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**COURSE TITLE: Consumer Behavior**

**TOPIC: The roles of consumers in marketing cannot be overemphasized. Explain these roles.**

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 **INTRODUCTION**

A consumer is the one who pays something to consume goods and services provided. As such consumers play the important role in the economic system of the nation. The importance of the consumers in marketing cannot be underestimated thus, without the demands of the consumers, the producers would lose the key motivation to either produce or sell and trade activities will crumble. Any product, good or service that is being developed must have target market in mind, in order to be effectively marketed and sold. Therefore, it is for the consumers that production first and foremost takes place. It is now pertinent to know who a consumer is and their roles in marketing.

 **WHO IS A CONSUMER?**

A consumer can be a person or a group of people, generally categorized as an end user or target demographic for a product, good or service. A consumer is very different from a customer because a customer is simply a buyer, but a consumer is one who both buys and uses the product or service. A consumer in the context of my discussion is the final consumer.

 **WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY MARKETING?**

According to the American Marketing Association, marketing is ‘the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and the society at large. The process of marketing is that of bringing a product to the market.

Now that the keywords have been explained, I will proceed to discussing the issue at hand which **is the role of consumer in marketing.**

 **THE ROLES OF THE CONSUMER IN MARKKETING**

Consumer service is what determines whether a consumer will come back, leave or even help to bring more customers. In marketing, consumers play roles such as;

1. **MARKETING RESEARCH**

The consumer plays a very important role as per this regard. Before a product is released to the public, a marketing research is usually conducted. Once the target consumers are identified, they can be invited to participate in focus groups or surveys can be sent to them in order to quiz them on the key elements of the marketing plan. Questions about matters such as;

1. The right price to charge
2. What marketing message appeals to them as a consumer, can help guide and organize the entire plan, especially when releasing a new product or service. For example, in releasing a new type of food delivery system, this can be employed.

1. **PRODUCT FEEDBACK**

 The consumers may also serve as an avenue for providing feedbacks to the producing company after a new good or service hits the market. After the release of a new product, the company needs not go to sleep rather they have to track the results and continually monitor the reactions of the consumers to the product in order to understand how best to improve on the product or service in the future as the case may be. For example, online applications through the software developers usually ask for feedbacks in the form of asking the consumers to rate the app on a scale of 1- 5 using star symbols. This helps to improve later versions of the app. Product feedback is a very important role of the consumers in marketing.

1. **PRODUCT ADVERTISING (WORD OF MOUTH)**

Consumers can act as agents to further the effects of marketing plans. By means of word of mouth, personal likeness, inter alia, consumers who have used a product may review it both online and offline and by so doing refer other consumers to the product. This form of marketing is free, easy and effective as individuals tend to trust the word of people they know when it comes to trying out new products and services. Some people also tend to use new products because they are in the habit of trying out new things or because someone they are close to have tried it out and they also want to. Therefore, consumers can help to introduce new consumers to a product.

1. **PRODUCT PROMOTION**

Marketing will bring in a customer but only customer service will keep him. The form of service a customer receives will largely influence his referral skills or derogatory skills. When a consumer is well treated, he /she can go a long way to promote such products to others. There are even situations when one does not really like the product but uses it because of the customer service he /she gets in the process of obtaining such a product.

 **CONCLUSION**

From my discussion, it has surely been established that a consumer’s role in marketing is highly crucial to the success or downfall of a service or product. Therefore, producers should ensure that the consumers receive good and adequate service as this will motivate them to perform their roles effectively. Without the consumers, a business (product and services) cannot exist.