Consumer Behavior

Buying, Having, and Being

FOURTEENTH EDITION

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Product involvement often depends on the situation we're in. The Charmin toilet tissue brand sponsors a website, appropriately named SitOrSquat.com. The site helps travelers find the cleanest public restrooms wherever they happen to be. The brand manager explains, "Our goal is to connect Charmin with innovative conversations and solutions as a brand that understands the importance of bringing the best bathroom experience to consumers, even when they're away from home." According to Charmin, SitOrSquat lists over 52,000 toilets in 10 countries.
Source: Courtesy of The Procter & Gamble Company.

As these novel scavenger hunts illustrate, media vehicles possess different qualities that influence our motivation to pay attention to what they tell us, known as **message involvement**. Print tends to be a *high-involvement medium* (whether it appears on a "dead tree" or in an e-book). The reader actively processes the information and (if desired) they are able to pause and reflect on it before turning the page.[76] In contrast, television tends to be a *low-involvement medium* because more viewers are passive, and exert relatively little control (remote-control "zipping" notwithstanding) over content.

Strategies to Increase Message Involvement   Although consumers' involvement levels with a product message vary, marketers do not simply sit back and hope for the best. If they are aware of some basic factors that increase or decrease attention, they can take steps to increase the likelihood that product information will get through. A marketer can boost a person's motivation to process relevant information via one or more of the following techniques:[77]

● **Use novel stimuli, such as unusual cinematography, sudden silences, or unexpected movements, in commercials.** When a British firm called Egg Banking

introduced a credit card to the French market, its ad agency created unusual commercials to make people question their assumptions. One ad stated, "Cats always land on their paws," and then two researchers in white lab coats dropped a kitten off a rooftop—never to see it again (animal rights activists were not amused).[78]

- **Use prominent stimuli, such as loud music and fast action, to capture attention.** In print formats, larger ads increase attention. Also, viewers look longer at colored pictures than at black-and-white ones.

- **Include celebrity endorsers.** As we'll see in Chapter 6, people process more information when it comes from someone they admire or at least know about, whether Michael Jordan, Bill Gates, or Kylie Jenner.

- **Provide value that customers appreciate.** Charmin bathroom tissue set up public toilets in Times Square that hordes of grateful visitors used. Thousands more people (evidently with time on their hands) visited the brand's website to view the display.[79]

- **Invent new media platforms to grab attention.** Procter & Gamble printed trivia questions and answers on its Pringles snack chips with ink made of blue or red food coloring, and a company called Speaking Roses International patented a technology to laser-print words, images, or logos on flower petals.[80] An Australian firm creates hand stamps that nightclubs use to identify paying customers; the stamps include logos or ad messages so partiers' hands become an advertising platform.[81]

- **Encourage viewers to think about actually using the product.** If a people can imagine this, they are more likely to want to obtain the real thing. Research shows that even subtle cues in an advertisement can encourage this mental rehearsal. One simple example is orienting an image of a cup with its handle to the right so that (for a right-handed person) it matches the dominant hand and facilitates mental stimulation.[82]

- **Create spectacles where the message is itself a form of entertainment.** In the early days of radio and television, ads literally were performances; show hosts integrated marketing messages into the episodes. Today live advertising that features attention-grabbing events called **spectacles** is making a comeback as marketers try harder and harder to captivate jaded consumers:[83] Axe body products sponsored a posh Hamptons (New York) nightclub for the whole summer season; it became The Axe Lounge, sporting branding on the DJ booth and menu and Axe products in the restrooms.

