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Course: BUS 208: Consumer behavior

Assignment: What are the roles of consumers in marketing?

A consumer can be defined as an individual who buys products or services for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. A consumer is someone who can make the decision whether or not to purchase an item at the store, and someone who can be influenced by marketing and advertisements.

Consumer behaviour can be defined as the study of consumers and the processes they use to choose, use (consume), and dispose of products and services. It can also be defined as the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer's emotional, mental and behavioural responses that precede or follow these activities. In short, consumer Behaviour refers to the study of buying tendencies of consumers.

An individual who goes for shopping does not necessarily end up buying products. There are several stages a consumer goes through before he finally buys things available in the market. Various factors, may be cultural, social, personal or psychological that influence the buying decision of individuals. It is really important for marketers to understand what prompts a consumer to purchase a particular product and what stops him from buying. A marketer needs to first identify his target consumers and understand their lifestyles, psychologies, income, spending capabilities, mentalities to offer them the right product. Individuals from lower income group would never be interested in buying expensive and luxurious products. He would first fulfill his basic physiological needs like food, air, water, etc. There are ideally two different ways which enable marketers to understand their consumers:

* Primary Research
* Secondary Research

**Primary Research :** Primary Research refers to a research methodology where marketers interact with consumers directly and gather as much information as they can. Information is generally collected through surveys, questionnaires interviews, etc.

**Secondary Research :** Secondary Research often refers to relying on information which has been collected by others at some point of time.The background and family status of an individual also influence his/her buying behaviour. Consumers would show interest in products only if they are of any use to them or their immediate family members. E.g A low income earner would not be interested in purchasing the latest cars on sale.

Marketers should also take into account:

**Age group of consumers** e.g Loud colours and designs would be popular among teenagers whereas middle aged and elderly people would prefer subtle colours and sophisticated designs.

**Geographical location** e.g people living in urban or developed areas will likely have more access to all sorts of technology, etc as compared to people living in rural areas.

**Lifestyle of consumers** e.g people living on a diet would tend be more picky in what they rat as compared to those who are not on a diet. Also a Muslim would make use of a hijab, high a Christian may have no use of.

**Social Status of consumers** e.g Individuals from posh localities and good jobs would show keen interest towards buying expensive and unique products as compared to individuals who do not come from an affluent background.

Therefore we can say the roles of consumers are:

I) marketing research(this involves the consumer gathering information about the product and services imnthe market place, looking at the advantages and disadvantaged of similar goods and choosing which one he wants.)

ii) product feedback(this consists of consumers giving a feedback of the product or services they have tried to the marketers. This will in turn help the marketers to better their product on where it is lacking.)

iii) Promotional (this consists consumers telling others about the product they have tried this in turn promotes and further helps to advertise their products. This could also have a negative effect if the consumers are badmouthing the business.)

iv) Growth of overall business (this occurs when the marketers business starts blooming I.e the business is gaining more recognition and buyers. This usually occurs when the following consumer roles stated above happened successfully/positively.

**Reference:**

Management Study Guide Content Team. http://www.managementstudyguide.com/role-of-consumer-behaviour-in-marketing.htm