CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF PROMOTION MIX

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Abstract
A highly competitive environment is forcing marketers to constantly use different marketing tools and strategies to retain existing customers and to win new clients and thereby increase their profitability. In the modern marketing, promotion is the most vital and familiar strategy used by the various business organizations to fascinate the customer. Promotion is communication by the marketer that informs, persuades and reminds potential buyers of a product in order to influence an opinion or elicit a response. This study reviews Promotion Mix refers to the blend of several promotional tools used by the business to create, maintain and increase the demand for goods and services. Promotional mix is a critical approach to enhance the sales that are why companies try to do some more attractive. The prime motive of the article is to review the significance of promotions mix elements like advertising, personal selling, public relations/Publicity, Direct marketing, Sale promotion. This study is designed to explore different school of thoughts of promotion and how Promotion Mix has the power to allow marketers to gain competitive advantage.

Keywords: Promotion Mix, Advertising, Public Relations/Publicity, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Personal Selling

I. INTRODUCTION
Once a product is developed, its price is determined the next problem comes to its sale i.e., creating demand for the product. It requires promotional activities. So, Promotion is an important part of marketing mix of a business enterprise. Promotion in marketing can be viewed as a communication process between organizations and their target market, which is aimed at informing them about their product availability and the benefits derivable in purchasing such products. Furthermore, promotion is the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and brand that they sell. The concept of integrated marketing suggests that the company must blend the promotion tools carefully into a coordinated promotion mix.
### Different schools of thoughts proposed by various authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kotler &amp; Keller (2006)</td>
<td>Sales Promotion, which is an aspect of marketing communication represents the ‘voice’ of the brands and is a means by which it can establish a dialogue and build relationships with customers.</td>
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<td>Kotler &amp; Armstrong (2008)</td>
<td>Promotion basically is geared towards attracting consumer attention, offer strong incentive to purchase; Ad can be used to dramatize product offers and to boost sagging sales.</td>
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<td>Tarence, 2000</td>
<td>Promotion refers to any incentive used by a manufacture to induce the trade (wholesalers and retailers), and/or consumers to buy a brand and to encourage the sales force to aggressively sell it.</td>
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<td>Anderson &amp; Lumar (2007); Jing &amp; Wen (2008); Kocas and Bohimann (2008)</td>
<td>Promotional sales in various forms as price promotions, coupons and displays are dominant features in the consumer product business marketing mix around the globe.</td>
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<td>Allender and Richards (2009)</td>
<td>Price promotional strategies to be adopted by any company business concern depends on the ratio of the price sensitive consumers.</td>
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<td>Issac (1999) quoting Russ and Kirk Patrik, 1982</td>
<td>Promotion is the most important element of the marketing mix in organization and may be the only means of differentiating its product in the minds of consumers. Hence promotion is defined as the persuasive communication activities and efforts used b the seller to induce buyers to buy its products.</td>
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<td>Russ &amp; Patrick, 1982</td>
<td>Promotion encompasses all communication efforts earned at generating sales or building a favorable attitude for an organization’s products of services. It is that part of an organization’s overall marketing strategy designed to communicate to the market-place usually through a set of activities, the nature of the organization and its market offerings.</td>
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<td>Okwandu &amp; Ekerte (2001)</td>
<td>Promotional strategy involves a systematic decision about the development and management of a firm’s promotional efforts. It involves decision about a product, its brand name, package, design, sales force, team, mass media, sales promotion, promotional themes, presentation and among others. In addition, it refers to the specific blend of promotion tools that companies uses to persuasively communicate customer relationship.</td>
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<td>Bendixen &amp; Pit (2007)</td>
<td>Apart from the promotional mix elements, a company may adopt the traditional 4Ps of marketing as a strategy to influence customer innovative behavior.</td>
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<td>Hermann et all (2005)</td>
<td>Price Promotion based on the following three conditions (a) when the price of a product is atleast 5% below the regular price (b) the duration of a price promotion does not exceed four weeks (c) when the price promotion rises. The price strategies are used to influence consumer’s purchasing decisions and thus might determine the level of brand loyalty.</td>
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<td>VanOest and Frances (2005), Hosiken and Reiffen (2004), Wettstein et al (2009)</td>
<td>Price promotions are characterized through two variables namely depth and frequency of price reductions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kotler &amp; Armstrong (2010)</td>
<td>Promotion mix or marketing communications mix is defined as the specific blend of promotion tools that the company uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationship.</td>
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<td>Kotler &amp; Armstrong (2010)</td>
<td>Advertising is any paid for m of non personal presentation and promotional of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor.</td>
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<td>Terrence (2000)</td>
<td>Advertising is that which involves mass communication via newspaper, magazines, radio, television and other mass (Billboard, the internet, etc), or direct communication that is pinpointed to each business - to- business customers or ultimate consumers.</td>
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<td>Isaac (1999) Kotler (1997)</td>
<td>Personal selling is the most cost effective tool at the later stages of the buying process, particularly in building up buyer's preferences, conviction and action.</td>
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<td>Kotler. &amp; Armstrong (2010)</td>
<td>Personal selling is a personal presentation by the firm's sales force for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships.</td>
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<td>Kotler. &amp; Armstrong (2008)</td>
<td>Sales promotion consists of short-term incentives to encourage purchase or sales of a product or service. Whereas advertising offers reasons to buy a product or service, sales promotion offers reasons to buy now.</td>
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<td>Schewe (1987), Pride and Ferrel (1982)</td>
<td>opined that sales promotion is an activity and/or material that act as a direct inducement, offering added value or incentive for the product to reseller's sales persons or consumers.</td>
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<td>Simpson &amp; Taylor (2002), Krake (2006)</td>
<td>Because of its unique characteristics and the incentive it offers to customers, the quick purchase of new products or services are adopted with ease.</td>
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<td>Padmore et al (2006), Opuku et al (2007).</td>
<td>Sales promotion often attracts brand switchers who are primarily looking for low price, good value or to attract new trials and reward loyal customers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frank (1998)</td>
<td>Public relations is defined as that which consists of all forms of planned communication, outwards and inwards, between an organization and its publics for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nwokoye (2002)</td>
<td>Public relations as the activities of a corporation, unions, government or other organizations in building and maintaining sound and productive relations with special publics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kotler, (2008)</td>
<td>Public relations as an aspect of promotional mix that involves the building of good relations with the company's various public by obtaining favourable publicity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russ &amp; Kirk Patrick (1982)</td>
<td>Publicity is a non-personal stimulation of demand for a product, service or business firm by planting commercially significant news about it in communication media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allen &amp; Patrick (2003)</td>
<td>Firm's uses publicity to maintain certain level of positive, public visibility and also to promote a particular image such as innovativeness, progressiveness and to overcome negative images.</td>
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Marketers drive sales by promoting the benefits of the company’s goods or services to pools of potential buyers. The ways marketer promote the organization will largely determine whether the marketer successfully plant the right messages in the minds of the target audience. Marketers should establish a promotional mix best suited to the company’s needs and resources.

