

Effective Promotion Mix: The Quintessential Element for Perfect Marketing

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Abstract

Out of sight; out of mind, is the reason for any product for which it needs to be promoted effectively. Promotion can be called as the soul of marketing mix mainly because it is perhaps the most needed element for any organization. As it is a very well known fact that promotion mix refers to the combination of promotional tools used by an organization to achieve its communication objectives. Various tools are used by the marketers to inform and persuade customers about their products. The concept of promotional mix assumes that there is a variety of means to communicate with consumers. Through this paper, a comprehensive analysis is being performed taking into consideration that now a days it is all about the promotion of any product to catch the attention of the target customers and being in the mind of the customers as their first and most preferable option. All these elements are going to be discussed and explained one by one along with some merits and demerits to get a clear vision and make promotion more effective. It is believed that there is an optimal way of allocating budgets for the different elements within the promotional mix to achieve best marketing results, and the challenge for marketers is to find the right mix of them for their products to make a product successful in the market.

Introduction:

Philip Kotler opines, "A company's total marketing communication mix also called promotion mix consists of specific blends of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing tools that the company use to pursue its advertising and marketing objectives."

Gary Armstrong defines promotion mix as, "A company's promotional mix includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing. It also includes product design, shape, package, colour, label etc., as all these communicate something to buyer."

The need for promotional activities has increased because of stiff competition, widening of market and rapid changes in the technology and tastes of the customer. The manufacturer has to take effective steps in meeting the consumer in the market after taking or making decisions relating to the nature of product, price and distribution. Promotion mix is the spark plug of the marketing mix. It is mainly a process of communication involving information, persuasion and influence. It includes all type of personal or impersonal communication with customers as well as middlemen in distribution. Every firm has to design its own promotional mix as there is no any tailor-promotional fix for a firm. Promotion is one of the key elements of marketing mix because without this a marketer cannot attract its target customers. The customers are attracted to buy the products on the basis of promotional activities. The promotional mix is the integration of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity and public relations. These promotion mix currents are more or less used at every stage in the selling process, but their intensity differs at different stages and at different periods.

Promotion can be called as the backbone because even a product which contains all qualities but not promoted properly it may vanish into the thin air.

Objectives:

1. To make aware the customers with the benefits of the product.
2. To convince that you are providing them better than the best product.
3. To retain the delighted customer.
4. To make a long-term relationship with mutual benefits.

Hypotheses:

1. Customers are the biggest opportunists; if not satisfied, rather delighted, will not think twice to dump your product.
2. A poor promotion can destroy the whole image of the product as well as the organization.
3. It is possible to retain them only through promoting and making a lifetime (long-term) impact through the product and its quality.

Note: Delighted means getting more than expectation.

Justification of the Study:

1. Advertising:

American marketing association defines advertising as, “any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor. Advertising is a prime part of promotion mix”.

Advertising can be understood as, grabbing the attention of the potential customers by providing the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospect at the lowest possible cost. Anything or everything that turns the attention to an article or service or even any idea might be called as advertisement.

Therefore, effective advertising is a cumulative process that maintains current customers, attracts new customers and establishes a favourable position for the business (marketers) with competitors. So an effective advertising must be based on a careful analysis of the situation before money is spent.

The 5 Ms of Advertising:

- i. Mission - The objective or purpose.
- ii. Money- How much you intend to invest?
- iii. Message- What you want to convey?
- iv. Media- How impactful it would be?
- v. Measurement- How successful you are?

Merits:

A. Mass reach and hence Economical:

Because of its wide reach, the overall cost of advertising gets spread over numerous communication links established. As a result the per-unit cost of reach comes low.

B. Enhances Customer Satisfaction and Confidence:

It creates impact on minds of customers as it is repeated several times. Thus helps in changing the customer’s perception and builds a strong image of a product or brand, apart from increasing its sale.

Demerits:

Though advertising is one of the most frequently used medium of promotion of goods and services, it attracts a lot of criticism.

A. Less Forceful and hence Low Effective:

As it is an impersonal form of communication, there is no compulsion on the prospects to pay attention to the message and therefore not that effective.

B. Lack of Feedback and Inflexible:

As it is a one-way system, there is no immediate and accurate feedback mechanism. It is inflexible as the message is standardized and is not tailor-made to the requirements of the different customer groups.

2. Personal Selling:

Art of personal selling is defined by D.D.Couch as, “science of creating in the mind of your prospect a desire that only possession of your product will satisfy”.

Personal Selling is the most traditional method, devised by manufacturers for promotion of the sales of their product. As the name states, it is personal form of communication where direct face to face conversation takes place between the two with the objective of making or influencing a sale (Two-way communication). Personal selling is a powerful tool for creating demand specially for the illiterate and rural customers, who do not have many other means of getting product information. It plays a very productive role in the economic progress of a society as it converts latest demand into effective demand.

Merits:

A. Personal Attention and individual Services: It focuses on personal problems of the customers. It is more effective and result oriented. Meets personal expectation of buyers and leads to customer satisfaction.

