

Speed of New Product Adoption

Two products that are now part of everyday life today are microwave ovens and smart TVs. But they were adopted by the market at quite different speeds.

Smart TVs became popular within a few years, yet microwave ovens faced significant market resistance and took decades to get adopted. Your challenge is to determine why this was the case.

The first commercially available microwave ovens appeared in the USA in the mid-1960s, but it wasn't until the mid-1980s that they became a common household purchase. This compares quite unfavorably to smart (internet-enabled) TVs that were adopted by the market relatively quickly.

Start this exercise by completing the following table:

Product Factors Influencing Speed of Adoption

Factor	Scale	Microwave Oven	Smart TVs
As compared to:		Traditional ovens	Traditional TVs
Did the new product complete the required task in a <u>superior</u> manner?	1. Much 2. Somewhat 3. Not really		
Was the new product <u>compatible</u> with existing lifestyles?	1. Very 2. Somewhat 3. Not really		
Was the new product <u>complex</u> to use (for first-time users)?	1. Simple 2. OK 3. Complex		
Could consumers easily <u>trial</u> the product?	1. Easily 2. Sometimes 3. Difficult		
Did consumers often <u>see</u> the product in use (e.g. at friend's homes)	1. Often 2. Sometimes 3. Never		
Was the product <u>expensive</u> to purchase and maintain (when it was first released)?	1. Affordable 2. Some cost 3. Expensive		

Student Discussion Questions

1. Based on your responses in the above table, what were the key product factors that can help differentiate the adoption performance of these two products?
2. Given the likely 'social environment' at the time, why do you think that microwave ovens faced significant market resistance after their launch in the 1960's and early 1970's?
3. What other factors can you think of that may have also influenced the different in these products' speed of adoption?
4. Given your answers above, what could the marketers of microwave ovens have done to try and speed up the market acceptance of their innovative new product?