**Designing of Marketing Mix**

**DHL in India**

DHL is one of the divisions of Deutsche Post DHL, which a logistic company based in Germany. DHL Express was found in the year 1969 and has expanded its operations across the globe. Currently, the company has more than 325,000 employees across the world. It mainly offers sea and mail services to enterprises and individuals. The company expansions in the early 1970's were motivated by the success of FedEx, which is among its major a competitor. DHL Express has extended more services to its customer. The high level of customer retention has been a major driver of its expansion.

Today, families can send gifts or other commodities from one continent to another following the expansion of delivery facility by the company. Manufacturers can import spare parts for their machines from other countries at a relatively lower price. Additionally, the company has promoted e-business to greater heights of success as business people can acquire and transport their goods from overseas with ease. This paper will focus on DHL division based in India. The paper will explore the marketing design the company adopts covering a detailed analysis of the 4 Ps of marketing, an implementation strategy and any standardization issues identified. DHL Express in India has 22,000 access points spread over the country. It has created employment for 275,000 employees in the country.

**The Marketing Mix**

Marketing mix refers to a collection of tactics and actions that seek to promote the product of a company (Borden, 1964). The mix comprises of the 4 Ps of marketing which are Pricing, Promotion, Place and the Product. The number of P's can range from four to seven depending on the nature of the business. Additional Ps may include processes, people, and physical evidence. For the purpose of this paper, we shall focus on the four top Ps through a detailed analysis of DHL Express Ltd.

**Product**

In the business context, a product can either be a good or a service. The product must satisfy the needs of the target customers (Goi, 2009). To achieve this, a thorough analysis of the customers need to done during the product development stage. DHL Express in India offers shipping services, tracking, and courier delivery services. Shipping involves importation and exportation of goods and other deliverables overseas. The company uses this means of transportation, especially when dealing with import and export of heavy machinery that cannot be transported over the airlines. Also, the company uses the water transport for those products which are not perishable.

The company has a high demand for its services as many businesses across countries and also within countries rely on the enterprise for delivery services. Their timely delivery has earned the company much loyalty from its customers. While implementing an expansion strategy, the company had also incorporated more delivery services for parcels making the company more relevant in the industry and lifted its growth to higher levels as compared to the time when the company used to offer mail services only.

**Pricing**

Price is an essential component of the marketing strategy. It refers to the amount a customer finds fair to pay for a product. Price has a significant impact on the demand for a product. Consequently, it can affect the profitability and survival of the business. A change in price will have a direct effect on the level of sales for a particular product. Care should be exercised when making such decisions as it can adversely affect the company's ability to compete with its business rivals.

When the determining the price of a product, a company needs to analyse the various factors. These factors include the prevailing market prices, the prices offered by the competitors, value for the price paid, the cost of production and the intended profit margin by the company. The price of the service must be above the cost involved in providing the service as well cover the profit margin. Competitors use price as a tool for competition. A better price is that which is slightly lower than that offered by the competitors provided that the business will still make profits.

DHL Express India makes consideration of various factors when determining the price to charge for the services. These factors include the distance for delivery, the means of transport used, the fuel consumption and the price charged by the competitors. The company has been leading in this industry due to its favourable pricing strategies. The pricing strategy has enabled DHL to remain relevant in the Indian Market. The company charges fewer prices than FedEx and UPS among others. The company is listed in the Fortune 500 companies.

**Promotion**

This is the third component of the marketing mix. This is the process by which the products of a company are brought to the knowledge of the customers. The success of a product in the market depends on how efficient the promotion function has been done. The function has four major elements which include advertising, sales promotion, sales organization and

**Public relations**

Advertising involves incurring the cost to publicize the product over communication Medias. Public relations are executed through seminars, conferences, exhibitions and sponsorships. Sales promotion can be done through word of mouth, demonstrations and also offering discounts on price. Sales organization entails team working with the marketing team to promote product sales.

DHL Express in India has invested heavily both in electronic and print media. It has also maintained its brand name in India and all over the 220 countries it operates in through its unique colour code. The yellow and the red colours give it a unique identity, which many people acknowledge across the world. Television advertisements are so often in the Indian communication industry.

**Place**

 The most important aspect of this P is convenience. The business ought to be located at a point that is accessible to the customers. The place concept will help in identifying the best location points for the distribution channels that the business seeks to utilize. It involves various strategies, which include franchising, intensive distribution, extensive distribution and selective distribution. DHL uses direct investment strategy whereby the company has established branches all over the India. This makes it closer and convenient to its clients. Overseas delivery booking is done over the Internet. Base on the differentiation location in India such as urban cities like Mumbai, DHL need an innovative method to delivery packages to customers at urgent time. The method have to adopt necessary factors such as need or urgency, time and distance, and ease of getting things done, therefore the best solution to deliver parcel in a more sustainable way is using bicycle. According to researches, bike couriers are proven to be fast and reliable within urban areas. DHL can apply this method by corporate with local logistics companies in variables urban cities in order to save the invest cost also create a large delivery network for company in the future.

**Product Design**

Product design is the modification or engineering of a product to boost its fitness to its function (Ulrich, 2003). Product design can be used to make a product unique and more attractive to the customers. This strategy is used to diversify product features. It is one of the strategies that the business uses to compete in the market.

The service industry can design its services through maintaining a particular level of service quality. DHL Express in India is unique from other service providers in this industry by the tracking service it offers to its customers. Customers can be able to track and assess the progress of their deliverables. This has been enabled through enhancement of technology. This is one of the areas where the company has gained a competitive advantage in over their competitors.

Another way of making its services unique is the ability to make timely delivery. DHL Express India has invested in aircraft for deliveries that need to be transported overseas, perishable goods, as well as those that need an urgent delivery. The company makes adjustments on prices to reflect the marginal cost incurred in product designing. Product design makes the services more attractive for the company thus boosting its promotion.

**Standardization Adaptation Issues**

While the product, place and price concepts are adapted based on the environment of operation, promotion elements are standardized (Solberg, 2000). DHL Express India uses a standardized label and brand name. The same brand and label are used across the globe.

**Proposed Implementation Strategy**

The marketing mix is quite significant in the marketing function. The four Ps are the primary determinant of a company's ability to compete and foster growth (Jain & Haley, 2009). To make is more productive, DHL needs to take into consideration of three main steps before implementing any strategy. These stages include laying out a plan on how to go about the tactic to be implemented, the actual implementation of the strategy that will involve taking actions consistent with the scheme and finally take control measures to ensure that the application process is conducted within the plan.

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