

5.5: Discussion Questions and Activities

Discussion Questions

1. Think about some of your friends and what you have discovered by visiting their homes. Do they buy different things than you do? If so, why? How might a company distinguish you from them in terms of its targeting?
2. Staples and The Limited have attempted to thwart shoppers who abuse store return policies. When a customer returns items, store clerks swipe the customer's driver's license through electronic card readers that track buying and return patterns for any suspicious activity (Weston). What drawbacks do you think such a strategy could have?
3. Is it always harder to find new customers than it is to retain old ones or does it depend on the business you're in?
4. Does one-to-one marketing have to be expensive? How can small organizations interact with their customers in a cost-effective way?
5. Are large companies better off using multisegment strategies and small companies better off using niche strategies? Why or why not?
6. How have companies such as JCPenney and Sears tried to change their position (reposition their stores)?
7. Do you think hotel companies have segmented the market too much and confused customers?

Activities

1. Visit <http://aclu.org/pizza/images/screen.swf> to see a video created by the American Civil Liberties Union in an effort to warn consumers about the information being collected about them. Do you think the video is far-fetched? Or do you think consumers should be alarmed? In your opinion, do the potential benefits of CRM databases exceed the potential downsides—or not?
2. Form groups of three students. Think of a product or service that one of you purchased recently on campus. How might you go about developing a customer profile for the product? List the sources you would use.
3. Describe a product you like that you believe more people should use. As a marketer, how would you reposition the product to increase its use? Outline your strategy.
4. Look at the latest census data and identify at least two areas of the country that are growing. What type of businesses would you recommend enter the growing markets?
5. Think of an idea for a new product or service. Who would be the target market(s) and how would you position your offering?

References

Weston, L. P., "The Basics: Are You a Bad Customer?" *MSN Money*.

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