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Conference Paper

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Provided in Cooperation with:

The Research Institute for Agriculture Economy and Rural Development (ICEADR), Bucharest

Suggested Citation: Cofas, Elena (2018) : Applying the marketing mix to the analysis of the barley market in the European context, In: Agrarian Economy and Rural Development - Realities and Perspectives for Romania. 9th Edition of the International Symposium, November 2018, Bucharest, The Research Institute for Agricultural Economy and Rural Development (ICEADR), Bucharest, pp. 230-238

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/205113>

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APPLYING THE MARKETING MIX TO THE ANALYSIS OF THE BARLEY MARKET IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

COFAS ELENA¹

Abstract: *Barley is a plant cultivated as an herbage plant, which has therapeutic qualities, being relatively well represented in all the Romanian culture areas where it finds appropriate culture conditions. The fact that there are autumn and spring forms may be the reason why this species occupies an important place in the farmer's crop decision, especially when the market offers a price and a guarantee of purchase since the establishment of crops. Occupying almost 5% of the arable land (about 440.4 thousand ha of barley versus 9.3 million hectares of arable land), barley is associated with wheat in cereal-based farms because it does not have any particular fundamental technological requirements. Because of the attractive price, barley can successfully replace wheat. The specific development of marketing activity in agricultural holdings requires changing the way the cereal market is analyzed, from the traditional approach - by analyzing market demand and supply - to a modern approach - by analyzing the marketing mix. This research aimed at analyzing the barley culture market through the mix of marketing, which led to the analysis of all the characteristic elements (product, price, placement, promotion) - practically an analysis both in terms of cultivated surfaces, production and price of culture barley, and marketing tools whose implementation determines the evolution of products and market prices. The results of the research of the marketing mix elements on the barley market and its products have shown positive aspects of the development of this market, as the economic importance of barley crops is lower compared to wheat, corn, rice or rye.*

Keywords: *barley, analyze, market, price, marketing mix*

JEL Classification: *O12, P50, Q18, Q57*

INTRODUCTION

Romania is one of the European countries with the most favorable pedo-climatic conditions for obtaining quality grain crops in significant quantities, which can cover an important segment of the domestic demand for agri-food products. The barley is a plant cultivated both as a fodder and brassica plant, being relatively well represented in all the Romanian culture areas, where they find suitable culture conditions. The fact that there are autumn and spring forms can be the reason why these two species of this type occupy an important place in the farmer's crop decision, especially when the market offers a price and a guarantee of purchase since the establishment of the crops.

Marketing of agricultural products involves identifying the needs of consumers of any kind and age, making a profit by satisfying these needs and maintaining these consumers for a long time. One of the most common definitions of marketing answers 4 questions:

1. What do we sell? - referring to issues related to the subject of the activity of a household / farms - what is the product we produce for sale?
2. How much do we sell? - referring to the calculation of a price we ask our consumer for the product we are destined for;
3. Where and where we sell? - before going to production, we think of who (people, what kind of people are potentially interested in what we produce and where and how we find them, issues related to distribution's logistics or direct sales);
4. How do we sell? - product presentation is perhaps as important as production, being the "first impression" we draw on consumers - including packaging, labeling and certification.

The cumulative responses define "4P" marketing - a concept that has been developed to describe the right combination for a particular set of circumstances, of the four key elements that constitute (Wilmshurst J., Mackay A): product, price level, promotional activity and product distribution.

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

The paper seeks a dual analysis, both in terms of production and areas cultivated with barley, as well as in terms of marketing tools whose implementation determines the evolution of products in the market. As a means, a set of controllable and measurable variables was used, and as a method of study, the marketing mix method (in particular the 4P method) was used to detail marketing strategies and influence the market in order to ensure maximum efficiency at the right time. In fact, they are essential tools of the marketing mix and are used successfully both in theory and in practice.

The elements of the marketing mix - product, price, promotion, placement (distribution or placement of the product) - can be analyzed in different directions for each element.

→ The product - it can analyze the assortment, quality, brand, packaging, services, etc.

→ The price - you can analyze the price level, the price composition, the commercial additions, discounts, credit conditions, etc.

→ Promotion - we can analyze the promotion tools, communication channels with the market, etc.

