

ASSESSING THE ADOPTION OF PRICE AND PRICE CHANGES OF CONSUMER GOODS IN RITE FOODS LTD

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of price and price changes on the sales of consumer goods, using Rite foods as our case study. The survey method was adopted as the research design 60 persons were selected out of the entire 150 staff of Rite Foods Ltd as the sample of study. The questionnaire constituted the instrument of data collection the mean (\bar{x}) was used to analyze the findings obtained from the field. The analysis shows that price determines the demands of consumer goods and is also used to gain competitive advantage price affect Rite Foods Ltd products by gaining competitive advantages through their pricing policy while has improved their market share over the years. Rite Foods ltd basically adopt demand based perceived pricing any as well as psychological and discount pricing strategy. The study recommended that the management of Rite Foods LTD must always ensure that the pattern of their pricing must be in accordance to what their customer can afford. This will always give their customers a competitive edge over other competitors.

Keywords: Price, Price Changes, Sales, Sales performance.

1. Introduction

Prices go by many names. It is all around us. The price of a worker is wages; incomes taxes are the price we pay for the privilege of making money. In economic theory, prices policy tends to be relegated to a secondary role and attention is devoted to other dimensions of competitive strategy. It is important to be clear what we mean by price. According to Ode (2016), the term price simply means the amount of money that you actually pay in order to buy a good or service so that any relation between the buyer and seller is confined to the transaction itself. This definition is inadequate for marketing purposes because it ignores guarantees, after sales services, installation, maintenance, consultancy, delivery, credit, etc. which distinguish one transaction from the next but often "free" or included in the price.

Price in marketing is still broader than the economists' conception. It is as much as the total product i.e the amount of money paid to acquire a good or service plus the cost of guarantees, after sales services, maintenance, consultancy, delivery, credit etc.

Price plays a central role in economy as a whole. It balances demand and supply, provide an incentive for new product distributes income between buyer and sellers, professionals consider price from two perspective which are consumer (suppliers or services of the product)

and provider (services provided for a fee to product users). An organization that wants to provide a satisfactory marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion). The price of its product must be acceptable to target marketing members. Price has a direct impact on company profit and all other elements of the marketing mix. Thus, the price of a product can be on influence on how consumers perceive it and how prospective seller attempts to optimizing this return. He tries to deal with volume, cost and price but he cannot keep them all in the air at a time. If he increases the price of his product, his volume of sales will fall and if he reduces the price, the volume of sales will increase.

In the face of rapid economic and technological changes, today's consumer is more curious, more educated and conversant with what he/she exactly wants. These changes also affect the needs of firms. According to Ehmke et al (2005), marketing your business is about how you position it to satisfy your customers' needs. Borden (1984) stated that marketing manager must weigh the behavioral forces and then handle marketing elements in his mix with focus on the resources with which he has to work when building a marketing program to fit the needs of a firm. For marketing to effect a change either in a new product or reinvigorate a new brand there are elements that remains constant which must be incorporated in the marketing mix and this is called the —Four P's". These four P's are product, price, promotion and place (Ehmke et al 2005). In the context of this paper, the emphasis will be on price; hence the need to elucidate more on meaning of price to both customers and firms.

Price is the amount a customer pays for a product or the sum of the values that consumers exchange for the benefits of having or using a product or service (Bearden et al 2004). Price means different things to different people; it is interest to lenders, COT or service charged by the banker (lenders), premium to the insurer, fare to the transporter, honorarium to the guest lecturer etc, (Kotler et al 2018). According to Rosa et al (2011), the importance of price as a purchase stimulus has a key role in price management since not only does it determine the way prices are perceived and valued, but it also influences consumer purchase decisions (Rosa, 2001; Simon, 1989; Vanhuele and Dreze, 2012). Studies have shown price as an important factor in purchase decision, especially for frequently purchased products, affecting choices for store, product and brand (Rondan, 2014)

