

Applying Marketing Concepts into Presentation Lessons

—— Product Analysis Practice ——

プレゼンテーションレッスンへのマーケティングコンセプトの応用

——商品分析の実践——

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1 Introduction

Shinshu University offers 15-week English presentation course to second-year students of the Faculty of Economics and I have been in charge of teaching one of the classes since 2007. Most of students taking this course have been learning English for more than 7 years, but not many of them are confident and used to deliver a public speech or presentation due to lack of oral communication skills. According to the study conducted by Koike and others (2008), even experienced Japanese businesspeople feel difficulties of fluently communicating and negotiating in English and fully comprehending complicated issues in English.

It is written in the syllabus that the English presentation course is designed to enable students to acquire (1) public speaking skills to talk about their daily lives as well as (2) professional presentation skills to report technical issues in front of an audience. Due to time constraint, it is crucial for the language teachers to carefully select topics to be dealt in class that provide maximized benefits for students. At the same time, teachers play a crucial role to motivate students to learn and obtain presentation strategies and tactics throughout the semester.

The aim of this paper is introduce basic marketing concepts that are applicable to presentation lessons for university students. The paper is divided into three parts. Firstly, the paper describes the rationale of applying the marketing concepts into English

presentation lessons. Secondly, the method of applying marketing concepts into English presentation lessons is explained. Finally, the paper describes some tips of assigning projects, implementing lessons and evaluating presentation skills of students.

2 Why apply marketing concepts into presentation lessons?

Marketing is not only about selling and advertising. Marketing is critical to the success to any organizations as marketing involves all the people who consume any products and services (Kotler, Armstrong, Brown and Adam, 1998, p.5). In addition, all the consumers in the world have been involved in marketing in their daily lives to persuade their peers. With the emergence of new-wave technology, the new generation of customers is proactive to co-create new products and services that reflect fresh and innovative ideas (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2010, pp.3-22). Changes in the social, environmental and economic environments demand marketers to have better understanding of anxieties and desires of the customers (Covey, 2009) and create unique values and strong images to the target market.

Marketing has contributed positively in the life of modern societies by creating innovate ideas and new theories (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2010, pp.25-35). By adopting marketing concepts into presentation lessons, students will be able to learn how successful individuals and organizations implement marketing strategies in business. Also, students will gain knowledge of the way to prepare and demonstrate effective and well-organized presentations.

3 Putting marketing concepts into presentation lessons

Exceptional speakers deliver clear messages that engage the hearts and minds of people. Exceptional speakers also know how to organize and structure presentations consistently that fit into an appropriate framework (Koegel, 2007, pp.31-2). Students could use the marketing concept as a good framework to prepare a well-organized and structured presentation.

In this section, some of basic marketing terms such as products, services, and product attributes are introduced to be adopted into presentation lessons.

3.1 Understanding products and their attributes

When people make decisions to buy products or services, various factors influence their decision-making behavior. They do not simply buy core products or services but also consider other attributes that combine to deliver core product benefits (Kotler, Armstrong, Brown and Adam, 1998, pp.344-8). Any organizations that offer products or services have to carefully define attributes that are delivering benefits to customers when they design products or services. Attributes differentiate the product against its competitors.

McDonalds', for example, offers various kinds of fast food to the customers. They offer physical goods such as hamburgers, drinks and French fries. At the same time, they provide services such as fast and dependable service at the counter, clean and bright environments, well trained crew, free Wi-Fi connection and so on. These single components that form a product or services are called attributes.

A company that would like to measure how their products or services are perceived by their target customers conducts research to define or redefine attributes of products or services. Attribute analysis is often conducted by marketers to differentiate their products or services and have competitive advantages against their competitors (Kotler, Armstrong, Brown and Adam, 1998, pp.317-8).

Product attribute analysis could be applied directly into presentation lessons to compare products, services or brands that fall into the same product category. In the next part, some tips for conducting product analysis and delivering a presentation in class will be introduced.

3.2 Product analysis in practice

3.2.1 Stating the argument

In order to introduce marketing concepts in class, the teacher is required to explain the marketing term, "product attributes" and some examples of product attributes of certain products at the beginning of the class. After that, the following model is introduced to enable students to identify key attributes easily (See Figure 1).

