CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

Motivation & Perception

Essential Reading for Students of Marketing

2025

Open Mentis

CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

Motivation & Perception

How They Drive Consumer Behavior in the Marketplace

We must self-actualize.
With equal zeal, we must also strive to make our *selves* worth-actualizing.

Free to Distribute. Our goal is to bring the enjoyment of reading consumer psychology to thousands of students and consumer psychology professors. Feel free to distribute it as widely as you like, in whole or in part.

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Deep knowledge for the classroom.
Breezy prose that does not tax the mind.

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PREFACE

College Students

The book offers a body of knowledge for college credit courses in consumer psychology, consumer behavior, consumer insights, and the like. It covers five key concepts of psychology: (a) motivation, (b) perception, (c) learning, (d) values, and (e) personality, identity, and psychographics, all in the applied context of marketing.

If you find textbooks tedious to read and are looking for a refreshing break, welcome aboard.

Marketing Professionals

A book simultaneously for a college course + executive reading* is an oxymoron. We have tried to defy that paradox:

a. We simplified deep knowledge for easy grasp;

b. We use examples both current and historical (whose lessons are perennial);

c. We shine a light on the interface between marketing and consumers; and

d. We made our writing style non-textbookish. You could almost think of this as your "beach read."

Is it really modernistic? Not entirely, but we tried.

Authors and Editors

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*The book should serve as a handy refresher for managers with a marketing major in college; for managers with other majors, the book offers *essential* background knowledge, especially if you work in the consumer-products industry.

con· sum· er·s

/kən'sōōmər s /

noun: **consumer** plural noun: **consumers**

are people engaged in the acquisition and use of products and services available in the marketplace to satisfy their needs and wants. Through these products, they make their living efficient in their physical world; and in their cultural and social world, they seek these products also to construct, live, and symbolically communicate their individual and group identities.

(Descriptive)

mar· ket·er·s

/mär-kə-tər s/

noun: **marketer** plural noun: **marketers**

are professionals who connect a business (or organization) to consumers. They present the firm's product and its message to consumers, hoping consumers will find it a source of satisfaction of their needs. And, equally important, they interpret consumer needs and preferences for the benefit of their organizations so other departments in their firms may design and make products that will satisfy those consumers' needs and wants.

(Normative)

1 WELCOME TO THE FASCINATING WORLD OF CONSUMERS

Where offerings and hopes meet

1 What Consumer Diaries Can Teach us

2 Five Visions of the Consumer

3 How Consumer Behavior is Defined and What Its Elements Are

4 Consumer Needs and Wants and How Marketing Shapes Them

5 Five Resources All Humans Possess and Exchange in the Marketplace

6 Four Consumption Values Humans Seek in the Marketplace

The Hug Shirt™

How marketing brings future to consumers!

TO UNDERSTAND

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What Future Consumers Will Wear!

Imagine you are wearing The Hug Shirt™. And your friend, thousands of miles away, is also wearing one. You wish your friend were with you and you two could hug each other. Now you can, no matter the distance.

The Hug Shirt™ is the world's first (and perhaps the 'only') haptic telecommunications wearable, invented by a London (UK) based tech innovation company named CuteCircuit.

Embedded in the shirt are actuators and sensors that capture the strength and the duration of your hug (imagining your friend, you strike the hugging arms pose); the actuators and sensors in your friend's shirt receive and decode those signals and translate them into the haptic sensation of the hug you just sent them.

The Hug Shirt™

Of course, you will need to download an app on your smartphone. The app connects to the shirt via Bluetooth. There are no wires, only smart fabrics, notes the company. And don't worry, the hug doesn't intrude on the recipient unannounced. It first shows up on the recipient's smartphone, just like a text message, and it waits there until your friend is ready to receive it on their shirt. You can buy the shirt from the company's website for £250.00.

In case all your friends and loved ones are within hugging vicinity already, there are other fascinating wearables you could acquire right now:

- High couture "interactive dresses" worn by the likes of Katy Perry, Kelly Osborne, and Nicole Sherzinger. The dresses are embedded with Micro-LEDs that react to your body motions to create luminous decorations.
- Mirror Handbags in luxurious suede with acrylic mirrors and LEDs that light up to display messages and Tweets from your Twitter feed.
- Twinkle T-shirt made from motion-reactive illuminated organic cotton with a golden sequin appliqué and micro-LEDs that shine through to create amazing animations

You can explore these wearables of the future at CuteCircuit.com.

Twinkle T-shirt

Introduction

- While CuteCircuit is the world's first wearable-technology fashion brand founded in 2004, other innovative firms are at work, bringing us diverse applications:[1]

- Levi's Commuter Trucker Jacket: Your jacket's cuff has Jacquard Threads (a Google innovation) woven into it. In addition, you wear a flexible snap tag, which syncs with your smartphone. If a phone call comes in, a light on the tag flashes; or haptic feedback will make your arm vibrate. This haptic feedback will tell you, for example, if your Uber is arriving. You can also take calls by touching the sleeve.
- Samsung has designed a yarn that collects energy from body movement and powers the battery of sensors, which may be embedded in our clothing for diverse functionality.
- In the future, clothes will be self-cleaning. Basically, tiny metal devices are attached to cotton fabric and they break down grime when exposed to sunlight. The clothes clean themselves in minutes.

Mirror Handbag

- Sensoria socks are embedded with textile pressure sensors that pair with an anklet magnetically attached to the cuff of the sock and then it talks to your cell phone. Together it helps you count the number of steps, speed, calories burned, and poor landing technique. These smart socks are intended to identify injury-prone running styles, and the app will give audio directions to correct your running.
- A June 5, 2020 report from Tufts University informs us of the invention of a biomaterial-based ink that responds to chemicals released from the body in fluids like sweat by changing color. The changing colors will signal our health conditions. The inks can be screen printed onto textiles such as clothes, shoes, or even face masks.

The big question now is, as consumers, are we ready to adopt these new products?

Beyond wearables, consider these wonders of technology: (a) Internet-of-Things (IoT), e.g., Amazon Dash Button, which automatically reorders essentials (e.g., soft drinks, pet food, etc.) or a small device (Lumi by Pampers) that tells parents that the baby diaper needs changing; (b) Augmented Reality (AR)—for example, in a retail store, you can try on the dress in the window without even entering the store; and (c) Virtual Reality—wear these headsets and you can take a trip through time to visit ancient Romans; or enter The Void portal (available in many cities in the USA and Canada) and be transported into your favorite film scenes and play your favorite character!

More than the technology behind these products of the future, more than the skills and dedication of the engineers and craftsmen behind them, their utility to consumers will depend on consumer savvy gleaned by the marketers of these products. It is their uncanny ability to get inside the skin of their consumers that will determine whether these products end up satisfying the needs and wants of consumers.

Today, more than ever before, consumers themselves are astonishingly market-savvy, with a never-before array of choices. And in our consumerist society, consumers look to the marketplace for heightened gratification of their needs and desires. Born in the age of the Web and the smartphone and immersed deeply in social media, the young and the restless, especially, but even the older and the tranquil, seek products customized and personalized to their tastes, and vetted by their social media peer netizens. They befriend brands that are "cool," and love the marketers who speak their language. That language is the language of consumer behavior. Every marketer should learn it.

This book seeks to teach that language. In this book, we are going to describe, dissect, and discourse about consumer behavior—human behavior in the world of products. We will study how we think, feel, and act in the marketplace—how we come to see products the way we see them, how we make our choices from the mind-boggling array of goods available, how we buy them and then weave them into the tapestries of our lives; how we consume them to sustain and energize our bodies, feed our minds, and construct our egos and our identities. This is the study of consumer behavior. Welcome to the fascinating world of consumers!

WE ARE CONSUMERS—24-7!

We are all consumers. This much comes as no surprise to us. But what we may not have realized is how much of our waking day we spend being a consumer—and we count not just when we are consuming or when we are buying something. Rather, as we will explain later, we are a consumer any time we are even thinking about acquiring and/or consuming anything. To be sure, we also live at least part of our lives not being consumers—such as when we are conversing with a friend (without using a phone or any other product), or reflecting on our futures, or for that matter, on the future of mankind. But most of the rest of the day is filled with plotting and enacting consumption. At our request, a group of consumers wrote a daily journal. We reproduce one of these journals (see Exhibit 1.1). This journal was quite representative of all those we received in one respect; they all showed the same thing: We are consumers 24-7!

CONSUMERS ARE FASCINATING

As consumers, we are fascinating. Consider a conversation we recently had with a consumer, Jackie, age 30 (see Exhibit 1.2 later in the chapter). We will let that interview speak for itself, and let you decide whether you agree that consumers are indeed fascinating.

When we think of consumers such as Jackie, several images come to mind. Consumers are the browsers in the department store, shoppers in the mall, patrons enjoying a meal in a restaurant, visitors standing in long lines at Disneyland, youngsters flocking to music concerts, and savvy shoppers lining up to grab the door-buster sale items. These and many other visions of the consumer can be aptly grouped into five categories, explained next.

EXHIBIT 1.1 Consumer Karma—*We Are Consumers 24/7!*

Dear e-Diary— Here is My Consumer Behavior

by Ellen Tibbs

MONDAY

- This morning on the way to work I bought a Sugar-Free Red Bull and Special K blueberry breakfast bar.
- I was walking to my car earlier and saw a woman with a new Coach purse. I am getting sick of the one I am carrying now. Once I save up some money I might treat myself and buy one!
- My friend just called and said she had an extra ticket to go to the Shawn Mendes concert in two weeks. I really want to go so I told her I would meet up with her later to pay for the ticket.

TUESDAY

- I got my hair colored at the salon, Madalyn San Tangelo this morning.
- My friend Lindsay and I wanted to eat sushi, so I placed a carry-out order at Mr. Sushi. We both ordered California Rolls, rice and we split an appetizer.
- I was online today and bought and downloaded music from iTunes. I bought some songs by Jonas Brothers and by Doja Cat.

WEDNESDAY

- I love my car, but I want a new one. I saw a new silver Scion today and want it badly. I called my mom and talked to her about trading my car in for a new car.
- I looked online for a desk for my room. I have a computer and printer, but no workstation. I usually sit at my kitchen table or on the floor to do homework and it's getting really annoying. I looked at Pottery Barn, Bova, and a couple of random sites, but didn't see anything I liked.

SATURDAY

- I bought an Icee Mango at Panera Bread…
- I went shopping today at Kenwood Mall for something to wear tonight. I went to a couple of stores but didn't find anything. I went into Forever 21 and was excited when I found a white skirt and black camisole. I was even more excited when I found great accessories to match!

SUNDAY

- I had a headache this morning and was out of Advil, so I went to Walgreen's. I bought water and a bottle of Advil gel caplets. In line, I grabbed a new tube of Burt's Beeswax and bought that too.
- I had to buy gas again today. I feel like I filled up! I hate buying gas. It is so expensive and is a pain in the butt. The only thing worse than buying it is to know you will have to buy it again in three days!
- I work at J B Fin's on the Levee, so I went shopping on my break. I went to Hollister and Pacsun. I didn't find anything I liked. However, I did buy a new belly button ring from the outside vendor.

Ellen Tibbs is a college senior majoring in Business Administration

MY CB BOOK

FIVE VISIONS OF THE CONSUMER

1. **Consumer as Problem-Solver**
2. **Consumer as Economic Creature**
3. **Consumer as Computer**
4. **Consumer as Shopper**
5. **Consumer as Reveler**

Consumer as Problem Solver In this vision, consumers are searching for solutions to the needs of daily life, looking for a product or service that will meet those needs in the best possible way. Once they find the "solution product," they can relax and move on with their lives. The following self-report from a consumer illustrates this[2]:

> **After I purchased my new pants recently, I spent most of my free time thinking about the shoes I already have. Finally, I decided that I didn't have any shoes to go with my new pants. On Tuesday, I started my search at Payless but didn't have any luck. I continued my search at Kohl's and DSW but once again I just didn't see what I was looking for. I became very discouraged. I decided that later that evening, my final store to shop would be Shoe Carnival. As soon as I walked in, I saw them, the perfect pair of shoes. They were a little pricey at $38.99, but with a 10% sale, I bought them. I was very excited and relieved that I had found the shoes I was looking for. (Angie, 22)**

Consumer as Economic Creature Consumers are also planners and managers of personal finances; they want to use their money wisely. As such, they seek to buy products at the best prices available. This does not mean that they always go for the lowest price (although often they do), but they always want to maximize their utility. As one consumer stated:

> **My fiancée and I always cut coupons before we go grocery shopping. It always saves us at least $20 per trip. We both agree that Kroger and Remke are too expensive for our large bimonthly shopping trips. We prefer to go to Meijer and likely save another $40 just by going there. Once at Meijer, we aren't too picky about the brands we buy. We can often be seen calculating the per-unit price based on the Meijer brand versus the name brand with a coupon. On almost everything, the lower per-unit cost always wins. Oddly enough ketchup is the one item that I purchase based on the brand name. (Christopher, 23)**

Consumer as Computer We also see consumers reading package labels, checking-off items on a shopping list, pondering information in their heads, looking at ads, making sense of instructions on how to use a product—in other words, sorting out all the information about products and the marketplace. In-

Is this person, at this moment, being a *CONSUMER?*

deed, our brains act like human computers. This vision can be seen in the following self-report from a couple:

> **We were in the market for a house. We began by searching the MLS site on the Internet. We searched listings by price, by location, by school district, and by features. Then we found a realtor and let him do the searching. He showed us several houses on the computer within our price range. One house seemed to have all the features but was on a street with no sidewalks, and sidewalks were important to us because we have children. Another house also had everything, but the deck was small; a third house had a large deck but the kitchen was small. We tried to figure out how much it would cost to make the deck bigger, and we thought that expanding the kitchen would be very cumbersome. We kept turning in our heads the three houses we liked and their various features, and finally, taking everything into account, we settled on the one with the small deck. (Jenny, 23, and Paul, 24)**

Consumer as Shopper This is the familiar image of consumers, coming out of a store, loaded with shopping bags in both hands. Inside the store, they are totally taken in by the vast merchandise, enchanted by all that is on display, theirs to have if they like, but to enjoy the sight anyway. Stores and marketplaces are the proverbial Alice's Wonderland for the consumer as a shopper. As one of our research respondents put it:

> **I shop all the time. Days, evenings, weekdays, weekends. Whenever I can get out. I shop at department stores and just as much at boutique shops. And I shop online—my favorite site is Overstock.com. I shop for sales and I shop for rare merchandise. If I am getting bored I will go to the mall. In fact, if I don't go shopping for 2 or 3 days at a stretch, I begin to feel depressed. I buy very carefully, after full deliberation, but I browse a lot and I window-shop a lot. The mall is a place I couldn't live without. You could say I was born to shop. (Christy, 22)**

Consumer as Reveler Finally, we all have visions of consumers just having a good time—at a restaurant, a rock concert, a beach resort on spring break—enjoying life with all the wonderful things the marketplace has to offer. Below are two excerpts from consumer interviews.

> **I am really big into smelling good. I spend hundreds of dollars on top name cologne. I feel that appearance and smell at first are what make the man what he is. I can be running to the grocery store and I put on cologne. (Chad, 22)**

> **I love attending a live concert. Rap, country, rock, gospel, alternative—I love them all. My favorite band is Dave Matthews—I have got all 14 of their CDs and two live concert DVDs! (Joe, 23)**

Consumers as Revelers:
Bo Ring Mud Festival
South Korea

Here we have a snapshot of a group of consumers. When it comes to consumers as revelers, a picture does speak a thousand words!

All of these visions are true. They exist not only in different consumers, but also sometimes in the same consumer. Thus, we are economic creatures at times, watching every penny; at other times, we just want to experience, just want to be revelers, with money as no object. Sometimes, we are assessing a product and soaking up all the information, with our internal computer drives whirring. A consumer is indeed multi-faceted. And our study will cover all these facets.

Now, we are ready to begin our formal study of consumer behavior.

WHAT IS CONSUMER BEHAVIOR?

We define **consumer behavior** as the set of mental and physical activities undertaken by consumers to acquire and to consume products so as to fulfill their needs and wants.

Our definition of consumer behavior has several elements worth noting. Let us discuss these one by one.

Mental and Physical Activities First, consumer behavior includes both mental and physical activities. **Mental activities** are acts of the mind, and they relate to what we think, feel, and know about products. **Physical activities** are, in contrast, acts of the human body, and they relate to what we do physically to acquire and to consume products.

Just wondering if a three-button suit jacket will be proper is also Consumer Behavior.

When you are contemplating buying a product, even dreaming about it, you are engaging in a mental activity. You are also engaging in a mental activity when you are mulling over a product's benefits and risks; making sense of an advertisement; trying to remember the price of a product in the store you previously visited; trying to recall what Dr. Oz said the other day, on his TV show, about the benefits of eating chia seeds; or just wondering if a three-buttoned suit jacket will be good to wear to a forthcoming job interview, or if, instead, you should stick to the more conservative two-buttoned jacket.

Physical activities include visiting stores, clipping coupons, talking to salespeople, test-driving a car, placing an item in the shopping cart, abandoning a shopping cart, and saving empty cartons for later recycling. Physical activities entailed in actual consumption are also included—such as preparation to consume (e.g., setting the table, blotting grease from pizzas and fries, etc.), consumption situations (e.g., choosing takeout or dining in, using a cell phone while driving), consumption rituals (e.g., a makeup regimen), or routine trivial behaviors (e.g., TV channel flipping). Indeed, it is by observing consumer inconveniences and improvisations during product use that marketers often conceive of new products and tailor their communications. Some activities are hybrids—both physical and mental—such as reading *Consumer Reports* or product labels.

It should be noted that the mental and physical activities we study under consumer behavior are not limited to specific acts of buying and using products. Rather, they include activities that the consumer undertakes in preparation for and prior to the actual buying act, and they also include activities that continue long after a product is actually consumed or used. When a consumer hears a friend praising a product and makes a mental note to try it sometime in the future, this preparatory activity is part of consumer behavior. Likewise, if a few months after using a product, the consumer suddenly recalls the experience of using that product and chuckles about it, enjoying the memory of past consumption, then that post-use mental activity is also consumer behavior.

Product Second, we use the term *product* broadly, to refer to any physical or nonphysical product or service that offers some benefit to the consumer, including a place, a person, or an idea offered for exchange. Thus, not only are physical products such as cars, shirts, and golf clubs included, but so too are services such as a fitness club, a college education, a TV program, and a "breakup-letter writing service." Also included are places such as vacation destinations, outlet malls, or video arcades. And persons, such as political candidates seeking your votes are included. And, finally, ideas are included, such as vegetarianism or promoting mask-wearing. The important point here is that casting your vote for a candidate is just as good an example of consumer behavior as is buying a brand of toothpaste; so is visiting a museum, choosing a college, downloading the Calm app, and then on it, listening to Matthew McConaughey Wonder, a sleep story he recorded in May 2020, displaying a "Save Our Environment" bumper sticker on your new car, or planning to donate to Stand Up To Cancer.

Consumers Third, our definition includes the concept of *consumer*. In general, a **consumer** is anyone engaged in the acquisition and use of products and services available in the marketplace. Although a few humans on our planet might well be living lives sustained entirely by self-produced products and services (rather than those acquired in the marketplace), most of us acquire the majority of the products and services we need and want through marketplace exchanges. Each of us, therefore, is a consumer.

The use of the term *consumer* in this text is broader than in practice, where different marketers call them, instead, by different names. For example, retail stores generally refer to their patrons as customers (rather than as consumers); so do utility companies (e.g., electricity or phone service providers), financial companies (e.g., banks), and service providers (e.g., palm readers). Professional service providers (e.g., lawyers, real estate agents, tax advisors) refer to them as clients, or by their more context-specific roles (e.g., doctors call them patients, educators call them students, fund-raisers call them donors, etc.). Only manufacturers (e.g., Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Kraft, Cadbury, Molson, Britvic, etc.), who do not routinely deal with the end-users of a product directly, refer to these household end

Customers, clients, patients, tourists, donors, students—all are consumers.

users as consumers. In this text, however, we refer to all of these kinds of acquirers and users of products and services as consumers.

Our use of the term consumer also goes beyond its literal meaning—persons who "consume." Of course, some products do get consumed, such as food items, but other products do not get "consumed" (i.e., depleted), such as household appliances or other durables. For these products, we are users rather than consumers. Again, we will use the term consumers to refer to the users of all products or services, whether these products are consumables or durables.

Correspondingly, we define consumption as any and all usage of products whether or not the products are actually "consumed" away; i.e., depleted. Thus, when we look at our digital pictures and we show them or e-mail them to others, we are consuming these pictures. And, of course, activities such as TV viewing, visiting art galleries, and tweeting and retweeting messages on Twitter also count as consumption.

Needs and Wants Finall**y, two important words in our definition are needs and wants.** Needs and wants are perhaps the two words most freely used by consumers—"freely" in the sense that consumers seldom ponder before uttering these words. They utter these words merely, but unmistakably, to indicate their desire or intent to possess and/or consume something. Philosophers of diverse ilk have ruminated for centuries as to what need and want mean, and understandably there is no consensus. Consequently, consumer researchers who study consumer needs and wants also vary in their definitions of the terms. Indeed, it would be futile to search for a definition on which everyone would agree. So, below are the definitions we will use in this book.

A Need is Not a Product. A Product is Not a Need.

A **need** can be defined as a discomforting human condition. It can be discomforting in a physiological sense or in a psychological sense. Examples of *physiologically* discomforting conditions are sensations of hunger or cold; examples of discomforting *psychological* conditions are feeling bored, feeling insecure, or experiencing being looked down upon. As consumers, we seek products or services in the marketplace exchange so as to alleviate these conditions of discomfort. A **want** is a desire for a specific object or product. The consumer who wants a product judges that it would restore his or her condition to a satisfactory state. Thus, the felt discomfort of a hungry stomach is a need; desire for food and for a specific kind of food is a want. Feeling insecure is a need; desire for the latest model of Nike shoes, even when barely within one's means, is a want. Thus, a product is *not* a need; it is a *solution* to a need.[3]

The definitions we use here differ from common speech, where needs are equated with necessities, and wants with luxuries. There are good reasons for this, which we will explore in a later section. For now, just remember that need is your felt discomfort, period. And remember also that the discomfort has to be perceived by the person himself or herself. Thus, a *need* is not someone else's assessment of your condition. I cannot say that your hair looks long, so you need a haircut, or that you don't need to upgrade your PS4 to PlayStation5, or that you don't need to splurge on the new Swarovski-crystal-dotted Adidas Rivalry Lo sneakers. It is for you to decide if not having these things is discomforting for you, psychologically speaking. Indeed, then, need is a very subjective word. It is a very personal feeling.

***Need* is a very subjective feeling—this important consumer sentiment is elegantly captured in this ad for Nissan 370Z.**

EXCHANGE, RESOURCES, AND VALUE

Three Essentials of Consumer Behavior

There are three essential elements in all consumer behavior. Without these, no "consumer behavior" can occur. And they work in unison—inseparably, as three grand enablers of consumer behavior. These are exchange, resources, and value. Let us examine each.

EXCHANGE

Exchange refers to an interchange between two parties where each receives from the other something of more value and gives up something of less value. Within that specific exchange, what is given up is of less value to the giver than it is to the receiver, so that both parties gain more in value than they give up. Thus, when we buy a shirt, we part with our money (say, 20 dollars or 40 rubles or 25 euros or 120 pesos or 80 yen) because, at that time, that particular shirt is more valuable to us than keeping that money in our pockets; conversely, when we sell that shirt in a garage sale for one dollar, at that time, that shirt's value to us is less than even one dollar.

Although an exchange can also occur between any two consumers, it is customary to call one of the parties the marketer and the other party the consumer. A **marketer** is an individual or an organization with an organizational goal to offer products and services in exchange for the consumer's money or (occasionally) other resources. When a marketer primarily seeks money and has the making of money as the principal organizational goal, then that marketer is referred to as a **commercial entity**. When a marketer offers products and services either free of cost or at a nominal charge insufficient to cover costs or make any profit, the marketer is typically a non-profit or social organization. Typically, **nonprofit** or social organizations promote ideas (e.g., smoking cessation) or persons (e.g., a presidential candidate). An important point here is that the study of consumer behavior is just as useful for non-profit and social and community organizations.[4]

RESOURCES

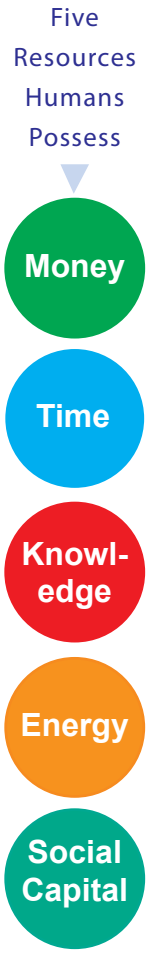
A **resource** is something we own or possess that people value. Because people value those resources, more or less universally, we can, as consumers, use them to acquire a whole host of products and services. That is, as humans, we value resources ourselves, and, because other humans value them too, we can exchange some of them to satisfy our needs and wants.

Five Resources

There are five types of resources: money, time, skills and knowledge, body and physical energy, and social capital. Of these, **money** is the most often used resource for marketplace exchanges—when we acquire products and services, we typically pay for them with money. We also use money to acquire the other four resources. We buy **time**-saving devices to gain more time; we hire maids so we ourselves don't have to expend time in housekeeping chores. We buy books and take college courses to gain **knowledge**, we buy home-improvement books to learn to do handiwork, and we pay for lessons to acquire the skills needed to compete on Dancing with the Stars.

To build our bodies and enhance **physical energy** as a resource, we spend money and join a gym. We spend time doing yoga. And we buy vitamins and nutrition-supplements to get energy. Finally, we spend time and money to build **social capital**—the network of friends and professional connections that can be of help in our hours of need. We buy designer brand clothes that will help us gain acceptance among our peers. We spend time writing "thank you" notes and sending gifts to keep the friends we have. And we pay fees to join social clubs and associations to enlarge our social networks.[5]

Sometimes we use other resources so we may pay less in money. We pay, in part, with our time when we choose to take a cheaper airline flight with a stopover instead of a direct flight. Likewise, when we buy a modular furniture system that we have to assemble ourselves, we exchange our time, physical energy, and skill-set to save money. If we believe that we have the requisite skills, then we choose a low-fee discount broker rather than a full- service investment advisor, or we buy stocks online. We use our healthy bodies as resources when we donate blood or pledge to donate some organ. And good looks are themselves "exchanged" to attract a date, companion, or mate.



VALUE

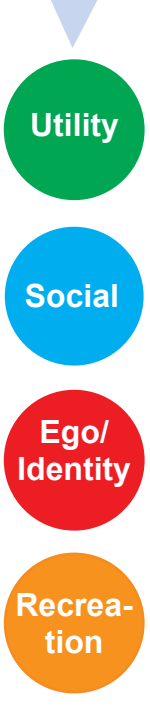
The third essential element in all consumer behavior is value. **Value** is the sum total of net benefits we receive from an activity or an exchange. Indeed, value is the core goal of all exchanges that humans undertake.

> **Value, not money, is the basic currency of all human interaction. When we meet someone, we try to assess quickly how long it would be worth our while to be talking to that person. If our phone rings, we promptly decide if we would gain anything by taking that call at that time.... It is even more true of marketplace exchanges. The only reason customers are even in the marketplace is that they are looking for something of value. (ValueSpace, 2001, p. 3-4.)[6]**

Value comes from all the benefits, all the desired outcomes that consumers obtain and experience from their use of products. When a cream eradicates our acne, that is a desired outcome to us and hence has value. When a musical play uplifts our moods, that is a desired outcome and hence has value. When wearing a particular suit or dress brings us compliments from others, we are receiving value. And when we feel good about ourselves having donated to a charity, we are experiencing value. In everything we buy, in everything we consume, in every advertisement to which we pay attention, from every salesperson to whom we lend our ears, in every store we enter, on every Web site we visit, we seek value.

Thus, value comes in multiple forms. Basically, value accrues when some need is satisfied. Because human needs are countless, so also are forms of value. However, they can be categorized into four major types, captured in the acronym USER: (a) utilitarian, (b) social, (c) ego/identity, and (d) recreational.[7]

Four Values Consumers Seek in the Marketplace



Utilitarian value is the set of tangible outcomes of a product's usage (or of an activity). It comprises the physical consequences of a product and its effects in the physical world around us and within us (i.e., in our bodies). Also called *functional value*, utilitarian value comes from objects when they enable us to manage our lives as biological and physical beings and to manage our external physical environments as well. Examples include filling our bellies with food, energizing our bodies with nutrients, moisturizing our skin with lotions, navigating physical distance by using a Bird or a Lime Scooter, etc. But don't mistake utilitarian value as referring only to basic physical necessities. A Peloton for our workout, a Noom nutrition plan for our weight control, or a Mobile Phone Jail Cell (Sonidika for $10.89 at Amazon.com) to curb our phone addiction—these products yield specific benefits that are also utilitarian.

Social value comes from our ability to manage our social worlds (as opposed to the physical world). This includes maintaining warm and harmonious relations with others, fitting in with peers, and generally projecting a good image to others. Thus, we get social value when we wear name-brand clothing with a certain brand image, and we get social value when we buy someone a gift to affirm our relationship. We also receive social value when we donate blood as part of an office drive, or when we join social clubs like The Ruby (therubysf.com, a space for women who work in the arts or in creative fields) or the Gentlemen's Factory (Brooklyn, NY).

Ego/identity value comes from our need to construct and nurture our identities or self-concepts, our sense of ego, our ideas of who we are. Thus, we eat vegetarian food because we value the identity of being an animal saver. We gain ego/identity value by recycling because we believe in preserving the environment. We wear Zara and Bonobos because we perceive these brands as very urbane and sophisticated and we also view ourselves as urbane and so-

phisticated. Or alternatively, we wear Free People and MINKPINK because we want to nurture our self-identities as being very "boho-chic."

Finally, **recreation value** comes from objects and activities when they recreate our moods and regenerate our mental ability—removing our fatigue and boredom, stimulating the senses, and rejuvenating our minds. Also called **hedonic value**, recreation value is obtained from wide-ranging forms of consumption: from mild mood-lifters like listening to one's favorite music to the extreme exhilaration of watching one's favorite sports team win the championship game; from a short coffee break to wallowing in pleasure at the Venetian in Las Vegas.

Of course, many products and activities could simultaneously produce multiple values, and two consumers could use the same product to derive two different values. Thus, a consumer could wear Zara or Bonobos clothing purely to impress others, whereas another person could wear them not because of what others might think of them, but because he or she sees himself or herself that way. To us, the clearest distinction between the two values (social and ego/identity) came from a consumer who said he buys name brand shirts and pants to make an impression, even though he thinks it is foolish to pay so much for them, and that when it comes to underwear, he buys a store brand; in contrast, another consumer bought only designer-brand underwear because he thought he "deserved it."

Make no mistake about it: we sometimes choose a product to impress others, but sometimes we choose it purely to play out our sense of identity. In product categories that are consumed within the home and thus are not publicly visible (e.g., shampoos, personal grooming, kitchenware, etc.), tons of expensive designer brands get bought and used by consumers because they think that is the kind of persons they are.

Another point to note is that while a few products are entirely symbolic and have no physical utility (e.g., greeting cards), most products have utility value as a minimal core. Many products have physical utility and not much more (e.g., hardware products such as duct tape), but most products have, surrounding a physical, utilitarian core, some social, ego/identity, or recreational value. Clothing, cars, colognes, and being seen in a Starbucks Café sipping a $4.50 Tazo® Vanilla Rooibos Tea Latte offer these multiple values, for example.

We will dwell on these more in subsequent chapters of the book, but for now, let us remember the acronym **USER** as our code word to think of the four principal values consumers seek in the marketplace and in consumption.

CB Notes

Pinterest Shows Us How That Lipstick Will Look on Our Lips

On January 28, 2020, Pinterest introduced a new AR (augmented reality) feature. Now, after you have clicked on the camera icon within Pinterest, the app shows you a "Try On" icon. Clicking on it opens a selfie (showing your face); at the bottom, you will see about 20 color circles, which are actually different shades of lipstick. Touch a circle, and magically, the lipstick will be on your lips. Tap a different circle and now you will see how your lips will look with that color. You also can see the lipstick on one of the models with a range of skin tones. Next, click on the "Shop" button and you will be taken to the seller's site to buy it.

Brands like Estée Lauder, Sephora, L'Oréal, and Urban Decay are available.

Hitherto we could not try experiential products in online shopping. Not true anymore!

MyCBBook.com

1.2

EXHIBIT

A Consumer Interview

Jackie Cooper, Makeup artist, Cincinnati, USA

"I Obey My Thirst!"

Q. Excuse me, sir, would you mind answering a few questions for my class project?

A. Sure, you can ask me anything.

Q. Great, thank you. (Pointing at the shopping bag) What did you buy today?

A. I just bought this new fly Fubu jersey. It is uh, blue and yellow, double zero on the back. It's phat.[1]

Q. How do you buy your clothing?

A. You know, whatever looks good. Stay away from stripes though.

Q. Why?

A. Oh, it could make you look bulky, you know.

Q. What kind of clothes do you buy?

A. Well, I have a lot of Nike. My favorite is Fubu, you know. I also got Sean-John. That is the only kind of stuff I buy.

Q. Why do you like these brands? What do you look for when you buy clothes?

A. It's gotta be comfortable. I have to be able to move in it, or play ball in it, and still go to the clubs … comfortable but still nice.

