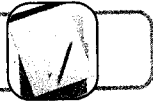


BUILDING YOUR MARKETING PLAN



If your instructor assigns a marketing plan for your class, don't make a face and complain about the work—for two special reasons. First, you will get insights into trying to actually “do marketing” that often go beyond what you can get by simply reading the textbook. Second, thousands of graduating students every year get their first job by showing prospective employers a “portfolio” of samples of their written work from college—often a marketing plan if they have one. This can work for you.

This “Building Your Marketing Plan” section at the end of each chapter gives you suggestions to improve and focus your marketing plan. You will use the sample marketing plan in Appendix A as a guide, and this section after each chapter will help you apply those Appendix A ideas to your own marketing plan. Depending on the topic of your marketing plan, some parts of Appendix A or some sections of Building Your Marketing Plan may not be relevant for your plan.

The first step in writing a good marketing plan is to have a business or product that entuses you and for which you can get detailed information, so you can avoid glitter-

ing generalities. Your instructor probably has guidelines on acceptable topics for marketing plans. Having worked with students on hundreds of marketing plans, we offer these additional bits of advice in selecting a topic:

- 1 *Do* pick a topic that has personal interest for you—a family business, a business or product you or a friend might want to launch, or a student organization needing marketing help.
- 2 *Do not* pick a topic that is so large it can't be covered adequately or so abstract it will lack specifics.

Now to get you started on your marketing plan, list four or five possible topics and compare these with the criteria your instructor suggests and those shown above. Think hard, because your decision will be with you all term long and may influence the quality of the resulting marketing plan you show to a prospective employer.

When you have selected your marketing plan topic whether the plan is for an actual business, a possible business, or a student organization, write the “company description” in your plan, as shown in Appendix A.

VIDEO CASE 1 Rollerblade: Benefits Beyond Expectations



ABT, TRS, TFS . . . and SIS! Does this look like a spoonful of alphabet soup?

Perhaps. But it really refers to Rollerblade's technologies, programs, and commitment to providing in-line skaters with the best quality of skates and skating experiences possible. Or “by providing benefits beyond what people are expecting to have,” as Jeremy Stonier, Rollerblade's director of product marketing, describes it. In fact, Rollerblade's leading-edge technology is covered by more than 200 patents, with more on the way.

ROLLERBLADE'S LAUNCH

At Rollerblade's launch two decades ago only one in-line skate manufacturer existed—Rollerblade. The company had only a single skate line and there were few sales. No one had heard of in-line skating! So Rollerblade used a “guerrilla marketing” campaign to get the word out. It used a tiny budget to develop attention-getting promotions to make people aware of the skates and to try them. Promotions ranged from “Demo Vans” in supermarket parking lots, where prospects could try the skates for a half hour, to putting Rollerblade skates on Minnesota Viking cheerleaders at a football game or Arnold Schwarzenegger. Marketing research was almost limited to what skaters told the Demo Van drivers.

A SKATE LINE FOR EACH SEGMENT

From the outset in-line skaters have been united by common experience: the thrill and fun of the speed and freedom that comes from almost frictionless wheels on their feet. “As the market has matured, it has settled into four core groups of users,” says Stonier. Each requires a number of unique skate features.

“The trickiest segment we sell to is probably the ‘street/vert’ skater—the 14- to 22-year-old in your neighborhood who is doing tricks you might see on ESPN's “Games,” says Stonier. Members of Team Rollerblade, a skating group that gives demonstrations around the country, suggest and test new technologies that find the way first into skates for this segment. The TRS—Team Rollerblade Series—line of skates contains everything from a PFS Specialized form-fit memory foot lining insert for extreme shock absorption to CoolMax fabric to keep the skater's feet cool and dry.

Skate buyers overlap somewhat in the fitness/recreation segment. The “fitness” group probably skates two or three times a week and may even aspire to skate in an in-line marathon. “The fitness user is going at high speeds and skating frequently, so we've developed the Lightning series of skates for women and Aero series for men that are incredibly light weight with an anatomical fit,” says Stonier.



The Aero series have the Total Fit System (TFS) that incorporates a new shell, liner, and closure system. Don't want to waste time buckling the skates? Here you don't need to because you simply pull up on a cord at the back of the skate, giving you a customized fit in a matter of seconds. (That's Stonier in the photo demonstrating it to colleague Nicholas Skally.) A larger view of the Total Fit System appears in the Rollerblade ad on page 4.

Most adult skaters are "recreational" users, for which the Zetrablade skate line is designed. With this skate both beginner and intermediate skaters get the comfort and reliability they want.

Parents are always concerned about having to buy their children new shoes or skates as their feet grow. Not only does the Microblade extendable skate adjust four sizes with a push of a button, but it also has a quick-pull lacing system, padded liner, and shell ventilation designed specifically for children.

The "speed" segment is just what the name implies—expert speed skaters wanting the maximum in technical features and performance. The ProBlade 100 model meets the needs of this segment.

The segments don't stop there. Besides its flagship Rollerblade brand marketed through sporting goods and skate specialty stores, Rollerblade has a lower-priced Bladerunner line sold through mass merchant and sporting goods chain stores. Finally, the global market has enormous potential. With China and South Korea showing high growth today, who knows what new segments could be next?

A FOCUS ON EACH CONSUMER

"One of the big differences between marketing today and in the future is that we will be able to reach each person, such as designing your own personal workout program," says Nicholas Skally, Rollerblade's manager

of marketing and public relations. Rollerblade's website (www.rollerblade.com) is a step in that direction. "An important benefit of the website is our ability to acquire marketing research data on individual consumers inexpensively," says Skally. This enables Rollerblade to get feedback and ideas from users very inexpensively. Website topics include everything from helping you choose which skate is right for you (Skate Selector) to helping you brush up on your braking technique.

