

Marketing to Manufacturers:

A Guide to Employing a Market Focus Strategy

Defining market focus is far trickier than product focus marketing. *Tagoras* defines a market focused approach as when your company pours its resources into “determining new or emerging needs in your market and coming up with new products [or services] to meet these needs. Don’t assume you know your market needs, but rather [be] bent on discovering them and serving them.”

In addition, *Small Business* reports that a market focus strategy “enables a company to dominate a niche. Through a focused strategy, a company concentrates on a limited part of a market. As a result of developing and promoting ‘niche’ products and services, a company can attract a higher share of customers in that market segment than competitors.” Some major components of a market focus strategy are:

- **Developing a plan:** A key component of having a market focus strategy company is developing a plan. *Forbes* notes that a marketing plan directs the sales staff. Without a plan the sales team will employ “shotgun marketing” as a self-motivated strategy to make sales quotas. It is important to set profiles for the types of clientele needed for longstanding growth. *Forbes* advises the implementation of a “cost system that shows a contribution margin for each customer, product line, product, or service.”
- **Utilizing a data-driven approach:** In 2015, there was a shift to a more data-driven approach for marketing to manufacturers, such as targeted email and social media. A study conducted by *StrongView* found that email, social media and mobile marketing all increased in prevalence in 2015, while the rate of use of tradeshows, events, and print advertising decreased.
- **Knowing the Customer:** Knowing the customer means studying the activities of the company’s largest specific consumers and modeling that behavior to lower-value consumers. According to *Forbes*, beyond demographics, knowing the existing customer can allow the company to create a “brand experience” to cater to future customers. Focusing on key customers segments in which you have a competitive advantage will facilitate data that allows you to satisfy the unique needs of this group better than your competitor.

Additionally, the buyer’s journey to purchase involves more touch points than it did historically. Buyers are visiting online platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube to evaluate and compare products. *BusinessKnowledgeSource* advises companies to show original equipment manufacturers how you will reduce the number of alternate suppliers and you will provide them with a value others cannot.

- **Narrowing the Target Market:** After knowing the customer, the next step is to identify business trends. To better build a brand and a niche market focused marketing strategy, a company must narrow the target market by conducting market research. The *Small Business Administration* defines target market research as “the process of analyzing data to help the company understand which products and services are in demand, and how to be competitive.”



Some of the most common ways of narrowing the target market is by revenues, number of employees, geographic location, or by utilizing Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. To target by revenue, most directories and online databases offer revenue searches as a basic selection. *Broadfield Consulting* states that targeting markets by their geographic location can also be essential depending on the scope of the business and whether its market is local, regional, provincial, national, or international.

To use SIC codes assigned by the US Government, a company can choose current high-value customers and search for their SIC codes in the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration's SIC search directory](#). Once a company's SIC codes have been identified, the next step is to search for other companies with the same classification and then market directly to those entities.

By Wanda McDavid
President
Access/Information, Inc.