Paper	Service Marketing (4 Credits)
Code	MC 204
Course	M.COM. 2nd Semester
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Unit 3rd: Marketing Research and Marketing Information System in Services Strategies for service marketing

Unit's Structure
1.1 *Marketing Research*
1.2 *Marketing Information System*
1.3 *Strategies for service marketing*

Service marketers often emphasise aspects like customer service, relationship-building, and the quality of the customer experience to differentiate their offerings and build customer loyalty.

Effective service marketing is critical in industries such as healthcare, hospitality, finance, and consulting, where the quality of the service provided directly impacts customer satisfaction and long-term success.

Types of Service Marketing

1. External Service Marketing: External service marketing is a set of **strategies and activities aimed at promoting and communicating the value and benefits of a service to potential customers who are not yet clients of the organisation**. It focuses on reaching out to the target market through various marketing channels and methods to attract new customers and generate interest in the services offered.

2. Internal Service Marketing: Internal service marketing refers to the **practice of applying marketing principles and strategies within an organisation to promote a positive service-oriented culture and enhance the experiences of employees who serve as internal customers**. This concept recognises that employees who provide services within an organisation should be treated as valued customers, and their satisfaction and engagement are critical to delivering superior external customer service.

3. Interactive Service Marketing: Interactive service marketing is a concept that emphasises the active participation of both service providers and customers in the service delivery process. It **recognises that services are often co-created and are highly dependent on the interactions, communication, and relationships between the service provider and the customer**. In interactive service marketing, the customer becomes an integral part of the service experience, and their engagement significantly influences the service's quality and outcome.

1.1 Market Research

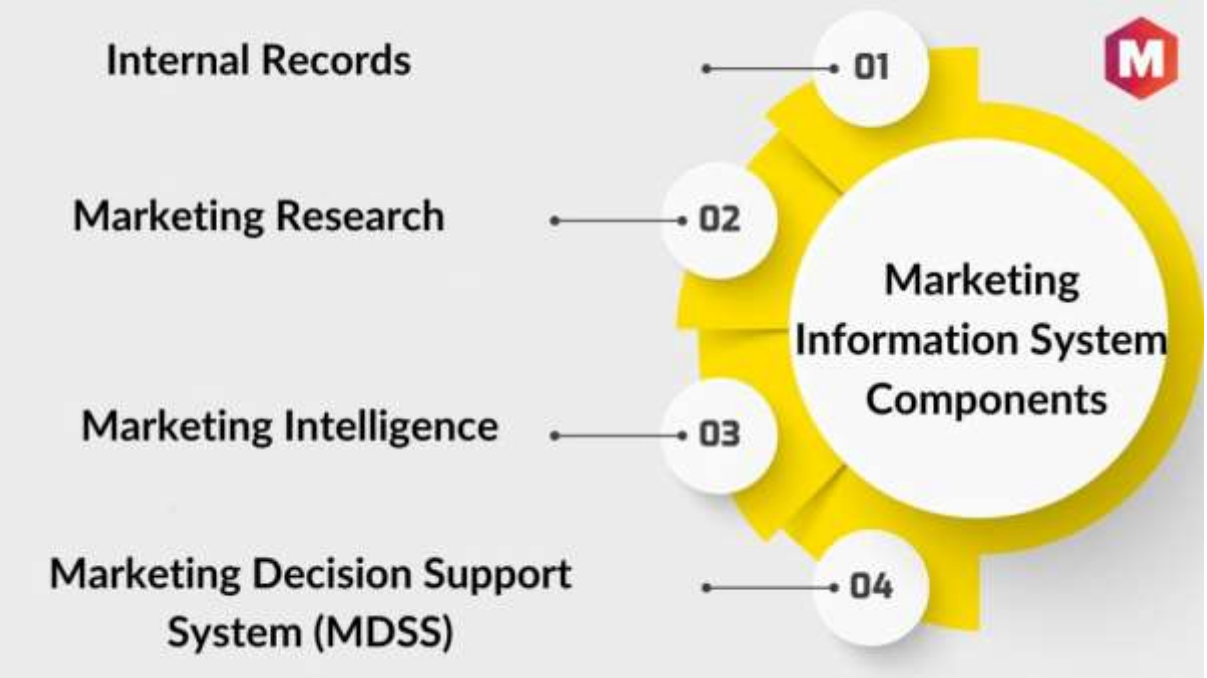
- Research is the bedrock of all present-day marketing efforts. From market research to brand research, rigorous scientific studies can help firms to make more informed decisions.
- Market research is an organized effort to gather information about target markets and customers. It involves understanding the customers' behaviour and their needs and requirements. It is an important component of business strategy and a major factor in maintaining competitiveness.
- Market research helps in identifying and analysing market needs, market size, and the competition. Its techniques involve both qualitative methods (such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and ethnography) and quantitative methods (such as customer surveys and analysis of secondary data).
- Market research also includes social and opinion research; thus, it is a systematic gathering and interpretation of information about individuals or organizations using statistical and analytical methods and techniques of the applied social sciences to gain insight or support decision-making.

