands, and advertise on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This means that businesses can be more effective in generating leads and gaining wider exposure through social media advertising and publishing engaging content.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Another important part of digital marketing is search engine optimisation, or simply SEO. Hence, SEO aims to optimally arrange and develop a website's content so that it achieves a better ranking on the search engine results page, especially on Google. By raising the business's rank in search engines, organisational visitors can be drawn to the web and increase their probability of becoming customers.

Content Marketing

Content marketing is an effective form of digital marketing that involves creating and sharing content to reach the target customers. This content can be delivered in many other ways, such as podcasts, essays, films, infographics, and blog entries. Organisations can benefit from the valuable information provided and also ensure that they meet the needs and wants of the target audience to create trust and become authoritative in their particular industry.

Email Marketing

Another form of Digital Marketing is email marketing, which involves sending emails to a list of subscribers. This strategy is quite helpful for nurturing leads, building customer relations, and generating sales. Through emails that are created and targeted specifically for the business's purposes, the audience can be communicated to and encouraged to perform certain actions, such as buying a product or registering for a webinar.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

Businesses that employ pay-per-click (PPC) advertising pay a certain amount for each click-through on the ad. This is an internet marketing technique. PPC advertising is another form of online advertisement that can be used to target a business' intended audience directly through search engines, social media, and other related websites. Businesses can target people by bidding on keywords of interest and creating good ad copy to get people to visit the business' website and create leads.

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing involves liaising with influential people with a large number of followers with the aim of advertising certain goods or services. Such persons may assist businesses in attracting more people, gaining people's trust, and making consumers interact with the products and services more frequently. Marketing goals of the companies can be achieved through the reach and influence of the influencers when partnering with influencers who have the businesses' goals, vision and target audience.

Digital Marketing Analytics

Performance evaluation and decision-making are the fundamental rationales of digital marketing analytics that involve the measurement, analysis and interpretation of data obtained from digital marketing endeavours. Some values that businesses may use include website traffic, conversion rate, click-through rates, and engagement level, which may be monitored with the help of analytic software. This information is so valuable as it provides a means for businesses to tweak their strategies so that they reap better results for marketing efforts.

- **Knowledge Check 2**

State True or False.

1. Differentiation strategy involves offering unique products or services that command a premium price. (True)
2. Cost leadership strategy focuses on offering the highest quality products in the market. (False)
3. Monitoring marketing activities involves collecting data on sales figures, website traffic, and customer feedback. (True)
4. Email marketing is not effective for building customer relationships and driving repeat sales. (False)

- **Outcome-Based Activity 2**

Create a brief outline for a digital marketing campaign for a local business, including social media, SEO, and email marketing strategies.

16.6 Summary

- Strategic marketing helps businesses navigate market complexities, align with business objectives, and create competitive advantages. It is essential to understand customer needs and position products effectively.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of marketing activities help businesses stay agile and responsive. Companies like Reliance Jio adjust strategies based on performance metrics and market feedback.
- Developing a marketing strategy starts with setting SMART goals, providing clear direction and enabling effective tracking of progress.
- Formulating the marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) ensures that businesses can effectively reach their target market and achieve their marketing objectives.
- Competitive marketing strategies include cost leadership, differentiation, and focus strategies to gain an edge over rivals.
- Cost leadership involves becoming the lowest-cost producer, as seen with companies like DMart, attracting price-conscious consumers.
- Setting clear performance metrics like sales revenue and customer retention rates is crucial for evaluating marketing strategies.
- Monitoring marketing activities involves collecting data on sales, website traffic, and customer feedback to identify deviations and take corrective actions.
- Continuous improvement through regular review of performance metrics and feedback helps businesses refine their strategies and enhance marketing effectiveness.
- Digital marketing encompasses social media, SEO, content marketing, and email marketing to reach and engage a larger audience.
- Digital marketing analytics help businesses measure, analyse, and optimise their marketing efforts, improving performance and achieving better results

16.7 Keywords

- **Strategic Marketing:** The process of planning, developing, and implementing marketing strategies that align with a company's overall objectives to create competitive advantages and meet customer needs.

- **Market Segmentation:** Dividing the market into distinct groups based on demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural factors to target specific segments effectively.
- **Differentiation Strategy:** Offering unique products or services that stand out from the competition, often commanding a premium price.

16.8 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the key roles of strategic marketing in business?
2. How does market segmentation help businesses in targeting their customers effectively?
3. Explain the process of developing a marketing strategy.
4. What are the main components of a competitive marketing strategy?
5. How do businesses evaluate and control their marketing strategies?

16.9 References / Reference Reading

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