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**WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF CONSUMER IN MARKETING?**

Consumers play a huge role in marketing. Without them, it is impossible to complete the marketing process of all goods and services. They are one of the two sides of the marketing coin- the other being the producer. The role of the consumer therefore, cannot be overemphasized as the chain of distribution remains incomplete without them.

**DEFINITION OF CONSUMER AND MARKETING**

Before examining the roles of a consumer in marketing, it is pertinent to understand the two key words, that is, consumer and marketing. A consumer is a person or a group of people who purchases goods and services for their personal use. On the other hand, marketing is a management process whereby goods and services reach the consumer through the process of promotion, distribution and trade. As aforementioned, consumers play a fundamental role in marketing. Here are some of the roles of consumers in marketing:

**ROLES OF CONSUMER IN MARKETING**

1. **CONSUMPTION**: The most important role of consumer in marketing is the consumption of goods and services. They do this through demand of these goods and services. Demand is the amount of goods and services a buyer is willing and able to purchase at a particular price and at a particular time. The only reason for the demand of goods and services is for consumption whether directly or indirectly. Without the consumers, production is rendered useless as there will not be demand of goods. Therefore, it is safe to say that the reason for production is consumption which can only be achieved through demand by the consumer.
2. **ADVERTISEMENT**: There is no better advertiser than a satisfied consumer. When a consumer derives utility from goods or services, he is likely to advertise these goods and services by word of mouth. Fortunately, most people (especially in Nigeria) respond more to word of mouth than a random advertisement on TV, billboards and the likes. Most businesses now make use of ‘consumer testimonials’ to advertise their products because they realize that people are more likely to believe other people that have tried and tested their product or service than a mere promise or assurance by the producers themselves.
3. **FEEDBACK**: Another important role of the consumer is that they give the wholesalers, retailers or even the producer feedback about both the product and the market. They inform them about the recent changes in the market and why their products are either doing well or not so well. They inform them about what they need to do to improve their products and what they need not change. They also give them the gist of the products that the market prefer and why. These feedbacks keep the producers on their toes thereby, resulting in a better produce. This can be done through focus groups, call centers, surveys, etc.
4. **EDUCATE:** The role of a consumer in marketing is to educate other consumers about how to use the product or services by demonstration. Advertisements only go as far as telling us about the product or service and maybe a little about how to use it. For example, most people know that Hypo is a bleaching product and what it is used for; however, many don’t know how to use it. It is impossible for producers to go from house to house to educate the consumers how to use their products, it is therefore the role of the consumer to educate others on how to use the product or service once they’ve learnt it themselves.
5. **DETERMINATION OF BULK OF PRODUCT TO BE PRODUCED:** There is no marketing without production or service. The target market in other words, the consumer determines the amount of product that is to be produced. After all, the producers will only produce what the consumers will need or purchase. For example, the consumers of washing machine determine the amount of washing detergent to produce likewise; the consumers of Coke determine how much of the product is to be produced. Without the consumers, the producer has no glimpse of how much of his product he should produce and may produce too much or too little.
6. **ENCOURAGE HEALTHY RIVALRY:** The role of the consumer in marketing is that they encourage healthy rivalry between producers whether they know it or not. They keep producers on their toes and ensure that they produce goods and services to attend to their needs. For example, when two producers produce similar goods for the same target market, there’s competition between them as to who will obtain more customers. The motto is that the more customers you have, the more profit you make (which is the purpose of business) and in turn will lead to economic development. Without the consumer, it is almost impossible to ensure this competition between producers.

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