Ценовая политика: проблемы и решения

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Аннотация

Актуальность статьи заключается в том, что в этой статье рассматривается термин «ценовая политика» с макроэкономической точки зрения и способы решения проблем в этой области экономики. Также доказано, что ценовая политика имеет большое значение для дальнейшего развития компании.

Ключевые слова: ценовая политика, риск, традиционный способ ценообразования, гибкий способ ценообразования.

Pricing policy: problems and solutions

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Annotation

In this article examined the term “pricing policy” from macroeconomic point of view and the ways of solving problems in this area of the economy are translated. It is also proved that pricing policy is of great importance for the further development of the company.

Key words: pricing policy, risk, traditional way of pricing, flexible way of pricing.

One of the important moments of vital activity of a production enterprise is the issue of pricing for goods, work or services of own production.

It would seem that there is nothing easier than to calculate their costs, distribute them to the output produced, add a surcharge, i.e. the desired profit and, as the saying goes "Case in the Hat" - the price is formed. Although, as practice shows, it is also not an easy task to correctly calculate and distribute costs between produced products, but this article deliberately does not concern this topic, but sets itself the task of showing that the "traditional" pricing method is not always acceptable for making managerial decisions, besides it is sometimes dangerous for the competitive work of the enterprise.

At the heart of the normal life of a commercial organization is profit, and profit, as you know, is nothing more than the excess of revenue over costs. Therefore, the calculation of the cost of production is the starting point in the question of pricing.

In the beginning we will consider the cost-oriented "traditional" way of pricing in the form of "Costs plus".

Judging by the name "Costs plus", one can guess that this method is based on the calculation of the cost of production, and adding to the calculated cost a certain percentage of profit, management will always be sure that if the sales volume exceeds the "breakeven point", the amount of revenue will cover costs. But the question immediately arises: what is the cost price to take for calculation?

If to calculate the price to take the cost, formed only on the basis of variable costs, then there is a danger that the selected margin level will not always be able to cover the constant costs, which in turn will lead to losses.

If the full production cost is taken to calculate the price, the mark-up should not only ensure the required level of profitability, but also cover non-production costs [1].

If the management wants to see the real profit per unit of output, then to calculate the price it is necessary to take the full cost price, its value should be calculated as the total production cost, increased by non-production costs.

Due to its simplicity, the "Traditional" pricing method has become widespread in enterprises not only in Russia but also abroad. The issue of pricing in an enterprise has to be dealt with mainly by the planning and economic departments at large enterprises or economists in small and medium-sized enterprises. And if in large enterprises the calculation of prime cost is a well-established algorithm of actions that has sometimes come down from post-Soviet times, thanks to sectoral regulations and normative acts, then in the middle and small enterprises the costing is mostly spontaneous. Most computer programs declaring the possibility of costing do not meet the requirements of management accounting.

The application of the "Traditional" pricing method causes difficulties associated with the adoption of management decisions, for example, when considering the possibility of placing an additional order. There are cases when the price for products can be set at a level barely covering variable costs. Suppose that your company, with the available volume of production covering the "breakeven point", received an additional order for products, at prices slightly above your variable costs. Taking into account that this order will in no way affect your fixed costs, and therefore will not necessitate additional allocation of overhead costs for this order, it should be concluded that the execution of this order will bring us a profit equal to the difference in the cost of this order and variable costs for its implementation. Of course, there are also negative aspects of the fulfillment of such an order, for example, if other customers learn about the special price, it would be logical for them to establish the same prices for themselves. In addition, the buyer, once received the goods at lower prices, will also be against the price increase. Therefore, before taking on the implementation of such an order, it is worth comparing the benefits that promise the execution of an order and the costs associated with it. Unfortunately, mainly because of the cost accounting methods adopted at the enterprise that do not provide for the division of costs in relation to the volume into variables and constants, they reject the possibility of fulfilling the order already at the first stage, since the cost of goods contains both variables and fixed costs, and therefore above the proposed price [2].

Under the "Traditional" pricing method, the price of sales of products always depends on the cost structure. If a significant share in the cost structure is occupied by fixed costs, and the demand for products falls, i.e. the specific constant costs per unit of output are increasing, and with it the total production cost, and following the logic of the "Traditional" pricing, the firm needs to increase the price for the products produced. Raising the price of the product, we can only expect a further drop in consumer demand. And in turn, with increasing demand for products, the unit fixed costs per unit of production will decrease, the cost price will decrease, and so the price should fall. Perhaps during the growth of demand it would be more reasonable to keep the price at the same level, and thereby increase the profitability of sales, but the "traditional" pricing method does not allow to calculate the optimal price at which the enterprise's profit will be maximized.