Q. Do you go on spending sprees?

A. Nah, I try to keep my platinum bill on the *D.L.*[2]

Q. Are you happy with the way you buy clothes?

A. Yeah, I got my own system. Hasn't failed me yet.

Q. Do you like shopping for clothes?

A. Clothes shopping? Yes, I like it. I love it. You know, I gotta keep my threads on top of the game.

Q. Is choosing clothes a problem for you?

A. Nah, I usually just try whatever catches my eye and I just buy it. I go in, do my business, and then I 'm out. … I am like flash … you know flashin' in, flashin' out. Bling blingin'!

Q. What role does clothing play in your life?

A. See, I look at clothing like it's a part of me. It's like people be lookin' at my clothes. It is like they're seein' into my soul. You know what I mean? That's why I dress the way I dress.

Q. Do you pay attention to clothes advertising?

A. Nah, I just buy what I like; I will not bow to any sponsor. I buy what I want. I'm like Sprite—I obey my thirst. That is the way it is.

INTERVIEWER: Ok. Thank you for your time.

1. Pretty hot and tempting 2. Down-low

Interviewed by Pamela Ryckman, a junior marketing student, who conducted the interview as part of her class project.

CONSUMERS ARE FASCINATING

Read and enjoy the interview with Jackie Cooper, a consumer we intercepted in a mall. Notice how he sees his life being enriched by what the marketplace offerings. Notice also that he buys branded clothing, yet he has his own choice criteria as well. So, what he buys is a blended outcome of what he wants and what diverse brands offer. He considers himself, not advertising, to be the driver of his choices. Advertising doesn't influence him, he declares. But he phrases this self-agency by borrowing a phrase from commercial speech: "I obey my own thirst"!

Go ahead and interview a few consumers yourself. And as you read the book, you may be tempted to test out various concepts on a few consumers. Interviewing consumers can be a useful and fun way to internalize the concepts. At the very minimum, apply these concepts on your own self as a test case. We will understand and internalize the concepts better both when we find that specific concepts apply to us and also when we conclude that certain other concepts do not.

Read on and carry on self-reflection as a consumer.

Are these two people *consuming* at this moment?

Yes, the clothes, for starters. Besides, whereas during yoga, we are expected to shut off our minds from all extraneous thoughts, few are able to. For all we know, these two persons might be thinking, individually, "I should, after all, buy a proper yoga mat." Or, he might be contemplating which movie they should see later that evening, *News of the World* or *The Woman in the Window.* And she, whether to buy a Pressurized Growler Keg, to help him reduce the frequency of trips to the bar and save money on beer at the pub.

Remember, evaluating impending purchases or contemplating future consumption is also consumer behavior.

Whether in actions currently unfolding or in thoughts laced with objects of desire, we are, at any given moment, more likely than not, being consumers. Indeed, then, we are consumers 24/7!

Consumers Wanted

Understanding consumer behavior has always been an essential prerequisite for business success. Throughout the 100-year history of marketing in the 20th century, marketers were in control. John Wanamaker's Philadelphia store (now Macy's), opened in 1876, was the first store operated with what is now known as the marketing concept.[8] Consumers had the option of buying or not buying the products they were offered, but little else. Since the beginning of the 21st century, however, advances in the Internet, smartphones, augmented reality have changed all that. Individual consumers can now create brand messages on their own and broadcast them—see any number of "sucks.com" websites (e.g., *Dell Sucks*, *Netflix Sucks*, etc.). And with social media, consumers can now connect and band together by the millions. The 21st century is the Age of the Empowered Consumer.

Increasingly consumers will look for products that bring them new levels of experiences, with brand messages that are transparent, authentic, and also relatable. Technology will bring forth many new products (e.g., 3D-printed food, see Chapter 7), but will consumers accept them? What will be the motives, values, and psychographics of these consumers? Or of consumers who seek, in general, authenticity, personalization, co-creation, and experiential consumption? Marketers of the future will need to understand the psyche of their potential customers so they may fashion their marketing programs that will resonate with these consumers in ever new ways (see below, *Romancing the Consumer*).

An Experiential Journey

Now the fun begins. We give you, so to speak, a universal template with a collage of mirrors of different shapes and sizes, and you can find for yourself which mirror reflects you as a consumer and fits you as a marketer the best. Here is where it becomes a learning experience. Or experiential learning. It is an expedition of discovery—about yourself and about the world of consumers. Welcome to the expedition!

Romancing the Consumer

DOUGHNUTS FOR YOUR TASTE BUDS. GRASS FOR YOUR FEET. LOVE FROM YOUR FAVORITE MARKETER

If you were in London during a recent Summer, you would have witnessed a strange product on the feet of many people walking: flip-flops with live grass growing on them!

A few weeks earlier, Krispy Kreme had surveyed over 1000 U.K. workers. Of the surveyed consumers, 72% said that they felt seriously stressed on a daily basis. And 81% of them said, further, that a simple walk through a park made them feel instantly relaxed. The problem was that, for these urban dwellers, a park was not nearby.

So, Krispy Kreme created the world's first grass flip-flops. The el-fresco flip-flops take up to three weeks to grow. When fully grown, each pair is covered with 10,000 blades of grass. If watered regularly, the grass will last the whole summer!

The company stores distributed the grass slippers to thousands of workers in London.

Krispy Kreme is not getting into the shoe business, mind you. It gives away the grass flip-flops free. Nor is the product connected in any way to its usual fare—doughnuts. Except in that both products bring consumers comfort and joy. Explains Katie McDermott of Krispy Kreme:

> ***We cheer people up every day with our one-of-a-kind doughnuts, but hopefully by providing them with their own part of park life too we'll be able to bring a sense of natural calm to stressed-out workers.***

Welcome to the age of *Romancing the Consumer*—in this case, one sole at a time!

MYCBBOOK

1 SUMMARY

We began this introductory chapter with a basic fact: We spend most of our waking hours as consumers. We are consumers 24/7! This is because we define consumer behavior as not just the act of buying and consuming but also all of the mental and physical activities we undertake when we contemplate and experience products—an ongoing process that begins much before we actually acquire and consume a product, and continues, in our memories, long afterwards.

Taking the viewpoint of consumers 24/7, we portrayed marketplace products as solutions to consumer needs and wants. We then defined *need* as a discomforting condition, whether physiological or psychological, and *want* as a desire for specific solutions to that condition. We next identified three essentials that frame all consumer behavior: *exchange*, *resources*, and *value*. Consumers' marketplace activities are, basically, an exchange with marketers, where consumers acquire products and part with their money. Money is one of the five resources consumers possess, the other four being time, knowledge and skills, body and physical energy, and social capital. In the exchange, what consumers seek first, foremost, and always is *value*.

We defined *value* as the set of net benefits consumers receive from an exchange. And we identified four broad categories of value: utilitarian, social, ego, and recreational (i.e., hedonic), captured in the acronym USER.

This book is directed at all "students" of consumer behavior—and who among us is not a student in the school of life? Our gain from reading the book is two-fold—first, we reflect on and understand our own behavior as consumers; and second, we become knowledgeable about how, as marketers, we must fashion our offerings so as to appeal to consumers.

1 KEY TERMS

Consumer
Consumer Behavior
Ego/Identity value
Exchange
Hedonic value
Marketers
Mental activities
Need
Physical activities
Product
Psychology
Recreation value
Resource
Social capital
Social value

1 YOUR TURN

REVIEW+Rewind

1. What is consumer behavior? Isn't it, basically, people buying products? Why or why not?
2. How are needs and wants defined here? Are these definitions different from how we use these words in everyday language? Which approach to defining these is better and why?
3. What are the five resources all consumers have?
4. What is the USER model of consumer value?

THINK+Apply

5. Give an example from your own life in which you saved money by using one of the other four resources in an exchange.
6. Give an example of each exchange value you have sought in recent marketplace exchanges (i.e., purchases).

PRACTICE+Experience

1. Write a journal of your own consumer behavior of the past one week. Record one episode each for when you were an economic creature, a problem solver, a computer, a shopper, and (here comes your favorite part) a reveler.
2. Find four advertisements that offer, individually, each of the four values of the USER model, and explain your selections.
3. Interview a consumer (similar to our interview with Jackie), and then identify the four values of the USER model in his or her consumer behavior. (Direct your topics so that the interview reveals all four values.)

A Must-Do

Write a short memo to yourself, evangelizing how this book is going to benefit you personally in your role as (a) a consumer, and (b) a marketing professional (current or future).

A BOOK ON CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY—ANY BOOK—IS A MIX OF SCIENCE AND ART, PROSE AND POETRY, THE MELODY OF THE MERCHANDISE AND THE CHATTER OF CONSUMERS INSIDE THE STORE. AS SUCH, IT IS MEANT TO BE DEVOURED AT LEISURE. ALL IT TAKES IS A CURIOUS MIND.

2 MARKETING AND CONSUMERS: THE ROMANCE CONTINUES

How offerings and hopes meet

1. Does Marketing Create Consumer Needs?
2. Marketing Anticipates Future Consumer Needs
3. Creating Customer Value: The Supreme Purpose of Business

How consumers get their cool in the marketplace

4. Four Academic Disciplines That Undergird Consumer Psychology As A Field of Study
5. Four Types of Readers for Consumer Psychology
6. Consumers Versus Marketing: Who Is Responsible for Consumer Wellbeing?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

TO UNDERSTAND

How I Went From Grunge to Preppy to Abercrombie

"Growing up, I was like most young boys, my attitude toward clothing was "if it still fits, it works" and I really didn't care about whether it matched or was stylish. Until one day at church (I was 14 then) a girl that had an opinion I valued mentioned that I was a very good dresser. This is something I had never really thought about and it caught me by surprise. I guess it "went to my head." Ever since that moment, I continued to make sure that I had clothes that would catch people's attention. I made it a point to have the newest styles, things that others weren't already wearing. In high school, I won the 'best-dressed man' award."

"In college, my style changed completely from preppy to grunge because no one in college wore preppy. And my style was about to change again when I got my first real job, at the Gap Outlet. Here, I worked with all girls who were not afraid to give me tips on how to improve my style. Another store popular among my age group people knew and shopped at was Abercrombie and Fitch. I really didn't like the store until a girlfriend mentioned how all the guys who wore this clothing looked sexy. I later learned that this was a general female attitude, so I tried their clothing piece by piece and found myself to like these styles. I am currently an avid shopper of the store!" (Jason O., 22)

DOES MARKETING CREATE CONSUMER NEEDS?

Our consumer Jason O. is happy that brands like Abercrombie & Fitch exist. Brands like Abercrombie and Fitch are happy that consumers like Jason O. exist. They make each other whole, so to speak.

Does this not mean that marketers make us buy what we otherwise would not have bought? This is a charge many consumers and also many "public policy minders" make. Let us examine its wisdom.

Some people blame marketing for creating consumer needs. They charge that marketing creates a desire for products we don't need. Does it? Let us examine this closely. Mainly, this charge is based on two prevalent views of what a *need* is. First, the charge comes from those who define true needs as only the basic things we require for survival. Consequently, they argue that we only need a basic car, not a fancy car, but marketers create in us a desire for a fancy car, and that we do not need Air Jordan III OG (price $4,500), but fancy advertising beguiles us into believing that we do.

The second definitional problem is that, in common parlance, a need is confused with a product. This leads to the argument that no one needed an iPad until Apple introduced iPads, and no one needed BOTOX® treatments until BOTOX® treatments became available. A discourse on whether or not we needed something is impossible if we use the terms *need* and *product* interchangeably.

In contrast, we have defined ***need*** as a condition (an unsatisfactory one), not as a product that improves that condition. The need to create, store, access, and watch digital content on-the-go had always existed; iPads provided a solution—a better solution. And the need to impress peers and express ourselves had always existed; Nike offers, and BOTOX® treatments offer, to some consumers, a way to accomplish these goals. Consider cell phones with digital cameras. Before they became available, we did not need a digital camera in cell phones. In fact, we did not even need cell phones. But the need to be able to call our moms or friends from a place with no payphone nearby had always existed. And every once in a while we were in a place looking at something, some product, or some transient scene, and we wished we could capture it in a photo and show it to a friend far away in real time to get his or her opinion. We had always needed, too, the ability to see the caller's face on our tiny cell phone's screen. Since these possibilities were not available, we dreamed about them every once in a while and then pushed the thought away from our active attention. Until one day, science made the cell phone available, and then the cell phone with digital camera and video messaging capabilities, and we suddenly recognized these products as solutions to our long-dormant needs. But it was science that gave us those products, not marketing. Marketing brought the news and explained product functions and benefits. The same goes for every invention—from Post-it® Digital

Notes to hair transplants, science made them available, and, after that, marketing brought us the information and offered the invention at a price (sometimes a hefty sum, mind you). And those who saw these products as solutions to their needs—the conditions that were bugging them—bought them immediately, without much persuasion, whereas others waited a while or never bought them at all (a high-intensity marketing effort notwithstanding!).

Speaking of the products science has brought us, smart consumers would have discovered their benefits even in the absence of marketers, and from them, in turn, all consumers would have. Consumers who credit marketers with creating in them the need for all those new inventions are merely shifting responsibility from themselves to marketers.

What about products that are not scientific inventions, but are mere packaging of image, we might ask? Like, designer brands? Here, too, marketing receives more blame than it deserves. Let us imagine a world in which only one brand and one type of shoes (in all sizes, of course) were available, and only one brand and one style of clothes, and only one make and style of car. Would we have been happier then? There resides in us a need to differentiate ourselves, not to be stamped from a cookie-cutter, to be someone unique. We come to see ourselves as gregarious or private, rustic or suave, a city girl or a country boy, and marketing did not make us so, and we seek products that we believe reflect that personality.

**Two consumers.
Two different self-identities.
Expressed through clothes.**

**Miguel Young, a "watch repair artist" (L) and Sean Foley, an eco-design professor,
Fedora hat or tie-dye T-shirt—to each his own, courtesy of the marketplace.**

(Incidentally, no amount of clever marketing can make Miguel trade his fedora hat for the tie-dye T. And Sean will absolutely, positively not do the trade either. They might as well, but not because of marketing.)

What marketers do, to consumers' benefit, is simply to make those varieties, those differentiations in product offerings available, whether by the core composition of that product or by giving that product a cultural persona. And in countries where these products are not freely available (and where, therefore, there is no marketing), many consumers would kill to get them from the gray market if they could!

Somehow, consumers have their ideas of what will make them happy and they will do anything to get those things, marketing or no marketing. Without any promotion, Tesla's Model X and Model Y are, in some markets, on a 3-month waitlist; Kylie Jenner's first Lip Kits makeup sold out in under a minute; and during COVID-19 stay-at-home days, Exploding Kittens Card Game sold out on Amazon.com. The important question, therefore, is this: Where do consumers get their ideas? From diverse sources, actually. From the media for one. From seeing what the sports celebrities are driving, and what the rap artists are wearing. And they observe people around them. Who is wearing the shirt not tucked in, or the skinny jeans? Who is driving a Prius, and who is walking with a murse (a male purse)? Thus, it is the media, and it is the society as a whole, the culture, the world around us, and what we see on the streets we are roaming—these are the sources of our desires. Marketing is a part of this environment, no more, and no less.

The tattoo is already inside you!
This consumer, Victor Strunk, used to sixth-sense extra-terrestrial characters protecting him from dangers both from outside and from within, got them etched on his skin.

The tattoo is already inside you!

Let us look at it another way. Consider how many products are introduced in a typical year, and how many of them become abysmal failures. With all the marketing prowess behind them, marketers just can't convince enough number of consumers to part with their money to buy those products. And then there is the battle of the brands. In activewear, there is Fabletics and there is Outdoor Voices. In smartphones, there is iPhone SE and there is Galaxy Z Flip. The marketing savvy or effort of one is not less than of the other. Why, then, do we buy one brand and not the other? There is a very simple reason: Each brand makes a certain brand promise, each projects a certain image, each fits a certain consumer's inner self-image, and the consumer buys that which speaks to him or her. To other marketers, consumers vote "No"—with their wallets and purses. Yes, consumers respond to advertising, to marketing, but only to the brand and only to the marketer that in fact responds first to what is within the consumer already. As one tattoo artist, describing how he helps his clients choose a design, put it: "The tattoo is already within the consumer; all I do is bring it out for the world to see!"[7]

Below, we summarize the arguments on the two sides of this debate.

REASONS FOR:

1. What consumers really need (for survival) are just the basics (e.g., food, clothing, shelter). As to all other products, consumers come to believe they need them because marketers tell them so.

2. Marketers create new products. Until then, consumers manage with whatever is available. By creating new products, marketers create consumer needs for those products.

3. Marketers package products and create messages that lure consumers. By themselves, many of the products would not have attracted consumers.

4. Marketers flood the media with commercials and deals; exposed to a barrage of commercial messages day-in and day-out, it is natural for consumers to succumb.

REASONS AGAINST:

1. To limit consumer needs to basic survival is to limit consumers to mere biological beings. As social and psychological beings, their social and psychological needs are just as important.

2. Products are not needs, so creating products cannot equal creating needs. Products are solutions to needs, which must already exist in consumers.

3. Many products fail despite heavy marketing. Thus, not marketing but the product's benefits (including social and psychological benefits) cause consumers to want them.

4. Consumers don't really trust marketers anyway. Rather, their product choices are based on advice from independent sources and influence from peers.

So now, dear reader, you must decide which side you are on.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

+

MARKETING

=

PRODUCTS THAT BRING CONSUMERS VALUE

Seeing the Future First: Meeting Consumers' Latent Needs

Consider the telephone. It is a miracle. It was invented in 1876. Suddenly, two persons continents apart could talk to each other. Since then, technology experts in phone companies have upgraded the device over the years, improving sound fidelity and adding new features such as pulse tone, and, later, speed dial, memory, and muting. But their gaze had long remained focused on the telephone device itself. And while they kept in mind the consumer need the device served, that need seems to have been understood in its most obvious form: the need to talk to someone not within hearing range. They did not look deeper; it was assumed, inadvertently, that whenever someone wanted to talk to a distant person, that other person would be available at that location and at that time, and that he or she would want to talk to the caller, without knowing who was calling. Furthermore, it was assumed that the two would speak the same language! After all, it was not until 1971 that the answering machine was invented.[8] And it was not until 1987 that caller ID was first offered to consumers.[9] It took more than a hundred years to address these telephone-related consumer needs. For nearly a century, scientists and marketers had failed to recognize these communication needs of consumers. No one had bothered to look deeper. Now, in the age of smartphones, iTranslate Voice app enables bilingual conversations among some 40 languages; alas, the voice is virtual and we must await another day in the future for translation in the human voice of our interlocutors.

Marketing Is All About Satisfying a Consumer Need

Consider some other products to see if they create a new need, or, merely, albeit admirably, satisfy a latent need of consumers.[1]

Self-watering Flower Pot The pot has two chambers; the lower half is filled with water; and a wick from the top half, which contains soil, reaches out to the bottom chamber. Would you want to buy it? If yes, that is because the moment you saw it, you recognized it as the perfect solution to a latent need—the challenge of taking care of plants while on vacation. If not, then no amount of marketing effort would make you buy it.

Samsung's Vertical TV One of Samsung's latest products is a vertical TV, named Sero (Sero in Korean simply means "vertical"). With a 43" screen, the unit sits on a stand, and with the press of a button, the screen rotates between landscape and portrait positions. Thus, you can stream your social media (vertical) and watch Netflix (horizontal), each with no "dead space" on the screen. Priced at $1,997.00, this product innovation aims to please the heavy users of social media, like millennials.

Rainbow Flatware: Everyday utilitarian products don't have to be boring. You can now get flatware in rainbow colors. Jericho Rainbow Pvd Mirror 20 Pc Set is available from Cambridge Silversmiths at $70.0; Berglander 20-piece set for $23.99.

Eva Denmark & Tools Design

Wearable tech: Lechal Shoe Lechal (a Hindi word meaning "take me along") is the world's first haptic shoe, designed initially to help a blind person walk. Combined with a smartphone app, the wearer hears voice commands, and also feels the vibrations in the feet at the oncoming turns. And, of course, it detects objects in the pathway of the blind.

The company has now extended its original shoe for the blind into a line of shoes for everyone. The shoe offers navigation to anyone. You can buy the shoes or only the insoles and the stylish Hot Pods that snap into the footwear and serve as command centers for the shoe or insole.

Explains the (Lechel) company's website:

> **Simply snap the Lechal pods into your smart footwear, set your destination in the app and you're good to go. No maps, no hands, no audio, no screen notifications, no distractions—just you and your super smart shoes!**

Apps for your phone: There are hundreds of apps to download (most of them are free) from Apple or Google Play store. The most popular among teens and now millennials too is TikTok, a Chinese social media app loved for its short videos and memes. Another interesting app is RunPee, which tells you at what point in the movie you could go to the bathroom without missing significant story; upon return, you could read a quick synopsis of what you missed. Finally, on August 5, 2020, Covidwise was launched. Both Apple and Google compatible, the app will alert you if a COVID-positive person is nearby, so you could pull up your mask.

Lechal haptic shoe

Would you buy these products?

Now, let us consider briefly what role marketing plays (or will play) for these products. Consider the Sero TV? Will we buy it? Will we buy it if we had the money? How about the totally utilitarian self-watering plant container? Or the whimsical flatware? Or the hands-free navigational guide to embed in our shoe? Or download TikTok or RunPee or Covidwise? Some of us just might. But, and this is an important "but," only if we can find some practical use of these products; only if we judge these products to offer us at least one of the four values: U or S or E or R, at least in some measure. If not, no amount of marketing prowess will get us to part with our money.

Will we buy any of these products, that is a question each of us has to answer on our own. Yes or no, whatever be our answer, it is going to be our answer—the outcome of we determining if they will meet any of our needs.

Would a million-dollar ad campaign make us buy it? No, a million-dollar ad campaign will make us, at most and if at all, reassess if the product would bring us any benefits we value. That is all.

As these examples show, rather than creating needs in consumers, what marketing does best is invent new solutions to meet consumers' needs (overt or latent, physical or psycho-social), and communicate the new and enhanced value these new products bring to relevant segments of consumers.

CREATING CONSUMER VALUE: THE SUPREME PURPOSE OF BUSINESS

What is the purpose of marketing? For that matter, what is the basic purpose of business itself? To make money? "Wrong," says Harvard professor Theodore Leavitt, who explains this by an analogy: all humans have to breathe to survive, but breathing is not their purpose. Likewise, making money cannot be called the *purpose* of business.[2] The basic purpose has to relate to why society allows businesses to exist. It is, says Peter F. Drucker, one of the world's leading management gurus, "to create and keep a customer."[3]

For consumers, marketing is the "face" of a business. It is the marketing's job to align what the business produces and creates and what the consumer needs and wants. Marketing does not create a need. It creates a satisfied consumer. And in striving to do so, its practitioners—**marketers**—serve a very important role for consumers, and for society. They create products they hope will satisfy the latent needs of some segment of consumers; or they commercialize the inventions of inventors, adapting them to suit consumer needs and tastes. They bring, too, art, culture, aesthetics, design, and creativity to morph and sculpt a sociocultural identity for a given product—the so-called brand image, the one they hope will resonate with the target consumer. However, creating that brand image in the marketer's own image will bring all that multi-million-dollar effort and all that marketing prowess to naught; creating it, instead, as they should, in the target consumer's image will bring the admiration (and economic votes; i.e., dollars or Euros or yen) of its target consumers.

CB Notes

DIRTY LEMON Teaches Us to Buy in a New Way

Dirty Lemon, sugar-free lemon juice infused with a bevy of natural ingredients, designed to help our bodies function better, comes in six flavors in minimalist but hefty, attractive bottles. You buy them from the company's own independent "drug stores" (in select cities), which are not "stores" at all. Instead, they are just giant refrigerators placed by the sidewalk. There is no payment machine. You simply pick up a bottle, walk out and then text a code (printed on your bottle) to a phone number and your account will be debited. (You can open an account after you walk out with the product.) The exchange works on an honor system.

Welcome to the new face of shopping!

MyCBBook.com

To create a product in the consumer's image, marketers must labor to understand consumers' needs and wants, desires and motives, self-concepts and identities; they must then craft their products so that they solve consumers' relevant problems and fulfill their dreams. Marketers must think hard, as well, to decide what price will make for a good value for the consumer and still bring the firm fair economic returns on its investment. Marketing brings the product to consumers' doorsteps, or to the Web portals on their cell phone screens. And it creates the physical, social, and cultural milieu that smooths the product acquisition process for consumers and that invites, enables, and enhances consumers' consumption experiences. The art of doing this right is the profession of marketing. This is, in effect, the supreme mission of marketing.

How do we fulfill this mission? How do we create a satisfied customer? How else but by studying consumers, by analyzing how a consumer thinks, feels, and acts in the marketplace and how he or she connects products and specific brands to his or her needs and aspirations. By seeing the "proverbial 'tattoo' that is already within the consumer," so to speak. That is why understanding consumer behavior is of paramount importance to the success of all organizations, commercial or social.

ENLIGHTENED MARKETERS: RESPONDING TO EMPOWERED CONSUMERS

Enlightened marketers are embracing the empowered consumer. In the future more and more companies will have to offer consumers opportunities for personalization and co-creation of products (a la Zazzle); facilitate collaborative consumption and access to special-occasion products without imposing the burden of ownership (a la Girl Meets Dress), offer unique and authentic products (a la Stance), and harness emerging technologies to create new products of extraordinary value to consumers (a la Lechal or Uber). To prepare for that future, a future already upon us, it is imperative that we study how humans behave as consumers in their pursuit of happiness in the marketplace.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AS A FILED OF STUDY

When we seek to understand consumer behavior, we seek to understand, basically, human behavior, albeit in connection with the world of goods. As an applied field of study, it draws on four fields of social sciences dedicated to the study of human behavior:[4]

Anthropology is the study of humankind in its habitat. It examines humankind's historic development—how people came to live the way they do. It is a study of humans in nature—how they survive as a group and how culture develops to help them live and adapt.

Sociology is the study of social systems—groups, organizations, and societies. It examines their structure and how individuals relate to one another in these social groups. It includes the study of social institutions, such as the family, church, school, etc., and the part they play in society and in consumers' lives.

Economics is the study of goods—how they are produced, distributed, and consumed. As such it also deals with how societies and individuals allocate their resources on what to produce and what to buy. Economics helps us understand how we spend money, why we save it, and how to gain maximum utility from every transaction.

Psychology is the study of the human mind and the mental processes that influence a person's behavior. Here we study how we develop perceptions, how we learn, how we form attitudes, and what motivations drive our behavior.

As we cover various consumer behavior topics, we will constantly draw on related topics in these source disciplines, define the key concepts they use, and then go on to apply them to the behavior of humans as consumers.

Consider our shopper in the mall, Jackie, for example (see the Interview). We may find that Jackie has a worldview that is either perfectly normal or perfectly strange—depending on our own worldviews. If our cultures and therefore our worldviews are different from Jackie's, then we may find it a little strange that he thinks that people can look at his soul through his clothes. He also has a language (a dialect, actually) that is not standard English—in his culture, "brotha" does not mean one born of the same parents. An appreciation of these of his traits requires us to draw on anthropology, the study of humankind and its culture. Of course, his prime goal in buying clothes is to make himself attractive. Here we see the mys-

terious but very real influence of significant others on his choice of clothes. Sociology helps us understand which other groups may have influenced his choices as a consumer. Also, he is worried about not "maxing out" his credit card; so no matter how much he likes clothes, he is going to have to watch his money and make sure he gets good value for it. These are considerations that economics helps us understand.

There are other mental processes going on in Jackie's mind that we will need to understand: how did Jackie come to associate Fubu and Sean John with the kind of image he wants for himself? How is it that he equates his clothes with his soul? And why is it that he claims not to pay attention to advertising and not to be influenced by it, even though he declares this accomplishment by using advertising's own slogan, I "obey my own thirst"?

As consumers, we too engage in similar mental processes all the time. We wish to proudly brandish our Stance socks and hide all other brands; we come to embrace the brand persona of Juliet has a Gun perfume (which according to its web site is *mutinous*, *vengeful*, *androgynous*, *cavalier*, or *immaterial*) because we want to be that kind of a woman; and we choose clothing from Ministry of Supply, because it helps us believe in ourselves—that indeed we are the persons "who never stop moving, who never stop making a difference, who want to turn a great idea into a better reality now and for the future."

Psychology helps us understand these processes of the consumer's mind. Anthropology, sociology, economics, and psychology—all blended into one—that is the multidisciplinary study of consumer behavior.

Four *Source Fields*
that feed Consumer Behavior
as a field of study

WHO SHOULD STUDY CONSUMER BEHAVIOR?

There are four groups of people who should be interested in a study of consumer behavior and can benefit from understanding consumer behavior.

Marketers **Marketers** are the people who connect a business (or organization) to consumers. They present the product and its message to consumers, hoping consumers will find it a source of satisfaction of their needs. And, equally important, marketers interpret consumer needs and preferences for the benefit of their own organizations so other departments in their firms can design and make products that will satisfy those consumer needs. To play this role effectively, all marketers need to understand consumer behavior.

Note that in modern times marketers offer not just physical products or traditional services, but a whole spectrum of new age products. Uber (rideshare), Lime (bike and scooter), Calm and Headspace (sleep and mental health app-based digital and virtual products) all need to understand consumers.

Social Organizations The study of consumer behavior is just as useful to organizations whose goals are to promote public well-being, not to make money. Indeed, everyone is a marketer. Political parties market candidates, the Red Cross and other agencies seeking volunteers and money are marketers offering "good feelings" in exchange; arts organizations, educational institutions, social and human services agencies, all need to understand their consumers—donors, patrons, art aficionados, even irresponsible consumers.

Public Policymakers The third group with an interest in consumer behavior consists of public policymakers. They are concerned, as they should be, with protecting the consumer both from marketers' potentially deceptive practices and from consumers' own irrational consumption behaviors. While it always behooves marketers to act in the consumer's interest, sometimes marketers are tempted to engage in opportunistic practices that compromise consumers' interests. To prevent this, lawmakers make laws, and various agencies of the government enforce those laws, monitoring business practices. In order for these agencies to know when a practice is harmful to consumers, it has to know how consumers interpret various marketing programs. For example, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently sued QVC (a cable shopping

network) for running infomercials promoting its dieting and slimming products for women. The FTC charged that the ads misled consumers.[16] For this charge to have legs, it would have to be based on an understanding of the psychology of perception and exactly what constitutes consumer deception.

Public policy makers are also concerned with protecting consumers from their own unhealthy behaviors. For example, the U.S. government has mandated new nutrition labeling on food packages sold in stores (enforced as of January 1, 2020); however, it must study whether anyone heeds such health information and whether the restructuring of the information format helps. Thus, a study of consumer behavior is imperative also for public policy makers concerned with consumer protection.

Consumers Finally, a study of consumer behavior should be of interest to (surprise!) consumers themselves. We spend many of our waking hours and so much of our money contemplating and experiencing consumption that understanding what drives that behavior can be an interesting, even an eye-opening exercise. The good thing about this book and this subject as a field of study is that we can actually relate every topic to our own personal lives. By reading this book, you will understand your motives for buying or not buying something. You will learn the bases of your perceptions and misperceptions about products and brands. You will realize how our brains are imperfect computers, and yet how they process all product information reasonably well. You will understand, too, how you might be influenced by others and yet continue to believe that your marketplace choices are your own. And you will recognize how, through consumption, you construct your own identity—connected with some groups but purposely distanced from others.





(From top:) Charles and Yukari Infosino with son Nino, Christian and Martina Haag (Germany), Jamie Schworer with daughter Katey, Bianca Hutton, and Shvaathi Gowridass.

CONSUMERS: SAME AND DIFFERENT

Meet these consumers. You will read about them later in the book. For now, let us assume these five consumers (or dyads and triads) represent some 100 million consumers. What do we need to understand about them as consumers, and how can we use that knowledge for crafting a better marketing strategy?

First, we have the option of treating them as a single market and then craft our marketing mix to appeal to their common core. In that case, we will need to understand what their common core is. Alternatively, we could treat them as different types of consumers and appeal to each type separately. How many types are there —two, three, five, or more? How do we separate them into these diverse types? Identifying differences among consumers and then grouping them according to their similarities and differences is called **segmentation**, a key marketing concept and tool. A helpful guide to market segmentation is appended at the end of the book, so here we explain this topic only briefly.

Diverse Segments, Diverse Behaviors Some differences among consumers are easily visible. First, we could segment them by demographics, such as gender, age, education, ethnic identities, etc. Clearly, consumers with different demographics will differ on some (but not all) of their behaviors as consumers. Clothing styles differ across the two genders, and age differentiates the young from the old in terms of their edgier versus more conservative styles in clothes, shoes, cars, music, etc. Education changes not only our preferences but also the manner in which we process information and the kinds of entertainment media we consume (which means our marketing communications will have to be tailored in their aesthetics, and media choices will have to be diverse as well). In terms of ethnic identities, as we shall see later, Hispanics and Asians are more family-oriented, so package size (more family sizes) and communication themes (caring for family) will need to be tailored, to take just one example. Our socioeconomic status also constrains our resources, requiring diverse market offerings. J. Crew, hitherto catering to the mature professional adult launched a spin-off called *J. Crew Mercantile* to cater to adolescents with tight budgets due to their pre-earner stage in life (i.e., students).

Beyond demographics, consumers can also be segmented by psychographics, the composite of consumers' mental makeup and resulting lifestyles. Bohemian Sean is going to relate to the marketplace differently than, say, the yuppie, Fedora-sporting Miguel (you met them earlier in this chapter), and as marketers our offerings will have to be tailored, not only in terms of product design but also in the marketing message content.

Beyond demographics and psychographics, we can also segment our consumers based on diversity in the benefits they seek from the product (*benefit segmentation*) See Exhibit 2.1.

Whether we decide to segment our target consumers or treat them as a single market, we need to understand their consumer behavior—their basic human behavior as applied to their interface with the market.

