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**Year: 2nd Year**

**Course: BUS**

**Sub Date: 15th March, 2018.**

**Questions**

**What is the role of consumers in marketing?**

**Answer**

**Introduction**

**To begin with, before this question can be properly answered it is necessary that the meaning of consumer behavior is properly explained. Consumer Behavior is the study of how consumers select, purchase, use and disposal of products, goods and services in order to satisfy personal needs. Consumer Behavior** refers to the study of **buying** tendencies of **consumers**. **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**. 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 distinct definition compared to “customer.” A customer is simply a buyer, while a consumer is the individual who both buys and uses the product or service. 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.

Going further with the knowledge of who a consumer is, they also have roles which they play. The following are the roles which consumers play in marketing. They include;

**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.

**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 consumer needs so you can improve on the offering in the future. For instance, software developers seek feedback from consumers regularly to help them develop new and improved versions of programs.

**Bring in new customers**

Consumers also can act as agents to further the effects of your marketing plan. With word-of-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.

**Alternative evaluation**

Once the information and need is identified it the time for the consumer to evaluated the alternatives that are available in the market. This is an important step for the marketers because at this stage the consumer will differentiate your products with other products to see which product satisfy the need of the consumer.

**Information Search**

In this step when the need has been identified and the consumer will seek information to satisfy the needs to do this will reveal information from two option: Internal information and External information in internal information consumer will search in his/her memory that is already present about a product or a brand. External information gained from the product or speech or advertisement or by the products given to the consumer by friends or family.

Furthermore, consumers play the role of;

**Customer Service**

Considering customer needs during the development and promotion of a product is not the only way to emphasize customer needs. Customer considerations after the product has been marketed are important as well. Customer service and interaction with the consumer after the product has been sold not only build strong relationships with the consumer but offer companies valuable information that will help to design more effective marketing efforts in the future.

**Marketing Considerations**

Some of the considerations to take into account when marketing to your customers are honesty, integrity and clarity. Keeping consumer needs in mind is also an integral part of effective marketing. Sneaky advertising campaigns can generate quick sales, but those sales will falter as consumers realize they've been duped. Selling a good product marketed with integrity brings back customers. To do this, a company needs to build customer confidence in its product over time. Customer confidence is what brings consumers back to your product and ensures long-term success.

In conclusion, the roles of consumers in marketing can’t be undermined, as they play a major role, apart from the ones listed above they also complete the production chain, as without them the cycle will be incomplete, because consumption of the produced or manufactured goods is very essential.