Even a superior product doesn’t sell itself. Customers need information about product or service before they buy it. The ways marketer communicate features and benefits to the potential customers is called a promotional mix.

The fourth element of the 4 P’s of Marketing Mix is the promotion; that focuses on creating the awareness and persuading the customers to initiate the purchase. The several tools that facilitate the promotion objective of a firm are collectively known as the Promotion Mix. Promotion mix refers to all the decisions related to promotion of sales of products and services. The important decisions of promotion mix are selecting advertising media, selecting promotional techniques, using publicity measures and public relations etc.

There are various tools and elements available for promotion. These are adopted by firms to carry on its promotional activities. The marketer generally chooses a combination of these promotional tools. The Promotion Mix is the integration of Advertising, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion, Public Relations/Publicity and Direct Marketing. Some authors have considered more elements, too. The marketers need to view the following questions in order to have a balanced blend of these promotional tools.

What is the most effective way to inform the customers?
Which marketing methods to be used?
To whom the promotion efforts are directed?
What is the marketing budget? How is it to be allocated to the promotional tools?
Elements of Promotion Mix

Following are the tools or elements of promotion. They are also called elements of promotion mix:
- Advertising
- Sales promotion
- Personal selling
- Public relation/Publicity
- Direct Marketing

**Advertising**

Advertisement can be defined as the “paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of idea, goods or services by an identified sponsor”. It is an impersonal presentation where a standard or common message regarding the merits, price and availability of product or service is given by the producer or marketer. The advertisement builds pull effect as advertising tries to pull the product by directly appealing to customer to buy it. Advertising is one of the most widely used methods of communication mix wherein the complete information about the firm’s product and services can be communicated easily with the huge target audience coverage. It is the most popular and widely practiced tool of market promotion. Major part of promotional budget is consumed for advertising alone. Various advertising media – television, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor means and so forth – are used for advertising the product.

