

1: The Role of Marketing in Business

UNIT 1: Marketing Foundations & Strategy - Standard: **NBEA Marketing I.1:** Understand the role and function of marketing in business - **CCTC MK.1:** Understand marketing's role in business and society

Lesson Objective: You will explain how marketing creates, communicates, and delivers value to customers — and why every business depends on it to survive. You will also trace how marketing has evolved from mass production to the AI-driven strategies shaping business today.

The Role of Marketing in Business The 3 Concepts to Know About Marketing

1. Marketing Is More Than Advertising

Marketing is the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers — starting long before any ad is made. It shows up every time someone chooses one brand over another.

2. Marketing Connects Every Part of a Business

Marketing runs through product development, sales, operations, and customer service — not just one department. Every business decision has marketing built into it.

3. Marketing Has Changed — and Keeps Changing

Marketing has moved through four major eras, from mass production to today's relationship and digital era. Businesses now meet customers where they already are — online, on social media, and on their phones.

Why This Matters

Marketing is what keeps businesses alive. Understanding how it works is a real advantage for anyone planning to run a business, work in one, or build a career serving customers.



Every brand you have ever bought from, followed, or talked about got your attention through marketing — whether you noticed it or not.

Your Product Is Great. Nobody Cares — Yet.

A new energy drink launches with a solid product — but the company prices it \$2 too high, sells it only in specialty health stores, and skips social media entirely. Within 90 days, it is sitting on clearance shelves while a competitor with a louder TikTok presence and a \$2.99 price tag owns the market. The drink was not the problem. The marketing was. Every business decision — price, place, message, and timing — is a marketing decision. Get those wrong, and even a great product disappears before anyone finds out it existed.

What Marketing Actually Is

Marketing is the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers. Value means giving people something worth their time and money — a product or service that solves a real problem or fills a real need. Every business that wants to survive has to get this right, whether it is a Fortune 500 company or a 16-year-old running a Shopify store from a bedroom.

Creating value starts before a product exists. Businesses study what people want, what frustrates them, and what they will actually pay for. When someone builds a dropshipping store or launches a digital product online, the first question is always the same: what does the customer actually need? That research shapes every decision that follows. Skip this step, and no amount of advertising can save a product that people do not actually want.

Communicating value is how businesses make sure the right people know the product exists. Today, that means short-form video content, influencer partnerships, targeted ads, and email campaigns — not just billboards. A brand that nails its TikTok



Nike's rise from a small track shoe company to a global powerhouse had more to do with marketing evolution than shoe design.

content can reach millions of people for almost no cost. One that only buys print ads is talking to a shrinking audience. Knowing where your customers spend their time online is now a core business skill.

Delivering value means getting the product to customers in a way that builds trust and keeps them coming back. Fast shipping, easy returns, responsive DMs, and consistent quality are all part of delivery. Businesses that deliver on their promises turn one-time buyers into loyal customers who tell others — which is the most powerful marketing of all.

Marketing Connects the Whole Business

Marketing does not live in one department. It runs through every decision a business makes, and that connection is what gives it real power.

A great product can fail if it's priced wrong or sold in the wrong places—marketing, not quality, determines success.

Your Product Is Great. Nobody Cares — Yet.

Product development and marketing work together from the start. What should the product do? Who is it for? How should it look on a shelf — or on a phone screen? These are marketing questions as much as design questions. When Stanley released its oversized tumbler cups, the product itself was not revolutionary. The marketing — driven by organic social media and influencer culture — turned a simple cup into a status symbol and a \$750 million business moment. The product team and the marketing team had to move together for that to happen.

Sales and marketing are a two-part engine. Marketing brings customers in; sales closes the deal. When marketing sends the wrong message to the wrong audience, the sales team gets cold leads. When sales does not follow through on what marketing promised, customers feel misled and do not return.

Customer service is marketing in disguise. A single frustrated customer who posts a complaint on social media can reach thousands of people before the company even knows there is a problem. On the flip side, a business that responds fast and makes things right often turns that public moment into a loyalty win. Every touchpoint a customer has with a brand — from the first ad to the last return — shapes what they say about it.



