

**Product and Brand Management**  
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**Lecture No. 17**  
**Market and Product Planning - I**

Hello friends, welcome back to Product and Brand Management.

Now, after having a discussion largely on all the possible fundamentals, I should not say all the fundamentals because this art and this science is actually, I am calling it both because there are scientific procedures associated with product and brand management and up till now, you have actually realized that this is an art as well and this is ever evolving, and it is continuously being worked upon by several researchers who are working upon this subject with different kinds of dimensions.

Because in this competitive environment, where in science is enabling everything, the way we live, the way we behave, the way we communicate, everything is changing and the pace is very rapid. See, if you will just look into a decadal kind of a change, which we have been going through. We are passing through 2021, starting from 2011 you just start marking that with a very simple kind of an analytical perspective, let us say the kind of products and I am not talking of brands, the kinds of products let us say the communication devices, and you would realize that it is a huge change, which has come up let us say from 1990 to 2001, and 2001 to 2011 and subsequently.

Last three decades, only one product category in communication devices, you would find a humungous change for example, if you will look at a computer in 1990, there you had disk-operated systems and then today you have sophisticated laptops or all in one unit and there are different kinds of weights and you have you have lightweight laptops and so on. Everything has changed and I was referring to communication devices, pager business was so prominent in 1995-96 and there were several paging companies enabling paging basically.

Most of the people used to carry a pager along with their belts and then they used to take out the pager and look at the message which has come up, for example, a number is flashing, and someone goes to a phone nearby and then calls back. So, it was kind of very enabling kind of a situation, wherein, you could get in touch with someone, then messages started coming on pagers, contact immediately on this number, do this, do that, go there, it was very very happy kind of a thing, basically.

Because communication got initiated in a different kind of a mode, otherwise, you had to think of, you had to note down numbers in your diaries, you had to note down, the digital diaries were also there, those kinds of things were there. And suddenly, within those 24, 25 years, look at your smartphone now. Everything has changed. And this is, what we term as market planning, product planning and so on. Someone was planning about today's smartphones, let us say, almost 5 or 6 years back, someone would have known that, what kind of changes were coming.

Someone definitely would have planned for what kind of communication changes would come. What kind of behavioral change, because of that communication, would come. Someone would have been thinking and people still are thinking that way. This is what you call market and product planning, in totality.

And I will be taking you through this with several examples, lots of examples, and I will keep urging you, that go to past three decades as I have just briefly demonstrated communication devices changes in front of you, you can think in terms of automotive and once EVs would come in full force, people would again start saying that an era has changed.

Then entertainment, entertainment industry, kind of movies, today. India is a fan of Amazon Prime, Netflix, Disney Hotstar and so on, so many venues are there and let us say 3 years or 4 years back, still people are going to multiplexes to watch movies but again it has changed. There was a time in between when large screen televisions were not so preferred, people were focusing on individual screens.

Now, because of this change, which we are having through these kinds of services available, people again are going for drawing room television viewing, and then you would have noticed that an integrated change in terms of software, that is, the shows, the serials, which are coming. So, that has also taken a change in terms of that now, people are producing more family-oriented stories, in terms of these kinds of shows.

So, everything is getting integrated in terms of entertainment, now, and then, and again, it is taking a different kind of a shape. Just start developing a trajectory of that, and you will develop more interest in the subject, what we are talking of. So, let us go ahead with as far as market and product planning segment goes. Market planning is an interesting thing actually, and I have marked specific areas as red to highlight few elements in market planning for you to see.

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**Market Planning**

- A marketing plan is a **written** document containing the guidelines for the **business center's** marketing programs and allocations over the **planning period**.

**Objective of Marketing Plan:**

1. To define the **current situation (Stage (PLC Point))**, **Customer Positioning**, **Internal-Organizational and Value Chain Positioning**, **Competitor Positioning** facing the product (and how we got there).
2. To define problems and opportunities facing the business. **Let's say EV Business (Assessment through the eyes of all stakeholders)**. This can be Longitudinal.
3. To establish objectives.
4. To define the strategies and programs necessary to achieve the objectives **(STEPS)**.
5. To pinpoint responsibility for achieving product objectives **(TEAM)**.
6. To encourage careful and disciplined thinking **(Method, Training and Execution)**.
7. To establish a customer-competitor orientation **(Message)**.

