

In today's current business landscape, marketing has changed dramatically from its original peripheral ways to being approached at more strategic angles, that show what it is the company is offering. Marketing isn't just limited to advertising, it instead serves as the primary way companies can communicate with potential consumers, ensuring that value creation aligns with the consumers needs. This essay will critically analyse and evaluate the multi level role of marketing, showing how it integrates in today's society and how it stays cautious of macro environmental forces identified through PESTLE. It will also explore the impact of the digital age, specifically social media and AI, which has majorly changed the relationship between brands and their audiences.

The primary role of marketing within a business is to create, show and deliver value to their target audience in a way that matches the organisation's goals. According to Drucker (1954), the purpose of a business is to create a customer, therefore marketing and innovation are the two basic functions of any business. In a more modern situation, marketing approaches such as the Marketing mix (4P's) are not done alone, rather used to support a company's general objectives such as market share growth and profitability. This requires flawless incorporation with other business functions, marketing must collaborate with functions like research and development to ensure their product meets the market demand. They must also communicate with finance to ensure their pricing is both competitive but also sustainable for consumers. For example, Apple uses a premium positioning strategy that aligns its marketing with its goal of high margin leadership. As proposed by Porter (1985), when marketing is successfully integrated into the "Value Chain" it acts as the driver for competitive advantage by making sure that every point of the customer journey adds perceived value. Recent academic studies emphasise that marketing is no longer just there to support, but to be a "strategic heart" that helps influence business innovation by identifying occurring customer pain points (Mawo, 2024).

Beyond delivering their external values, the alignment between marketing and other departments is critical for maintaining internal marketing standards. The internal marketing concept suggests that a company's employees are treated as internal "customers" who must be aligned with the brand's promise before it can be

successfully delivered to consumers. If a brand offers a premium service, that it then cannot meet the premium standards offered, it creates a service gap, which can lead to rapid company failure. Therefore a modern marketing team must operate as a coordinator for the company. In companies like Amazon for example, data from marketing helps give information to their logistics and inventory department, where predictive analysis is then used to ensure customer obsession is successfully carried out via their rapid delivery service. The connection between companies' departments shows that marketing's role has changed dramatically from simply just generating demand to handling the customers' entire experience, which is now seen as a major driver of value. By also focusing on customer relationship management, marketing teams can ensure that the cost of acquiring a customer matches against the long term customer lifetime value, giving the business a basis to grow on, rather than give them short term sales spikes.

However, the efficacy of any and all marketing strategies is heavily contingent upon a business ability to navigate the macro environment. PESTLE provides a structured approach by allowing companies to analyse these external factors, which are almost always beyond a businesses control, but can heavily dictate its boundaries. Political and Legal factors, like the introduction of much stricter data privacy laws like GDPR have forced companies to change the way they operate with data driven marketing tactics to maintain consumer trust. The change to a more “privacy first” marketing time requires brands to move on from intrusive third party cookies, and towards more transparent first party data strategies. Economical factors, such as global inflation and the regionalisation of supply chains means marketing teams must be more careful in their pricing and distribution strategies (Belsare, 2025). During times of an economic slump, marketing changes to a more “value for money” approach and reinforces brand loyalty to prevent customers from switching to a lower cost label.

Social trends, especially those of a more ethical consumption seen in Gen Z and Gen Alpha audiences, have caused companies like Patagonia to shift focus onto how their products are environmentally sustainable, reflecting the Environmental and Social factors in PESTLE. An organisation that fails to join these trends risks “strategic drift”, where the internal values no longer match the global external values. As an example, the major and rapid shift in the automotive industry to electric

vehicles was caused by a combination of external factors such as legal requirements (Political/Legal) and a major shift in consumer values regarding carbon footprints (Social). Companies like Tesla didn't succeed primarily because of superior technology but of a successful marketing strategy that successfully anticipated the change in the macro environment before other traditional automotive companies, who are now just starting to catch up with Tesla. By using PESTLE to their advantage, marketers can move on from attempting to fix problems after they have already happened, to a more strategic formula, by predicting and adapting to trends, ensuring the company remains relevant in a constantly changing environment.

One of the main shifts in marketing has been the shift into Marketing 5.0, where technology is beginning to be manufactured for the benefit of humanity. This shift is mainly characterised by the introduction of AI and robotics, to create, communicate and deliver value across the consumer's journey (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2021). The rise of social media has been seen as a disruptive force, changing the way brands communicate with customers. Social media sites like TikTok and Instagram have enabled social commerce, where entire products are purchased directly from the social media site of a company, rather than a dedicated website. This change in consumer behaviour means that companies are no longer the only ones creating their image, it is rather created within their customers through content generated by consumers and engagement (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

The major rise in social media has created a challenge for marketers where they have to create unique content for them to differentiate themselves in a vast digital landscape. Consumers have moved to more short form video's thanks to sites like TikTok and Instagram forcing brands to adapt their content to be more authentic. For example, businesses use AI tools to determine the mood behind social media trends, allowing for more authentic experiences (Hootsuite, 2025). Whilst this is beneficial for companies, it can also lead to issues such as brand hijacking, where a single negative post can lead to significant and instantaneous damage to their reputation.

Furthermore, the creation and integration of AI into marketing has massively changed the concept of market segmentation. The traditional way is being replaced with micro segmentation, where algorithms predict individual consumer needs in real

time. This style of marketing allows for companies to offer dynamic prices and personalised recommendations, evident in services like Netflix and Amazon. Kotler (2021) argues that the challenge for modern companies is to make sure they balance the high tech with human connection. If marketing becomes too automated, it will risk losing the emotional connection that builds long term loyalty and equity. Brands must also be careful of their ethical use of AI in their marketing as well. They must make sure it doesn't cross the line into seeming manipulative or infringing on the customers privacy.

Overall, marketing serves as the centre of any modern business. It is the tool that can transform the way consumers can view a business. However, the success of these efforts is highly dependent on the understanding of factors like PESTLE, which will dictate the boundaries of what is possible and profitable for the business. The change to a digital age hasn't change the importance of marketing, rather has amplified its importance. The ability to use social media, AI and algorithms to a their advantage, companies can differentiate themselves from their competitors effectively. Effective marketing strategies are no longer about just selling the product, rather creating an experience the consumer will enjoy as well as building a long lasting ethical, profitable and sustainable relationship with them.

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