

Essay.

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MARKETING FUNDAMENTALS
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Submission Deadline - 17th January 2025

An Evaluation of Marketing

Marketing is a vital component of modern business strategy, shaping how audiences connect with their audiences and achieve overarching objectives. Marketing aligns an organisation's offerings with marketing demands. This essay evaluates the role of marketing, explores the influence of the macro-environment factors (using PESTLE framework), and examines how organisations must adapt to an increasingly digital world, with a particular focus on social media as a transformative marketing platform.

Jain (2022) explains that marketing is the process of connecting potential customers with a company's products or services. Furthermore, it aims to align the offerings of the business with the needs of its customers. Forsey (2024), relates this by suggesting that marketing encompasses all activities a company undertakes to draw an audience's attention to its products or services by delivering compelling and high-quality messaging. In marketing, STP-Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning represents the three fundamental steps that help marketers identify the right customers, deliver tailored messaging, and provide the necessary information for effective targeting (Royston, 2024).

Segmentation involves grouping potential buyers into distinct segments, based on demographics, geography, behaviour, or psychographic factors, in order to better understand and market to them (Tarver, 2024). Segmentation enables organisations to have a better understanding of the consumers.

Royston (n.d) informs that, targeting involves dividing the target audience into segments and then tailoring marketing activities to reach those segments that are most likely to respond positively to your efforts.

A positioning strategy consists of a series of actions and processes aimed at enhancing the image and visibility of a brand, company or product (Pearce, *et al.* 2024).

Marketing is essential for organisations as it bridges their goals with customer needs and market expectations. For example, Apple devised a well-defined marketing strategy for the iPhone and executed its launch with precision (Singh, 2021).

Additionally, Despite encountering a few challenges, the company delivered a unique product tailored to tech-savvy consumers seeking a mobile phone and music player, facilitating organisational goals by fostering STP strategies.

Marketing drives innovation and adaptation by leveraging market research and analytics to help organisations anticipate trends and adjust their products or services to meet changing consumer needs. Agreeing to this, Chai (2024) expresses that Procter and Gamble strengthens their competitiveness and efficiency by vertically integrating key business functions and fostering strategic partnership with external collaborators. At the same time, the company focuses on continuous product innovation to meet market demands, while navigating challenges in technology research and development, cost control and risk management.

Marketing builds and preserves brand equity by conveying consistent messaging and reinforcing value propositions. For instance, Rolex serves as a prime example that embodies sophistication. Renowned for their craftsmanship, timeless designs, and strong ties to elegance and prestige, the company has established itself as a symbol of sophistication within the luxury watch industry (McCabe, 2023). People form emotional connections to historical events. Sádaba & Bernal (2018) explain that by blending heritage and innovation, Rolex has created a brand that cooperates both historical and contemporary ideas to meet customer desires. This form of marketing plays a critical role in enhancing brand value. Rolex have cultivated segmentation, targeting and positioning techniques.

The macro-environment significantly affects marketing strategies, forcing organisations to adjust to external factors. The macro-environment refers to the wider business landscape and external factors that affect all businesses, regardless of their industry or size (Aggarwal, 2024). The PESTLE framework - Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and environmental elements - offers a structured method for understanding these influences.

Political stability, trade regulations, and government policies significantly impact marketing. Research conducted by Freeman, *et al* (2024), shows the UK's departure from the EU's single market and customs union at the beginning of 2021 caused an immediate drop in both imports and exports with the EU. Additionally, it was observed that businesses took measures to mitigate the overall decline in trade. Marketers need to navigate regulatory frameworks to ensure they remain compliant and adjust their strategies as needed.

Economic conditions, including inflation, unemployment, and consumer purchasing power, shape marketing strategies. During economic downturns, organisations often shift to value-based marketing, promoting affordability and cost-efficiency.