Situational Involvement

Situational involvement describes engagement with a store, website, or a location where people consume a product or service. Many retailers and event planners today focus on enhancing customers' experiences in stores, dealerships, and stadiums. Industry insiders refer to this as a "butts-in-seats" strategy. That's why some fans who attend Atlanta Falcons football games get visited by a cheerleader in the stands for a photo op and also why Chrysler is ramping up its efforts to get people to test drive cars at dealerships and auto shows. As the head of the car company's "experiential marketing unit" explained, "We know a physical experience with a vehicle is a great way to allow people to try it out and move it up on their consideration list."[84]

Strategies to Increase Situational Involvement

Personalization: As we saw for product involvement, retailers can personalize the messages shoppers receive at the time of purchase. For example, a few marketers tailor the recommendations they give shoppers in a store based on what they picked up from a shelf. At some Dunkin' Donuts locations, a person who orders a morning coffee sees an ad at the cash register that pushes hash browns or breakfast sandwiches. And, of

course, recommendation agents that provide customized suggestions when we shop online perform much the same function.

High tech: The point of purchase can be much more than a place to stack up stuff and wait for people to throw it in their carts. Exciting new technologies such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and beacons allow retailers to turn the shopping experience into an adventure. We'll revisit these options in Chapter 8.

Subscription boxes: Many startups, such as FabFitFun, Birchbox Ipsy, Dollar Shave Club, and Graze, deliver "surprises" of exotic food items, personal care products, books, wine, clothing, and many other wondrous goodies on a regular basis to consumers who sign up. Subscription company websites attract about 37 million visitors a year, and that number has grown by over 800 percent in just three years. A website called *My Subscription Addiction* sums up the enthusiasm these services have generated for many thousands of variety junkies.[85]

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. **Understand how motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic.**

   Motivation refers to the processes that lead people to behave as they do. It occurs when a need that the consumer wishes to satisfy is activated. The need creates a state of tension that drives the consumer to attempt to reduce or eliminate it. The motivation can be intrinsic, *pulling* from the person's inherent drives, or it can be extrinsic, *pushed* by an external force.

2. **Outline how products can satisfy a range of consumer needs.**

   Marketers try to satisfy consumers' needs, but the reason any product is purchased can vary widely. The identification of consumer motives is an important step to ensure that a product will meet the appropriate need(s). Traditional approaches to consumer behavior have focused on the abilities of products to satisfy rational needs (utilitarian motives), but hedonic motives (such as the need for exploration or fun) also guide many purchase decisions. Maslow's hierarchy of needs demonstrates that the same product can satisfy different needs.

3. **Discuss how setting goals correctly can motivate consumers to strive toward and achieve those goals.**

   When we set goals deliberately, when we monitor goal progress, and when we are committed to reaching the goal, we are most likely to achieve it. Consumers experience different kinds of conflicts that can impact their purchase decisions, such as approach–approach and approach–avoidance conflicts. A goal has *valence*, which means that it can be positive or negative. We direct our behavior toward goals we value positively; we are motivated to *approach* the goal and to seek out products that will help us to reach it. In general, the higher we set our goals, the better we perform. One way to encourage people to set even higher goals for themselves is to frame them correctly. Some factors that influence the results include the time frame, specificity, and difficulty of the goal.

4. **Explain how the way we evaluate and choose a product depends on our degree of involvement with the product, the marketing message, or the purchase situation.**

   Product involvement can range from low, where consumers make purchase decisions based on inertia, to high, where they form strong bonds with favorite brands (cult products). Marketing strategies also need to consider consumers' extent of engagement with the messages about their products and the environments in which consumption of these products occur.

KEY TERMS

REVIEW

5-1 What is *motivation,* and why is this idea so important to marketers?

5-2 Describe three types of motivational conflicts. Cite an example of each from a current marketing campaign.

5-3 Explain the difference between a need and a want.

5-4 What is *cognitive dissonance*?

5-5 What are some of the key problems with Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

5-6 List three types of perceived risk, and give an example of each.

5-7 What is it about a cult product that allows a higher price point?

5-8 What are some strategies marketers can use to increase consumers' involvement with their products or messages?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ **DISCUSS**

5-9 Does money buy happiness? Why or why not?

5-10 Crisis, fear, and guilt are very common themes in marketing and advertising. Humanitarian disasters are the backdrops favored by charities to elicit donations. Fear of burglary or weather damage fuels home and contents insurance marketing. Gyms rely on our guilt about putting on a few pounds over the winter months. These are all dominant emotions—should marketers use these emotions as integral parts of their marketing campaigns?

