

Marketing strategy

A strategy is a long-term plan to achieve certain objectives. A marketing strategy is therefore a marketing plan designed to achieve marketing objectives. For example, marketing objective may relate to becoming the market leader by delighting customers. The strategic plan therefore is the detailed planning involving marketing research, and then developing a marketing mix to delight customers. Every organisations needs to have clear objectives, and the major route to achieving organisational goals will depend on strategy. It is important, therefore, to be clear about the difference between strategy and tactics.

These terms originate from military use (military strategy before and during a military campaign is the general policy overview of how to defeat the enemy). Developing a strategy involves establishing clear aims and objectives around which the framework for a policy is created. Having established its strategy, an organisation can then work out its day-to-day tools and tactics to meet the objectives.

Marketing can thus be seen as the process of developing and implementing a strategy to plan and coordinate ways of identifying, anticipating and satisfying consumer demands, in such a way as to make profits. It is this strategic planning process that lies at the heart of marketing.

In 1985, the Chartered Institute of Marketing adopted the dynamic slogan:

'Marketing means Business'

Strategic discipline

Marketing is now accepted as a strategic discipline or general management function and in this respect must care for the health of a business in the future - especially against competitive influences. This is because it is increasingly realised that although making a profit is important, an organisation should also develop its market share and search for brand leadership as well. So the marketer must monitor the profitability of the business and attempt to anticipate the likely trends. At the same time rival companies should be monitored and examined for vulnerable points. Successful marketers must therefore be concerned with every aspect of their business, including future project and other areas of their industry. Successful companies plan five or ten years and more in advance and often know as much about their competition as they know about themselves.

Marketing is not just a series of business-related functions, but more wide-reaching than this. It is a business philosophy designed to develop an attitude of mind which should be shared by everyone in an organisation and is often enhanced by both frequent and open communication. Developing such an attitude of mind reduces the likelihood of crisis and contributes to the development of the overall future of an enterprise at both strategic and tactical levels.

At the heart of marketing lies the degree to which an organisation becomes marketing-orientated. The more committed a company is to its marketing activities, the more able it will be to pursue its corporate objectives and develop and retain customers. Every business in existence relies upon its customers for survival, and those who best meet customer needs will always survive a period of change.

The marketing function is therefore an essential ingredient of corporate strategy, and this marketing focus should be communicated through marketing planning into all aspects of business activity.

In choosing a marketing strategy a frequent distinction that is made is between undifferentiated marketing and differentiated marketing.

Undifferentiated marketing is where a single marketing mix is offered to the total market. In contrast differentiated market is the process of attacking the market by tailoring separate product and marketing strategies to different segments of the

market, for example, the spectacles market can be broken down into fashion segments and functional segments, high price and low price segments, and segments for individuals with different types of vision problems.

Objectives

The ends which an organisation focuses its plans and activities towards achieving.

Strategies

The means to achieve the ends. Usually long term plans.