

The marketing mix

Once you know who your customers are and what they want, you need to develop a strategy for communicating with them. It is the marketer's function to manage the marketing mix which can be simply summarized by the four P's: PRODUCT, PRICE, PROMOTION, and PLACE. The marketing mix is the set of characteristics that makes up the 'package' being offered to the customer. The four P's is an established framework for developing a marketing strategy. Its main components are:

Product

Describe your service or product in detail. Include its special features, and how it will benefit the customer. It covers:

- Quality
- Features
- Name
- Packaging
- Services
- Guarantees

Price

Describe your pricing strategy, based on your costs and the current market rate; and your payment policy, including any incentives or discounts you'll offer. It covers:

- List price
- Discounts
- Allowances
- Credit terms

Promotion

Select the promotional tool identified in your market research as the one best suited to reach your customers and achieve your marketing objectives, i.e. flyers, telemarketing, advertising, networking, guest speaking, public relations, press releases etc. It covers:

- Advertising
- Personal selling
- Sales promotion
- Public relations

Place

Describe how and in what place (location) you will display or provide your service or product so that customers have access to it, or can find out how to contact you. This could involve developing your own website. It covers:

- Distributors
- Retailers
- Locations
- Inventory
- Transport
- Warehousing

Consumers place differing degrees of importance on the individual elements of the marketing mix. They differ not only in the price they will pay, but in a wide range of benefits they expect from the service or product and its method of delivery. As a result, the market becomes split into several segments. Each segment or group will require a different marketing mix strategy so that you can deliver the best offer to the best segment.