

MODULE 1 OF 11 · FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING

What Is Marketing?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Explain the marketing concept and distinguish a market orientation from a production or selling orientation; define needs, wants and demands.

KEY VOCABULARY

Marketing concept

Needs / wants / demands

Exchange

Production orientation

Market orientation

WHY THIS MATTERS

Every other module in this course builds on one idea: that marketing starts with the customer, not the factory. Get this concept solid early and everything downstream (research, segmentation, the mix) makes more sense.

WARM-UP QUESTION

“Is marketing the same thing as advertising? Why, or why not?”

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Can a business be too market-orientated — always chasing what customers say they want, even when it isn't sustainable?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Think of a product that didn't exist ten years ago. What need was it actually meeting?

Core Concepts

A production or selling orientation looks inward

A production-orientated business assumes customers just want the product made efficiently and cheaply; a selling-orientated one focuses on persuading people to buy what's already been made.

Example: A factory that only asks "how do we make more, faster?" without asking what customers actually want is production-orientated — classic early-20th-century Ford Model T thinking.

A market orientation looks outward

It starts by understanding customer needs and wants, then designs the product, price, place and promotion around that understanding.

Example: A coffee shop that surveys regulars before changing its menu, rather than guessing, is behaving with a market orientation.

Needs, wants and demands are not the same thing

A need is a basic requirement (thirst); a want is how a person chooses to meet that need, shaped by culture and personality (a specific brand of soda); a demand is a want backed by the ability and willingness to pay.

Example: Everyone needs to travel to work. Some want a car, some want a bicycle — and only those who can and will actually pay for one turn that want into demand.

COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID

Treating "market orientation" as just being friendly to customers — it's a strategic starting point (research first, product second), not just good customer service.

Running the Lesson

TEACHING OUTLINE

1. Contrast a production/selling orientation with a market orientation.
2. Define needs, wants, demands and the exchange process.
3. Trace briefly how marketing thinking evolved over time.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

In pairs, students pick a familiar brand and identify one genuine "need" and one "want" it satisfies.

MINI CASE STUDY

A small bakery used to bake whatever the owner liked best (production orientation) and struggled to sell out. After asking regular customers what they actually wanted more of, it shifted its whole weekly menu around demand — and started selling out by lunchtime.

RECAP

- Marketing begins with understanding the customer, not the factory.
- A market orientation designs the whole business around customer needs.
- Needs, wants and demands sit on a scale from basic requirement to a want someone will actually pay for.

HOMEWORK / EXTENSION

Find one advert and decide: does the business behind it seem market-orientated, or product/selling-orientated? Justify the answer in two sentences.

Full lesson & free auto-marked quiz: marketingteacher.com/courses/foundations-of-marketing/lessons/what-is-marketing-the-marketing-concept/