EXHIBIT

2.1 SEGMENTATION OF CONSUMERS: TWO EXAMPLES

1 MOTIVATION (BENEFITS)

A BENEFIT SEGMENTATION OF FITNESS CLUB MEMBERS

Correctional Fitness

See themselves being out of shape and want to get back in shape by e ercising. hey see e ercise trainers, aerobics classes, and nutrition advice.

Maintenance Fitness

See themselves as normal and t and are motivated to stay t. se tness machines and aerobic classes and seek e ciency.

Build-up Fitness

Fit and healthy. Seek to build a muscular body. Heavy users of big machines and most devoted to spending time at the gym.

Relaxation

Come for rela ation and visit usually at the end of the workday. Mainly use swimming, sauna, and spa facilities.

Socialization

Come to socialize with friends and others with similar motives. Hang out at the pool, TV watching area, and the juice bar.

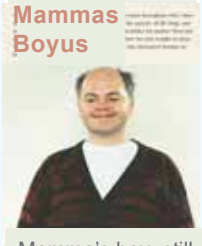
hypothetical e ample

2 DEMOGRAPHICS+PSYCHOGRAPHICS

AGE AND LIFE OUTLOOK OF HOME BUYERS

Young single; powerful built; becomes active after sunset; often ghts ri al males can open beer with teeth.

Young, fashion-able; shopping is a hobby; nests in yuppy-rich areas; fascinated by shiny objects.



Mamma's boy; still nests with parents; does not travel in herds; consumes twice his weight in pizza.

Couples, thrive in suburban areas; male sheds hair and gets restless around 50; seen with a snifter on Saturday nights.

Sociable and con-vivial, primarily ac-tive during the day; sheds the teeth every night; can be seen in tea-rooms.

bos a homebuilder in or ay targets customers de ned by li e-stage and mental ma eup. he company-supplied tongue-in-chee pro les e cerpted and hea ily edited here ma e an e cellent study in segmentation by demographics psychographics. (Used by permission.)

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MARKETING ON TRIAL

Supersized Fast-Food: I Loved It, But Nobody Told Me It Would Supersize Me!

A Date to Remember:

February 17, 2003

When both marketing and the consumer won

On July 24, 2002, the Supreme Court of the State of New York registered a complaint against the four biggest U.S.-based fast-food chains: McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, and KFC Corporation. The plaintiff was Caesar Barber, a 57-year-old resident of Bronx County (New York). At 5'2" height, he weighed 275 lbs. He suffered from diabetes and had had two heart attacks. His complaint: The fast-food chains were responsible for his health condition. How? For fifty years, he had eaten fast food four to five times a week.[5]

On February 17, 2003, Judge Robert Sweet of the State Supreme Court threw out the case. His ruling: The complaint failed to allege that the defendants' products were dangerous in any way other than that which was open and obvious to a reasonable consumer.[6]

At the core of the landmark lawsuit is the issue of the division of responsibility for consumption choices between individuals who make them freely and the marketers who make those choices available. "Where should the line be drawn," Judge Sweet had asked, "between individual responsibility and society's responsibility?"

While there may be a temptation to discount consumer Barber's action as an attempt to extort money from big corporations and to gain fame, it is worth noting that among the compensation and remedy demanded by the plaintiff were these items: (a) an order mandating the defendants to label their products with ingredients and their harmful effects; and (b) funding of an educational program to inform children and adults of the dangers of eating fast food.

Note also that Judge Sweet dismissed the case on grounds that the effects of eating fast food should be obvious to an average consumer; but he left open the possibility that the plaintiffs had not demonstrated that the fast-food chains knew of certain long-term health effects that an average consumer could not be expected to know about. That means that if, in the future, a company knows any of its products has harmful effects that are not common knowledge, then the company must reveal them to consumers or else it will be held responsible for any harm to consumers, even if the product was consumed voluntarily, as most products, in fact, are.

This lawsuit did serve to awaken everyone—consumers, governments, and marketers alike, to pay more attention to what is in our food, that which we consume in fast-food chains as well as that which we consume at home. And the fast-food chains have since leapfrogged to a menu that includes more healthy options and also more informative labeling.

Serving Consumer Wellbeing, Not Just Their Desires

The writing on the wall is clear. Professional marketing is not about exaggerating our product's benefits. Its goal is not to con the consumer into believing our product is that which it is not. This was never the marketing's purpose. It is even less true today, indeed less feasible, in the age of the net-savvy consumers, with abundant information being available on the web, both from competitors and from our social media fellow consumers. It behooves us as marketers, therefore, to stay true to our brand's core—the benefits and value it will bring to consumers, the savvy and the naive alike. Marketing's noble purpose is to tell the brand's authentic story, honestly and with full zeal and pride of ownership. As marketers, that is our charge. And our privilege.

2 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we raised the question, "Does marketing create consumer needs?" We examined various arguments both for and against. The key to answering this question is a wise definition of the term *Need*, so we presented a definition that avoids equating a need with the product itself,

Marketing merely presents products and brings their benefits to consumers' attention, and consumers pick and choose what meets their needs--the needs they acquire growing up in their cultures.

Satisfying a consumer need is the very purpose of business. And in order to do just that, marketers must, we argue, study consumer behavior.

The study of consumer behavior is built upon the core disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and economics. And, besides marketers, social organizations and public policy agents too must study it. Lastly, consumers themselves should study it so they can understand their own consumer behavior.

We presented an illustration of segmenting our target consumers. This is a basic tool of marketing that recognizes the fact that not all consumers are alike, a fact we appreciate even more as we study consumers.

An important question concerns relative responsibility of marketers versus those of consumers themselves. The responsibility is mutual, we explained. But our laws do assign to marketers the responsibility of full and proactive disclosure of any harmful effects of a product that might not be common knowledge.

Marketing is a profession. While anyone can practice marketing, professional marketers see their jobs as the opposite of conning consumers. Marketing's noble purpose is to tell the brand's authentic story, honestly and with full zeal and pride of ownership. As marketers, that is our charge. And our privilege.

2 KEY TERMS

Consumer need
Purpose of business
Purpose of marketing
Marketers
Mental activities
Psychology
Sociology
Anthropology
Economics

2 YOUR TURN

REVIEW+Rewind

1. What is the purpose of business? Is it or is it not "to make money"? Explain.
2. What is consumer segmentation? Why is it important from the vantage point of consumer behavior as a discipline?
3. What use does a study of Consumer Behavior/psychology have for non-profit and governmental agencies?

THINK+Apply

1. Some accuse marketing of creating consumer needs, making us buy things we did not need. Do you agree or disagree? Defend your answer.
2. If a consumer becomes obese from frequently eating fast food, and suffers severe ill health, who is responsible, the consumer or the marketer?

PRACTICE+Experience

Interview a few consumers to understand their view of whether marketing creates needs? Probe them for examples and how that example supports their point-of-view.

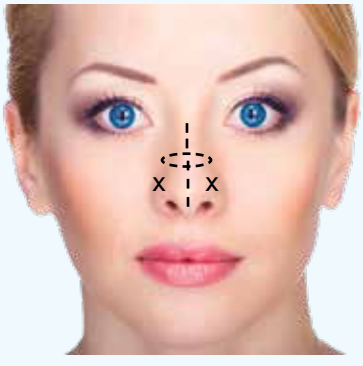
Next interview a few marketing managers of consumer goods company.
Ask them also how the view they hold on this issue colors and affects, if, the practice of their craft.

DOES MARKETING CREATE CONSUMER NEEDS? WE ARE FREE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION AS A *YES* OR A *NO*. WE ARE NOT FREE TO ASSUME THAT OUR ANSWER WILL NOT COLOR OUR LIFE'S WORK AS MARKETERS.

3 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The fire that lights within

1. Consumer Motivation as a Fundamental Inner Force
2. Approach Avoidance Motives
3. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Its Fluidity
4. Beyond Maslow: Murray's List of Motives
5. Unconscious Consumption Motives
6. Methods of Researching Motives



I am motivated to get what I want.

TO UNDERSTAND

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Look, I Got A New Face!

Welcome to Brazil. We are famous for our beaches, of course. But today, let us show you another face of Brazil, that of being "the world's epicenter of plastic surgery"!

Brazil overtook the USA in 2014 and has maintained that lead with 1,498,237 surgeries in 2019, with the USA a close second at 1,492,327.

When it comes to plastic surgery, Brazil has an interesting history. In the 1950s a doctor named Ivo Pitanguy convinced the government that self-loathing or low self-esteem due to poor looks is harmful to health. Since that time, in Brazil, plastic surgeries are viewed as "essential health." Most health insurance companies cover it and, in public hospitals, plastic surgeries are free or at a very low cost, especially for low-income or poor people. At his clinic, Dr. Pitanguy, now known as "the pope of plastic surgery" himself performed pro bono or charity surgeries for the poor.

In public hospitals, where surgeries are free, there is a long queue of patients with waiting times of several months or even several years! Facilities are in poor condition. But young resident physicians are eager to perform such surgeries on low-income patients as they see it as an opportunity to get training.[1]

Brazil is known to have the best plastic surgeons. But the procedures are not easy. Consider Rhinoplasty, the procedure to reshape our noses. A long incision is made on the bridge between the two nostrils. Then with tweezers, the skin is lifted up as if it were the hood of a car. And then, with a scalpel, the bone is cut and the cartilage is shaped.

Despite the risk and pain, Brazilian women seek plastic surgeries in droves. They consider their looks and body shape an essential ladder to climbing up to a good job, a good husband, or even a good date. One more thing: Unlike in the USA and other nations, face or body augmentation procedures are not considered a taboo topic; so, women admit having undergone the procedure and display their new face proudly. And yes, Brazil's beautiful beaches play a prominent role: They present ample opportunity to showcase your augmented bodies or reshaped faces!

Meet the new consumer. The consumer with a new face—literally.

Achieving that face was no cakewalk. The now altered face was under the knife for more than four hours. The costs were upward of 10,000 dollars. There was considerable post-surgery pain. And there was some risk that the face would suffer some permanent nerve damage. But appearance is very important to some consumers. Worldwide, in 2019, there were 10.60 million surgical and 12.65 million nonsurgical procedures to reshape the body or the face. In the USA and everywhere, the selfie culture has fueled a new demand for facelifts.[2]

Of course, looking good has always been a consumer obsession, for centuries. Only, until recently, we couldn't do much about it. But now, medical technology has made it possible. So, those of us who can afford it can have it—a new face, new skin, new body. But more than money, we still would need a strong motivation.

Motivation is a powerful force in life. Without it, we would simply vegetate; with it, we can accomplish a lot. As consumers, too, we need motivation. It takes money and effort to acquire things—we must have the motivation to want something badly enough that we are willing to devote our time to it and part with our money. There are products we want, and, just as surely, there are products we don't want. It all depends on whether or not those products stir our motivations.

But just what is motivation? In this chapter, we are going to find out. We are going to define it, illuminate its true nature, and explain why it has such a strong grip on our lives. We are going to learn some theories of motivation and become familiar with a variety of motivations that instigate our consumption behavior. And we will also meet two of motivation's siblings: emotion and involvement.

CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The Why Behind the What

In everyday language, we use the word *motive* or *motivation* to imply a reason for doing something. If our coworker who has been unfriendly and standoffish all these years suddenly gave us a bottle of cologne as a gift, we would wonder why. What was his reason or motive? Was it that he could stand our body odor no more? Or was it that he was going to ask for a favor, like taking care of his clients while he went away on a vacation trip?

Describing motivation as a "reason for doing something" is fine as far as everyday usage of the term goes, but it doesn't tell us much about how we experience it. That experience is captured in the definition we present next.

The Fundamental Inner Force

Motivation is what moves a person—it is the driving force for all human behavior. More formally, **motivation** can be defined as goal-directed drive. Let us consider each of the two components of motivation implied in this definition.

Drive Drive is energy. When we want something, and want it badly, we are thrust into action. If you are running a competitive race, and you see yourself five feet behind the leading contender, you feel high energy to catapult your body to the finish line. If we learn that free tickets to a concert are being given to the first 100 customers, we rush to the venue to join the line. This energy, this drive, then, is a key ingredient in our motivation.

Goal Object What we feel the energy for is not random, of course. Rather, it is something that we know will help us achieve our goal or deliver us a benefit we value highly. In other words, it is our goal. Goal object is, thus, the second ingredient of motivation.

We are now ready to formally define motivation. **Motivation** is the human drive to attain a goal object. A **drive** is a force or energy that impels us to act. And a **goal object** is something in the world, the acquisition or attainment of which will bring us happiness.[3]

A MODEL OF MOTIVATION

When we desire a goal object, its absence makes us feel discomfort. Or if we are at discomfort, we seek the goal object that will alleviate our discomfort. If we are hungry, the discomfort of hunger pangs makes food our goal object. If we want a new pair of Nike shoes, then we feel unease until we acquire that new pair of shoes. Discomfort occurs due to a gap between our desired state and our actual current state. This gap is felt as discomfort and creates tension. Tension in turn produces the energy or drive to achieve the goal object. A drive is like a spring, compressed by felt discomfort and, therefore, under tension and ready to release with force. The greater the pressure (i.e., the discomfort), the greater the released force (i.e., drive). Drive provides the energy to act; goal object provides the direction in which to channel that energy.

A person with goal objects but without the drive is just a daydreamer; one with energy but no goal object is akin to a hyperactive child. When energy is expended to attain some goal object, we call that use of energy motivated or **purposive behavior**.[4] (See Figure 3.1.) Remember, then, to be motivated, we should have both a *drive* and a *goal object*.

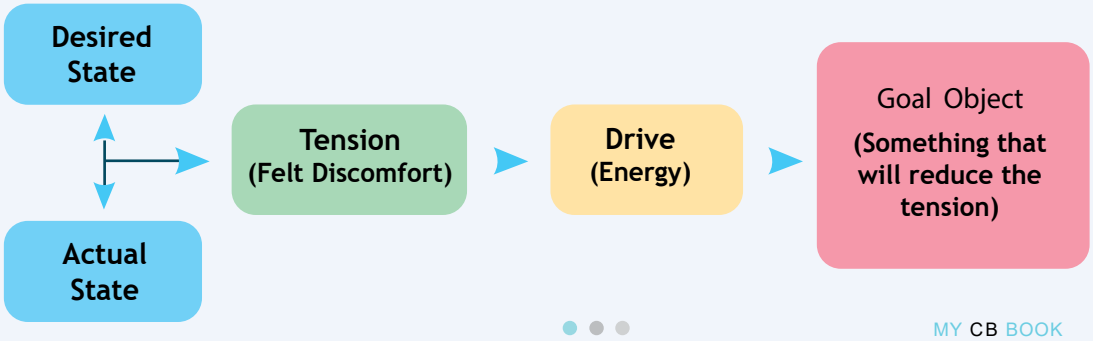
What about needs and wants?

Motivation is goal-directed energy. A motivated behavior is a goal-driven behavior. Then, what about needs? Isn't it true that our needs drive all of our behaviors? We need food, for example, so we do whatever is required to get food. In the definition of motivation, where do needs fit in? How are motivation and need related?

In Figure 3.1, notice that the tension or discomfort produces the drive. Thus, tension or discomfort is NOT motivation itself, but rather a precursor to motivation. That tension or discomfort is what need is. That is how we defined need in Chapter 1. That need (i.e., felt discomfort) comes from a felt gap between the current state and the desired state. A need, then, is an instigator of the drive component of motivation. If we didn't feel any need, then we would not have any drive.

Sometimes, there is only one goal object that can reduce a particular tension. But often the world offers us a range of solutions. To relieve hunger pangs, for example, we must get some food, but what kind of food? The kind of food we feel will satisfy us the most becomes our goal object. The desire for a particular goal object is, as defined in Chapter 1, a want. Thus, needs and wants are closely related to motivation. Needs provide the drive, and the want provides the goal object. Our needs and wants are what make us different consumers.

FIGURE 3.1 A MODEL OF CONSUMER MOTIVATION



MY CB BOOK

Image courtesy of Mudra Communications, India.

The motivational power of desire for products

Well, then, from where do needs come?

Innate Versus Learned Needs

Where do needs come from? Are we born with them, or do we acquire them? The answer is, both. Scholars classify needs into two types: innate and learned. **Innate needs** are needs with which we are born. They are common to all humans, rooted in our survival instincts. Thus, a hungry stomach creates an innate need, and so does a body shivering with cold or burning with heat, exposed to the harsh weather outside. In contrast are **learned needs**, which are acquired in the process of growing up and living. So, when we say we feel our hair has grown half-an-inch too long, we feel bored with our current car, or feel our clothes are out of fashion and make us look uncool, we were not born with these needs, and our survival does not depend on overcoming these conditions. These are needs we learned living in particular cultures and social groups.

Biogenic Versus Psychogenic Needs

Another classification of needs is biogenic versus psychogenic needs.

And what our bodies need

Biogenic needs are conditions of discomfort stemming from our biology as humans. All bodily discomforts are included in this category, but such needs go beyond hunger, thirst, and exposure to rough weather. They include tiredness from working or walking, illness, and loss of motor skills and sensory faculties due to aging (e.g., vision and hearing loss). They also include certain negative conditions pertaining to our bodies, many of which are based on our individual genes, such as oily or dry hair. Or our bodies may be intolerant of certain foods, such as milk for the lactose-intolerant, or allergic to certain materials (e.g., bird feathers), which creates the need to find substitute products (e.g., hypoallergenic pillows). Finally, biogenic needs also include cravings for certain foods and substances (e.g., spicy food, caffeinated beverages, and narcotics), which we develop because of the conditioning of our bodies and tastes. Thus, strictly speaking, not all biogenic needs are innate needs. We learn some of them through repeated use, and, with strong wills, we can use our minds to extinguish them. But until we do so, the conditioned cravings of our bodies do qualify as biogenic needs.

Brand Anakiri seeks to fulfill both biogenic and psychogenic needs of ecology-conscious consumers.

And what our mind needs

Psychogenic needs, in contrast, stem from our mental makeup, not from our bodies—the way we think about ourselves and about the world, how we define happiness and success, and what we consider to be good and bad. Lack of things we consider essential to our happiness produces a state of discomfort in our minds and thus creates psychogenic needs. We all want to look cool, and if we come to believe that sporting a pair of Calvin Klein jeans will make us cool, then the discomfort of not having that pair of jeans is a psychogenic need. If we come to believe that adorning our bodies with tattoos will get us the admiration and popularity we seek, then that is a psychogenic need as well.

Note, however, that just as all biogenic needs are not innate, not all psychogenic needs are learned either. Some psychogenic needs are, in fact, innate. For example, as we shall see later in the chapter, need to get peer approval is innate to all humans, as humans are social creatures.

Then what about a facelift?

Now think about the facial surgeries many boomers are having done these days. What kind of need do they exemplify? The correct answer is "psychogenic." Just because what we gain—the goal object—pertains to our bodies, it does not make it a bodily or biogenic need. Rather, this need stems from our psychological makeups, our ways of thinking—both that we are unhappy with our looks and that we covet certain facial features. The need is produced by our views of ourselves as psychological beings, not biological beings; therefore, the perceived need for a facelift is a psychogenic need.

Why is a facelift a psychogenic need?

Some products and brands satisfy, of course, only a biogenic need (e.g., a generic brand of cotton swab); others satisfy a purely psychogenic need (e.g., a birthday greeting card). But consumers seek most products to satisfy simultaneously both types of needs, and many brands strive to deliver just that to consumers, such as a line of skincare products that are also eco-friendly; or cosmetics by Kylie Jenner that her fans find immensely uplifting of their self-im age.

SAVVY MARKETER

Approach-avoidance Motives

Things we seek and things we avoid

We have defined motivation as a goal-directed drive. But this does not mean that goal objects are always desirable. Some goal objects are the ones we want to avoid. The drive we feel to avoid a goal object is also motivation. Consumer psychologists, therefore, recognize two types of motivations: approach and avoidance.

Approach motivation is the desire to attain a goal object. Approach goal objects (i.e., objects that attract us) are sought or even longed for, such as the latest game for Xbox or Michael Jackson's left-handed glittery glove (sold at

the "Music Icons" auction at the Hard Rock Cafe in New York City's Times Square, November 21, 2009, for $104,614). Being deprived of them creates discomfort and unhappiness.

Avoidance motivation is the desire to protect oneself from an object, such as a bee sting or a stale or unhygienic burger. Technically, approach and avoidance motives are called, respectively, appetitive and aversive. Of course, one consumer's poison may be another's nectar. Vegetarians love tofu, but avoid meat; most non-vegetarians love meat, naturally, and some of them may not like tofu.

We all want the "approach objects," and we all want to avoid the "avoid objects." Sometimes we are lucky and have to choose between two desirable options—say, out of two toys, we can only have one. That lucky situation is called **approach-approach conflict**. Of course, sometimes we also get totally unlucky and face two options equally undesirable. Got a speeding ticket? Well, you can pay a fine, or you can attend three hours of safe-driving classes (purposely designed, it seems, to bore you!). You are facing what is known as an **avoid-avoid conflict**.

The above two types of conflicts occur when we are faced with two separate options—two equally enjoyable TV shows at the same time, two equally charming dresses, or two equally mouth-watering desserts. Or, if we are unlucky, two equally tasteless diet foods, two equally boring classes, or two equally moist-eye movies that our significant others have short-listed for us to watch together. But there is a third type of conflict, called **approach-avoid conflict**—a conflict we experience when we find an object desirable as well as undesirable. This happens for products that have both desirable and undesirable features. Unfortunately, products often are mixed blessings: a part of them is good, but a part of them is undesirable. For example, the taste in Hershey's candy bars is desirable, but their fat and calorie content is not.

As marketers, our greatest challenge is to minimize the negative aspects of our product while maximizing its desirable properties. Avoidance motives of consumers provide opportunities for marketers just as approach motives do. Blending two hitherto mutually opposed attributes (e.g., healthy and good-tasting) in a product can bring an unusual value to consumers by banishing their approach-avoid conflict.

A Universal Dictionary of Motivations

How many products do you own? How many will you buy this year? If you will buy a hundred products, do you have a hundred motivations?[5]

No, to count the individual reason for buying each product as a separate motive would give us a long list of motives, a thousand or more, and it would be difficult to plan any action around a long list of motives. As marketers, we therefore need to find a more sensible way of counting and specifying consumer motivations—a way that goes to the core of why we need these thousands of products to begin with. There must be, in humans, a core set of needs that can

Copy in the ad reads: If you're partial to style, you'll find it here. From sleek curves and contoured handles to the drama of high gloss finishes. After all, when it comes to refrigerators, style does matter.

If you're partial to intellect, you'll find it here. From quick thawing and chilling to the remarkable power of turbo-cooling. After all, when it comes to refrigerators, intellect does matter.

Rescuing the consumer from the approach-avoid conflict, par excellence!

be accounted for within a short list—short enough to remember and utilize in real-world marketing. The good news is that there is. Psychologists have studied human motives for years and have grouped all of the human motives into a few categories. One of those psychologists was Abraham Maslow, who gave us a short list of five core motives. There are, of course, other lists, but this one has stood the test of time and has become a classic in marketing and consumer behavior. No marketer can ever claim to understand why people buy things without understanding Maslow's theory of human motivation. It is, in other words, "a universal dictionary of motivations"—translating thousands of consumer purchases into five simple need categories.

MASLOW'S MODEL OF HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Humans live for bread and then more!

The five need categories in Maslow's theory are:

1. **Physiological needs**
2. **Safety and security needs**
3. **Belonging and love needs**
4. **Esteem and ego needs**
5. **Self-actualization needs**[6]

Actually, Maslow did more than simply propose this list; he also suggested a pecking order among them—that is, what humans must have first before they seek something else. His theory is called **Maslow's hierarchy of needs**—the order in which humans experience needs. The hierarchy is shown in Figure 3.2 as a pyramid. According to Maslow, the needs at the bottom of the pyramid must be satisfied first; until they are, the higher-level needs remain dormant. But the moment the lower-level needs become satisfied, then, almost inevitably, the next level of needs comes to life. Let us look inside this pyramid.

Physiological needs At the bottom of the pyramid are **physiological needs**—i.e., our bodily needs (also called biogenic needs). These needs drive us all to seek food, clothing, and shelter. We must satisfy these needs before we worry about anything else. It is a no-brainer—if we are starving, then we must find food before we seek, say, a Peloton bike. And we must find clothes before we seek a facelift.

Furthermore, many of the differences in what consumers use and buy are due to physiological (that is, biological) differences; i.e., differences attributable to genetics, race, gender, or age. Examples include soy milk for lactose-intolerant persons (genetics), vision-correcting glasses for weak eyes (due to age or genetics), and custom-made shoes for people with feet of unequal size. For all humans, such needs are paramount. And these must be satisfied before consumers will feel other needs.

FIGURE 3.2 Maslow's Model of Hierarchy of Needs

Safety and Security Needs Closely following physiological needs are **safety and security needs**—the need to be protected from danger. Personal safety is a motive as old as survival itself—early man developed arrows and spears to kill predatory animals that threatened his survival. In modern times, the new weapons are personal cell phones and community-supported police forces. Now there are new products dedicated just to this motive: Ring Security System, cameras installed in our cars that would beep if you begin to fall asleep while driving your car, and privacy protection software like SiteLock.

Belonging and Love Next come social motives of **belonging and love**. We are all social creatures, and once our physiological and physical safety concerns are met, our social needs become active. We want to have friends and family, and we want to receive love and affection from others. Without love and affection, our lives will feel empty. To satisfy this kind of need, consumers buy products that are well-regarded by others and the use of which will bring them peer approval, affection, and a sense of belonging. The kind of car we choose to drive, the designer logos on the clothes we wear, and whether we get a tattoo or a piercing on our bodies—each of these is determined, at least in part, by how we think our peers and significant others will look upon our choices. Many products, such as greeting cards, flowers, and other kinds of gifts, are bought specifically to promote relationships with others.

Ego and Esteem Next in the hierarchy are **ego needs**—the need to feel good about ourselves and to have self-esteem. We all work hard to gain success in our individual spheres of activity and to acquire the qualities others consider desirable and virtuous so that we can win our own and others' esteem. We also buy products and services we believe support our self-image. We drive

cars, for example, that, beyond impressing others, in our judgment, reflect who we are; we visit stores in which we are treated with respect; and we even buy and give gifts to ourselves because we feel "we deserve" them.

Self-actualization Finally, once these physiological, security, social, and esteem needs are satisfied, people begin to explore and extend the bounds of their potential—to become what they are capable of being. This is the need for **self-actualization**—the need to realize one's true potential. To quote Maslow, "musicians must make music, artists must paint, poets must write if they are to be ultimately at peace with themselves. What humans can be, they must be."[7]

Indeed, the self-actualization motive is what drives many adults to go back to school and acquire a new set of skills. And many marketers appeal to consumers' ambitions. (A recent ad from Monster.com poked fun at people who were content with their current mediocre jobs.) Many not-for-profit agencies appeal to the consumer's sense of being a good citizen. The U.S. Army's long-running slogan "Be All You Can Be" and, later, "The Army of One" are calls to a person's need for self-actualization.

In Eastern philosophy, many see their self-actualization as meeting their Creator, becoming what they are supposed to be in a cosmic sense. They spend endless hours meditating and reflecting on the nature of life and its purpose. And in Eastern and Western societies alike, religious messages such as "God is within you" are designed to appeal to a believer's need for self-actualization.[8]

How the hierarchy works

The storm inside the pyramid

If this pyramid were a five-story building, there would have to be an elevator that only went upwards and only one floor at a time—or at least that is how the foregoing description of Maslow's hierarchy reads. But that description was for starters, designed to explain the basic pattern. We can now move beyond and look more closely at the hierarchy. Rather than being a five-story building served by an upward-only elevator stopping at each floor, perhaps a more apt analogy is an ocean with five "layers" of water, being navigated by a submarine. The submarine moves relatively effortlessly between the top and the bottom layers of water, causing many crosscurrents. These crosscurrents occur because our needs at any one level of hierarchy recur. They occur, also, because we don't have to satisfy the needs at one level fully before moving on to the next level. Rather, we need to satisfy them only to a good degree. Thus, if we need a place to live, we can rent an apartment in whatever condition it is in and move in. Then we can attend to the task of studying for our classes. After the first test is done, we can attend to making the apartment more livable and buying the essential furniture we need.

The point of the hierarchy is that consumers have to feel at least some modicum of comfort at one level of their needs before they become concerned about the next "higher" level of needs. We can't sell someone a necktie if his throat is desert-dry with thirst.

Product Journey up the Pyramid

Or why a chair comes in so many shapes

There is another fascinating fact about our motivation to acquire things as it relates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Consider the three chairs shown here.

What motivates a particular consumer to buy one rather than the other of these three chairs? Their basic function is the same: to satisfy our physiological need to be seated. And that need is well-satisfied by the Hand Chair, for example, which costs only $90. The other two chairs also satisfy that need; but, in addition, they might meet higher-level needs as well. The Lips Chair would probably appeal to a consumer who thinks that it might be an icebreaker and that friends might hang out at his or her place more often. It will meet, in other words, his or her need for belonging and love. What about the Broadway Chair: Who is going to buy it—at $1460? Besides being rich, what else would motivate a person to buy something like this? Most likely, this person is an art connoisseur, or one who believes that others will hold him or her in high esteem, awed by his or her appreciation of the art and beauty of the chair. It will satisfy, in other words, his or her need for esteem.

Recall that we began this quest for coming up with a short list of motivations because counting them as "motives to acquire specific things" would have resulted in a long and unwieldy list of thousands. The short list in Maslow's hierarchy solves that problem. But there is also a bonus benefit. A product is no longer tied to a specific need; it can now meet more than one need. A chair must satisfy a physiological need, of course, but, in addition, it can satisfy the need for belonging or esteem as well. And this is where the real fun begins, for consumers and marketers alike. Consumers must decide how many and which needs they want a product to satisfy. And marketers must invent new versions of products so as to satisfy new combinations of consumers' needs.

Lips Chair
www.Sexyfurnish-ings.com

Hand Chair
www.Brightthrift.com

Broadway Chair
(Courtesy: Bernini SPA)

Beyond Maslow—Murray's List of Needs

The Psychology of Flashmobs

A few years ago, Flashmobs suddenly became the latest craze among some cyber-consumers. Begun in 2003, and in vogue until 2015, they can be now enjoyed in 100s of videos on Instagram. And Flashmob America offers

CB Notes

Dine Alone, Find Love

If you were in London on February 14, 2020, you could have had a very special Valentine's Day dinner, alone.

Located on Great Eastern St., London, as a popup, it was called "Self-Love Restaurant." To qualify, you answer a one-sentence quiz on its mobile app: "Do you like looking yourself in the mirror?" Then, when you arrive at the restaurant, you will be seated at a narrow table facing a full-size mirror and just one chair. The mirror would be decked with hand-written feel-good messages. One of them read: "Best Date Ever." Another one read: "Hey good lookin'."

Midway during the five-course meal (priced at 20 GBP), a waiter would remove the mirror, revealing the solo diner on the other side of the two-sided mirror. You finish the meal now facing each other. Then, you had the option of paying for your "just found" date as well or going Dutch. The event was created by Tastecard, a dining membership club.

Reading about it now, you wish you were there. Just what specific motive is making you want it, you wonder.

opportunities for organizing one. If there is one near you, would you join it?

Why did thousands of people across the world participate in them? Can we explain this behavior by using Maslow's scheme of needs? We could say, of course, that it was to satisfy their need for belonging. That is at best a partial explanation, for the crowds disbursed after a mere ten-minute performance. The Flashmob.com site (now defunct) described its purpose: *Breathing life and vibrancy into the dull corners of modern life. Perhaps there is something more, like a need for excitement, or a need to shock and surprise bystanders.* The distinction of Maslow's scheme is that it "orders" all of the human motives into five broad and generalized categories. As such for explaining more niche human behaviors, we need more detailed lists. Niche behaviors like, why some customers walk away when salespersons try hard to sell them something? Or why some people enjoy telling stories to others? And why do some consumers happily pay upward of $1,000 for a celebrity-worn pair of jeans?

Fortunately, other psychologists have proposed more detailed lists. One list popular in marketing is from psychologist Henry Murray. Murray proposed a list of 12 biogenic and 28 psychogenic needs. See a sampling of those needs in Table 3.1. Review that list and you will realize that Murray helps us define consumer needs at a more detailed level than does Maslow. With a list like this, now we can explain almost any consumer behavior. Looking at Murray's list, what would you say is the motive behind flashmobs? Or behind such consumer behaviors as impulse buying, being a demanding customer, or playing an opinion leader?

UNCONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION MOTIVES

The Bliss of Not Knowing What Makes Us Buy Things

Suppose we told you that Jane Infosino, one of our neighbors, buys a lot of kitchen appliances; that Mark O'Connor, one of our friends in Denver, Colorado, always wears shoes that are rather heavy; and that Angelica Yoshida, one of our coworkers, always wears white cotton dresses. Why? What do we mean by "why"? Aren't their motivations obvious, you wonder? Jane most likely loves to cook; Mark perhaps does a lot of walking and likes to keep his feet warm in the cold weather of Denver; and Angelica feels that white cotton looks good on her.

These are all good reasons. And, most likely, these are actually the reasons these consumers, Jane, Mark, and Angelica, would give us. But Ernest Dichter disagrees. He believes that Jane's love of kitchen appliances arises from her desire to gain mastery over her environment; that Mark wears heavy boots to show off his masculinity; and that Angelica's penchant for white cotton is due to a sense of the moral purity she feels in the deep layers of her soul. "Who is Ernest Dichter?" you ask. "And could there be anything weirder than these explanations?"

