

Discuss the Responsibilities and Tasks of a Marketing Department in an Organization

Manwen Lu

Fuzhou University of International Studies and Trade, China.

Abstract

The importance of marketing department in a firm is stressed by a lot of marketing scholars. Marketing department's job are multifunctional that are finding potential customers and delivering them , managing market, keeping the product mix profitable and competitive, making the reasonable strategy and keep eyes on every corners of market to control these marketing activities.

Keywords

Marketing department, Marketing mix, Responsibilities.

1. The importance of marketing

Marketing today is an indispensable part of an organization. Kotler and Armstrong (2010, p.28) suggested that “sound marketing is critical to the success of every organization”. Therefore, “marketing’s role within firms has received much attention in the academic literature and popular press” (Verhoef and Leeflang, 2009, p.14) and they pointed out that massive literatures explore that marketing department has the ability to drive an organization’s marketing orientation. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) defined that marketing in today’s world is not simply about sales, but also satisfying customer needs. The marketing department is endowed with more roles and tasks nowadays than that of past. Thus, the marketing department is playing important roles and doing essential tasks in an organization. This essay will be divided into three parts. Introduction is in the first part. Secondly, authors will discuss the responsibilities that the marketing department is taking in marketing research, marketing strategies including 4P’s—product, price, place and promotion, customer service, customer relationship management, strategy implementation and evaluation. Conclusion will be given in the last part. Marketing departments do plenty of tasks through taking many roles and responsibilities to help firms achieve success.

2. The objectives of marketing

Marketing aims to find its potential customers and to know what are the customer’s requirements. Slater and Narver (1998 , p.1001) stated that,“ The marketing concept says that an organizations’ purpose is to discover needs and wants in its target markets and to satisfy those needs more effectively and nconsumers is a crucial way to collect more information from the customers. As a result, it is indispensable for the marketing department to comprehend their consumers. According to Moutinho and Southern (2010), marketing research is a process to collect the customer’s interest in some products or services through a systematic data gathering investigations relevant to a marketing decision. Marketing demand may constantly change, therefore, planning to analyze the information is a basic part for further marketing responsibility. Just as Aaker and McLoughlin (2010, p.26) indicated, “In most strategic market-planning contexts, the first logical step is to analyze the customers”. They also pointed out that market research is necessary to understand market segment and to detect unmet demands. Marketers will need the analysis of consumer incentives to explore deeper requirements. In an organization, the marketing department will have a lot of tasks to achieve, but it seems that doing market research is the first step for them to lay the basis of other missions.

3. The process of marketing research

The process of marketing research has seven steps. According to Mooi and Sarstedt (2011), the first step is to recognize the problem, and then to make a decision about the research project. Thirdly, the marketing department should plan approaches to collect information and after this step, marketing department should gather the information. Fifthly, the marketing department needs to analyze the information, and then explain, make decisions and present the discoveries. The last step is to follow up. Marketing research could support a better marketing decision, because after this investigation, the marketing department may get some useful customer data from the survey. According to Aaker and Mcloughlin (2010), the uses of the market research in dynamic marketing context mainly have four parts, they are improving the quality of decision making, tracking existing problems, keeping old customers and understanding the changing market. In all of these it seems the consequence of market research might have some practical effects for a company. As the market competition is more and more fierce and global, in order to catch the step of the market and the competitor's action, marketing department becomes increasingly indispensable for a company's further development. Every organization will have different objectives, and after market research, the market department is required to have a strategy to achieve its goals better. As Doyle and Stern (2006) indicated that most organizations will have different level strategies, each strategy for each product or market. Organization needs to formulate its strategies according to the results of marketing research.

4. 4Ps of marketing

Literally, one of important jobs of the marketing department is to manage the market for the sake of the organization. However, it is impossible for any department to control the ever changing market. So the one task that a marketing department should do is to make a proper marketing strategy, using the marketing mix including 4P's-product, price, place and promotion, which can be actually controlled by marketers to produce the response it wants from the target market (Aaker and Mcloughlin, 2010).

4.1 Products

Product is "at the heart of marketing exchange" (Brassington, 2003, p.267). Once the product fails to satisfy customers' needs and wants with its benefits, or if it is left behind by other elements of the marketing mix, then none of them will make any difference. Product consists of layers of benefits that mean differently for different customers, so the marketing department can manage them layer by layer. Like three concentric rings, the core benefit is in the centre, the augmented product is on the outside, and the actual product is between them, and each layer adds more benefits (Kotler *et al.*, 2013). The core benefit including the technology, function, et cetera, influences the other layers. So when defining it, the marketer should always have something to differentiate the product with. Actual product is the body of the product, through which the core benefit can be offered to customers. In this layer, there are design, quality, branding and packaging. Together with the augmented product including guarantees, warranties, et cetera, these two layers are where most of the overt marketing competitions happen (Parasuraman, 1997). The whole set of products brought by a company into the marketplace is a product mix (Kotler *et al.*, 2009). The marketing department plays important roles to keep the product mix profitable and competitive. On one hand, every single product has its life circle and some of them would lose their market appeals eventually. They should be deleted when they do so, or the production will be rather costly, and the capital will be tied up other than used more profitably (Alexander, 1964). On the other hand, a firm should constantly bring new products to ensure its long-term growth and profitability in this ever changing market. As Johnson and Jones (1957) recommended, some leading companies may be capable of establishing a temporary department made of staff from different departments to develop a new product, so its future marketer could formally participate, whereas other companies might have to make their marketing departments to work with other relevant departments. Although the decisions of both deletion and addition of products are made by the top management, it is the marketing department's responsibility to give

advices and even to lead the process according to customers' needs and firm's desired marketing positioning. The marketing department in an organization should take part in the development of products in different levels to make sure products are positively differentiated, and developed with enough and, the most importantly, the right benefits that meet the customers' needs and wants.

