Marketing strategy and competitive positioning 2020 pdf

Marketing strategies must be combined study elements of demographic markets, competitors, prices, promotion, distribution and sales support. The goal is to offer a revolutionary product that will offer people a new experience. Effective marketers use the study of demographics to increase the visibility and profitability of their products. Demographics study segments of the population that look at factors such as age, income, gender, and purchasing preferences. You need to study competition to have an effective marketing strategy. Studying similar products are already on the market and assessing their successes and failures. The pricing strategy must be competitive, while maintaining the factors of profitability. Prices must be in line with major brands but a little less expensive. Promotion involves both push and pull strategies. Push strategies create customer demand by introducing products to the public. Pull strategies require high spending on advertising and consumer promotion. Achieve product visibility by choosing an advertising media vehicle that will provide the highest possible exposure for your product. Some media are television, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor advertising and internet advertising. The Walt Disney Company claims to be doing intensive research to learn about its target market, allowing it to seize global growth opportunities. Disney corporate officials say they are committed to staying informed with the technologies children use, with shows they are watching, and how they incorporate technology into their lives. For example, Disney offers ad discounts on Twitter and games on Facebook. He makes sure his licensed characters like Mickey Mouse and Spider-Man are advancing to new platforms. Demonstrating its leadership in marketing to reach children and families, Disney unveiled the first national wireless phone service in 2006, known as Disney MobileSM. The phone used GPS features to allow parents to control who their children communicate with and monitor where they are. This is part of Disney's strategy to be relevant to contemporary family lifestyles. Disney also continues to attract teens and their parents by staying current with digital gaming and social media opportunities, as with its acquisition of online social game leader Playdom Inc. According to small business strategist DEMC, Disney acknowledges that many people don't have the ability to travel to the United States to visit Walt Disney World or Disneyland. As a result, Disney has developed themed around the world to capture the market, adapting them to local cultures. They include Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disney, and Hong Kong Disneyland. With expansion around the world, Disney aims to increase its market and expand its brand. Disney ownership of media networks such as ABC, Disney Channel and ESPN is a strategy strategy company is using to market its brand to Americans. This includes a systematic approach to television advertising, as well as radio spots, press, outdoor advertising and mobile initiatives, promotion of resort discounts, and family packages. To reach teenagers, Disney has launched advergaming, which puts ads online and video games. The goal is to reach the children directly and encourage them to urge their parents to visit a Disney park for a family experience. As part of its marketing strategy, Disney believes in innovation to keep up with the competition and build the business. With rapid advances in technology, traditional passive television audiences are in transition, no more prisoner of prime-time programming on major networks. Disney's strategy is to connect with children directly through storytelling using multiple technologies. The overall purpose of a marketing plan is to advance the exposure of the product or company, depending on the specific objective of that plan. When you develop your marketing strategy, it's important to understand the various roles a marketing plan fills when it's in place. By understanding the roles of a marketing plan, you are better equipped to create an effective strategy. The marketing strategy identifies the strengths of the product, according to business experts on the Microsoft website. Part of the purpose of your marketing plan is to explain, in detail, the many benefits of your product and how your customers can make some sort of return using your product. For the customer, such a return could be in the form of money savings, or it could be a competitive advantage that grabs more market share. The marketing strategy also identifies the ways your product is superior to the competition, and why your customers should consider your product over the competition. An important role of a comprehensive marketing strategy is a detailed description of the target audience, according to marketing expert Michael Goodman writing on the Intel website. To create effective marketing campaigns, your strategy needs to identify important details about the demographics of the customers you've determined to be the best solution for your campaign. Some of these details include age range, median income, geographic location, and the advertising medium that would be best used to reach that target buying group. In order to develop an effective marketing campaign, your marketing strategy must offer a detailed description of the competition, according to small business experts at the website for Business Planning. The role of the marketing strategy is to provide historical information on how competition has advertised products in the past, the target market that competition goes after, and the product characteristics that competition offers. Other factors such as competition prices, competition, distribution network and competitive sales methods are also part of a global marketing strategy. A marketing strategy is used to determine the revenue that the campaign will produce. All parties that determine revenue, including campaign