→ Placement - for this, you can analyze distribution channels, pipeline, transport, handling, storage, etc.

The information was supplemented by documents, articles and studies published in specialized magazines and in the analysis of the general situation for production / cultivated surfaces / prices were used the statistical data provided by Eurostat, the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Barley, like wheat, has a long history, being cultivated by people from ancient times. The barley culture has a wide spread and is due to both varied forms in the crop and to the vegetation period. For the human body, barley offers a wide range of nutrients: vitamins (vitamins E, C, B vitamins B1, B2, B6, B12), minerals (selenium, manganese, calcium, iron, magnesium, molybdenum, copper), food fibers, bioflavonoids, polysaccharides and polypeptides. Barley is used in the human's food in the form of egg and coffee surrogate, even in other areas where wheat is cultivated, respectively as a raw material in the beer industry. It is also used in animal feed, the feed value of barley beans being comparable to that of corn grains, even higher because of the higher protein content. From a chemical point of view, barley grains do not differ too much from grains of other cereals, but contain a higher amount of cellulose, namely a lower amount of fat than corn and oats, and gluten is present in a very small amount, characteristic which determines a poor palatability of the flour (Bilteanu Gh.). The chemical composition of the bean is influenced by the genetic factors, the form of culture (autumn or spring), the pedoclimatic conditions and the applied technology.

Table 1. Chemical components of barley and barley straw

Specification	Average values (%) la:	
	beans	straw
Water	13,92	13,15
Crude protein	10,53	2,87
Crude fat	2,08	1,40
Unassembled extractive substances	66,18	39,94
- of which starch	55,16	-
Cellulose	4,85	38,65
Ash	2,78	4,45

Source: I. Borcean și colab, Tehnologia culturilor de câmp, Ed. Agroprint, Timișoara, 1997

In 2017, Romania ranked as the 1st in the European Union in maize and sunflower production, respectively 4th in wheat and rape and 3rd in soybeans. These cultures led to a faster growth of agriculture in GDP last year, but especially to the increase in the value of agriculture, crucial to the food security of the population. Although the first half of 2018 was one of the most difficult periods in terms of weather, the yields obtained from grain cereals have exceeded expectations. In most counties, the crop of grain cereals has increased since 2017, registering a new historic high in the country. This was primarily due to timely subsidies and respect for modern culture technologies. If, in 2017, the average yield per hectare for barley crops was 4.731 Kg / ha, the average production per hectare was 5.204 kg / ha in the 2018 campaign, with the highest average yield per hectare being obtained in the counties: Constanta, Ialomita, Bihor, Braila, Arad, Timis, Calarasi, Mehedinti, Dolj and Ilfov. These 10 counties made 860,000 tons of barley crop, accounting for 61% of country production.

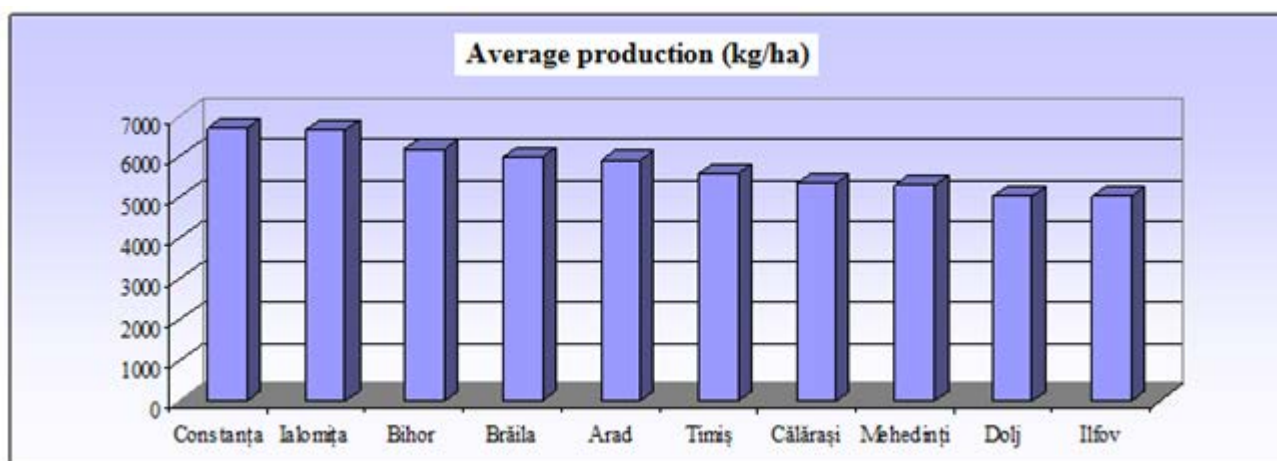


Fig. 1. Average barley crop production in 2018 (source: www.gazetadeagricultura.info)

