

Identifying Segment Needs

The main purpose of segmenting any market is to identify different consumer needs in order to construct an appropriate marketing mix. For this activity, let's assume that five different market segments have been identified for the sports shoe market, as outlined below. Please review the segments and answer the questions at the end.

The sporty market segment

This is the traditional segment of the sports shoe market. These consumers are actively involved in fitness or sports on a regular basis.

They are usually looking for a good quality sports shoe that has the performance required to support them in their chosen field of activity. Many of these consumers would go to the gym or some form of fitness class on a regular basis or participate in some form of sport.

They are most interested in well-known brands that offer higher quality shoes. They are willing to pay a higher price (within reason) for a suitable product.

The elite sports market segment

Consumers in this particular market segment are highly committed to a particular sport, and probably train more than 10 hours per week. Some may be professional athletes, but the majority are serious competitors in their chosen sport.

They are particularly interested in shoes that are designed for a particular function (such as running, cycling, basketball, and so on) and typically seek out more modern innovations and technologically-advanced products.

This will be a high involvement purchase decision for these consumers and will tend to be relatively brand loyal as a result.

The everyday wearers market segment

It is a very mainstream market. It consists of a wide variety of people who are looking to purchase sports shoes to wear on day to day lifestyle basis.

Because they do not wear the shoes for any specific sporting purpose, they are less concerned with the actual quality and performance specifications. They are most interested in comfortable shoes that represent good value for money.

They tend to be quite attracted to very well-known brands because they consider that to be a safe, low risk choice.

The fashion sports market segment

This is an emerging segment that is looking for sporty looking fashion shoe.

They do NOT buy the product for its sports function, but for its style, look and brand image (for their social/self-identity).

As this market tends to be teenagers, young adults and young professionals, they want brands that are unique to themselves, not brands that their parents wear.

The budget conscious market segment

Like any market there are a proportion of people who are very budget conscious, or will buy cheaper shoes on occasions. These consumers are after low quality, low priced shoes that have a sporting look about them.

Consumers in this market tend to be families, retirees, or consumers looking for an extra pair of shoes simply to wear around the house or in the garden.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the above market segments. Which ones do you think would be the more attractive segments for sports shoe manufacturer (that is, the better markets)?
2. Having selected your preferred target markets in Question One, how could a shoe manufacturer configure its marketing mix to meet the needs of these consumer groups. (Think about the 4P's).
3. Would it be possible for this firm to structure their marketing mix in such a way that they could meet the needs of ALL market segments? If yes, how could they do this?
4. Do you know of any specialist sports shoe brands that appear to target ONE market segment only? Does this appear to be a more viable approach than try to meet the needs of all market segments?