Businesses that treat customer service as part of marketing build loyalty that outlasts any single ad campaign.

How Marketing Has Evolved — and Where It Is Headed

Marketing has moved through four major eras, and each shift happened because the old approach stopped working.

In the production era, businesses focused on output. Ford's assembly line made cars affordable for average Americans — the strategy was simple: make more, price it low, and buyers will come. That worked until every competitor started doing the same thing.

The sales era pushed products aggressively. Companies hired large sales forces and ran hard-sell advertising because markets were getting crowded. It worked short-term, but customers started tuning out brands that only cared about closing a deal.

The marketing era flipped the model. Instead of asking “what can we make?”, businesses started asking “what do customers actually want?” Companies that listened — and built products around real needs — started pulling ahead of those that did not.

Today, the relationship and digital era is fully in motion. The goal is not a transaction — it is a long-term connection. Loyalty apps, personalized recommendations, and two-way social

A brand with strong marketing can outsell a better product — because customers buy what they know, trust, and feel connected to.

Your Product Is Great. Nobody Cares — Yet.

media engagement keep customers close. A small business with a strong Instagram presence can compete with national brands in a way that was impossible 20 years ago.

The next shift is already underway. AI-powered marketing tools now predict what customers want before they search for it, generate personalized ad content at scale, and analyze data that would take human teams weeks to process. Understanding how marketing works today is valuable. Understanding where it is going is what separates people who stay ahead from those who get left behind.

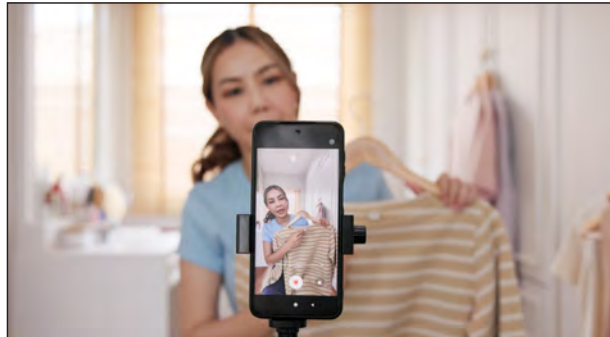
How One Brand Used Every Era's Playbook

Nike started as a small track shoe company in the 1960s — production era thinking at its core. As competition grew, it moved into aggressive sales and celebrity endorsements. By the 1980s, Nike had fully entered the marketing era: studying athletes, building products around performance identity, and launching the “Just Do It” campaign in 1988 around what customers valued, not just what the company made. Today, Nike uses AI-driven personalization, app-based loyalty programs, and creator partnerships across TikTok and YouTube to stay connected with a new generation of customers. Revenue has grown from under \$1 billion in the 1980s to over \$50 billion today — not because the shoes changed, but because the marketing kept evolving.

This Is Your Starting Point

Marketing is not a department — it is the strategy that holds every part of a business together. Businesses that understand their customers, communicate with clarity, and

evolve with new tools are the ones that last. The skills built in this course are the same ones driving the businesses, brands, and side hustles generating real income right now.



TikTok creators who understand marketing are building real businesses before they finish high school — without a storefront or startup budget.

What Marketing Actually Does

- **Creates value** — identifies what customers need and builds around it
- **Communicates value** — gets the right message to the right people on the right platform
- **Delivers value** — fulfills the promise through quality, speed, and service
- **Connects the business** — links product, sales, and customer service into one strategy
- **Evolves constantly** — from Ford's factory floor to AI-powered personalization

Marketing is the skill that determines whether a business idea, side hustle, or startup actually makes money — and it is learnable.

1: The Role of Marketing in Business - Guided Notes

Three Most Important Concepts

Identify and explain the three most important topics you learned from the article.

Concept 1: _____

Concept 2: _____

Concept 3: _____

Main Concept Overview

Fill in the blank using the Word Bank below.