Even before the harvest campaign was launched, agricultural producers were interested in the evolution of the price so that they would know what the barley production would be: in the storage areas or immediately sold out of the cereal purchasers. Thus, this paper proposed to approach the criteria for the development of the grain-producing holdings through the analysis of the activity from the point of view of the marketing mix, respectively the implementation of the specific marketing tools. 11 years after the European integration of Romania, this paper also comes as an analysis of the impact of this on the different agricultural and agri-food products.

The development of the concept of "marketing mix" can be considered one of the dominant ideas in the practice and theory of modern marketing. To build an appropriate and efficient marketing mix, companies need to consider the following (Iuhos I. C., Bal C.):

→ Never act on the market and on the environment by means of a single way or instrument, but with a multitude of means and tools that, in fact, constitute the components or elements of the marketing mix;

→ The degree of integration of the means, methods and tools that have been used must be high. Using them in an isolated way, without a relationship of interdependence, reduces the efficiency of the mix;

→ The allocation of resources and investments will take into account the specificity, size and power of the firm and will focus on the fair and judicious distribution of all marketing mix elements. Only with a judicious allocation of resources (material, financial and human) on each element of the marketing mix, firms can avoid excessive consumption of resources.

In general, the term "marketing mix" refers to the four main elements or dimensions around which marketing activity focuses, namely (Kotler P.): product, price, promotion, placement. The marketing mix defines a set of tactical and strategically controllable tools, grouped or focused around at least 4 important aspects of marketing (the 4P), which they combine in a specific dosage

depending on the conditions specific markets, with a view to producing a positive reaction on the markets for the demand for its products.

In the following, we will analyze the elements of the mix-marketing complex for the barley crop market and the development trends of this market, an analysis that can be useful in developing a strategy for the efficient development of marketing activity on agricultural holdings, in forecasting prices and in making the right decisions for having profit.

1. The product

Generally, a product is anything that can be offered on a market to meet a need or desire. To this end, we studied and evaluated the products of the barley market, the problems of the products on the market and the trends of product development on the market and we analyzed the variation of the official statistical data for the barley culture between 2000-2015 separately, on two intervals: 2000-2006 (pre-accession period in the EU) and 2007-2015 (post-accession period in the EU), comparing statistically the significance of recorded average values. Occupying almost 5% of the arable land (about 440.4 thousand ha of barley versus 9.3 million hectares of arable land), barley is associated with wheat in cereal-based farms because it does not have any particular fundamental technological requirements.

Also because of the attractive price, barley can successfully replace wheat, especially in the spring, when wheat and barley crops are compromised.

Table 2. Dynamics of barley surfaces and productions in Romania - pre-accession EU

Specifications	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Surface (thousand ha)	528,80	549,73	317,23	412,00	471,63	326,41
Average production (kg/ ha)	2.988	2.111	1.705	3.413	2.288	2.215
Total production (thousand to)	1580,04	1160,38	540,80	1405,99	1079,14	722,92

Source: Statistical data F.A.O.

Table 3. Dynamics of barley areas and productions in Romania - post-accession EU

Specifications	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Surface (thousand ha)	363,8	394,0	517,5	515,8	419,5	424,2	495,7	516	462,0	487
Average production (kg/ ha)	1461	3069	2284	2542	3170	2325	3250,5	3319	3424	3726
Total production (thousand to)	531,4	1209,4	1182,1	1311,0	1329,7	986,4	1542,2	1712,5	1582	1815

Source: 2007 - 2015 - INS data - Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2016 - INS data - Plant production

- Evolution of cultivated areas

In 2000-2006 (pre-adhesion), barley was grown on average on 440-450 thousand hectares, with a multiannual variation of about 22%, which is statistically considered to be a large variation to very high. The tendency of the crop system expressed by the difference between the average value and the median value of the variation function indicates that the areas occupied with barley tended to decrease. In 2007-2015 (post-accession), the average occupied area was 443.6 thousand ha, without the recorded decrease (2.288 thousand ha) being statistically significant. However, it is worth noting the annual variation of the areas, which decreased relatively significantly, the 12% / for 2007-2015 qualifying as average variations.