The issue of pricing decision and the effect of change in price is sensitive to both firms producing homogenous consumer goods and buyers of such products. On the part of the firms, it is only price that brings about revenue, as such a slight change in cost of production lead to price increment while the buyers on the hand, price is among the major determinant of buying or buying a product or services. In spite of the sensitivity of price, business organization tend to commit common mistakes in their pricing decision. This is evident in the way some organization frequently review their prices upwardly while others fixed their prices independently of other marketing mix element as well as their competitors. This has made so many firms in the consumer goods industry to close shop due to their inability to effectively compete. Hence, the effect of price change on the sales of consumer goods has cut the attention of business managers, captains of industries, consultants and scholars. As such the researcher sees the subject matter of this research worthy of investigation.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the activities of price and price change on the sales of consumer products in Rite Foods LTD, it would however, highlight the problems and prospect of price changes in other to provide possible solutions that would be beneficial to the management. In line with this objective, the following hypothesis is designed for the study

- i. Price policy has no effect on sales of consumer goods in Rite Foods LTD?
- ii. Change in price has no effect on the market share of Rite Foods LTD.
- iii. There is no relationship between change in price on the sales of consumer goods in Rite Foods LTD.

2. Literature Review

Concept of Price

Price goes by many names. It is all around us. The price of a worker is wages; income taxes are the price we pay for the privilege of making money. In economic theory, price policy tends to be relegated to a secondary role and attention is devoted to other dimensions of competitive strategy. It is important to be clear what we mean by price. According to Ode (2011), the term price simply means the amount of money that you actually pay in order to buy a good or service so that any relations between the buyer and seller is confined to the transaction itself. This definition is inadequate for marketing purpose because it ignore guarantees, after sales services, installation, maintenance, consultancy, delivery, credit etc. which distinguish one transaction from the next but often "Free" or included in the price.

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The Effects of Price Increase on Sales Volume

Price increases for a good or service offered by your small business will have an effect an effect on the sales volume of that good or service. How price increases affect consumers demand and subsequently sales volume involves several key factors, making selecting a pricing strategy a complex task you need to put thought and research into.

Price Elasticity: Price elasticity measures how price increases as well as decrease affect demand for a product or service. A price increase has little to no effect if the product or service has little elasticity, while a high level of price elasticity means a slight price increase will have a major effect on the demand for the product or service. Several factors play into the price elasticity of a product or service (Steve, 2011).

Substitutions and competition: The availability and perceived quality of competing products or service will help determine how price increases affect demand. If you are selling a product or service that has competition that consumers perceive as similar in quality, increasing your price to more than the competition will lead to a decrease in sales as consumers buy the competition's product or service. Consumers may also make substitutions for a product or a service. For example, if the price of cars increased dramatically, consumers may begin to make mass transit more, ride a bike or walk Dynes, 2010).

Time: Time plays a factor in the effect of price increases and sales volume. The longer a price increase exists, without the competition increasing their prices, the longer consumers have to change their behaviour through buying competitive products or services or substitution. How accessible competitive goods or services, as well as substitutes are to consumers will combine with length of the price increase to affect sale volume. A short price increase will affect sale volume negatively less than a long-term price increase because consumers will have less time to change their behaviour because of the price increase (Steve, 2011).

Price strategies: Not all companies price their product to sell the highest amount of the product or service possible. These companies incorporate strategies using prices to sell the optimal amount of goods or services while making the maximum amount of profit per sale. Some brands use prestige pricing, where they purposely set a high price point for their product or service to communicate that the product or service is of superior quality. How you use various pricing strategies to price your product or service, though, depends on factors such as the competition, consumer's perception of your product or service and the price elasticity of the products or services finding the right price point increase while keeping sales volume high may require trial and error (Agbo, 2010).

Price Changes

As the situation changes a cut in price or increase in price may be demanded. These changes are based on the competitors and customer's reactions. Customer's reactions are based on perceptual factors and price elasticity of demand (Lawal, 2007). Competitor's reactions may be anticipated on the basis of a set reaction policy or they may flow from totally new appraisals of the challenges each time. Government policy, suppliers and middlemen are important and their reactions are to be given due weight while considering price changes. Sudden changes as reaction to competitor's price change should be planned in advance (Paula, 2006).

It is the job of the management. No formulae or procedure can alter the fact that the last ingredient is management judgment. To achieve a good pricing system it is not enough to involve one product only. Further, it will require involvement of a line of products, the company as a whole and a management team committed to the progress of the company (Duru, 2011).

