

What is marketing?

To too many people marketing equates to one of two things:

Selling – with all that entails such as the dreaded double-glazing or financial salesman.

Advertising – with all that entails such as the slick young creative and smarmy account person.

Of course marketing also encompasses these functions – though, hopefully not as in the stereotypes that are in so many minds – but marketing is about a great deal more than just selling or advertising.

Marketing is the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you're continuing to meet the needs of your customers and are getting value in return.

It includes:

- Finding out what groups of potential customers or markets exist
- What groups of customers you prefer to serve – your target markets
- What their needs are, what products or services you might develop to meet their needs
- How customers might prefer to use the products and services
- Who competitors are and what they are doing
- What pricing mechanism and approach you should use
- How each of target markets might choose to access the product, etc.
- How much customers / clients might be willing pay and how.
- How to design and describe the product such that customers/clients will buy from the organization, rather than from its competitors – the unique value proposition
- How the company or products should be identified – personality - to be most identifiable i.e. naming and branding
- Ongoing campaigns, which can include advertising, public relations, sales and customer service

All of this was characterised many years ago by Dr. Philip Kotler as the 4Ps:

- Product – making what customers want
- Place – delivering it via the channels they want to use
- Promotion – making them aware of its existence
- Price – making it available at a price they will pay

At the end of the day marketing is really about not losing sight of the basics. You have to be focused on what customers require as the outcome and then find out how to get there by meeting customers needs over a period of time, in a socially responsible way, whilst making a reasonable profit.

Marketing is really a philosophy and attitude about customer focus that has to run through the whole organisation. If you get that you get marketing.

Easy, of course to say.

Frequently not so easy to achieve!

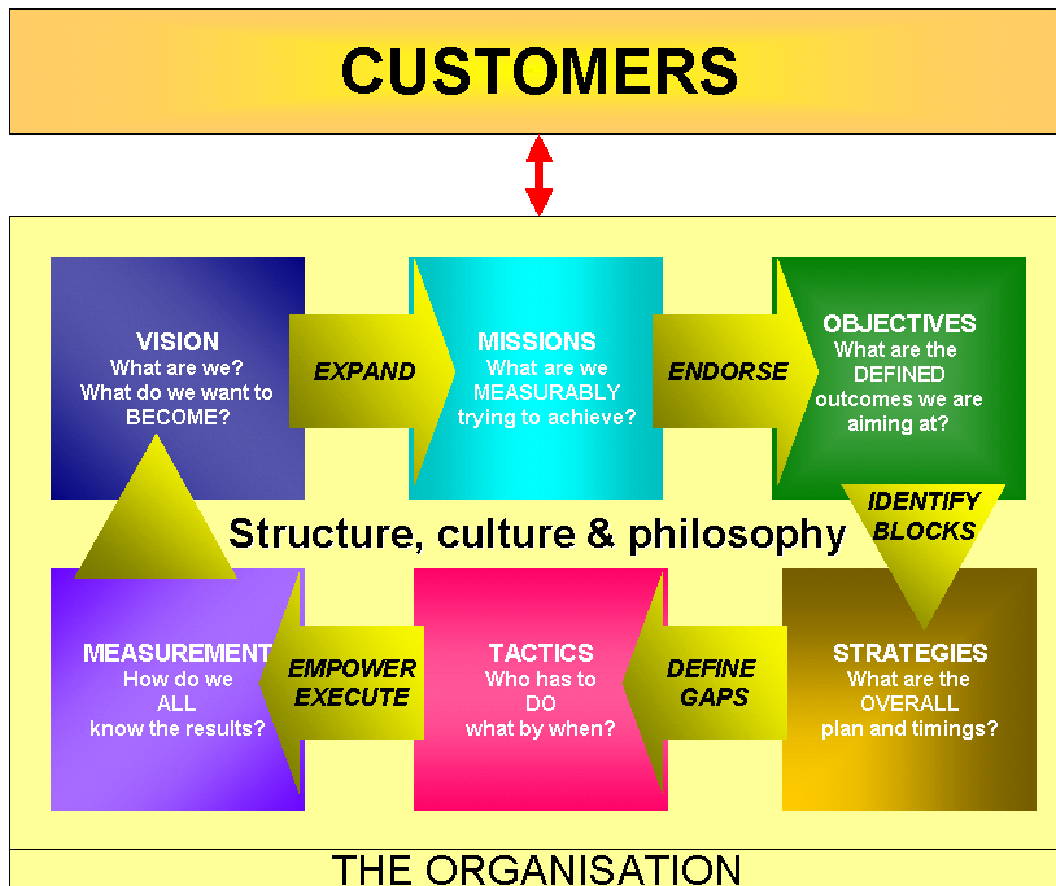
So how does one achieve it?

There really is no easy answer to that, but the process might look something like this – and **remember that, all the while each of these points is not internal but customer focussed:**

The first step is to develop a realistic **Vision** for the organisation. This should a picture of what you want the business to be. Think big: “World peace and prosperity”.

Next are the **Missions**, which indicate what you have to achieve by when – think military: “Your mission to day is to take the pillbox on the third hill”.

The third essential element is to explicitly state the organisations multiple **Objectives** in terms of the results it needs and/or wants to achieve in the medium/long term. Objectives should relate to the expectations and requirements of all the major stakeholders, including employees, and should reflect the underlying reasons for running the organisation. Think quantified and KPI (Key Performance Indicator): “10,000 customers buying the mega-widget package with an average spend of £100 in 12 months at a gross profit margin of 30% and a net profit margin of 10%, of which 90% will repeat their purchase in the following year”





www.e-crm.co.uk

Next are the **Strategies** - the rules and guidelines by which the mission, objectives etc. may be achieved. They can cover the organisation as a whole including such matters as diversification, organic growth, or acquisition plans, or they can relate to primary matters in important functional areas. Think how: "Direct marketing to get 50% of the 10,000 customers, 6 sales people for the other 50% ". Marketing strategies must concentrate on the key customer segments and develop the core message and communications methods with them.

Then **Tactics** set out the implementation plans for the important strategies. Think implementation: The direct marketing campaign will consist of 4 direct mail campaigns in W, X, Y and Z costing..." These tactics have to deliver the core message that has been developed.

Penultimately, there is **Measurement** of the actual results against plan to all the relevant parties. Think methodology: "All campaigns whether sales-force based or direct marketing based will be entered in to the CRM system every day and the following reports..."

Finally, all of this has to happen within **Structure, culture and philosophy** of the business, in other words the values governing the operation of the organisation and its conduct. Unless these values are clear to all and subscribed to by all who work in the organisation failure is much more likely.