

4.5 The seven Ps of the marketing mix

Promotion: Above the line promotion

Promotion is the use of advertising, sponsorships, sales promotions and personal selling to inform and persuade customers to buy a product. Promotion requires effective communication with actual and potential customers from the business about the product. Effective promotion will increase product and brand awareness, as well as image.



Figure 1. There are many ways for a business to communicate with customers about their products.

Credit: Show999, Getty Images

There are three general types of promotion that will be discussed in the following sections:

- above the line promotion
- below the line promotion
- through the line promotion

Above the line promotion

Above the line promotion (ATL) refers to the various forms of promotion, such as television and radio advertising, print advertising in newspapers and magazines, and so on, that are aimed at mass or large audiences. Above the line promotion is generally not targeted.

The most common methods of above the line promotion are explained in this section. However, almost any area can be sold for advertising space, including for example the front of players' shirts in Premier League football matches and advertisements on Spotify.

Television advertising

Television offers advertisers the chance to make visually stimulating commercials that reach national audiences. In the past, when there were few choices on television and few other media channels, television advertising reached wide, captive audiences. However, digital television services have led to an explosion of specialised channels. This means that the average audience per commercial is reduced. However, businesses have used this specialisation to better aim advertising at their specific target market on television.

The cost of buying advertising space depends on the channel, the time slot and the expected audience. Overall, however, television is by far the most expensive form of above the line promotion and is less effective than it once was. There are now more effective and less expensive channels for reaching target markets, via digital advertising and social media. Businesses globally are now directing more of their promotion spending to digital channels.

Exam tip

In examinations, students often suggest television advertising as a form of promotion. However, television advertising is very expensive for businesses. Therefore, it is only suitable for the very largest national or global companies. If the business in the case study is a local company, you should probably not recommend television advertising in the marketing mix.

Newspaper advertising

Although the readership of newspapers has been in long-term decline, newspapers are still an attractive medium for some businesses. One reason for this is market segmentation. Newspaper readers tend to segment by socio-economic group, which helps advertisers target the desired group easily. For example, newspapers such as *The*

Wall Street Journal, that target higher income business readers, are more likely to carry advertisements for luxury or financial products. In addition, many newspapers are moving their papers online. They know that consumers increasingly access news on their laptops or mobile phones.



Figure 2. Many newspapers are now moving online.

Source: Robert Scoble

([https://www.flickr.com/photos/scobleizer/4697192856/in/photolist-8a5kMJ-5PUDGb-2iaPZvf-2kj7tQm-5TpKkZ-28fHSjy-2g2ww1n-sTvYbK-bsxZ6V-HCjXen-qYG5mA-9LU9as-2n53F7U-7bhzpt-aE3U9C-dmeBXg-2epQipw-2ghXeZv-N7Nj5h-bsxYT2-2kWTxVS-79x5uJ-4Z1LXD-dmeBUH-dmeC8H-2iB2VvB-dmeGcb-FRNQmq-dmeC66-dmeC2v-JmUxoY-a3QYGf-2iLPX8U-2kFxfGG-2j8KDd8-2gdWTeL-a6zPAf-dNEnRT-xHW6iV-2iAFp2s-2mi8Azp-2h6xN7S-7Gz33A-7zrtDM-2afoSrQ-NaALKZ-](https://www.flickr.com/photos/scobleizer/4697192856/in/photolist-8a5kMJ-5PUDGb-2iaPZvf-2kj7tQm-5TpKkZ-28fHSjy-2g2ww1n-sTvYbK-bsxZ6V-HCjXen-qYG5mA-9LU9as-2n53F7U-7bhzpt-aE3U9C-dmeBXg-2epQipw-2ghXeZv-N7Nj5h-bsxYT2-2kWTxVS-79x5uJ-4Z1LXD-dmeBUH-dmeC8H-2iB2VvB-dmeGcb-FRNQmq-dmeC66-dmeC2v-JmUxoY-a3QYGf-2iLPX8U-2kFxfGG-2j8KDd8-2gdWTeL-a6zPAf-dNEnRT-xHW6iV-2iAFp2s-2mi8Azp-2h6xN7S-7Gz33A-7zrtDM-2afoSrQ-NaALKZ-7ZyKLE-uqhoJR-PfNsbU-SjVgFM)

