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Please state your chosen organisation & contemporary issue in the box below:

Selected Organisation: Netflix

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NETFLIX

Executive Summary

This report evaluates the marketing effectiveness of Netflix Inc., a leading global subscription-based streaming service operating within an increasingly crowded and competitive media landscape. The purpose of the report is to assess the role and strategic value of Netflix's marketing function in driving subscriber acquisition, engagement, retention, and long-term brand sustainability. Using established marketing frameworks including PESTLE analysis, Porter's Five Forces, the STP model, the 7Ps marketing mix, and Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). The report examines how effectively Netflix's current marketing strategy responds to key market challenges such as intensifying competition, market maturity, rising customer acquisition costs, and heightened price sensitivity. The findings show that marketing at Netflix is closely embedded in overall corporate strategy rather than treated as a separate promotional activity. The company demonstrates strong marketing performance through its use of advanced analytics, data-driven personalisation, and content-focused communication, all of which closely support its subscription-based business model. Notable strengths are evident in the product and place elements, with high-quality original programming and a globally accessible, digital-only distribution model delivering scale, convenience, and competitive advantage. Netflix's integrated use of digital channels, such as social media, email, and push notifications, also enables consistent and timely interaction with users across international markets. However, the analysis highlights several limitations that may undermine long-term effectiveness. Pricing remains a key issue, as frequent price increases and the introduction of an ad-supported tier have challenged Netflix's premium brand image and weakened consumer trust. In addition, promotional activity, while successful in generating short-term engagement and cultural relevance, places relatively little emphasis on emotional storytelling and long-term brand development. The company's heavy dependence on algorithm-driven experiences also results in an efficient but increasingly impersonal customer journey, while limited offline engagement and sustainability communication represent missed opportunities for deeper emotional connection and brand differentiation. To address these issues, the report recommends four strategic actions: strengthening brand-

led storytelling alongside data-driven personalisation; improving clarity and consistency in pricing communication to rebuild trust; broadening media channel use through selective offline and experiential initiatives to engage under-served audiences; and reinforcing a clear premium brand position through closer alignment of product quality, pricing, and promotional messaging. Together, these recommendations aim to enhance long-term loyalty and sustain Netflix's competitive advantage in a highly contested streaming market.



1. Introduction

One of the biggest subscription-based video streaming services in the world, Netflix Inc. offers viewers in a variety of international markets on-demand entertainment content.

Netflix has rapidly expanded throughout the world since switching from a DVD rental company to a digital streaming service, and it is now a well-known brand in the media and entertainment industry. The company now faces fierce competition from both established and emerging streaming services, including Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, and Apple TV+, in an increasingly crowded and dynamic market. Marketing has evolved into a crucial organizational function that promotes both long-term brand sustainability and commercial performance in this competitive environment.

This report's main objective is to assess Netflix's marketing department's function and efficacy. The study evaluates how well Netflix's present marketing initiatives handle current market issues, such as market saturation, growing customer acquisition expenses, and rising price sensitivity. The study looks at how marketing strategy affects customer acquisition, retention, and differentiation using well-established marketing theories and analytical frameworks. To guarantee that conclusions are based on both theory and practice, the evaluation is backed by pertinent scholarly literature and industry data.

Because Netflix's business model heavily depends on subscription revenue and customer lifetime value, marketing is especially important to the company. In contrast to traditional broadcasters, Netflix needs to consistently interact with its subscribers and promote continued use to reduce attrition and sustain profitability. As a result, marketing activity now includes data-driven personalization, content positioning, and relationship-building with international audiences in addition to conventional promotional campaigns. In a market where technology is changing quickly and customer expectations are changing, Netflix can communicate value, build brand equity, and stay competitive by using effective marketing.

This report is organized as follows. A critical assessment of Netflix's marketing initiatives, including an examination of the macro and micro marketing environment, target markets, segmentation and positioning, marketing mix, communication channels, and performance measurement, comes after the introduction. The study concludes by pointing out the main flaws in Netflix's present marketing approach. Lastly, the report provides a set of practical and fact-based suggestions intended to assist Netflix's marketing strategy going forward.