In the past, Rollerblade often sent out millions of direct-mail pieces or buying commercials on national TV networks. Today, Skally points out that Rollerblade now focuses more narrowly by selecting magazines that link directly to the user segments or grassroots programs like Skate-in-School (SIS) that offer physical education class options to students in more than 750 schools.

ROLLERBLADE'S FIRSTS

"If you're going to buy a pair of in-line skates, it only make sense to buy from us," says Stonier, "because we're the ones who started it, perfected it, and continue to push the innovation." As evidence of Rollerblade's innovation, he points to a number of firsts, such as the use of polyurethane boots and wheels, metal frames, dual bearings, and heel brakes. Other firsts include breathable liners, push-button adjustable children's skates, skates designed specifically for women, and the award-winning Advanced Braking Technology (ABT) that allows braking without raising the toe of the skate.

Questions

- 1 What trends in the environmental forces (social, economic, technological, competitive, and regulatory) identified in Figure 1-3 in the chapter (a) work for and (b) work against Rollerblade's potential growth in the twenty-first century?
- 2 Compare the marketing goals for Rollerblade (a) in 1986 when Rollerblade was launched and (b) today.
- 3 What kind of focused communication and promotion actions might Rollerblade take to reach the (a) recreational and (b) children market segments? For some starting ideas, visit rollerblade.com.
- 4 In searching for global markets to enter, (a) what are some criteria that Rollerblade should use to select countries to enter, and (b) what three or four countries meet these criteria best and are the most likely candidates?

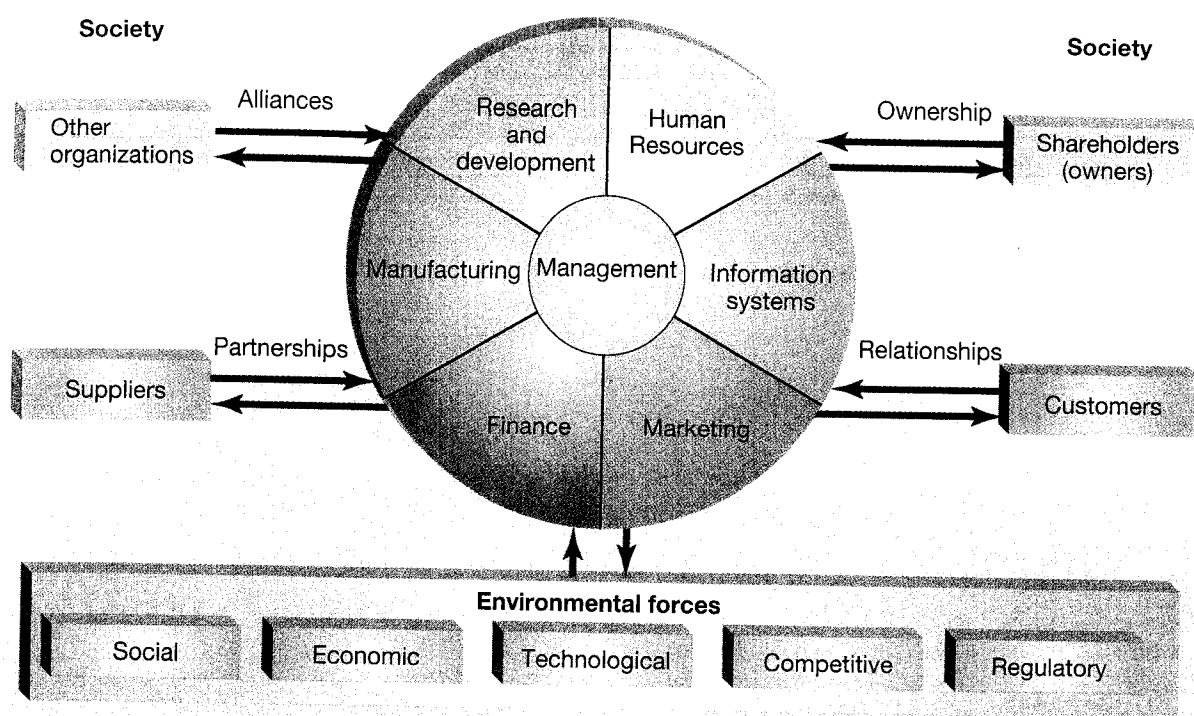


FIGURE 1-3

An organization's marketing department relates to many people, groups, and forces.

the organization, management is responsible for establishing these goals. The marketing department works closely with a network of other departments and employees to help provide the customer-satisfying products required for the organization to survive and prosper.

Figure 1-3 also shows the key people, groups, and forces outside the organization that influence marketing activities. The marketing department is responsible for facilitating relationships, partnerships, and alliances with the organization's customers, its shareholders (or often representatives of groups served by a non-profit organization), its suppliers, and other organizations. Environmental forces such as social, technological, economic, competitive, and regulatory factors also shape an organization's marketing activities. Finally, an organization's marketing decisions are affected by and, in turn, often have an important impact on society as a whole.

The organization must strike a continual balance among the sometimes differing interests of these individuals and groups. For example, it is not possible to simultaneously provide the lowest-priced and highest-quality products to customers and pay the highest prices to suppliers, highest wages to employees, and maximum dividends to shareholders.

Requirements for Marketing to Occur

For marketing to occur, at least four factors are required: (1) two or more parties (individuals or organizations) with unsatisfied needs, (2) a desire and ability on their part to be satisfied, (3) a way for the parties to communicate, and (4) something to exchange.

Two or More Parties with Unsatisfied Needs Suppose you've developed an unmet need—a desire for information about how computer and telecommunications are interacting to reshape the workplace—but you didn't yet know that *ComputerWorld*

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