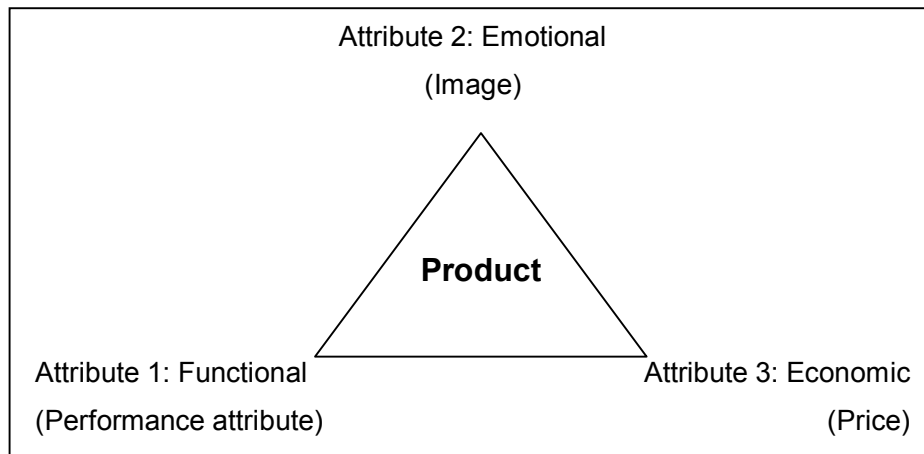


Figure 1. A product and its attributes ¹

The students are then asked to practice identifying product attributes of a product with their group members to come up with the following argument:

XXX (product) is the best product because of its association with (attribute 1), (attribute 2) and (attribute 3).

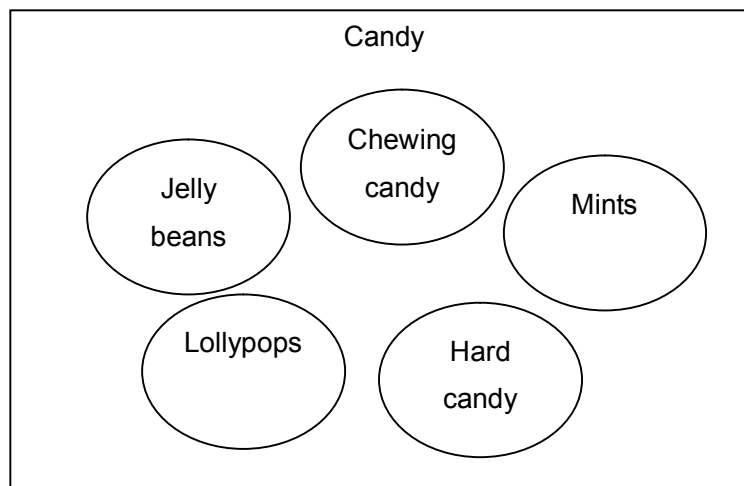


Figure 2. Examples of different types of candy

Prior to the lessons, the teacher should choose appropriate products that could be used for product analysis in class. Preferably, it is ideal to choose consumable products that are familiar to students. For example, the teacher can prepare 3 different branded candy products (e.g. Frisk®, Mentos® and VC-3000 Nodoame ®) that fall into the same product category (See Figure 2) because they are easy to taste, smell and touch in class.

By using existing products for analysis, students can easily obtain information about the product they are going to analyze. Also, it will enable students to participate in the activity smoothly, share their opinions and work collaboratively with their group members.

To start the activity, students are divided into groups of 3 or 4. The teacher distributes one of the products to each group, and allows students to analyze and define product attributes. Students are also allowed to “experience” products so that they can personalize the experience according to their own unique needs and wants (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2010, pp.32-3). Belows are some examples of product attributes of candy (See Figure 3):