2. Main Findings

➤ 2.1 Concept and Importance of Marketing

The American Marketing Association (AMA, 2017) defines marketing as the activities, institutions, and processes involved in creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that generate value for customers, partners, and society as a whole. This definition makes it clear that marketing is not limited to advertising or promotion, but instead centres on value creation and the development of enduring relationships. Supporting this perspective, Kotler and Keller (2022) describe contemporary marketing as a strategic organisational function that focuses on identifying customer needs, shaping compelling value propositions, and maintaining long-term competitive advantage. From this standpoint, marketing is best understood as a holistic business philosophy rather than simply a communication function. This broader view is especially relevant in digital businesses such as Netflix, where marketing influences core decisions related to product design, pricing strategies, content creation, and the overall customer experience.

Marketing is fundamental to Netflix's business model because the company depends entirely on subscription revenue. Unlike one-off transactional models, Netflix only earns income when customers continue to pay their monthly fees. Consequently, attracting new subscribers, retaining existing ones, and maximising customer lifetime value (CLV) are key measures of success. Subscriber losses have an immediate impact on revenue, which positions marketing as a core business function rather than a discretionary cost. This approach aligns with relationship marketing theory, which stresses the value of building and sustaining long-term customer relationships rather than concentrating solely on acquisition. Netflix puts this into practice by delivering highly personalised experiences and maintaining continuous engagement to enhance CLV. In this way, marketing directly underpins the company's financial stability by limiting churn and extending subscription duration.

Netflix's strong emphasis on marketing is further demonstrated by the scale of its investment in this area. The company allocates significant resources to content-focused promotional campaigns, global social media activity, and sophisticated data analytics. Its marketing operations span multiple international markets to ensure messaging is locally relevant, while algorithm-driven personalisation enables tailored recommendations and targeted promotions for individual users. Evidence from Netflix's annual reports, alongside industry insights from sources such as Statista and Deloitte, indicates that analytics and personalisation are central to the firm's marketing success. Nevertheless, questions remain regarding the efficiency of this high level of expenditure. Although substantial investment supports brand visibility and user engagement, it also raises concerns about rising acquisition costs and the risk of diminishing returns in an increasingly crowded streaming landscape.

A critical assessment of Netflix's strategy indicates that marketing is closely embedded within the company's overall corporate direction rather than operating as a separate promotional activity. Key decisions relating to content development, platform functionality, and global market expansion are heavily shaped by customer insights and marketing intelligence. However, Netflix appears to place considerable reliance on algorithms and user behaviour data, which may result in less emphasis on emotional brand building and creative storytelling that can strengthen long-term customer attachment. Moreover, the strong focus on short-term performance indicators, such as viewing time, risks overshadowing the development of long-term brand equity. In summary, while Netflix displays well-developed strategic marketing capabilities, its predominantly data-driven approach may limit its ability to sustain distinctive brand positioning over time.

➤ 2.2 Macro and Micro Environment Analysis

Macro Environment: PESTLE Analysis

The political and legal context has a strong influence on Netflix's marketing decisions, largely due to varying content regulations and censorship rules across international markets. In regions such as China, the Middle East, and parts of Europe, governments impose limitations

on politically, religiously, or culturally sensitive material. These constraints reduce Netflix's ability to apply uniform global marketing campaigns and require careful local adaptation. In addition, the launch of an ad-supported subscription option has increased exposure to advertising regulations, particularly in relation to data protection and transparency standards. As a result, marketing activities must be tailored to individual markets, increasing operational complexity and costs while limiting the efficiency of standardised global branding.

Economic conditions also place significant pressure on Netflix's marketing strategy. Rising living costs and increasing levels of "subscription fatigue" have made consumers more cautious about discretionary spending, especially in mature markets. This environment challenges Netflix's premium brand positioning and makes price increases more difficult to justify, as higher fees may accelerate subscriber cancellations. In response, marketing communications have increasingly focused on value-for-money, breadth of content, and flexible pricing options. However, this shift indicates reduced pricing power compared to earlier stages of rapid growth.

