

BUS 214: PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING II

Study Session 2

1. TOPIC: THE PROMOTIONAL PLAN

2. Introduction

In the last Study Session we discussed the meaning, nature and the objectives of promotion. In this Session, we shall consider how a marketer can go about implementing the promotional plan. Promotion is one of the basic elements of the Marketing mix. When product is launched newly into the market, aggressive promotional effort has to be embarked upon to create the awareness in potential customers. This chapter will attempt to evaluate the various promotional strategies which help marketers achieve their marketing communication objectives.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

After studying this session, you should be able to:

- (a) explain the steps involved in a promotional plan; and
- (b) explain the factors that determine effective promotion message.

3. Steps Involved in Promotional Plan

For promotion to be effective and result-oriented, it must be properly planned and carefully implemented. The following steps are followed:

Step 1: Selling Objectives

Step 2: Identifying the Target Market

Step 3: Developing a Budget

Step 4: Choosing a Message

Step 5: Determining the Promotional Mix

Step 6: Selecting the Media Mix

Step 7: Measuring Effectiveness

Selling Objectives: Before embarking on a particular promotional exercise, it is essential to establish the objectives the promotion is aimed at achieving. It is indeed impossible to plan a promotional program unless the marketing manager knows what goals he or she is trying to achieve. The objective could be one of creating awareness, increasing level of sales or reminding purchasers of the brand name, or capturing new customers.

Identifying the Target Market the market segment that the firm wants to reach in a given promotional campaign should be explicitly defined both demographically and perhaps, psychographically through market research. Naturally, the target market should consist primarily of the individuals where most likely to purchase the product within a relevant period. For a new product in home use, test marketing; on focus groups provide valuable insights into characteristics of potential buyers.

Developing a Budget after a marketing manager has specified the promotional goals and identified the relevant market segments; a concrete promotional budget can be developed. At this stage, top-level management decision-making is required. It is not the duty of the marketing manager alone.

Choosing a Message after promotional objectives have been created, target markets identified, and promotional budgets established, management could begin preparing the right message to reach the target. The nature of the message will vary, depending on the goals of the promotion. If the product is in the introductory phase of the product life cycle, product information will probably be the major message.

Determining the Promotional Mix: Often different message themes are developed for each promotion tool. For example, public relations may be charged with creating a positive corporate image among target customers. Advertising will focus on developing corporate and product awareness to complement personal selling. The function of personal selling will be to interact with customers by amplifying and explaining the advertising messages and designing the right product or services to meet the specific needs of customers. Sales promotion may come into the picture by communicating a “special discount” to prospective buyers if they purchase now. Thus, public relations, advertising and sales promotion are all aimed at increasing sales effectiveness.

Measuring Effectiveness: The next stage is to assess the success or otherwise of a chosen promotional tool. Where a tool failed to achieve the set goal, a modification could be made.

4. Designing the Promotional Plan

Having identified the target audience of a promotion and established the goal, the marketer must design a realistic message to make the promotion meaningful and effectively convincing. Ideally the message should get attention, hold interest, arouse desire and elicit action i.e. (AIDA Model). In formulating the message, the marketer must consider solving four problems:

1. Message content – In terms of what to say
2. Message structure – In terms of how to say it logically

3. Format – In terms of how to express it symbolically
4. Message source – In terms of who should say it

Message Content: The communicator must figure out what to say to the target audience to produce the desired response. This involves formulating some kind of benefit, motivation, identification or reason why the audience should think about or investigate the product. Three types of appeals can be distinguished:

1. **Rational appeal**, which shows that the product will produce the claimed functional benefit.
2. **Emotional appeal** which attempts to stir up some negative or positive emotion that will motivate purchase.
3. **Moral appeal**, which is directed to the audiences' sense of what is right and proper. They are often used to exhort people to support social causes, such as cleaner environment etc.

Message Structure: Message effectiveness depends on its structure as well as its content. Messages can be communicated in a way that leads to a logical conclusion about the benefits of the product. For example, a current advertisement on TV that shows how a man tries to contact his doctor through the telephone. The logical conclusion here will be that the binatone brand of telephone is better than any other type.

Message Format: The communication must develop a strong format for the message. In print advert, the communicator has to decide on the headline copy, illustration and colour. To attract attention, advertisers use such devices as key visuals, a pay off, image, demonstrations, testimonials, emotion, and music. If the message is to be carried over the television, all of these elements plus body language have to be planned, and presenters have to pay attention to their facial expressions, gestures, dress, posture, and hair style. If the message is carried by the product or packaging, the communicator has to pay attention to colour, texture, scent, size and shape.

Message Source: Messages delivered by attractive sources achieve higher attention and recall. Advertisers often use celebrities and spokes people, for as Mohammed Ali for a Ribena Drink and our local Austin Okocha for IGI Insurance. The source of a message should be attractive, likeable and trustworthy.

5. Summary of Study Session 2, 'Promotional Plan'

Now that you have completed this study Session 2, you have learnt the various stages involved in the promotional plan and Message content, message structure, format and

message source have been identified as the major factors that determine the effectiveness of a promotion message.

6. 9. Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 1

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess yourself with the following questions:

- (a) Identify and explain the stages involved in promotional plan
- (b) Explain: Rational Appeal, Moral Appeal and Emotional Appeal
- (c) What factors determine the effectiveness of a promotion message?
- (d) Explain the AIDA mode

7. Notes on SAQs for Study Session 2

9. Reference

Kotlen, Phillips (1988) *Marketing Management* New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Ltd.