budget, product cost, sales price, and product life, should all be part of the marketing strategy. The revenue target can be measured based on actual revenue, and this information can be used to create future marketing strategies more successfully. Should we emphasize price or quality? Do we want to stay with smaller, high-end retailers or look for market expansion through large discount chains? Will our proposed new product take sales off our existing line? These are the kinds of questions, those of strategy, that marketers agonize. But what happens once a particular strategy has been agreed? Will marketers effectively turn the drawing board strategy into market reality? Too often a seemingly effective strategy fails to do what it should do, and marketing executives immediately assume that the strategy is at fault. The author argues that most of the time it is the implementation that goes wrong. Implementation difficulties can result from a number of organisational and structural problems, as well as inadequate personal skills. The author offers guidelines to identify the most common difficulties and tips to remedy them. Marketing literature is full of research and analysis to help managers develop marketing strategies tailored to the market. Yet when it comes to implementing these strategies, silent literature and self-help books sound empty. What top management needs in the 1980s is not new answers to strategy questions, but a greater focus on marketing practice, signs of good marketing management that direct smart strategies towards successful market results. The purpose of this article is to explain and help in diagnosing and troubleshooting marketing implementation, cataloguing common problems of translating marketing strategies into management acts, and recommending tactics to increase the effectiveness of marketing practices. The examples and conclusions are taken from a three-year clinical research program that I conducted to start a course on marketing implementation at Harvard Business School (see the insert for details of this study). The data in this article originated from a course development and research project on marketing implementation. if I'm still conducting the research, I've compiled 35 case studies on marketing practice issues to date. All examples in the article, with one exception, are taken directly from these cases. They cover a variety of business sizes and types. The cases fall within the four four categories that I outlined in the article. Some cases illustrate low-level functional marketing issues, such as how Hertz can withdraw from its no mileage pricing scheme, ever, should this become appropriate. Others show program-level issues, regarding the synergistic combination of marketing features to bring a particular product to market or sell a special segment. Key account management cases are a major concern in this case. There are cases of marketing systems, where management is troubled or concerned by the information it has (or does not have) available to direct and control the marketing effort. And, there are cases about marketing policy guidelines, formal or informal policies by which management attempts to direct the execution of all marketing. I have collected many of these cases on the topic of marketing and leadership. One of the reasons I started a course on marketing implementation was that top executives often complained to me that newly seasoned MBA's are generally great strategists, but they can't arrange a three-car funeral when it comes to running marketing plans in the field. The results of teaching the course for three years indicate that it is possible to teach effective execution in marketing. The results of the research project indicate that the marketing practice is worthy as much of detailed management attention and academic study as the formulation of the strategy. It's always easier to think about smart marketing strategies than to make them work under business constraints, competitors, and customers. Consider a tube company that invented a new type of triangular tube 180% more efficient than the existing line, which only needs two-thirds of the material. Based on the value for users, the new vice president of marketing wanted to price the new high tube. He feared, however, that the lack of support from other top managers, the company's marketing systems and the sales force would hamper his strategy. Everything that three generations of managers have learned to do business in this market, everything the company is, he complained, seems to conspire against my being able to introduce this innovation properly. What to do, the marketing strategy, is clear to this vice president: price by value, encourage cannibalization of existing lines, and reap profits. How to implement the strategy, i.e. the implementation of marketing, is problematic. This family-run company routinely produced pipes in large quantities and sold it in a non-growing market at low margins. The company started every year with high margins, due to competitive pressure and the need to maintain its capacity plants, it ended up reducing costs in the heat of the sales season. Plant operators were paid on the basis of tubes produced per minute. The sales force has thought in terms of cutting list prices to stimulate orders and guarantee commissions. Top encouraged this commodity-oriented culture by setting budgets with high fixed costs and maintaining a measurement system designed to monitor the selling price of each unit of raw material rather than the pipe itself. The vice president rightly worried that simply declaring a high price on the new fiat tube or even building an innovation marketing program would be ineffective in combating the entrenched, commodity-centric way of doing business. As this example suggests, problems in marketing practice have two components: structural and human. The structural one includes the company's marketing functions, such as prices and sales, as well as any program based on these functions, control