

## 4.7: Discussion Questions and Activities

### Discussion Questions

1. Assume your company makes shop towels, hand-washing stations, and similar products. Make a list of all the companies that could be potential customers of your firm. Then identify all the markets from which their demand is derived. (Who are their customers and their customers' customers?) What factors might influence the success or failure of your business in these markets?
2. How might a buying center be different for a company that is considering building a new plant versus choosing a new copier?
3. Imagine you are a salesperson for a company that sells maintenance items used in keeping a manufacturing plant running. There is a large plant in your territory that buys 60 percent of its products from one competitor and the other 40 percent from another competitor. What could you do to try to make a sale in that plant if they have never purchased from you before? How would your answer change if you were the 40 percent vendor and wanted to increase your share of the buyer's business? Would your answer change if you were the other vendor? Why or why not?
4. When your family makes a major purchase, such as choosing a vacation destination or buying furniture, does it resemble a buying center? If so, who plays what roles?
5. Katie is a forklift operator who is tired of her forklift breaking down. She points out to her boss, the plant supervisor, that her forklift is broken down at least 20 percent of the time, and it is beginning to impact production. The plant supervisor tells the purchasing agent that a new forklift is needed and asks the purchasing agent to get three bids on new ones with similar features. The purchasing agent calls three companies and gets bids, which the plant supervisor uses to narrow it down to two. He then has Katie test drive the two and since she liked the Yamamatsu best, he decides to purchase that one. What roles do the supervisor and Katie play in this firm's buying center? Does the process followed resemble the process outlined in the chapter? If not, why not?
6. Someone who works in a company is also a consumer at home. You have already learned about how consumers buy. How does what you already know about how consumers buy relate to what you would expect those same people to do at work when making a purchase?
7. A major office equipment manufacturer and an airline once teamed up to offer a special deal: Buy a copier/printer and get a free round-trip ticket anywhere in the United States where the airline flies. The promotion didn't last long—buyers complained it was unethical. What about it was unethical? Who was really doing the complaining?
8. Congratulations, you just made a sale! For the first time in five years, the Humongo Corporation purchased from your company. How do you turn this into a straight rebuy? What product characteristics might make this goal easier to accomplish? What buyer characteristics might make it more difficult to accomplish?
9. Consider a company where marketing and sales are two different departments. Their customers are other businesses. Using both the buying center and buying process, describe what the marketing department actually does. What do salespeople actually do?

### Activities

1. Interview someone you know who makes purchasing decisions as part of the job. The person may or may not be a professional purchasing agent as long as business purchasing decisions are a fairly regular part of his or her position. What are the key principles to making good purchasing decisions at work? How do those principles influence people's purchases for their own personal consumption?
2. Locate three different types of Web sites that cater to markets discussed in this chapter. How do these differ from sites like eBay or Overstock.com? How are they similar? B2C models like Groupon and LivingSocial are being adopted by B2B companies. Examples include Bizy Deal; take a look at their site and identify the types of offerings that seem prevalent. What characteristics of the product or service would make such a model right for a B2B company?
3. Go to [www.ism.ws/](http://www.ism.ws/). What is the purpose of this site and the organization that created it? How does the ISM help its members with ethical dilemmas? Be specific, with specific examples from the site.
4. Many B2B marketers use NAICS to segment their market. Go to <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>. Click on the FAQs link to answer these questions. What is NAICS and how is it used? How does NAICS handle market-based rather than production-based statistical classifications, and why is that distinction important?

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