4.2 Price

Price is the only element of the marketing mix relating to income directly, and even a slight change in the price can dramatically affect the profits, so the problem for marketers in terms of the price is how to "justify a price rise to customers" (Blythe, 2006, p.446). It is the responsibility of marketing departments to mark the right prices for products, which fit in with the firm's corporate objectives. To do this the marketers should develop a pricing strategy for each market segment by looking over the firm itself, customers, competitors, distribution channels and environment (Hollensen, 1998). Marketers should estimate both investment and operating costs, and then they have to consider the possible demands at different pricing levels, because the value of a product may decrease when the price rises, since customers' costs rise with it (Blythe, 2006). The next stage, according to Blythe, is to understand the competitors' current positions as well as their potential reactions to this pricing decision, and finally, marketers choose a pricing method such as cost-plus, skimming, psychological pricing, et cetera. Pricing is important to a company, and the marketing department should be careful when pricing, in order to achieve the firm's corporate objectives instead of maximizing the profits all along, because there are a lot of relevant aspects to concern with.

4.3 Place

The place strategy plays a vital role in the marketing strategy of a product or service in the marketing sector and it refers to how and where a company to place their products or services in order to gain more market share and consumers (Asem and Holland, 2013). Basically, place strategy may include the physical store, online store and other ways by which the company can reach customers (Peter, 2010). Different marketing places seem to have different options for contacting with customers and dealing with purchasers. However, although various channels provide more opportunities for the marketing department to sell products, it is important to compare the cost of each distribution channel with its income and try to make a strategy to reduce the cost. In addition, the place strategy should also take account of the potential contribution of different distribution channel which may give access to an additional customer base for the marketing sector. Therefore, it is significant for the marketing department to make a good place strategy and to ensure that the products are placed on the right marketplace effectively, and the place strategy incorporates with the right level of control and support. In other words, the marketing department should make the reasonable place strategy and distribute the product to the user at the right place and the right time.

4.4 Promotion

After selecting the appropriate marketing place, how to develop a good promotion strategy becomes another task for the marketing department. According to Ferrell and Hartline (2005, p.250), promotion strategy refers to "some activities or objects that add value for the buyer and act as an incentive or inducement to purchase". As Doole and Lowe (2008) indicated, it was one of the responsibilities for the marketing department to use some ways to put the products in front of the public and attract the customers. There are various ways to promote a product or service, for instance, personal selling, direct marketing, advertising, sales promotion (Mothersbaugh, 2012). The impacts from promotion strategies may be different on companies, so some companies may adopt a specific method depending on one marketing purpose, while others may use more than one method for just one goal. For example, the McDonald's use not only the TV advertisements but also discount coupons to promote the products and achieve a high popularity amongst young customers. These promotion strategies are likely to help the McDonald's gain more sales and customers. Generally, promotion strategies will affect the product sales, so marketing departments pay more attention to formulating and implementing the marketing strategies and regard them as an important way of stimulating the sales. According to Ferrell (2005), by adopting suitable promotion strategies, the companies could

increase sales and occupied more market share. Therefore, it is marketing department's responsibility to formulate appropriate promotion strategies to make the products win a higher market share.

One of the significant tasks of the marketing department is to provide satisfied services to their customers. According to Proctor (2000), customer service can have profound effects on businesses since the focus of marketing has been shifted from simplex transaction to customers. In other words, marketing departments are more concerned about meeting the customer expectation rather than finishing single sale, because the loyal customers are more active to deliver the value of the company to potential customers than others. As Javalgi *et al.* (2006) point out, by providing the required quality of service, firms can win the repeat purchase and word-of-mouth reputation, and these can be regarded as the main driver of successful businesses. In order to achieve this, it is essential for marketing departments to incorporate the intangible elements in marketing place. They need to demonstrate the image and build the reputation of organizations for customers. These include offering discount to reward the customers, using technology to enhance service quality and improving the demand of marketing staff (Proctor, 2000). For example, an increasing number of companies in retail field are willing to use the databases promoting with the loyalty cards, which aims to offer individual services to customers. Tesco offers the Clubcard to provide one to one response service for its customers according to their purchasing data and this become one of the most competitive aspects for Tesco (Proctor, 2000). These above shows that it is necessary to focus on the customer service for marketing departments.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the analysis and evidences above indicate that marketing departments play vital roles within an organization. The marketing department firstly makes marketing research through collecting information and data analyzing to know consumers' interests and needs. Secondly, marketing departments use marketing mix as a tool to manage their target markets. They take a lot of effort on the product, price, place and promotion in various means in order to develop their products or services successfully. Another significant role or responsibility of the marketing department is service. Therefore, in order to help organizations achieve success, the marketing department does various tasks through taking various roles and responsibilities.

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