

Topic 2: Role of Marketing in Organizations

1. Topic Overview

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the role of marketing within an organizational structure.
2. Distinguish between different marketing orientations and their implications.
3. Identify how marketing links with other business functions.
4. Evaluate the strategic importance of marketing in creating value for customers and stakeholders.

Topic Info	Details
Duration	3 Hours (1 full class session)
Class Size	~40 Students
Materials Needed	Slides and printed case brief

2. Lecture Content

2.1 What Is the Role of Marketing in an Organization?

Marketing is not just a department — it is an organizational philosophy. Its role spans three interconnected levels:

Level	Marketing's Role
Strategic Level	Define target markets, competitive positioning, long-term growth direction.
Functional Level	Plan and execute the marketing mix (4Ps/7Ps), manage budgets and campaigns.
Operational Level	Day-to-day customer interactions, sales support, social media, promotions.

A common misconception is that marketing equals advertising. In reality, marketing touches product design, pricing strategy, distribution decisions, and customer relationship management.

2.2 Marketing Orientations

Organizations can hold very different beliefs about what drives business success. These beliefs shape culture, structure, and strategy:

Orientation	Core Belief	Real-World Example
Production	Efficiency lowers cost; customers want affordable products.	Ford Model T — one color, one model, mass production.
Product	Better product quality wins customers.	Kodak — focused on film quality while digital disrupted the market.
Selling	Aggressive promotion converts customers.	Insurance industry — push products through agents.
Marketing	Understand and satisfy customer needs better than competitors.	Apple — designs around user experience and lifestyle.
Societal	Balance customer needs, company profits, and society's wellbeing.	Patagonia — environmental mission embedded in brand.

2.3 Marketing's Relationship with Other Business Functions

Marketing does not operate in isolation. It creates value by collaborating with:

- Finance: Marketing budgets, ROI of campaigns, pricing profitability.
- Operations/Production: Capacity planning linked to demand forecasts; product availability.
- Human Resources: Employer branding, customer-facing staff training.
- R&D/Product Development: Customer insight drives innovation; product feedback loops.
- IT/Digital: CRM systems, e-commerce platforms, data analytics.

Key concept: Marketing acts as the voice of the customer within the organization — translating external market signals into internal decisions.

2.4 Marketing as a Value-Creation Process

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as: "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."

This positions marketing as a value chain — from understanding needs → designing solutions → communicating benefits → delivering experiences → retaining relationships.

Key Takeaway for Students

Marketing is not just what a company says — it is what a company does to create, deliver, and communicate value. Organizations without a marketing orientation risk becoming irrelevant, as seen with Kodak, Blockbuster, and Nokia.

3. Case Study: Nike — From Sports Equipment Seller to Global Brand Ecosystem

Case Brief Overview

Duration: 45 Minutes | Groups of 5 (10 groups for 50 students) | CLO1, PLO1, PLO2

Students will analyze how Nike's marketing orientation transformed it from a running shoe distributor into a cultural icon worth over \$120 billion, and critically evaluate the role marketing plays across its organization.

3.1 Background

Nike, Inc. was founded in 1964 as Blue Ribbon Sports by Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight — initially just an importer of Japanese running shoes. The company rebranded as Nike in 1971 and introduced its famous "swoosh" logo and the "Just Do It" slogan in 1988.

Today, Nike is not simply a shoe company. It operates as a brand ecosystem touching footwear, apparel, equipment, digital fitness platforms (Nike Run Club, Nike Training Club), and exclusive retail experiences (Nike House of Innovation stores). Revenue in FY2023 exceeded \$51 billion USD.

3.2 Nike's Marketing Orientation Evolution

Nike's growth mirrors the evolution of marketing orientations:

Era	Orientation & Strategy
1960s–1970s	Product orientation — focusing on high-performance running shoe technology (waffle sole, lightweight materials).
1980s	Selling orientation — aggressive celebrity endorsements with Michael Jordan (Air Jordan launch, 1985) to push products.
1990s–2000s	Marketing orientation — consumer insight-driven campaigns. "Just Do It" spoke to motivation, not just shoes.
2010s–Present	Societal marketing — purpose-driven campaigns (Colin Kaepernick, 2018), sustainability goals (Move to Zero), and digital community building.

