MBA · CUSTOMER ENVIRONMENT · TOPIC 2

The Dynamic Customer Environment

The forces reshaping your customers — macro and micro environments, PESTEL and SWOT

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THE MAP

Two environments, two tools

- How the customer environment evolves — and the forces that drive it.
- The MACRO environment you cannot control, and the MICRO environment you partly can.
- Two analysis tools every marketer needs: PESTEL and SWOT.

THE DEFINITION

Everything outside marketing that shapes marketing

- The actors and forces OUTSIDE marketing that affect its ability to build customer relationships.
- Study the environment carefully → adapt strategy to new challenges and opportunities.
- Ignore it → be surprised by change your rivals saw coming.

THE SPLIT

One you read, one you work

- MACRO — larger societal forces: demographic, economic, natural, technological, political, cultural. Not controllable.
- MICRO — actors close to the company: suppliers, intermediaries, customers, competitors, publics. More controllable.
- Strategy = adapt to the macro, manage the micro.

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layers of environment — societal forces you can't control, close actors you can influence

THE MACRO

Six forces you can't control

- Demographic — aging populations shift demand (healthcare boom).
- Economic — recessions push customers to budget products.
- Natural & Technological — resource scarcity; AI rewrites service.
- Political & Cultural — data-privacy law; the demand for organic goods.

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macro forces — demographic, economic, natural, technological, political, cultural

THE MICRO

Six actors close to home

- Company & suppliers — internal alignment; cost, quality, timely delivery.
- Intermediaries — retailers, wholesalers and agents who move the product.
- Customers & competitors — the needs you serve, the rivals you position against.
- Publics — government, media and interest groups that shape your reputation.

THE WHY

Scan or be surprised

- Markets now change faster than annual planning cycles.
- Companies must scan constantly to stay competitive and adapt.
- PESTEL and SWOT turn scanning into strategic planning, opportunity recognition and risk management.

TOOL 1

Six letters that map the outside world

- Political & Economic — policy, stability; inflation, interest rates, income.
- Social & Technological — demographics, lifestyle shifts; automation, digital disruption.
- Environmental & Legal — sustainability, climate; data protection, employment law.
- Purpose: anticipate THREATS, identify OPPORTUNITIES.

P·E·S·T·E

Political · Economic · Social · Technological · Environmental · Legal

DEEP DIVE 1

Read the economy like a marketer

- Overall health — GDP, exchange rates, the business cycle (growth vs recession).
- Standard of living — the quality and quantity of goods a country consumes.
- Fun applied indicator: the Big Mac Index compares purchasing power across countries with one burger.

DEEP DIVE 2

Five events that rewrote the rules

- GDPR — global data-privacy rules. Brexit — new UK–EU trade terms.
- US–China trade war — tariffs and tech sanctions.
- EU Digital Services Act — platform accountability. Russia sanctions — market exits.

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recent political-legal shocks every marketer had to absorb

DEEP DIVE 3

Each generation buys differently

- Boomers — job security, TV, early IT adopters.
- Gen X — work–life balance, PC-era digital immigrants.
- Gen Y — freedom and flexibility, smartphone natives, entrepreneurs.
- Gen Z — security-seeking multitasking 'technoholics' with wearables.

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generations in today's market — Maturists to Gen Z, each with its own signature product

THE EVIDENCE

When disruption becomes permanent

- McKinsey, State of the Consumer 2025: global behavior is shifting and less predictable.
- Consumers demand convenience, speed and service — and prefer locally owned companies.
- Digital channels surge, yet social media is the LEAST trusted source for buying decisions.

DISCUSS

Worry changes spending

- Top 2025 worries: climate change, international conflicts, unemployment, job security.
- Discuss: what does each worry do to consumption?
- Discuss: what does that mean for the economy — and your marketing plan?

TOOL 2

Look inward, then outward

- Strengths — what you do well: strong brand, loyal customers.
- Weaknesses — where you lag: poor online presence.
- Opportunities & Threats — external, fed directly by your PESTEL scan.
- Purpose: evaluate current position, plan strategic action.

S·W·O·T

Strengths · Weaknesses (internal) — Opportunities · Threats (external, from PESTEL)

THE EDGE

Where advantage is decided

- Competitive analysis must span the macroenvironment, the microenvironment AND industry rivalry.
- Together they define what competitive advantage is possible — and what is real.
- Next topic: from environments to the customer's mind — Knowing Your Customer.

YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT — BUT YOU CAN READ IT

No company controls the macroenvironment — but every company chooses how well it reads it. Scan constantly, analyse with PESTEL, review with SWOT, and adapt before your competitors do.

Dr. Aftab Ahmad