systems and policy guidelines. The second component is the people themselves, the managers in charge of completing the marketing work. Strategy or implementation? Marketing strategy and implementation affect each other. While the strategy obviously affects actions, execution also affects marketing strategies, especially over time. Despite the confusing boundary between strategy and execution, it's not difficult to diagnose marketing implementation issues and distinguish them from strategy deficiencies. When a terminal computer sales force of 50 people sells only 39 of the company's new line of smart microcomputers during a sales blitz in which sales of more than 500 units were expected, does the problem with sales force management or strategy shift to smart machines? The question is answered. Intense competition is eroding margins on sales of its old stupid terminals. In addition, the category of smart terminals is expected to grow by more than 500% during the 1980s. The new product, a portable microcomputer with printer and built-in memory, offers many advantages that the target market values. But because sales representatives already earn an average of more than $50,000 a year, they have little incentive to struggle with an unknown new product. The management has also inexplicably set out a lower compensation for sales incentives on new machines than for older machines. Finally, the old terminals have a half-sales cycle, as long as the new ones and do not require any knowledge of the software or support. Here is a case where poor execution stifles a good strategy. The Exhibition shows how marketing strategy and implementation affect each other. The computer sample falls into the lower left cell of the array and illustrates an important rule about strategy and implementation: poor implementation can mask a Strategy. As the exhibition indicates, when both strategy and implementation are on target, the company has done everything possible to ensure success. Similarly, when the strategy is inadequate and implementation is inadequate, implementation deficiencies can mask the problems of the strategy; not only is failure the likely outcome, but such failures will be particularly intractable intractable of the difficulty of identifying the cause of the problem. Exhibit Marketing strategy and diagnosis of implementation issues When the strategy is appropriate but implementation is poor or vice versa, diagnosis becomes difficult. Poor marketing execution can cause management to doubt even robust strategies because they are masquerading as implementation inadequares (the lower left cell of the exhibition). As the example of the IT company that is in others suggests, management can accelerate market failure if it changes its strategy. I labeled such a situation the trouble cell on the matrix because poor execution hinders confirmation of the correctness of the strategy and can cause unnecessary changes. When the strategy is inappropriate and the execution excellent (the cell at the top right), the management usually ends up with time to recognize and correct its strategic errors. Good branch bosses, for example, are known to amend potentially disastrous head office directives. In fact, some companies that are known for running excellent marketing, such as Frito-Lay, expect such changes from their managers. But other times, a good execution of bad strategy acts like the engine on a plane in a dip in the nose - it accelerates the accident. Since it is difficult to predict the result of an inappropriate strategy coupled with good execution, ethiol this rescue cell or ruin. From this analysis, two points are distinguished to help managers diagnose marketing implementation issues. Firstly, poor implementation tends to mask both the adequacy and inadequacy of the strategy. Therefore, when unsure of the causes of poor marketing performance, managers should look at marketing practices before making strategic changes. A careful examination of how questions, implementation questions, can often identify a execution culprit responsible for seemingly strategic issues. Structural problems of marketing practice In his book zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Robert Pirsig proposes a catalog of traps that can weaken the mechanic's willingness to do quality work. He recounts, for example, how a five-cent screw holding a access cover in place can, if locked, make a $4,000 motorcycle worthless and the mechanic a frustrated wreck headed for truly serious mistakes. Like mechanics, managers need a catalog of traps in marketing practice. In the following sections I take the problems and pitfalls of every level, or place, in the structural hierarchy of marketing practice: functions, programs, systems and directives Then I discuss the implementation skills required by those who are doing marketing. Features: Fundamentals Marketing features include selling, commercial promotion, and distributor management. These low-level tasks are the fundamentals, blocking and addressing the work of the marketer. Yet I observed that most companies and their have great difficulty with these tasks. Often the difficulty stems from a failure to pursue marketing fundamentals in a determined way, such as when a CEO doubted that the company's fair spending was a good marketing communication device, but went on to authorize $1 million each year thinking the company needed to be there. Although the peculiar pitfalls of each function are worthy of a separate article, there are some management issues common to all. Problems with marketing features typically outweigh problems at the marketing program, systems, and policy level. Managers most often have problems with sales force management, distributor management, or price shifts. When functions go wrong, it is often because headquarters simply assumes that the function in question will be performed well by someone else, somewhere else, and therefore ignores it until a crisis intervenes. In one company, for example, management decided