Source: Lehmann, D. R. & Wiler, S. T. (2000). Product management. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

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A marketing plan is a written document containing the guidelines for the business center's marketing programs and allocations over the planning period and this can vary, this is not necessarily an annual plan. This can vary because, you can create sub-plans for annual perspective also, as I said, someone was thinking in terms of huge influx of smartphone devices or those kinds of things with larger companies and then we know all their names. So, but the basic ingredient or fundamental element of marketing plan is objective, objective of marketing plan.

What do we intend to do? Why do we focus so much on this kind of a thing and why it is so interesting? And it is sort of a guidebook, it is a very important, step by step sequence of what should be done definitely with lots of analysis and re-analysis along the way. But this is largely a guide, wherein the objectives are to define the current situation. And when I say current situation, it is not just a simple thing, you have to look into the stage, where do you stand as a business, where your product stands, and if you are a multi-product organization, then definitely you have to plot those products, one by one on a lifecycle graph.

And then, if I am talking of let us say a very large consumer products organization, then definitely they have to think in terms of so many product life cycles, although one product manager usually is allocated to one product in large organizations if, it is a large selling product, you can have so many people to look after, as the owners of those products or the managers of those products.

But, if imagine one has to manage 2, 3, 4, 5, then it is a humongous task, but keeping that thing aside, product lifecycle we have focused upon, I have just highlighted those points, where to bring in that product in terms of the lifecycle situation, and I would remind you of the fact that, that thing in terms of introduction, growth, saddle, then growth, in maturity then more or less decline and no product manager wants decline for their products.

They do not pre-empt that but one has to take things into consideration and then rejuvenation, if it is at all required. So, then comes in customer positioning. Now positioning we have talked about, and then you see how does our customer actually perceives our product. And how do we know that? Because we have been in touch with our customers, we have been talking to them. And if you are not, then it is a wrong exercise and then market plan should be preceded by an understanding of how customer perceives? We should not preconceive anything in terms of how customer thinks about us.

So, we have to ask them that, are you happy? Are you delighted? And in today's era, you would have noticed that organizations try to be in continuous touch with their customers, through their call centers, through mobile applications, through several kinds of interaction modes. And then they keep asking about, what are you feeling about the product? And then they decipher that feeling. Because they are asking questions, they are asking questions in terms of many times rating them and once you have made them, so, they interpret those and even they are going as far as deciphering the tone which, you are using at that particular moment when you are rating them.

So, customer positioning has to be analyzed and reanalyzed, then there is a very important and a fundamental element to be seen always that is internal, organizational and value chain positioning, and we are talking of situation analysis. You see internal means, how strongly the employees, the team members feel about the product. Are they happy about it? Are they willing to act as the ambassadors of the product which the organization is manufacturing? Would they be taking those products to their own home for consumption, if you are talking of consumer products?

Basically, I was talking to a plant head of a company in consumer products segment and he was demonstrating jaggery based product to me once very interesting, and I said that I like it, I tasted that I liked that, I said that it feels good, is it healthy, is it clean, are the processes good, he said I will show you the plant, but just to tell you first that I take this product back home for my children and I feed them this product, so that is the kind of a strength, that is the

kind of positive element he carries about the product and I said that how many of such people are there in your organization who actually buy this product from the organization, they said almost all, so that is where internal strength lies when, your team members are strongly oriented towards the quality, the element of the product.

Value chain positioning; and when you say value chain positioning, are your retailers also into that basically, can they stand by the commitment which you are putting up in front of the customer? Can they say yes, I stand by this organization? And they do whatever they say. This product is definitely good. I have been selling this for quite some time or I have been selling this for recent years and there are no complaints and so on.

Can this come from the retailer, then your service partner? It is a very happy moment for a customer and a manufacturer, if a service partner and a service person from an organization comes and he just casually talks to someone at home and he says I was just passing by and it is your service due? It is just a call. Is there any trouble in the product? And he knows that you would say no. Now, that is the conviction, that is the strength which the service partner carries. Once he comes here, he knows that apart from the changeable parts, nothing has to be attended to.