Word Bank: value — connections — leads — want — ad

- 1. Marketing is the process of creating, communicating, and delivering _____ to customers.
- 2. A business that communicates its product to the wrong audience will send cold _____ to the sales team.
- 3. The marketing era shifted businesses from asking “what can we make?” to asking “what do customers actually _____?”
- 4. Today, AI-powered tools can predict what customers want and generate personalized _____ content at scale.
- 5. The relationship and digital era focuses on building long-term _____ with customers, not just making one-time sales.

Matching

Write the correct letter on the blank line.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| _____ Value | A. The era in which businesses shifted from pushing products to understanding what customers actually needed |
| _____ Sales Era | B. A product or service that solves a real problem and is worth the customer’s time and money |
| _____ Delivering Value | C. Getting the product to customers in a way that builds trust — through fast shipping, easy returns, and consistent quality |
| _____ Marketing Era | D. The era focused on aggressive selling and large sales forces to move products in a crowded market |
| _____ Influencer Culture | E. A modern form of communicating value where brands partner with creators to reach large audiences on social platforms |

1: The Role of Marketing in Business - Guided Notes Continued

True / False

Write TRUE or FALSE on the blank line before each statement.

1. _____ Marketing only happens in the advertising department of a business.
2. _____ A business that prices a product too high or sells it in the wrong location can fail even if the product is good.
3. _____ In the production era, businesses focused primarily on understanding what customers wanted.
4. _____ Today, a small business with a strong social media presence can compete with much larger national brands.
5. _____ AI-powered marketing tools can predict customer behavior and generate personalized content at scale.

Fill in the Table

Marketing has evolved through four major eras. Use the article to complete the right column. Describe what each era focused on and give one example or detail from the article.

Marketing Era	What It Focused On
Production Era	
Sales Era	
Marketing Era	
Relationship & Digital Era	

Application Question

Think about a product you bought recently — a snack, a game, a piece of clothing, or an app. Based on what you read, describe at least two marketing decisions the company likely made to get that product in front of you.

1: The Role of Marketing in Business - Hypotheticals

Scenario 1: The Internship Assignment

You land a marketing internship at a local clothing brand. Your supervisor asks you to figure out why their new jacket line is not selling — the product is solid, but the brand only promotes it through email and Facebook. Their target customer is 16–24 years old.

- Questions:
- a) Based on the article, which part of marketing — creating, communicating, or delivering value — is the most likely problem?
 - b) How does choosing the right platform connect to the relationship and digital era?
 - c) What specific change would you recommend to your supervisor, and why?

Scenario 2: Launching a Side Business

Marcus wants to start a print-on-demand business selling custom hoodies. He designs a great product, sets up a Shopify store, and prices the hoodie at \$65 — \$30 more than similar designs on TikTok Shop. He gets website visitors but almost no sales.

- Questions:
- a) Which of the three marketing actions does Marcus need to reconsider first?
 - b) Why does pricing affect whether a customer believes a product is worth buying?
 - c) What would you tell Marcus to do next to communicate his product’s value to the right audience?

1: The Role of Marketing in Business - Data Analysis

Marketing Channel Performance — 30-Day Results		
Marketing Channel	New Customers	Revenue Generated
TikTok Short-Form Video	310	\$9,300
Instagram Paid Ad	180	\$5,400
Email Campaign	95	\$2,850
Facebook Paid Ad	40	\$1,200

A small streetwear brand ran the same hoodie promotion across four different marketing channels over 30 days. The owner tracked how many new customers each channel brought in and how much revenue each one generated. Now the team needs to decide where to focus their marketing budget next month.

Questions

1. **Data Interpretation:** Which marketing channel brought in the most new customers over the 30-day period?

2. **Pattern or Comparison:** What difference do you notice between TikTok Short-Form Video and Facebook Paid Ad performance? What might explain that gap based on what you learned about the relationship and digital era?

3. **Business Application:** Based on the data, which channel or channels should the brand prioritize next month, and why? Use at least one specific number from the table to support your answer.