Social trends are equally influential in shaping Netflix's marketing approach. The widespread acceptance of binge-watching has encouraged promotional messaging that highlights urgency, exclusivity, and highly anticipated releases. At the same time, growing expectations for diversity, inclusion, and locally relevant content have pushed Netflix to strike a balance between maintaining a strong global identity and appealing to local audiences. Marketing campaigns now place greater emphasis on regional original productions, signalling a move towards cultural localisation. While this strengthens audience engagement, it also carries the risk of diluting global brand coherence if not carefully managed.

Technological capabilities remain a cornerstone of Netflix's marketing performance. The use of advanced analytics and AI-driven recommendation systems allows for highly personalised communications that support engagement and retention. Nevertheless, it is increasingly unclear whether Netflix is setting the pace in technological innovation or simply matching competitors such as Amazon Prime Video and Disney+. Although Netflix was an early leader in data-led personalisation, rival platforms have rapidly developed similar technologies, narrowing the competitive gap and increasing the need for continuous investment.

Environmental considerations currently have a more limited impact on Netflix's marketing strategy. Despite the significant energy consumption associated with data centres and streaming infrastructure, Netflix has been relatively restrained in communicating its environmental initiatives. Compared to competitors that more actively promote sustainability efforts, this represents a missed opportunity to enhance brand reputation and differentiation through stronger environmental positioning as consumer expectations around corporate responsibility continue to rise.

Micro Environment: Porter's Five Forces

Competition within the streaming sector is exceptionally intense, with platforms competing directly for viewer attention and recurring subscription income. This high level of rivalry has encouraged Netflix to depend heavily on large-scale promotional activity and content-driven marketing to remain visible and relevant. At the same time, customer bargaining power is considerable, as subscribers can switch services or cancel with minimal effort. This ease of switching increases price sensitivity and restricts Netflix's ability to implement price rises without risking customer dissatisfaction or revenue loss.

The threat posed by substitutes is also significant and extends beyond direct streaming competitors. Platforms such as YouTube and TikTok compete for users' time and attention, even though their business models differ. From a marketing standpoint, this requires Netflix to present its offering as more than simple entertainment, instead emphasising a high-quality, immersive viewing experience. Overall, Netflix's marketing response appears uneven. While its pricing strategy often seems reactive to market pressures, the company has been more forward-looking in areas such as technology and personalisation, resulting in a competitive position that lacks full strategic balance.

2.3 Target Market and Segmentation

Netflix uses the Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP) framework as a core component of its marketing strategy, enabling the company to operate on a global scale while remaining relevant to a wide range of audiences. Instead of addressing a single mass market, Netflix breaks the overall market into multiple, overlapping segments using demographic, geographic, psychographic and behavioural criteria.

From a demographic standpoint, Netflix mainly appeals to younger and middle-aged consumers, particularly those between 18 and 49, who are generally more comfortable with digital technology and subscription-based services. Income levels also influence segmentation, as Netflix offers several pricing options to attract both cost-conscious users and those willing to pay for premium access. Geographically, the platform operates in more than 190 countries, making detailed market segmentation essential to accommodate cultural differences, language requirements and regional viewing preferences. This approach has supported the success of locally produced content, such as *Money Heist* in Spain and *Squid Game* in South Korea, which are promoted through tailored, country-specific campaigns.

Psychographic segmentation focuses on consumers' lifestyles and entertainment habits. Netflix targets audiences who value flexibility, convenience and immersive, on-demand viewing. These consumers are often time-constrained but seek high-quality content that fits around their schedules. Behavioural segmentation is particularly important to Netflix's strategy, as it distinguishes between frequent binge-watchers, occasional viewers and fans of specific genres. Data on viewing patterns, search activity and engagement levels is continuously analysed to support personalised recommendations and targeted promotional messages.

