



## Is the concept – Marketing – a passing stage for a nobler destination?

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### Abstract:

*Marketing is an exalted expression for selling in true sense, since there is not much to distinguish them from each other. The concept of Marketing became dignified by bringing in perceived value of products or services, the associated experience thereof and equating with the real value of them, to say at the end, that all is well, if the buyer and the seller are mutually happy. It is, of course, right in its limited sphere. However, the marketing concept does not seem to have the sight of the actual value that the customer ought to get, as the perceived value is a 'felt-value' and cannot sustain for long, and hence does not match the real value. While it is so on the one side, keeping in view the lacuna in the concept of marketing, the study of Research gurus in marketing philosophy had concluded saying that the societal concept of marketing is the most ideal concept to embrace. This is because the Societal marketing does not only look at the transactional outcome between the buyer and seller as the deciding factor, but takes into account the larger interests of so many inhabitants on the planet earth, which the transaction could affect in the process.. Societal concept thus got the nod for being the most congenial concept for the society. It's however open and true that marketing in general is a stage that has to be gone through by every product before ultimately attaining the nobler destination to meet the needs of the societal marketing rule book. The paper tries to bring to the fore several instances in the past that go to prove that the societal marketing is a true and most acceptable ideology, but the products of any nature have to necessarily pass through stages to ultimately attain the characteristics under societal marketing. It is therefore that all products have to undergo a travel meeting the ideological needs at the end. This can be adequately substantiated as every product evolves in its 'product profile' with time and the needs that arise, and over a period of time attains the ideal state of marketing needs that the society is most comfortable with, which in essence is Societal marketing.*

**Keywords** Marketing concept – Societal marketing concept - Environment

### Introduction:

Products and services are the built up solutions to problems, since problems are the reasons for products and services to emerge. Looking at 'products' as 'solutions' for study, one can focus on two aspects 'Idea generation process' & 'creative process' which shape the product development to take place sequentially. With 'marketing communication' and 'delivery' happening, subsequently, a full cycle of marketing activity gets over. Customer satisfaction about the product and the buying and the initial user experience also are part of marketing as a concept.

Considering Idea generation, it is for the solution to dawn as an idea, which is followed by visualization of the product with its features taking the shape further and the product contents finding their due places. The stages of 'Idea generation' and

'Creation' of the product development though look to be different, are actually overlapping stages for each other. When idea generation happens and is on, the mental creation of the product which will be sketchy also occupies the mind to enable the idea to continue its positive trail. Similarly, when the actual creation starts happening, refined ideas also tend to modify the creative processes. Idea generation is, of course, the first spark of conceptual stream followed by visualization of a crude idea-image taking a shape while the idea is still to culminate. When the first clear concept and a mental picture of the product in its crude form is visualized, the mind tends to move on to the 'Creation' stage.

Creation stage is that when the mind starts working as to what could bring the action required from a would-be-product, what are the required materials that become the

contents of it, how many of each of them, how they form a collective-whole, leading the process thus to attain its full image form, clear enough to go to the engineering drawing board. Creation stage actually is quite a prolonged one; it could take days thereafter or even more, since development is a process and any process would have stages not bound by the time frame. This again depends on the Concept visualizer's knowledge, experience and exposure to allied knowledge areas and more importantly the ability of a strong visualizer. A strong visualizer could bring out a high quality outcome with comparatively lesser time spent on the task. Nevertheless, even while the Creation stage is still on, ideas emerge and could spring up to refine the creative tasks. Till the first form of the product is concretized in the mind, refinement will keep happening within the mind consciously and sub-consciously. And the product development – in the form of “new model”, is something that is inevitable at any point of time during the product life-cycle.

### **Results and discussions**

Explaining on the objective of the paper it is to be understood here that initially the products are made by using material which are available freely, accessible without much concern and of course not-subject-to any governmental restrictions in regard to the toxicity, environment related issues, etc., but the scrutiny cannot go beyond certain levels, as the experts - either in Government or the Corporates cannot foresee too much ahead in future to find a serious de-merit which can be a reason for restriction to be spelt out in the current period of time . In other words, at any given point of time, the authorities would only be able to check the feasibility of material selection and usage for development of a product and give a go-ahead considering

the rule-book relevant to that particular time period only.

Quoting a classic example relevant here - a few decades ago, production of thermal power to meet large scale requirements was found feasible by using coal as the fuel for running the turbines with the technology available then, which was found quite commendable that time, as the huge availability of coal meant that it was a win-win proposition. It was a great marketing idea to produce power with the raw material available in plenty and meet the huge requirements of power. Rightly appreciable it was since the most essential need was met at the least cost possible, which aided growth in the industry with a corresponding jump in the national economic indices in the subsequent years. ***No hitch was found and it was a great a decision then.*** But decades later the same technology using the coal for burning to produce heat energy to drive the turbines of a power plant, was found harming the environment devastatingly and today even sanctions are being considered for not halting the thermal power production. Need for looking for alternate power generation so became an urgent requirement. ***What was a great marketing idea once, later found to be a curse on the society. It meant as though the societal interests were ignored when a decision was taken years ago. But it was not true in the real sense.*** If one tries to understand the background here, it would be clear that ***the decisions at the government level are taken generally by considering the available knowledge and the technical know-how to check whether societal interests are guarded. Failing to take a decision to give a go-ahead for thermal power generation decades ago, would have been a great impairment on the progress and development of the country.*** More

