

# A Chronology Of The Definition Of Marketing


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## ABSTRACT

*As a variety of marketing environmental factors have changed and evolved over the past century, so has the definition(s) of marketing. The author provides a chronological listing of the various (and popular) definitions of marketing that have been used in the marketing literature over the past 100 years. The contents of the manuscript represent an important resource for marketing students, faculty, and practitioners in developing a richer understanding of the development and evolution of marketing as both an academic discipline and a business practice.*

**Keywords:** Marketing; Definitions; Chronology; Evolution; Change

## INTRODUCTION

 Over the past 100+ years, the discipline of marketing has continued to change and evolve, reflecting the influences of a variety of marketing environmental factors. Similarly, the definition of the discipline and practice of marketing has evolved over time as a reflection of these evolutionary changes. In marketing, there has been a tendency to undervalue the historical perspective in doing research and understanding the role of historical developments in shaping the evolution of this discipline.

The purpose of this manuscript is to provide a chronology of various definitions of marketing, spanning the last century, in an effort to provide researchers, practitioners and all students of marketing with a resource base with which to study the evolutionary nature of the discipline and practice of marketing. The definitions are grouped by decade up/through the last two accepted definitions of marketing according to the American Marketing Association.

### 1910 - 1920

What is marketing? To the producer, it is the manner in which the product is disposed of, the way in which it is distributed for him - often with his cooperation - thru the various channels of trade. On the other hand, merchandising, which parallels marketing at many points and is frequently confused with it, is the process from the jobbers' and the retailers' standpoints and includes not only the distribution of the goods, but their acquisition as well. Manufacturers *market* their products and jobbers and retailers *merchandise* their stocks of these products (Johnson, Falkner, Greendlinger, & Hurd, 1918, p. 19).

### 1920 - 1930

The term, as used, is designed to cover the complex group of services involved in the distribution of merchandise from producer to consumer, excluding only those functions which involve alterations in the form of commodity.

- The essential task of any form of merchandise distribution (or marketing) is to affect a transfer of ownership of goods in exchange for what is considered to be an equivalent (Cherington, 1920, pp. 1, 6).
- Commercial organization as used here, then, means the mechanisms and devices in modern industrial society for the actual transfer of economic goods, whether by wholesale or retail, from one party to another, on their way from origin to consumption. A study of commercial organization is, therefore, a study of marketing problems and methods (Duncan, 1920, pp. 1-2).

Marketing, in a broad sense, covers those business activities which have to do with the creation of place and time utilities. Marketing, to the economist, is then a part of production (Converse, 1921, p. 2).

Marketing consists of those efforts which effect transfers in the ownership of goods and care for their physical distribution (Clark, 1922, p. 1).

Marketing is a specific form of economic production and yet it is, at the same time, both the process by which those values of the product are determined, which are to be distributed and one of the processes in economic distribution (Moriarty, 1923, p. 22).

Marketing may be defined as the process of transferring goods through commercial channels from producer to consumer (Brown, 1925, p. 3).

### **1930 - 1940**

Marketing, too, has often been limited, in definition, to selling by means of the distribution of such ideas about goods as will arouse desire for the goods and cultivate willingness on the part of the consumers to pay the price and to make the required effort to secure the goods.

In addition to personal salesmanship and advertising, it comprises research, forecasting, planning, and other development activities.

Marketing, then, has broadened out in its scope so that in addition to touching the physical activities of distribution at many points, it reaches back into product manufacture as well (Collins, 1930, pp. 19-20).

Marketing, in a broad sense, covers those business activities which have to do with the creation of place and time utilities.

Marketing has to do with getting goods and services from the hands of the producers into the hands of the ultimate consumers (Converse, 1931, pp. 3, 22).

Marketing defined: In its commonly accepted usage, the term marketing covers all business activities necessary to affect transfers in the ownership of goods and to provide for their physical distribution. It embraces the entire group of services and functions performed in the distribution of merchandise from producer to consumer, excluding only operations involving changes in form.