In terms of targeting, Netflix follows a broad market strategy, aiming to attract a wide and diverse customer base rather than concentrating on a narrow niche. This mass-market approach is strengthened by advanced personalisation tools that allow marketing activity to be tailored at the individual level. Features such as customised thumbnails, personalised emails and algorithm-led content suggestions enable Netflix to communicate differently with each user. While this enhances reach and engagement, it also creates potential challenges around brand clarity. By attempting to appeal to a very broad audience, Netflix risks diluting a clear and distinctive brand position, particularly as competitors pursue more sharply defined identities.

Netflix's positioning is built around ease of use, personalisation and extensive content choice. The brand presents itself as a comprehensive entertainment platform that delivers high-quality, on-demand content aligned with individual preferences. Social media

marketing frequently promotes popular releases and shared cultural moments, reinforcing relevance and immediacy. However, the launch of an ad-supported subscription option may weaken Netflix's long-standing premium, ad-free positioning. Although this tier improves affordability and market reach, it may blur the brand's value proposition and pose challenges for long-term differentiation based on quality and user experience.

➤ 2.4 Marketing Mix – 7Ps

Netflix's marketing mix reflects its role as a leading global streaming platform, though its effectiveness varies across the different elements of the 7Ps. While the company demonstrates clear strengths in certain areas, such as product and place, it faces growing challenges in pricing, promotion, and the overall user experience.

Product is Netflix's most prominent strength. Its extensive library of original content, including internationally acclaimed series like *Stranger Things* and *Squid Game*, supports brand differentiation and recognition. Producing original content reduces reliance on licensed material and helps retain subscribers. However, the sheer volume of releases creates a risk of oversaturation, which can dilute perceived quality and make it harder for individual titles to stand out. From a marketing perspective, this reliance on quantity may weaken the clarity of Netflix's value proposition and increase dependence on algorithm-driven discovery rather than brand-led content curation.

Price remains one of Netflix's most debated marketing decisions. The tiered model - including basic, standard, premium, and ad-supported options - enables Netflix to appeal to both price-sensitive and premium segments. While this broadens accessibility, repeated price hikes and the introduction of advertising have caused friction with long-term subscribers. Research on pricing fairness suggests that perceived unjustified increases can accelerate churn and erode brand loyalty. Netflix's pricing approach often appears reactive to market and economic pressures rather than being strategically aligned with its premium brand positioning.

Place is a clear advantage. Netflix's entirely digital distribution model allows global availability across a wide range of devices, reinforcing its positioning as a convenient, on-

demand entertainment service. Unlike traditional media providers, Netflix faces minimal physical distribution constraints, enabling rapid international expansion and consistent service delivery.

Promotion relies heavily on social-first and culturally driven strategies, including viral campaigns, meme marketing, and platform-specific engagement on TikTok, Instagram, and X. These approaches generate strong short-term engagement and cultural relevance, particularly among younger audiences. However, they often prioritise immediacy and humour over deeper emotional storytelling, which may limit the platform's ability to foster long-term emotional brand attachment compared to competitors leveraging heritage or franchise-based narratives.

The remaining elements - **People, Process, and Physical Evidence** - highlight Netflix's operational efficiency but also point to experiential limitations. Skilled data scientists and engineers play a central role in designing algorithm-driven recommendations and user journeys. The app interface acts as the primary physical evidence, projecting simplicity, professionalism, and technological expertise. Yet, the heavy reliance on automation creates a highly efficient but impersonal user experience, with minimal opportunity for human interaction or emotional engagement.

Overall, Netflix's marketing mix is only partially aligned with its brand positioning. Strong performance in product, digital distribution, and personalisation supports convenience and content variety. At the same time, pricing strategies and promotional tactics risk undermining the perception of a premium, high-quality brand. This imbalance suggests that while the marketing mix effectively drives engagement and usage, it is less successful in sustaining long-term brand trust and loyalty.

