

8.6: Discussion Questions and Activities

Discussion Questions

1. What's the ideal number of marketing channels a firm should have?
2. Is a pull strategy superior in all markets?
3. Is selling power the only source of channel power? From what other sources could an organization derive channel power?
4. The chapter listed a number of scenarios that can cause channel conflicts. What other factors can you think of that might cause channel conflicts?
5. Amazon.com has carved out a unique niche for itself as an intermediary. Amazon sells products on behalf of manufacturers such as Dell, Sony, and Calvin Klein, as well as retailers such as Macy's and Toys“R”Us. How should Amazon be categorized? As a retailer, wholesaler, or broker?
6. What are some reasons for backward integration? For forward integration? Does such integration always benefit the consumer?
7. Direct to consumer advertising for pharmaceuticals is a pull strategy, designed to get consumers to ask their doctors to prescribe certain medications. What are the pros and cons of this practice? Are these always pros and cons to pull strategies? What might the pros and cons be for push strategies involving pharmaceuticals?
8. What are some brands that you think use selective or exclusive channels? How does channel choice, in those instances, influence consumer perceptions of value? In what situations might selective or exclusive channels add real value?
9. Of the channel functions described in the chapter, which is the most important and why? The least important? Why?
10. How does disintermediation benefit the consumer? How might it harm the consumer? Can you think of any revolutionary businesses created in the past few years due to disintermediation? Be sure to describe one not mentioned already in the chapter.

Activities

1. Think of some products you currently use. Are there any you would like to buy via different marketing channels? Do you think the products could be successfully marketed this way?
2. Describe a time in which you did business with a company and received conflicting information from its different channels (for example, a store's Web site versus a visit to the store). How did it affect your buying experience? Have you done business with the company since?
3. Break into groups and make a list of four to five different types of products. Decide which channels should be used to distribute each product. Present your findings to your class and see if they agree with you.
4. Make a list of products you believe failed because of poor marketing channel choices.

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