Another brief definition which has considerable merit is that marketing includes all business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer, excluding only those activities that involve the changing of form (Maynard, Weilder, & Beckman, 1932, p. 3).

Marketing consists of those efforts which effect transfers in the ownership of goods and care for their physical distribution.

The marketing process, therefore, involves both mental and physical aspects - mental, in that sellers must know what buyers want and buyers must know what sellers have to sell - and physical, in that the goods must be physically moved to the places at which they are wanted by the time they are wanted (Clark, 1932, p. 1).

As defined by the National Association of Marketing Teachers, "Marketing consists of those business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from the point of production to the point of consumption."

Since marketing – the distribution of goods – creates the utilities of time, place, possession, and information (an elementary utility), the economists treat marketing as a part of production (Agnew, Jenkins, & Drury, 1936, pp. 1-2).

A study of marketing involves a consideration of all the business activities which take place in getting goods and services to the consumer, excluding only such activities as involve a significant change in form. It should be noticed at the outset that this is a broad field of study beginning with the primary raw material, which must be placed in the hands of the manufacturer, and then taking the product as it leaves the manufacturer and tracing it to the point where it enters the hands of the ultimate consumer (Phillips, 1938, p. 3).

The study of marketing involves the study of all the activities included in moving goods and services from producers to consumers. Among these activities may be listed the major marketing functions of selling, buying, traffic management, storage, financing, risk management, and standardization (Barker & Anshen, 1939, p. 3).

### **1940 – 1950**

Business is not merely a game, nor is it solely a means for the private gain of those who engage in it. It is a tool shaped to do a job for society. The social task is to provide - for consumers - the goods and services which they wish to supply them when and where they are wanted and in the manner in which they are desired. A part of its work is to do these things at the lowest possible cost to the consumer in funds or exertion, or both.

There are two essential elements in this process. One is production, or fabrication - the making of merchandise and the preparation of services. The other is marketing - the series of activities which are involved in the flow of goods or services from production to consumption. To be sure, there are other general business activities involved in performing this task, such as financing and record-keeping; but they are incidental to one or both of the two basic processes (Alexander, Surface, Elder, & Alderson, 1940, p. 3).

Marketing consists of those efforts which effect transfers in ownership of goods and services and care for their physical distribution. The marketing process, consequently, involves both mental and physical aspects - mental, in that sellers must know what buyers want and buyers must know what is for sale - and physical, in that goods must be moved to the places at which they are wanted by the time they are wanted.

The need for marketing grows out of the division of labor, particularly as it is manifested in specialized and large-scale production and in the localization of industry. This division, in turn, is due to the diversity of human wants - a diversity which arises not merely from the demand for the prime necessities of life, but from the demand for satisfaction of that far greater number of acquired wants which result from the seemingly limitless possibilities for human beings to expand and develop their desires (Clark & Clark, 1942, p. 1).

Marketing includes all the activities involved in the creation of place, time, and possession utilities.

Marketing is the business of buying and selling. It includes those business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from production to consumption (Converse & Huegy, 1946, pp. 2-3).

Marketing is the economic process by means of which goods and services are exchanged and their values determined in terms of money prices. The term "process" implies activity - coordinated groups of activities, in fact, having a definite purpose - the purpose being to move goods from points of production to points of ultimate use, not simply in a physical sense, but in such a way as to facilitate the maximum satisfaction of consumers' wants.

The process of marketing is not spontaneous or automatic but results from conscious effort of a business manager, not only to service existing wants of consumers, but to stimulate new wants. Conversely, from the buyer's point of view, marketing (purchasing) includes all those activities that are necessary for acquiring the ownership or sue of goods from others; but it may, and often does, include conscious effort on the part of the buyer to organize or influence sources of supply so as to achieve an advantage over other buyers, or even to improve his bargaining position with the seller (Duddy & Revzan, 1947, pp. 4-5).

