MARKETING MANAGEMENT

Part 1 - Finding the Customer

S346 MBA | Lessons 1-6 | 3 hours

From a Small Stall to a Successful Brand

Participant handout for a facilitated storytelling session. Read the episode, discuss the decision, and record your recommendation.

Case setting

Meena, a young MBA graduate in Chidambaram, is developing her family's millet breakfast stall. Raman, her father, trusts product quality. Arjun, her friend, trusts promotion. You are Meena's marketing advisory team. The case, characters, and figures are fictional.

Session route

Minutes	Session segment
0-10	Opening story and prior knowledge
10-30	Lesson 1: Marketing: Definition and Importance
30-55	Lesson 2: Concepts of Marketing
55-80	Lesson 3: Marketing Management Tasks
80-90	Break
90-115	Lesson 4: Marketing Environment
115-140	Lesson 5: Marketing Strategies
140-170	Lesson 6: Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning
170-180	Integration, team pitch, and reflection

Name: _____ Team: _____

Facilitator: Prof. (Dr.) A. Selvarasu, Professor of Management, Annamalai University

LESSON 1 | 10-30 min

Marketing: Definition and Importance

The story

At eight o'clock, fifty millet breakfast packs remained unsold at Raman's Chidambaram stall. Raman blamed customers for ignoring good food. Meena, his daughter and a recent MBA graduate, spoke to Kavya, a student who had walked past. Kavya needed breakfast, but had only five minutes. She worried about a leaking container and could not see the price. Meena realised that the food was only one part of the offering.

Raman: "Our food is good. Why did she leave?" Meena: "She needs breakfast that fits her journey, time, and budget."

Concepts to carry forward

Marketing begins with customer needs and develops an offering that creates value and supports exchange. Place utility means making it accessible; time utility means making it available when needed; possession utility helps the customer acquire it. Selling is one activity within the wider marketing process.

Team activity | approximately 10 minutes

In pairs, complete: Our customer is not simply buying ____. The customer is trying to achieve ____. Then suggest one change to the stall.

Your working notes

Identify one unmet customer need and explain how your proposed change creates value.

Remember: Marketing connects the offering to the customer's life.

LESSON 2 | 30-55 min

Concepts of Marketing

The story

The family debated its next step. Raman wanted larger production and lower costs. The cook wanted a perfect recipe. Arjun, Meena's friend, wanted discounts and stronger persuasion. Meena interviewed students, commuters, and families instead. Their needs differed. She also noticed discarded packaging outside the stall and asked whether success should include the effect on the community.

Arjun: "A bigger discount will solve it." Meena: "Only if the offer already addresses a need worth paying for."

Concepts to carry forward

Production orientation stresses efficiency and availability. Product orientation stresses quality and features. Selling orientation stresses persuasion. Marketing orientation starts with customer needs. Societal marketing considers customer satisfaction, business viability, and longer-term social welfare.

Team activity | approximately 10 minutes

Form five groups. Each represents one orientation. Prepare a one-minute recommendation to Raman. Discuss which useful idea should be retained from each approach.

Your working notes

Which orientation best guides Meena's decision, and how can production quality and selling support it?

Remember: Customer understanding gives direction to business effort.

LESSON 3 | 55-80 min

Marketing Management Tasks

The story

Demand did not behave consistently. Some people disliked millet food; some had never considered it. Office workers wanted an option the stall did not yet offer. Weekdays were busy, Sundays quiet, and festival orders exceeded kitchen capacity. Meena rejected the idea of giving every customer the same discount. She matched each demand condition with a different response.

Meena: "Before choosing an action, name the demand problem."

Concepts to carry forward

Negative demand: conversional marketing. No demand: stimulational marketing. Latent demand: developmental marketing. Declining demand: remarketing. Irregular demand: synchromarketing. Full demand: maintenance marketing. Excessive demand: demarketing. Unwholesome demand: countermarketing, illustrated through a separate harmful-product example.