Pricing Constraints

In the marketing mix, price is definitely an important element. It is the price that creates sales revenue. In setting prices, the prospective seller attempts to optimize his returns. He juggles with volume, cost and price. But he cannot keep them all in the air at a time. If he raises his price, his volume will fall and vice versa. Similarly, the prospective buyer attempts to optimize his own profit but usually does not have total freedom to indicate both the volume he wishes to buy and the price he is prepared to pay. This process of adjustment is the basis of all pricing and can be observed in its simplest form in the produce market and the stock exchange market (Egbe, 2009).

Pricing cannot always be cost oriented, as it should take into consideration the demand intensity and customer physiology. Price varies for different product items and market segments. While fixing the price, the other element of marketing mix also should be taken into

consideration. Usually a price revision is necessary when market conditions change (Ode, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

Naive pricing theory

Naive price theory is grounded on the assumption that price will stay the same. The theory states that the only thing determining tomorrow's price is today's price. Naive price theory is a perfectly natural way of dealing with prices if you do not understand what determines them (Friedman 1990). The use of this theory is least plausible because prices change. Just as it makes very little sense to assume that as a baby grows older he/she remains the same size, it makes no more sense to assume that the market price of a good remains the same when you change its cost of production, its value to potential purchasers, or both. One must understand the causal relations involved. According to Friedman (1990), although the theory may have errors, the alternative to correct economic theory is not doing without theory (sometimes referred to as just using common sense) but the alternative to correct theory is incorrect theory.

Game pricing theory

According to Ezeudu (2005), it is a collection of tools for predicting outcomes of a group of interacting agents where an action of a single agent directly affects the payoff of other participating agents. It is the study of multi-person decision problems (Gibbons 1992). It could also be referred to as a bag of analytical tools designed to help us understand the phenomena that we observe when decision-makers interact (Osborne and Rubinstein 1994). Myerson (1997) defines it as the study of mathematical models of conflict and cooperation between intelligent rational decision makers. According to Diamantopoulos (1991), game theory studies interactive decision-making. There are two key assumptions underlying this theory:

- 1) Each player in the market acts on self-interest. They pursue well-defined exogenous objectives; i.e., they are rational. They understand and seek to maximize their own payoff functions.
- 2) In choosing a plan of action (strategy), a player considers the potential responses/reactions of other players. She takes into account her knowledge or expectations of other decision makers 'behavior; i.e., she reasons strategically. A game describes a strategic interaction between the players, where the outcome for each player depends upon the collective actions of all players involved (Bolton and Lemon 1999).

Arbitrage pricing theory

Contemporary, there are two theories of portfolio choices with reference to which risk diversification is more dominant i.e. Capital Assets Price Model (CAPM) and Arbitrage Price Theory (APT). The APT model states that the forecasted rate of return on assets depends on the unpredictable nature of macroeconomic variables which points out that factor risk takes more significance in assets pricing (Holbrook 1994). APT is comparatively a moderate diverse technique for analyzing the assets prices model. APT model assumes that the stock prices were influenced partially and uncorrelated with most of the macroeconomics variables and these variables are not multi-collinear with each other. APT defines that expected return on stock prices is composed on the capital gain plus the realization of risk premium (macroeconomics variables risk) during the course of time (Walter et al., 2011).

Consumer theory

Consumer theory is concerned with how a rational consumer would make consumption decisions (Martijn 2011). The consumer theory arises because the consumer's choice sets are assumed to be defined by certain prices and the consumer's income or wealth. There are certain assumptions for this theory. The assumptions as stated by Lichtenstein et al., (1993) can be seen below: The assumption of perfect information is built deeply into the formulation of this choice problem, just as it is in the underlying choice theory (Blythe 2005). Some alternative models treat the consumer as rational but uncertain about the products, for example how a particular food will taste or how well a cleaning product will perform. Some goods may be experience goods which the consumer can best learn about by trying the good. In that case, the consumer might want to buy some now and decide later whether to buy more. That situation would need a different formulation. Similarly, if the agent thinks that high price goods are more likely to perform in a satisfactory way that, too, would suggest quite a different formulation.