Flashmobs: Breathing life and vibrancy into the dull corners of modern life

Ernest Dichter was a psychoanalyst who trained in Vienna in the early part of the 20th century. A strong believer in Sigmund Freud's ideas about the subconscious in the human psyche, he believed that unconscious motives play a significant role in people's consumption decisions. He believed that we suppress from our consciousness a lot of our motives because they are not appreciated by society. But, buried inside the deep layers of our minds, they still influence our behaviors, both in life and in the marketplace. We remain unaware of them, of course—that is why they are called "unconscious motives"—and being unaware serves us just fine. Ignorance here really is bliss.

The reasons people give us are sometimes only half-truths.

Dichter conducted in-depth interviews with consumers for some 200-plus products. Based on these interviews, he identified a set of subconscious motives/needs that explain why individuals consume certain products. (See Table 3.2.)

Marketers have always looked at Dichter-like claims of unconscious motives with less-than-total belief. But peeping into consumers' unconscious motives has not been entirely fruitless. Consider the following story:

> **Back in the sixties, the Pillsbury Company came out with a new product: a quick-baking cake mix. No more need to diligently measure and mix various ingredients; no more need to skillfully monitor the baking process; hours of labor in the kitchen simplified. Homemakers should rush to buy it, right? For some unknown reasons, they were not buying it. When the company researchers asked them why, their typical answer was, "The cake wouldn't taste good." Yet, in blind taste tests, they couldn't tell the difference. Obviously, they had some deep-seated motive against buying a quick-baking cake mix, and they wouldn't tell us if we asked them directly. In-depth research revealed that the real reason was that this innovative product took away from women their opportunity to practice what they then considered the "art of cake baking."**

(Read these on the next page)

TABLE 3.1 MURRAY'S LIST OF PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS (A sample with consumer examples)

NEED	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Autonomy	To be independent and free to act on impulse; To be unattached; To be irresponsible; To defy convention	Impulse buying; wearing unconventional clothes, etc.
Dominance	To direct the behavior of others	Aggressively demanding attention in service establishments
Nurturance	To give sympathy; to feed, help, and protect the needy;	Giving to humanitarian causes
Exhibition	To make an impression; To excite, amaze, fascinate, entertain, shock, intrigue, amuse or entice others	Wearing high-fashion clothing
Cognizance	The need to explore, ask questions, to seek knowledge	Visiting museums; learning about new technology
Exposition	The need to give information and explain, interpret, lecture	Playing opinion leaders

Note. Our descriptions are intuitive, intended to explain Consumer Behavior. For original descriptions, see H.A. Murray. Explorations in Personality (New York: Oxford, 1998).

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If you are a total disbeliever in the existence of subconscious motives, ask any grandparents why they buy toys for their grandchildren. They will tell you, invariably, that it is because they love their grandchildren. They are not wrong, but often that is not the whole truth. Few, if any, will tell you that it is also to satisfy their own need to receive the love and affection of their grandchildren. Or ask someone why they are planning to buy a GMC Hummer EV (announced on May 5, 2020, for launch in 2021) and they might answer, "I plan to make cross-country, off-road trips." The real motive might be to overcome anxiety because they suspect that onlookers don't view them as being strong and macho enough.

The reasons people give may sometimes be only half-truths. The other half resides in their unconscious motives. It behooves marketers to uncover conscious as well as unconscious motives. Since unconscious motives influence consumption decisions unconsciously, Dichter's list of motives is most useful for incorporating symbolism in product advertising.

TABLE 3.2 DICHTER'S LIST OF SUBCONSCIOUS MOTIVES (A sample with consumer examples)

MOTIVE	EXAMPLES OF CONSUMPTION DECISIONS
Mastery over environment	Kitchen appliances, power tools
Status	Drinking scotch; owning a car in a third-world country
Rewards	Candies, gifts to oneself
Individuality	Gourmet foods; foreign cars; tattoos
Social acceptance	Companionship: sharing tea-drinking
Love and affection	Giving children toys
Security	Full drawer of neatly ironed shirts
Masculinity	Toy guns; heavy shoes
Femininity	Decorating (products with heavy tactile component)
Eroticism	Sweets (to lick); gloves (to be removed by women as a form of undressing)
Disalienation (a desire to feel connected)	Listening to and calling into talk shows
Moral purity/cleanliness	White bread; bathing; cotton fabrics
Magic-mystery	Belief in UFOs, religious rituals, crystals (having healing power), etc.; visiting Elvis Presley museum and buying related products

Note: Constructed by author, based on information in J. F. Durgee, "Interpreting Dichter's Interpretations: An Analysis of Consumption Symbolism in the Handbook of Consumer Motivations," in H. Hartvig-Larsen, D. Mick, and C. Alstead, eds., Marketing and Semiotics: Selected Papers from the Copenhagen Symposium (Copenhagen, 1991). The original work by Dichter is documented in Ernest Dichter, Handbook of Consumer Motivations (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

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RESEARCHING CONSUMER MOTIVES

Raising peek-a-boo to an art form

SAVVY MARKETER

You must now be wondering how, if many of consumers' motivations are unconscious, marketers would ever find out about them. Actually, the same question also applies to conscious motives. For example, if we ask consumers why they bought a pair of Air Fear of God 1 (released April 25, 2020), they would not admit, even if aware of it, that they bought it to win friends or to gain esteem. We like to keep some of our motives private. It is simply not cool to reveal that we are seeking status or affection or love, for example. Thus, there are two reasons why we would not learn, by direct questioning, what consumers' real motives for a given purchase might be. First, these motives might be unconscious, and second, consumers might want to keep them private. The question, then, is how to get consumers to reveal them. Fortunately, psychologists have devised a set of procedures to, in a sense, "trick" consumers' minds into revealing them, unwittingly. We call it "Playing Dr. Motivation."

Playing Dr. Motivation

UNCOVERING HIDDEN MOTIVES

Motivation Research (MR)

Motivation Research is research directed at discovering the motives for a person's behavior—reasons which the consumer is either unaware of or is unwilling to admit to in direct questioning. It uses techniques that are disguised and non-structured. The techniques are disguised in that consumers are not able to figure out that we are trying to find out their deep motives. They are non-structured in that the answers are not pre-structured; rather, the consumer is encouraged to say whatever comes to mind.

The general characteristic of these techniques is that the respondent is given a fairly vague and open-ended stimulus and is then asked to interpret that stimulus. Since the stimulus is vague, interpreting it requires that the consumer "project" himself or herself into the stimulus situation. These techniques are therefore called *projection techniques*. From such self-projections from consumers, the researcher is able to infer each consumer's motives for a particular marketplace behavior. These techniques, described below, are all very simple, but they are amazingly effective. Read on.

Third-Person Question Phrasing Instead of asking "Why don't you buy —— (say, a quick-baking cake mix)," the question can be phrased as "In your opinion, why do people not buy ——?" Consumers would not be hesitant to answer this, and, of course, they are basically projecting their own motives onto other consumers. Their answers, on behalf of others, would reveal to us their own motives.

Word Association Quick, say the word that comes to mind when we say the following words: Blue —— (write your answers in this and the following blanks); Angel —-; surfer ——; Europe ——. Your answers might reveal that blue is cool, Angel is good-hearted, a surfer is sexy, and Europe is exotic. This is word association. For example, the words "instant-baking cake mix" might bring out such associations as "tasteless," "ordinary," "lazy," and so on, revealing the reasons consumers might not buy it. Another group of respondents might respond with such words as "convenient," "quick," and "instant gratification," revealing why this group of consumers includes heavy users of instant cake mix.

Sentence Completion Sentence completion techniques are similar to word association. Here, the consumer is presented with an incomplete sentence and asked to fill in the blank; e.g., an incomplete sentence like, "I drink instant coffee only when I am ——" might elicit such responses as "in a hurry," "in the office," and so on; or, alternatively, such responses as "entertaining at home," or "relaxing." These two sets of responses will reveal two different sets of motives for consuming instant coffee, and, correspondingly, two vastly divergent perceptions about it.

Story Completion The most common form of story completion is the **Thematic Apperception Test** (TAT), which consists of a series of ambiguous pictures shown to the consumer. The consumer is asked to describe the story of which the picture is a part. To continue with the coffee example, a consumer might be shown a picture of someone preparing a cup of instant coffee and asked to describe "the story" surrounding this situation. Someone might say, "The consumer shown in the picture is an office secretary preparing coffee for a high-level executive meeting"; another's story might be that the person in the picture is a bored housewife, getting ready to watch daytime TV. These two stories illustrate two very different sets of perceptions, attitudes, and motives for or against the consumption of instant coffee. It is in this story-writing procedure that the "projection," as this set of techniques is called, plays out fully (since the stimulus is quite vague).

A variation of this technique involves asking consumers to fill in a blurb in a cartoon, such as the one shown here, designed to find out the "real" reasons why some consumers build their own Web pages.

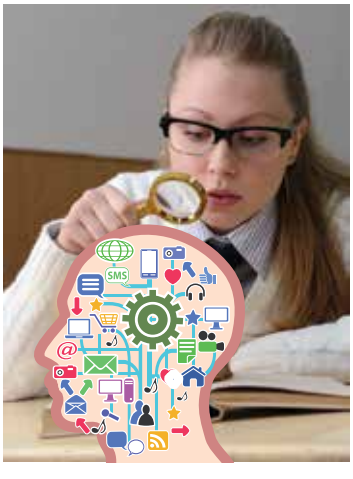

EXHIBIT **3.1** **A Projective Technique To Discover Motives**

Do our shopping lists reveal who we are?

(Yes, and consumers themselves believe they do!)

EXHIBIT **3.3**

TWO SHOPPING LISTS

List A	List B
- *apples*	- *apples*
- *oranges*	- *oranges*
- *milk*	- *milk*
- *peanut butter*	- *peanut butter*
- *cookies*	- *cookies*
- *cereal*	- *cereal*
- *Maxwell House regular coffee*	- *Maxwell House instant coffee*
- *bread*	- *bread*
- *eggs*	- *eggs*
- *cheese*	- *cheese*
- *muffins*	- *muffins*

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EXHIBIT

3.2 Mason Haire's Projective Technique

Projective techniques are fascinating and we can't help giving you yet another version—this one by a clever MIT psychologist. His method was so innovative that it has come to be known by his name, *Mason Haire*. Back in the Sixties, when Maxwell House Coffee introduced instant coffee, homemakers chose not to buy it. When asked *why*, they gave the obvious reason: They did not like its taste. This perfectly innocent answer was not so innocent, for in product development research, consumers had indeed found the test product's taste comparable or better. Obviously, homemakers now had some other reason for not buying the new coffee, a reason they would rather not give. So to uncover that deeper motive, the company hired our clever Dr. Haire. Here is what he did.[9]

He made two shopping lists with usual supermarket items, including coffee. The lists were identical except that one included Maxwell House Regular Coffee and the other included Maxwell House Instant Coffee. His research team then intercepted shoppers at random in supermarkets and showed them one or the other of the lists. Consumers were told that the list had been found in a shopping cart, and were asked to imagine and describe the kind of person the owner of the shopping list was.

The findings were revealing. The study respondents who were shown the list containing regular coffee described the list owner as a very conscientious homemaker and a good housewife. Those shown the other list thought the list owner was a lazy homemaker and a bad wife!

What is remarkable in the findings of this study is that consumers had no hesitation in saying that the shoppers who used instant coffee were lazy, whereas they never would have admitted that the reason they themselves never bought instant coffee was because of their fear of being perceived as lazy. How did they know what kind of a person the list owner who used instant coffee was? Obviously, by projecting their own motives onto those other consumers!

Although the technique is some fifty years old, it is eminently usable for a variety of products in modern times.[10]

For example, suppose that you want to find out whether consumers think that the type of person who reads Time magazine is different from the one who reads *Newsweek*. Put together two identical collections of magazines except that one includes Time and the other includes *Newsweek*. Then, show one set to some consumers and the other set to others, and ask each consumer to "guess" the type of person the subscriber is. Or, investigate the image of the users of Visa versus MasterCard credit cards using a "lost wallet" procedure: Show consumers a wallet supposedly found on the street. Thus, whenever the purpose is to identify the personality associations people make for the user of a product, these associations can be unearthed by using the Mason Haire technique. ■

Photo Quiz 3.1

a

c

d

e

Which motive In the Maslow's Hierarchy-of-Needs) is most engaged by this product. (For a given motive, there may be more than one product or none.)

(Check as many as needed)

b

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Self-actualization	___	___	___	___	___	___
Esteem & Ego	___	___	___	___	___	___
Belongingness	___	___	___	___	___	___
Safety/Security	___	___	___	___	___	___
Physiological	___	___	___	___	___	___

f

Photo Quiz 3.2

Which product will benefit the most from a Mason Haire's Technique-based research study?

Not benefit at all 1 2 3 4 5 benefit very much

Water bottle	1 2 3 4 5
Broadway chair	1 2 3 4 5
Shoe with lipstick heel	1 2 3 4 5
Monocle eyeglass (brand Paola)	1 2 3 4 5

3 KEY WORDS

Approach motivation
Avoidance motivation
Biogenic needs
Dichter's unconscious motives
Maslow's hierarchy-of-needs
Mason Haire's Technique
Murray's list of needs
Psychogenic needs

3 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we explored the topic of *motivation*. *Motivation* is goal-directed drive or energy; this energy is provided by felt needs. Various scholars have classified human needs, and we discussed some of the prominent classifications. *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* classification is perhaps the most well-known of these, but we also outlined Murray's social needs system and Dichter's list of subconscious motives.

We discussed methods of researching consumer motives. Among these, a notable method is *Mason Haire's Shopping List* Technique, especially useful for uncovering unconscious motives. Perhaps you should give it a test run.

3 YOUR TURN

REVIEW+Rewind

1. Explain each need in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Explain any five of Dichter's motives. How do they differ from Maslow's needs?
2. List all methods of researching consumer motives, and explain each briefly.

THINK+Apply

1. Do Maslow's needs always arise in the order of the hierarchy? Explain.
2. Think of one example of consumption where an unconscious motive might be at work.

PRACTICE+Experience

1. Find an ad on TV or in magazines that captures each of the needs in Maslow's Hierarchy.
2. Design and conduct a study using the Mason Haire techniques to understand consumers' choice of Halloween costumes. (Include this note: "You may assume that this costume is similar to your own favorite costume"). After this, interview them directly on their reasons for their choice of their favorite costume. Compare the results.

In the Marketing Manager's Shoes

Put yourself in a marketing manager's shoes. Identify at least five specific applications of the chapter's concepts, all of which should be entirely new, different from the examples cited here.

SELF-ACTUALIZATION IS WORTHY OF PURSUIT ONLY IF WE FIRST MAKE OUR *SELF* WORTH ACTUALIZING.

4 CONSUMER EMOTION AND MOOD

How brands tug at our heartstrings

1. Eight Types of Human Emotions
2. Four Types of Emotions Brands Bring Us
3. Emotion—How We Can Measure Them
4. How Moods Differ from Emotions and How Moods Are Created in the Retail Store
5. Hedonic Consumption and Its Four Forms
6. Consumer Involvement and Its Role as a Yardstick for Consumer Actions

My emotions nourish on brands.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES TO UNDERSTAND

Driving Our Brand Choices Through Emotion

The 30-second TV commercial opens on a basketball flying in slow motion over a basket. It misses the basket and bounces off the rim. A player picks it up. That's when we see the players—six men, all in their wheelchairs.

On the enclosed court, there is the intensity of the game—the struggle to control the ball, the focus to aim and make the basket, and the joy when the ball goes through the basket. The chairs collide, one even topples over but the player rolls it back upright, effortlessly.*

The adrenaline runs high while the soundtrack from the epic song "To Build a Home" (by Cinematic Orchestra) plays in the background. Forty-five seconds into the commercial, five of the six players stand up from their wheelchairs, as one of them promises "Next week, buddy!"

A soft but ponderous voice speaks three words with pause (spanning a 10 second duration, from :36 to :46):

Dedication. Loyalty. Friendship.

The announcer finishes up the thought with "The choices we make reveal the true nature of our character," as the scene moves to a nearby pub where the six players (one of them still in a wheelchair) are now seen enjoying their Guinness.

The commercial first aired on September 4, 2013 and has run through all these years on program reruns like Seinfeld. It can be viewed on YouTube, of course, and even after all these years, it gives us goosebumps, pulling at our heartstrings, pushing our attitude toward the brand ever more upward!

A Date to Remember

September 4, 2013

The day marketing brought us 30 seconds of pure emotional uplift. For a brand of beer.

***If we keep track of individual players, we realize at the end the man who was able to roll back his chair to upright effortlessly was an able-bodied friend.**

(The images are for illustration only and do not purport to resemble or reflect the brand or the commercial.)

CONSUMER EMOTIONS

Motivation and emotion are closely related. Similar to needs, emotions are also capable of propelling the person toward relevant goal objects. As consumers, we desire certain goal objects (i.e., products), and, if we are deprived of them, we feel negative emotions. If we attain them, we feel positive emotions. Current negative emotions act as drive, and so do the expectations of positive emotions. Thus, positive emotions serve as approach motivations and negative emotions as avoidance motivations. Much of the consumption or use of products and services is driven by and immersed in emotions.

No wonder, then, that a wide range of products are sold through emotional campaigns, from "Diamonds Are Forever" (in a recent commercial, a young man screams at the top of his lungs, "I love this woman," in a public square, before presenting her with an engagement ring) to McDonald's Happy Meals (with a campaign showing cute babies with ear-to-ear smiles).[1]

What Is Emotion?

As humans, we are creatures of emotion. Emotions lace our lives and guide our everyday actions. We cuddle a baby because we feel affection and love for the little creature. We swear at a rude driver who cuts in front of us because we feel anger and frustration. We feel anxious because we are not prepared for the exam. We are delighted when we ace it. We are ecstatic because Dad bought us the red 2021 Genesis Essentia on our twenty-first birthday. We are overjoyed because someone we met at last night's party sent us flowers. Emotions are our lives—as humans and as consumers.

The technical definition of emotion is complicated, so we have chosen to use a simplified version.

Emotions can be defined as sudden surges of feeling.

A sudden surge of feeling acts as a strong drive. We are driven to attain the source of that emotion. Gift-giving is an apt example. The experience of gift-giving brings us rewarding emotions and feelings. Most emotions are non-verbalizable—we find it difficult to say in words exactly how we feel toward someone, though often our faces communicate our feelings. Just as often, we find it helpful to use products (given as gifts) as symbols of our sentiments. And, sometimes, we use greeting cards to capture and convey our feelings. Finding the right card can be an immensely and emotionally gratifying experience, both for the sender and the recipient.[2]

Lust, Love, and Longing

A hundred faces of emotion

Lust, love, longing. Greed, envy, jealousy. Hatred, contempt, disdain. Pleasure, happiness, joy. Boredom, sadness, depression. Pain, agony, torment. The emotions we experience as humans are numerous (just as our needs are). Once again, psychologists come to the rescue and offer us a manageable list. Psychologist Robert Plutchik has proposed that all human emotions can be summarized into eight types.[3] Each can vary in intensity as follows.

1. **Fear**—ranging from timidity to terror. A consumer might experience this if, when driving on the expressway, he or she discovers that the car's brakes are not working.
2. **Anger**—ranging from annoyance to rage. A consumer might become angry when a car rental agent says that the car the consumer reserved is not available.
3. **Joy**—ranging from serenity to ecstasy. A consumer might experience joy at an auto dealership when he or she spots a rare model he or she had been looking for.
4. **Sadness**—ranging from pensiveness to grief. A consumer may experience sadness when, calling an airline for a last-minute reservation, he or she is informed that the last seat was just sold.
5. **Acceptance**—ranging from tolerance to adoration. When a consumer goes to a hair salon and the stylist happens to be friendly and highly skilled, the consumer would experience acceptance.
6. **Disgust**—ranging from boredom to loathing. A consumer might feel disgust at finding an insect in his or her soup.
7. **Anticipation**—ranging from mindfulness to vigilance. This is the emotion a consumer experiences while awaiting responses from people whose photos he just "swiped right" on Bumble.
8. **Surprise**—ranging from uncertainty to amazement. A consumer might feel surprised when his or her waiter announces that dessert will be on the house.

This is a list of human emotions we experience in everyday consumption situations. But products and brands also become sources of emotion.

FOUR SHADES OF EMOTION IN BRANDS

Can you pack your brand with emotions? Yes, an increasing number of brands are doing just that. Their use of emotions can be grouped into four types:

Romantic Love In 2009, Coke released the "Open Happiness" ad showing two teenagers in a library, flirting by drawing some images on their hands—the boy draws a Coke bottle on his hand and the girl draws on her hand a glass filled with ice cubes. As they bring their hands closer to touch, Coke flows out of his hand into hers. The commercial ends with the superimposed tagline, "Open Happiness."

Family Love In 2011, Google created a video for its Chrome browser, in which a father catalogs his daughter's life story—from birth to the loss of her baby teeth—all using Google tools, from Gmail to YouTube (YouTube is now a part of Google).

Human Connection In a 1971 ad, a large number of people assembled on a hilltop in London and, holding Coke bottles in their hands, sang the song "I'd like to buy the world a Coke." (The company has played this ad many times since, most recently during the broadcast of the final episode of Mad Men on May 17, 2015.) In a 1979 ad, aired during the Super Bowl game, NFL star player "Mean Joe Green" is offered a Coke by a kid; the grateful Green rewards the kid by giving him his jersey.

Joys of Everyday Life In 2010, BMW ran a campaign that featured happy people enjoying their BMWs, feeling the breeze on their faces. Its tag line: "What you make people feel is just as important as what you make. We make joy. Joy is made by BMW."

These are classic examples, at least some of which will live in memory and inspire future marketers for decades. Can you find some current examples for each of these four types? The quintessential common element of these emotion-laden brand communications is that the brands are given a human face.

MEASURING EMOTIONS

Suppose you are a fragrance marketer and you are creating an advertisement for your brand of cologne. You want to evoke an emotional theme of romance. You create the ad and run the advertising campaign. How would you know the advertisement was successful in evoking the emotion of romance? Once again, consumer researchers can help. There are two ways, they suggest, of measuring emotions: verbal rating and picture matching. In the **verbal rating method**, you simply present the names of the eight emotions to consumers and then ask them to circle the emotions they think they experienced when they were watching the ad, or using our product.

This method is simple, and that is good. But it does have one problem: it assumes that consumers recognize their emotions under these labels or that they can verbalize their emotions. The fact is that most of our emotional communication is nonverbal; i.e., we can't put our feelings in words. Instead, we show and communicate our emotions through gestures and facial expressions. So why shouldn't we use a technique that capitalizes on this to measure emotions? Our second method does just that; it is called (what else?) the picture matching method. Ad agencies Foote, Cone, and Belding (FCB) and BBDO use it to test their ads. (They call it ***visual image profiling***.) In this method, consumers who have just been shown a test advertisement are shown a set of faces with differing expressions, and are asked to mark the face that comes closest to how they themselves felt when they viewed the ad.

This method is very useful for testing commercials. If an advertisement does not produce the desired emotion, as marketers we must modify it until it delivers the desired emotional effect.

CONSUMER MOODS

Almost emotional

"Moods subtly insinuate themselves in everyday life, influencing what we remember of the past, perceive in the present, and expect from the future."

—-Morris Holbrook (2000)[4]

Emotions are quite an experience. But we can't be on an emotional high all the time. In fact, to feel emotions, we must have been in a state of "no emotion." Only then can we notice the change in our feelings. "But what," you might ask, "do we feel when we are in states of 'no emotion'?" The answer is that we are in such states as being relaxed, bored, curious, happy, etc. Now, if these are not emotions, what are they? You know them firsthand. You even know their name. We call them *moods*.

Moods are simply emotions felt less intensely. They are "almost emotions," if you will. They are also short-lived. They are easy to induce, and they appear and disappear in our consciousness frequently and readily. They are pervasive, in that we are always in some kind of mood—a happy mood or a sad mood, an irritated or pleased, amused or bored, a pensive or a "brain-dead" mood. Moods affect our responses to marketing communications.[5]

When you don't know you are in the mood

We are not always conscious of our moods. For quite some time now, you have been busy reading this chapter. You have been in a relaxed and pleasant and absorbed mood, but you were not saying to yourself, mentally, "I am in a relaxed, pleasant, and absorbed mood." Yet, this mood kept you reading. If you grew tired of reading, you may have perhaps stopped for a while, still without consciously recognizing that you were tired. If you were always aware of your mood, then your mind would not be able to focus on the work you were doing. Thus, moods are not only milder forms of emotions, but sometimes they can be so mild as not even to register on our consciousness (in contrast, we are always aware of our emotions).

In this case, our moods act like a backdrop to our consciousness. They work in the background, almost autonomously. This helps us keep on doing whatever we are doing. Thus, if we are in a store, and the ambience and the piped-in music has put us in a pleasant mood, we just linger on a bit longer. And we buy more—which is very good for the marketer.

And when you know you are in the mood

Then there are times when we do become conscious of our moods. And we also become aware of the source of our moods. When the music in a store just puts us in a pleasant mood without our awareness, for example, we may not even be conscious of the music being played; in contrast, when suddenly some tune or lyrics register on our consciousness, then we become aware of the mood and the source, and we, in fact, focus on that source. We pause to listen to the song or the tune. Thus, when we are aware of our moods, we want to approach or stay with its source if the mood is a positive one, and we want to distance ourselves from the source if the mood is negative. This type of mood acts as an active driver; in other words, it acts as a motivational force. We received good grades, so we want to buy a cappuccino. We got an e-mail from an old friend, so we want to grab a beer. We got bored reading our textbook, so we switch to surfing the Web. (Please, not right now!)

How Moods Make You...

Moods make us act in the marketplace, and, basically, these mood-based acts can be grouped into two categories:

Response to Market Stimuli Consumer researchers have found that consumers linger longer in positive-mood environments—as when good music is playing in a store, or when a salesperson is not shadowing them as they browse the merchandise. Consumers also tend to better recall those ads that create a positive mood. And they feel more positive toward brands whose advertisements create feelings of warmth.[6] Overall, good moods make us respond positively to market stimuli; bad moods make us respond negatively.[7]

Situational Consumption Choices Our moods also affect our consumption experiences. One of the research findings is that consumers in negative moods engage in "immediate self-gratification," such as rewarding themselves (eating desserts, drinking, self-gifting, etc.); of course, consumers also engage in these activities when in positive moods ("Dessert? Forget dieting, I deserve it!"). Thus, both negative and positive moods (compared to neutral moods) produce self-gratification-oriented consumption. Another mood effect is that the consumption experience itself is more positive when we are in a good mood, and more negative when we are in a bad mood. Have you ever wondered why food in a restaurant tastes better when we have nice company? A nice company produces a nice mood—that is why!

Good Mood—Marketers Owe It to Us

If moods affect consumer responses to market stimuli, it behooves marketers to create the circumstances that create a positive mood in us.

Moods are induced in two ways: (a) internal autistic thinking—this happens when you recall some past incident or fantasize about some future event; and (b) exposure to external stimuli—you see candy, and you instantly feel in the mood to eat some candy. As a marketer, you can tap into both of these sources; you can arrange marketing stimuli to induce the right mood in the consumer.

Here are some marketing stimuli at your command:

- **Ambience of the store**
- **Demeanor of the salesperson**
- **Sensory features of the product**
- **Tone and manner of the advertisement**
- **Content of the message**
- **Product packaging or the display of the product itself**

HEDONIC CONSUMPTION

What Maslow missed

Maslow has done us a great service—by capturing all of our core motives. But he did miss one core type—pleasure, enjoyment, recreation, hedonism. Maslow's scheme could not answer such questions as "Why do consumers play solitaire?" or "Why do we go to music concerts?" Pleasure and recreation are also natural human needs. Consumer researchers call them hedonic motives—the consumer need and desire to obtain pleasure. Hedonic consumption refers to the use of products/services for the sake of intrinsic enjoyment.[8]

Note that our use of the term has nothing to do with its popular usage. A Google search shows up hedonism.com, a website for Hedonism II, which is described as "one of the most famous clothing-optional resorts in the world (located in Negril, Jamaica). Rather, our intent here is grounded in the theory of **optimal stimulation level**—the need for the human organism to maintain an optimum level of stimulation. Below this level, we feel bored and unenthusiastic, which would then lead us to become unproductive. Thus, the goal of hedonism as a consumer concept here is not wanton sensory indulgence; rather it is recreation and enjoyment to restore our mental faculty into a state of energy and interest for productive work.

The idea of "intrinsic" enjoyment in our definition means that the activity or consumption is enjoyable in itself, regardless of the outcome of the activity. Thus, the game itself is enjoyable regardless of who wins. Theater, music, vacations, etc., are enjoyable while we are consuming them, even though nothing concrete may come from them. Intrinsic enjoyment comes in one of the following forms.[9]

1. Sensory pleasure—pleasant sensations of sight, sound, taste, touch, or smell. Examples include taking a bubble bath; luxuriating in a jacuzzi or sauna; using perfume and colognes; looking at exciting colors in clothing; glancing at strobe lights in a discotheque; choosing home décor; listening to music.

2. Aesthetic pleasure—reading poetry; visiting an art gallery; taking a course in Greek history.

3. Emotional experience—watching movies or TV shows; sending gifts; receiving gifts; visiting relatives; long-distance social calling; dating; class reunions.

4. Fun and Play—playing Wasteland 3 or Cyberpunk 2077; or playing sports; dancing; vacationing.

Some activities may be a source of more than one kind of hedonic pleasures.[10]

Photo Quiz
4

The Venetian Room at Wildwood Inn, Florence, Kentucky, USA.

Lie in Bed in Fantasy Land

There is an inn that offers you hedonic gratification like no other. Its themed rooms put you instantly in the midst of New York City's Central Park or in front of the Statue of Liberty, while you are watching TV or lying on the bed.

Other choices include a pirate hideout, Tennessee caves, a race car room (the bed frame is a model race car), a rain forest, a Champaign room (with a champagne bath on an open-view mezzanine floor within the room) and, yes, Venice.

You can check out this unique place at www.wildwood-inn.com.

Q. Which of the four forms of intrinsic enjoyment does Wildwood Inn offer to guests?

(If you believe that more than one or all of these are being satisfied, show relative focus by distributing 10 points among them.)

1. Sensory pleasure ___
2. Aesthetic pleasure ___
3. Emotional experience ___
4. Fun & Play ___

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CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

A yardstick for all of our actions

Now we want to introduce you to a concept that is so powerful that it colors all our actions as consumers. The concept is *involvement,* and it describes our relationship with all of the products we consume or do not consume and all of the activities in which we do or do not want to engage.

Involvement is a general term that can be defined as the degree of interest a consumer finds in a product, service, object, or activity. At the most basic level, involvement stems from the personal relevance of an object, product, or service to a consumer. Paul is not into golf, so golfing equipment is not relevant to him, but he has a cat, so cat foods are relevant. Accordingly, Paul is not involved in golf clubs or golf balls but is involved in cat foods. Perceived relevance, then, identifies a consumer's involvement as a 'yes' or 'no'—involved or not involved—category.

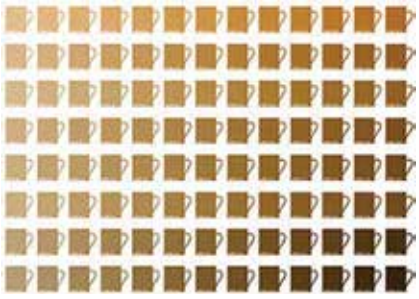
Once we cross the "relevance" threshold, involvement becomes a matter of degree—high or low, corresponding to the degree of interest a consumer feels in a product or object. Thus, both cat food and video games are relevant to Paul, but he takes less interest in cat food than in video games.

Of the hundreds of products and services we consume in our lifetimes, we cannot be equally excited about each one. There are some products we consume casually and take for granted. In these, our involvement is low. There are other products we consume with some interest, pausing to savor their tastes, smell their aromas, feel their textures, or hear their sounds. Still others—a few in number—we consume with extreme interest. We like them; we enjoy them; we love them. Everyone has a favorite activity, a favorite product, a favorite brand. Some of us are fashion-obsessed; others, car buffs; still others, computer jocks. We are eager to get to know these products—fashions, cars, and tech gizmos—to find out everything there is to know. We get excited whenever the topic comes up. And, of course, we want to be shopping for or using them whenever possible. In these, we have high involvement; moreover, in these, we have enduring involvement. **Enduring involvement** is the degree of interest a consumer feels in a product or service on an ongoing basis.[11]

Purchase Decision Involvement

There are some products or activities in which we become interested only in specific situations, as when buying a product or when consuming something in the presence of an important client or friend. This form of involvement is called **situational involvement**—defined as the degree of interest in an object in a specific situation or on a specific occasion. For example, you are unlikely to take much interest in dishwashers—you use them in your kitchen in a taken-for-granted manner. But the last time you were buying one, you became

extremely interested (i.e., involved) in dishwashers—attempting to learn about them, deliberating over various options, and weighing them vis-à-vis your own needs. The involvement that arises at the time of purchase (as different from the consumption situation) has a specific name—**purchase decision involvement (PDI)**—the degree of concern consumers experience in making the right choice. The other sub-form of situational involvement is *consumption-situation involvement*, the interest we experience in the usage situation; for example, consuming wine at home, unconcerned about the public image of the wine brand, versus consuming wine in company, concerned about the impressions you might make consuming a particular brand of wine.



How do you want your tea? Onkar Singh Kular, a London artist, has designed 128-Pantone colored mugs for you to choose *precisely*. Mark one and the hostess will know how much milk to add. (Image: Courtesy Onkar Singh Kular)

Enduring involvement, perpetual motivation. Situational involvement: we are motivated when the right situation arises.

Want to know whether you have enduring involvement in something? Take the surveys in Table 4.1 and find out. Analogously, purchase decision involvement can be measured with a scale shown in Table 4.2. (See these on the next page.)