1: The Role of Marketing in Business - Case Study

Business Case Study: Gymshark

Background

In 2012, a 19-year-old named Ben Francis launched Gymshark from a garage in Birmingham, England, selling gym clothing with almost no budget and no name recognition. In a market dominated by Nike and Under Armour, the challenge was clear: how does a startup with nothing compete? The answer came down entirely to how value was communicated in the digital era.

What Was Done

Francis sent free products to fitness influencers on YouTube and Instagram — people with large, loyal audiences who were not yet celebrities. They wore Gymshark gear authentically and directed followers to the site. The brand also engaged directly with customers on social media, building a community identity around fitness culture. Every decision — platform, pricing, partnerships — centered on the target customer.

Results

By 2016, Gymshark topped \$40 million in revenue. By 2020, the company was valued at over \$1 billion — no traditional retail, no TV ads, no outside investors until years in. Communicating value through the right channels, to the right audience, at the right time can outperform far larger competitors with much bigger budgets.

Conclusion Questions

1. **Understanding:** How do creating, communicating, and delivering value each show up in Gymshark's story? Find one example of each.

2. **Evaluation:** Was using influencers instead of traditional ads an effective strategy? Use at least one number from the case to support your answer.

3. **Application:** What could a student starting a small business today learn from how Gymshark approached marketing?

How You Can Make an Impact Now: Start Seeing What Others Skip Over

Marketing is not a talent people are born with. It is a skill built by paying close attention to what is happening around you and asking the right questions about it. The good news is that you are already surrounded by opportunities to practice — in school, at work, and every time you scroll through your phone.

Creating value starts with observation. Before any product is built or any ad is written, someone has to notice a gap — something people need that is not being met well enough. When something frustrates you, or when people keep asking for the same thing, that is a signal. Marketers and entrepreneurs who learn to spot these signals early move faster than those who wait to be told what the opportunity is.

Communicating value is where a lot of people get stuck — not because they have nothing good to say, but because they say it to the wrong people in the wrong place.

Building this skill means learning to match your message to your audience. The more you practice clear, direct communication in everyday situations — a group project, a part-time job, a DM to a small business you admire — the more natural it becomes when the stakes are higher.

Delivering value is where trust is built or broken. That gap between what a customer expects and what they actually receive is what marketers work to close. Developing a habit of following through — doing what you said you would, when you said you would — builds the same instinct that separates reliable businesses from forgettable ones.

If you paid close attention for one week to what the people around you actually need — what problems keep coming up, what keeps getting ignored — what opportunity would you find, and would you know how to communicate it in a way that made someone else see its value?

If you paid close attention for one week to what the people around you actually need — what problems keep coming up, what keeps getting ignored — what opportunity would you find, and would you know how to communicate it in a way that made someone else see its value?

1: The Role of Marketing in Business - Reflection Questions

1

How has marketing shaped a purchase you made recently?

Think about the last time you bought something — a snack, a game, an outfit, or an app. Consider the price, where you found it, and what made you want it in the first place. How many of those factors were the result of marketing decisions someone made before you ever saw the product?

2

How does the idea that “customer service is marketing in disguise” change the way you see businesses?

Think about a time you had a bad experience with a business — or a really good one. How did that experience affect what you thought of the brand? Based on what you read, why might a company that ignores complaints be making a bigger mistake than it realizes?

3

Should businesses be responsible for how their marketing affects people?

Marketing shapes what people want and how they see themselves. Think about an ad that made you feel good — or not so good. Where does a company’s responsibility to sell end, and its responsibility to be honest begin?