And I can name Eureka Forbes water purifiers, wherein I have personally seen many many satisfied customers wherein their service station always calls you just to say, just to remind you that your service is due and then they formally ask you that is there any trouble? They very well know that you would say no, there is no trouble. So, that is the strength of value chain positioning, which you must gain. So, what is that level which, you have at this particular moment. And you see that is where current situation analysis comes in.

Competitors' positioning; a very important element, I will be talking about this in due course of time and I will be going for competitors' analysis also, because, after this phase of our discussion, I would be going for analytical part where not mathematical analysis per say, but analysis in terms of several elements and then I would be going for strategy part later on.

So, but, again, competitors' positioning; how does your competitor looks at you? Do they admire you? Do they accept you as leaders? They do not acknowledge you, more or less you are a large organization for them, you do not exist actually, how do you know that. You see many times your contemporary peer group in different organizations would tell you that, we do not care about you, and you are working at the same levels basically many times and you know that joke.

But again, the point is, why do not they acknowledge you, because you do not have that kind of a marketing strength or you do not have that kind of a product, supremacy or you do not have that kind of a product planning and research and development associated with you, why? If your competition is not acknowledging you somehow then things are not positive. You see competition should be worried of your growth basically and there are several organizations who are admired by their competition.

So, there are many cases of that sort and you can work upon those in automotive sector. There are many admirable organizations like Hero motors, I can name Honda, I can name Hindustan Lever and Patanjali and Dabur and so many organizations in consumer products. They are admirable competitors. Then current situation is focused upon this elemental analysis and how we have got there, that is what are the basic reasons for us to reach here actually.

So, that is what we have to focus upon. Then the next element comes in defining problems and opportunities in relation to the business wherein your product is actually contributing to your business model. So, for example, electrical vehicle business. Now, if an organization is new, then what should they be doing in terms of market planning because, they require lots of liquidity. For example, let us talk about electrical vehicle business.

Now, if you look at this with the perspective of market planning, a product manager and definitely a brand manager, who is also looking at the scenario basically and I will be talking about that later on when, I would be referring to the brand management part, but, if you just focus about this, because, a product as I told you is a contributor in a business model.

Now, you have to assess electrical vehicle business and the market plan associated with this product with an assessment through the eyes of the stakeholders, prime stakeholder definitely is a customer and we have talked about customer also and one must look at the planning perspective with the eyes of the customer first.

For example, electrical vehicle, you talk to a customer that would you like to buy electrical vehicle? Customer would definitely say yes, I would, because there would be low maintenance, there would be lots of satisfaction and customer would not feel conscious about several things like we have been discussing on sustainability and about the emissions and so on.

Although, existing petrol and diesel vehicles are definitely taking care of emissions and emission norms and they are putting devices there and engines are being developed and so much has been done. Despite of the fact that everything is going on, but we are definitely thinking in terms of a different trajectory of automotive for sustainable global development.

Then you have to look at electrical vehicle business with the perspective of several key stakeholders and partners who would be contributing in the development of this business. Direct partners definitely would be retailers or service partners and so on, but there would be 'n' number of other kinds of partners for example, people who would be contributing into software development related to, correlating everything in terms of this business largely.

So, there are several aspects in terms of problems and opportunities. Direct problem, which can be seen at this moment and which is very short lived, that electrical charging stations are lesser in number, every product manager is aware of that, and while planning they are considering the active role which government is playing and several organizations are playing in developing this. See at this particular moment government of India and then several organizations along with government of India are very proactive in bringing several enabling measures for electrical vehicles in this country in times to come.

So, product planners and market planners first of all are actually keeping an eye on this and that is a very important kind of an element. Now, I would not spent much of your time on this, but, just to give you an insight and input that, defining problems and opportunities is a longitudinal exercise, as in the case of, defining the current situation, where in reaching to the current situation is related to the longitudinal data and understanding you have about your market and related markets as such. Then you go on establishing the objectives, finding those very clearly, because objectives are not just for you, as a product manager, objectives are for everyone in the value chain we have discussed.

