**4 TYPES OF CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS - CONVENIENCE, SHOPPING, SPECIALTY AND UNSOUGHT PRODUCTS**

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4 Types of Consumer Products

Firstly, what specifically is a consumer product? A consumer product is a product bought by final consumers for personal consumption. But not every consumer product is the same. There are four different types of consumer products. Marketers usually classify consumer products into these 4 types of consumer products:

Convenience products

Shopping products

Specialty products

Unsought products.

These 4 types of consumer products all have different characteristics and involve a different consumer purchasing behavior. Thus, the types of consumer products differ in the way consumers buy them and, for that reason, in the way they should be marketed.

**Convenience products**

Among the four types of consumer products, the convenience product is bought most frequently. A convenience product is a consumer product or service that customers normally buy frequently, immediately and without great comparison or buying effort. Examples include articles such as laundry detergents, fast food, sugar and magazines. As you can see, convenience products are those types of consumer products that are usually low-priced and placed in many locations to make them readily available when consumers need or want them.

**Shopping products**

The second one of the 4 types of consumer products is the shopping product. Shopping products are a consumer product that the customer usually compares on attributes such as quality, price and style in the process of selecting and purchasing. Thus, a difference between the two types of consumer products presented so far is that the shopping product is usually less frequently purchased and more carefully compared. Therefore, consumers spend much more time and effort in gathering information and comparing alternatives. Types of consumer products that fall within the category of shopping products are: furniture, clothing, used cars, airline services etc. As a matter of fact marketers usually distribute these types of consumer products through fewer outlets, but provide deeper sales support in order to help customers in the comparison effort.

**Specialty products**

Number three of the types of consumer products is the specialty product. Specialty products are consumer products and services with unique characteristics or brand identification for which a significant group of consumers is willing to make a special purchase effort. As you can see, the types of consumer products involve different levels of effort in the purchasing process: the specialty product requires a special purchase effort, but applies only to certain consumers.

Examples include specific cars, professional and high-prices photographic equipment, designer clothes etc. A perfect example for these types of consumer products is a Lamborghini. In order to buy one, a certain group of buyers would make a special effort, for instance by travelling great distances to buy one. However, specialty products are usually less compared against each other. Rather, the effort must be understood in terms of other factors: Buyers invest for example the time needed to reach dealers that carry the wanted products. To illustrate this, look at the Lamborghini example: the one who wants one is immediately convinced of the choice for a Lamborghini and would not compare it that much against 10 other brands.

**Unsought products**

The 4 types of consumer products also include unsought products. Unsought products are those consumer products that a consumer either does not know about or knows about but does not consider buying under normal conditions. Thus, these types of consumer products consumers do not think about normally, at least not until they need them. Most new innovations are unsought until consumers become aware of them. Other examples of these types of consumer products are life insurance, pre-planned funeral services etc. As a consequence of their nature, unsought products require much more advertising, selling and marketing efforts than other types of consumer products.

**Marketing considerations for each of the 4 types of consumer products.**

Marketing

consideration Types of Consumer Products

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Convenience** | **Shopping** | **Specialty** | **Unsought** |
| Customer buying behavior | Frequent purchase, little effort (planning, comparison), low customer involvement | Less frequent purchase, much effort (planning and comparison of brands on price, quality, style etc.) | Strong brand preference and loyalty, special purchase effort, little comparison of brands, low price sensitivity | Little product awareness and knowledge or little interest |
| Price | Low price | Higher price | High price | Varies |
| Distribution | Widespread distribution, convenient locations | Selective distribution, fewer outlets | Exclusive distribution in only one or a few outlets | Varies |
| Promotion | Mass promotion | Advertising and personal selling | More carefully targeted promotion | Aggressive advertising and personal selling |
| Examples | Toothpaste, magazines, laundry detergent | Television, furniture, clothing | Luxury goods (e.g. Rolex watch), designer clothing | Life insurance or pre-planned funeral service |