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# Developing New Products

## Introduction

Much of Gillette's success comes from its ability to develop the new products that customers want. Gillette's first successful product was the safety razor, introduced by King C Gillette in 1901. Market research shows that most people do not like having to take time shaving. It is considered something that has to be done, but the more quickly and efficiently it can be finished, the better. The safety razor tapped into this by making shaving easier. The challenge for Gillette is to continue to make shaving easier by producing efficient tools but also to make it as pleasurable an experience as possible. This means coming up with new ideas and then using modern technology to develop the products.

## First mover

Over the years, Gillette has continued to be the 'first' to the market with a number of innovations, including the first twin bladed razor, the first pivoting head razor and the first triple blade razor. It also produced the first razor specifically aimed at women. Being first gives Gillette advantages. The innovator, or first mover, in a market can often win, and keep, a major market share before any competition arrives. Gillette is also a leader in many areas of operation which include Duracell batteries, Braun electrical goods, Oral-B dental products and the Right Guard brand.

## Researching the market

Market research is used to find out what sort of products consumers might want. This may be either:

- Qualitative– such as working with small focus groups
- Quantitative - involving large samples and the use of strategies such as questionnaires.

After this, Gillette carries out technological research and development, to test the viability of the new product. It will also carefully forecast the possible effect of competition and whether the product can be profitable.

## Product development

Gillette's research has shown that it needs to develop shaver products for several distinct markets within the world shaving market – worth over £5 billion a year. It has targeted two main markets: systems and disposables.

- Systems are where the razor is bought to last with the customer buying replacement blades.
- Disposables are where the razor is bought for limited use and then discarded.

Both sectors are then further divided into premium (top price and quality) markets and standard markets. Quality is all important. Whatever market the razor is in, it must produce an efficient, clean shave.

## Conclusion

Gillette uses market research to find out what people want and then develops these products. Much of its success comes from being a first mover.