

## Quality as a Selling Point

Among all the various elements constituting the competitive environment (such as price, distribution channels, and brand recognition), perhaps the most critical is quality. Particularly when combined with price, quality is a central characteristic in the formation of a purchase decision. Despite this, quality is also one of the core components of a product companies cannot resist tinkering with. Unfortunately, except when the quality is improved, the results are generally problematic

Quality is in many cases one of the premier selling points for a product. As consumers become more sophisticated and their choices become greater, their demand for constantly improving products will be matched only by their insistence that there be price reductions as well.

Some companies have failed to spot this trend and try to find ways around innovating and improving their products. Other companies seek to avoid price increases by reducing the quality of their product, compromising on aspects of the product they suspect the average consumer will not notice. In most cases they are wrong.

So what is quality and how to we use it to sell our products? This article will shed light on the answers to both of these important questions.

What is Quality?

There are a number of ways quality can be defined and measured. They are:

1. The extent to which the product performs as promised
2. How consumers perceive quality and how the product performs against these expectations
3. The extent to which consumers are willing to be inconvenienced to purchase a product
4. The price consumers are willing to pay for the product. Typically better quality products are rewarded to a consumer willingness to pay more money in order to purchase them
5. The support a product is granted, meaning the extent to which a company backs its products through warranty and maintenance.
6. The way a product is distributed and how easily accessible it is

Raising one's quality is a function of understanding the position of one's perceived quality in the mind's of consumers, especially as it relates to the products of competitors. This understanding needs to be supplemented by real time data with regard to which of the above quality measures apply to the consumer pool in question. The perception of what quality is will help you define what sort of quality you need to be delivering.

The application of quality to your sales effort requires that you position your company as a provider of high quality goods (or services). The temptation might be there to raise prices, but you need to be certain that you do not go beyond the perceived value of your product. In other words, if we are defining quality as;  $Quality = product\ meeting\ promise + competitive\ price$ , then any action taken to offset the balance could lead to a reduction of the perceived quality. If the price is raised too high, the perception of value may also

be threatened, meaning that consumers may conclude that while they like your product, it simply is not worth the expensive price you have assigned to it.

The use of quality as a selling point requires that you establish and maintain high quality levels consistent with the definitions of quality stated herein, as well as deliver the high quality at a price that makes the value evident.