

The 4 Marketing P's: Wicked Whoopies

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Marketing Principles

Introduction

Maintaining good customer relationships is the key to marketing. Amy Bouchard, founder of Isamax Snacks, uses a variation of marketing principles to sustain customer needs. The combination of the marketing mix: product, price, place and distribution and promotion are the tools used to make her company profitable.

To understand the consumers' expectations, the customer must first be identified. Whoopie pies are not specific; anyone can enjoy one, making it easy to market to a large segment. Originally, Bouchard sold the whoopie pies to people in her community. These customers soon turned into loyal lifetime consumers since they were hooked on the delicious tasting product.

Whoopie pies aren't necessary. This makes it harder to market, so Isamax must differentiate itself. The treats are consumed for pleasure. Food is necessary, but there might be a want or craving for a whoopie pie, which will be satisfying, therefore making the treat a demand. Market offerings create a brand and personal experience.

Bouchard can relate to her customer markets by being a mother and modest family woman. Through this basic relationship, consumers feel as though they are buying from a peer, rather than a big company whose only concern is profit.

Business markets include convenience stores and other resellers. Isamax must appeal to these customers positively, so they will be convinced that their business can be more profitable if they partner with Isamax.

Isamax developed a mission statement to distinguish themselves from competition and give the customer proof of their brand. Bouchard says there are "10 smiles in every whoopie". This basic statement is market oriented; expressing that it will fulfill the want of a snack.

Isamax has a large marketing environment. The microenvironment plays a role in the service and brand of the company. Amy created the brand, named after her children, while her husband controls the customer service and shipping departments. Others in the microenvironment are the workers, chain suppliers and intermediaries. The macroenvironment includes the different affects on the company such as the segment and outer circle of the marketing mix.

Product

Wicked Whoopies are a tangible good. Although Bouchard didn't invent the whoopie pie, she took the simple recipe and made it her own, resulting in a brand. Bouchard provides the service of producing whoopie pies and selling them to the public.

By co-producing with family and now a group of employees working in three different bakery locations, Bouchard has spread the whoopie craze and satisfied customers, who are defined as "everyone in America" (<http://wickedwhoopies.com/info>).

As a convenience good, Wicked Whoopies are relatively cheap and purchased often. There is a widespread distribution of the whoopies and they are easily accessible. Many stores stock these treats because they know the customer will buy on impulse; they aren't going to the grocery store specifically to buy whoopie pies.

Wicked Whoopies are both an industrial and consumer product. Selling through convenience stores, coffee shops and Hannaford supermarkets, Bouchard conducts business through business. Isamax also sells directly to the customer by mail orders purchased online in addition to their three bakeries in Maine.

Isamax had to go through a series of steps to achieve the maturity in the product life cycle it currently obtains. Originally, Amy Bouchard was a mother of two looking to make some extra money while taking care of her kids. With the knowledge that friends and family loved her whoopie pies, she set out to share these whoopies with more people and turn a profit. Without any business experience, she used her home kitchen, making about a dozen whoopies an hour and delivering them herself. Sales were low and she kept her earnings in a jar. Bouchard realized that her business could flourish if she moved into a bakery. By expanding to a selection of flavors and solely concentrating on whoopie pies, Isamax grew. In the maturity level, Wicked Whoopies has been talked about nationally and orders come in from all over the country.

Although Isamax's core product is whoopie pies, they service supplementary products as well. The whoopies are available in 20 different flavors. In their stores, they diversify by offering other bakery items.

Augmented benefits support the business as well. The whoopies will ship in one to three days. Isamax also provides a customer service support department.

Price

When setting a price for the whoopies, Isamax had to examine their costs. Time is also a cost for the company. The brand name of Wicked Whoopies increases the cost, therefore increasing customer value.

Distinguishing themselves as the only bakery solely dedicated to producing whoopie pies, Isamax can keep their price low because of lack of competition. Other bakeries may manufacture whoopie pies, however the Wicked Whoopie has branded itself on the flavor and experience the customer will have. Wicked Whoopies are at a variable cost of around \$1.39. If bought in bundle, which is required by online shoppers, the cost is 12 for \$24, plus shipping. The price penetration used by Isamax reflects the impulse buying and wide market. Perceptual mapping shows that Wicked Whoopies are abundant in Maine and in grocery or convenience stores.

Isamax's price is also reflected legally. The cost of shipping and taxes they have to pay, enforced by the government, might cause the price they charge their customer to go up.

