

Nature and role of marketing

All modern organisations engage in marketing so as to be able to please and win the loyal support of their customers. Gillette engages in marketing to find out about the needs and requirements of shavers,

banks engage in marketing research to find out about its customers financial services requirements, and the Inland Revenue engages in market research to find out about the needs and requirements of taxpayers and other clients. The Chartered Institute of Marketing uses the following definition of marketing:

'Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying consumer requirements profitably.'

The definition places consumers at the centre of the organisation's activities - whether they be consumers of Kellogg's Special K, the pupils or parents of children at the local school, or people queuing up to watch Nottingham Panthers play ice hockey.

Some organisations are very close to their consumers - for example, a post office in a small town. For other organisations consumers may be thousands of miles away - for example, Cadbury Schweppes selling confectionery and soft drinks around the world. The principle that the 'Consumer is King and Queen' is just as relevant to the organisation engaged in international marketing.

There are a number of key ingredients to the Chartered Institute of Marketing definition:

- * **Identifying** - This will involve answering questions such as 'How do we find out what the consumer's requirements are?' and 'How do we keep in touch with their thoughts and feelings and perceptions about our good or service. This is a key purpose of market research.
- * **Anticipating** - Consumer requirements change all the time. For example, as people become richer they may seek a greater variety of goods and services. Anticipation involves looking at the future as well as at the present. What will be the Next Best Thing (NBT) that people will require tomorrow.
- * **Satisfying** - Consumers want their requirements to be met. They seek particular benefits. They want the right goods, at the right price, at the right time in the right place.
- * **Profitability** - Marketing also involves making a margin of profit. An organisation that fails to make a profit will have nothing to plough back into the future. Without the resources to put into ongoing marketing activities, it will not be able to identify, anticipate or satisfy consumer requirements.