Empirical Literature Review

Price is the amount a customer pays for a product or the sum of the values that consumers exchange for the benefits of having or using a product or service (Bearden et al 2004). Price means different things to different people; it is interest to lenders, COT or service charged by the banker (lenders), premium to the insurer, fare to the transporter, honorarium to the guest lecturer etc, (Kotler et al 2008). According to Rosa et al (2011), the importance of price as a purchase stimulus has a key role in price management since not only does it determine the way prices are perceived and valued, but it also influences consumer purchase decisions (Rosa, 2001; Simon, 1989; Vanhuele and Dreze, 2002). Studies have shown price as an important factor in purchase decision, especially for frequently purchased products, affecting choices for store, product and brand (Rondan, 2004).

The greater the importance of price in purchases decisions, the greater the intensity of information and the greater the amount of comparisons between competing brands (Mazumdar and Monroe, 1990). Considering the nature of the consumer products (frequently purchased and consumed products, implying medium-low level of consumer-supplier interaction), the basic is, the customers who usually purchase are more frequently in contact with prices. Pricing strategy is paramount to every organization involved in the production of consumer goods and services because it gives a cue about the company and its products, a company does not set a single price but rather a pricing structure that covers different items in its line (Kotler et al, 2001). According to Hinterhuber (2008) pricing strategies vary considerably across industries, countries and customers and can be categorized into three groups: cost-based pricing, competition-based pricing, and customer value-based pricing. These will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Choosing a pricing objective and associated strategy is an important function of the business owner and an integral part of the business plan or planning process. It is more than simply calculating the cost of production and adding a markup (Roth 2007). Therefore, assigning product prices is a strategic activity and the price or prices assigned to a product or range of products will have an impact on the extent to which consumers view the firm's products and determine its subsequent purchase. However, it is less clear how pricing activities can be

guided by the marketing concept. Certainly, customers would prefer paying less, in fact, they would even prefer to pay nothing but it is simply not feasible to give products without price (Sagepub.com 2009). An organization that does that will run dry and out of business and would not be able to create value for the customers. Subsequently these constitute problems that have provided a purpose for this research and they will be discussed subsequently.

Etzel et al (1997) stressed that this is the highest level of price management; the basic laws of economics come into play. Changes in supply (plant closings, new competitors), demand (demographic shifts, emerging substitute products), and costs (new technologies) have very real effects on industry price levels. It is the broadest and most general level of price management. The objective is to determine the current and expected future state of key market place dynamics in order to establish pricing strategies and deal with other key strategic issues (Walter; et al., 2008). Managers who examine prices in this context must understand the pricing 'tone' of the market (Michael and Robert 1992). This is the overall direction of price pressure whether up or down and the critical marketplace variable fueling that pressure. This will help managers to predict and exploit broad price trends and foresee likely impact of actions on industry price levels.

Methodology

The survey research design will be adopted for this study. This involves the gathering of data from a sample size and generating the findings on the entire population. This method is considered appropriate for this study because it will help the researcher to discover relative incidences and distribution on the population.

The research population for this study consists of management staff of Rite Foods LTD, sale men, customers and employees of Rite Foods LTD estimate sixty (60) people out of which a random sampling technique was employees to select a sample size of thirty (30) respondents from the management staff. Ten (10) respondents from the salemen and (20) twenty responses from customers of Rite Foods LTD.

The instrument used use for the collective of data is self-designed structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was design in such a way that all the three categories of subject have option to answer all question. This will enable the researcher to find out more realistic solution to the question asked where the various opinion is collected. The justification of the instrument used is for clarification. So as to have accurate result for the research findings.

Available data would be presented using tables simply constructed in rows and columns. This would recidivate the presentation of the 5-points likert scale and enhance easy interpretation. Frequency counts and simple percentage would be used to determine the responses of the respondent used on personal data ask. Tables would be used to summarize the frequency. This statistical technique would be used because it facilitates accuracy and clarity or data analysis. Besides it is easy to use. However, the research question would be analyzed using the statistical means scores. The choice of the techniques is drawn from the fact that the statistical mean scores is the most appropriate statistical techniques used in analyzing a five likert questionnaire that would be adopted in this research.