3.3 Marketing's Role Across Nike's Organization

At Nike, marketing is not confined to a single department. It permeates the entire organization:

- Product Design (R&D): Consumer research shapes every shoe. Nike Fit (AI foot scanning) was born from marketing insights about sizing frustration.
- Operations & Supply Chain: Demand sensing from digital channels (NikePlus app) feeds production planning to reduce overstock.
- Finance: Nike's marketing spend is ~10–12% of revenue (~\$4–5 billion annually), treated as a growth investment, not just a cost.
- HR & Talent: Nike's employer brand attracts designers, engineers, and athletes — marketing drives talent acquisition strategy.
- Digital/IT: The NikePlus ecosystem (50M+ members) is a marketing-owned asset that generates first-party data for personalization.

3.4 The Role of Marketing in Nike's Value Creation

Nike's marketing creates value at multiple levels:

Value Type	How Nike Marketing Delivers It
Functional Value	High-performance gear that actually improves athletic outcomes.
Emotional Value	Inspiring storytelling that connects the brand to personal achievement.
Social Value	Wearing Nike signals identity — aspiration, athleticism, cultural relevance.
Community Value	Nike Run Club / Training Club create belonging and loyalty loops.

3.5 Discussion Questions (For Group Analysis)

Question 1

Identify which marketing orientation Nike used in each era (1970s, 1990s, 2010s–now). Provide evidence from the case to support your answer.

Question 2

How does Nike's marketing function interact with at least THREE other departments? For each, describe what information or value flows between them.

Question 3

Nike's 2018 Colin Kaepernick campaign was controversial. Some customers burned their shoes; Nike's stock rose 5% in a week. From a societal marketing perspective, was this a good marketing decision? Argue your position.

Question 4

A small Thai sportswear brand (e.g., Warrix) wants to compete in the regional market. Based on Nike's model, what ONE marketing orientation shift would you recommend and why?

4. Group Activity: "Marketing Department Audit"

Activity Overview

Purpose: Apply the lecture concepts by auditing marketing's role in a REAL brand the students know.

Member: 5 students/group

4.1 Brand Assignment List (10 Brands)

The brand will be randomly picked for each group. Mix global and regional brands for richer contrast:

#	Brand	Likely Orientation	Hints
1	Apple	Marketing / Societal	Ecosystem, design-first, Think Different campaign
2	Grab (Southeast Asia)	Marketing	Super-app built around user convenience in SE Asia context
3	Starbucks	Marketing / Societal	Experience-first, loyalty app, third-place concept
4	CP Group (Thailand)	Product / Marketing	Largest Thai agri-food conglomerate, B2B and B2C
5	Muji (Japan)	Product / Marketing	Minimal design, anti-brand identity
6	BTS (HYBE/BigHit)	Societal / Marketing	Fan community-first, global K-pop strategy
7	Xiaomi	Production / Marketing	Disrupted premium market with value-for-money + community
8	Line Corporation	Marketing	Messaging app turned lifestyle super-app across Asia
9	Patagonias	Societal	Anti-consumerism stance as marketing — Don't Buy This Jacket
10	McDonald's Thailand	Selling / Marketing	Local adaptation of global brand — Samurai Pork Burger

4.2 Marketing Audit Canvas (Student Worksheet — 1 Per Group)

Each group fills this canvas on the paper (or a file provided):

MARKETING AUDIT CANVAS	
Brand Name: <hr/>	Marketing Orientation (circle one): <i>Production / Product / Selling / Marketing / Societal</i>
Industry: <hr/>	One sentence of evidence: <hr/>
Marketing's role in 3 departments: 1. <hr/> 2. <hr/> 3. <hr/>	Types of value marketing creates: Functional: <hr/> Emotional: <hr/> Social: <hr/>
Most impressive marketing move: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	One marketing improvement suggestion: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3-Minute Pitch Statement (prepare to say aloud): " _____ uses a _____ orientation because _____ <hr/> Marketing connects with _____ by _____. The most important value it creates is _____ because _____."	

5. Recommended Reading & Resources

Core Textbook:

- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2023). Principles of Marketing (18th ed.). Pearson. Chapters 1–2.

Supplementary Reading:

- American Marketing Association. (2023). Definition of Marketing. [ama.org](https://www.ama.org)
- Nike, Inc. Annual Report FY2023. investors.nike.com
- Patagonia Brand Story — patagonia.com/our-footprint

Videos to Show in Class (Lecture Support):

- Nike 'Dream Crazy' Campaign (2018) — YouTube, 1:30 min — ideal for societal marketing discussion.
- "What is Marketing?" — Kotler on Marketing (TED-style, 8 min) — available on YouTube.
- Grab: Building a Super App — Bloomberg Quicktake, 5 min.