1.2 Marketing Information System (MIS)

Marketing Information System regularly gathers, analyzes, interprets, stores, and distributes internal and external market data. Marketing information systems include CRM, market research, competitive intelligence, internal sales tracking, and external databases.

It empowers enterprises of all sizes. It provides access to company data and analyzes marketing trends, including sales success, customer segmentation, competitor tracking, and more. Businesses can reliably make strategic decisions with an MIS.

Thus, it helps companies better understand customer needs and preferences to make smarter marketing decisions. **The MIS comprises several components: Marketing Research, Data, Marketing Intelligence Systems, and Marketing Information Processes.**



Steps Involved in a Marketing Information System Process

The process of a marketing information system involves a series of steps used to analyze data and communicate findings, ultimately affecting decision-making. These steps include

1. Identify marketing metrics to use.
2. Collect data from inside and outside sources.
3. Create graphs to display trends.
4. Share trend details with relevant departments.
5. Analyze the data to make informed decisions on the right course of action.

Example

Pandora, a popular music streaming service, mirrors how Spotify leverages a marketing information system, albeit with a few twists. Its system examines subscribers' listening behavior, preferences, and social interactions to provide tailored music suggestions and curate personalized playlists. Besides, the information system lays the groundwork for effective ad campaigns and monitors client engagement. The result: Pandora can predict the type of music subscribers would enjoy and smartly target its marketing efforts.

Conclusion

A Marketing Information System is a powerful tool for marketing managers to optimize the accuracy and effectiveness of their marketing

efforts. As a marketing data support system, it helps to provide companies with essential data and information that can be used to make informed decisions, develop successful marketing strategies, and increase sales.

By leveraging the power of the Marketing Information System, companies can gain valuable insights into their business environment, gain access to market data, and conduct marketing research. Moreover, the marketing information system can generate internal reports and help companies make sense of their internal company data.

1.3 Marketing Strategies for Service Companies

1. Marketing Research

2. Marketing Information System

3. **Niche Strategy**

One of the most important business considerations for service marketing is **niche targeting and specialization**.

Niche marketing is a highly targeted form of advertising for a small, specific, and well-defined audience. Niche strategy is a unique marketing strategy that focuses on selling or promoting a unique and specialized product or service to a small but productive target group. It targets only those customers who can relate well to the particular product or service. The company tries to build a long-term relationship with this small set of customers.

For example, the fitness industry is a broad market, but "high-protein meal prep for endurance athletes" is a niche market. Niche marketing is the practice of building a company's entire go-to-market approach around that defined segment.

DryBar disrupted the traditional salon market by specializing in a single service: blowouts. Its tagline — "No cuts. No color. Just blowouts." — is a masterclass in product-speciali

zation niche positioning. By committing to one service, DryBar created a new category rather than competing within an existing one, earning national press coverage and a loyal repeat-visit customer base.

