

What Is Marketing Mix?

The definition of marketing mix can best be described as the combination of elements used to promote products or services. These variable elements are based upon the analysis of the “four P’s” of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion. Specific marketing tactics are then formed from the intersection of these four factors.

Marketing mix is considered an essential marketing theory that all business people should know in order to be conversant in the field of marketing.

How Does Marketing Mix Work?

No two products are promoted in exactly the same way. Therefore, marketing managers develop product marketing plans based on their analysis and interpretation of many factors:

- **The product’s attributes:** Features, benefits, proof points (e.g. studies, testimonials)
- **The target audience:** Who will buy this product? What problems will this product solve? What media does this target audience prefer? Where can we find them online, in print, on the airwaves? What do they like to do in their free time?
- **The price:** Is it an inexpensive product? A luxury product? Something in between?
- **Brand:** What is the company’s overall brand? What is the brand promise? How does this product fit into the brand?

Once these questions are answered, marketing managers are able to craft a marketing mix strategy (and the tactical plan necessary to achieve said strategy). The marketing mix becomes part of the tactical plan and describes the elements that will achieve the product’s sales goals.

Marketing Mix Elements

Marketing mix elements (also known as tactics) aren’t fixed but change over time. Often, marketing managers test various elements of the marketing mix to determine which tactics achieve the highest [return on investment \(ROI\)](#).

Common Marketing Mix Tactics

Marketing mix elements can include one or all of the following:

- A website or landing page for the product
- Search engine marketing
- Social media marketing
- Paid search ads
- Paid social media ads
- Product reviews
- Sales and marketing brochures
- Print advertising in magazines, newspapers, and journals
- Packaging to appeal to the target audience

- Billboards
- Sponsorships
- Online videos
- Trade show events
- Radio ads
- Television ads
- Store demonstrations

There's really no limit to the creativity that marketers use to develop their marketing mix elements. Similar products often use different marketing mixes in the hope of reaching a slightly different target market (or covering part of the market their competitors haven't).

What Are The Four Ps of Marketing?

Grasping the concept of the four P's of marketing is essential since they fit together with the marketing mix to develop a marketing plan.

It always begins with an analysis of the product, the identification of a product's benefits, and matching the target audience's needs to guide the rest of the strategy (including choosing the appropriate price and where to promote the product).

1. Product

Even the best marketing mix strategy can fail if the underlying product concept is faulty. Building exceptional products is essential to the success and profitability of any company.

The first step is deeply analysing a product's features, benefits, and advantages over the competition. Competitive analysis can help determine the differentiating features of their products that can be highlighted in their marketing materials. Companies may also conduct market research to discover the elements that customers find most appealing about their products.

2. Price

Pricing products is both an art and a science. The price point for any product must be profitable for the company while covering costs and adding an adequate [profit margin](#). Beyond that, determining retail price is a matter of comparing similar products in the market, their price points, what prices the target market is willing to pay, and how to leverage the psychological impact of price.

[Psychological pricing tactics](#) utilize human psychology as part of the marketing mix. Bargain prices often end in unusual numbers (such as Home Depot, which often end '8') while luxury prices may end in '0'.

Depending on the target audience and the brand strategy, the final price point may be a luxury price, bargain price, or something in-between.

3. Place

Place may happen online or in a store, but knowing where people are likely to encounter, discover, and learn about products is essential.

Place can occasionally be easy to find. Golf enthusiasts, for instance, will probably interact with new clubs at golf courses and pro shops. It might not be as easy to determine where consumers might interact with a new flavor of ice cream. Unlike golfers, the list could extend from supermarkets to convenience stores, restaurants, food trucks, and special events.

Knowing where people interact with the product (or are likely to encounter the product) leads directly into the last of the four P's: promotion.

4. Promotion

Promotion refers to the activities chosen to advertise the product – and how to distinguish and differentiate it in the marketplace. People often equate promotion with marketing, but without product, price, and place, it's difficult to find the right promotional mix without wasting time and money.

Example of Marketing Mix

Jane is a marketing manager for Simple Smartphone, a new smartphone developed for older people. Market research has revealed that people 60 and over find the newer generation of smartphones difficult to use. Jane's company took that information and developed a new product to compete in the smartphone market against Apple, Samsung Galaxy, and similar phones.

The four P's quadrant for the new Simple Smartphone might look like this:

MARKETING MIX

PRODUCT

- Large handheld phone
- WiFi or cell signal
- 4G or 5G
- Extra large buttons to dial numbers
- High contrast screen
- Easy and fast charging
- Camera easy to find

PRICE

- Base model is \$99
- Upgraded phone with greater memory capacity \$199
- All phones come with free case and charger
- No monthly contract
- Pay as you model

PLACE

- Sold at Walgreens, CVS, Walmart
- Sold direct by mail from magazine advertisements
- Sold direct by mail from website

PROMOTION

- Dedicated landing page
- Facebook ads
- Magazine ads in Better Homes & Garden, Victoria magazine (target market women ages 60+)
- Television commercials on select regional networks

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Marketing Mix Examples of Companies

The following real-world marketing mix strategy examples focus on companies that have chosen one area of the marketing mix to use as their competitive advantage.

Dollar Tree leverages price as a factor by pricing everything in the store at \$1 or lower. This sends a strong signal to their target consumer that they'll save money by shopping at their stores.

Another example of marketing mix is Tiffany & Co. applying product as their competitive edge. Their signature diamond cut (called a "Tiffany True Cut") is only available at their store. The "Tiffany Blue" of their packaging is so distinctive that the [Pantone Company](#) has even named the color after the brand.

Apple focuses on product innovation as the quadrant to leverage for their competitive edge in the marketing mix. Although it has memorable advertising, it's the product design that sets Apple apart from all others.

Other Marketing Mix Strategy Examples

Since the 4 P's were introduced in the 1960s, others have used it to create their own marketing mix strategies. This includes the 7 P's model and the Boston Consulting Group Matrix.

What Are The 7 Ps?

The [7 Ps of Marketing](#) add three additional areas to evaluate the marketing mix, including:



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Why Marketing Mix Is Important

Marketers live by the axiom, “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.” It’s never wise to put all of your promotional dollars into one marketing tactic – no matter how promising it seems.

Developing a marketing mix increases the chance of reaching more people in the target market. It is the confluence of these elements – right product, right time, right place, right person – that results in a sale.

How to Use a Marketing Mix to Get Ahead

Whether using the four P’s, seven P’s, or the Boston model, the end goal is the same: to make sales. Models simply help marketing managers think through the many steps to choose the appropriate marketing tactics.