1: The Role of Marketing in Business - Vocabulary

TERM	DEFINITION
AI-Powered Marketing	
Communicating Value	
Creating Value	
Customer Service	
Delivering Value	
Influencer Culture	
Marketing	
Marketing Era	
Production Era	
Relationship and Digital Era	

The Role of Marketing in Business

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Relationship and Digital Era

Influencer Culture

Delivering Value

Customer Service

Creating Value

Communicating Value

AI-Powered Marketing

Production Era

Marketing Era

Marketing

The Role of Marketing in Business

Across

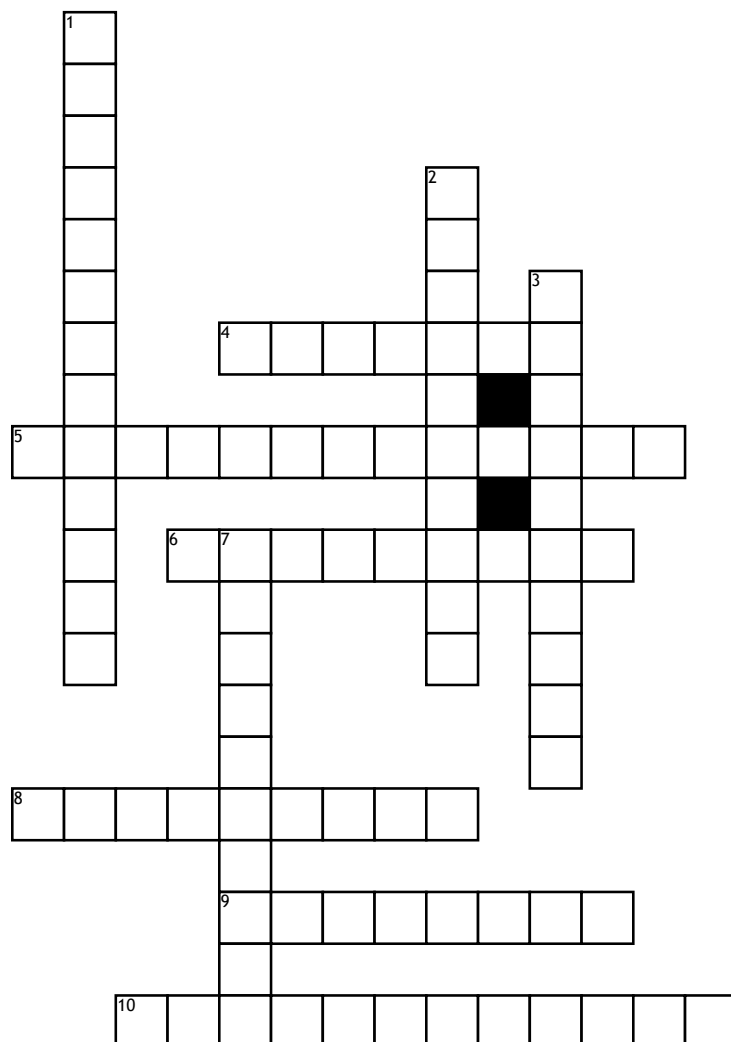
4. Every interaction a business has with a customer after the sale, which directly shapes brand reputation and long-term loyalty – making it a core part of marketing. Customer

5. The process of letting the right customers know a product or service exists and why it is worth their attention and money, using tools like social media, ads, and content. ____ Value

6. The use of artificial intelligence tools to predict customer behavior, personalize content, and automate marketing decisions at a scale that would be impossible for humans to do manually. ____ Marketing

8. The process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers; the strategy that connects every part of a business to the people it serves.

9. The stage of marketing where a business identifies what customers need and builds a product or service specifically designed to meet that need. ____ Value



10. The period when businesses shifted their focus from making and selling products to understanding and responding to what customers actually needed. (Two words)

Down

1. The earliest stage of marketing history, when businesses focused primarily on manufacturing as much product as possible, assuming demand would follow supply. (Two words)

2. The current stage of marketing, focused on building long-term customer connections through digital platforms, personalized communication, loyalty programs, and AI-driven tools. Relationship and ____

3. The process of getting a product or service to customers in a way that meets their expectations and builds trust through quality, convenience, and reliability. ____ Value

7. A modern marketing approach where brands partner with social media creators to reach and persuade their audiences, often more effectively than traditional advertising. ____ Culture