Team activity | approximately 10 minutes

Choose one demand condition. Describe the evidence, select the task, and recommend one action. Example: excessive festival demand may require advance booking and limited order slots.

Your working notes

How is remarketing different from synchromarketing? Give a story example of each.

Remember: Manage the level, timing, and nature of demand.

LESSON 4 | 90-115 min

Marketing Environment

The story

A supplier raised ingredient prices. A nearby cafe introduced delivery. Heavy rain reduced passing traffic. A local office changed its reporting time. Raman was puzzled because the recipe had not changed. Meena explained that their business was operating within a changing environment. She began a weekly log of changes, implications, and possible responses.

Raman: "We changed nothing." Meena: "Our customers and operating conditions did."

Concepts to carry forward

The immediate environment includes customers, suppliers, competitors, and intermediaries. Wider influences include economic, social, cultural, technological, political, and ecological conditions. Scanning becomes useful when an observation leads to a practical decision.

Team activity | approximately 10 minutes

Respond to four fictional headlines: packaging costs rise; mobile ordering grows; office reporting begins earlier; rain disrupts transport. For each write: change, implication, response.

Your working notes

Which factor is an opportunity, which is a threat, and what evidence would change your judgement?

Remember: Observe the environment and adapt with purpose.

LESSON 5 | 115-140 min

Marketing Strategies

The story

A large restaurant opened nearby with low-priced breakfast combos. Arjun proposed a price war. Raman wanted to protect regular customers. Meena identified commuters who needed dependable collection before 8:30 a.m. The small kitchen could serve that group well, even though it could not compete with the restaurant on every dimension.

Meena: "We must choose where our capabilities matter most."

Concepts to carry forward

Confrontation challenges competitors directly. Defensive strategy protects an existing position. Niche strategy serves a defined segment distinctively. Demarketing restrains or redirects demand when necessary. Remarketing renews demand. Strategy should link opportunity, objectives, resources, and competitive choices.

Team activity | approximately 10 minutes

Recommend a strategy using: We recommend ____ because customers need ____ and we can reliably provide ____. Add a measurable target, such as 30 repeat weekday customers within a month, then state how feasibility will be tested.

Your working notes

Why might a niche strategy fit this business? Under what conditions would you reconsider it?

Remember: Strategy is a supported choice about where and how to compete.

LESSON 6 | 140-170 min

Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning

The story

Raman suggested the sign "Breakfast for Everyone". Meena compared students, families, commuters, and institutional buyers. Their budgets, timing, quantities, and purchasing processes differed. She selected commuters as the first target and proposed a promise: familiar-tasting breakfast ready for collection before work. The team then checked whether its operations could deliver that promise.

Raman: "Why exclude anyone?" Meena: "We can welcome buyers while focusing our resources on a clear target."

Concepts to carry forward

Segmentation groups customers meaningfully. Targeting evaluates and selects groups to serve. Positioning establishes a distinctive value proposition in the target customer's mind. Consumer bases include geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioural factors. Industrial segmentation can use organisation type, location, volume, and purchasing requirements.

Team activity | approximately 10 minutes

Create three segments, select one with reasons, write a positioning statement, and name an operational promise needed to support it.

Your working notes

For [target], our [offering] provides [benefit] because [credible support]. Complete the statement.

Remember: Select a customer and make a credible promise.

Bring the lessons together

Final team task | 10 minutes

Prepare a one-minute advisory pitch: Which customer will Meena serve, what problem will she solve, and why will that customer choose her?

One-page customer and strategy brief

Customer need and value offered

Relevant marketing orientation and demand task

Environmental opportunity or threat

Chosen strategy and measurable objective

Target segment and positioning statement

Individual reflection: What decision changed after listening to the customer?

Source alignment: Annamalai University, Directorate/Centre for Distance and Online Education, Marketing Management, paper 346E1120, Lessons 1-6. This is an original teaching adaptation, not a reproduction of the textbook or an official university publication.