prudently, the decision taken then was quite in keeping with all the requirements of public good. No flouting of any rules happened. So the point here is, *what crops up as a marketing idea worth considering at one period of time could end up becoming a curse later on the society, when a need to take society-friendly alternate choices would become an urgent need.* Softer statements, such as, ‘societal interests could have been considered with a greater vision also would be baseless. Such statements cannot be given credence as *‘the past could see the future with the vision only that it is endowed with.’* (Ref.No.1)

Next in the list is the ‘use of Fossil fuels’ during the last 50 odd years. We may today say that use of fossil fuels had left the atmosphere badly affected with high levels of air pollution. Today the observation will have great relevance and must be looked into with all seriousness, but, had it not been decided decades ago to use the fossil fuels, the automobile industry and other industries using these fuels would not have progressed taking great leaps to be seen as they are today. Use of alternate energy run vehicles are being talked about today to cut down fossil fuel consumption due to release of Huge amounts Carbon dioxide, Sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides which are affecting the environment through global warming and human health issues. *Here again it is to note that the marketing idea which got a nod decades ago became a point of contention today referring to the societal interests.* (Ref.No.2)

Plastics are again of similar material, decades ago, it was seen to be a great find, answering the search for alternate material for several uses, such as packaging, filler material, engineering accessories. The application extended even to serve the purposes of furniture making, containers and tanks, why even it took greater part of

automobiles, airplanes and other huge structures considering larger percentage of material content. Ideally then it strongly supported the marketing idea as it was available in plenty and was also most cost effective. With the availability and application possibilities using varying compositions, Plastics became a boon and a household name then, which was not matched by any other material in the engineering field. *What was boon and an excellent resource then, is now a bane.* Today, it is a huge challenge to deal with the disposal of the plastics as they cannot be worked back or reversed. *No doubt, it is a huge environmental problem which is choking the societal interests.* The departure from use of plastics is a societal-marketing-oriented decision. But till the research provides alternates, fulfilling the needs of the customers becomes a challenge. And here again if the demand for the product to be phased out is high, it takes that much more time, not only to find the best possible alternative but also ensure availability of such product in huge quantities matching the demand. So change over may take a longer time to replace plastics keeping in mind the societal friendly attributes of the material to be chosen. (Ref.No.3)

There have been several other cases like what has been said – Chemical fertilizers were and even are in use now but the excessive use of synthetic fertilizers had badly affected several fertile lands and is posing problems of serious nature. *“Synthetic fertilizers do not support microbiological life in the soil. The application of a synthetic fertilizer actually kills a significant percentage of beneficial microorganisms. These tiny creatures are responsible for breaking down organic matter into a stable amendment for improving soil quality and*

*fertility. Some convert nitrogen from the air into a plant useable form.” (Ref.No.4)*

An interesting thing that is now heard – during these Covid-19 times – if what is heard is true about the credit card payments, it goes to prove that a well thought out marketing idea will have behind it a corresponding societal interest that is compromised. It is heard that the credit card marketers have an idea to make the defaulters of payments or those having dues to either pay on time – beyond the moratorium period - the dues or convert the dues to an EMI option for stretched out payment. Nothing is wrong for them to think the way they are doing, as it is an excellent marketing idea to sell a financial product with a great amount of ease. But deeper if one understands, the defaulters – not all but those who are generally disciplined – have not been able to honour payment commitments due to the difficult times they are experiencing now. But the difficulty experienced by people which is genuine, is being considered as an opportunity for coming out with a surprise marketing option to sell a financial product, which act is insensitive to societal interests. (Ref.No.5)

The classic examples that were taken for discussion to support the hypothesis of the paper prove beyond doubt that though it is ideal to keep strong view of Societal marketing as the mantra, it may not be possible always to start development of products – more especially products/commodities required in huge quantities – straight-a-way with the societal marketing needs in mind, as the marketer cannot go anywhere else than to depend on the resources naturally available on the planet earth. So anything that is chosen as a resource has to be from nature to be

shoveled for use in the development of products. And such an act ought to result in an imbalance in future leading to cry for a halt.

### **Conclusion**

**It is to be concluded therefore that what crops up as a marketing idea worth considering at one period of time could end up becoming a curse later on the society, when a need to take societal-friendly alternate choices would become inevitable,** since, unlike the marketing concept, Societal marketing concept does not only look at the transactional outcome between the buyer and seller as the deciding factor, but also takes into account the larger interests of so many inhabitants on the planet earth, which the transaction could affect in the process. Marketing, as a concept therefore, is passing stage only in the journey towards the nobler destination, where the societal interests become a priority thus including in the transaction - the society - as the third stake holder – the buyer and the seller being the first and the second.

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