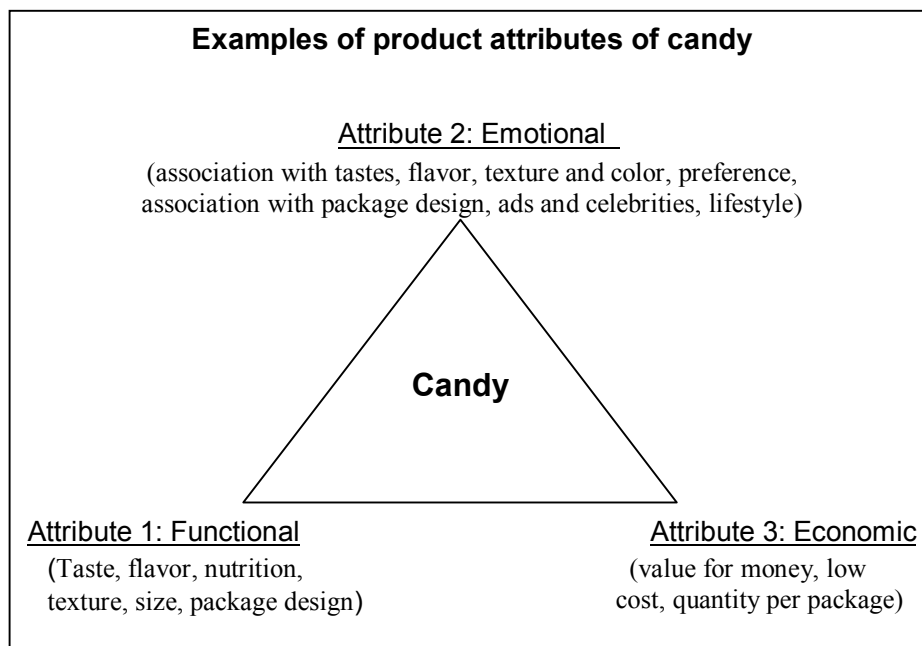


Figure 3. Examples of product attributes of candy products

3.2.2 Supporting the Argument

The next step is supporting the argument with evidence. Evidence could be examples, explanations or numbers. Example sentences to support the argument for VC-3000 Nodoame ² are shown below:

VC-3000 Nodoame®

Nodoame® is the best candy to eat, especially if you have a sore throat (*argument*). Firstly, VC-3000 Nodoame® contains a lot of nutritious substances that are good for your sore throat (*Support 1*). It contains vitamin B1, vitamin B2 and 3000 mg of vitamin C necessary to your body (*Evidence 1*). It also contains herbal essence and quince extracts that help sooth your throat (*Evidence 2*). Secondly, you can feel happy while you eat and carry VC-3000 Nodoame® (*Support 2*). The TV commercial is fun and appealing to watch with its association with Japanese Enka singer, Tendo Yoshimi (*Evidence 1*). Each candy is wrapped, thus enables us to easily share the candy with our family and friends (*Evidence 2*) Thirdly, VC-3000 Nodoame® is good value for money (*support 3*). The stick-type candy contains 10 candies per package (*Evidence 1*) and it only costs around 100 yen (*Evidence 2*). Indeed, VC-3000 Nodoame® helps moisten your sore throat, gives you happy feelings, and is friendly on the wallet.

Students develop supporting ideas by adopting paragraph writing techniques. Nation and Newton (2009, pp.121-5) mentioned that formal speaking is influenced by a written form. Usually in formal speaking activities, students are given time to prepare scripts prior to delivering a presentation. Without having enough time for preparation and planning, it is hard for students to perform high level presentations.

3.2.3 Giving a presentation

After preparing and developing their ideas, each group gives a short presentation in front of their classmates using the triangle tool shown in Figure 1 as their visual aid. The teacher and audience can ask a few questions to each presentation to interact with the speaker(s) and wrap up the activity.

3.3 Assigning and evaluating presentation tasks

Based on the in-class practice described above, the teacher can give a new presentation assignment to students such as individual presentations or group presentations. The purpose of assigning a new presentation is to evaluate students' performance and obtain

information of their progress. Nation and Newton (2009, pp.165-6) suggest that the teacher can set up his/her own information gathering system to obtain more useful and reliable information.

When organizing any tasks, the teacher should explicitly explain requirements and assessment criteria of the assignment, and it is helpful and supportive if the teacher could provide the framework to construct the presentation outline and notes to be used by students (See Appendix). Based on assessment criteria given from the teacher, students are evaluated upon their presentation performance. The teacher can also get the learners involved in making self-assessment and peer-assessment regarding their commitment in given tasks (Newton and Nation, 2009, p.165).

4 Conclusion

This paper explained why marketing concepts are applicable to presentation lessons and showed how to organize lessons adopting marketing concepts in class. The teacher should carefully choose the topics to be used in class and he/she should explain difficult marketing terms to be used in class if necessary.

By adopting marketing concepts, presentation lessons could enlighten students to organize creative and innovative ideas. Marketing concepts also enhance students' presentations skills, especially planning and organizing convincing messages to be delivered to the audience. The teacher should assign appropriate tasks to facilitate students' understanding of marketing concepts and presentation skills. Monitoring and evaluating students' performance is the important duty of the teacher. At the same time, students can evaluate themselves and each other by conducting self- and peer assessment.

Notes

¹ The original framework was introduced in the lecture notes of the “International Marketing” course offered at the University of New South Wales, by Dr. Chris Styles in 1999.

² Information source: the website of NOBEL Confectionery Co., Ltd.
(<http://vc3000.com/product.php>) accessed on January 10th, 2011.

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