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QUESTION:

What are the roles of consumers in marketing?

For a marketer to achieve maximum output, he has to put into consideration everything about his consumers. A lot of marketing research should come in place. The consumer is the central elements of all decisions related to marketing.

It is important at this point to know who exactly a consumer is. In a lot of cases, people use the word “consumer” and “customer” interchangeably but the term “consumer” has a more distinct definition compared to the term “customer”. A customer is simply a buyer, while a consumer is the individual that will both buy and use the product or service. In other words, the consumer is the last man on the chain of production and cycle of the product. The consumer buys the product or service and does not resell, he uses those products or services immediately or directly. He is the end user of a product or service. Furthermore, a consumer can be a customer, but a customer is not necessarily/not always a consumer.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to examine the roles of consumers in marketing. They are:

1. The role of consumers in **marketing research.** The role of the consumer here is in marketing research before a product or service is brought out to the public. Marketing research has to do with gathering information about a marketer’s target market. It usually involves market survey, interviews, questionnaires, quizzes etc. Therefore, when a marketer identifies his target market, he can then indulge them to participate in the things listed above. It could be on the right prices to charge, information they would like to hear etc. this can be employed especially when he wants to introduce a new product to the market.
2. In marketing, a consumer also plays a major role in **giving feedback on products**. A marketer will usually gather reviews on the product and it is definitely the consumers that will help enforce this. For instance, software developers seek feedback from consumers regularly to help them develop new and improved versions of programs. E.g. applications on the online stores seek review and act on it after all.
3. Consumers also give their **reviews for the purpose of improvement.** When marketers get reviews from the consumers, they realize what they are doing well and what they are lacking. Through this, they get to improve and employ new strategies.
4. Consumers also play the role of **introducing new consumers.** Consumers are also agents in bringing new consumers into the market. When a product is introduced to a consumer and he gives good report, he will in that particular process win the hearts of other potential consumers.
5. During the process discussed in (4) above, the consumer becomes an agent of **publicity.** This is because he likes the product and will say good things about the products.

In conclusion, the popular sayings “consumer is always right”, “consumer is king”. The consumers who have used a product can always break the market of that product. The consumer will aid rapid awareness/publicity. When consumers say good things about a product, it has a very positive and fast effect. The word of mouth has a snowball effect, particularly in this age where fast worldwide communication is common. As marketing a product with integrity is important, so will treating a consumer well help the business move forward.

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