

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CONNECTING WITH CONSUMERS

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It's easy to become confused about these terms: advertising, marketing, promotion, public relations and publicity, and sales. The terms are often used interchangeably. However, they refer to different - but similar activities. Some basic definitions are provided below.

Advertising is bringing a product (or service) to the attention of potential and current customers. Advertising is focused on one particular product or service. Advertising is typically done with signs, brochures, commercials, direct mailings or e-mail messages, personal contact, etc.

Promotion keeps the product in the minds of the customer and helps stimulate demand for the product. Promotion involves ongoing advertising and publicity (mention in the press).

Public relations includes ongoing activities to ensure the overall company has a strong public image. Public relations activities include helping the public to understand the company and its products. Often, public relations are conducted through the media, that is, newspapers, television, magazines, etc..

Publicity is mention in the media. Organizations usually have little control over the message in the media, at least, not as they do in advertising. Regarding publicity, reporters and writers decide what will be said.

Sales involves most or many of the following activities, including cultivating prospective buyers (or leads) in a market segment; conveying the features, advantages and benefits of a product or service to the lead; and closing the sale (or coming to agreement on pricing and services).

Marketing is much more difficult term. Marketing is a new field of science. It is the art and science of connecting with consumers.

Marketing is the social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others. Kotler.

Marketing is the right product, in the right place, at the right time, at the right price. Adcock.

Marketing is the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you're continuing to meet the needs of your customers and getting value in return.

Marketing is usually focused on one product or service. A marketing plan for one product might be very different than that for another product. Marketing activities include "inbound marketing" and "outbound marketing".

Inbound Marketing Includes Market Research To Find Out:

- 1. What specific groups of potential customers/clients (markets) might have which specific needs.**
- 2. How those needs might be met for each group (or target market), which suggests how a product might be designed to meet the need.**
- 3. How each of the target markets might choose to access the product, etc. (its "packaging").**
- 4. How much the customers/clients might be willing pay and how (pricing analysis).**
- 5. Who the competitors are (competitor analysis).**
- 6. How to design and describe the product such that customers/clients will buy from the organization, rather than from its competitors (its unique value proposition).**
- 7. How the product should be identified - its personality - to be most identifiable (its naming and branding).**

Outbound Marketing Includes:

- 1. Advertising and promotions (focused on the product).**
- 2. Sales.**
- 3. Public and media relations (focused on the entire organization).**
- 4. Customer service.**
- 5. Customer satisfaction.**

Too often, people jump right to the outbound marketing. As a result, they often end up trying to push products into people who really don't want the products at all. Effective inbound marketing often results in much more effective - and less difficult - outbound marketing and sales.

Marketing is science of future and it will help to sale products more effective.