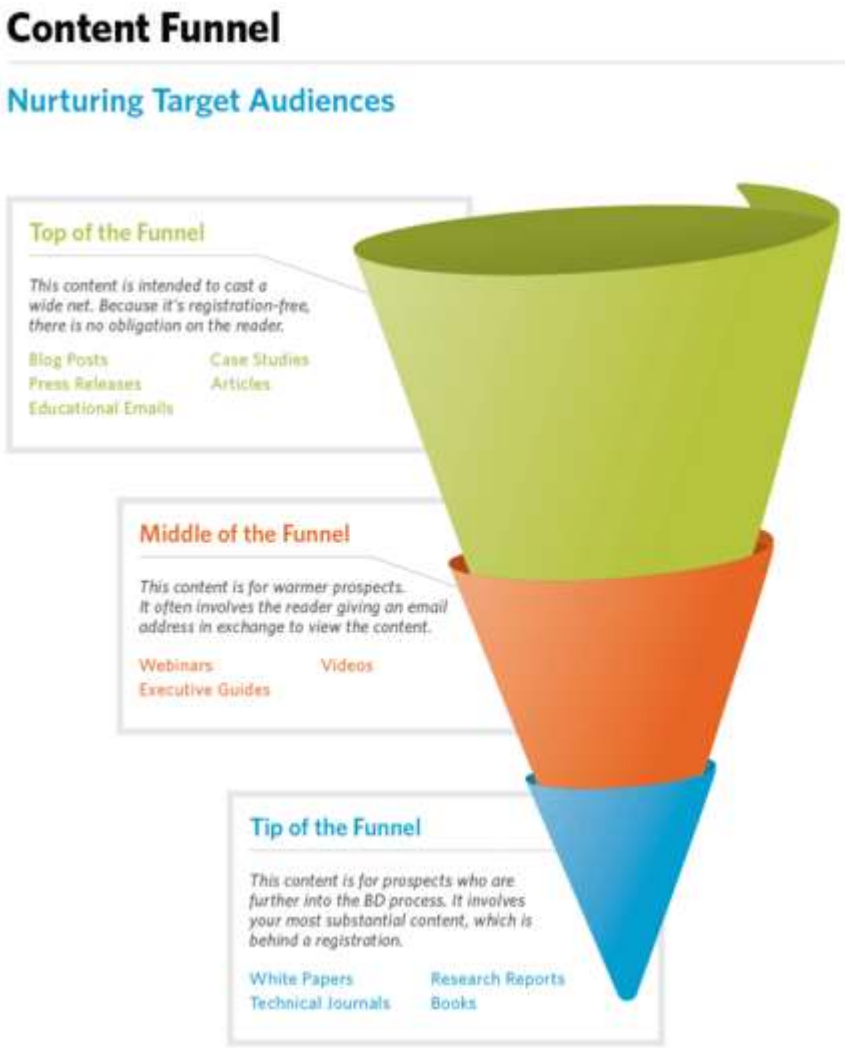
What we like: DryBar's tagline defines its niche by explicitly stating what it doesn't do. This builds immediate clarity and attracts exactly the customer who values convenience and specialization over full-service options. If your niche is defined by simplicity or focus, build your messaging around what you won't do.

4. High-Performance Website

A company's website is one of the most crucial assets in today's professional service marketplace. It is much more than just a digital billboard, as many companies once thought. A well-designed website serves as the centrepiece of a service firm's online presence and acts as a rich source of information that showcases your expertise in the marketplace.

A website is a major tool for building brand visibility. Prospective clients usually search online to hire service providers. Service provider firms must have an easily navigable website where people can find all the information they need and stand a better chance of winning a business. Besides, the website will help you demonstrate your expertise and gain better marketplace acceptability. It's usually seen that around 80% of people search online for service marketing firms. The internet has also emerged as the most common source of all information.

When a visitor lands on a firm's website, robust information and carefully devised offers can drive leads to closer engagements. It eventually brings qualified business to you. The process of **nurturing leads** via content is shown below.



The second component of the website that firms must consider is the design. Graphic and **web designs** can greatly influence audience perception, aid recall, and differentiate the business intuitively and swiftly.

The power of a good website design is often underestimated. This, in turn, gives a tremendous opportunity for a company to set itself apart from the rest of the competition and convey the credibility that's needed to drive home the rewards.

The compatibility of your website with a wide range of devices is also important. These include computers, **Androids**, tablets, mobiles, and others. Responsive design, which allows a website to suit a viewer's device, has become one of the key features for business as more people are using mobile and handheld devices for business.

For example, Google has already begun to rank "mobile-friendly" websites higher up the search results. Making a website responsive is now a necessity for service marketing firms.

5. **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

The online **service marketing** puzzle: high-growth companies consider SEO one of the most important strategies available to drive traffic.

SEO is an always-evolving yet complex discipline. It comprises two major components.

- **Onsite SEO:**

This technique uses targeted keywords to communicate the content of a firm's website, which will appeal to your target audience. Keyword phrases typically focus on your services and help search engines develop more relevant data for the searchers. And when the audience searches for insight into your specialization's service area, they'll land on your website.

- **Offsite SEO:**

It takes the form of backlinks to your website via guest articles on other websites or through third-party engagement. These efforts increase the website's authority as an acknowledged leader in your industry.