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Magazine advertising

Magazines offer highly segmented, defined target audiences. People buy magazines that match their personal interests, which allows for psychographic segmentation (Subtopic 4.2 ([/study/app/y12-business-management-a-hl-may-2024/sid-351-cid-](https://study/app/y12-business-management-a-hl-may-2024/sid-351-cid-174702/book/promotion-above-line-id-39009/print/)

[174702/book/the-big-picture-id-37443](#))). People who are interested in fashion may buy *Vogue*. People who are following current events may read *The Economist*. As a result, magazines can be an efficient medium for advertisers.

Another advantage of magazines is that they are relatively durable. People may keep magazines for several weeks, or they may pass them on to their friends. Advertisements in magazines may be viewed multiple times by different people. This increases their potential reach. Glossy colour images also improve impact. Readers may, however, ignore obvious advertisements, turning the pages to concentrate on the magazine's main articles instead. Magazine publishers have therefore become smarter about embedding promotions into articles or picture spreads.



Figure 3. Magazines offer defined target audiences for advertisers.

Credit: Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy, Getty Images

Radio advertising

Radio can be useful for local promotions for sole traders and other small businesses. However, because of its audio rather than visual format, the impact of radio advertising tends to be low. Radio also typically reaches people while they are doing other things, such as housework or driving. This means they may be distracted while listening, which reduces the effectiveness of radio advertising.

Outdoor advertising

Shopping centres, advertising hoardings (billboards) and bus sides are common types of outdoor advertising. Local businesses can advertise on a single billboard; larger companies may fund national billboard campaigns.



Figure 4. Outdoor advertising hoardings or billboards are designed to catch consumers' attention.

Credit: Mlenny, Getty Images

Activity

Learner profile: Knowledgeable

Approaches to learning: Thinking skills (transfer)

Consider the following products and suggest an appropriate above the line promotion method for each. Explain your choice:

- a luxury brand of car
- a new restaurant in a small town
- a bank that is launching a new financial service
- a famous company that is launching a new brand of sports shoes

Evaluation of above the line promotion methods

Table 1 outlines some of the benefits and limitations of different above the line promotion methods.

Table 1. Benefits and limitations of above the line promotion methods.

Method	Benefits	Limitations	Examples
Television advertising	High visual impact. National global reach.	Expensive. Consumer media choice. TV adverts now reach a smaller market.	Global automakers advertising new car models.
Newspaper advertising	Volume of information. Much information can be included; customers can refer to it multiple times. Segmentation is possible. Reach. Through online newspaper options.	Weak visual impact. Consumer media choice. Newspaper adverts now reach a smaller market.	A business advertising financial products to a particular demographic or socio-economic target market.

Method	Benefits	Limitations	Examples
Magazine advertising	<p>Psychographic segmentation.</p> <p>Durability. People keep magazines and pass them on.</p> <p>Colour. Imagery can be effective.</p> <p>Reach. Through online versions of magazines.</p>	<p>Static imagery.</p> <p>Lack of movement may make magazines less effective than digital media.</p>	A global clothing company advertising in a global fashion magazine.
Radio advertising	<p>Better segmentation.</p> <p>Local radio stations allow for geographic segmentation for local, small businesses.</p>	<p>No images.</p> <p>Audio medium may be less effective than visual medium for many consumers.</p> <p>Less effective.</p> <p>Consumers may be distracted by other activities while listening.</p>	A small car repair shop looking for local customers.

Method	Benefits	Limitations	Examples
Outdoor advertising	Scope. Outdoors can range from a national campaign down to a single billboard; well-placed advertisements can be seen by thousands of people.	Static imagery. Non-digital billboards lack moving images, so may lack impact.	Potentially any consumer product can be advertised with outdoor promotion.

Activity

Learner profile: Communicator
Approaches to learning: Communication skills; Thinking skills (critical thinking)

Using the mass media discussed previously, create a positioning map with the following variables:

- High/low impact
- High/low reach

(You studied positioning maps in [Section 4.2.2 \(/study/app/y12-business-management-a-hl-may-2024/sid-351-cid-174702/book/segmentation-and-targeting-id-37445\)](#).)