This suggests that after accession a system of agricultural farms specialized in barley culture has crystallized, which, on a yearly basis, establishes culture on the same surfaces. It can be appreciated that the barley market has evolved towards a constant multiannual demand, which implies the conclusion that, with regard to the areas occupied, EU accession has given some predictability. As we can see, the tendency manifested in the last years of the interval is the decrease of the occupied areas (about 5%).

- Evolution of total barley production

Total production increased from 1101.7 million t / 2000-2006 to 1209.9 million t / 2007-2015, but the difference of about 108.2 thousand tons could be remembered as significant. Because the surface variability was relatively large, we can assume that at least part of the annual variability of total output (32.6%) is due to environmental factors. The growth trend of total production recorded in the pre-accession period was maintained after post-accession.

The relationship between the decrease of the cultivated area and the increase of the total production determined in 2000-2007 has also been maintained in insignificant limits, suggesting an increase in the efficiency of the crop amid the increase of the production at the surface unit, in other words, the barley culture has a slight tendency of intensification. Analyzing the degree of intensification of barley culture through the relationship between the surface and the total production, we find that in the period 2000-2007 the relationship is positive, of an extensive type, while in the period 2007-2015 the increase of the total production is in a reverse relation proportionality, suggesting that there has been a turnaround of the production system towards the relatively intensive nature, with the not very significant differences.

- Evolution of the average barley production

Average production increased by 186 kg / ha (2,505 kg / 2000-2006 and 2,691 kg / 2007-2015). This increase is insufficient to be statistically ensured because of the large multiannual variability of 26.1% (over a quarter of the average), which supports the extensive nature of the culture system, despite intensification tendencies. The decline in multiannual variability after adherence is insignificant (0.5%), suggesting that the variation in average yields could be due, in particular, to variations in environmental conditions. Concerning the farmer's decision expressed through the relationship between the sown area and the average production achieved, the post-accession system's mutations are relatively discreet. Relationships are small, of inverse proportionality, suggesting the same intensification trend, with an insignificant annual rate, the difference being in the probability range below 10%.

2. The price

In the broad sense, the price is the sum of all the values that consumers offer in return for the benefit of having or using the product / service in question. Pricing a product is a strategic decision that must be consistent with the choice of other marketing mix variables (Dubois P.L., Jolibert A.). The profit margin, demand and supply, marketing costs and many other factors must be taken into account when deciding the price. In order to elaborate the strategy for the development of the marketing activity on the agricultural holdings it is necessary to identify the tendencies of price evolution, as well as solutions to the problems that arise on the grain market in general. Prices for cereal products are usually established in correlation with: demand for and supply of agricultural products, competitors on the cereals market, grain competitiveness and state regulation of procurement policy, respectively to grant subsidies and endowments.

Table 4. Data on the average purchase price on the domestic market (lei / kg) for barley

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
0,59	0,67	0,44	0,41	0,73	0,86	0,79	0,62	0,66

Source: 2007 - 2015 - INS data - Romanian Statistical Yearbook

Barley price dynamics suggests a constant oscillation in the period under review, but prices have also oscillated in the pre-accession period. The reasons for this decrease or increase are many and varied. Factors that affect one degree or another may be the following:

a. Production: the more accurate are the forecasts of the harvest, the more stable are the prices. The most impact on the grain prices has the performance indicators: the results obtained at the last harvest and the expected ones, the size of the cultivated areas, the harvest forecasts, the carry-over stocks and the harvesting terms. Reaching out of the sown areas, farmers count on a particular crop. On the basis of estimates, the state makes forecasts for internal and external consumption, but farmers correct their forecasts depending on weather, soil and other conditions - for example, if the size of cultivated areas is below the level of the previous year then the offer will

be weaker, prices will rise and vice versa. While farmers are waiting for a new harvest, the grain remains in the warehouses of the last crop, and the reserve's volume leads to lower prices. Otherwise, prices may also be increased if farmers harvest later than the set deadline.