As more relevant and high-quality websites link to your site, popular search engines will understand your credibility, leading to higher rankings.

6. **Social Media**

More than 60% of all buyers check new service providers on social media (such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.), which makes it one of the most commonly used information sources than formal recommendations or referrals.

The nature of referrals has changed with the arrival of **social media**. A recent referral marketing study found that nearly 17% of all expertise-based referrals are based on social media interactions. Simply put, social media acts as an accelerator to reach your expertise, reputation, and content to your target customers. It helps you connect to valuable influencers and contacts and monitor your brand via social listings.

7. **Advertising**

There are several platforms on which you can advertise your service marketing firm. These commonly include the following.

- Service Industry websites and publications
- Social media
- **Google AdWords**, search engine marketing (SEM), **Yahoo**, **Bing,** and other portals.
- Retargeting: A cookie-based technology that uses a JavaScript code to anonymously follow your audience across the internet and serve relevant advertisements.

Advertising doesn't merely promote your service marketing. It also plays a major role in driving content downloads and increasing visibility and expertise.

Remember to use various advertising forms that best match your professional service. Networks like LinkedIn and other services for industry-oriented advertising often work best. These networks allow direct targeting of the appropriate customer segment, leading to more conversation, better click rates, and lower download costs. **LinkedIn's analytics tools** can provide valuable insights and key metrics to help you target the appropriate customer segment on the platform, leading to more conversation, better click rates, and lower download costs.

Conversely, SEM is usually more expensive and harder to target for extending professional services. At the same time, Facebook advertisements could be less than adequate because professional service customers use them less than other similar networks.

It needs to be remembered simultaneously that each type of advertisement has several variations. A service marketing firm may find them somewhat successful depending on the advertisement purpose, budget, targeting, or industry niche.

8. **Referral Service Marketing**

The nature of professional service referrals has changed over the years. This has impacted service marketing strategy in a big way. It has been found that more than 81% of service providers have received referrals from people who were never a client.

Content marketing can be used in connection with the tactics mentioned in referral service marketing. This way, service provider firms can build goodwill for their brand and get a widespread reputation for their specialized domain. Firms build brand recall among the audience that may not have worked with them. This, in turn, leads to more referrals and new business.

9. **Marketing Automation, CRM, and Lead Nurturing**

- **Marketing automation:**

It replaces repetitive, manual, high-touch processes with automated ones. The changeover is supported by technology. Automation combines all the online service marketing channels into a single centrally managed system to create, manage, and measure campaigns and programs.

Like any other technological tool, firms must select the correct service marketing **automation software** most suitable for their company. The solution's complexity, scalability, and size must match your requirements well.

10. **CRM:**

Another useful software is the **customer relationship management** (CRM) system. Many companies use CRMs for tracking and organizing client information and scouting opportunities. A CRM module, in short, can help you to stay connected and organized, regardless of how complex your operations become.

The CRM system functions as a **database** for all the related information about clients and opportunities, including detailed notes about interactions. The staff can key in, store, and access information when needed. It leads to the synchronization of efforts across various departments in your firm.

- **Lead nurturing:**

CRM is not the end of bagging new clients. The website is an important part of the puzzle. Email marketing is also equally important. Analytics-driven and targeted email service

marketing campaigns help you deliver hard and soft offers for particular types of buyers tailored to their demands.

On the other hand, Drip email campaigns allow firms to send targeted offers for segments in your audience over a particular period. It forges a much closer engagement between the service provider and the client and educates via relevant and successive offers and content.

11. Testing and Optimization

Testing and optimization allow you to schedule your marketing efforts and make decisions based on hard facts, not presumptions. While research is at the base of marketing, testing and optimization are continuous guides. Testing of marketing campaigns should never stop. But they can be adjusted according to market demands.

- **A/B testing of landing pages and emails**: Using popular A/B tools like Unbounce or Optimizely, learn which landing pages or emails most successfully convert users in various designs, languages, or other elements.
- **Landing and email page rendering**: Using tools like Email on Acid for testing the rendition of pages on various platforms and devices, ensure they function as they are supposed to.

12. Analytics and Reporting

Analyzing the right metrics is essential for measuring results effectively, and firms need the right tools for accurate data collection. Key tools include Google Analytics for website traffic, MOZ for SEO improvements, and Hootsuite for social media analytics.

Regular testing and analysis will help firms identify effective strategies. Use these tools wisely to transform marketing efforts into a science.