Results and Discussions

Respondent characteristics

Table 1: Respondent Sex

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	60
Female	12	40
Total	30	100

The table shows respondent sex. The analysis indicates that 60% of the respondents are male while the remaining 40% are female.

Table 2: Respondent Education

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sch. Cert.	-	-
ND/NCE	30	66
First degree/HND	17	23
PGD/Masters	13	1
Others	-	-
Total	60	100

The analysis indicates that 66% of the respondent hold either National diploma or national certificate of education while 23% of another set of respondent hold first degree/Higher national Diploma and the remaining 1% of the respondent hold master's degree.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 3 mean scores on the effect of price policy on sales of consumer goods in Rite Foods LTD

S/N	Variables	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
1.	Price determine the demand of consumer goods	20 X 5 100	18 X 4 72	22 X 3 66	-	-	60 <u>238</u> 60	3.9	Accept
2.	Price is used as a strategy to gain competitive advantage	30	-	-	-	-	30	5.0	Accept
3.	Price determines the revenue and sales volume of consumer goods	20	10	14	1 0	6	60	3.5	Accepted

Table 3 displays the mean scores on the effect of price policy on sales of consumer goods the analysis shows that variable 1 and 2 had a mean scores of 3.9 and 5.0 respectfully. This

indicates that the respondents agree that price is used as a strategy to gain competitive advantage. Variable 3 had a mean of 3.5. This implies that the respondent agreed that price determines the revenue and sales volume of consumer goods.

Table 4: mean scores on the effect of price on the market share of Rite Foods ltd

S/N	Variables	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
4.	The pricing strategy of Rite Foods LTD has realized a sizable share of the market	50	10	-	-	-	30	4.8	Accept
5	The pricing strategy of Rite Foods LTD has gain competitive advantage which makes them control the market	20	10	30	-	-	60	3.8	Accept
6	Rite Foods LTD embark on price stabilization in other not create price war and maintain it market by following the price set by market leaders	-	-	30	10	20	60	2.2	rejected

Table 4 displays the mean scores on the effect of price on the market share of Rite Foods LTD. The analysis in this regard indicates that variable 4 and 5 had a mean scores of 4.8 and 3.8 respectively. This implies that the respondents agreed that the pricing strategy of Rite Foods LTD has realized a sizeable share and has gained competitive advantage which makes them to control the market to some extent. In contrast variable 6 has a mean of 2.2 this implies that the respondents disagreed that Rite Foods LTD embark on price stabilization in other not to create price war and maintain it market by following the price set by market leaders.

Table 5: Means scores on the various pricing strategies of Rite Foods LTD Nigeria committed

S/N	Variables	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
7.	Cost-plus pricing	-	-	-	-	60	60	1.0	Rejected
8.	Break-even pricing	-	-	30	10	20	60	2.2	Rejected
9.	Demand based perceived value pricing	20	10	20	10	-	60	3.6	Accepted
10.	Discrimination pricing	-	-	30	10	20	60	2.1	Rejected
11.	Average rate pricing	-	-	20	10	30	60	1.8	Rejected
12.	Bid-pricing	-	-	-	-	60	60	1.0	Rejected
13.	Psychologically pricing	24	10	6	20	-	60	4.0	Accepted
14.	Discount pricing	60	-	-	-	-	60	5.0	Accepted
15.	Competitive pricing	60	-	-	-	-	60	5.0	Accepted

Table 5 displays the analysis on the pricing strategies used by Rite Foods LTD as variable 7 and 8 has a mean of 1.0 and 2.2. This implies that the respondents disagree that cost plus pricing strategy as well as break-even pricing are strategy adopted by Rite Foods LTD in contrast variable 9 had a positive mean of 3.6. This implies that the respondent agreed that demand based perceived value pricing strategy is used in Rite Foods LTD

However, 10 and 11 and 12 had negative mean scores of 2.1, 1.8 and 1.0. This implies that Biggs do not use discriminatory pricing average rate pricing as well as bid-pricing strategy.

In contrast variable 13 had positive mean scores of 4.0. This implies that the respondents agreed that Rite Foods LTD uses psychological pricing as one of their pricing strategy. Similarly, variable 14 had a mean scores of 5.0 and 15 also had a mean score of 5.0. This implies that the respondents agreed that Rite Foods LTD uses competitive pricing strategy as well as discount pricing as it pricing policies.

