

Marketing Mix Lesson 1: Product Design

SUBMITTED BY: Leya Matthew

SUBJECT(S): Marketing

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

According to Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2007), all marketing decisions are based on assumptions and knowledge of consumer behavior. Understanding the motivations and behaviors of the consumers is thus a vital aspect of any marketing plan or strategy. In this concluding lesson, students build on concepts from previous lessons to plan, execute and reflect on a project on consumer behavior. For this project, they are asked to prepare and survey their peers in the class for their perceptions and behaviors around a particular product. This is then compared to an analysis of the marketing strategies of this product to arrive at some general observations. The Knowledge@Wharton article provides some basic resources for survey preparation. Other aspects are discussed and resolved in class.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Marketing, I. Foundations of Marketing
- Marketing, IV. The Marketing Mix

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“Young Entrepreneurs Make Headlines — and Cash”](#)
- [“Developing Prototypes: ‘Share Your Ideas in Hopes of Improving Them’”](#)
- [“Crowdfunding, Creativity and Kickflips Inside a Church in Spain”](#)
- [“Corn Flake Innovation and the Battling Brothers Behind the Kellogg’s Brand”](#)
- [“Advice from Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs with Three Very Different Products”](#)

- “A Teen Entrepreneur Ventures into Cyclist Safety and Product Sales”
- “A High School Freshman Raises Funds on Kickstarter for Her New Kind of Backpack”

Common Core Standard(s):

1. CCR Standard for Reading: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it.
2. CCR Standards for Listening: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on each other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
3. CCR Standards for Speaking: Present information, findings and supporting evidence in such a way that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development and style are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.

Objectives/Purposes: Students will analyze product design and design a product.

Other Resources/Materials: Internet access

Activity:

1. The teacher introduces the idea of business plan competitions. (5 mins)

Many business schools or business programs have a business plan competition, which is where student-entrepreneurs actively apply all the concepts they learn in business classes into a hands-on comprehensive project.

Wharton’s 2011 Business Plan Competition

The team judged to have the most viable business plan receives the \$30,000 Michelson Grand Prize plus \$15,000 in legal and accounting services. The second-place winner receives \$15,000 in cash and \$15,000 in legal and accounting services, and the third-place winner gets \$10,000 in cash and \$15,000 in legal and accounting services.

Like Wharton, *Businessweek* magazine has a similar competition, which is open to all American entrepreneurs below the age of 25. Business plans can provide you with opportunities to find resources to start your own company, find partners to design and execute your dream company, and to really get into the nitty-gritty of planning a company and asking investors for money.

Whether your school has a business plan competition or not, it is interesting to look at: What makes for a great business plan? What kinds of plans are selected to enter the competition? Which ones make it to the top prizes. There seems to be a clear trend in the winning teams — it is not just the finesse of presentation, or the sophistication of their plan. Business plan winners have specialized products, they target niche segments, and provide a tangible value to the target customer.

2. Analyzing the winners (5-8 mins)

The teacher distributes copies of the Wharton Global Youth Program article: “Young Entrepreneurs Make Headlines — and Cash.” After students finish reading the article, the teacher pulls up additional descriptions and pictures of some of the winning ideas — Johnny Cupcakes, NoteHall, and Intern Queen.

Pictures of the Johnny Cupcakes store provide an interesting visual aid. T-shirts are sold in a store that resembles a bakery, and customers take their T-shirts home in a bakery-cake-box.

The teacher leads a class discussion on the examples used in the concepts explained in the introductory section. Here, student perceptions and questions are solicited.

3. Work in small groups (10 mins)

Students are randomly divided into small groups. One small group is chosen to be the panel of judges; these students form a separate group and develop their criteria for judging the product/product line. The other groups are asked to develop a product based on the discussions earlier. If the school has a business plan competition, this can be a platform for students to come together and build their plans.

4. Sell your product (20 mins)

This section is organized like a competition. Though there is a student panel of judges, it might be prudent to make your own notes about the presentations and provide students with your feedback too. Each group presents the product to the panel. The student panel of judges is given full liberty to conduct this section.

After the students present their product design ideas, the panel deliberates on their decision and finally announces winners, and the basis for their decisions.

The teacher wraps up.

Tying It All Together: This lesson focuses on one of the 4Ps of the marketing mix. Though it places the Product at the center of the marketing mix, it explores the relationship the product has with consumer segmentation and the other Ps of the marketing mix.

This lesson format presents students with an opportunity, and the resources and support required to make use of that opportunity. The competitive element provides additional motivation to internalize the marketing concepts involved. The group work supports and challenges individual students to work collaboratively on designing an innovative product/product line. Furthermore, the format of the lesson prepares students for the auxiliary elements involved — clarity and creativity of presentation.

Practice Outside the Classroom: The next time you purchase a product, examine why you chose this particular product and not any other. What value does this product offer that none of its competitors provide? If this product provides you with no unique value, why did you then still buy this particular product?

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: Even without an external business plan competition as a motivational factor, the idea of competing has its own intrinsic motivational value. On the other hand, it might be interesting to pilot a business plan competition at the school level. This could evolve into a support program for students interested in business and it could also connect such students with industry professionals.

If needed, please clarify the difference between a product and a service during class time.

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