**Characteristics of Advertising are as follows**
- Advertising is non-personal or mass communication. Advertising can reach a large market. As through various media of advertising there is benefit of mass reach for example, any message given on All India Radio or TV can reach in different corners of the country wherever TV and Radio network is available. Personal contact is not possible.
- It is a paid form of communication.
- It is a one-way communication.
- Identifiable entity/sponsor-company or person gives advertising.
- It is costly option to promote the sales.
- It can be reproduced frequently as per need.
- It is always felt that advertising increases the cost of product or service but advertising is considered economical as compared to other promotional techniques because it reaches masses and if we calculate cost per customer it is very low or nominal. Per contact cost is the lowest.
- It is a widely used and highly popular tool of market promotion.
- There is wide variety of media available for advertising for video, audio, visual audio, print media etc. Under each category large variety is available for example, in print media we can select from magazines, newspaper, banner etc. This variety or choice helps the marketer to select the media, keeping in mind the target customer.
- In advertisement the messages regarding the product or service are given publicly to customers so there is always a proof for it and customers believe that publicly the company will not give false information of the product. The customer feels comfortable to buy a product which is widely advertised.
- Advertising provides enough opportunities to marketers to dramatize the message with the help of drawings, colours, pictures, music, dance etc. They can easily express the use of product through various techniques, and can add multimedia effect also.
Sales promotion

Sales promotion refers to short term use of incentives or other promotional activities that stimulate the customer to buy the product. Generally, the sales promotion schemes are floated in the market at the time of festivals or the end of the season. This promotion technique not only helps in retaining the existing customers but also attract the new ones with the additional benefits. Sales promotion techniques are very useful because they bring:

- Short and immediate effect on sale.
- Stock clearance is possible with sales promotion.
- Sales promotion techniques induce customers as well as distribution channels.
- Sales promotion techniques help to win over the competitor.
- It is taken as supplementary to advertising and personal selling efforts.

Some of the sales promotion activities commonly used by the marketer to increase the sale are:

- Rebate: It refers to selling product at a special price which is less than the original price for a limited period of time. This offer is given to clear off the stock or excessive inventory for example; coke announced 2 liter bottles at Rs 35 only.
- Discounts: This refers to reduction of certain percentage of price from list price for a limited period of time. The discounts induce the customers to buy and to buy more. Generally at the end of season big companies offer their products at discounted price to clear off the stock e.g., season’s sale at Snow-White Jain Sons, Paul Garments, Bhuvan Garments, etc.
- Refunds: This refers to refund or part of price paid by customer on presenting the proof of purchase for example, Rs 2 off on presentation of empty pack of Ruffle Lays.
- Premiums or Gifts/or Product Combination: These are most popular and commonly used promotion tool. It refers to giving a free gift on purchase of the product. Generally the free gift is related to product but it is not necessary for example, Mug free with Bourn vita, Shaker free with Coffee, Toothbrush free with Toothpaste, etc.
- Quantity Deals: It refers to offer of extra quantity in a special package at less price or on extra purchase some quantity free for example, buy three get one free e.g., this scheme of buy three get one free scheme is available on soaps.
- Samples: It refers to distribution of free samples of product to the customers. These are distributed when the seller wants the customer must try the product. Generally when a new product is launched for example, when Hindustan Level launched Surf Excel it distributed the samples as it wanted the customers to try it.
- Contests: It refers to participation of consumers in competitive events organised by the firm and winners are given some reward for example, Camlin Company organizes painting competition, Bourn vita quiz contest and some companies organise contest of writing slogans and best slogan is awarded prize.
- Coupons: Certificates entitling the bearer to a stated saving on the purchase of a specific product: mailed, enclosed in other products or attached to them, or inserted in magazine and newspaper ads.
- Frequency Programs: Programs providing rewards related to the consumer’s frequency and intensity in purchasing the company’s products or services.
• Patronage Awards: Values in cash or in other forms that are proportional to patronage of a certain vendor or group of vendors.
• Point of Purchase (P-O-P) Displays and Demonstrations: P-O-P displays and demonstrations take place at the point of purchase or sale.

Personal Selling

Personal selling includes face-to-face personal communication and presentation with prospects (potential and actual customers) for the purpose of selling the products. It involves personal conversation and presentation of products with customers. It is considered as a highly effective and costly tool of market promotion. The personal selling does not mean getting the prospects to desire what seller wants but the concept of personal selling is also based on customer satisfaction.

Characteristics of personal selling have been listed below
• Personal selling is an oral, face-to-face, and personal presentation with consumers.
• Basic purpose is to promote products or increase sales.
• It involves two-way communication.
• Immediate feedback can be measured.
• It is an ability of salesmen to persuade or influence buyers.
• It is more flexible way of market communication.
• Per contact cost is higher than advertising.
• It involves teaching, educating, and assisting people to buy.