Business is divided into two parts - production and marketing. Production, in its business meaning, has to do with the creation of goods. Distribution - or marketing - has to do with moving these goods from producers - factories, mines, and farms - into the hands of consumers.

Marketing includes buying, selling, advertising, transportation, and warehousing. The corner grocer, the drug store, the chain store, the department store, the mail-order house, the wholesaler, the railroad, the grain elevator, the milkman, the livestock shipper, and the public warehouse are engaged in marketing (Converse & Jones, 1948, pp. 3-4).

Consequently, we can define marketing as including all the activities which take place in getting tangible goods to the consumer, excluding only such activities as involve a significant change in the form of the goods (Phillips & Duncan, 1948, p. 5).

The other is marketing - the series of activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user.

Marketing is often referred to as "distribution." The term "physical distribution" is sometimes used to designate the activities involved in the movement and handling of goods from the point of production to the point of consumption or use. In general, however, "distribution" is used as a synonym of "marketing" (Alexander, Surface, & Alderson, 1949, p. 3).

### **1950 - 1960**

In this book, the term *production* more specifically means the creation of *form* utility. *Marketing* - or *distribution* - will be used to mean the creation of *time*, *place*, and *possession* of utilities - the transportation and handling of goods and services from the point of production to the point of consumption (Converse, Huegy, & Mitchell, 1952, p. 2).

Marketing defined: In its commonly accepted usage, the term marketing covers all business activities necessary to affect transfers in the ownership of goods and to provide for their physical distribution. It embraces the entire group of services and functions performed in the distribution of merchandise from producer to consumer, excluding only operations relating to changes in the form of goods normally regarded as processing or manufacturing operations (Maynard & Beckman, 1952, p. 3).

"Marketing," in a business sense, has a meaning somewhat distinct from its meaning as an aspect of the social order. It is the economic process by means of which goods and services are exchanged and their values determined in terms of money prices. The term "process" implies activity - coordinated groups of activities, in fact, having a definite purpose - the purpose being to move goods from points of production to points of ultimate use, not simply in a physical sense but in such a way as to facilitate the maximum satisfaction of consumers' wants (Duddy & Revzan, 1953, p. 6).

Marketing defined: In the commonly accepted usage of the term, marketing covers all business activities necessary to affect transfers in the ownership of goods and to provide for their physical distribution. It embraces the entire group of services and functions performed in the distribution of merchandise from producer to consumer, excluding only operations relating to changes in the form of goods normally regarded as processing or manufacturing operations. In a broader sense, the term "marketing" embraces all business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from physical production to consumption (Beckman, Maynard, & Davidson, 1957, p. 4).

Marketing is the exchange taking place between consuming groups, on the one hand, and supplying groups, on the other (Alderson, 1957, p. 42).

### **1960 - 1970**

Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user in order to best satisfy consumers and accomplish the firm's objectives (McCarthy, 1960, p. 33).

No single definition of marketing has ever been universally accepted. Although a committee of the American Marketing Association defined marketing as "*the performance of business activities that direct the flow of*

*goods and services from producer to consumer or user,"* there is still considerable room for doubt concerning what business activities are included in marketing. Also, the definition fails to point up other ways of looking at the management of marketing activities. There are three views on what marketing encompasses: (1) the distribution of goods and services concept, (2) the delivery of a standard of living concept, and (3) the generation of revenues approach (Buskirk, 1961, pp. 3-4).

Marketing consists of those efforts which effect transfers in the ownership of goods and services and which provide for their physical distribution. The marketing process, consequently, involves both mental and physical aspects - mental in that sellers must know what buyers want and buyers must know what is for sale - and physical in that goods must be moved to the places at which they are wanted by the time they are wanted (Tousley, Clark, & Clark, 1962, p. 4).