An alternative to the "Traditional" way of pricing is the "Flexible" pricing methods. The essence of the "Flexible" pricing methods boils down to the fact that the company first of all determines the market share that it wants to seize, and then the price that will allow it to be achieved. Without a doubt, it is not easy to do this, and without serious marketing research is indispensable.

At most Russian enterprises, according to the organizational structure, there are marketing departments and services, but the duties and functions that lie on them do not meet the basic requirements, and are sometimes limited to the simple sale of products. This is due to the lack of clearly defined goals and objectives of the management of marketing services, and as a consequence with the inability to determine the results of their work.

"Flexible" methods of pricing are presented quite differently. In Japan, the method of target calculating, which allows to overcome the problems of cost-oriented pricing, is widely used [3].

Having determined the market share and the price that will allow this share to be achieved, the desired profit should be deducted, so we get the target cost price. If the target cost price turned out to be lower than the planned cost price, or actually existing at the moment, the firm should find ways to reduce it to the target without sacrificing quality. Usually this is done by analyzing the functional properties of the goods, dividing them into basic and secondary and, if possible, leaving only the basic ones. A good example of such a target costing is the production and sale of computers or household appliances. When a company enters the market with products that have a different set of functional properties and are designed for different consumer wallets.

When determining the market share and the price that will allow to take this share, it is necessary to clearly represent at what phase of the life cycle your product is located. In economic literature, it is customary to single out four phases of the product life cycle.

1. Implementation phase - usually this phase coincides with a period of significant capital, mainly related to the purchase of equipment, research and preparatory work. Therefore, the firm in this phase may be torn between two pricing approaches. First, the desire to seize the market with the help of the price strategy of "penetration" in order to ensure that the volume of sales will recoup the initial costs. Secondly, the firm may prefer a "cream-skimming" strategy, which assumes that the establishment of an initially high price, and then its subsequent reduction, will get the maximum profit.

2. The phase of growth - at this stage, the volume of production and sales is increasing, and as in modern enterprises a significant share of expenses is occupied by fixed costs, then at this phase of the product's life cycle, the price usually decreases.

3. The maturity phase is the most profitable stage, since at this stage the market share is won and relatively stable, as well as production technology and supply and marketing channels. At this stage, in order to win in a competitive struggle, a firm can reduce product prices, or increase functional properties without changing the price.

4. The phase of decline - the stage of falling sales and, as a consequence, an increase in cost, and with it the fall in prices in order to keep consumer demand.

Thanks to scientific and technical progress, the significance of the life cycle in the process of pricing is becoming more pronounced. Therefore, there was a method of calculating the cost of the phases of the life cycle of goods. This approach allows us to take a position that is more clearly oriented to the market and strategic goals and focus more on the relationship between costs, prices, goods and the market, and not just on the dynamics of costs.

In the process of pricing, it is necessary to clearly represent the relationship between the volume of demand and the price of the commodity, i.e. price elasticity of demand. The cost-oriented model does not take into account this dependence and therefore ignores the existence of such a price and demand at which the maximum profit from sales is achieved. To conduct such an analysis, market research is used to determine the dependence of demand on price changes. This method is not devoid of subjective judgments. Therefore, there is some error in its use. In addition, for simplicity of analysis, a linear cost function is usually assumed, i. E. the total fixed costs and specific variable costs for any production volume remain unchanged, and also assume that price is the only factor determining the volume of demand, whereas there can be quite a lot of such factors.

I would also like to note that when speaking about the elasticity at the price of a particular product, an analysis should be made of the nature of the elasticity. In other words, it is necessary to analyze what effect the price change has on the volume of consumer demand. They say that the goods are elastic at a price, if the price change causes a much greater change in demand and the commodity is not elastic at a price, if the price change causes a slight change in demand [4].

In addition to the listed methods of pricing, there is also assortment pricing, when the producer is engaged in the production of complementary or substitute products. Prices for such types of goods are formed not with the cost of specific goods, but the entire commodity group, and the price for some types of goods can be set below the cost, but taking into account that the proceeds from the sale of other assortment products will cover not only the loss, but and will allow you to profit in general for the entire assortment group.

The advantages of "Flexible" pricing methods in comparison with "Traditional" follow from the difference in approaches:

First, the "Flexible" method is oriented strictly to the market. It relies on marketing research, collecting and evaluating competitors and consumers. The "traditional" method is cost-oriented and as shown above, it is not always optimal for the competitive work of a firm.

Secondly, the "Flexible" method allows you to create a cost control tool. Defining the maximum allowable cost limit, the firm, in case of revealing a discrepancy between the target cost price and actual, has the opportunity to conduct an analysis and find ways to reduce the actual cost price.

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