5-11 A group of psychologists argued that we need to revise Maslow's hierarchy of needs. They propose we should delete "self-actualization" from the pinnacle and replace it with "parenting." Right below this peak, they added "mate retention" and "mate acquisition." They claim that too many people see Maslow's triangle as "aspirational"—a description of what fulfilled individuals "should" do—rather than as an explanation of how human motivation actually works. Their perspective is evolutionary; if the only purpose of art, music, and literature is self-fulfillment, how does that contribute to the survival of the species? What do you think—do our motivations to buy, have, and be ultimately come down to survival of our gene pool?[86]

5-12 Our emotional reactions to marketing cues are so powerful that some high-tech companies study mood in small doses (in 1/30 of a second increments) as they analyze people's facial reactions when they see ads or new products. They measure happiness as they look for differences between, for example, a *true smile* (which includes a relaxation of the upper eyelid) and a *social smile* (which occurs only around the mouth).

Whirlpool used this technique to test consumers' emotional reactions to a yet-to-be-launched generation of its Duet washers and dryers. The company's goal: To design an appliance that will make people happy. Researchers discovered that even though test subjects said they weren't thrilled with some out-of-the-box design options, such as unusual color combinations, their facial expressions said otherwise.[87] Does the ability to study our emotional reactions at such a specific level give marketers an unfair advantage?

▶ APPLY

5-13 Our online behaviors also can satisfy needs at different levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, especially when we participate in social networks such as Instagram or TikTok. Web-based companies can build loyalty if they keep these needs in mind when they design their offerings:

- We satisfy physiological needs when we use the internet to research topics such as nutrition or medical questions.
- The internet enables users to pool information and satisfy safety needs when they call attention to bad practices, flawed products, or even dangerous predators.
- Profile pages on Facebook allow users to define themselves as individuals.
- Online communities, blogs, and social networks provide recognition and achievement to those who cultivate a reputation for being especially helpful or an expert in some subject.
- Users can seek help from others and connect with people who have similar tastes and interests.
- Access to invitation-only communities provides status.
- Spiritually based online communities can provide guidance to troubled people.[88]

 Interview people you know about their motivations to participate in social media. Ask them to provide a list of the platforms they access most. Then, for each, probe their reasons for visiting these. What needs do these sites appear to satisfy? How might these insights help you to devise ideas for new social media products?

5-14 Interview members of a celebrity fan club. Describe their level of involvement with the "product," and devise some marketing strategies to reach this group.

5-15 Crowdfunding is a relatively new frontier for marketing and consumer behavior. The main feature of this type of business arrangement and its related marketing revolves around customer involvement and a sufficient number of interested backers to fund the project. The reward for involvement is the completion of the product or project. In addition, there may be benefits added based on excess funds received or the creation of additional features for the product to attract more funds.

 However, the relationship between the developers of the product and the backers is no longer a simple case of gathering presales funding to validate the demand for the product. Increasingly, backers are involved in the actual development of the product. The project developer responds to the requirements of the backers; after all, it is their funds that underpin the financial viability of the whole project. Crowdfunding certainly shortens the development cycle for new products, but it is developing far beyond the original idea of peer-to-peer lending.

 Research the development of the crowdfunding of products on two or more crowdfunding platforms. How has the development and launch of products been influenced by the involvement of the customers or backers? How has the product been marketed? Has the product, once launched, featured the involvement of backers in the marketing messages? Do you think this backer involvement and influence will continue? What challenges will marketers face both during the project crowdfunding phase and the eventual launch of the product in the market?

▶ DIGGING IN WITH DATA

See **"Data Case 1: Analyzing the Athletic Shoe Market"** in **Appendix A** for an opportunity to work with real consumer data and apply this chapter's concepts to real world problems.