b. Climatic factors. Climate instability is one of the main causes of unstable crops and presents an inherent risk to agriculture. Frequent natural disasters such as droughts, late spring frosts, hail and floods have a devastating impact on crops. In addition, soil can lose its natural fertility and needs rehabilitation.

c. Economic factors - each country influences prices in its own way. The economic factors include: the volume of cereal exports and imports, the balance between supply and demand, the market situation and the economic situation in the importing countries. It is important to know in what economic phase the cereal market is. Depending on the phase - soar, peak or recession - future price increases or decreases can be predicted. In addition, account must be taken of the economic phase in the importing and exporting countries, which determines the volume of production and purchasing power.

d. Situation in adjacent markets: the financial crisis stimulates the cereal market. - There is a close link between the financial and the commodity markets. If the financial market shakes, investors opt for goods and in this case, grain prices are rising. The reverse situation leads to lower prices.

e. Policy - The tense situation inside the country negatively influences the purchasing power

f. Speculation - there are investors who decide to invest in the markets, speculating with prices. When they sell financial instruments for agricultural crops, prices fall, and when they buy them price grow. The volume of exchanges on stock exchanges has long exceeded the real volume of grain sales and purchases in the physical markets.

Table 5. Situation of intra- and extra-Community trade in barley

	Cant_IMP (to)	Val_IMP (mii euro)	Cant_EXP (to)	Val_EXP (mii euro)
2007	46.104,7	10.176,2	139.808,1	26.507,4
2008	187.448,9	32.804,4	645.056,3	110.263,5
2009	47.209,9	5.199,3	543.310,9	60.176,8
2010	90.878,3	14.312,5	771.877,6	94.920,8
2011	186.770,1	34.530,6	763.540,5	145.411,2
2012	138.004,3	32.137,3	688.074,6	154.026,3
2013	222.758,0	44.438,3	1.132.937,1	223.593,6
2014	110.090,9	17.181,0	1.374.770,7	228.017,8
2015	533.792,2	83.097,2	1.763.164,3	299.095,3
2016	480.421,0	70.305,2	1.310.986,4	191.836,6
2017*	58.168,4	8.441,2	129.808,0	21.684,6

Data source: INS - EUROSTAT (* January - April)

The general mechanism for the functioning of the agricultural markets in the European Union is based on a complex system of regulating the prices of products. Thus, three price levels are established annually for products covered by the CAP:

→ *Indicative price* - is the price at which agricultural products are marketed on the domestic market. Its level is considered appropriate to ensure a "reasonable" standard of farmer income.

→ *The intervention price* - is the guaranteed minimum price that can be obtained for domestically marketed production. When the cereal's prices reach the minimum level (when the supply is in excess of demand), the Community intervenes by purchasing and storing the product concerned, not allowing the fall in market price below the intervention price and ensuring that farmers receive minimum incomes. In the case of cereals, and therefore of barley, the level of the intervention price is increased each month to cover the costs caused by the storage of production by farmers in the harvest and marketing period. The monthly increase in the intervention price is

designed to avoid placing the entire harvest on the market, and farmers are thus encouraged to gradually market their production in smaller installments.

→ *The price threshold* - is the price below which imports of agricultural products can not enter the EU. The reason is that, after adding specific transport and marketing costs throughout the Community, the consumer price of the imported products will be higher than domestic product prices. The threshold price level is obtained by applying customs duties at the world price level.

3. Promotion

Promotion refers to the ways we can find to bring our product to the target audience and to differentiate it from competition. Promotion takes place in two main directions:

➤ *Product promotion* - through all the means and methods used in the orientation and information of the potential customers about new or improved products, starting with the idea of a new product and its launch on the market, to develop a positive attitude towards the product.

➤ *Sales promotion* - through all the actions and means of capturing the attention of potential buyers, by sales outlets, in order to boost sales.

It is made by several types of actions, called promotional means or forms, such as: advertising, direct promotion, public relations, merchandising, sales promotion, other actions. Promoting is not, however, a stand-alone tool, but rather a combination of such elements - a promotion mix. The aim and objectives of promoting agri-food products are:

- ✓ increasing sales and persuading consumers,
- ✓ increase market position,
- ✓ creating a positive image of the product,
- ✓ creating a favorable climate for future sales,
- ✓ educating and informing the market.

