

# Consumer decision process

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Q5 Consumer decision process represents a road map of consumers' minds that marketers and managers can use to help guide product mix, communication, and sales strategies. The model captures the activities that occur when decisions are made in a schematic format and shows how different internal and external forces interact to affect how consumers think, evaluate, and act. The main purpose of this model is to analyze how individuals sort through facts and influences to make logical and consistent decisions. Consumers typically go through major stages when making decisions: need recognition, search for information, pre-purchase evaluation, purchase and post-purchase evaluation. The study of consumer behavior primarily focuses on these stages and how various factors influence each stage of consumers' decisions. By understanding the stages in the consumer decision-making road map, marketers can discover why people are or are not buying products and what can be done to get them to buy more or buy from a specific supplier. Many companies seek to use WWW to communicate with potential customers and thus result in an interactive media called shopping in online environment which allows for very high degree of interactivity. The starting point of any purchase decision is a customer need. Need recognition occurs when an individual senses a difference between what he or she perceives to be ideal versus the actual state of affairs. Marketers must know consumers' needs; they have a better idea of how to improve the products, more effective programmes and more user-friendly distribution channels. Firms sometimes make mistakes of developing new products based on what they able to manufacture instead of based on what consumers want to buy. Procter & Gamble have made the mistake of

flooding the market with unnecessary product variations. The company said its goal was to offer more choices to consumers, but unfortunately the choices didn't meet any unmet needs. In term of marketing, the internet marketer can capture the consumer at this early stage of process. The marketer, by virtue of powerful databases of consumer information, is in a better position to know and anticipate the consumers' needs and wants. EDI emphasizes the effectiveness of automatic re-order prompts at specific stocks level, product and service updates and upgrades for valued customers. These made the decision less complex for buyers and more manageable and effective. At this stage, marketers focus on the development of communication technologies. After need recognition occurs, consumers begin searching for information to satisfy their needs. Search may be from internal i. e. retrieving knowledge from memory or may be from external, collecting information from peers, family and marketplace. The information can be sought and accessed directly by consumers because of information technology development. The emergence of new push technologies means that communications can now be sent routinely to targeted recipients who are known to be interested parties by virtue of their earlier visits to the website, their general Internet browsing and shopping behavior. Marketer at this stage basically tends to attract information-seeking consumers and provide information they need. In deciding which products to be purchased, consumers rely heavily on their evaluations of the alternatives available for choices. Liked alternatives will be compared, with the one receiving the most positive evaluation being chosen. The alternatives during decision making are known as evoked set. It is typically

the shortlist of potential products that the consumer has to choose from. The marketer's products must be in the evoked set of potential alternatives. Marketers must constantly remind consumers of the company's products offerings. Besides, marketers must take steps to understand consumer's choice criteria. CompareNet has a programme that for a wide range of products will search the Web for the product the consumer specifies. It helps consumers to choose and arrange the relevant criteria and produce tabulated data for buyers to compare the options. It is a useful tool to ease the stage of evaluation of alternatives for consumers. Purchase stage involves decisions on where and how to buy. Marketers should determine how their core customers think of shopping—is it fun or is it a chore for them to complete? New shopping activity on the Internet is giving rise to new alliances between Internet sellers and distribution organisations internet marketers must make the shopping experience easy and enjoyable for their customers, including ease of ordering, payments and delivery in this stage. For those inexperienced Internet shoppers they always concern about the question of security. The SET protocol is set to popularize online credit card purchases. In a conclusion, marketers must make the buyer feel comfortable with the decisions on where to buy and how to buy. After making a purchase, here comes the final stage of decision which is known as post-purchase evaluation. There are only two outcomes for this stage: satisfaction or dissatisfaction. While evaluating the benefits after a purchase cognitive dissonance will cause customers concern about their purchase decision. The actual sales should be perceived as a starting point rather than an end. How the customers take delivery of product, how the product is used, the degree

of satisfaction, quality of products, customer complaints and suggestions are all critical to understanding consumer behavior. Online marketers have to be habitual to update their site frequently because post-purchase activity involves consumers returning to the seller site with queries, for new information, and to repurchase. Sometimes, customers do not necessarily go through all stages in decision making process. For example, a buyer doesn't have to go through information search stages because of his/her previous experiences on purchasing that particular product or he/she has familiar with the products. At times, it is also influenced by impulse factor. Impulse buying behavior is any purchase which a shopper makes but has not planned in advance. Impulse buying is known as a sign of immaturity and lacking behavioural control; it is risky and irrational. It occurs when there is a sudden, powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. Psychological literatures often assume that acting on impulse purchase in poor decision quality whereas thoughtful search results in better decisions. Rook and Fisher proposed that impulse buying is not always negatively viewed by consumers but represents a rational alternative to more time-consuming search behavior.