to offer low list prices with corresponding low discounts from list prices. In doing what he thought was a sound pricing move for his line of graphics computers, however, management failed to take into account how prices were implemented. The price system that resulted did not satisfy anyone because buyers demonstrated their effectiveness based on the size of the discounts received. Therefore, the problems of implementation at the level of functions are mainly caused by faulty managerial assumptions or, as they say in the world of sport, by not keeping an eye on the ball. As might be expected, this disease is more prevalent in large operating units, where administrators have functional specialists to rely on, than small ones. A second cause of marketing function problems is structural contradiction. A very promising start-up with a turnover of 600,000 dollars decided after careful consideration to expand its national distribution network by creating, at great expense, its sales offices. The aim was to control its distribution channels. For international distribution, however, management has been divided between its need for control and its unfamiliarity with international markets. The conflict was escalated when a potential foreign partner said it would guarantee $30 million in sales. Management was perplexed. Its policy required it to have foreign channels, but implementation was beyond its capabilities. Finally, cash flow led the company to decide on indirect foreign distribution, with a different partner and an agreement in each country. The overall was a complicated mosaic of direct and indirect distribution, which the thin ranks of executives could not manage. Management's attempts to balance the contradiction between the desired control policies and the functional distribution structure have been ineffective and have led to conflicts between company executives and foreign distributors. And a third third of the problems is when the office fails to choose a marketing function for particular concentration and competence and instead takes satisfaction in doing a proper job with each, what I call global mediocrity. Officials thus spread administrative resources and talents democratically but ineffectively. Typically, the pricing, advertising, promotion and distribution functions are satisfactory, but no feature is pending. The best companies have a chance to manage one or two marketing functions and are competent in the rest. No marketer is good at everything, but the most capable focus on doing a great job at some marketing features. Frito-Lay is an example of a company that has refined two functional skills, namely sales and distribution, at levels that serve as the company's marketing base. Gillette's Personal Care Division does an advertising science. Both of these companies allocate resources, often unequal, to maintain competitive pre-eminence in showcase functions. Programs: The right combination A marketing program is a combination of marketing and non-marketing features, such as sales promotion and production, for a given product or market. Marketing programs are a fundamental reference point for the analysis of marketing practices; from them, you can look down on the functions that include programs or up to the systems and policies that direct program execution. At the program level, management seeks to merge marketing and non-marketing functions in an attempt to sell a particular product line or penetrate a target segment. Managing all aspects of the Silkience hair conditioner line is an example of a marketing program; so is the management of a company's key accounts and their special needs. If the features are blocking and facing execution, marketing programs are the playbook that shows how customers will be courted and the competition confusing. A computer vendor, for example, wanted to install a national account program to better serve its small but growing number of key accounts. The seller recruited a highly regarded national account manager from another company, gave him a secretary, and issued a presidential mandate to put together a key account schedule. Exactly how was this done? Perhaps the manager should try to create a dedicated national accounts sales force based in headquarters, despite the risks that competition with the vice president of sales, his supervisor, entailed. Or was it better to work in a dotted line capacity through the company's sales managers, without any of sales or service beyond simple cross-functional persuasion and taking different risks with the customer base? The art of merging functions into programs is a poor understanding at best, often left to learning in the workplace for trial and error. A common programme it comes from what I call empty promise marketing, which derives from the establishment of programs that are contradicted by the identity of the company or are beyond its functional capabilities. The computer graphics company alluded to a generalized piece of computer equipment that served all segments of the industry, but most buyers were small single-user users. In fact, with the exception of its national account manager, every implementing action and policy directive has oriented the company to small customers. Unlike many companies that get 80% of revenue from the largest 20% of customers, this company received only 30% of its revenues from its large accounts. In short, the company's national accounts program was at odds with what the company had set up to do in marketing. The program was an empty promise internally and in the market. In another case, the country's largest manufacturer of private bulbs decided that it had to give its bulbs a brand and put them on grocery shelves to prevent others from attacking its lucrative main business. The company, which specializes in industrial lighting products, had no experience in marketing or consumer advertising and only a little in important retail sectors such as commercial promotion. Nonetheless, he created Project Shopping Cart. After