Involvement: A master switch for all of our actions as consumers

The linkage between involvement and motivation should be self-evident. Involvement acts as a "master switch" that turns our motivation on or off. No involvement, no motivation. Low involvement, low motivation. High involvement, high motivation. As black and white as that! This concept, involvement, will keep us company throughout this book.

DEEP INVOLVEMENT

Extreme interest in things

One special case of enduring involvement is **deep involvement**—defined as a consumer's extreme interest in a product or activity on an ongoing basis. Often it borders on product fanaticism. One consumer in Sydney had the brand name 'Apple' tattooed on his forehead. And a friend in Holland had shaved his head, trimming the hair in the back in the shape of Apple logo!

The phenomenon of deep involvement is important to study because it is a window on a consumer's key motivations and emotions. People are fanatical about things they care deeply about. They use them for enjoyment, to derive life satisfactions, and even to define their identities for themselves. What are you deeply involved in? Cars? Sports? Art? Gizmos? Cooking? Shoes? If you are, then you know how a significant part of your consumer behavior—contemplating, searching, browsing, buying, collecting, caring, nurturing, and relishing—is dedicated to the object of your deep involvement. You also know, firsthand, how your deep involvement is, for you, a constant source of motivation—perhaps, for some, even a reason to live!

On my mind, on my head.

Proud to show my *brand love**

*Gabriel McIntyre, Founder CEO, Whisper Media, Holland (Photo Courtesy: Gabriel McIntyre)

TABLE 4.1 A Scale to Measure ENDURING/DEEP INVOLVEMENT

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

1. I am very interested in ___ . ___
2. I feel emotionally attached to my ___. ___
3. My ___ holds a special place in my life. ___
4. My ___ is central to my identity, my sense of who I am. ___
5. I quite enjoy using this product. ___

Add item scores. Scores below the mid-point, 15, indicate low or absent *Enduring Involvement*. Scores above 15 mean High *Enduring Involvement*.

[Adapted in part from much longer lists in: P. Bloch, "Involvement with a Product Class," *Adv. in Cons. Res.* 8, 61-65; and K. J. Dodson, "Peak Experiences and Mountain Biking: Incorporating the Bikes in the Extended Self," *Adv. in Cons. Res.*, 1996.]

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TABLE 4.2 A Scale to Measure PURCHASE DECISION INVOLVEMENT

1. When making my selection for this product, I will:
   Not care much 1 2 3 4 5 Care a lot
   as to which one I buy
2. How important would it be for you to make the right choice:
   Not much important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important
3. Do you consider the various brands/alternatives available in this product category:
   uite ali e 2 3 ery di erent
   from one another.

Add item scores. Scores below the mid-point, 9, indicate low PDI. Scores above 9 mean high *PDI*.

[Adapted from "Measuring Purchase Decision Involvement," *Psychology & Marketing*, Summer 1989, p. 147-162.]

MY CB BOOK

4 SUMMARY

Human emotions play a significant role in motivating human behavior. We explained Plutchik's emotional classification system, and illustrated it with consumer behavior examples. We also described four types of emotions brands bring us. Next, we discussed moods as a milder and short-lived form of emotion and outlined some influences of mood on consumer behavior. Moods play an important role when the consumer is in the store, and we explained how store managers should manage store *atmospherics* to create good moods in shoppers.

One specific topic in our discussion of emotions and moods was hedonic consumption. Motive for hedonism is just as core in humans as other motives or needs in the Maslow's hierarchy-of-needs schema, and it accounts for considerable consumption by humans.

Finally, we discussed consumer involvement as a factor that separates the important from the trivial. When we experience a high interest in a product or activity on an ongoing basis, it is called *enduring involvement*. We learned how to measure this concept, and we came to understand that, as a "master switch" of motivation, involvement will color every topic in the rest of the book.

4 KEY WORDS

Enduring involvement
Emotion
Mood
Hedonic consumption
Involvement
Purchase decision involvement

4 YOUR TURN

REVIEW+Rewind

1. What are moods and how do they differ from emotions? Give examples of two uses of moods that a marketer can employ.
2. What is involvement? What is the difference between situational and enduring involvement?
3. What is meant by hedonic consumption? List your own hedonic consumptions.

THINK+Apply

1. With which of these products are you enduringly involved: (a) your car, (b) your MP3 player; (c) your cell phone; (d) any student or professional club; (e) your gym; (e) your brand of cologne; (f) your dishwasher and microwave oven. Explain your answer.

PRACTICE+Experience

1. Interview two consumers who might have enduring involvement in some consumption. Document the kinds of activities they engage in to manifest their deep involvement and explain what kinds of needs it satisfies for them.

In the Marketing Manager's Shoes

Put yourself in a marketing manager's shoes. Most concepts in the chapter have some lessons for the marketing manager; i.e., they suggest what to do differently in practice. Indeed, often these applications are implicit in our explanations of the concepts and models in the chapter. Identify at least five specific applications of the chapter's concepts, all of which should be entirely new, different from the examples cited here.

HEDONISM, AS WE USE THAT TERM HERE, IS NOT WANTON INDULGENCE. RATHER, ITS GOAL IS TO SATISFY THE NEED OF OUR MINDS TO MAINTAIN OPTIMAL STIMULATION. WHEN BORED, THEY BECOME UNPRODUCTIVE. HEDONIC CONSUMPTION, IN MODERATION, RESTORES OUR MINDS TO DO PRODUCTIVE WORK AGAIN.

5 CONSUMER PERCEPTION

The only brand reality that matters

1. The Three-Step Model of the Consumer Perception Process
2. Dynamics of Voluntary vs. Involuntary Consumer Attention
3. Three Factors that Shape Consumer Perceptions
4. Perceptual Biases and Frames and Consumer Viewing of Reality
5. J.N.D. Just Noticeable Difference: Theory and Marketing Application
6. Subliminal Perception: Fact or Fiction?

I see it, therefore it is.

TO UNDERSTAND

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Drink Liquid Death.

A Bold New Experiment in the Art of Watering Our Bodies!

Liquid Death was created in June 2019 by Michael Cessario, former creative director of Netflix and also a promoter of punk and heavy metal bands. The brand of water is described as 100% mountain water from the Austrian Alps, served in ice-cold sustainable cans.

Yes, the water is packaged in a tallboy aluminum can, embracing the pro-environmental anti-plastic movement. The can's label is gold color with an image of a skull drawn in line art. An associated video (:60) shows a demon with an ax, violently smacking a slew of people drinking from the can, causing blood to spew out, thus symbolically murdering your thirst. A longer (1:31) video shows a satanic queen of an underground world (hell?) lamenting the fact that plastic bottles have polluted the earth above and are now seeping into her world, and she is on a crusade to torch them out of their plastic bodies. It calls out to help the demons bring #DeathToPlastic by getting involved at keeptheunderworldbeautiful.org.

The brand invites us to join the Liquid Death Country Club (which is supposedly located somewhere in hell) and to join it, you have to "sell your soul."

On its Web page, the brand explains itself:

> Let's be clear. Liquid Death is a completely unnecessary approach to bottled water. Because unnecessary things tend to be far more interesting, fun, hilarious, captivating, memorable, exciting, and cult-worthy than "necessary" things.
>
> Necessary Things: Breathing, colonoscopy.
>
> Unnecessary Things: Smashing a guitar on stage and lighting it on fire or jumping over 14 Greyhound buses on a vintage motorcycle.
>
> We started Liquid Death with the totally evil plan to make people laugh and get more of them to drink more water more often. How? By taking the world's healthiest beverage and making it unnecessarily entertaining.
>
> 100% Stone-cold Mountain Water, Death to Plastic. Murder Your thirst.

INTRODUCTION

Will you sign up to join the Liquid Death Country Club and help the satanic queen in her crusade? Will you seek out Liquid Death and will you make it your water of choice? Wait, before you decide, you do have the choice of a few other brands of water.

Consider *Just Water*. *Just* was conceived by then 10-year-old Jaden Smith (born 1998), an American actor and son of renowned actor Will Smith. The water is packaged in a carton made from renewable materials. The body of the carton is made from paper; to keep the carton hold shape, the carton's neck uses plastic, but this plastic is not the kind that is made from petroleum; instead, it is the one that is made from sugarcane. The cap is made from sugarcane too. On the brand's website, Jaden explains the sourcing of water thus: "We don't pump water and go. We only use 100% spring water. We only bottle excess water our community doesn't need. We pay fairly for the water we use."

Another notable new brand is *Flow*. It was launched in Canada in 2015 and introduced in the US in 2016. Entrepreneur Nicholas Reichenbach sourced it from a piece of land on his ancestors' property near Lake Huron in Toronto, Canada. The brand's website informs us: "It has heavy mineral count: potassium, magnesium, calcium, bicarbonate, and is naturally alkaline with pH 8.1." The water is packaged in a 100% cardboard wrap capped by a lid made from sugarcane fiber. Its Facebook page features the brand on a table amidst flowers and fresh-cut fruit. In June 2019, Gwyneth Paltrow's wellness company GOOP adopted Flow as its exclusive water.[1]

• • •

As humans, we can't live without water. And for millennia, all we have wanted is water. Clean, safe, plain water. But now, we want much more: we want minerals, and we want electrolytes. And we want water with good karma—that it be produced, and consumed, with minimal environmental damage.

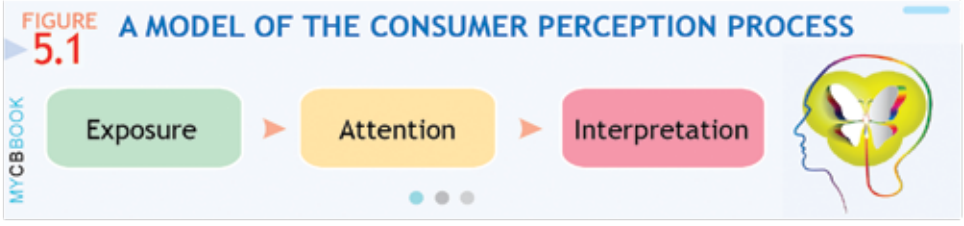
Marketers are vying to offer us all that and more. Liquid Death is going for our souls, promising to rescue it from whatever we want it to be rescued from. A Facebook fan (Anthony F.) found that promise in Liquid Death: "So deadly it killed the cancer in my liver. And also me as well. Hell isn't so bad, we have wi fi down here." Just Water focuses on sourcing the water from a non-depleting source and on paying a fair price for it to pump up the local economy. Finally, Flow, with its imagery of nature and soft colors aesthetic, and with Ms. Paltrow's endorsement, invokes in us feelings of harmony in nature, physical activity, meditation, tranquility.

Which of these brands will we choose? That depends on how we as consumers come to think of these brands. And of any other brands. It depends on our perceptions, that is.

THE PERCEPTION PROCESS

Perception is a basic, fundamental, and inescapable process of the human mind. "Basic" in that any time we encounter anything—absolutely anything whatsoever—our minds must first perceive it before they can do anything else with it. "Fundamental" in that the perception we form of a thing plays a central role in whatever we do with that thing subsequently. "Inescapable" or inevitable in that we can't stop it and we can't control it. Just how do our minds do that? Let us define our terms first.

Perception is the process by which the human mind becomes aware of and interprets a stimulus. The process has three steps: exposure, attention, and interpretation. See Figure 5.1.



EXPOSURE

The Face-off with the Consumer

Exposure means that a stimulus has come within the reach of one or more of our five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting. A **stimulus** is any object or event in the external environment. Exposure determines whether a stimulus even has the opportunity to be sensed by the consumer.

Marketers have five means of exposing their product or service to consumers.

1. Product Display. If you wanted to see a product, where would you go? Right, to stores. Physical stores and online stores. Shelf space in stores is a scarce resource and brands vie to get prominent display space (e.g., eye-level). Small brands and entrepreneurs take their brands to consumer events such as art fairs, farmer's markets, etc. Brands big and small are able to display their products on the Web—on the brand's own website, on commerce sites such as Amazon, and on social media. Some brands launch as Web-only, called *digital natives*: Warby Parker (eyeglasses), Dollar Shave Club (razor subscription); Casper (mattress), Revelry (custom-fitted bridesmaids dresses). On social media, Instagram and Pinterest are becoming the prime sources for fashion-forward consumers to discover new beauty and apparel brands. Some recent launches: Paris 99 (founded by Paris Starn, a 24-year-old student), I.Am.Gia, Réalisation Par.

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2. Product Sampling. Some products need exposure not only to consumers' eyes but to other senses as well, such as the sense of taste (food and beverages), hearing (music), smell (colognes), and touch (skin products). Brands attain such exposure by *product sampling*, a small quantity of the product given away to consumers free of cost. Free samples can be given away in stores, at public events, and also sent in the mail.

3. Advertising. Advertising is the prime means of exposing the product to masses or niche segments alike. However, advertising does not come cheap and there is so much of it surrounding the consumer that most consumers tend to ignore most of it. To break through this clutter, ads have to be creative and relevant. Important though these elements of ad design are, they come into play at the next stage in the perception process (discussed later). At the current stage—*exposure*—what matters the most is the right choice of media—where the ad is placed. If you were marketing *Pocket God* on a country music station, and if your target consumers—mostly teenagers—didn't listen to country music stations, then the commercial would not gain exposure with your target audience. If you advertised *Ghost of Tsushima* (launched on July 17, 2020) in *Vogue* or *Vanity Fair*, then again you would most likely miss your target audience. Thus, a proper choice of message delivery media is the most crucial and first step. A wrong choice can cause the first step itself to fail. No face-off with the consumer occurs, and, consequently, no perception is created.

Advertising media descend on consumers in two modes, *intrusive and non-intrusive*. **Intrusive media** disturb us in whatever we are doing at the moment. **Non-intrusive media** don't demand our attention away from our work of the moment; instead, they just hang out there, so to speak, for us to attend or not attend to them. TV is a prime example of the former. Magazine or billboards are examples of the latter. On social media, not only do the ads appear non-intrusively but also, in style, they match well with the main content—"'instagrammable' product photos" is a popular expression.

On TV, consumers often avoid commercials, sometimes by attending to other tasks and sometimes by switching channels, a process called **zapping**. And when consumers watch prerecorded programs (such as via Tivo), they fast-forward through the commercials, a process called **zipping**. To get past these commercial-avoidance habits of consumers, marketers must make their ads vivid and uniquely engaging. On American TV, Super Bowl commercials have attained a rare reputation of "must-see." You need a big budget, of course (the average cost of running a 30-second commercial in Super Bowl LIV, on February 2, 2020, was $5.6 million), but you also get a mega audience (Super Bowl LIV was watched by 102 million people).[2]

4. Product Placement. Product placement is the tactic of embedding the product in media content, such as featuring a product being used naturally by actors in a TV movie.

Product placement, if done adroitly, works wonders. In the James Bond films, Jaguar XKR is featured, and in the American film that spoofs James Bond, *Austin Powers*, actor Mike Myers endorses Shaguar (Jaguar). In the year 2002, when Austin Powers was playing in theaters, sales of Jaguar rose sharply in America.[3]

Perhaps the most memorable instance of product placement is in the 1982 film *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, featuring Reese's Pieces. In the 2020 Oscar-winning movie *Parasite*, Apple laptop (with its iconic logo facing the camera) appeared prominently; in *Ford v Ferrari,* Matt Damon was seen gulping Coke; and Lincoln, Chevrolet, and Cadillac makes of cars appeared in four movies: *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, The Irish Man, Marriage Story,* and *Joker!*

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Product placements such as these benefit the brand by:

a. Increasing brand awareness This benefit would accrue, naturally, more for new and niche brands (e.g., Tempo, the newest hotel for millennials by Hilton; Reverb.com, an online marketplace for new, used, and vintage music gear).

b. Improving brand likeability If a brand is shown being used by actors who serve as aspirational models of behavior for some segments of viewers. (In *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, Brad Pitt sports a shirt with the logo of Champion, an auto-parts brand; curiously, this was not a placement, as the brand did not even know of it. For that reason, this "natural" brand appearance was even more powerful!)

5. Ambient Advertising. There is one kind of advertising that is *intrusive* in the extreme. It is actually in our face. Yet, it is welcomed by whoever happens to come face to face with it. And it is so different in its makeup that it should not even be called advertising. (That is why we gave it its own category.) An **ambient advertisement** is an artifact—a physical prop that resembles the whole or part of the product and/or visually captures and presents its function or distinction in a manner that it blends with the natural surrounds of a public place. A wall across the track at an underground station reads, "Come closer. We need you." It was signed by a local funeral services company![4]

Rimmel Nail Polish
(Quick Dry?)

(Seen in London a few years ago)

ATTENTION

Breaking through the Noise

Choosing the right advertising medium can give your product exposure to the consumer. But getting exposure does not mean that you will also get the consumer's attention. Or even awareness. For example, if you are in a classroom, all the other students have exposure to you, and you have exposure to them; but this doesn't imply you will have noticed each one of them. At the end of the class period, you will walk out without even being aware of some of them. Exposure, yes; awareness, no; and attention, definitely not.

Now let us take a marketing example. Suppose you are selling Lucozade Energy Drink, and you placed an ad in the Christmas issue of, say, *Hello*. Lisa, your typical target consumer for this product, is flipping through this magazine. She comes to the page that features your ad, but she flips past it too. Your ad has failed to get Lisa's attention. Again, exposure, yes; attention, definitely not.

Attention can be defined as the allocation of mental processing capacity. When the attention is given, the mind focuses on a stimulus, ready and willing to process further information from that stimulus. Getting attention is a major concern for marketers, because most consumers face a flood of stimuli. For a stimulus to even be noticed, it has to make its presence felt to one of our five senses. Thus, it should somehow "catch" our eyes, ears, or nose, or leave a taste on our tongue, or feel different on our skin (touch). On one or more of these five sensory characteristics, it should stand apart from the surrounding environment. That is, it should be vivid.

Vividness refers to a stimulus' intensity and distinctness. Vivid sensory characteristics include bright colors, loud noises, strong aromas, strong tastes, or very rough or very silky textures. The key element required for producing the vividness effect is **contrast**—a stimulus' distinct difference from its environment or background. Although Lisa missed the Lucozade ad, she did stop to notice when she came to a page featuring Fleuvog shoes. Why? Vividness. The colors (a black body frame behind a red shoe) and the image are so stunning that they can't be missed, even if it be in the field of the peripheral vision of a reader cursorily browsing the magazine. Lisa made a mental note to check it out later at Fluevog.com.

Voluntary and Involuntary Attention

Attention comes in two forms: voluntary and involuntary. **Voluntary attention** is attention given by choice—the consumer chooses to pay attention. **Involuntary attention** is forced on the consumer.[5] It is an intrusion. Now, it is the case that, initially, all advertising must catch involuntary attention; i.e., the attention the advertising catches is of the involuntary sort, at least initially. This is because the consumer seldom proactively seeks an advertisement. Lisa was just turning the pages of *Hello*; she was not looking for shoes. The Fluevog ad had to intrude upon her attention. It did so by being vivid.

If consumers find an ad to be relevant, then they will pay voluntary attention. That initially involuntary attention turns into voluntary attention. Lisa, of course, decided to pay voluntary attention to the Fluevog ad. Consequently, she noticed, to her delight, that inscribed within the body frame is the phrase "Listen to Me!"

Marketing Implications

All advertising (all marketing stimuli, for that matter) must necessarily first get involuntary attention. With our lives so over-cluttered with things to do and with so many stimuli from so many directions vying for our attention, consumer attention these days has become a scarce commodity. Some have called the present times the **attention economy**.[6]

To survive in this attention-scarce economy, marketers must constantly reinvent new ways to gain exposure and attention. Commercial speech now shows up in strange places—on floor mats in fitness gyms, on TV screens in Wal-Mart, on mini-video screens mounted on shopping carts, and as place-based ads on cell phone screens—called **contextual advertising.** Beyond the ever-expanding media presence, clever message execution also influences consumer attention. Perhaps one of the cleverest recent examples of "no-fail attention getter" advertising is from Zelnorm®—yes, those exposed tummies used as billboards for marker pen-inscribed words like "Abdominal Pain," "Bloating," and whatever else those tummies might be suffering from.

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This particular execution for Zelnorm® has a rare quality worth emulating that all students and practitioners of advertising must note: Anyone can get attention (by doing totally outrageous things, for example—remember the Paris Hilton Car Wash for the Carl's Jr. burger chain?). The creative challenge is to get attention in a manner so that the attention "prop" is not extraneous to the message.

INTERPRETATION

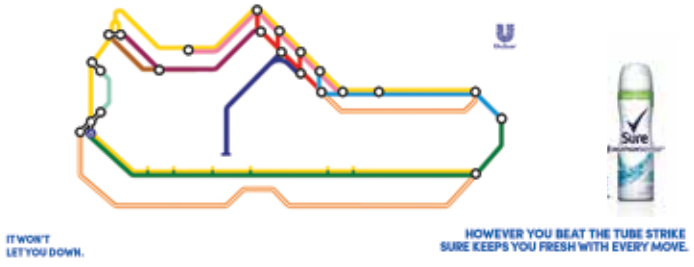
The Curse of Extreme Creativity

The third and final step in the perception process, **interpretation** is the process and outcome of understanding the meaning of a stimulus. When we see an abstract painting and we understand it to be in the cubist style of art by Picasso, depicting three musicians, we have interpreted the painting.

When you first saw a can of 911 Smart Energy Drink on a store shelf, you wondered if 911 had anything to do with the September 11 World Trade Center tragedy. Then you read the label, which says that it is a drink made in South Africa by a nutritional scientist in Switzerland. So, you made a mental note to try it sometime. You interpreted this new stimulus properly.

A recent ad from Budweiser depicted some idle young men who phoned each other simply to ask and reply with a one-word slang contraction, "Wasssup?" In a later version, one of these young men is sitting at a bar when a more mature customer walks in. The young man habitually asks, "Wasssup?" and the older gentleman unloads his full story. (YouTube it.) Now, the older man did understand the meaning of the slang term, but he didn't know that it was not meant to be taken literally. Among viewers too, many older consumers might miss the point of the "Wasssup?" ad series. And certainly, consumers in foreign cultures would be at a loss. This exemplifies, simply, a consumer's inability to interpret the ad. In order to make the ad interpretable, an ad creator must understand both the vernacular (slang language) of the target audience as well as its culture.

The Number 1 factor that helps interpretation by consumers is that the ad, both in its text and image, not be alien to the target consumers' knowledge base, including cultural symbols. For example, if we featured a ten-headed demon king, consumers other than of (Asian) Indian origin will be at a loss; if we featured a geisha, non-Japanese consumers may not be able to relate to it; and if we showed a map of the London Underground, most non-Londoner consumers are unlikely to be able to interpret it. Of course, this creative ad was apt because it was shown only in London.



(Explanation: Facing page)

FACTORS THAT SHAPE PERCEPTION

Or, Are Things the Way We See Them?

If we asked you why you see something the way you say it is, you would most likely answer, "Because that is the way it is." But is it? Sometimes, you will be right, but sometimes not. Look at this pair of neckties. Do you perceive them to be "cool"? Your perception will depend on three factors, responsible for all our perceptions (see Figure 5.2).

1. **Stimulus characteristics—the properties of the stimulus itself**
2. **Context—the setting in which the stimulus is encountered**
3. **Consumer characteristics—consumers' own knowledge, interests, and experiences**

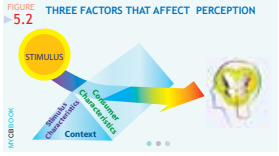


Figure 5.2: See it on the next page

1. STIMULUS CHARACTERISTICS

A Thing Is What It Is

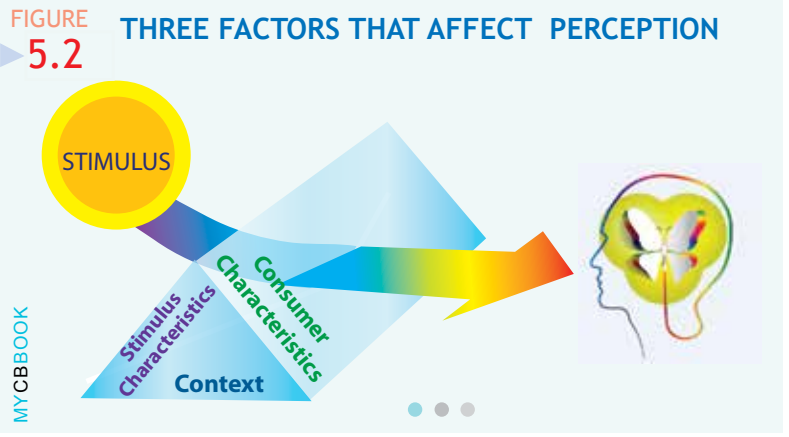
Some of the blame for our misperceptions and credit for correct perceptions should go to the object or stimulus itself. After all, the mind's goal is to capture the "reality" of the stimulus. So, when we perceive something, we can't perceive it to be considerably different from what it is. If we see a car, then that is because the stimulus really happens to be a car. If we perceive a brand of cereal to be healthy, it is because we see that it has whole-wheat flakes and nuts, and we do not taste much sugar in it. The reality of the stimulus, i.e., the stimulus characteristics, inevitably determines our perception. Stimulus characteristics themselves can be grouped into two types: *sensory characteristics* and *information content*.

Upon exposure, this ad attracts attention due to an unexpected visual of a familiar product (the athletic shoe). It takes a moment to realize the shoe outline is actually a London Underground ("the Tube") route map. It takes a bit more of thinking to appreciate this image as a tting conte t or the deodorant brand s promise as the headline reads: *However you beat the Tube strike, Sure keeps you fresh with every move.*

The interpretation step in the perception process is complete as we realize that if we are going to beat the tube strike by walking, we had better use Sure to beat the perspiration and stay fresh.

Image: Courtesy of DLKW Lowe, London (U.K.)

FIGURE 5.2 THREE FACTORS THAT AFFECT PERCEPTION



Sensory Characteristics

A characteristic is **sensory** if it stimulates any of the five senses. Sensory characteristics influence perceptions and consumer responses in two ways: through *sensory-experience* and through *cultural symbolism*. **Sensory experience** refers to how we feel when a stimulus makes contact with our senses. We are biologically wired to find some sensory characteristics pleasant and, likewise, to find some unpleasant. Thus, we find loud, harsh sounds unpleasant and melodic sounds pleasant. We find sweet tastes pleasant and bitter tastes unpleasant. And so on. Some of these responses develop with conditioning (e.g., we may dislike Indian classical music by such artists as Ravi Shankar or country music by such artists as Garth Brooks simply because we have had no prior exposure to these styles). But eventually they all come to reside in our automated, biological sense responses.

Cultural symbolism refers to the meaning any characteristic or entity comes to have in a particular culture. Although the term applies to all entities, the focus here is on the sensory characteristics of visual stimuli. All visual stimuli have three features: color, shape, and texture.[7] And each comes to acquire cultural symbolism.

Color The meaning of some colors differs across cultures; for example, black is the color of mourning in Britain, but white is the color of mourning in Japan. This meaning applies only to clothing, however, and not to cars—in both countries (and in most other countries in the world) black in cars is considered to signify affluence and gravity.

Marketers attempt to influence consumers' perceptions by packaging their products and messages in appropriate colors. Mouthwashes are colored green or blue to connote a clean, fresh feeling. One brand, Plax, makes its mouthwash red to distinguish itself from competing brands and also to create the perception

Watch me wink. Brand feelunique.com gets your attention, in a charming way. Feelunique.com is a U.K. based online beauty boutique. Models/consumers sporting the temporary tattoo on their eyelids earned 10 pence per wink.

(Creative agency: Mischief PR, U.K.)

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that it is medicinal and therefore more effective. Consumers find blue to be the coolest color for display in electronic devices. Most cell phones have adopted this color as a popular option. And American Express introduced a blue card targeted at college students and even called it *Blue Cash*.

Shape Shapes, too, come to connote qualities that sometimes are culture-specific, and, with changing culture, their meanings may change for the same consumer group. This is most visible in clothing styles and in car designs. The boxy shapes of the cars of the sixties were replaced in the eighties by egg-shell bodies resembling spaceships and connoting advanced aerodynamics; but at the beginning of the current century, the boxy look was back, with Scion and Element for the Gen Y set, and with the Mini for nostalgic boomers. In men's neckties, the fashion swings from broad to narrow. In jeans, from bell-bottoms to tapered to flared, changing shapes catch the fancy of the fashionable and trendy. In skirts, mini to midi to maxi define the wearer's identity. For an interesting insight on how the shape of a glass affects how much we drink, see Exhibit 6.1 in Chapter 6.

Here is a stimulus. What is it? A chair. What kind? Informal, very comfy, quite inviting. This perception stems from the characteristics of the stimulus. In our perception, often (though not always by any means), a thing is what it is.

Texture Textures, too, come to acquire culturally symbolic meanings. Silky textures in clothing, for example, are deemed luxurious in a gender-neutral way in Eastern cultures, but somewhat feminine in Western cultures (where rustic textures are considered masculine). The "distressed" look in clothing conveyed poverty in most cultures until recently; now, it is "engineered" at great expense in such Jeanswear brands as Uniqlo, Acne Studios, and Naked & Famous and then celebrated by millions of young consumers as the coolest looking fabric on our planet!

Information Content

The second characteristic of a stimulus that influences perception is its information content. Information content moves the perceptual process beyond sensation or stimulus selection toward interpretation. For example, information about an automobile's engine horsepower, acceleration, and style enables one to categorize (i.e., interpret) it as a performance car or, alternatively, a family sedan.

Marketing Practice

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When German car brand Smart (stylized as smart, i.e., with a lower case 's') was launched in the USA in 2008, its ultra-small size was bound to cause perceptions of the product that would lead consumers not to consider it. To thwart such perceptions, the company ran a print ad campaign. One of the ads showed a man doing push-ups, with the short headline "tougher than you think"; another showed four pieces of luggage with the headline "bigger than you think"; and the third ad showed a child in a safety seat with the heading "safer than you think." Note that these perceptions were targeted with the information content in the ad (of course, to be successful, the ad message had to be grounded in the product's reality).

2. THE CONTEXT AS A FACTOR

The Company the Stimulus Keeps

Context refers to the setting or surrounding in which a stimulus is situated. In interpreting a stimulus, we are always influenced by the context. Suppose that a restaurant waiter keeps a polite but impersonal demeanor. This waiter will most likely be deemed unfriendly in a low-to-mid-price, mass-market restaurant such as an Applebee's or a T.G.I. Friday's restaurant. The same demeanor in an upscale restaurant such as a Nobu or a Jean-Georges may be perceived, on the other hand, as respectful (i.e., not getting too personal).

Favela chair

Look at the Favela chair in the picture. What do you think of it? Is it cool? Or, alternatively, ugly? And how much do you think it costs? Write down your answers. Now, what if we were to tell you that we found it in an antique store in a rundown area amidst cheap furniture? Next, what if we were to tell you, instead, that we saw it at the home of MoMA director Glenn Lowry? Would your perceptions of the chair be different? If yes, that shows the power of the context.

You will have an opportunity to read the actual description of the Favela chair later in the chapter. If your perception changes then, that, too, will show the power of the context.

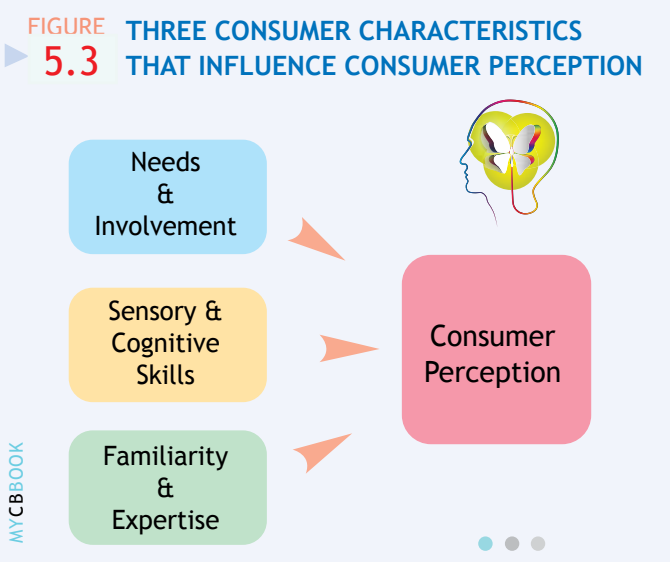
3. CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS

The Consumer Still Rules

Finally, consumers' own characteristics influence their perceptions. That is why two consumers may not perceive the same stimulus in a similar fashion. Most Americans love the game of football and find it perfectly normal, but many foreigners who watch the game for the first time are amused that players carry their "foot"-ball in their hands! An 8'x10' room in a European Hotel might look adequate to a Japanese tourist but would look awfully small to an American tourist. And a dress that might look too risqué to 2020 Grammy winner jazz musician Esperanza Spalding might not look exciting enough to Billie Eilish. The consumer characteristics that influence perceptions include (a) consumer needs and involvement, (b) consumers' sensory and cognitive skills, and (c) consumer familiarity and expertise. (See Figure 5.3.)

Consumer Needs and Involvement Consumer needs give relevance to stimuli. If you are not hungry, you might ignore or not even notice a roadside restaurant. If you are not into body-piercing, then an ad for body-piercing might not even register on your senses, or if it did, you might not pay attention to it. Involvement is, as we discussed in the previous chapter, a state of mind in which a need is felt more intensely or when we are deeply interested in something on an enduring basis. Involvement, too, affects consumer perceptions. For example, if a consumer is involved in Stephen King's novels, he/she paid attention to the release (September 2019) of *The Institute*. In the

FIGURE 5.3 THREE CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE CONSUMER PERCEPTION



midst of COVID-19, National Basketball Association (NBA) games were played in "the bubble," in a stadium filled with virtual fans. Both the staging and care of "the bubble" and projection of virtual fans (whose real versions were actually watching the game at home in real-time) onto the stadium seats were miracles of technology and organizational resolve, and for TV audiences at home, a rare treat to witness and relish. Yet, those not involved in the game (naturally, it is a significant mass of people) remain unappreciative, some even unaware, of this phenomenon.

