

Today's Definition of Marketing. Has It Changed?

By [Bobette Kyle](#)

With the continued proliferation of the Internet, the meaning of the word "marketing" also seems to proliferate. Cyberspace has opened up a whole arena of new marketing technologies, techniques, and twists. Amidst the online exuberance, it seems each online marketer or salesperson changes the definition of marketing to suit his or her preference.

Many times, ill-conceived notions and perceptions reduce the meaning of the word "marketing" to a shadow of it's true self. Many see marketing as a series of tactics or gimmicks. Some define marketing as pyramid programs and the like. Others treat the words "marketing" and "sales" or "marketing" and "advertising as synonymous. None of these adequately convey the definition of marketing.

Different Marketing Definitions

Along with all of the new terminology, new techniques, and new twists the Internet has brought us, it has also opened opportunities for misguided notions about the definition of marketing. While the above definitions describe different facets or definitions of related terms, they do not convey the much broader process that is truly marketing. By taking a look at some dictionary and trade definitions of marketing we can get a better feel for what marketing is truly about:

American Marketing Association Definition

The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives. (Note 1)

American Heritage Dictionary's Definition of Marketing

The commercial functions involved in transferring goods from producer to consumer. (Note 2)

Merriam Webster's Marketing Definition

1 b: the process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service. 2: an aggregate of functions involved in moving goods from producer to consumer. (Note 3)

Marketing Definition From MSN Encarta Dictionary

The business activity of presenting products or services to potential customers in such a way as to make them eager to buy. Marketing includes such matters as the pricing and packaging of the product and the creation of demand by advertising and sales campaigns. (Note 4)

Note the phrasing: "The process," "functions involved," "process or technique," "an aggregate," "the business activity." These all get to the heart of the definition of marketing.

As a process, there are certain foundations of marketing that will never become obsolete. We still have products, services, and ideas to sell at some price. We deliver to our customers via some means of distribution. We promote and we advertise. Those are the basics. Those basics still exist and always will.

If The Marketing Definition Hasn't Changed, Then What Has?

What has changed is the business environment. Companies compete with more efficient technologies. Customers have better access to their cost options and they communicate to each other in ways not conceivable in the pre-Internet age.

In some industries, the Internet has lowered the cost of entry so that entrepreneurs -- many times from a home office -- have entered the competition. The changes in competitive environment are numerous. What have also changed are marketing strategies and the marketing programs we have available to implement those strategies.

These have changed, but the basic marketing definition has not. Superior marketing is and always has been analysis, then action. It is strategy development, then logical and thought-out tactical implementation. It is the way to customer satisfaction and increasing profit.

The steps to successful marketing and implementation include:

- 1) Analyzing your customers and the business environment in order to
- 2) identify key opportunities to better and more profitably meet customer needs,
- 3) figuring out how to act on those opportunities, and then
- 4) implementing your plan.

The process doesn't have to be cumbersome. Five-year plans and novel-length documents are not required. The logic of the action is what is important.

By applying the basic marketing process, rather than a tactic here and a technique there, your chances of success skyrocket.

Notes: 1. <http://www.marketingpower.com/live/mg-dictionary.php>

2. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by the Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

3. Merriam-Webster Online, <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>

4. <http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/dictionaryhome.aspx>

About The Author

Bobette Kyle draws upon 12+ years of Marketing/Executive experience, Marketing MBA, and online marketing research in her writing. Bobette is proprietor of the Web Site Marketing Plan Network <http://www.WebSiteMarketingPlan.com> and author of the marketing plan and Web promotion book "How Much For Just the Spider? Strategic Website Marketing For Small Budget Business, <http://www.howmuchforspider.com/TOC.htm> .

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