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**The roles of consumers in marketing**

The consumers are the people who buy the products and merchandize that companies and businesses produce for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. Anytime someone goes to a store and purchases a toy, shirt, beverage or anything else, they are making that decision as a consumer. Consumers are what make competition in both market and mixed economies. They make the economy and without them, there would be nothing like marketing.

Marketing means buying and selling in the market. It involves the promotion, distribution and selling of a product or service and includes with it, market research and advertising.

The role of a consumer is very significant in marketing as they play a really large and important role in it. In marketing, they determine the demand for a product. This becomes essential for without the consumer, issues of supply are thrown into complete limbo as there is a lack of direction. Also, the consumers play a vital role as to helping to determine costs. Businesses do not do themselves any favour when price controls are constructed without taking the consumer’s ability to spend into account. The role of the consumer is important in an economic system because it is consumers who demand goods and services the consumers want.

Firms exist to provide value to consumers and so when consumers disappear, so does the firm. Marketing must then adopt a more collaborative approach with the consumer rather than trying to dictate how consumers must behave. The consumers make for the conducting of a consumer behaviour research which enables the managers develop better theories and make better decisions.

As stated earlier, marketing involves the promotion, distribution and selling of a product or service and includes with it, market research and advertising. Consumers in their role in marketing will then help promote the existence of the product being marketed and enable it survive long in the market by making demands for these said goods and ensure also that supply is made appropriately according to the demand made.

After a manufacturer does well in the promotion of his goods through the help of the consumers, it is now then the work of the manufacturer to ensure his goods are made readily available in the market by ensuring that the goods be efficiently distributed through the various channels of distribution and according to each consumers demand.

The consumers will then help in the selling of a product in the market since it is according to consumer’s demand that costs will then be made. Efficient increase and decrease in price will be made according to the consumers demand for goods. In some cases, an increase in the demand for a specific product in the market could likely lead to an increase in the price of the said product. So therefore, the consumer’s role in making demands for goods will likely influence the selling of goods in the marketing.

The marketers have to also put into notice the level of awareness of their products and the consumers play a huge role in this because it is through a market research of the consumer’s demands for goods that the marketers will then be able to know the level to which their products have been made known to the public. They will then have to seek for efficient methods by which they can improve or increase the level of awareness of their products. They could then decide to seek for appropriate means by which they can be able to advertise their products and pick out a reliable method they can afford. Advertising can be done through the newspapers, television and radio depending on the type or means that one finds most suitable.

A consumer or consumers can also help advertise a product by their use of it. *For instance*, *one uses Maggi to cook and then invites friends over to join her for a meal. Her friends totally enjoy the meal and ask what she used, she tells them that she had used Maggi and so by this, she has helped advertise and promoted the use of Maggi.*

Consumer protection is prompted by the allegations of abuses of consumer rights in the market place.  Consumer rights in this regard are the rights of consumer to some basic entitlement in the goods and services they consume.  This basic entitlement includes standard weight and measurers, adequate and appropriate quality of goods and services as well as right to consumer information competitive choice, redress and environment protection.

The CPC has the following rights made known to consumers:

1. The right to be informed:  Business should make of full and accurate disclosure  of their information (facts) on quality, longevity and materials  including basic prices, administrative costs, warranty limitations etc.
2. The  rights to safety:  The consumer has the right to  expect that his health and safety  be taken into account when industry or business develops any  service or  product preparing instructions for and limitations on its use and designing  or proposing the potential environment.
3. The right to choose:  The consumer has the right to expect business to provide a broad enough spectrum of opportunity that he can obtain for a satisfactory package opportunity spectrum should provide choice, which meet his individual needs.

The consumers play a really important role in marketing and so it is important that consumers needs and rights be respected in order to ensure a positive response in demand for goods and so marketing can continually exist.