spending several million dollars designing a new light bulb display and packaging and even more to sponsor sporting events and recruit a number of brokers to place light bulbs, management has accumulated a market share of 0.3% over two years. The marketing features in this industrially and generically oriented company were unable to provide the retail block and address that the simply hired location would be there to implement its well-conceived program. A second program-level execution error is one that terms bunny marketing. It does not arise from a functional inability to execute program plans, but from a lack of direction in the top management execution criteria. A heavy manufacturing company has been continually frustrated because it came out late with new products in an industry where spare parts inventories and operators' loyalty give the first supplier a significant advantage. One of its products, a machine for particular mining conditions, came out almost two years after the entry of the competition. Headquarters had kept its thin development engineering staff busy with a torrent of engineering projects, some to rework machines already in the field, one to come with a prototype automatic machine under government grant, and a to design the new machine. In short, the profusion of programs lacked focus because it stemmed from a bad sense of what the company was and what it did. The presence of many smart marketing programs, a great playbook, is often associated with implementation issues. This is so so when a strong sense of identity and marketing direction are absent, programs tend to go out in all directions. Such rabbit marketing results in spread of effort and random results. Systems: Bureaucratic marketing systems obstacles include formal organization, monitoring, budgeting, and other overlaps that promote or inhibit good marketing practices. Systems can be as simple as voice telecommunications or as complex as profit accounting. Among systems at lower organizational levels, the most problematic is the reporting and control of the sales force. Among the pervasive systems, those who deal with the allocation of marketing resources and those who help management monitor results are bugbears in all but a few companies. Especially in smaller companies, allocation systems cause a lot of problems; in larger ones, control systems do more damage. Other types of systems, as well as staff and formal organisational structure may also be problematic, but managers can usually get around these obstacles by exercising their execution skills. Three problems that commonly occur at system level are errors of ritual, politicization and unavailability. Ritual errors arise when the company's systems guide it along habitual paths, even when good judgment dictates a different path. In a concrete manufacturer, the marketing control system was based on a backward measure of the plant. When arrears were low, the sales force beat bushes for jobs, no matter how marginal, estimators (who control prices in construction companies) shaved margins, and everyone from the CEO down gets nervous. When the backlog was high, the reactions were the opposite. As a result, low-margin activity taken in difficult times hampered the company when it sought a high-margin business in better times. When the president accepted suggestions for a new sales control system to remedy the problem, he instituted new forms and reports, but refused to change backlog management or address profitability for work as a means of more effective segmentation and sales. The problem of politicisation is never more obvious than when you look at the reporting and control systems of the sales force and, in particular, they are called reports. Sales managers often exodated their call reports to fit their preconceptions. Even more dangerous, call reports can lose their intelligence function altogether and instead become a device with which to punish sales representatives who submit Inappropriate. However, the politicisation of systems is in no way limited to sales controls. In one case, the management of the division into an equipment rental company chose to report to head office that its new pricing system would increase unit revenues by 11% and margins by 13%. He neglected to notice, unfortunately, that the rental equipment would be obsolete a year earlier than the head office had anticipated! The final, and most system problem is unavailable. That is to say, some systems designed to make life of airline officers easier just not to. In all but a handful of companies I've studied, financial accounting and sales accounting systems can only be called perverse in not meeting marketing demands. You would expect that in today's data-oriented companies managers can make projections based on a detailed analysis of the results. Few executives, however, have any idea of profitability per segment, to name an element. Rarer are still good numbers on profitability per product, and only once have I seen a system that has allowed profitability to be calculated from a single account. Instead, managers are either treated for incomprehensible, thick prints of non-aggregated data or otherwise are told in response to their requests that accounting will not give us in this way. The inevitable result is a kind of bell environment in which it is impossible to make sound decisions. Policies: Spoken and not said At the broader structural level of marketing practice are political directives. While policies cover the spectrum of administrative activity, I focus here on two particularly important marketing implementation policies: identity policies, those related to what the company is, and management policies, those related to what it does. By politics I do not just mean verbal or written statements; in fact, some of the most central policies for good marketing practices are unexpressed. Identity problems are the most common political difficulties and, paradoxically, occur more often in mature units than in young business units. Marketing