Social factors are one element of the macro-environment which can affect an organisation. Shifts in demographics, cultural values, and lifestyle trends influence consumer preferences. Gift Campaign (2024), relays that Nike turns ordinary items into symbols of resilience and achievement by emblazoning products such as T-shirts, hats, and sports bags with the "Just Do It" slogan. Resulting in reinforcing the brand's athletic identity and showcasing its dedication to innovation and performance.

Legal factors include health and safety, equal opportunities, advertising standards, consumer rights and laws, product labeling and product safety. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU has heightened the importance of transparent and ethical data handling in marketing strategies (Arora, 2023).

Environmental awareness has made sustainability a key focus in marketing, prompting organisations to implement green marketing strategies to attract environmentally conscious consumers. Patagonia has built their brand around rescuing the planet. For instance, for the past 35 years, they have committed 1% of their sales to supporting the conservation of the natural environment (Ames, 2022).

The rise of social media as a marketing platform has significantly transformed how brands engage with their audience. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok have revolutionised marketing communication. They offer unparalleled opportunities for engagement, brand building and direct interaction with consumers. For example, to address body image issues early on, Dove launched the Face of 10 campaign, showcasing girls as young as ten years old (Kiely, 2024). This helps create drive brand awareness and customer engagement. Social media also facilitates influencer marketing, where brands will collaborate with individuals who have substantial online followings. Influencers act as trusted intermediaries, enhancing brand credibility. Nike has collaborated with renowned athletes and celebrities to endorse products and has initiated social media campaigns to engage with consumers more personally. In addition this approach also allows them to reach the influencers audience and expand their online visibility (Panigrahi, 2024).

While digital platforms offer vast opportunities, they also present challenges. The abundance of online content makes it difficult for brands to stand out, necessitating creative and data-driven approaches. Personalisation, achieved through data analytics, has emerged as a key strategy. Krysik (2024) states that nearly for 20 years, Netflix has implemented several personalisation systems to predict and recommend content that users are most likely to enjoy.

Privacy concerns and data regulations pose additional challenges. Organisations must navigate ethical considerations and comply with regulations like GDPR to maintain consumer trust. Transparency in data usage and the adoption of secure systems are critical for sustainable digital marketing.

Technological advancements continue to reshape digital marketing. Artificial intelligence enables predictive analytics, chatbots, and automated content creation, enhancing efficiency and personalisation. Sephora's Virtual Assistant tool, enables customers to virtually try on makeup products using augmented reality (AR). In addition, this interactive feature enhances the shopping experience by making it enjoyable and helping reduce the uncertainty of purchasing beauty products online (Patov, 2024).

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are also gaining traction in marketing. Offering consumers an AR-based trial experience before making a purchase decision is expected to reduce product returns (Ozturkcan, 2021). Warner Bros. Pictures introduced a Barbie Wardrobe AR lens on Snapchat, enabling users to see themselves in outfits inspired by the movie (Gilliland & Sentance, 2024).

To conclude, marketing plays a central role in modern business, bridging the gap between an organisation's goals and its audience's needs. This essay has explored the multifaceted nature of marketing, emphasising its alignments with customer demands, its adaptation to macro-environmental factors through the PESTLE framework, and its evolution in response to digital transformation, particularly the rise of social media. Through STP, marketing enables businesses to identify and connect with their ideal audiences. This structured approach enhances the effectiveness of

marketing efforts, as illustrated by examples like Apple's strategic product launches and Rolex's blend of heritage and innovation. The macro-environment profoundly impacts marketing strategies, requiring organisations to navigate political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental dynamics. From adapting to economic conditions to adopting sustainable practices, companies must remain agile and innovative. Case studies of brands like Patagonia and Nike underscore the importance of aligning marketing efforts with broader societal trends and values. Digital platforms have revolutionised marketing, offering opportunities for engagement, personalization, and innovation. Social media campaigns, influencer collaborations, and advanced technology like AI and AR have reshaped how brands interact with consumers. However, these advancements also demand careful attention to data privacy and regulatory compliance to maintain trust. Marketing remains indispensable for organisations striving to connect with their audiences, adapt to changing environments, and drive innovation in a competitive global landscape.

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