Marketing is essentially a process like farming, manufacturing, mining, or construction. As such, it is basically functional in character and may, therefore, be defined as *the performance of all activities necessary for ascertaining the needs and wants of markets, planning product availability, effecting transfers in ownership of products, providing for their physical distribution, and facilitating the entire marketing process.* It thus embraces the entire group of functions performed and services rendered in the acquisition or distribution of products for further processing, for business or institutional use, or for ultimate consumption. The various methods by which these functions and services are performed, together with the institutions concerned and the policies adopted, are necessarily an integral part of the subject of marketing (Beckman & Davidson, 1962, p. 4).

The Committee on Definitions of the American Marketing Association defines marketing as "those activities which direct the flow of goods and services from production to consumption." This definition, although widely accepted, places emphasis on the economic role of marketing and does not clearly portray the scope of executive responsibilities for marketing (Staudt & Taylor, 1965, p. 11).

Marketing is the process in a society by which the demand structure for economic goods and services is anticipated or enlarged and satisfied through the conception, promotion, exchange, and physical distribution of such goods and services (Beckman, Davidson, & Engel, 1967, p. 4 (note: definition is (1964). Statement of the Philosophy of Marketing of the Marketing Faculty of The Ohio State University. Columbus: Bureau of Business Research, The Ohio State University. Republished in the *Journal of Marketing*, January 1965, pp. 43-44).

Marketing is traditionally viewed as the business function entrusted with the task of finding customers.

Marketing - The performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user.<sup>1</sup>

Marketing is the analyzing, organizing, planning, and controlling of a firm's customer-impinging resources, policies, and activities with a view satisfying the needs and wants of chosen customer groups at a profit (Kotler, 1967, pp. 3, 5-6, 12).

We define marketing as *those activities necessary and incidental to bringing about exchange relationships.* The activities may be those of business firms or of consumers which directly influence and exchange process. As its focal point, marketing has exchange - or put another way, exchange is the center of marketing. Buying and selling are the activities commonly associated with exchange, yet many other functions and events facilitate the exchange process and these are included in the concept of marketing (Holloway & Hancock, 1968, p. 4).

Marketing, which is often referred to as 'distribution' by businessmen, "serves as the bridge between production and consumption." It includes all the activities necessary to place tangible goods in the hands of

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<sup>1</sup> Other definitions of marketing are summarized as follows: "It has been described by one person or another as a business activity; as a group of related business activities; as a trade phenomenon; as a frame of mind, as a coordinative, integrative function in policy-making; as a sense of business purpose; as an economic process; as a structure of institutions; as the process of exchanging or transferring ownership of products; as a process of concentration, equalization, and dispersion, as the creation of time, place, and possession utilities; as a process of demand and supply adjustment; and as many other things." (Marketing Staff of the Ohio State University (1965). A Statement of Marketing Philosophy. *Journal Of Marketing*, January 1965, p. 43).

household consumers and industrial users, excluding only such activities as involve a significant change in the form of goods (Phillips & Duncan, 1968, p. 3. Quote stated above can be found via L. C. Lockley in (1964). R. Cox, W. Alderson, & S. J. Shapiro (Eds.), *Theory in marketing* (p. 37). Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc.).

### **1970 - 1980**

Marketing defined: The purposeful management of the products and services, the prices and the promotional and distribution activities of a business organization according to the preferences of some market or market segment and in a manner calculated to achieve the objectives of the business (Gist, 1971, pp. 11-12).

Marketing is a set of activities necessary and incidental to bringing about exchange relationships in our economic system (Holloway & Hancock, 1973, p. 10).

Marketing defined: Those activities performed by individuals or organizations, either profit or nonprofit, that enable, facilitate, and encourage exchange to the satisfaction of both parties (Marcus et al., 1975, p. 4).

Marketing encompasses exchange activities conducted by individuals and organizations for the purpose of satisfying human wants (Enis, 1977, p. 17).

Marketing is the development and efficient distribution of goods and services for chosen consumer segments (Boone & Kurtz, 1977, p. 10).

Marketing would be the set of activities by which the demand structure for goods, ideas, and services is managed in order to facilitate the exchange process satisfactorily (Markin, 1979, p. 5).