The economy has a big effect on price. In the current economy, there is a lot of pressure to cut back on spending. Wicked Whoopies can be a cheap and easy way to give gifts or treat oneself. By supporting local business, customers are helping the economy. However, since Wicked Whoopies are a want rather than a need, customers will cut out the treats so they can save money. These savings will go to their necessities.

The natural environment is another effect on price. Families suffering the hurricanes in the South have a lot of expenses and cannot afford to buy unnecessary items. Some eco-friendly people may not want to buy whoopie pies, since it may be considered an unhealthy, processed food.

Technology cuts into price through help of machinery and computers. Paying for the website and appearing on Google searches may be an added cost, however it will help spread the word through the segment and increase profits by online orders. Computers and calculations will help to figure out the cost of the whoopie pies and the materials needed to bake them.

Place and Distribution

Isamax has a consumer and business segment. They will sell to resellers and directly to consumers. The undifferentiated strategy is used to get the product out to the entire market because whoopies are a basic good. Wicked Whoopies are not specific to demographics, because anyone can be interested in eating a whoopie. Geographics show that the local area is Isamax's most affluent segment because they are the most knowledgeable of the brand.

In tangible distribution, Isamax uses intermediaries to get the Wicked Whoopies to the buyers. The internet is one of the biggest intermediaries for Isamax. When shipping the whoopies, Isamax uses UPS to get their product to the consumer. Sourcing is used to develop Wicked Whoopies and research to find other ways to publicize the brand.

Value chains, such as Hannaford supermarkets, team up with Isamax to sell Wicked Whoopies. By co-producing with another brand, Wicked Whoopies become more widespread and profitable.

To ensure market coverage, Isamax uses intensive distribution. Through penetration, Isamax can identify their prospects and stimulate shoppers to buy their product. The company gets their whoopies into any available outlet.

Isamax will use market penetration to make more sales to current customers without changing the product. They opened a third store in Maine making their whoopies more accessible to their current customer base.

By use of market development, Isamax has been expanding where their product is sold. Hannaford is stocking Wicked Whoopies in more stores on the east coast. Having a website opens the market up to the whole world.

Technology, such as www.wickedwhoopies.com, has helped Isamax conduct business. Fast shipping ensures that the customer will receive their whoopie pie in one day. The company can interact with their intermediaries and resellers through business-to-business e-commerce. Computers help to review inventory, pay bills and understand the market. Machines have reduced the number of employees needed and increased outlets in time and availability.

Promotion

Bouchard started her brand through personal selling, since her customer base was easily accessible. However, to increase awareness through pull promotion, Wicked Whoopies has used a mix of strategies.

Bouchard herself can be viewed as a cash cow for the company. In Maine, she is the poster-girl for a hometown, motivated housewife who wanted to achieve more. She encourages her customers to be happy and follow in her footsteps to break the mold.

In the media, Wicked Whoopies has been featured in a number of magazines and television shows. The company's website shows clips of national shows discussing Wicked Whoopies. Isamax has received free publicity through newspapers as well. This promotion has given more people knowledge of Wicked Whoopies and has shown the product positively. Discussion of Wicked Whoopies in Roger Williams Marketing class 200.01 has encouraged product trial.

Isamax uses current customers to receive more customers; this is called consumer-generated marketing. On the Wicked Whoopies website, there are various quotes from loyal customers who have been satisfied with the whoopies. Pleased customers will continue to buy and tell others of their good experience. Customer-perceived value is very important to Isamax, because it is an evaluation by outsiders of their positive opinion of the brand.

Socio-culturally, customers are impressed by Wicked Whoopies. Brining a box of Wicked Whoopies to a party or as a gift is a way to differentiate boring trends such as flowers or chocolate. However, the current obsession with weight might alter consumption. People concerned with their figure will not be willing to buy a lot of whoopie pies when they are on a diet.

Bouchard takes the time to educate her customers on why they should buy her product. She gives customer testimonial in addition to history of the brand. Isamax shows how they are different from their competition and reassures the customer that they will be satisfied with Wicked Whoopies. The physical evidence of Wicked Whoopies comes from taste and appearance of the product.

Conclusion

Amy Bouchard and Isamax have found success by tapping into a market with a differentiated product. A strong marketing plan incorporating the marketing mix:

product, price, place and distribution and promotion have supported the profitability of the company. With continued support of customers, the accessibility of the internet and exposure in the media, the Wicked Whoopies will grow and realized increased profitability.