Netflix Marketing Mix (7Ps) – Simple Summary Table

7P	What Netflix Does	What Works Well	Main Issue
Product	Originals + licensed content	Strong global hits	Too much content, quality diluted
Price	Tiered pricing + ads tier	More choice for users	Price rises hurt trust
Place	Digital-only streaming	Easy access worldwide	No major weakness
Promotion	Social media, memes, viral clips	High engagement	Weak emotional storytelling
People	Data scientists, engineers	Highly skilled teams	No human interaction
Process	Algorithm-driven experience	Fast, personalised	Feels impersonal
Physical Evidence	App interface, UX design	Clean and professional	Limited brand warmth

➤ 2.5 Selection of Media and Channels

Netflix's choice of media and communication channels reflects its digital-first approach and focus on direct consumer engagement. The company primarily leverages owned and social platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X to promote new releases, share short-form videos, and participate in trending conversations. These channels allow Netflix to reach large audiences - especially younger viewers - through visually engaging and culturally relevant content. YouTube also plays a key role, hosting longer-form trailers, behind-the-scenes footage, and interviews that generate awareness ahead of major launches.

Beyond social media, Netflix heavily relies on direct communication tools, including email marketing and push notifications. These channels are tightly integrated with user data and

viewing patterns, enabling highly personalised reminders, recommendations, and release alerts. From an Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) standpoint, this consistent use of multiple channels reinforces Netflix's brand positioning around convenience, personalisation, and content variety. The application of data-driven insights across these touchpoints enhances message relevance and improves user response.

However, Netflix's channel strategy has notable limitations. There is a strong emphasis on younger, digitally active audiences, particularly via TikTok and meme-driven Instagram content. While this supports short-term engagement and cultural visibility, it risks underserving older or less tech-savvy segments. The limited use of traditional media, offline events, or community-focused engagement reduces opportunities to foster deeper emotional connections across a broader demographic.

Moreover, Netflix's heavy dependence on owned digital platforms carries potential risks. Algorithm changes on social media and rising competition for attention can reduce organic reach and overall effectiveness. From a critical IMC perspective, the communication mix leans heavily toward efficiency and personalisation, but underutilises experiential and relationship-focused marketing. Although Netflix's online presence is strong and cohesive, limited offline visibility and minimal community engagement constrain its ability to cultivate long-term brand loyalty beyond the digital screen.

In summary, Netflix demonstrates effective digital integration across media channels, but its narrow reliance on online platforms highlights a clear opportunity to diversify its media mix, deepen emotional engagement, and better reach underserved audience segments.

3. Conclusion

The analysis indicates that Netflix's marketing strategy is largely effective, particularly in driving customer acquisition, engagement, and retention within the highly competitive streaming industry. Marketing at Netflix is clearly integrated into broader strategic decision-making, rather than operating as a standalone promotional function. The company's use of data-driven insights, personalisation, and content-led communication demonstrates strong alignment between its marketing approach and its subscription-based business model.

A key strength of Netflix lies in its ability to deliver customer value through a highly personalised digital experience. The STP analysis showed that, although the platform follows a broad market approach, it successfully tailors communication at the individual level through advanced algorithms. This enhances engagement and reinforces the brand's positioning around convenience, variety, and personalisation. The marketing mix analysis further highlighted strong performance in product and place: high-quality original content and a global, digital-only distribution model give Netflix scalability, accessibility, and a clear competitive edge. Its use of digital media channels—integrating social media, email, and push notifications—ensures timely, consistent communication with users, strengthening the overall customer experience.

However, several weaknesses limit the long-term effectiveness of Netflix's marketing strategy. Pricing emerges as a significant concern, with repeated increases and the addition of an ad-supported tier challenging the brand's premium positioning and undermining customer trust. This suggests that pricing decisions are often reactive, responding to competitive or economic pressures rather than being closely aligned with brand values. Similarly, promotional strategies, while engaging and culturally relevant, tend to prioritise short-term visibility over deeper emotional storytelling and long-term brand loyalty.

