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**QUESTION**

*What are the roles of consumers in marketing?*

**INTRODUCTION**

 A business can never place too much emphasis on its customers. The customer is the foundation of any business’ success. One of the primary goals of any marketing strategy should be to identify and meet the needs of the consumer. Considering customer importance at all stages of the marketing process helps your company to ensure greater customer satisfaction and increase its long-term goal of repeat business.

**WHO IS THE CONSUMER?**

 A consumer is an individual who buys products or services for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. That 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. Any time someone goes to a store and purchase a toy, shirt, beverage, or anything else, they are making that decision as a consumer. Basically, without consumers there would be no economic system.

 Without consumer to purchase the goods, there would be no demands for the goods. This has an effect on the entire economic system as well. It includes everything from the product itself to marketing. Before you examine the role of the consumer in your marketing plan, make sure you understand exactly who the consumer is. People sometimes use the two terms interchangeably, but the term “consumer” has a more district definition compared to “customer”. A customer is simply a buyer, while a consumer is the individual who both buys and uses the product or services. ***A consumer is a customer, but a customer isn’t always a consumer in a business transaction.*** A consumer also is called the **end user.**

**HOW DOES A CONSUMER BEHAVE?**

 Consumer behavior refers to the study of buying tendencies of customers. Meaning, an individual who goes for shopping does not necessarily end up buying products. It could also deal with the way you feel about a product. There are several stages a consumer goes through before he finally picks up things available in the market. Various factors, be it cultural, social, personal or psychological influence the buying decision of individuals. Marketers need to understand the buying behavior of consumers for their products to do well. **It is really important for marketers to understand what prompts a consumer to purchase a particular product and what stops him from buying.**

**THE ROLES OF CONSUMERS IN MARKETING**

 Although, the company is the main catalyst in the marketing of its own products and services, consumers also play a role in the marketing process. When developing your plan, remember that the consumer is the central element of all decisions related to marketing. Understand the roles consumers play so you can maximize the effectiveness of your marketing plan. The role of a consumer or of consumers in general is important in an economic system because it is consumers who demand goods and services. Basically, without consumers there would be no economic system. Without consumers to purchase the goods. This has an effect on the entire economic system as well. It includes everything from the product itself to marketing.

These are some roles of consumers in marketing;

* **Marketing Research**

 Consumers play a major role in marketing research before a product or service is released to the public. Once you identify your target consumers, you can invite these people to participate in focus groups or send them surveys to quiz them on key elements of your marketing plan. Questioning them about the right price to charge and what marketing message appeals to them as a consumer can help guide your entire plan, particularly when releasing a new product or service.

* **Bring in new costumer**s

Consumers also can act as agents to further the effects of your marketing plan. With word-of-the-mouth marketing, consumers who have used your product review it both offline and online and can refer other consumers to the product. This marketing is free and very effective, as individuals tend to trust the word of people they know when it comes to trying new products and services.

* **Product feedback**

 The consumer also plays a role in the feedback-gathering process after a company’s offering hits the market. After implementing your marketing plan and releasing the product or service, you need to track results and continually monitor consumers regularly to help them develop new and improved versions of programs.