B. Immediate Feedback and Triple Reward:

This is the only market promotion technique with immediate feedback through which it can be easily judged that whether the customer is interested or intended to buy. Also, it benefits all parties i.e.

- I. Customer is satisfied with products and services,
- II. Salesman can achieve his targets ,and,
- III. Companies can improve its market and profits.

Demerits:

A. Limited Reach and Time Consuming: Through personal selling only a limited number of people can be reached and if they are not satisfied or influenced by the demonstration of the sales-person or the product. It is nothing but a waste of time and hence the result is nil.

B. Expensive not Economic: The personal selling is an expensive way of persuading the buyers as compared to the various other ways of promotion.

3. Sales Promotion:

American marketing association defines sales promotion as, “Those marketing activities other than personal selling, advertising and publicity that stimulate consumer purchasing and dealer effectiveness

such as display shows and exhibitions, demonstrations and various non-recurrent selling efforts not in the ordinary routine.”

Sales promotion is an incentive to consumers or trade that is designed to stimulate purchase. In typical consumer promotions, companies reduce the price for a limited period of time or offer more quantity for the same price, or offer extra items or gifts or prizes with purchase. It is basically used to provide short, sharp impetus to sales as the long-term sales effect of the sales promotion could be positive, neutral or negative.

Sales promotion is usually undertaken to supplement other promotional efforts such as advertising and personal selling.

Merits:

A. Attention Value and Useful in New Product Launch:

Promotional activities attract attention of the people because of the use of incentives and hence can be very effective at the time of introduction of a new product in the market.

B. Synergy in Total Promotional Efforts:

Sales Promotion activities are designed to supplement the other efforts (personal selling and advertising) used by a firm and add to the overall effectiveness of the promotional efforts.

Demerits:

A. Crisis Reflection:

Frequent rely on sales promotion by a firm may give the impression that there are no takers of its product or is unable to manage its sales.

B. Spoils Product Image:

Sales Promotion may affect the image of the product negatively as the buyers may start feeling that the product is not good enough or is of bad quality or it is not appropriately priced.

4. Publicity and Public Relation:

According to the Institute of Public Relations (UK), “Public relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its public.”

Publicity, a function of public relations is a communication about an organization and/or its products to public. It generally takes place when favourable news is presented in the mass media about a product or service. Publicity may have both positive or negative impacts.

Public Relations can be defined as a planned effort by an organization to influence the attitudes and opinions of a specific group by developing a long-term relationship. Like any other marketing activity, public relations also needs to follow a systematic approach of setting objectives, selecting the message and media vehicle, plan implementation and finally conduct evaluation.

Merits:

A. Wide Reach and Influential:

Message can be exposed to a large audience at a time. As it is one of the most credible forms of promotion, it can easily gain the trust of audiences.

B. Economic and Beneficial:

It can be a cost effective way to reach a large audience as it is a non-paid form of promotion. Also it helps in reducing the conflicts and misconception about company or its products. Hence, it is very efficient and effective.

Demerits:

A. No Exact Evaluation and No Direct Control

It can be very difficult to measure the effectiveness of PR activities. It is harder to determine its impact on the target audience. Hence, it is not controlled directly.

B. No Guaranteed Results:

Results are unpredictable as its impact can be neutral, positive or negative depending upon the response of the target audience.

Conclusion:

Penetrating cut-throat competition has given birth to efficient and effective as well as rigorous and continuous promotion of any product, service or idea to prevail in the market.

Now a days, even a small thing which is being launched or is already running in the market needs promotion at each and every stage.

Even services like home tuitions and coachings are themselves in a great need of advertising (promotion) to show their competency and to prove that they are better than rest others.

Replacement is very easy in these modern times because there is an excessive competition in every sector right from agriculture to industries. Only the degree varies. Promotion is an essential factor in the marketing of a product because it plays the deciding role in buyer's decision.

If product is the heart of the company then the promotion mix is the face of the company which displays the purity of the heart with simplicity and lucidity which in turn creates stability and induces healthy growth. It is not done only for profit maximization but also for capturing large or major share in the market and for creating continuous demand for a particular product. Every part of the world, now, is full with promotional and saleable materials. Millions of dollars are getting disbursed for the purpose of maximum promotional activities. Corporate are ready to spend huge sums for promotion of their products. People are also ready to buy such products whose promotional activities are attractive. Effective promotion has the latent potential to upgrade the sale of the product and make it skyrocket overnight.

Concluding Thought:

Many products or services have failed in the market; not because of their quality, packaging or pricing, but because the potential customers did not know at all that they were available. And even if they did know, they were not aware of their properties, usage and utilization. This is what we call an utter lack of promotion.

So, in order to sell a product or service, one must promote it effectively.

Key Takeaways:

- a. Customers are clever and very well know what to purchase. So, producers, too, must play clever to satisfy the existing demand.
- b. One must be the better version of their best version in order to sustain in the market.
- c. Customers can be retained only by delighting them. Therefore one must keep surprising them with more than their expectation rather than only satisfying their needs.

- d. Stay ahead of the times by cutting the cluster i.e. One up manship.
- e. Need of the era is a good story telling about the product or service or even any idea (i.e. effective promotion).

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