

Marketing and the law

Marketing is designed to achieve profitable sales. It involves the use of powerful tools to manipulate the decisions of individuals and of other firms in the private and public sectors. This means that boundaries must be set to define the limits of acceptable behaviour.

Some limitations are imposed on a voluntary basis by firms themselves and by industry-based organisations such as the Advertising Standards Authority. But the law must provide the ultimate source of regulation in areas such as:

- * consumer protection: laws regulating product safety, honesty in product description and rights to refunds and exchanges
- * credit : laws requiring lenders to provide full information about a loan including the Annual Percentage Rate (APR); also giving time for borrowers to change their minds
- * information: obligation to disclose information held about consumers
- * child protection: age limits for the sale of alcohol and tobacco products; film certification.

Overall the law has to find a balance between the importance of profitable business enterprise and the need to protect consumers from unfair or anti-social marketing activity.