

# Introduction

This explains why marketing and marketing strategy is so important to managers in the 21st century.

Why do companies exist? What is business all about? Noted authority Theodore Levitt says, “*the purpose of a business is to create and keep a customer.*” I think he’s on the right track. Companies and businesses exist because someone had a need (or a “want”) and someone else fulfilled that need with a product or service. How did that person know such a need existed? How did s/he develop a product or service that met that need? And how did they communicate that such a product or service existed? Then, how was the original person with a need convinced to buy this particular product, when there were many others that were similar and might have fulfilled the need?

The answers are Marketing, Marketing, Marketing, and . . . Marketing. Do you think marketing is important? It is only the beginning of everything. An old saying states that “*nothing happens until a sale is made,*” and that is true. But until someone does some marketing, there is nothing to sell, and no premise on which to sell it. There is even very little knowledge about who to sell it to.

Marketing is the eyes and ears of the company, tuned to the customer, and to competition. Marketing is the driving force behind new products, behind the promotion and advertising and all of the other communications about those new products. Marketing’s job, in the words of another well-known expert, Roger Blackwell, is simply “*to have what will sell.*” What a wonderfully elegant and simple way to say it. But as in all wonderfully simple seeming things, there is a veritable forest of complexity just below the surface, and that is what this book will explore.

“Having what will sell” means so many things. It means having the product or service that a specific market segment wants, at a price they will find attractive compared to alternative choices. “Having what will sell” also means having distribution channels that will have the product in stock and available for purchase through the channels of distribution that those customers normally use. It also means communicating to prospective purchasers that the product or service exists, why it is the most desirable alternative to buy, and how to obtain it – and this is no small task.

Finally, “having what will sell” means fulfilling or exceeding the purchaser’s expectations. You must first fulfill the order itself, either directly or through a system of distribution. You must next fulfill the

promise that the communications, advertising, promotion or brand name (and image) conveyed to the purchaser. In most cases, it was this promise that actually created the sale. Then, having sold the product, you must be ready to provide any necessary after sales service. This might be an accessory to use with the product; it might mean instructions or clarification on how to use the service or product properly; it might mean standing behind the product in the event of a problem – usually called a warranty.

Last, but certainly not least, there must be a relationship of some sort between the creator, seller and buyer of a product or service. Above all else, marketing is all about creating, supporting and building that relationship so it can become the basis for repeat sales and a continuing business. To succeed in the future, by doing superb marketing, you simply must “have what will sell!” Isn’t it simple?

In the course of expanding on these ideas, there will be many examples used to illustrate how companies successfully use marketing to great advantage. If the examples are familiar, that is because successful marketing tends to make its user somewhat “famous.” Familiar examples are also helpful because they are just that – “familiar” – and most readers will easily relate to the product or service involved.

Are you ready? Here we go on the Marketing Express! All aboard!