Our needs and involvement affect not only our attention but also our interpretations. If we were very hungry, for example, then even insipid food would taste good. If we were bothered because our hair was very flat, and if a new brand of shampoo gave our hair even a little bit of body, then we would rate that shampoo highly. But if our hair had no "flatness" problem, then we might not even notice that brand's quality.

Consumers' Sensory and Cognitive Skills As humans, we differ in the sensitivity of our senses: some of us have a more developed, keener sense of smell than others. This allows us to smell mild aromas that others cannot and to distinguish between two closely related aromas. Similarly, some of us have more sensitive faculties of hearing, vision, taste, and touch. Correspondingly, our perceptual skills differ. Some of us can perceive depth accurately; some can visualize linear distances or spatial dimensions better (e.g., "Would this table fit into our kitchen?"); and some can remember, while in a store, the exact visual image of the colors in their bedroom's wallpaper design and judge, while in the store, whether a particular drapery color will match.

Even more importantly, people differ in their **cognitive skills**—the mental abilities to hold and process information. Some of us can manipulate numbers more easily than others (e.g., "Per-unit of the product, do these two brands have the same amount of fat?"); and some can hold more information in active memory while others need to write things down as they listen to a product demonstration or a food recipe. Some have a tendency to avoid technical information while others avidly seek it. These differences in cognitive skills obviously influence how consumers interpret and encode a stimulus. A 21-year-old college student might find a textbook's prose and examples engaging, whereas a topic scholar (with highly developed cognitive skills) might dismiss it as lacking gravitas.

As humans, we differ in the sensitivity of our senses.

Consumer Familiarity and Expertise Finally, consumer familiarity with the stimulus category or expertise on the topic influences consumer interpretation. We are able to recognize and quickly categorize something with which we are familiar. When we see a new product under a familiar brand name (i.e., a brand extension), we quickly know what it is—e.g., that Listerine mint strips are breath fresheners. Expertise goes beyond familiarity and entails some specialist knowledge. Because of this, expertise helps consumers to more accurately categorize and evaluate stimuli. Thus, wine connoisseurs are able to judge wines more accurately than can novice wine consumers, for example.

Expectations Influence Perception

Familiarity produces expectations, and our expectations in turn influence our perceptions. We drink a soft drink, thinking it is Coke, our favorite brand, and we find that the drink tastes good, just as Coke should. We see a shirt with a Bonobos label, and we think it is a high quality, fashionable shirt. We notice that the DVD player is made in, say, Bangladesh, and we might quickly conclude that it is a "cheap" import. Again and again, in everyday life, we form these perceptions and make quick judgments (sometimes false) because we expect things to be like that. And speaking of expectations, look again at the Favela Chair and see the power of context and how contexts shape our expectations and, in turn, our perceptions. In this case, the context is the price, the designer name, and the fact that it is made in Italy.

Designer: Fernando and Humberto Campana, 2002
Manufacturer: Edra, Italy
Materials: Brazilian Pinus wood
Dimensions: 29"x26.33"x24"
Price: $2,630.00
www.edra.com

Favela Chair

PERCEPTUAL BIASES

Or, Why We Don't See How Things Are

Since consumer characteristics influence consumer perceptions, these perceptions are seldom objective; rather, they are biased or distorted. Some of these distortions occur unintentionally; others occur because we actively control what we want to see or not to see. In either case, to cope with the mass of stimuli coming at us all the time, our minds employ three selective processes: selective exposure, selective attention, and selective interpretation (see Figure 5.4). These selective processes bias our perceptions.

SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

Avoiding Seeing Things

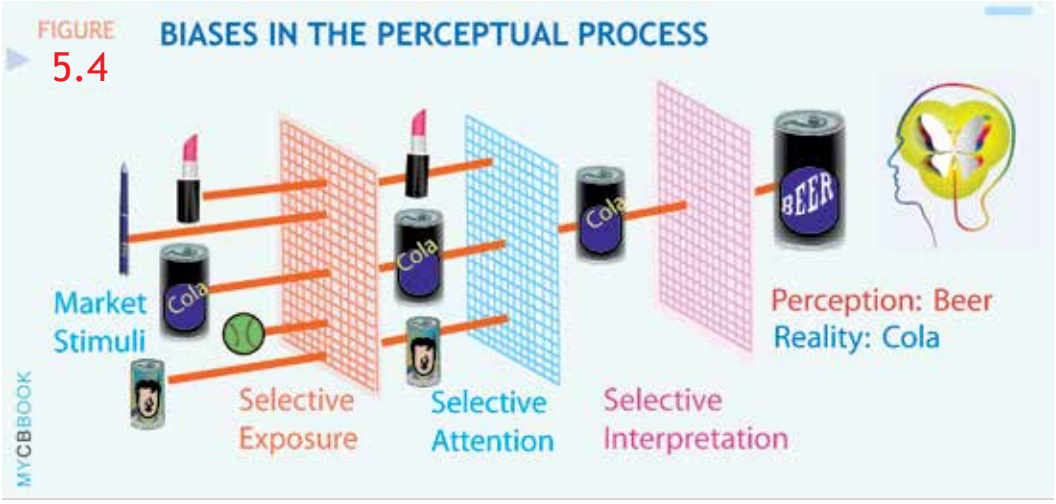
Red wine? White wine? In the bottle and in the glass. Perceptual distortion aplenty!

As a typical consumer, we face something like 3000 stimuli on an average day. If our minds were to attend to each one of these, we would go insane. Therefore, our minds cope with the barrage of marketing communications and products by becoming "selective." A hundred emails show up in our inbox, and we delete half of them unopened. Our favorite TV show goes into a commercial break and we quickly immerse ourselves into our Facebook feed. The fact is that we choose what to expose ourselves to. There are 50 or 60 stores in a mall, but we do not visit a majority of them. We receive print catalogs from new streetwear brands, and we quickly discard Stüssy but save Aimé Leon Dore (ALD). In these and other ways, we choose to expose ourselves selectively to market communications.

SELECTIVE ATTENTION

Avoiding Taking a Note of Things

You didn't notice all the students in your class; but you did notice that one particular student with the T-shirt that said: "Procrastinate Now!" And when you were reading *Surrounded by Idiots: The Four Types of Human Behavior and How to Effectively Communicate with Each in Business (and in Life)* by Thomas Erikso (2019) and watching TV in the background (or rather "listening" to your TV), you let whiz past your ears the story about the Twitter accounts of celebrities like Kanye West and Elon Musk being hacked for seeking donations in Bitcoin to a scam account (this was July 16, 2020); but you did pause from reading the book and turned fully to the TV as soon as you heard the words "SoulCycle" in the story about your favorite brand bringing out its own Peloton-like in-home fitness bike (yes, with streaming video and all). Why? Because you are interested in all things fitness gizmos! *Selective attention* at work here.



SELECTIVE INTERPRETATION

Avoiding Knowing the Inconvenient Truth

Even if a marketer succeeds in getting the consumer's full attention, it still does not mean the marketer got the consumer to believe in the message. Consumers interpret the content and messages of marketing communications selectively. A call by the umpire was unfair if it penalized our favorite team; it was fair if it penalized the opposite team. This sort of selective interpretation is called *perceptual distortion*.

Perceptual distortion refers to information being encoded non-objectively. That is, the consumer sees it as different from reality. This distortion occurs for two reasons:

1. Prior expectations and sensory habits. Our sensory systems get used to particular forms in which stimuli have been exposed to us all our lives. Thus, if we see pastel-colored bottles of water or cologne or smartphone skins, we perceive them to be feminine. If we see a person in a fancy suit stopping us on the street, we listen, expecting no harm; the same move by a shabbily dressed person makes us step away. In reality, the fancy suit person could be a peddler of fake watches and the shabbily dressed person a successful millionaire entrepreneur lost for directions. In the wake of COVID-19, Warheads candy maker (one of their edible candies is *Super Sour Spray*) brought out hand sanitizer in a package that had the company name on it and looked like a candy package. Parents worried that children will mistake it for edible candy.

2. Prior Beliefs. Perception is both an outcome of sensory coding (the first factor mentioned above) and our mind's desire to hold on to its beliefs and reject anything that defies those beliefs.

Mary Jordan's *The Art of Her Deal: The Untold Story of Melania Trump* (released on June 16, 2020) had garnered 357 reviews on Amazon by July 30—42%, 5-stars, and 27%, 1-star. Katharine Weymouth, a 5-star rater wrote: "Mary Jordan's thoughtful and insightful portrait of the First Lady is a must-read." And "Avid reader," a 1-star rater, wrote: "Don't waste your money. I'm sorry I did. And, if Jordan is considered a journalist, then I'm a monkey's uncle." Same stimulus, different interpretations!

PERCEPTUAL FRAMES

Old Perceptions, New Stimuli—How They Dovetail

What we see depends on the perceptions we currently hold *and* on what we are looking for. Thus, our current perceptions and our goals "frame" our perceptions of new stimuli. The term ***perceptual frames*** refers to consumers' current stock of knowledge and perceptions, which helps them to selectively receive and organize new stimuli. This overarching concept influences three perception outcomes: (1) perceptual threshold, (2) subliminal perception, and (3) perceptual organization, with its three subcomponents—gestalt, field and ground, and closure.

PERCEPTUAL THRESHOLD

Or, How We Can Show up on the Consumer's Radar

Some stimuli are not registered by our senses because they fall below our **perceptual threshold** (sometimes also called **differential threshold**)—the minimum level or magnitude at which a stimulus begins to draw involuntary attention and begins to be sensed. A related concept is the **just noticeable difference (j.n.d.)**. This refers to the magnitude of change necessary for a change to be noticed. Marketers use this principle to reduce product quantity or size marginally in order to keep per-unit prices constant in the wake of rising costs. Some years ago, a famous candy maker successfully reduced the size of its candy bars by keeping the size change small.

The magnitude of change needed for a change to be noticed depends on the base quantity. The larger the base quantity, the larger the magnitude of change needed for the change to be noticed. This is known as **Weber's Law**, named after the German scientist Ernst Weber.[8] For example, a one-half inch reduction in the size of a five-inch candy bar will perhaps not be noticed, but the same reduction in a two-inch long stick of chewing gum is likely to be noticed.

This principle is used by marketers in two opposite ways: Sometimes, they don't want consumers to notice the change they made in some element of their stimulus. In 2015, Facebook quietly changed its logo and hardly anyone noticed. The new logo was supposed to feel friendlier and the company hoped that the consumers don't have to perceive the change in order for the emotional sensory effect to happen. Check out this change at https://tinyurl.com/facebook-logo-change. (Authors created this friendly web address in 2016, and it was still in place when last accessed, which was on August 27, 2020.)

Sometimes, marketers want us to notice the change. No matter how vivid a stimulus, after a while our senses get used to it and we stop perceiving it. What makes a stimulus rise above the perceptual threshold is *change*. Case in point: Febreze® NOTICEables™ by Proctor & Gamble. The wall-plug-in air fresheners come in twin fragrance pouches that switch every 45 minutes. When the fragrances alternate, you are sure to notice them and enjoy the fragrant air in the room. You can have the choice of Calypso Breeze & Hawaiian Paradise™, Morning Walk & Cleansing Rain™, Pink Magnolia & Jasmine Breeze™, Vanilla Refresh & Vanilla Bean,™ and Clothesline Breeze & Meadow Songs™. (Learn more at www.febreze.com).

Our senses cannot perceive very small changes in stimuli. And that can be a good thing for marketers.

Some stimuli fail to achieve registration on consumers' senses, but failing to achieve attention can sometimes be a good thing. Actually, some stimuli are deliberately kept "sneaky" so that, it is hoped, they fail to attract attention. It is like flying a fighter plane below an enemy's radar sensors. That brand of candy bar reducing its size just a tad is a case in point. In such situations, escaping notice is a good thing for marketers.

And it is also the basis of one of marketing's oldest folktales—*subliminal perception*.

SUBLIMINAL PERCEPTION

The Folklore of Sneaky Marketing

Perhaps no other story has been told in marketing more often than this one. In the 1950s, marketing researcher James Vicary conducted a test. In a theater, on the movie screen, the words "Drink Coca-Cola" and "Eat popcorn" were flashed for 1/3000 second (below the perceptual threshold level) at five-second intervals. The sales of Coca Cola and popcorn reportedly increased during the test period.[9]

As a result of stories like this, people at large sometimes suspect marketers and advertisers of being mysterious con artists, trying to manipulate their minds without their knowledge. And since then, consumer advocacy groups and consumer activists have been trying to find hidden symbols in product package designs or in pictures in advertising. This quest for hidden images, however, has turned up no concrete evidence that such tricks exist or that they work. Marketing researchers who have tried to repeat the Vicary experiment have not been able to replicate his findings. And, indeed, in a 1962 interview with *Advertising Age*, Vicary himself confessed to having fabricated the whole thing.

On trial here is a phenomenon called **subliminal perception**—the perception of a stimulus without our being aware of it. **Subliminal stimuli** are defined as stimuli of which one is not conscious. Thus, the stimulus registers on our senses but without our being aware of the registration. For example, if music is playing in a store where we are busy finding what we want, we might not become conscious of it even though it might put us in a happy mood. Thus, without focusing our attention on it, we have perceived it below the threshold of awareness. This is subliminal perception.

Psychologists have done several experiments to test whether subliminal stimuli work. Typically, the subliminal stimulus is masked by or submerged in a more vivid stimulus on which people are focusing attention. Let us describe one such experiment.[10] A psychology researcher told a group of subjects (that is, people who participate in psychological experiments) that their task was to solve some problems on the computer. Each of them sat at a PC and went through the tasks presented on the computer screen, such as solving puzzles or building figures. While the steps to these tasks were being presented, some pictures of faces would briefly appear in a corner, where they would not interfere with the main task; they would flash so briefly that they would be below the threshold level of being seen by the human eye. The pictures flashed for half of the subjects were of pleasant faces; the other half were of unpleasant faces.

After some time, a message suddenly appeared: "F 11 Error: failure saving data. You must begin again from the beginning." Secretly, a camera recorded the facial reaction of all subjects. The finding? The subjects whose screens had flashed unpleasant faces were angrier than the other group of subjects!

While psychologists still debate if subliminal perception is real, experiments like this one show that it is possible for humans not to be aware of something but to be influenced by it anyway. What then is to be believed about subliminal perception?[11] Here is our summary of this issue:

Sometimes, mere exposure can create a liking.

1. **First, research has demonstrated that mere exposure to stimuli can create a liking for those stimuli and that this can happen even without consumers being aware of having seen the stimuli before. This is called *mere exposure effect*.**[12]
2. **Second, certain stimuli create an instant and automated response in humans. For example, if a commercial contains a soft melody, we might like the advertised brand a little bit more without even being aware of the melody. Making a package more pleasant to look at can have a similar subliminal effect.**
3. **Whether consumers perceive a stimulus subliminally or consciously, it pays to make all elements of marketing stimuli pleasant. It is not necessary for marketers to cunningly embed unwholesome images in advertisements. Pleasant presentations of all elements of product offerings are all that are needed to create favorable impressions whether or not the phenomenon of subliminal perception actually exists.**

A gift for you!:
Now you see it.
Now you don't.

PERCEPTUAL ORGANIZATION

Bringing Order to the Chaos of Life

Not only is our world full of stimuli, but each stimulus also generates a multitude of sensations. If our minds took note of all these sensations, we would continuously experience a state of chaos. And our minds would be perennially overloaded with the work of "seeing" the stimuli. To cope with such an enormous task, the mind quickly "organizes" the sensations in some sensible order. Three principles guide how consumers accomplish this perceptual organization: *gestalt*, *figure and ground*, and *closure*.

#1

Gestalt Look at the zebras in the picture. Done? Ok, now, without looking at it again, answer these questions: How many stripes does the standing zebra have? And which of its front legs is positioned forward of the other—the left or the right? Are the stripes on the side of its belly slanted upward from left to right, or from right to left? And is the seated zebra's head pointed toward or away from the standing zebra? You didn't notice? But you saw the picture and recognized it as a zebra, right? All of us register and encode stimuli this way—as an overall configuration, without sensing the details. This is called *gestalt perception*, derived from the German word **gestalt,** which means a general, overall image formed in the mind. Humans (and therefore consumers) seldom attend to all the details of a stimulus. Rather they form an overall impression based on a pattern within the stimulus (for a zebra, this pattern is a horse-like animal with stripes). It is efficient for consumers to do it this way.[13]

Courtesy: whozoo.org

Marketers need to take note: sometimes consumers are paying only fleeting attention, so they form an overall impression of the brand based on some surface features or on the overall image in an ad. But even when they pay attention, consumers don't notice each feature, and often what they notice and retain in memory is merely an overall impression of the advertised product, i.e., a gestalt perception.

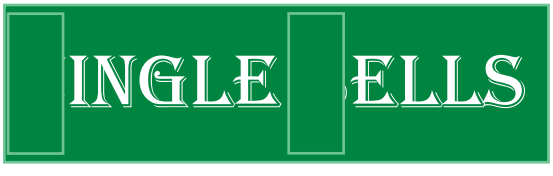
Figure and Ground Now look at the Zebra picture again. Is it really a picture about zebras? Or is it about the outdoor terrain and vegetation in spring? That depends on how you stumbled onto this picture. Were you searching for pictures of animals? Or, alternatively, were you searching for pictures of seasons or landscapes? This is the concept of **figure and ground**: In any visual, something is the background (ground), and something is the focal object (figure).

#2

Look at the picture of a vase. Is it really a vase, or is it, instead, a picture of two human faces? That depends on what you see as ground and what you see as figure. As an advertiser, you will want to make sure that your product and your message remains the figure rather than becoming the ground. Your message risks becoming part of the ground if you make the ad so humorous, for example, that people remember the joke or the humor but not your product story or even its brand name.

Closure The **closure principle** suggests that consumers have a natural tendency to complete a partial stimulus, supplying the missing information from memory (assuming of course that they are already familiar with the complete stimulus).[14] If you hear the tune of a song, you automatically begin to hum it; if you read or hear a partial sentence of a familiar jingle, you fill in the rest. Partial information bothers us like an unsolved puzzle, and we make the effort to find the missing information and achieve closure. Utilizing this principle, if marketers omit a letter or two from a familiar brand name or jingle, then consumers will fill in the blank. In this way, consumers actively participate (rather than seeing the information passively), and this active participation makes the brand name or tagline more memorable. Not too long ago, an ad by a famous brand of scotch whiskey did just that in its Christmas Holiday advertising. It wrote the headline phrase as _ingle _ells. Can you fill in the blanks to achieve closure (and notice the curious discomfort until you do)?

#3



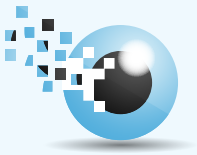
Actually, consumers need not be familiar with the brand name or slogan; they need only to be familiar with the words used. If you are preparing a poster, for example, for your campus club, say, the Young Entrepreneur's Club, try to leave out a letter here and there (for example: You g E trepne r's Cl b). The chances are that more viewers will register the poster and your club's name in their minds than if you had spelled it out. That is because achieving closure on an unfinished stimulus is an inherent human need.

Choice Reading

HUMAN SENSES— ESSENTIAL ORGANS TO EXPERIENCE OUR WORLD

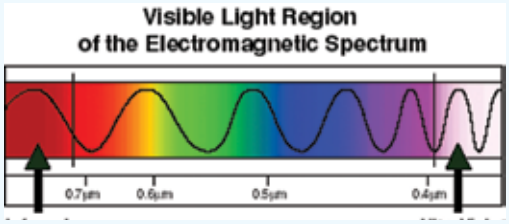
Essential to our experience of our physical world are our senses. Consumers experience all marketing stimuli through these senses. Marketers should be aware of the capabilities as well as the limits of our senses and the role they play in consumer perception of all things physical.

Sense of Sight



Our eyes are the organ of sight. Light passes through the cornea, pupil, and lens onto the retina, which is coated with photoreceptors, absorbs light and converts it into electrical signals that carry information to the brain. When light falls on an object, the object reflects that light. Our eyes detect that light, form an image (a representation of the object), and convey it to the brain. Human eyes are able to detect just a narrow range of the wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation reflected from objects, that between 380 and 780 nanometers. These wavelengths allow us to see the spectrum of colors within visible light—red at the high end and violet at the low end. Outside of this spectrum lie gamma-ray, X-ray, and ultraviolet radiations at the low end and infrared, microwave, and radio waves at the high end. Our vision-glass makers offer us UV protection as an option; it is to protect the eye from ultraviolet radiation that we cannot see but which is present in the atmosphere during daytime.

Other species can see in the ultraviolet range. Bees, for example, can detect nectar in flowers even though nectar reflects ultraviolet light. Many birds have sex-linked markings on their plumage in the ultraviolet range that other birds can detect and identify to find a mate. Beyond detection is clarity, which depends on the amount of light and the way it converges as a focal point on the retina. Raptors (eagles, hawks, and falcons) have big eyes, allowing more light and better focus; they can therefore see eight times more clearly than the human eye.

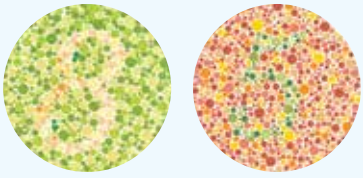


How far can the human eye see? Quite far, actually. We can see the moon and the stars in the galaxies, which are more than a million light-years away from earth. Researchers have calculated that on a dark, clear night, we could even see a candle flame flickering up to 30 miles away. However, a car at that distance would appear to have a single headlight; a car would need to be within 2 miles for the human eye to separate out the two headlights.

Seeing an object means detecting four features of the object: shape, color, motion, and depth. Without depth perception, we would see the world flat, all objects as mere two dimensional! Seeing depth requires us to detect that the two objects (or two points on a single object) are at different distances.

Three-dimensional (and depth) vision is called *stereoscopic*, and it depends on the fact that our eyes are separated and thus receive a slightly different view of the same object. Although in practice we are sometimes able to detect depth with monocular (one-eyed) data, it is largely guesswork based on certain clues (such as if an object partially hides another, we know it is in front of the hidden object; or when we move our heads, nearby objects appear to move faster than the faraway objects; light reflected from nearer objects appears brighter than that from farther objects; etc.). However, the binocular (two-eyed) vision gives a better view of depth, distance, and three-dimensionality.

Defects in color vision. You might have heard some people say they are color blind. Few people are totally color blind, so it usually means only that some people cannot detect a particular color. You might have also heard that men are more likely to be color blind than women, and it is true. Color vision defects are generally genetic, and both red and green pigments are on the X chromosome and men have only one X chromosome. Consequently, approximately 2% of men are red-green color blind, and approximately 8% of males, and fewer than one percent of females, have some difficulty with color vision. Want to test out your color vision? Try the following test, which we owe to Dr. Shinobu Ishihara. If you do see the numbers 8 and 5, you have good color vision.[a]



Sense of Hearing

We hear with our ears. Our ability to hear varies, as it depends on the "health" of our ears. Sound is basically the movement of air surrounding our ears. That movement causes pressure on our eardrums, creating signals for the brain. Sound has two attributes: amplitude (loudness) and pitch (frequency). Frequency of air vibrations is measured in Hertz. The frequencies that humans can hear are called audio or sonic. Higher frequencies are called ultrasonic and those lower than audio are called infrasonic. Snakes, whales, giraffes, and elephants can hear infrasonic, and dogs can hear ultrasonic. That is why we can't hear dog whistles but, naturally, dogs can (dog whistles are made to emit sound at 23 to 54 kHz).

Sound pressure is measured in decibels (dB), set to zero at a level at which humans can begin to hear. Zero to 15 dB is the sound of rustling leaves. Our normal speech is at 60 dB. Sounds over 85 dB, exposed to repeatedly, can cause noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) and sounds of 140 dB can cause painful damage to hearing. Thunder emits sound at 120 dB and a gunshot at 140-190 dB. Some 40 million Americans suffer from hearing loss.

How far can we hear? We can hear other people from up to 20 meters away for normal chatting, 100 meters for shouts, and 10 meters for whispers.[b]

Choice Reading

Sense of Smell

We smell objects around us when air touching those objects reaches the two small odor-detecting patches, called olfactory receptors, located high up in the nasal passages. Humans have some 5 to 6 million of these receptor cells. In comparison, dogs have some 200 million receptor cells. Still, humans can detect and distinguish thousands of different smells. (Until recently, scientists believed that humans could detect only about 10,000 different odors; in recent research at Rockefeller University, NY, however, it was estimated that the human nose can detect up to 1 trillion odors.)

The perception of smell is closely related to our sensory experiences and emotions. That fragrances stir our emotions is not merely the imagination of poets, nor is it merely the commercial pitch of the marketers of perfumes. Human olfactory receptors are directly connected to our limbic system, the part of the brain responsible for our emotional experiences. In fact, the information reaches the limbic system sooner than it reaches our cognitive system, so that we are able to feel the pleasure of the smell before we are able to name it, such as vanilla, rose, or jasmine.

It is this autonomic association with our emotional system that explains why we have emotional reactions to different body odors or fragrances we sense in close proximity to people. In psychological experiments, moods induced by fragrances have been shown to influence our judgments of even things unrelated, such as ratings of people in photographs. (The researchers note, however, that people of outstanding beauty or extreme ugliness will not be able to mask the effect with fragrances!) In reality, good fragrances induce a positive sensory experience in most consumers, and fragrances (from perfumes and colognes to air fresheners, to food flavors) drive a growing and robust market.[c]

Sense of Taste

We taste food (and other materials) with receptors called taste buds, which are located on the tongue, soft palate, cheeks, and back of the throat. The average human has approximately 10,000 taste buds (we lose some as we age). When food molecules dissolve in saliva, our taste buds react chemically to sense taste and send the taste information to our brains. These taste buds are capable of detecting five types of taste: salty, sweet, sour, bitter, and umami.

This last one, umami, also called savory, is a recently recognized taste, found in certain amino acids, richly present in bacon and other meats, for example. (For vegetarians, savory amino acids are present aplenty in miso, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, tomatoes, and mushrooms—especially when sun-dried, and fermented foods such as sauerkraut and kimchi, among others.) Contrary to a popular belief that different regions of the tongue specialize in different taste types, each taste bud is able to detect, in fact, each of the five taste types.[d]

Sense of Touch

The organ of touch is our skin. Although we think of "touch" as a singular sense, in reality, it is a complex sensory system, called the somatosensory system, or somatic senses. It is made up of four main types of receptors called thermoreceptors, photoreceptors, mechanoreceptors, and chemoreceptors, capable of sensing heat, light, pressure (or touch), and chemicals, respectively. Thus, our skin experiences touch as pressure, skin stretching, vibration, and temperature.

The information from these receptors is sent to our brains. The part of the brain these signals reach has a map of the body parts, so it knows what parts of our bodies were touched. Also, the sensitivity of the receptors (i.e., nerve endings) differ on our bodies—our hands and fingers, faces, and lips and tongue are most sensitive, and the small of our backs, lungs, and thighs are least sensitive. And a smaller index finger is more sensitive than a bigger index finger. That is why women's index fingers, generally smaller than men's, are more sensitive. And we sense texture through vibrations caused by the unevenness of a surface when we slide our fingers along that surface. Also, our nerves send two types of information, one that discriminates what the stimulus being touched is (i.e., that the coin in our pocket is a dime and not a quarter), and the other that lets us experience emotion.

When we touch something, we get tactile feedback—what the surface feels like on our skin. When we lift something and hold it, we also get another type of information, called kinesthetic—the effect we feel in our muscles, joints, and tendons. Kinesthetic feedback informs us, for example, of the weight and size of the coffee cup we are holding. The combination of the two types of feedback is referred to as haptic. Stationary or passive touch is called tactile touch, and a movement touch is called *haptic touch*.[e]

5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we described consumer perception as a three-step process—exposure, attention, and interpretation. In this perceptual process, we identified the influence of the characteristics of the stimulus or incoming information, the influence of the context, and the role of the consumers' own characteristics. Once exposed in the right media, the product or advertising message gains consumer attention based on the sensory characteristics of the stimulus—the more vivid the stimulus, the greater the likelihood of it gaining a consumer's involuntary attention. Consumers subsequently select it for further attention—termed *voluntary* attention, depending on the interest or involvement in the topic presented. And finally, the interpretation depends on the consumer's prior expectations and the context of the stimulus. For a product, everything serves as context—brand name, package design, price, and the store in which the product is carried. Marketers, therefore, need to fashion these elements of their offerings so as to create the desired perceptions.

Next, we described three biases in the perception process: selective exposure, selective attention, and selective interpretation. These processes allow us to escape from (selective exposure) and cope with (selective attention) the barrage of stimuli that constantly faces us; they allow us also to complete efficiently the task of interpretation. Marketers should be aware of these biases and, where necessary, design their stimuli to harness these biases in their favor.

5 KEY WORDS

Ambient advertising
Attention
Closure
Context effect
Expectations
Figure and ground
Gestalt
Interpretation
Just noticeable difference (j.n.d.)
Mere exposure effect
Organization
Perception
Perceptual distortion
Perceptual frames
Perceptual threshold
Stimulus
Subliminal perception
Weber's law

5 YOUR TURN

REVIEW+Rewind

1. Describe the three steps in the perception process and illustrate them with an example drawn from your own experience.
2. Define attention and its two forms: *voluntary* and *involuntary*. Give an example of each.
3. What is the "mere exposure effect" and its relevance to marketers?
4. Explain the concepts of (a) *gestalt*, (b) *figure and ground*, and (c) *closure*.

THINK+Apply

As a consumer, have you experienced perceptual distortion? Why did this occur in your case?

PRACTICE+Experience

Visit your local supermarket and browse the product displays of: beverages, candies and cookies, and men's grooming products. Make a list of all the stimulus characteristics and then brainstorm how they likely affect consumer perceptions.

Photo Quiz
5

Match the four depictions with the factor of perception:
(There may be more than one image for some values, and no image for some.)

1. Stimulus factor — — —
2. Consumer factor — — —
3. Context factor — — —

Briefly explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

THERE ARE NO FACTS IN LIFE. ONLY OUR PERCEPTIONS OF FACTS. PERCEPTIONS, NOT FACTUAL REALITY, FORM THE BASIS OF ALL OUR ACTIONS.

6 BRAND POSITIONING & SENSORY MARKETING

Delighting senses, occupying minds

1. Reference Price and Its Role In Consumer Perception
2. Country-of-origin Effects on Consumer Perceptions
3. Branding: How it Wins Over Unbranded Equals
4. Uses of Perceptual Maps and Methods of Drawing Them
5. Brand Positioning/ Repositioning and Alternative Strategies for Achieving It
6. Consumers' Five Senses and How Sensory Marketing Lures Them

In branded products, I trust.

TO UNDERSTAND

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Watch Our Minds Fool Our Senses

One evening, three marketing professors decided to play servers at MIT's Muddy Charles Pub. As customers rolled in and took a seat, one of the professors would approach them and offer two free samples of beer to taste. After tasting the samples, which were marked A and B, the patrons were asked which beer they would like a full-glass of. A majority of the patrons chose Beer B (59%).

Unbeknownst to the beer-drinking customers, Beer A was actually Budweiser, and Beer B was the same Budweiser but with a bit of balsamic vinegar added (2 drops per ounce of beer). The role-playing professors fondly called Beer B *the MIT Brew*. When the experiment was repeated with Sam Adams without (Sample A) and with the vinegar (Sample B), again a majority of the customers preferred Beer B. It was thus established that a small quantity of balsamic vinegar improved the perceived taste.

In the next experiment, the curious professors decided to tell the volunteer beer-tasting customers what the beers were: "This here is Sam Adams and this here Sam Adams with just a few drops of balsamic vinegar added." This time, a majority preferred Beer A, the one unembellished with vinegar. Compared to the 59% who had preferred the MIT brew in the first experiment, now only 30% of the customers wanted it!!

MARKETING APPLICATIONS OF PERCEPTION PROCESSES

The story of the MIT experiment vividly shows a revealing truth about the workings of the human mind: It has a way of seeing things that may or may not reflect reality. Perception is about how our minds see things. It does not matter what a marketer says a product is or will do. It doesn't even matter in reality what a product is. What matters is how consumers perceive it.

Since perception influences our way of looking at the world, it affects virtually every instance of consumer behavior in the marketplace. We bring this point home by highlighting the role of perception in five domains of consumer behavior:

1. **Psychology of consumer price perceptions**
2. **Country-of-origin effects**
3. **Consumer perceptual maps and positioning**
4. **Brand image and brand extensions**
5. **Sensory marketing**

APPLICATION #1

PSYCHOLOGY OF PRICE PERCEPTION

$9.99 is Good, $10.01 is Too Much!

The psychology of price perception refers to the way in which consumers psychologically perceive prices. Noteworthy aspects of this phenomenon are reference price and price as a quality cue.

Reference Price A consumer who accidentally walks into a store and discovers a "20 percent-off" sale may be delighted, but if the same consumer came in after viewing an advertisement hyping a huge sale, he or she is likely to feel disappointed or even anguished. Why? The concept of *reference price* explains it. **Reference price** is the price consumers expect to pay.[15] If the actual price is lower than the reference price, it is perceived as a good economic value. The consumer who accidentally walks into the store has the full price as the reference price; in contrast, the consumer who has seen advertisements of "huge savings" has a much lower reference price and is therefore disappointed.

