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## Ethics in marketing-need of the hour

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### Abstract

Marketing ethics is an area of applied ethics which deals with the moral principles behind the operation and regulation of marketing. The present paper is a modest attempt to identify ethical and unethical practices in the marketing mix components like product, price, promotion and physical distribution and to analyze the implication of interface of ethics and marketing.

**Keywords:** distribution strategy, ethical issues, marketing, pricing strategy, product strategy

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### Introduction

Marketing, a part of the overall business activity inherently is the most visible to the general public because of its boundary-spanning role. Indeed, ethics is a popular research topic in the marketing literature. Marketing has received increased research interest during the past thirty years. Areas of research include ethical problems faced by marketing managers, marketing researchers, advertising personnel, purchasing personnel, industrial sales people and retail sales people. Other areas include consumer's perception of various marketing practices, non-business professors and marketing practitioner's belief about the appropriateness of applying marketing principles to social issues and ideas, perceptual differences between industrial sales and purchasing personnel's ethical beliefs, college student's perceptions of potentially questionable marketing practices and ethical problems faced by marketing faculty.

### Ethics in Marketing

Ethic is a standard for judging the rightness not of action person, but of action one person relative to another. The business is primarily a social process, within which it is an economic process and within the latter, marketing is a specialized process involving relationship and interactions. Marketing is something that people do as people, not merely as buyers and sellers not even just as economic men. In the field of marketing personnel deal more with men than with machines. The people do not constitute an atom behaving in a set fashion. They are a bunch with lot of inclinations, preferences, desires. Marketing is a process of engaging men completely, social entities who have commitments both within and without institutional involvements.

### Ethical Issues in Product Strategy

This concerns the production of flawed products due to company indifference, increased product complexity, and poor-quality control. Most companies are way of producing poor quality products in the backdrop of rising consumerism and the regulators in USA fearing liability suits and damage claims. Even in India the consumer may not go for repeat sales if they are unhappy with the product quality in this era of multiple brands and greater choice. Some producers follow a program of planned obsolescence, causing products to become obsolete before they actually need a replacement. Attractive functional features in electronics like mobile phones and computer are launched in a phased manner to make order model models obsolete. Many a times product components are made using material which ruts, wears, breaks or rots sooner than expected. In the high fashion industry apparels are deemed obsolete before their time. However, the marketers counter that in a competitive market new features, models, technologies, styles attract customers.

### Pricing Strategy

Announcing super discount offers and attracting customers through false advertising, subsequent visits prove that merchandise attracting maximum discounts is out of stock and the retail prices are kept unethically higher before extending high discounts. High prices amount to profiteering and exploitation of the consumer. This is due to high cost of distribution, high advertising and promotion costs and excessive mark-ups. Consumers pay for excessive distribution costs if there are too many intermediaries, inefficiency and duplication of services. Marketers feel that advertising adds value by informing potential buyers of the availability and merits of a brand. Heavy advertising and sales promotion does make branded products costlier but assures a buyer of the quality. Some companies charge a higher mark-up as a strategy.

**Promotion Strategy**

Now-a-days, children are more accessible to the televisions. This is intelligently capitalized by the modern marketers. The exploitation of children by the modern marketers. The exploitation of children by the advertisers is explained as follows: Children are exposed to advertisements of product that could be harmful to them; some television techniques may be deceptive because children lack the ability to evaluate them properly; Long term exposure to advertisement may have adverse effects on the development of children's values, attitude and behavior. India is famous for culture. Indians give prime place to the ladies.

**Distribution Strategy**

Organization today targeted new and present customers, the emphasis is shifting from selling customers today, to create customers for tomorrow. Thus, business is finally, beginning to think more long term than short term. This process is referred to as relationship marketing. Most of the time, consumers are talked into buying unwanted and unneeded things by sales people using high pressure selling. Sales people use smooth and canned talks to entice purchases by consumers and often it is a case of sale and not advertising buy. In USA there are laws that control telephone and door to door sales people and they have to announce at the outset that they want to sell a product. Again, selling involves building long term relationships with valued customers and high-pressure tactics cause serious damage to such relationships. Maintaining equality is the duty of everybody in every day's life.

**Conclusion**

Marketing decision often require specialized knowledge, ethical issues are often more complicated than those faced in personal life and effective decision-making requires consistency. As business situation is different, many organizations have embraced ethical codes of conduct and rules of professional ethical to guide managers and employees. However, sometimes self-regulation proves insufficient to protect the interests of all parties in the exchange process will likely occur. It is also found that there is a change in the conduct of marketer due to ethical awareness.

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