

An introduction to...

Marketing



This course is a 5min read
with additional time required
for exercises

What you are trying to do and why?

Marketing centres around the relationship between two core elements: the customer (or consumer) and the brand. Marketing activity focuses on improving this relationship.

Brands – almost anything is a brand. Kitkat is a brand, Bath is a brand, you are a brand. Services, products, companies are all brands, but a brand is much more than a logo or name. A brand essentially means the dynamic identity of a 'thing', and that identity lives in the mind of your customer, not your company!

Customers (or consumers) refer to the people or audiences that engage with a service or product. It can feel a bit odd at the beginning talking about 'customers' if there isn't a monetary transaction, but you can look at it as people who spend their time (or money) engaging with you.

Before you can market to your customers, you need a clear idea of what you are going to 'sell'. Understanding the proposition, your specific offering, who are the target customers (i.e. the people to whom this is relevant), and why this offering is valuable to them is crucial as a first step. You need to get these elements clearly defined before jumping into marketing activities.

Key terms:

Marketing

The process of understanding your customers and building and maintaining relationships with them. It is an umbrella term for any activity relating to the promotion and selling of products and services, which includes insight gathering, market research, product/service development, marketing strategy, and advertising campaigns.

PR (public relations)

Public relations is a way for organisations and companies to communicate with the public and media. An organisation's website and social media channels are often used for PR, as well as marketing activities.

Advertising

Communication with your customers to promote or sell a product or service. Advertising is part of marketing activities.

Competitors

Other products, services, or organisations that 'compete' for your customers' time or money. Not always like-for-like – a chocolate bar's competition could be an apple or cup of coffee, rather than only other chocolate bars.

Consumer, Company, Competition

The 3Cs of marketing

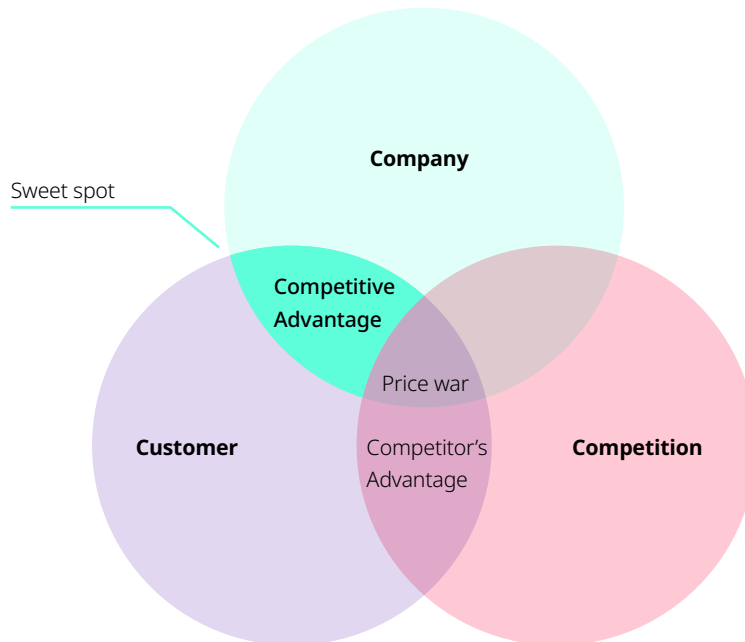
Marketing requires you to know what you are trying to do and why. The 3Cs model is a good place to start:

Who are your consumers? For service offerings, think about who is the end user. Understand what they are looking for. There may be something they are missing or that they want. Take some time to explore and understand what this is and define it as tightly as possible. It might not be as obvious as a product, for example it could be a desirable need state.

Who is the company? As a company or charity, figure out what it is you are really good at. The essence or purpose, strengths and weaknesses of your organisation. Be clear about the sorts of assets you have, including competencies and skills (and be honest about weaknesses). Then use this to match against what the identified consumer needs or wants.

Who is the competition? Think of this in broad terms, rather than just the obvious competitors. Work out what they are good and bad at. Weakness and gaps in your competitors' offerings provide opportunities to focus your strengths.

What is your point of differentiation? The sweet spot for marketing is where these 3Cs overlap: offering something unique to your target consumers that they both want and plays to your strengths, but not where the competition currently is, or where you can offer something better.



Only when you know what you are trying to do and why will your organisation benefit from marketing activities.

S.A.V.E

A new way to look at the 4Ps: product, place, position, and price

Working your way through each step of S.A.V.E can help you focus in on what is important to communicate to your customers:

1. Solutions

What can you provide to the customer?
You need to be able to offer a solution to a problem they have.

2. Access

How do your customers access your service?
Access to your service needs to be easy and facilitated. Often there is a digital component to consider, which is why 'place' doesn't fit so well these days.

3. Value

Why is this service valuable to the customer? For a sustainable organisation or brand, there must be value on both sides. A win-win exchange between brand and customer.

4. Education

What do you stand for?
We don't tend to do much one-way advertising. Customers want to understand more about the brand through web-based and social channels.

Top tip

Think about it from a customer perspective

Marketing is an organisation-wide initiative. Everyone is involved. How you present your services, what you say about the organisation, how employees conduct themselves, these all leave cues for the customer.

Within marketing, advertising is the most visible aspect but is only a small part. You have to understand what you are trying to 'sell' first before you can think about advertising. Help the customer to understand how they can benefit from your offering and access it. It's not about just throwing it at them!

Provide the end users a road map reflecting their goal, and how to get to it.



This activity takes 20min

Activity: What's your brand?

- As an individual or organisation, what do you think your brand is? What do you see as the value it represents to the end user? Write this down in a few sentences.
- Ask 5 people – either end users or critical friends – to do the same thing. Ask them what they think your brand is and the value it represents.
- Compare what you wrote against what the others wrote.

There will inevitably be a gap. Understanding the gap is an important first step to help close the gap. It provides an opportunity to identify your strengths and weaknesses, as well as insights into the potential competition to your consumers.