The advertising campaign is designed to increase sales volume and attract customers by: advertising message (press, radio, TV etc.), brochure, catalog, flyer, banner, etc. The essence of advertising is to offer the right product to the customer with the right argument. Selling through personal effort consists of: choosing customers; in approaching customers; attracting attention; awakening interest; presenting and demonstrating the use of the product, overcoming objections; concluding the transaction and assuring the client about the fairness of its decision and choice.

Public relations creates a climate of trust among potential customers, using internal and external communications, the Internet, lobbying, and marketing consulting. The special promotional methods that are aimed at the immediate increase of sales are: participation in fairs and exhibitions, visits to customers, sales with offers, etc.

4. The placement (Distribution)

Placement is the component of the marketing mix that refers to the places where customers can find the product, but also how they come into contact with it. The manufacturer, intermediaries (if any) and the consumer make up a distribution channel (Coughlin A., Anderson E., Stern L., Ek-Ansary A.). A key role in setting the price fulfills the company's supply chain. Stages of the complex chain of final food products or product groups are:

- production of agricultural raw materials in different forms and types of agricultural, family or associative units;
- purchases of raw materials, transport, storage, inventory formation system;
- product processing;
- internal trade: en gross and in detail;
- foreign trade.

Distribution is interposed between production and consumption by: act of selling, buying, transporting, storing, conditioning and delivering products. Channels of distribution include all companies that participate in sales-purchase acts when transferring a product from the manufacturer to the destination. Classification of distribution channels:

- ✓ short channel (producer-consumer);
- ✓ medium channel (producer-intermediate-consumer);

- ✓ long channel (producer - wholesaler - retailer - consumer).

Intermediaries are wholesalers and retailers who interfere between the consumers and the manufactures. As types of intermediaries on the grain market we meet those who work in the name and on behalf of others (brokers, agents, agents), those who work on their behalf and on the account of others (commissioners) and those who work on their behalf, and on their own (wholesale companies, en-detail companies, specialized firms, cooperative organizations).

CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of the barley market, it can be said that during the ten years of Community agricultural policy applied in Romania, the barley production system did not undergo significant mutations, the reductions of the cultivated areas and the production increases being statistically uninsured, which makes the detected tendency to intensify uncertain, repetitive and reproducible. Serious aggravations (especially in the area of trade in agricultural products) produced by the transition to a market economy had a negative impact on barley crop production and grain crops in general. Although plant productivity has declined, the production volume has, however, been maintained, at least at the outset, by the substantial expansion of cultivated areas. This is explained by the fact that cereals have remained an attractive alternative for larger producers with limited access to credit resources. One possible explanation would be that the producers in question do not require large amounts of cash until harvest, and the cereal crops can be grown on large areas, which provide sufficient income and provide the opportunity to cover the actual investment.

Marketing of agricultural products involves identifying the needs of consumers of any kind and age, making a profit by satisfying these needs and maintaining these consumers for a long time. Marketing includes all the activities and services involved in the transfer of a product from the point of production (farm or farm administration) to the consumer. This is a valuable sector linking the consumer's agricultural producer. Specifically, marketing activities refer to the selection of the distribution channel, business decisions (investments, purchases, etc.), how and how it will be produced (such as conventional, organic, bio-dynamic or a combination of these) and business, advertising, promotions, price strategy etc.

In order to achieve profit, the marketing activity must begin even before sowing the harvest. Farmers must provide:

- ✓ products that consumers want,
- ✓ in the right form (fresh, dried, processed etc.)
- ✓ at the right time of the year,
- ✓ in the right quantities,
- ✓ to the quality and packaging required,
- ✓ in the right place,
- ✓ at the price that consumers are willing to pay.

Practically, the 4 P - product, price, promotion and placement - helps focus on the 4 most important aspects of selling a product and prove to be useful in several circumstances such as:

- in marketing strategy planning: when we make our marketing strategy and business plan, the 4 P help us structure ourselves so that we can identify the risks and opportunities.
- in market monitoring: once we have chosen our product and marketing strategy, we can monitor market changes by checking how the product, price, promotion, or sales position changes over time.

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