

THE MARKETING CONCEPT

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The marketing concept is a management orientation that holds that the key task of the organization is to determine the needs and wants of target markets and to adapt the organization to delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than its competitors.

In short, the marketing concept says "find wants and fill them" rather than "create products and sell them." This orientation is reflected in various contemporary ads: "Have it your way" (Burger King); "You're the boss" (United Airlines); and "No dissatisfied customers" (Ford).

The marketing concept replaces and reverses the logic of the selling concept. The selling concept starts with the firm's existing products and considers the task as one of using selling and promotion to stimulate a profitable volume of sales. The marketing concept starts with the firm's target customers and their needs and wants; it plans a coordinated set of products and programs to serve their needs and wants; and it derives profits through creating customer satisfaction.

Among the prime practitioners of the marketing concept is McDonald's Corporation, the fast-food hamburger retailer.

Before McDonald's, Americans could get hamburgers in restaurants or diners, but not without problems. In many places, the hamburgers were poor in quality, service was slow, decor was poor, help was uneven, conditions were unclean, and the atmosphere noisy. McDonald's was formulated as an alternative, where the customer could walk into a spotlessly clean outlet, be greeted by a friendly and efficient order-taker, receive a good-tasting hamburger less than a minute after placing the order, with the chance to eat it there or take it out. There were no jukeboxes or telephones to create a teenage hangout, and in fact, McDonald's became a family affair, particularly appealing to the children.

In addition, McDonald's management knows how to efficiently design and operate a complex service operation.

In today's competitive world putting the customer at the heart of the operation is strategically important. Whilst some organizations in certain industries may follow anything other than the market orientation concept, those that follow the market orientation concept have a greater chance of being successful.

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