CASE STUDY — Game On! Using Gamification to Engage with Consumers

If you are like many of us, you have probably been playing games most of your life. Your odyssey may have begun with Chutes and Ladders, but today, you're more likely to be one of the estimated 3.24 *billion* people around the world who enjoy video games.[89] Marketers have taken notice. They have learned that games can be a great way to get and hold consumers' attention and help them engage with a brand.[90]

The consulting firm Gartner defines gamification as "the use of game mechanics and experience design to digitally engage and motivate people to achieve their goals."[91] In recent years, organizations have devised games to encourage people to save, improve their fitness, and to increase employee productivity.[92] Similarly, *gamification marketing* harnesses these gaming design elements to attract and retain customers.[93] Games are particularly effective in reaching younger millennial and Gen Z consumers who have grown up with digital technology. Indeed, one study found that 68 percent of Gen Z males feel that gaming is a part of their identity![94] And gaming is not just for males anymore; a 2019 study found that 63 percent of mobile gamers are female.[95] No wonder, then, that this technique is so effective to reach these coveted consumers.

A major goal of this approach is to recreate some of the passion and attention that players often exhibit when they're immersed in a game. If a marketer can somehow replicate this "secret sauce" at least to some extent, they hope to see increased engagement with what they offer.[96] McDonald's top prize in its 2017 Monopoly campaign was $65 million, and Chipotle's digital racing game had a grand prize of a Tesla Model 3.[97] Most prizes are more modest, but they still provide a more immersive experience than traditional advertising.[98] Some other examples:

- Samsung asks consumers to watch product videos, review products, and participate in Q&A sessions, and in return awards badges that become entries in a drawing for Samsung products.[99]
- Rather than doing traditional marketing research, KIND, the healthy snack bar company, used its Raise the Bar contest to get customers to vote on its next flavor.[100]
- M&M promoted its new pretzel-flavored candy by challenging players to find a pretzel hidden among an image of a bunch of M&Ms.[101]
- If you are a coffee lover, you are likely part of the Starbucks Rewards loyalty program in which your coffee habit lets you progress through levels to earn some free java.[102]

Games are an effective promotional tool for several reasons. A loyalty program can be enhanced by gamification that continually rewards customers for desired behavior, encouraging them to come back for more. A game can create word-of-mouth promotion—often through social media—as those playing tell their friends, increasing brand awareness. Gamification can also be a great way to gather data, as players will often readily share contact information to enter a contest or to receive rewards.[103]

Why does an ad a marketer puts in game form sometimes work better than a traditional ad? There is a little psychology at work here. Matthew Pierce, CEO of gamification company Versus Systems, believes we react differently to a game than we do to a traditional ad. As he explains it, "It's not being forced to watch an ad, but being able to choose what you want to play for. That literally opens up different pathways in your brain, and you stop thinking about it as an ad. You see it as a reward, as a prize. You see that it's something you earned, and that's materially different."[104] These games give users control and reinforce desirable behavior—such as providing a product review—through rewards. Games can also satisfy our need for achievement, even if only in small ways.[105] The tendency to form habits is also at play; some games offer players rewards to return on a regular basis.[106]

Some marketers classify gamification broadly to include any kind of interaction with consumers that has game-like elements—some as simple as getting a reward for watching an ad or purchasing more of a product, the latter typical of many loyalty programs. A stricter definition identifies true gamification as marketing interactions that involve elements of games you'll recognize if you're a video gamer: strategy, competition, and the opportunity to be recognized for achievements as you play.

Does gamification work? A 2019 report from the organization Brand Loyalty and Visa found that 81 percent of consumers will participate in a game when it is part of a loyalty program. The M&M brand got some nice buzz from its pretzel game with 25,000 new likes on the brand's Facebook page, along with 6,000 shares and 10,000 comments.[107] Samsung's gamification initiative led to an amazing 500 percent increase in product reviews.[108]

Most important, games can lead to purchases. A study by digital agency Reflect Digital found that 60 percent of study respondents would be more likely to make a purchase from a brand if they had enjoyed playing a game offered by the company; the number rises to 86 percent for those who have played branded games before.[109] As examples, a