

PUSH AND PULL STRATEGIES IN INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

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Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. As an independent direction of modern marketing, agricultural marketing acts as a process of organizing and managing the production of agricultural products, raw materials, and foodstuffs to meet the needs of individual citizens, the industrial sector and the whole of society.

In total, agricultural marketing is the study of all the activities, agencies and policies involved in the procurement of farm inputs by the farmers and the movement of agricultural products from the farms to the consumers. Agricultural marketing techniques are used in every corner of "agribusiness," including small farms, corporate farms, and collectives; distributors; manufacturers of farm equipment, pesticides, and genetic enhancements for crops and livestock; feed and seed sellers; and more.

Promotion is an important part of any international marketing strategy. You can have the best product or service out there, but unless you promote it successfully, no one will know about it. There are three basic types of promotional strategies – a push strategy, a pull strategy or a combination of the two.

The primary difference between push and pull marketing lies in how consumers are approached. In push marketing, the idea is to promote products by pushing them onto people. For push marketing, consider sales displays at your grocery store or a shelf of discounted products. On the other hand, in pull marketing, the idea is to establish a loyal following and draw consumers to the products.

A "push" promotional strategy makes use of a company's sales force and trade promotion activities to create consumer demand for a product: it takes the product to the customer - the customer knows about the product when they buy it.

A push strategy tries to sell directly to the consumer, bypassing other distribution channels. An example of this would be selling insurance or holidays directly. With this type of strategy, consumer promotions and advertising are the most likely promotional tools.

The different ways a company can use a push strategy to increase awareness of a product include:

1. At trade shows and showrooms, businesses can demonstrate the product's features to potential customers.
2. Companies can encourage retailers to stock a product. Sometimes a company has to negotiate with a retailer to stock a specific item because retailers have limited store space and need to stock items they know will sell.
3. Companies can create a supply chain so that retailers can obtain the product in sufficient quantities.

A "pull" selling strategy is one that requires high spending on advertising and consumer promotion to build up consumer demand for a product: it brings the customer to the product - the customer is motivated to buy it.

The different ways a company can use a pull strategy to promote a brand include:

1. Advertising strategies that include mass media promotion of a product.
2. Customer relationship management that makes existing customers aware of new products that will fill a specific need.
3. Referrals.
4. Sales promotions and discounts.

Some companies use a combination of both push and pull strategies. For example, Texas-based textile producer Cotton Incorporated uses a push/pull promotional strategy. They push to create customer demand through constantly developing new products and offering these products in stores; and pull customers towards these products through advertising and promotion deals.

According to marketing expert Blair Entenmann, in an article he wrote for his company MarketingHelp!, there is no single correct combination of push and pull. The amount spent on each type of strategy will depend on factors such as budget, the type of product, the target audience and competition.

Successful marketers rely on the strength of each approach and often use them together. You need Push to reach out to those who might not have heard of your service or company. A Push approach also is needed for communicating with your qualified leads, lapsed customers and existing customers to increase sales. You need Pull to attract those in the research or buying stage who are searching for your product or service and to promote your business as a thought leader.

Like any marketing strategy or initiative, push and pull strategies require planning and consideration of the audience and the marketplace. Each tactic and campaign should be monitored, reviewed and revised on a regular basis. New ways of analytics such as digital analytics enable marketers to develop a comprehensive understanding of their audience allowing them to determine the best possible push and pull strategies to move their customers from awareness to purchase and beyond into raving fans and ambassadors.