The macro and micro-environmental analysis also revealed structural challenges that Netflix's marketing strategy has not fully addressed. Intense competitive rivalry, high customer bargaining power, and the growing threat of substitutes place pressure on differentiation and retention. In addition, limited environmental messaging and minimal offline or community-based engagement highlight missed opportunities to strengthen brand reputation and emotional connection with audiences.

In summary, Netflix's marketing strategy is effective but unbalanced. Its strengths in data-driven personalisation, digital integration, and content marketing support short-term performance and global reach. Yet weaknesses in pricing strategy, emotional brand building, and experiential engagement limit its capacity to cultivate sustained loyalty. As competition continues to intensify, addressing these gaps will be critical to maintaining marketing effectiveness over the long term.

4. Recommendations

Drawing on the findings of the analysis, Netflix's marketing strategy could be strengthened through targeted adjustments that address its current weaknesses while reinforcing existing capabilities. The following recommendations are practical, strategically grounded, and consistent with established marketing theory.

(I) Balance Data-Driven Personalisation with Brand-Led Storytelling

Explanation:

Although Netflix is highly effective in using algorithms to personalise recommendations, its marketing communications tend to focus more on functional cues than emotional brand narratives. Netflix should place greater emphasis on brand-led storytelling that highlights shared viewing experiences, cultural relevance, and the emotional impact of its content, alongside personalised messaging.

Justification:

Brand equity theory suggests that emotional connections play a key role in building long-term loyalty beyond functional benefits alone (Keller, 2013). An excessive reliance on algorithmic recommendations risks turning content into a commodity and weakening emotional attachment to the brand. Stronger storytelling would enhance brand meaning while preserving the benefits of personalisation.

Feasibility:

This recommendation is highly achievable, as Netflix already has strong creative capabilities and established social media presence. The change primarily requires a shift in creative focus rather than significant additional investment, making use of existing teams and channels.

(II) Improve Pricing Communication to Restore Brand Trust

Explanation:

In response to repeated price increases and the introduction of an ad-supported tier, Netflix should adopt a clearer and more consistent approach to pricing communication. Marketing

messages should clearly articulate the value offered at each price point and avoid frequent repositioning that may confuse or frustrate customers.

Justification:

Pricing fairness theory indicates that when consumers perceive price changes as unjustified, trust declines and churn increases (Xia et al., 2004). Transparent, value-based communication can reduce negative perceptions and protect brand credibility, which is particularly important in subscription-based services.

Feasibility:

This recommendation requires minimal financial investment, as it focuses on improving messaging through existing touchpoints such as email, in-app notifications, and on-platform explanations. It can be implemented quickly using current communication systems.

(III) Broaden Media Channel Use to Reach Under-Served Audiences

Explanation:

Netflix's strong focus on digital and social media channels risks over-engaging younger audiences while overlooking older or less digitally active segments. The company should explore selective offline and experiential marketing initiatives, such as brand partnerships, pop-up experiences, or local community screenings.

Justification:

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) theory highlights the importance of balanced channel use and consistent messaging across multiple touchpoints. Expanding beyond digital platforms would improve reach and deepen emotional engagement without compromising efficiency.

Feasibility:

Although offline initiatives involve higher costs, a selective and localised approach would limit financial exposure. Pilot campaigns in key markets could be used to assess effectiveness before wider implementation.

(IV) Reinforce and Clarify Premium Brand Positioning

Explanation:

Netflix should strengthen its premium brand image by ensuring closer alignment between product quality, pricing, and promotional messaging. This includes reducing mixed signals created by advertising-heavy communication and consistently emphasising quality, exclusivity, and user experience as core brand values.

Justification:

Differentiation strategy theory suggests that clear positioning reduces price sensitivity and competitive pressure. Without a well-defined premium identity, Netflix risks becoming indistinguishable in an increasingly crowded streaming market.

Feasibility:

This recommendation is strategically realistic, as it builds on Netflix's existing strengths in content production and user experience design. It requires long-term brand discipline and strategic consistency rather than significant new investment.

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