Public relations/publicity

The companies perform several social activities with a view to create their positive & favorable brand image in the market. The companies carry out several public relations campaigns (such as constructing the public conveniences, donating some portion of their purchase to the child education, organizing the blood donation camps, planting trees, etc. are some of the common moves of enhancing the Public Relations) with the objective to create goodwill and have a support of all the people associated with it either directly or indirectly. The public comprises of the customers, employees, suppliers, distributors, shareholders, unions, environmentalists, government and the society as a whole. Thus, public relations include organization’s broad and overall communication efforts intended to influence various groups’ attitudes toward the organization.

Public relations are significant in the following ways
• Help to convey the policies and programmes of the organisation.
• Help to collect information about public opinion about the organisation, management activities etc.
• To overcome the complaints and dislikes of public.
• To mould people’s attitude in favour of organisation.
• To maintain goodwill and understanding between organisation and public.
• To build an image of the organisation.

The publicity is one of the forms of public relations that company may use with the intention to bring newsworthy information to the public. Publicity is a way of mass/personal communication. It is not a paid form of mass/personal communication that involves getting favorable response of buyers by placing commercially significant news in mass media and through personal communication by word of mouth. William J. Stanton defines: “Publicity is any promotional communication regarding an organisation and/or its products where the message is not paid for by the organisation benefiting from
it.” Publicity comes from reporters, columnists, journalists (Editorial Space) and general public (word of mouth). Publicity involves giving public speeches, giving interviews, conducting seminars, charitable donations, inauguration by film actor, cricketer, politician or popular personalities, stage show, etc., that attract mass media to publish the news about them and general public to communicate with others through word of mouth. E.g. Large Corporates such as Dabur, L&T, Tata Consultancy, Bharti Enterprises, Services, Unitech and PSU’s such as Indian Oil, GAIL, and NTPC have joined hands with Government to clean up their surroundings, build toilets and support the Swachh Bharat Mission.

**Main characteristic of publicity include**

- Publicity involves obtaining favourable presentation about company or company’s offers upon radio, television, or stage that is not paid for by the sponsor.
- It is a non-paid form of market promotion. However, several indirect costs are involved in publicity.
- It may include promotion of new product, pollution control efforts, special achievements of employees, publicizing new policies, etc., for increasing sales. It is primarily concerns with publishing or highlighting company’s activities and products. It is targeted to build company’s image.
- Mostly, publicity can be carried via newspapers, magazines, radio or television.
- Company has no control over publicity in terms of message, time, frequency, information, and medium.
- It has a high degree of credibility. Publicity message is more likely to be read and reacted by audience.
- Publicity can be done at a much lower cost than advertising. Company needs to spend a little amount to get the event or activity publicized.
- Frequency or repetition of publicity in mass media depends upon its social significance or the values for news. Mostly, it appears only once.

The firm’s success and achievement depends upon the support of these parties. For example, firm needs active support of middle men to survive in market, it must have good relations with existing shareholders who provide capital. The consumers’ group is the most important part of public as success of business depends upon the support and demand of customers only.

**Direct Marketing**

With the intent of technology, companies reach customers directly without any intermediaries. The e-mails, text messages, Fax, mobile phones are some of the tools of direct marketing. The companies can send the emails and messages to the customers if they need to be informed about the new offerings or the sales promotion schemes. E.g. The Shopper Stop send SMS to its members informing about the season end sales and extra benefits to the golden card holders.

**Interactive Marketing**

Interactive Marketing has recently gained popularity as a marketing communication tool, wherein the customers can interact with the firms online and can get their queries resolved online. Amazon is one of the best examples of interactive marketing wherein the customers make their choice and can see what they have chosen or ordered in the recent past. Also, several websites offer the platform to the customers wherein they ask questions and get the answers online such as answer.com. Thus, marketing Communication mix refers to the different tools that a firm can adopt to
inform, persuade, and remind the customer about the product and services it sells.

II. CONCLUSION

The 'promotional mix' is a term used to describe the set of tools that a business can use to communicate effectively the benefits of its products or services to its customers. It is crucial to implement promotional strategies to retain existing customers and to win new clients and thereby increase their sales and profitability. The challenge is to select the right mix of promotional activities to suit the particular business at a particular time and to then use it correctly to achieve a result. In these modern times, the company operates in a constantly changing environment. One of the most important marketing decisions that managers may need to make centers around determining the most effective way to promote their business and products. Past research results also suggested that advertising plays a vital role to diffuse the information among the customers. Even sales promotion has a positive impact on brand equity, but past studies also recommended that monetary promotion might harm brand equity and it can be an adverse effect on its creation. The significance of public relation cannot be ignored, for good relation company needs to maintain the customer relationship with the customer and make them satisfied. Further, personal selling is the rich source of brand awareness and brand image because when buyer and seller interact face to face, then customer got brief information about goods and services which make a positive and trustworthy relationship with the client. Direct marketing also plays a significant role to build brand equity through brand image and brand association.

III. REFERENCES

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