

### **DT Task 3**

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Investigate the work of two different consumer organisations. Compare their roles and the range of products they evaluate. For each organisation explain how their product reviews:

- Help or hinder product manufacturers
- Guide consumer choice

#### **Standards Organisations**

Standard organisations set standards which products must meet before they can be sold. The products will be tested and will be made sure that they meet all quality standards. The manufacturers of the product need to meet all standards, they need to fulfil all the needs of the customer. For Example a mobile phone must function correctly all the time and must meet all standards expected of it by the person using it. If a product meets all the standards then it can apply for a 'kitemark', this is to show customers that the product has met all the standards needed.

This process can help manufacturers as if the product does meet all the standards then it will get the kitemark and it will help to show customers that they are buying a quality product which uses a quality system.

The way in which it can guide consumer choice is by whether a product has a kitemark or not, people are more likely to buy a product if it does have a kitemark as this shows the product is of a high quality standard.

#### **Consumer Watchdog**

This is when magazines and newspapers (sometimes TV shows E.g. The Gadget Show) offer sections on the new and upcoming products soon to be entering the market. Often a review will be written on each product and then a rating may be given. For Example a magazine could test 5 new fishing rods and then each rod will be tested, the rod could be tested on a number of factors E.g. Cost and Style. The products can then be given an individual rating and then they will decide which product is the best.

This is likely to influence the consumer's product choice as they are not going to buy the product with the lowest rating.

Other groups can offer consumer support E.g. TV and Radio programmes can give information and guidance on consumer rights. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) also offers advice and support.

#### **Conclusion**

The differences between the two organisations are that the standard organisations focus on the product functioning properly and it also being of a high standard. The consumer watchdog on the other hand offers a comparison of different products to the consumer in order to show them which products are best.

Both of the organisations can determine the customer's choice as to which product they choose to buy. The standards organisations can affect their choice by showing which products are the best by giving the best products a kitemark. The consumer watchdog does the same thing but in a different sort of way, as offering reviews as to which products are the best.

The consumer watchdog does not either help or hinder the product manufacturers, but the standards organisations do as they pick out and show the consumers which products are the best and have the highest quality. This helps the manufacturers if they do meet the standards required.