Table 7: Effect of mean scores on the effect of change in price on consumer goods in Rite Foods Ltd

S/No	Variables	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
16.	Change in price down ward enhances high demand	60	-	-	-	-	60	5.0	Accept
17	Change in price upward reduces demand	60	-	-	-	-	60	5.0	Accept
18	Price reduction enhances sales volume and quick turnover	20	10	16	14	-	60	3.6	Accepted
19	Price increase facilitate increase in supply a several as revenue generation	14	20	20	6	-	60	3.6	Accepted

The table displays the analysis on the effect of change in price on consumer goods in Rite Foods LTD the analysis shows that variable 15 and 16 had a mean scores of 5.0 respectively. This indicates that the respondents agreed that change in price downward enhances high demand while upward reduces demand.

Variable 18 and 19 also had a mean scores of 3.6 respectively. This implied that the respondent agreed that price reduction enhances sales volume and quick turnover and price reduction facilitate increase in supply as well as revenue generation.

Summary of findings

The analysis shows that following findings:

1. Price determines the demand of consumer goods and is also used as a strategy to gain competitive advantage. Price equally determines the revenue and sales volumes of consumer goods.
2. Price affect the market share of Rite Foods LTD because the pricing strategy of has realized a sizeable share of the market and has gain competitive advantage which makes than to control the market of confectionary and fast food to a large extent.
3. The pricing strategy used by Rite Foods LTD are basically demand bases value pricing, psychological pricing as well as discount pricing and competitive pricing.
4. Change in price downward enhance high demand of Rite Foods LTD products while downward reduces demand. As such price quick turnover and price increase facilitate increase in supply as well as revenue generation.

Discussion of findings

The finding indicates that price determines the demand of consumer goods and is also used as a strategy to gain competitive advantage. Price equally determines the revenue and sales volumes of consumer goods. This finding provide answer to the first research question: What are the effects of price? Price affect the market share of Rite Foods LTD because the pricing strategy of has realized a sizeable share of the market and has gain competitive advantage which makes than to control the market of confectionary and fast food to a large extent. This finding provide answer to the second research questions: How does change in price affect the market share of Rite Foods LTD?

The pricing strategy used by Rite Foods LTD are basically demand bases value pricing, psychological pricing as well as discount pricing and competitive pricing. This finding provides answer to third research question: What are the various price strategies used by Rite Foods LTD?

Change in price downward enhance high demand of Rite Foods LTD products while downward reduces demand. As such price quick turnover and price increase facilitate increase in supply as well as revenue generation. This finding provides answer to the fourth research question: What are the effects of change in price on the sales of consumer products of Rite Foods LTD?

Conclusion

Price is an important tool in marketing as price change in any direction affects both the demand and supply of such product. change in price of consumer good down ward facilitate more purchases as such increases demand while upward reduces purchase as such reduce demand. This because is most consumer goods have close substitute which can easily lead to defection of consumer from one product to another. Hence the pricing policy of Rite Foods LTD has been demand based and competitive pricing which has facilitate high sales volume and profitability which has help in no small ways to actualize the organizational goals and objectives

The following recommendations are made base on the research findings so as to facilitate the possibility of gaining competitive advantage through effective pricing policies.

1. The management of Rite Foods LTD most always ensure that the pattern of their pricing most be in accordance to what their customer can afford. This will always give them a competitive edge over other competitors.
2. Discount should be given to customer from time to time. This will attract more purchase and consequently increase their sale volume as well as profit.
3. In pricing formulation, the issues of minimum wage has to be taken into cognizance in fixing price of consumer good to enhance high patronage and avoid defection from the products of Rite Foods LTD to other close substituted.
4. Management should ensure that price reflect quality so that customer will have a good Value for money spent. This will enhance patronage in no small way.
5. Price must be consistent with the company pricing policies as such Rite Foods LTD should set up a pricing unit under the marketing department to develop polices and establish or approve decisions concerning price change. This will help to maintain price that are reasonable to customers and profitable to the company.
6. Management of Rite Foods LTD must also consider the reaction of its customers to their price. This can be obtain through feedback from sales men.

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