theme and marketing culture are two terms that I use to capture the powerful but often unseeded feeling of common purpose that the best implementers have and others don't. Theme and culture convey the company's identity policies. The theme of marketing is a confusing but meaningful term that refers to management's shared understanding of the purpose of marketing. In one company, some executives perceived as the head of a raw materials supplier with the only hope for the future of being R&D projects blue-sky. Others believed that the key attribute of the company was to differentiate its baselines. Managers have consistently worked based on their different knowledge, and the result was a confusing and ineffective marketing effort, a sales force that thought head office gave it contradictory signals, a divisive trade, and unhappy customers. In contrast, the management of another company and the entire sales force of 10,000 people could act (with conviction): We are the first supplier snacks in this country. Our products are great. But we only have two seconds to reach the supermarket buyer, so we live or move in service. shared understanding of direction and continuous reinforcement (through compensation, training and of this theme, simple though it sounds, promoted exceptionally effective sales performance and consistent customer reactions. It is tempting to reject the idea of promoting a common understanding of the company's marketing theme as a vague and insignificant idea. A test of business executive perceptions of this issue may give rise to some concern. To conduct this test, write a single sentence that describes the essence of your company's marketing. Then get your key people to do it too. The results are usually as instructive as they are shocking. Marketing culture is a broader notion of the theme. While themes can often be verbalized, culture is the underlying and usually unseated social web of management. Subtly but powerfully channel managers' behavior into comfortable grooves. Culture can be clearly observed by things like canteen conversations and the motets that management puts on the walls. For example, when I asked a company's managers why they were designing a $700 million plant to support a new line of products that market research suggested would only require half that capacity, the vice president of marketing replied: We don't see much sense around chinning ourselves on the sidewalk. Management policies refer to both marketing strategy and leadership. While the marketing strategy is outside the realm of this article, leadership deserves attention as a key aspect of implementation. It has become fashionable in companies to blame shortcomings in practice on culture. It is undeniably true, however, that some top marketing managers are top-notch leaders and others are not. The former inspire us with their desire to take the field; they are intelligent in designing simple and effective monitoring methods, and their understanding of customers is powerful. Others are much less effective as leaders, being immersed in complex conceptualization or unwilling to leave their leather chairs for the market; they are a source of inspiration only as models of what their juniors hope not to become. The quality of marketing leadership has a far-reaching effect on the quality of marketing practice. In fact, of the business units I observed that had low-caliber leaders, no one had high-quality marketing practices overall. Whether a strong theme and culture are brought by the charisma of the person at the top or orchestrated through memoranda is irrelevant. The critical question is whether these intangibles of identity, or who we are, and the direction, or what we are, exist as powerful, though unquantifiable, forces that impose themselves on an observer in the same way that they permeate the company. Gap Bridging: execution Up to this point I analyzed the bike without much attention to the mechanic. In fact, the main reason good marketing practice occurs is that managers often use their personal skills supplant, support and sometimes quietly overthrow inadequate structures of practice. I call this replacement of personal skills for a weak structure a subversion towards quality. Poorly functioning formal marketing systems are often patched when managers using them exercise informal organizational skills. Similarly, informal monitoring schemes are often created to obtain data that the control system cannot obtain, and budget reallocations are often designed to subvert formal policy constraints. Managers bring four execution skills to the marketing work: interacting, allocateing, monitoring, and organizing. Interact Marketing work by its nature is to influence others inside and outside society. Inside, there is a regular parade of peers on which the marketer does not have the power to impose preferences; instead it has to hit the horse trades. Outside, the marketer deals with a plethora of assistants, including advertising agencies, consultants, producer representatives, and the like, each with an agenda and an axe to grind. I observed that those managers who show empathy, that is, the ability to understand how others feel and have good bargaining skills are the best actuators. Allocation The implementer must transfer the time, assignments, and other resources of all between the marketing processes to run. Capable managers have no false sense of egalitarianism or charity, but they are tough and fair in putting people and dollars where they will be most effective. The less able regularly allocate too much dollars and people to mature programs and too few to the riskier and amorphous programs. Monitoring It is by using monitoring skills that a manager can do more to reconstruct degraded business information and control systems. Good implementers struggle and struggle with their markets and businesses until they can easily and powerfully express the back-of-the-envelope relationships needed to run the business, regardless of the inadequaities of