Advertisement or no advertisement, we all have some reference price in mind for a product or service; this is termed the *internal reference price*, the price we believe to be the right price. This differs from the *external reference price*, which is the price the marketer uses to anchor a price advantage (e.g., "compare at___"). Often, a consumer's internal reference price comes from knowing the competitors' prices. When a price is higher than the consumer's reference price, the marketer may have to "educate" the consumer on the quality superiority that makes the price a good value. One recent advertisement read: "Our competitor's price is lower. That is because it should be!"

Price as a Quality Cue Consumers often use price as a quality cue—that is, as a basis for making inferences about the quality of the product or service. Such use of price is particularly likely where quality cannot be independently judged. Consumers often assume that a product with a higher price is superior in quality to one with a lower price.

The use of price as a quality cue can occur for products and services when consumers are seeking psychosocial satisfaction, that is, nonfunctional or non-utilitarian values. For example, for pens, a higher price may be valued as a reflection of exclusivity and status. It also may occur for products and services sought primarily for their functional or utilitarian value, especially if consumers cannot judge the quality independently (e.g., judging a higher-priced pen to be superior in writing quality).[1]

COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN EFFECTS

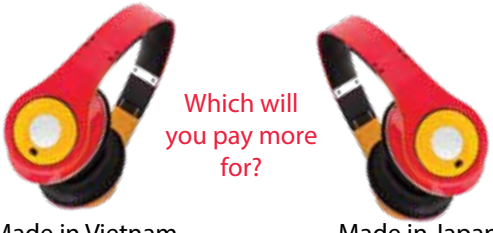
APPLICATION #2

High Fashion Suits from Timbuktu?

Would you buy a DVD player from Pakistan or Iran? High-fashion suits from Timbuktu? A fine wine made in China? Most probably, your answers are "no." What about a fashion suit from Italy, or a fine wine from France? Perhaps, your answers to these questions are "yes." If so, your answers may be driven by the "country-of-origin" image.[2]

Country-of-origin effects refer to the bias in consumer perceptions of products and services due to the country in which these products and services are made (or are claimed to be made). Overcoming this bias requires well-conceived informational and educational campaigns, and tenacious attention to product quality. In 2005, Lenovo, a Chinese computer company, acquired IBM's ThinkPad and personal computer business, and by pursuing product innovation, established an image for itself, unaffected by the historical image of China for electronic products. (The Thinkpad was actually already manufactured for IBM by Lenovo, so actual quality was never in question; the challenge was simply to manage public perception of a China-made computer.)

While a country with a poor overall image suffers from this bias, a country with a good image benefits from it. A British marketer of electronic products, in fact, exploits the positive image of another country. It assembles its products all over the world, but not in Japan; yet it markets them under the brand name Matsui to imply (misleadingly) a Japanese origin.



Made in Vietnam Made in Japan

APPLICATION #3

PERCEPTUAL MAPS AND POSITIONING

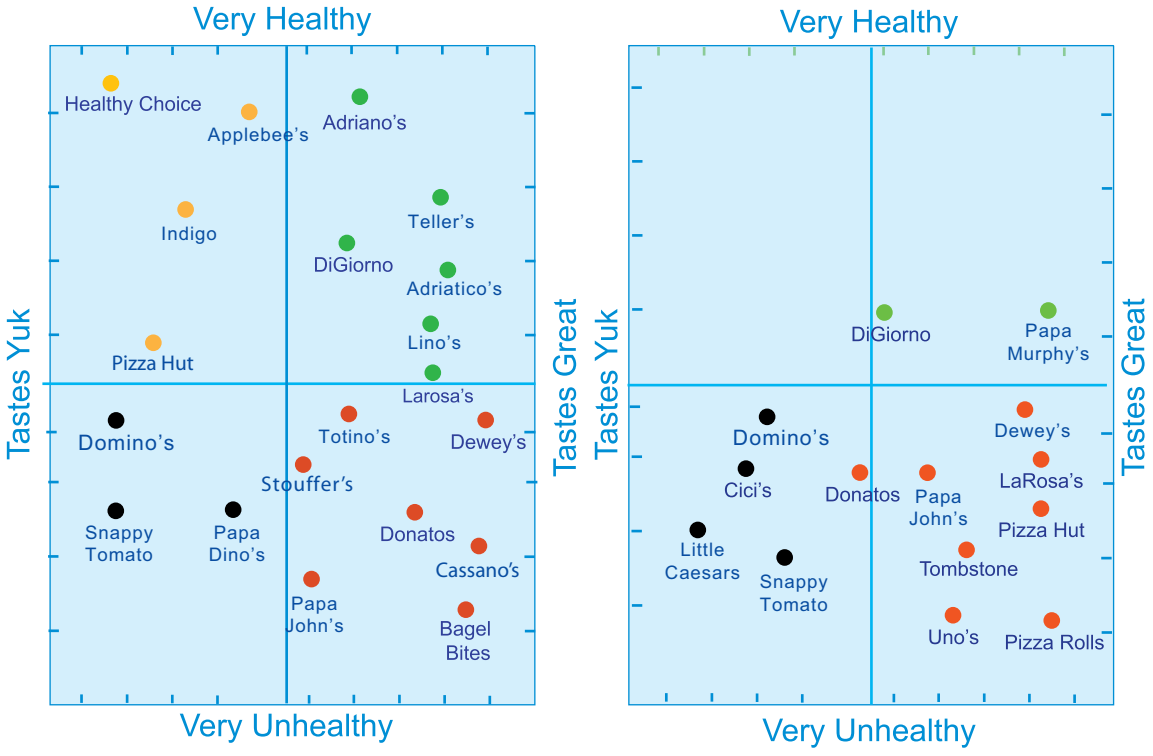
How Marketers Play the Mind's Photographer

Which pizza is tastier, Tombstone or DiGiorno®? Which is healthier? And which is the best value for the money? The answers are all a matter of perceptions—how we perceive these pizza brands. And these perceptions are in our minds. There is a map, if you will, in our minds of all these brands of pizza. And likewise, for other products. What marketers do is capture our mental map on paper, playing the photographer of the mind, so to speak. These maps on paper are called *perceptual maps*. **Perceptual maps** are visual depictions of consumer perceptions of alternative brands in a product category, in multi-dimensional grids. Dimensions are attributes of the product category—in the pizza example, these are taste, healthiness, price value, etc. Thus, the number of dimensions can be as many as the number of attributes. On paper, we draw these maps in two dimensions at a time (along an X-axis and a Y-axis), covering all attributes, two attributes at a time.

As an in-class exercise, two student groups drew their maps as shown in the figure. Notice how the perceptions of the two groups differ. Note that consumers may never have even tried some of these pizzas—their perceptions are merely impressions. As we know, not all perceptions are based on experience. Indeed, consumers never even try some products because of their unfavorable preconceptions about them. Also note that since the two consumers' perceptions are different, surely both of them cannot be correct, and therefore at least one of them differs from objective reality. It confirms one of our axioms: When it comes to how we see the world, there is no objective reality, only perception. And perceptions, not reality, are what matter. That is why marketers need to study such perceptual maps.

Four Uses of Perceptual Maps

1. **Know who your competitors are** Your competitor is not the company whose brand has the highest market share, nor the company with the brand share closest to yours (in either direction). Rather, your competitor is the company closest to your brand in the consumer's perceptual space; i.e., on the perceptual maps that your consumers draw for you. Thus, perceptual maps enable you to see the marketplace and various competitors in it from your customer's point-of-view.
2. **Know who your potential new target customers should be** Your potential target market should be the consumers of brands plotted closest to your brand on the map. They are the ones who are likely to have considered your brand and found it acceptable. If in a



survey of consumers, along with the perceptual maps, you also elicit demographic and media information, then you can target this group of consumers.

3. **Modify the product** Consumers perceive your product as lacking certain features or qualities. This tells you what features you need to improve in your products so that you can advance your brand on the perceptual map.

4. **Correct the misperceptions** Finally, consider the case of the consumers who have judged your product to be inferior to the products of certain competitors, but who view your product as on par with (if not superior to) these competitors' products when the product is tested and/or analyzed objectively. Obviously, consumers have come to hold misperceptions about your brand. You need to correct these perceptions by communicating the true attributes of your product and by encouraging these consumers to sample your product.

Positioning and Repositioning

The spot your brand occupies on the consumer's mental map is known as its positioning. More formally, **positioning** is defined as a consumer's perception of a brand relative to that of other brands and relative to consumers' goals relevant to the product category. Positioning encompasses the salient features consumers associate with the brand and the images the brand name evokes in consumers' minds. The images can relate to the product's benefits, the situations for which the brand is suited, the characteristics of people who consumers believe would typically use the brand, the emotive and symbolic experiences evoked by the brand, or the product's relationship with any other facets of consumers' lives.

If you don't like the positioning of your brand, you would want to change consumer perceptions about it. The practice of changing consumer perceptions about a brand is called *repositioning*. As a marketer, you can position and reposition your brand in one or more of the following ways.

By Functional Benefits When you think of Volvo, what comes to mind? Safety. Thus, Volvo is positioned as a safe car; Honda as a reliable car; Cadillac as a luxury car; and BMW as a performance car.

SAVVY MARKETER

By Symbolic Image Some brands position themselves by an intangible attribute that goes beyond a product's utilitarian benefits. Notice how the Movado brand positions itself as an "artistic" watch whereas Tag Heuer positions itself as an endurance watch. (Google these brands if you have not already seen their print ads.)

By User Image Brands can also be positioned by their distinct personalities. For example, Quicksilver projects a casual, playful image; in contrast, Just Cavalli embodies an ultra-glam, pulp-fiction-esque image. (You can find ads for these brands by Googling.)

By Usage Situation When a beer advertises itself as "the one beer to have when you are having more than one," it is positioning itself according to a consumption situation.

"Well, oranges are round and moist. ..."

Positioning against (and above) cookies

By Competition Sometimes, brands position themselves by competitive advantage. A classic positioning battle was fought between Hertz and Avis—Hertz had been touting its "largest car fleet and number 1" position. In response, Avis countered with the "Avis is only Number 2, so we try harder" campaign.

By Values A brand can also position itself according to the larger societal values it stands for. If you know anything about The Body Shop, then you know what stands out the most about it in the consumer mind: no animal testing. Likewise, Ben and Jerry's is positioned as an environmentally friendly company.

By Category Yet another way to position a brand is by carving out a new category. A classic example is Dial soap, which, in a campaign several years ago, wrapped itself in a prescription Rx label, thus positioning itself as a germ killer rather than merely as a cleanser. And, of course, you remember (perhaps from your "principles of marketing" text) that 7 Up staked out a new category: an Uncola drink.

APPLICATION #4

BRAND IMAGE AND BRAND EXTENSIONS

Listerine Lipstick? You Must Be Kidding!

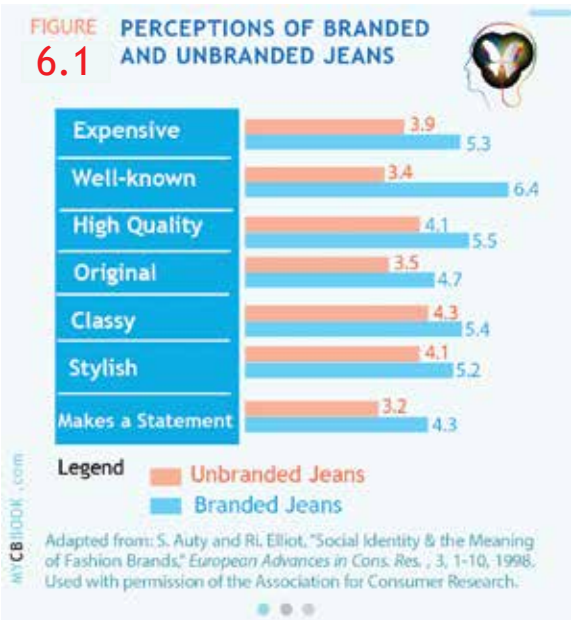
Brand names influence the perception of products. For new products, brand names act as contexts. They are like pedigrees. Adidas started as a shoe company; now it also sells apparel. Good for Adidas—as the company's good name is going to bring good consumer perceptions to its apparel. Brand names come to be known for certain product categories, and brand extensions must remain within the bounds of that category.

Listerine is perceived to be in an oral hygiene product. If the company (most known for mouthwashes) brought out a product extension into, say toothpaste, that would be easily assimilated by consumers. But if the company wanted to start marketing, say, sunglasses under the brand name Listerine, that would create an anomaly in consumer perceptions of the brand. Consumers would not be able to "organize" this new stimulus, and it would unsettle the brand image even for the company's oral hygiene products.

How Brand Names Affect Consumer Perceptions

Brand names clearly affect consumer perceptions of products. In one recent study in the UK, 800 consumers were surveyed about what they thought of the pair of jeans depicted in an advertisement they were shown. The ads (in print) were both for Levi's brand of jeans, but two versions were created: one showing the brand name on the product and the other without the brand name. In all other aspects, the two versions of the ad were identical. Half the consumers were shown one version and the other half the other version. Each group was asked to rate the pair of jeans on a number of adjective pairs (e.g., stylish/not stylish, expensive/inexpensive). The finding was unmistakable: On average, consumers who saw the branded jeans ad rated the jeans higher than did the consumers who saw the unbranded jeans version. Even more important, they rated it higher, not simply in overall terms but also on most of the attributes. See Figure 6.1. This example amply illustrates what consumer psychologists have known all along; namely, that brand names, and the image and reputation those brand names have built, bias consumers' product perceptions.

FIGURE 6.1 PERCEPTIONS OF BRANDED AND UNBRANDED JEANS



Adapted from: S. Auty and Ri. Elliot, "Social Identity & the Meaning of Fashion Brands," *European Advances in Cons. Res.*, 3, 1-10, 1998. Used with permission of the Association for Consumer Research.

EXHIBIT 6.1

How Package Shapes Influence Perception

Do longer packages make us see bigger? The answer is yes, and it is explained by elongation theory.

Elongation Theory Elongation theory says that consumers' perception of container volume is influenced directly by the tallness of the container relative to its width or diameter. Taller containers are perceived to be larger than are shorter but wider containers of the same volume. In research studies, consumers were found to prefer products with taller packages.

Marketing Implications. Product packages should be designed to look taller rather than wider. If product size needs to be reduced to save on costs, then it should be done by reducing the width or diameter of the package rather than reducing its height.

(A more elaborate treatment on this can be found on the book's Web site: (www.mycbbook.com/Learn-More/Package-Shape.)

APPLICATION #5

SENSORY MARKETING

Alluring You through the Senses

Sensory marketing refers to creating favorable product or brand impressions in the consumer mind by appealing to one or more of the five senses. Through sensory gratification, that is. To do so, the product, packaging, or brand messages are made intensely pleasing to the senses. Let us consider each sense, one by one.[3]

SOUND

The Magic of Melody

Marketers use jingles and music in advertisements to create the appropriate mood. Even the voices of the spokesperson and actors in an ad are chosen to match the brand's desired personality. Products are designed to produce the expected sound. To take one example, it has been found that consumers do not feel that a car door is securely shut unless it makes a sharp thudding sound when closed. So, even though it is possible to produce doors that close more quietly, car manufacturers now deliberately design their car doors to make a thudding noise. In stores and service facilities alike, marketers play the music that consumers will find enjoyable. Abercrombie and Fitch plays loud beats to keep its adolescent customers hopping; in contrast, Victoria's Secret pipes in soft melodies to set the mood for lingerie shopping. The sounds our cars make as we drive through changing surroundings—from city streets to highways to tunnels, and from wind to rain to snow—have we ever taken

the time to enjoy them? Honda "celebrates" them in a 2-minute TV commercial that has a full orchestra play a medley of those sounds, introduced by the only spoken words in the commercial, "This is what a Honda feels like"! YouTube it and enjoy this outstanding example of sensory marketing.

TASTE

Thank Your Taste Buds for It

When companies introduce new foods and beverages, they conduct extensive taste tests, because taste is, by definition, a major factor in the marketability of all food and beverage products. Pleasurable taste can increase product consumption. For example, Aqua Vie markets water in seven flavors (Hydrator™) designed to increase water consumption among consumers. And it is because of the pleasures our taste buds seek that International Delight® coffee creamers come in 11 flavors (e.g., cinnamon hazelnut, southern butter pecan, etc.), and Arizona Iced tea comes in more than 20 flavors (e.g., Asia plum, ginseng, etc.), all to delight consumers with the sensory experience of taste.

THE SENSE OF SMELL

Oh, the Spell of that Hypnotic Fragrance

Who among us, while strolling through the mall, has not been tempted to buy a Cinnabon, or Aunt Annie's pretzel, or a cup of Starbucks Café au lait? Smell plays a big role in attracting consumers to stores and products. At the very least, stores should have pleasing aromas.[4] Abercrombie and Fitch stores have a familiar musky smell that its loyal customers recognize because that is the scent in its signature men's cologne named Fierce. And New York-based supermarket Net Cost pumps artificial scents in its stores—scents of fresh-baked bread, milk chocolate, flowers, etc. Enviroscents is a company that sells AccScentHD, an aroma diffusing machine to airports, public theaters, hospitals, theme parks, and hotels. Who knows, next time we go to a Rainforest restaurant, we might even enjoy the aroma of a rainforest!

THE SENSE OF TOUCH

Touch Me, Touch Me Not

We all know the feeling: we are in a store, we read a sign that says, "please do not touch," and we feel as if someone has clipped our wings. We feel that we have been denied one of our basic pleasures while shopping—tactile sensation. Tactile sensation is a significant consumption experience for a number of products. The texture of clothes, bedsheets, and towels; the temperature of food and beverages (which affects not only taste but also touch sensation); the consistency of skin ointments (moisturizing creams, aftershave lotions, bath

oils, etc.)—these and many other product qualities bring consumers pleasure because they evoke tactile sensations.

Touch is so important to our experience of most of these products that, when not allowed to touch, as consumers we feel almost disabled—rendered helpless in judging and evaluating them. Fortunately, though, tactile surfaces have a rough visual code; that is, through a history of personal experiences of touching and viewing the same surface simultaneously, we learn to recognize the tactile feel of a material by its appearance. That is why we are sometimes content merely to look at the material or look at the picture of the product and evaluate its tactile properties. But often, there is nothing like the real thing and the opportunity to touch it. Recent research has found that the mere act of touching a pleasant product makes consumers want it more (the effect is opposite for inherently unpleasant products)![5]

This tactile sensory experience (along with the visual treat) is what makes shopping pleasurable. That is why WaNeLo (Want. Need. Love.), a pioneering and hugely successful online social shopping store, is partnering with Nordstrom to bring items trending on WaNeLo to 100+ Nordstrom stores. In the selected stores, Nordstrom will install a TV wall in its Juniors section, where it will scroll 100 most popular items and then have those items in the store for customers to touch and feel, and buy.

SIGHT

The Eyes Never Had It So Good!

Finally, there is the sensory experience of sight. This experience works on two levels: visual identity and experiential pleasure.

Visual Identity When we think of any object, brand, product, etc., we visualize it. If we can see it, in our mind's eye, as distinct from other objects, brands, or products, then its visual identity has made an impression on us. Forming this impression means both that we are able to tell it apart from other similar products and that we have certain impressions about it. Brands do it by using brand logos, brand marks, or brand symbols. Thus, most consumers recognize McDonald's by its golden arches, Delta airlines by its stylized Greek letter delta, and Target by the red bull's eye.

From a shield to a vibrant sunburst (named Helios, after the sun god of ancient Greece).

Companies sometimes change their logos to keep the brand or company's image contemporary. In 2003, petroleum company BP Amoco changed its brand mark from a shield to a multi-layered sunflower. Note that the company still kept the core colors (green ground with yellow figure) but changed the icon. The old shield stood for protection and stability, but that image was not considered relevant anymore. The new figure looks more contemporary, so it certainly creates the perception of a modern company. But beyond that, the

company intended the interlocking pattern of sunflower petals (technically called *Helios Mark*) to symbolize the sun, energy, and BP's commitment to environmental leadership.

Visual identity also comes from all other visual aspects of the brand, such as the color and design on the package (e.g., Arizona Iced Tea), or colors of vehicles and employee uniforms in a service company (e.g., UPS's brown).

Experiential pleasure Beyond the identity, the visual stimuli related to a brand also offer a pleasurable sensory experience (just as stimuli do through other senses). The packaging of Arizona Iced Tea is a treat for our eyes. And the visual cacophony of colors, shapes, and textures in stores and on merchandise beckons millions of consumers to malls and stores, whether or not they intend to buy anything. Some brands have showcase stores like Victoria's Secret, Torrid, and Anthropologie to provide unusual visual sensory experiences. Some stores even commission renowned architects to design stores and merchandise displays that offer truly unique sensory experiences. Ed Tsuwaki, a well-known Japanese graphic designer, designed unusual swan-necked mannequins that now display clothing in nakEd bunch stores in Tokyo. And fashion retailer DAKS features in its flagship store on Old Bond Street in London a dramatic sculpture group designed by renowned Swedish artist Lars Nilsson.

SAVVY MARKETER

No account of sensory marketing would be complete without the mention of a company that has turned it into an art form—Apple Computers. In 1998, the company introduced iMacs—housed in an egg-shaped translucent shell and five fruit colors that instantly changed the product category from pure hardware into designer decor eye candy! Then in 1998, the company introduced the iPod, a portable media player that instantly made it fashionable to walk around with white earbuds. iPod's main consumer utility was music (pleasure for our ears), of course, but it's lure resided in its appeal to two of our other senses: lovely to look at and inviting to the touch, with our fingers addictively spinning its click wheel!

Sensory Marketing 2.0. If we are a food brand, innovating new tastes takes magic. If we are a fragrance, coming up with new fragrances that consumers will like is also an accomplishment. Likewise, for music brands or for digital music players, to improve sound quality, and for clothing to improve the haptic feel of the texture. These are improvements in the product category's basic and core function, and as such accomplishments in sensory marketing, but merely in a basic sense.

Attractive cans of Arizona Iced Tea

The real challenge of sensory marketing comes when a brand strives to create sensory delight beyond the product category's core function. This takes two forms:

1. Adding sensory experience to a non-sensory product. Non-sensory products' main performance is utilitarian, such as computers compute, appliances cook, wash, clean, heat, cool, etc. But if they are made attractive to look at, that is sensory marketing in the real sense. Design is becoming a new frontier in brand competition, and as already mentioned, Apple with its translucent shell iMacs was an early pioneer. Apple continued its design distinction with iPod and then iPhone (delightful to look at and addictive to touch), so that today visual design has become a major choice criterion for mobile phones for consumers. The same design aesthetic is now being applied to everyday household products. One example is Flexita grater—notice how designer Ely Rosenberg brings eye-candy magic to a purely utilitarian product.

Marketers are also harnessing visual experience in package design. Arizona Iced Tea was an early pioneer, now joined ranks by the likes of Bai or Bottle Up (a Dutch brand of water in bottles made from Braskem's I'm green polyethylene). An innovative example is Juicy Skins' carton design (currently available only in Japan), by Naoto Fukasawa, noteworthy for its visual textured presentation of the fruit inside.

SAVVY MARKETER

2. Adding sensory delight for an additional sense. In this strategy, brands appealing to one sense endeavor to also appeal to an additional sense. For a food brand to add visual appeal, for example. An example is Cincinnati-based eatery, Yagööt Yogurt (Yagootyogart.com), which dresses up its yogurt concoctions with attractive add-on toppers, and, even more notably, makes its stores a visual delight.

Ah! the Joy of Sensory Marketing

Designer:
Ely Rosenberg

This product was granted the *Red Dot Best of the Best* award

Juice skin
"Haptic -Awakening the Senses
Designer: Naoto Fukasawa
Photo Credit: Masayoshi Hichiwa

SAVVY MARKETER

On facing page

Yagööt, a Cincinnati-based eatery, dishes out delicious, innovative concoctions built around its brand of yogurt. But it is its decor that irresistibly lures the eyes.

Learning from a Classic Marketplace Episode

No marketing student should ignore reading the story of the launch back in 1985 of New Coke. (Exhibit 6.2 below.) That story is living proof that our minds (i.e., our beliefs and motivations) overtake our senses and command them to interpret the incoming stimuli not by the stimuli's sensory properties but by the need to conform to the perceiver's existing worldviews.

EXHIBIT 6.2

Once Upon A Time, Real Consumers Mourned the Untimely Death of Real Coca-Cola!

One of the most famous stories about the monumental power of consumer perception in the annals of marketing is the New Coke saga. The year was 1985. In April of that year, the Coca-Cola Company launched "New Coke"—a sweeter concoction than its old product, which the company chose to withdraw from the market completely. The change was intended to take market share away from rival Pepsi. In blind taste tests, consumers had always rated Pepsi higher than Coke, and it was based on these research ndings that the compan s product development scientists had concocted a new formula. The result was New Coke. Just to be sure, prior to the launch of New Coke, the company had again conducted consumer taste tests, and, in these tests, consumers had consistently rated the new formula not only as better than the old Coke but also better than Pepsi.

So it was with great fanfare that the company launched the new product. Within days, however, there was a groundswell of consumer protest. Whereas a lot of consumers were just angry with the company for taking away something they had been used to drinking for decades, many of them found that the New Coke just did not taste as good. When the blind taste tests were repeated, the results were the same as before, but with a twist: consumers pointed to the drink that tasted better, but they thought they had selected the old Coke. When told that the drink they had picked was actually New Coke, they argued that they were probably confused or that the plastic cups must have made the drinks taste di erent. he fact was the insisted that the old Coke de nitel tasted better. nd that is wh they said they would not buy New Coke.

Six weeks later, the company had to bring back the old Coke, under the name Coke Classic. And even two years later, the old Coke had continued to outdo New Coke in sales—about 8 to 1.

a

Photo Quiz 6

b

c

Ad by Levi's (India).

In the column at the right are five images of the button on the jeans. The copy around these images reads: Made from the same steel that goes into your car's chassis.

(The dog is in excruciating pain for he bit into those buttons!

Q. Which method of positioning is most in evidence in these ads? (Check as many as applicable)

	a	b	c
. By Functional benefits	___	___	___
. By Symbolic image	___	___	___
. By User image	___	___	___
. By Competition	___	___	___
. By Values	___	___	___

6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we examined five areas of application where perception influences consumer behavior. (i) the psychophysics of consumer price perceptions, (ii) country-of-origin effects, (iii) brand image and brand extensions, (iv) perceptual maps and positioning; and (v) sensory marketing. Any given price is perceived as good or bad depending on what is known as *reference price*. The country of a product's origin affects consumer perception of a product's quality. Some brand extensions are perceived as natural and are therefore assimilated by consumers; others are perceived as misfits and rejected. Perceptual maps place competing brands in a common space, and these maps then guide the marketer to reposition a brand.

The last application, sensory marketing, concerns how marketers are structuring the entire marketplace environment to appeal to consumers' various senses. In this section, we highlighted the sensory experience of stimuli through each of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Whatever the ultimate benefits and appeal of products, these must first pass through our sensory screens. It behooves marketers, therefore, to design all stimuli with noteworthy sensory experiences, with attention to each of the five senses. With the increasing deployment of multi-media technology, both in physical and digital worlds, the potential for sensory marketing is vast. As marketers and students of consumer behavior, becoming aware of consumer perception processes will help you fashion your marketing mix for maximum perceptual advantage.

6 KEY TERMS

Brand image
Country-of-origin effects
Odd pricing
Perceptual maps
Positioning
Quality cue
Reference price
Repositioning
Sensory marketing

6 YOUR TURN

REVIEW+Rewind

1. Explain the concepts of positioning and repositioning. The chapter describes several approaches to repositioning a brand in the consumer mind. Briefly explain each with a current example.
2. What is meant by internal and external reference price? What is its relevance to a company's pricing decisions?

6 YOUR TURN

THINK+Apply

1. Assess all ads in the book so far in terms of their effectiveness in creating distinct positioning for the advertised brand. Next, find an ad for each method of positioning and repositioning, and comment on their likely effectiveness in creating a distinct "brand perception" in the consumer mind.
2. What advice would you give a company considering a product line extension—should it use a family name or new, individual brand names?

PRACTICE+Experience

1. Set up a blind taste test for two brands of cola or power drinks. Have consumers choose between the two brands with their brand names: (a) not revealed, (b) revealed correctly, and (c) revealed falsely (i.e., call each drink by the other's name). Tally, for each condition, the proportion of those who chose the brand they usually and knowingly prefer, versus those who misjudged their brands. Summarize your findings.
2. Get three consumers to draw perceptual maps for (choose one):
   a. Five brands of jeans;
   b. Five brands of athletic shoes;
   c. Five brands of credit cards;

   Then adopt one of the brands as your company's brand, and suggest marketing action to improve its perceptual position, separately, for each of the three consumers.
3. Visit your local supermarket, and browse through the product displays of three categories: beverages, candies and cookies, and men's grooming products. Identify brands that do a good job of (a) establishing a distinct visual identity, and (b) creating a pleasurable sensory experience.
4. Visit your local mall and make a list of all stores that utilize one or more of the five sensory stimuli to appeal to consumers. For each selected store, list and describe examples of each of the five sense appeals. Next, choose two stores that might be utilizing some but not all feasible types of the five sense appeals, and suggest how they could bridge this gap.

MORE THAN THE PRODUCT'S OBJECTIVE QUALITY, CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF IT MATTER. AS MARKETERS, IT IS OUR BURDEN TO SHAPE THESE PERCEPTIONS TO ALIGN WITH OUR BRAND'S REALITY. AND ALSO OUR OBLIGATION.

OUR LIFE PROJECTS ARE MILESTONES IN OUR LIFE'S JOURNEY. WE COMPLETE ONE AND MOVE ON TO THE NEXT. OVERARCHING THEM ALL IS OUR *BIG LIFE PROJECT*. FROM ADOLESCENCE TO THE END, IT IS ALWAYS ON. IT IS TO NOURISH AND LIVE OUR IDENTITY. MUCH OF IT VIA OUR LIFESTYLES. MUCH OF IT THROUGH PRODUCTS WE OBTAIN FROM THE MARKETPLACE. MUCH OF IT AS CONSUMERS!

AS MARKETERS, WE BUILD ASSOCIATIONS— WE PAIR OUR BRAND WITH CERTAIN PERSONALITIES, SITUATIONS, BENEFITS, OTHER DESIRABLE OBJECTS. BUT CONSUMERS WILL ACCEPT ONLY THOSE ASSOCIATIONS THEY FIND INTUITIVELY SENSIBLE.

AS MARKETERS, WE NEED TO *LEARN THIS*!

EPILOGUE

MARKETING MEETS THE CONSUMER

Insight, Foresight, and the Marketer Response

Now that we understand consumer psychology, the inevitable question is, how can we put all this knowledge to use to serve the consumer better? As customer-oriented marketers, we already know that when we satisfy the consumer, when we bring them products of genuine value, it is then that we also serve our business interests the best.

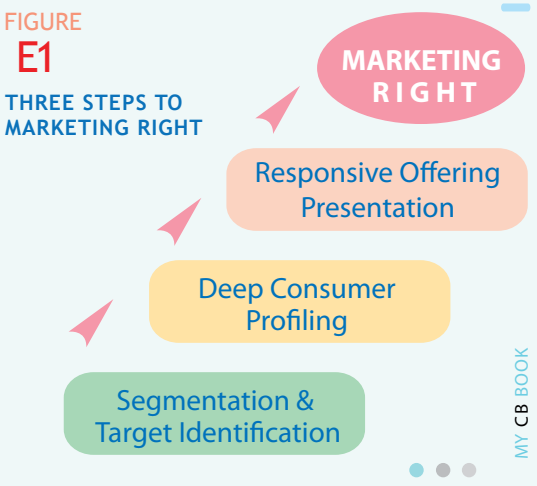
Understanding consumer psychology—what "value" consumers are seeking in the marketplace—should enable us to fashion our marketing program so that it accords with our target consumers' modes of thinking, feeling, and acting. To satisfy consumers, marketing programs must respond well to consumers' motivations and needs, their hopes and aspirations, and their identities and life projects. In this section, we develop some key ideas for a consumer-psychology-informed, responsive marketing program.

Consumer Insights and the Marketer Response

Basically, from a consumer behavior standpoint, there are three parts to a marketing planning project: (See Figure E1.)

1. Segmentation and target identification,
2. Deep consumer profiling, and
3. Responsive offering presentation.

FIGURE E1
THREE STEPS TO MARKETING RIGHT



First, because no marketer can satisfy and serve all consumers, we must recognize salient differences among consumers and identify the consumer segments we can serve best (through segmentation and targeting). Next, we should research and understand consumer behaviors of the chosen groups (through deep consumer profiling). Finally, we must create offerings (e.g., products or services, pricing, and associated messages) that respond well to our target consumers' worldviews (responsive offering presentation). Let us look at each.

1. SEGMENTATION AND TARGET IDENTIFICATION

Some differences between consumers are obvious; for example, age, sex, race, income, education, social class, and geographic location. Collectively known as demographics, these form the first bases for segmenting our markets. The next set of characteristics pertains to psychographics, and, in Chapter 10, we have covered some well-known psychographics-based segmentation schemes such as VALS™ and PRIZM. Many research companies offer other, country-specific psychographic segmentation schemes; as marketers, we should avail ourselves of these, and choose the one that seems most appropriate. Beyond these established ways of segmenting the market, virtually any of the other consumer characteristics discussed in this book can be used to segment our market: values, motives, perceptions, and involvement, among others.

Take values. Values can segment consumers into those who are materialistic versus those who are not; environmentalists or not; consumers who value animal rights; and nationalists who prefer domestic products versus globalists who ignore country boundaries in product choices.

