

Marketing

- 1 Think about the last thing that you bought. Why did you buy it? What attracted you to the product? Discuss your answers with a partner.
- 2 Read the title of the text only. What do you think 'the four Ps' are? Discuss your ideas in pairs, then read quickly the text to check your answers.





Into the mix

the importance of 'the four Ps' in the marketing mix

In today's global economy, companies face a great deal more competition than they used to. This is in part due to the ease with which businesses, especially small ventures, can enter the market. Anyone from anywhere in the world can buy a domain name and start trading online. In order to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals, it is vital that businesses meet their customers' needs as precisely as possible. To do this, a business will use something called the marketing mix to create their brand image and establish their USP (unique selling point) – the thing that makes them stand head and shoulders above the competition.

The marketing mix is comprised of four things, known as the four Ps: product, price, promotion and place.

Product: The business needs to identify what the customers want from the product, its features, the brand name and, most importantly, the thing that differentiates it from the competition.

Price: What is the value of the product to the customer? What price should it be sold at and should there be discounts? Is the product price sensitive? Will dropping the price result in a greater market share? How does it compare with similar products?

Promotion: The business must establish the best way to make potential customers aware of their product. In the past, this would have been through channels such as billboard advertising, television adverts, or word-of-mouth publicity. Today, however, businesses are turning to the Internet to promote their products, for example through targeted adverts (where businesses track people's Internet browsing preferences) and social media (e.g. through viral marketing).



Place: Where is the best place for the product to be sold? Should it be sold in the same place as the competitors' product or would a different place be advantageous?

Each of the four Ps is as important as each other. A company, however, will manipulate the marketing mix, modifying elements as necessary, to create the brand image and USP. Usually businesses rely on consumer research to help them identify specific needs and develop the overall marketing mix. Having done the research, usually in the form of a questionnaire, the business is then in a good position to launch its product with the best chance of success.

Case study – marketing mix

A company selling reusable shopping bags decides on the following:

Product: An eye-catching, brightly-coloured bag made of thin but strong material, which can be folded up and is small enough to be clipped onto a key ring (this is its USP).

Price: Under £1. This is because it costs 50 pence to buy a supermarket reusable bag – if the price is much higher than this, the company risks losing market share.

Promotion: Small poster adverts outside supermarkets; adverts on the supermarket's website; a local supermarket giving a number away as freebies for customers who spend over £100 in one transaction.

Place: Product to be placed by the tills in the supermarket for optimal visibility.



3 Read the text again. Explain the terms below in your own words.

1 global economy

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2 small venture

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3 price sensitivity

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4 market share

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5 consumer research

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4 Read the text in more detail and answer the questions.

1 Why do businesses need to meet their customers' needs?

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2 What is a product's USP?

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3 How can businesses use social media in the marketing mix?

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4 How do businesses identify the needs of their customers? When is this done, ideally?

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5 In the case study, what is the product's USP?

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6 In the case study, why is the product sold for just £1?

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5 Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 Look at the different forms of promotion mentioned in the text. Which of these are popular in your country? Are there any popular forms of promotion that are not mentioned in the text?
- 2 Is online selling popular in your country or do people still prefer to buy products in shops?

?? DID YOU KNOW?

93% of marketers use social media to promote their products. 71% of Internet users are more likely to buy a brand that they are following on social media.

PROJECT

- 1 Work in groups of four. Choose a particular product brand and research its marketing mix.
- 2 Each person in the group should choose one of the four Ps (product, price, promotion or place) to research and make notes on.
 - product
 - price
 - promotion
 - place
- 3 Share your information with the rest of the group in order to make a short presentation about your product. Give your presentation to the rest of the class.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

comprise [v]: to consist of two or more things

differentiate [v]: to see or show a difference between things

ease [n]: the ability to do something easily

manipulate [v]: to handle skilfully, control or use something

optimal [adj]: best or most suitable in a range of possibilities

precisely [adv]: exactly

to stand head and shoulders above someone/

something [phr informal]: much better than all the others

venture [n]: a new business or activity