### **1980 - Current**

Marketing may be viewed as the product planning, pricing, promotion, distribution, and servicing of goods and services needed and desired by consumers (Udell & Laczniak, 1981, p. 5).

Marketing is an exchange process between producers and consumers, in which producer matches a marketing offering (the product or service plus its promotion, distribution, and price) to the wants and needs of the consumer (Mandell & Rosenberg, 1981, p. 6).

Marketing is an integrated analysis and execution of those activities necessary to plan, distribute, price, promote, and effect exchange of satisfying products and services to present and potential users (Shaw, Semenik, & Williams, 1981, p. 4).

Marketing is the anticipation, stimulation, facilitation, regulation, and satisfaction of consumers and publics' demand for products, services, organizations, people, places, and ideas through the exchange process (Evans & Berman, 1982, p. 7).

Marketing consists of individual and organizational activities aimed at facilitating and expediting exchanges within a set of dynamic environmental forces (Ferrell & Pride, 1982, p. 7).

Marketing is human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through the exchange process (McDaniel, 1982, p. 4).

Marketing is a societal process that, subject to internal and environmental constraints, attempts to establish mutually beneficial exchanges (Nickels, 1982, pp. 7-8).

Marketing defined: The activities of individual business firms as they compete for the purchasing power of consumers within the framework of a free marketing economy (Runyon, 1982, p. 9).

Marketing defined: 1) The performance by a seller of various interrelated activities intended to bring beneficial exchanges involving the seller's market offering. 2) The social science that studies these activities (Russ & Kirkpatrick, 1982, p. 6).

Marketing is the process of managing effort in a dynamic environment in a socially responsible manner to facilitate exchange relationships which match an organizations capabilities and resources with the wants of selected market targets - present and potential customers (Schoell & Ivey, 1982, p. 12).

Marketing involves satisfying human needs and wants through exchange processes (Gaedeke & Tootelian, 1983, p. 8).

Marketing defined: The performance of activities involved in planning and facilitating exchanges that are aimed at satisfying human wants and needs (Hartley, 1983, p. 5).

Marketing consists of all the activities of individuals and organizations that are designed to encourage and facilitate exchanges satisfying to all parties involved (Kinnear & Bernhardt, 1983, p. 9).

Marketing is human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange processes (Kotler, 1983, p. 6).

Marketing is managing human and organizational exchange activities directed at satisfying human wants and needs (Schewe & Smith, 1983, p. 20).

Marketing is the development and efficient distribution of goods, services, ideas, issues, and concepts for chosen consumer segments (Kurtz & Boone, 1984, p. 8).

Micro-marketing is the performance of activities which seek to accomplish an organization's objective by anticipating customer or client needs and directing a flow of need-satisfying goods and services from producer to customer or client (McCarthy & Perreault, 1984, p. 22).

Macro-marketing is a social process which directs an economy's flow of goods and services from producers to consumers in a way which effectively matches supply and demand and accomplish the objectives of society (McCarthy & Perreault, 1984, p. 22).

Marketing is a total system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and distribute want-satisfying goods and services to present and potential customers (Stanton, 1984, p. 7).

Effective marketing consists of a consumer-oriented mix of business activities planned and implemented by a marketer to facilitate the exchange or transfer of products, services, or ideas so that both parties profit in some way (Zikmund & D'Amico, 1984, p. 10, 9, respectively).

Marketing involves an exchange process requiring that two or more parties exchange, or trade, things of value (Zikmund & D'Amico, 1984, p. 10, 9, respectively).

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (1985, AMA Definition of Marketing).

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (*Approved July 2013*; 2013, AMA Definition of Marketing).

## CONCLUSION

While the role of technology and other marketing environmental factors continues to influence the practice of marketing (and in turn how we define marketing), the ability to examine broad trends is critical in being able to understand and anticipate how marketing will continue to evolve in the future.

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**NOTES**