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Marketing for Success: Keep Your Eye on the Ball with Target Marketing

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Like a batter who keeps their eye on the ball when trying to hit one out of the park, value-added entrepreneurs working toward success should focus their marketing efforts around the characteristics of a specific target audience. A target audience is defined as a specific portion of the population who has

1. A need that the product or service can fulfill
2. A willingness to purchase the product or service
3. The financial ability to purchase the product or service

Most products (and services) are not needed or desired equally by every person in the population, even though as producers and sellers we often think that all people desire our products. Products are likely to be needed or desired more by some segment of the population. In the same way, not all people will be willing to purchase a product even if they need or desire it. Finally, not all people have the financial ability to purchase a specific product or service. It is the people in this smaller segment of the population who have the need or desire for the product, the willingness to purchase and the financial ability to purchase that should be the focus of marketing efforts for a product.

It is the job of the marketer to narrowly define the target audience and learn about this audience's customer values¹ (benefit/need, cost, convenience, communication). The marketer needs to learn the characteristics of the target audience and answer such questions as

- Who are they (parents, grandparents, school teachers, teenagers, men, women)
- What is their income and what do they expect to pay for the product
- Where do they expect to find the product or how far will they travel to purchase the product
- Where do they live
- What amenities/services do they expect from your business
- What sources or types of advertising or promotion influences the purchasing decisions

Using the information learned about the target audience, the marketer can plan and implement narrowly-focused marketing efforts to gain effectiveness and efficiency. Marketing efforts can only be effective in earning sales and efficient in spending marketing budgets when they reach people who need or desire the product, the target audience, and entice them to learn more about or purchase the product. By keeping their eye on the ball (the target audience), marketers will greatly increase their chances of hitting one out of the park.

¹ Refer to CPA Info #119, *Marketing for Success: Developing a Customer State of Mind*, at <http://cpa.utk.edu/pdf/files/cpa119.pdf> for further information on customer values.