But, let us not include customer here, but retailers who must also have the same level of thinking about those objectives because they would be actively participating in achieving those objectives. Then other people in the organization actually, other departments, functional areas and everyone should be crystal clear on the objectives, for example, Maruti Suzuki developed Brezza.

Now, everyone had a clear objective of how they would be making this vehicle successful, for example, a wonderful project Nexa and it is one of my favorites wherein they completely

redesigned almost everything around that brand Nexa and everyone was on the same plane in terms of this exercise.

Then comes in the fourth objective of marketing plan, which is to define the strategies and programmes necessary to achieve the objective steps and when I say steps, we have gone through those several times in past, in terms of terms and concepts and let us say, what kind of a marketing mix perspective would be there? You would remember last time, we discussed the correlation of product with other 'Ps'.

So, steps; what would be the price, which would be the retail outlets, how would you reach there, how customer would come there, what would be your communication and so on. Every single thing in absolute details. You have to create sub chapters, but that is a necessary part because you have to follow that and reanalyze that because, once, things are not going the way you want, you always revisit those steps and these are the only places which tell you that this is the place where you should be augmenting something.

So, that is a very important element actually. And for that matter, if you create such a plan, leave aside marketing plan for this moment, you create a plan for yourself, for example, then you will be visiting the steps only. For example, you have developed a career plan and any other class would also have a mention to a plan with reference to that particular functionality. So, that is the core strength of a plan wherein you revisit the steps whenever you have to. To pinpoint responsibility for achieving product objectives, that is team who is going to do what? And what would be the synchronization of the team? How harmonious would be the team? How effective would be the designing team?

And how effectively the design would be understood by the production? How effectively the marketing team would be actually participating in projecting their views on whatever they have given as their input up till now? How coherent they are, as far as the complete thing goes starting from this side of customer to production and to procurement and everything. Everything should be synchronous.

I will be coming to many examples wherein you will find a reflection. For example, you have to release a product, you have that product which you have to release. Just release that product for a very short while under let us say a scheme or an event, then also production, brand manager, financial functionalities, financial heads, marketing team, all of them are interconnected intensely, because otherwise you would say that I required these many



numbers of products for this kind of a period, production would say, sorry, I cannot do that because HR is not allowing me for overtime, for example.

So, again, that is where synchronization goes and for getting synchronization, you have to bring in the top leadership onboard. And for bringing in top leadership onboard, you have to tell them that this plan is profitable, as simple as that. If you cannot show them profits, they will not accept your proposition. Ultimately, they are answerable to the stockholders and all the stakeholders. So, they must find a reason for being told to everyone, that is where the strength of leadership would come in.

This is the sixth from my side; to encourage careful and disciplined thinking. Can we do that? when so many people are working in organizations with the motive of rising, earning, definitely focusing on their jobs and in a synchronous manner and training is excellent, but again, can we bring them on board on every aspect of marketing plan? Yes, we can.

There are several methods which organizations apply for developing mental coherence of teams. There are several exercises they go through. There are several training sessions introduced which, they go through. There are several kinds of sharing moments on as far as productivity and products, which they go through and everyone is made a part of the complete journey all the time.

So, there are methods of training and execution in due course of time. Then I should not say last, but one of the most important objectives to establish is a customer competitor orientation. How do you do that? There are several elements, but the key element is your communication. What would you say that your customer would feel it and he would start moving towards you? And your competitor would also feel it and would start doing something to compete with you, that is where you require that kind of a message and intensity.

And it is my favorite when I remind you of several taglines, several kinds of storyboards, beautiful advertisements all around which you watch. You see, that is where customer orientation, competitor orientation or precisely customer orientation comes to fore and then something else from the competitor comes in. And that is how you start developing things.

One of my favorites, which is the Fevicol campaign, I want you to watch that and if you want to go into the details of this promotion element, there is a course on Integrated Marketing Communication, which I floated earlier, so you can attend that. But that is where that Fevicol

campaign would tell you wonderfully that how a B2B product largely got itself converted into B2C. And that is the beauty of a marketing plan. So, I will leave you here with the thoughts associated with marketing plan and market planning and I will come back to you with lots of inputs next time. Till then, goodbye.