

The Five Phases of Marketing

There are all kinds of attempts to define marketing in complex ways. A recent definition called marketing the link between producers and customers. Another referred to marketing as the sale and distribution of products either directly or indirectly to consumers. Excuse us, but this is really academic gobble gobble.

The best definition of marketing we've heard is "the art of selling more product to more people, for more money". At Tudog, we define it slightly differently because when you think about it marketing is really (a) raising awareness, (b) creating interest, and (c) providing the buy opportunity. When a company is seeking to expand its marketing it really has two basic constituencies; existing customers and new (targeted) customers. If we're making it sound simple it's not. It's not as complicated as the academics make it sound either.

To simplify matters even a bit further, Tudog presents the five phases of marketing, meaning the five steps to be taken in the planning and execution of a marketing program. The five steps are:

1. Intelligence

Attempting to construct and execute a marketing plan without the appropriate data is sort of like marrying someone you've never met but have been corresponding with via the Internet for a few months. In other words, you shouldn't go into things of major consequence without knowing what you need to know. In addition to the importance of gathering all the relevant information is the analysis you pass the data through, making sure that the conclusions drawn are supported by the information and not shaped by preconceived notions or special interests.

2. Strategy

Once you have your data collected and analyzed you are in a position to develop a strategy. The strategy should focus on long term goals and large issues such as market sectors and overall corporate direction. The strategy does not discuss how to implement, but rather what it is that needs to be implemented.

3. Tactics

The tactical phase is where the "how to" gets formulated. Tactics are the tools and avenues selected so that strategic objectives can be obtained. Areas that are to be included during this phase include positioning within the market, branding implementation tactics, channels, message, and elements of a marketing campaign like advertising and public relations.

4. Implementation

It is during this phase that the plan – the tactics you developed – is implemented. The plan needs to be guided by a timetable and all elements of implementation need to be scheduled. Without a schedule of execution you will find that compliance with the program will suffer because people will become too busy to implement aspects of the plan that are not on their immediate "to do" lists. The way around this very human of

behaviors is to make sure that everything that needs to be done is placed on the calendar and that those responsible for execution are aware of the timetable and implementation dates set.

5. Monitor & Adjustment

Marketing, as much of a science as it has become, is an inexact science at best. The idea that most market is trial and error is still very much a reality, despite the fact that more quality data is available now than ever before. Nonetheless, the process of marketing requires developing and implementing a program as close to perfection as the data, and team experience and talent can muster, and then testing it in the market to see what the true experts (the targets) think. The response to the campaign therefore needs to be monitored, and, as with the data, analyzed and properly interpreted. In accordance with the findings the program then needs to be adjusted (if necessary) so as to reflect the new understandings drawn from the consumer response.

Once these five phases are completed marketing essentially becomes a cycle of implementation and monitor & adjustment, with some elements of tactics thrown in from time to time. Essentially the data process is also constant, but it is now rolled into the monitoring phase. The strategic phase most often remains static, although if the tactics are failing it could be that there are fundamental challenges associated with the strategy.

These five phases are the heart and soul of marketing. They are what marketing is. Any other definition may define its purpose or seek to wrap it in academic papers, but all told, it's all about selling more things, to more people, for more money.