

Teacher's notes Management: 4 Customer needs

4 Customer needs

Before you start

- 1 Are your students interested in this topic? Use the checklist on page 7.
- 2 Which classroom management options will you follow? See pages 4–5.
- 3 Do your students need language support for the discussions? See page 8.

1 Brainstorm.

Tasks 1 and 2

- 1 Get students to brainstorm vocabulary for tasks 1 and 2 in pairs or small groups.
- 2 Elicit answers and write them on the board.
(See *Possible answers/ideas* box below.)

Tip

Point out that, in general, the word *customer* is more common in the manufacturing sector and where cash is exchanged e.g. in shops and restaurants, while *client* is more common in the service sector.

Possible answers/ideas

- 1 **Before purchase:** continuity of supply, credit schemes, availability, price stability
At the point of sale: warranty information, merchandising, resale future value
After purchase: availability of spares, fault-free product life
- 2 **Manufacturer:** continuity of supply, advance notice of price increases for parts and raw materials, meeting quality standards
Wholesaler: ongoing product quality, special packs with large quantities of goods, strong yet easy-to-move packing materials

- Retailer:** attractive packaging, point-of-sale merchandising, pricing policy that allows a reasonable profit, a fast and efficient ordering/delivery system, no faulty products, top-quality warranties
- Service sector customer:** good brochures and leaflets to support the sale of the service, top-quality warranties that are easy to understand
- Consumer/End user:** good design and build, easy-to-understand product/service information, availability, high levels of warranty protection, good after-sales service, occasional after-sales contact to show long-term commitment to the relationship

2 How does your company focus on customer needs? Write notes.

- 1 Focus attention on the diagram and check the vocabulary in the headings. Point out that the diagram shows the different stages of business activity, starting with R&D (Research and Development). Tell students that they don't have to fill in every section.
- 2 Circulate while students make notes. Write down on a piece of paper any useful language needed or produced. Write a few language items of general interest on the board at the end.

Tip

Use the following prompts if the students have problems getting started:

- R&D (Research and Development):** How does feedback from the end user come back to the R&D department? How are design, specification and user-friendliness influenced by customer needs?
- Production:** How are quality, range and choice influenced by customer needs? How does information on recalls and repairs come back to the production department?
- Marketing:** How do customer needs influence price and product information? How is market research done? How is packaging designed? What types of merchandising are there?
- Distribution:** How do the distribution channel and sales locations depend on customer needs? How is speed of delivery maximized? Is there a sales tracking system and how does it help customers?
- Sales:** How do sales staff make available to other departments their first-hand knowledge of customer needs, how customers use the product, what customers see as the strengths and weaknesses etc.?
- After-sales:** How are complaints handled? Are there surveys and questionnaires of existing customers? How is knowledge of after-sales staff made available to other departments?

3 Discuss.

- 1 Which classroom management options will you follow? See pages 4–5.
- 2 Circulate during the discussion. Make a note of good/bad language use.

Feedback slot

See page 5.

Extension

- Students can write a short summary of the needs of their own customers.
- Consider repeating the activity in a later lesson e.g. with a different partner. See page 5.

4 Customer needs

1 Brainstorm.

1 What do customers want? Add examples to the following lists.

Before purchase: design, information,

At the point of sale: choice, demonstrations,

After purchase: good handling of complaints, maintenance/servicing,

2 Add some special needs for each of the following types of customer.

Manufacturer: keeping delivery schedules,

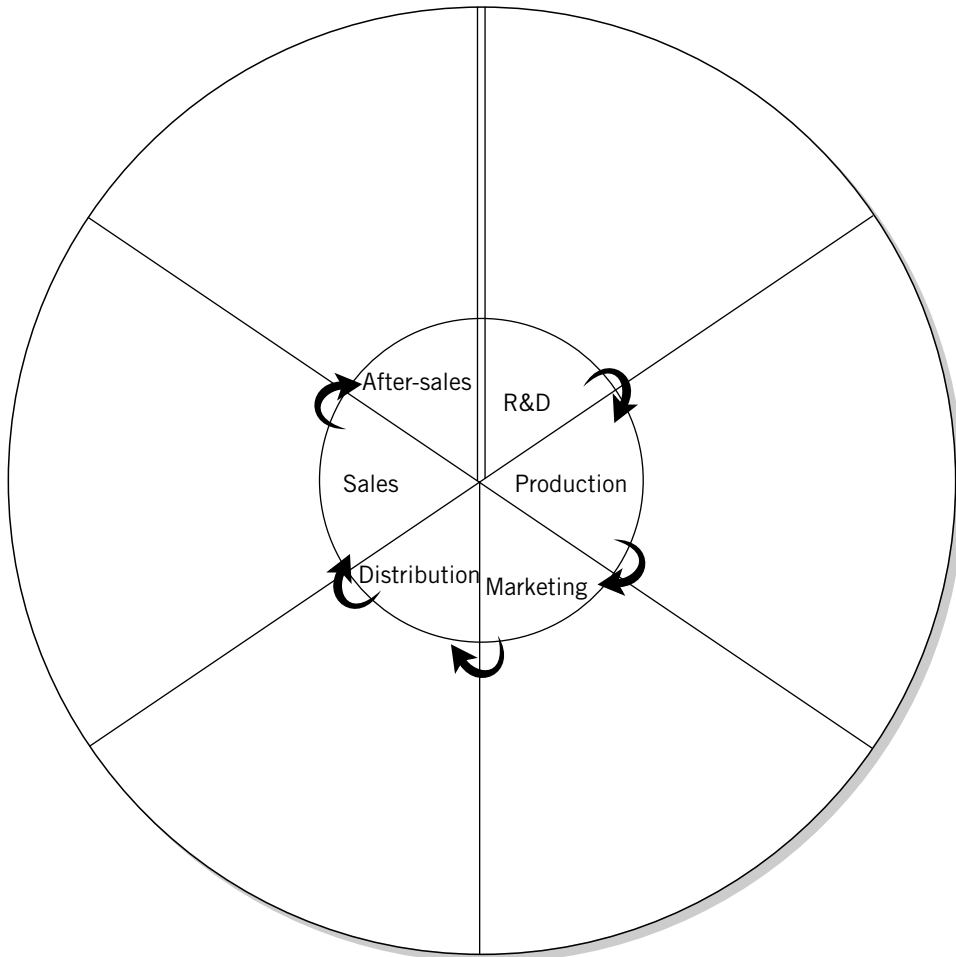
Wholesaler: capacity to deal with fluctuating orders,

Retailer: national advertising of brands,

Service sector customer: top-quality information about benefits to the final customer,

Consumer/End user: a long, trouble-free operational life of goods and services,

2 How does your company focus on customer needs? Write notes.



3 Discuss.