the formal control system. Poor implementers either blissfully wallow in the clichés of the industry or get mired in impressive and often quantitative complexity that no one understands. The chief executive of a company with 38 factories and 300,000 customers, for example, handled everything he considered crucial according to notations on two three-by-five-inch index cards. Instead, the sales manager of a company about a cent that size generated prints of computer prints monthly in his monitoring zeal, then let them age like cheese. The organization of a good implementer has a it is almost disturbing to create an informal organisation, or network, again to meet every problem they face. They know someone in every part of the organization (and also outside) who, by virtue of mutual respect, attraction or some other tie, can and will help with any problem. In any case, these managers rebuild rebuild to meet the marketing work that needs to be done. They customize their informal organization to facilitate good execution. Often, their organization and formal organization have little in common. Good practices in marketing Marketing administration is problematic in all but a few companies, and management's adeptity is often limited to a few functions or programs within the marketing discipline. Yet, some of the companies in my example have shown a really excellent marketing implementation, and it is from them that some simple but important features emerge that differentiate good marketing practices: in the best companies there is a strong sense of identity and direction in marketing policies. There is no confusion and little disagreement between managers about who they are. In addition, leaders are strong and capable. There is, in fact, clarity of theme and vision. The best implementers are constantly targeting customers, including commerce or distributors, in several unusual ways. Customer concern is an entrenched part of the culture and is always prominent in the theme of the best implementers. Interestingly, distributors are also seen as customers, and management has as its main objective the maintenance of a partnership with distributors and end users. I call this behavior profit partnership with broad definition. I did not find that good actuators are less profit-oriented than poor ones; Contrary. However, the best running managers take particular care to see that end users also profit in terms of true value for the money they spend. Commercial profits in more traditional ways, with dollar margins, but also benefit from having good actuators consider them as key accounts. Companies less competent to implement never form a partnership with these two major marketing districts or, worse, lose their attention once upon a time. In the best organisations, management is able and willing to replace its expertise with shortcomings in the formal structure. At United Parcel Service, the story is told with some pride by the regional manager who took the road to untangle a bewildered shipment of Christmas presents by renting an entire train and diverting two 727s owned by UPS from their flight plans.1 When top management learned of his actions, he praised and rewarded him. Culture supported the replacement of the facility's skill manager, but the regional director was also combat ready to defend his judgment. Finally, in companies that better manage execution, top management has a distinctly different view of both the marketing structure and managers compared to bosses of other companies. In the best companies, without exception, the importance of executives dominates the importance of the execution structure. That is to say, marketing (and other) managers are key managers and are treated with a latitude not found in other societies. Top business executives who are good at marketing encourage their followers to challenge and question them because it's not always possible for those at the top to be right. Those who are poor at following continuously hinder the tendency of politics and structure to become religion, which causes it to lose its flexibility in times of change.2 This process can be characterized as a common theme good leaders, poor followers. Top managers from top companies also view the marketing structure differently. They tend to promote a philosophy of extravagance of allocation with program pickles in marketing investments. It's not always easy to get new programs approved by these managers, but the plans that are approved are staffed, funded, and otherwise fully supported to maximize their chances of success. Full approval of fewer, more sound marketing programs seems to give these officers the critical mass they need to make programs work in good and bad times and limits the risk to the company. This approach worked well for a business-jet distributor I studied, which withstood the recession of the early 1980s in much better shape than its more prolific peers in programming. Again, in the best companies, management focuses on one or a few marketing features that promote and nurture in a competitive distinction through expertise. When combining strong themes and culture, program skills, and function-level concentration, the conclusion that emerges is that the companies that are best at marketing encourage solidity at the top (policies) and bottom (functions), rather than blurring in the middle (programs). When everything is said and done, quality in marketing practice is not a guarantee of good market results. There's too much luck, competitive jockey, and definitely customer perversity involved in hoping for that kind of predictive accuracy. Rather, good marketing practice means using artfully to cope with the inevitable execution crises that cloud strategies for managing customers and intermediaries. Individually, such threats are not much to fear. Taken collectively, they are strategy killers. A version of this article appeared in the March 1984 issue of Harvard Business Review. Review.

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