In terms of motivation, consumers may differ on where they fall on Maslow's hierarchy. Product-specific motivations could also differ. For example, some consumers might buy a motorcycle as a more economical means of transportation than a car; others might buy it to experience outdoor adventure and the thrill of the ride; and still others might want one as a badge of a particular lifestyle. Consumers may also be classified as those with low involvement versus those with high involvement; those who are brand (or store) loyal versus those who are not; knowledgeable versus novice consumers; technophiles versus technophobes; net-savvy versus net-muddlers; those who love to shop versus those who dread shopping; and so on.

These and many other concepts covered throughout the book are all useful bases for segmenting our market. Contemplating all of these criteria may appear to be an arduous task, but identifying the right consumer segment to serve is a singularly important responsibility in marketing planning. Admittedly, segmentation is less important if our product is one that can be mass-marketed. On the other hand, if we wanted to identify a niche market or an emergent market, contemplating and evaluating all of these consumer differences can be a very fruitful exercise. The benefit of reading this book is that we are now aware of a comprehensive list of variables by which to segment our consumers and then to decide which segment to target.

FRAME-FORMING

Actually, *targeting* might be a misguided term, notwithstanding its use in marketing for more than four decades. A better term would be *frame-forming*. "Targeting" implies that consumers are the target (as in a bull's eye). What marketers need to do instead is to adjust their frame-of-view, and to bring the consumer into the frame so they (marketers) can then keep their focus on the consumer. Mere semantics? Actually, no. Labels do reflect our implicit view of a phenomenon, and, in turn, they guide (and misguide) our actions themselves.

DEEP CONSUMER PROFILING

Once we have identified our target market segment we must now prepare a comprehensive, deep profile of this segment. By comprehensive *deep profile*, we mean a description of as many of the consumer concepts as possible, as covered in this book. For example, suppose that our target segment consists of college seniors in metropolitan areas with a cosmopolitan outlook. Now, for this segment, we will need to describe everything: their values, motivations (e.g., achievement- or ego-needs), their lifestyles, and their activities and interests. For example, what kinds of music do they like? Are they into fine arts, fine wines, dining, sports, or community volunteerism? What is their culture, their ethnic identification, and their self-concept? What are their life themes, and what are some of their current life projects? Also, describe their perceptions about the marketplace, our product category, our brand, and competitor brands. Is this product category one of high or low involvement to them? How knowledgeable are they about this product category and about our brand? In what ways do they see the product? Are they comparison shoppers, impulse buyers, coupon clippers? And so on.

To prepare such a profile, also called *buyer persona*, we will need to do in-depth consumer research. Initially, qualitative research using focus groups and in-depth interviews may be used. These may be followed by large-scale quantitative studies. If our product typically engages hedonic, social, and identity (rather than exclusively utilitarian) product values, then we may also want to deploy creative research methods such as visual collage construction or ethnographic studies. In essence, we are preparing a dossier on our target consumers. Such in-depth profiling might in turn reveal important sub-segments, and we must, naturally, recognize them and profile them individually. We may also revisit our decision to target or not to target a specific segment or sub-segment in the first place.

RESPONSIVE OFFERING PRESENTATION

The third and final step is responsive offering presentation. By "offering," we mean the product or service with all its associated entities—its branding, packaging, assortments, warranties, prices, distribution channels, and advertising messages. The so-called "augmented product," that is. This offering must be responsive to all of the elements of the deep profiles we will have prepared—responsive to how consumers think, feel, and act. Essentially, this entails planning the 5Ps of marketing—four of which are classic, and the fifth a recent realization. Let us briefly discuss each.

Fashioning 5Ps of Marketing

Product The principal instrument for creating consumer satisfaction is the product. For established consumer needs, product designers should create configurations that best meet the needs of target consumers. In a car, for example, do our target consumers want fuel economy or high performance, style, or comfort? What amenities do they want? Are cameras that monitor their eyes for sleepiness of value to them; a 360-view (where all four corners of their own vehicle are visible to them)? A glass roof that meets the windshield seamlessly (a la Tesla Model Y).

Many needs are latent, but placing ourselves in the consumers' proverbial shoes and making keen observations can suggest products for hitherto unmet needs—this is how Uber, Lime, and Bird services or Torrid stores for plus-sized teenage girls were conceived. Observing consumers' changing lifestyles can also uncover needs for new services such as a mobile pedicure or apps like Snapchat. Shazam, and RunPee.

Pricing Several characteristics of the psychological makeup of our target consumers should inform our pricing decisions. Price should obviously be set at a level our target consumers can afford, based on their income. Beyond that, a product's desired image (e.g., economy or prestige) affects pricing. Consumers' reference price and price-quality associations also dictate pricing levels. If the target segment is price-sensitive and given to comparison-shopping, then the prices would have to be set at competitive levels. The more the product is bought for reasons beyond its utilitarian value, the less price-sensitive consumers are. Likewise, the more the product plays a role in consumers' life-themes, the less price-sensitive the consumer is. Less price sensitivity means

consumers are willing to pay more for intangible dimensions of the product or service, such as the prestige of the brand.

Place Marketers have a choice of a wide array of retail stores and distribution channels. Through classical conditioning, the image of the store rubs off on the product and brand; and, conversely, the brand's image rubs off on the store. That is why Target (a U.S.-based department store company) commissioned renowned artists Michael Greaves and Philippe Starck to create signature merchandise exclusively for itself. The reciprocal conditioning between product image and store image occurs primarily for products with social and ego-identity value components (e.g., clothing, accessories), but not noticeably for primarily utilitarian products (e.g., detergents, staples). Stores themselves carve out their personae through atmospherics, making them more or less inviting for browsers. In making place decisions, marketers also need to decide if they should sell their products on the Web—either exclusively, or in addition to bricks-and-mortar stores. Likewise, bricks-and-mortar stores need to decide if they should have a storefront on the Web as well. This depends, in large part, on whether or not the target market is net-savvy.

Promotions Promotions, as we know, consist of personal selling, publicity, sales promotions, and advertising. In personal selling, one of the most significant factors is whether the consumer looks to the salesperson as an informational and expert referent or, alternatively, as an identificational referent as well. Furthermore, the salesperson's product knowledge should dovetail with customers' own product knowledge levels and should complement their need for more information. Sales promotions are a valuable tool for attracting deal-seeking consumers, but their periodicity and predictability should be managed so as not to create an enduring expectation of an "always on" in the consumer's mind. Publicity is non-advocate communication (i.e., independent of the marketer), either in the mass media (e.g., a newspaper article on the brand) or through person-to-person word-of-mouth. Because dissatisfied consumers talk (and they talk more than do satisfied consumers), it is imperative for marketers to resolve consumers' dissatisfaction, for example, through effective service recovery. Beyond that, advertising in newsworthy ways itself creates publicity buzz; for example, a TV commercial by Honda wherein a very voice-talented choir simulates, using only their mouths, the aural and sensory experience of driving a Honda.

Advertising (or, speaking more broadly, marketing communications) is also the field in which consumer behavior concepts most intimately influence marketing practice. Different media reach different consumers, defined both in terms of demographics and psychographics (e.g., *Self* magazine for image-focused teenage girls, and *Men's Health* magazine for fitness-obsessed adult men). Within the ad itself, the persons shown using the product should be similar to the target consumers in both demographics and lifestyle. Brand advertising should even capture the desired mood and the attitude of the prospective consumer. And celebrities must be carefully chosen to serve as the type of referent (namely, informational or identificational) that our target segment is seeking. The specific appeal itself must be determined through a careful consideration of the total consumer profile. It has to be congruent with the consumer's culture (e.g., individualistic or collective), address the consumer's motives, help bolster his or her self-concept, be an instrument of identity projection, and create the kind of brand relationship the target consumer seeks. If the consumer has misconceptions, then the firm should set out to correct them. If the consumer has no brand knowledge, then the marketer should focus on imparting that knowledge. If consumer cognitions about the brand are already adequately and truthfully formed, then advertising should move forward to create emotions and feelings by attaching some element of feeling to the product.

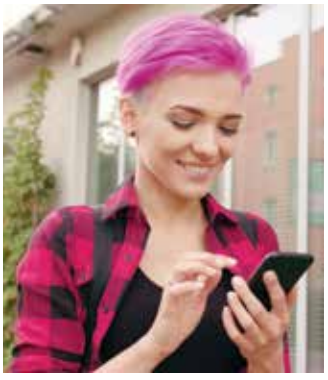
Advertising also should be fashioned according to the diverse levels of consumer involvement—more visual, with a banner copy for low-involvement consumers, and a detailed product story for high-involvement consumers. Marketers should also harness the enthusiasm and interest of highly involved consumers in order to build brand communities by organizing brandfest events (as does Chrysler for Jeep, among others).

Personalization P**ersonalization** refers to how a business organization treats an individual consumer—as a number, or as a person. This is the "how" dimension of business transactions. It is most pertinent to the consumer-marketer interface, the interaction between the consumer and the marketer. Whether that interaction is face-to-face or via telecommunications, consumer-initiated or marketer-initiated, pre-purchase or post-purchase, it should be functional (meets consumers' needs), efficient (minimizes consumer inconvenience and costs), and socially rewarding (addresses the consumer's need to feel respected and valued as a person). Functionality, efficiency, and social reward are judged, of course, from the consumer's point of view, not the marketer's. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems might be efficient from the marketer's point-of-view, but if they force the consumer into a mile-long nested menu, then, from the consumers' point-of-view, they constitute a negative value. And once the consumer is connected with a real human, the challenge is even greater—the live human should be, well, human. She/he

should have good listening skills, be knowledgeable about the product, and, most importantly, genuinely enjoy people.

Everything in this book about consumers will help a marketer fulfill this role responsibility. Consumers experience approach-avoidance conflicts; they make attributions (e.g., "Why is this salesperson recommending this option?"); they make quick inferences and form distorted perceptions; they need mnemonics to remember brand information; they are not equally involved in all products they buy and consume; they seek products and brands that match their self-image; most of all, they choose products that blend into and prop up their lifestyles.

We will likely revisit these concepts in the book from time to time, as we plan our marketing programs to connect with our consumers. The utility of re-reading about various consumer psychology concepts in this book can never be overemphasized. After all, the purpose of a marketing program is not merely to go through the routine, or to see that the system runs efficiently, or to play the standard script. Instead, it is to satisfy the consumer. The consumer—the curious, engaged, distracted, bored, hassled, anxious, confident, risk-averse, venturesome, task-focused, playful and spontaneous, self-doubting, motivated, unmotivated, minimally involved, enduringly involved, angry, delighted, frugal, indulgent consumer, living up his/her self-concept, and seeking from the marketer products that will advance his or her current life projects.



To understand this consumer deeply, and then to innovate responsive offerings is our marketing task. And it is also our grand opportunity to do well for ourselves by doing well by the consumer. To do this task well, we hope this book has equipped us with the necessary knowledge, perspective, and insights., and that it has given us reasons to revisit the many Consumer Psychology concepts illuminated herein.

IT IS IN THE HUMAN PSYCHE THAT CONSUMERS WILL FOREVER SEEK NOVEL EXPERIENCES. MARKETERS MUST CONSTANTLY INNOVATE "OFFERINGS" THAT PRODUCE THESE EXPERIENCES. THIS IS THE MARKETERS' CHALLENGE. AND THEIR PRIVILEGE.

SPECIAL TOPICS

1. **Gender-Bender Branding**
   Brand hijacks and consumer revolts

2. **Psych Meets Econ**
   Why consumers can't count their money

3. **Netnography**
   nside the online co ee communities

4. **Brand Drama**
   Life stories via brands

GENDER BENDER BRAND HIJACKS AND CONSUMER REVOLT

The Porsche Cayenne Story

Jill Avery, Harvard Business School, USA

One central part of who we are is our **gender identity**—our sense of ourselves as women or men.

Throughout history, marketers have created gendered brands, creating a persona for their brands and writing the brand stories in their advertising so as to appeal either to men or to women.

Stagnant sales in many mature product categories are causing managers to look for new ways to increase their business. **Gender-bending**—taking a brand that has historically been targeted to one gender and now targeting it to the other gender—is becoming a more common occurrence.

Porsche may well be one of the world's most gendered brands. Treasured for their superior German engineering, award-winning design, and racing victories, Porsche sports cars are also valued by their owners for their masculine identity meanings. Since the brand's inception, Porsche has been linked with masculine imagery. Well known as "chick magnets," Porsches are purchased by men young and old in order to attract the opposite sex. Jokes, movie and book plots, and real-life stories abound about men purchasing their first Porsches during their mid-life crises, trying to compensate for their decreasing attractiveness with a car that catches women's eyes. Porsche is such a male brand that in all of the movies featuring Porsche cars over the past forty years, 91% of the Porsche drivers have been male. Much of Porsche's brand equity derives from its identity meanings.

Gender-bending of motorcycles

In 2003, in an effort to expand its market share, the parent company of Porsche launched the Porsche Cayenne SUV, the brand's first vehicle that was not a sports car. Although the company claimed it was targeting men who owned Porsche sports cars who also needed an SUV to transport their growing families, Porsche owners believed that the Cayenne was targeted towards women.

1. Tanz, Jason, "Wounded to a Quick by a Porsche Gone Astray", *New York Times*, New York, (December 13, 2002).
2. Meredith, Robyn, "Porsche Goes Soccer Mom," ***Forbes***, (February 2002), 169(3), 54-56.

Photo: Christiaan Ploeger

Porsche 997 GT3 (top) and Porsche Cayenne (bottom)

Their collective howl of disbelief echoed around the world. The New York Times captured the spirit of their response:

> *"There may be no vision more heretical to a testosterone-poisoned 911 owner than that of a suburban mother loading groceries into the back of her Porsche after dropping her children off at soccer practice."* [1]

In the article, a current Porsche sports car owner laments:

> *"Every SUV I've seen is driven by some soccer mom on her cellphone. I hate these people, and that Porsche would throw me into that category made me speechless." A reporter from Forbes magazine concurred, "Porsche goes soccer mom…Has Porsche lost its soul?"*[2]

. . .

Take Away

Brand managers fill their brands with imagery, stories, and personality to appeal to either men or women, infusing them with gendered identity meanings. Being a brand manager of a gendered brand requires understanding and respecting the identity meanings that consumers use, and protecting them so that the identity message the brand sends when a consumer uses it supports the identity needs of the brand's consumers.

Excerpted from a much longer article in the Source Book:

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

How Humans Think, Feel, And Act in the Marketplace, 5e, 2021

PSYCHOLOGY MEETS ECONOMICS:

Why Consumers Can't Count Their Money Correctly

Priya Raghubir, Stern School of Business, New York University

Consumers feel happier if they discover that the complimentary ticket they received was priced at $200 rather than $100 (even though the ticket was free, anyway). They see greater value in two 10% discounts than in a single 20% discount. And they buy a $200 appliance placed next to a $220 model but not when it is placed next to a $180 model. Economics calls these consumer behaviors "irrational." Psychology considers them "normal." This paper illuminates why.

Prospect Theory suggests that the perceived disutility (that is, "pain") of a loss is greater than the perceived utility (that is, "joy") of a gain of the same amount. Let's see how it translates into everyday consumer decisions.

Marketing Implications:

1. Consumers view two smaller gifts as being better than one large gift.
2. Bundling two products even with no bundling discount is better than two products offered for sale separately.
3. Having tax deducted at source is less painful
4. Charge more now, rebate it later.

Money Illusion Bias

- Gift certificates tend to be viewed as worth less than Cash.
- Payment by credit cards is viewed as less painful than paying by cash.
- A larger denomination bill is less likely to be spent than a smaller denomination bill.
- (if you have a $50 bill in your wallet (as opposed to, say, 5 ten-dollar bills), you are less likely to break the $50 bill to buy anything.
- Monetary forms that are more colorful and less serious looking are likely to be spent more readily.

1. Kahneman, Daniel and Amos Tversky (1979). "Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk." *Econometrica*, 47, 263-291.

Biases in the recall of money

Recent work in consumer psychology has shown that consumers have strong biases in their recall of how much money they have. The larger the denomination of a monetary instrument, the more accurate they are, but as the number of each note or coin increases, they underestimate the amount that they are carrying.

Biases in the recall of spending

Can you recall how much you spent last month on your credit card bill? Or on your last vacation? The fact is that these are difficult tasks as they are made-up of identifying individual transactions and then aggregating them. People can forget not only the fact of the transaction, but the amount of it. They are more likely to forget transactions that are infrequent, distant in time, small in value, and those associated with a lower pain of paying (e.g., by credit card). This could be one of the reasons why people overspend on their credit cards, as they lose track of their expenses.[1]

Take Away

**THE IRRATIONAL CONSUMER—
NOT THAT IRRATIONAL AFTER ALL**

The choices consumers make when facing alternatively priced options might look irrational, from an economist's point of view. However, recent theories in psychology, such as the *prospect theory*, explains why consumers make those choices, and that from a psychology point-of-view, they are not all that irrational.

By understanding these psychological processes, managers can get a better understanding of why consumers react to prices the way they do. This insight can help marketers understand how to set and communicate prices so as to be in sync with the consumer's ways of encoding them.

Excerpted from a much longer article in the Source Book:

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

How Humans Think, Feel, And Act in the Marketplace, 5e, 2021

The Online Life of Coffee Aficionados:
A Netnography of An Online Consumption Culture

Robert V. Kozinets, University of Southern California

Coffee is just another product for you too. You could just as well be selling those turnip twaddlers of flame retardant condoms, but as long as you are having fun and paying your bills, that is all that matters to you, right? I am afraid that it is not quite that simple for many of us. We take our coffee very seriously, and to have it demeaned in such a manner is a slap in the face. Coffee is much more than a tool. It is passion, it is intrigue, mystery, seduction, fear, betrayal, love, hate, and any other core human emotion that you can think of, all wrapped into one little bean .

—Peter, posted on <alt.coffee>

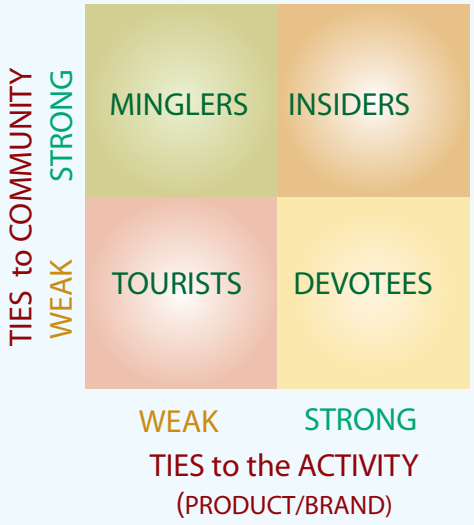
This is one of many posts on online coffee community site named alt. coffee. Read and delve into enough of them, and you will begin to build some of the deeper insights that mark the best marketers. This work of understanding online communities is part of a new approach to consumer research called ***netnography***.

As is true of any community, the coffee community has its own language, and on the net this special language becomes even more colorful, peppered liberally with such coffee-lingo as baristas and JavaJocks, cremas and roast-masters, tampers and superautomatics, livias and tiger flecks. Learning this language can be an interesting exercise for any student of coffee culture browsing the online chatter, but it is the subtext of the posts, the banter among the online members, the way that the communications are shared and shaped that is fascinating and draws the reader—and the researcher—in.

Consider this post from member "Fred":

What I am coming to in my own life and consumer behavior is that I want to support and savor the true specialty items while I can. I'd rather eat Barry's fudge… than Godiva 'faux specialty' chocolates. And I'd rather drink the local café's coffee than Starbucks's because, well, those tiny, passionate companies are more precious than Starbucks… Any corporation with food chemists can make Starbucks' product, IMO [in my opinion]. Only a passionate, driven romantic would keep making top-notch specialty coffee day in and day out. Lose Starbucks and another clone clicks into that economic eco-niche. Lose a lover or a hero and you might wait a long time until another comes along.

Not everyone joins a consumption community with the same goals. When we study member behavior in online communities, we can divide members into four types according to the role they play. See Exhibit.



EXHIBIT

TYPES OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Netnography reveals the true face of these consumers. And it is an interesting face. It is an interesting face because it is rich and full of details. It is interesting because it talks about taste. It is interesting because it is artistic, creative, and can serve as a source of new ideas for new products or marketing campaigns. It is interesting because this is not just a closed community, but an open one, that anyone interested in coffee can learn from and join. It is interesting because it has the potential to be very influential. And it is interesting because it reveals the deeply committed members who form the core of the culture. We might call it a picture of the community's soul.

Take Away

Used wisely and carefully, netnography can inform marketing, new product development, and advertising on the deep meanings that communities bring to their members' consumption experiences. It reveals motivations, hopes, fears, dreams. It can show us the unexpected and the real. It can offer us a window into the rich and complex world of the consumer. In the right hands, netnography can reveal the human face of the brand.

Excerpted from a much longer article in the Source Book:

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

How Humans Think, Feel, And Act in the Marketplace, 5e, 2021

CONSUMERS in SEARCH of PROPER PLEASURE

How Brand Stories Help Consumers Enact Dramas in Their Lives

Arch G. Woodside, Boston College, USA

Consumers are hardwired to tell stories of their consumption. Through storytelling, consumers interpret, make sense of, and relive their original consumption experience. Such re-experiencing through storytelling, Aristotle calls "proper pleasure."

Residing in our unconscious and behind these stories is an ***archetype***—the hero of the story if you will. In telling their stories as brand users, consumers assume the role of that archetype, that hero.

We illustrate the role of such archetypes in brand communications through a brand consumption story about Versace and the archetype some consumers might well experience. In the Versace story, this archetype is the siren, the seductress in a Versace coat. See Exhibit.

How Consumers Experience Brand Stories

Myths have heroes. Likewise, all stories have a protagonist—the main character in the story. Often, they also have an antagonist—the character who blocks the mission of the protagonist. Eventually, the protagonist wins. This is recognized, in popular parlance, as the triumph of the hero over the villain.

Consumers both live the myth stories and then they tell them. They live these stories in that, modeling after the archetype in the myths, they try to enact the **product drama**, i.e., the drama surrounding the product's use, in a manner that will make them the protagonist in the related myth story. Living the stories enables consumers to achieve archetype outcomes: become Mr. Evil—an anti-hero—by donning a WWII helmet and a black leather jacket, and riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle on a Saturday afternoon, even though this consumer might be an accountant five-days a week.

Just as consumers tell these stories, brand managers can tell them too. .To do this, consumer researchers first need to find a sample of consumers who tell such stories and then listen to their narratives. Then they embrace, adopt, and incorporate these narratives in their brand's communications. In turn, when other consumers hear the brand stories in brand communications, many will identify with the archetypes featured in the stories and experience that identity as the brand users. See Figure.

EXHIBIT

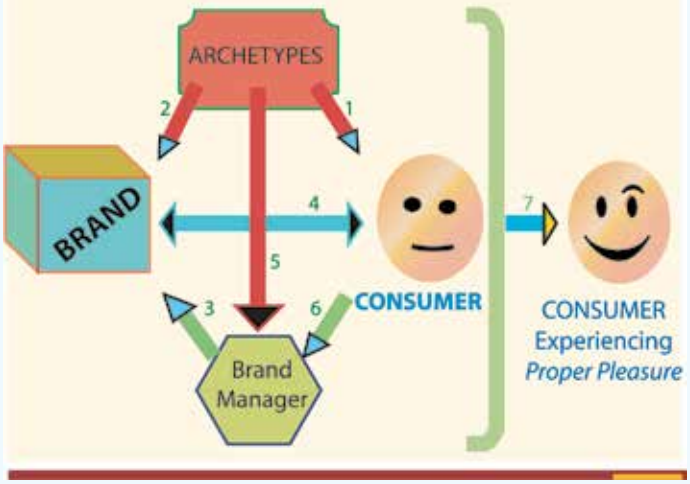
"I am a Siren and I Wear Versace"

Pollee, a British woman, writes a story about her purchase and consumption of a Versace coat

> ***Out on shopping one day, she had just bought new lingerie from a store and then at a second-hand ladies wear shop in Beauchamp Place (London) she found her prized purchase: a beautiful cream colored cashmere coat—Versace at a price of £150, of which she writes:***
>
> ***The feel of the cashmere was sooo soft ....epitomised luxury all the way. The fit of the coat was wonderful and I felt like I was one of those film stars sweeping into the room wearing the most wonderful outfit.***

(More in the original article)

FIGURE HOW BRANDS BUILD ARCHETYPAL STORIES



Legend

1. Core archetypes the consumer aspires to achieve.
2. The archetype most fitting for the brand.
3. The brand stories that brand managers build.
4. The brand stories consumers build, accept, and relish. This link reflects the consumer-brand relationship.
5. The archetype the brand manager taps to build stories.
6. The brand manager researches consumer brand stories.
7. The consumer tells (or listens to) the archetype-based story.

Take Away

Many consumption experiences are "realized" by consumers through the telling of stories to themselves and to others—stories built around the brand's use. Brand communications also sometimes tell such stories, but, in order to be effective, they should resonate with what consumers are trying to achieve through brand consumption. To achieve such resonance, brand managers should listen to the stories consumers tell.

Excerpted from a much longer article in the Source Book:

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

How Humans Think, Feel, And Act in the Marketplace, 5e, 2021

Endnotes

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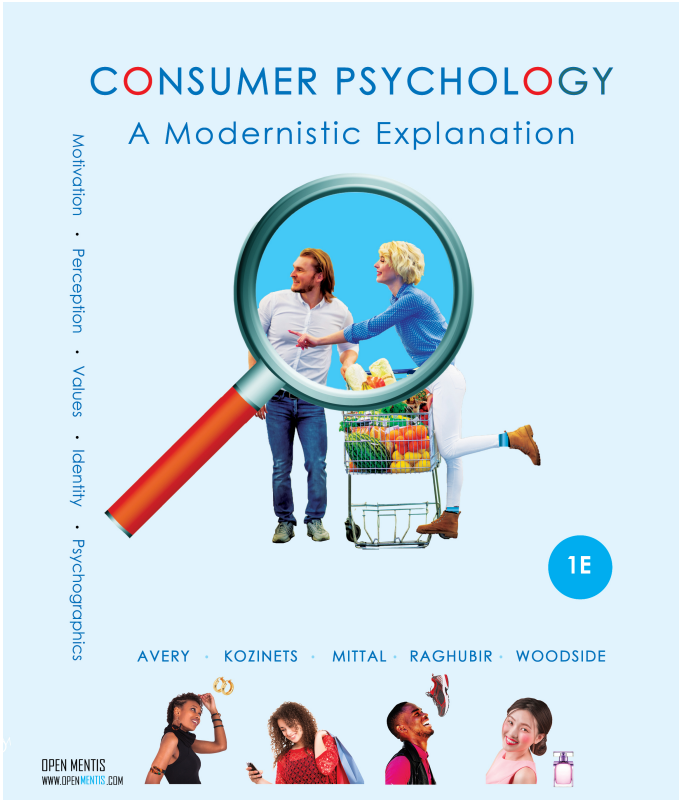

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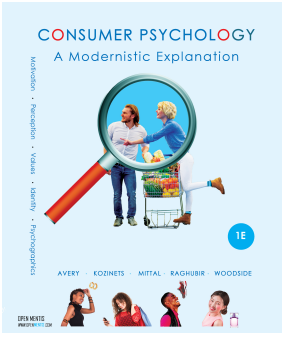

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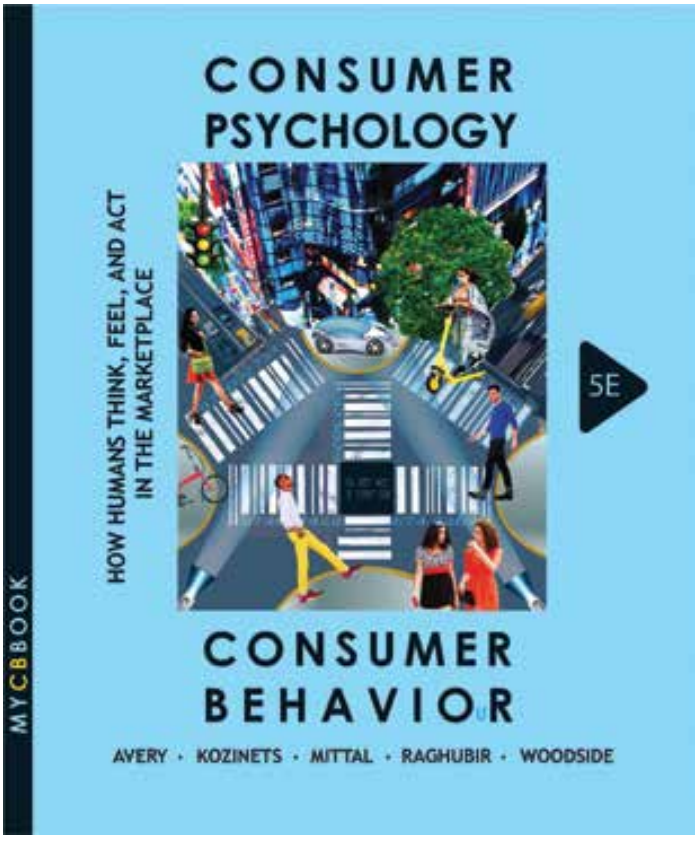

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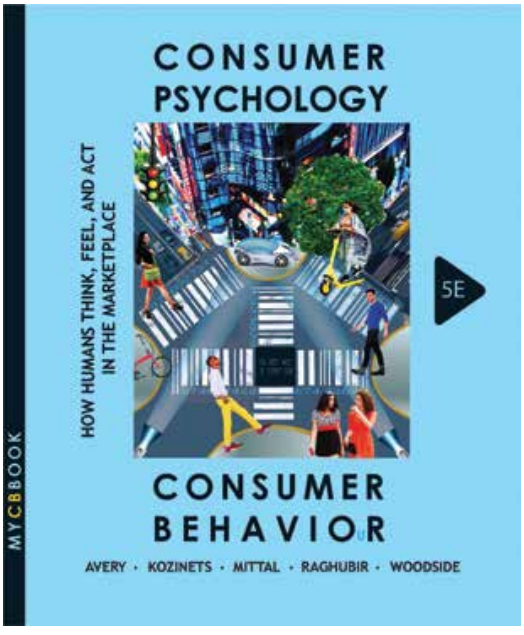

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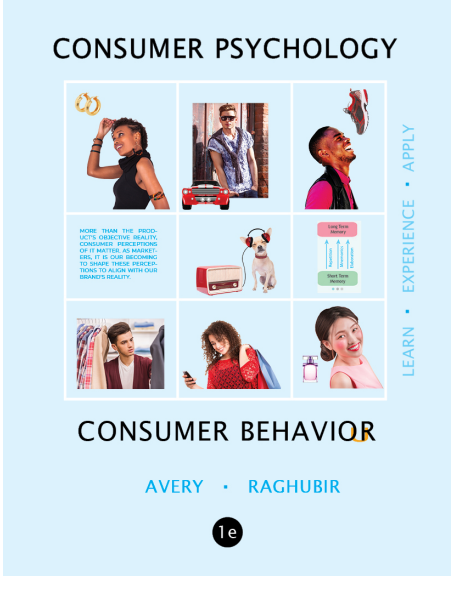

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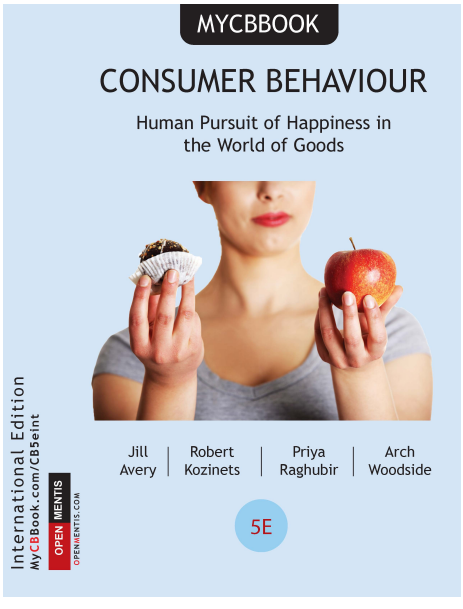

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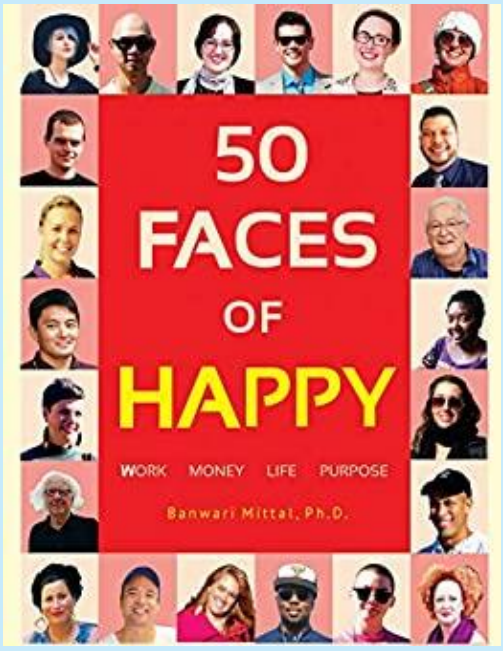

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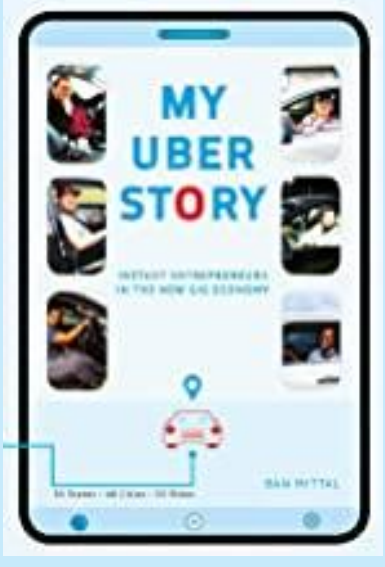

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