

# What influences consumer behavior?

Business



A man walks into your shop. He smiles at the cashier with a tiny nod. He begins to prowl the aisles. He pauses here and there, sometimes picking up an item. But then soon sets it back down.

When your sales associate asks the gentleman if he needs any help, the man leaps into questions.

The well-trained associate dives head first into the benefits of your product. It's clear by his nodding that the man sees the appeal.

Your associate helps him choose Product A over Product B. Everyone is all smiles.

“ Will that be all?” Your associate asks. She moving towards the register to cash the man out.

“.... you know what?” The man holds Product A and squints. “ I'm just going to wait on this. Thank you for your help!”

And then he's gone. Just like that.

You were so close to a sale. But close doesn't cut it.

Still, even after reviewing the exchange and seeing all the lights going off in the man's head, it's not clear why he didn't take out his wallet.

He seemed ready. He seemed happy. But not so ready or so happy that he became a new customer of your shop.

What happened?

Well, eight desires are hardwired into every brain. These desires dictate what consumers buy or don't buy. This information can be applied to any product. And it helps you understand what influences consumer behavior.

### The Big Eight Desires That Influence How We Buy

The eight desires are simple. But too often businesses fail to utilize the desires when marketing and selling their products.

They are:

- Survival, enjoyment of life, life extension.
- Enjoyment of food and beverages.
- Freedom from fear, pain, and danger.
- Sexual companionship.
- Comfortable living conditions.
- To be superior and prove they're winning.
- Care and protection of loved ones.
- Social approval.

Every single product in the world can be put in at least one of the above categories. And every person in the world, at one stage of their life, buys products because of these desires.

It's time for some examples.

#### 1. Survival and enjoyment of life

The rise of online businesses and entrepreneurship signifies people want to be their own boss. Why?

Because they're tired of being an employee. They're tired of the 3-hour commute to their soul-sucking job. They're mentally and physically exhausted in their career and desire to enjoy life more.

Products that appeal to these entrepreneurs are self-help books, marketing courses, business conventions, Seth Godin, and anything selling the American Dream.

Of course, consumers looking to survive and enjoy life are more than entrepreneurs. The product for these consumers is a gateway for them to move towards enjoyment and, presumably, freedom.

## 2. Enjoyment of food and beverages

Kinda goes without saying, huh? People like to eat and drink. What they (desire to) eat and drink influences what customers buy.

People who buy expensive wines at 4-star restaurants are looking to enhance the richness of their medium rare steak prepared by Gordon Ramsey.

But people who can't cook are looking for something easy, like microwavable meals or fast food.

Others looking to cut sugar and get healthier look to eat foods low in sodium and sugar, and don't mind having to cook for themselves.

What foods are out there, what benefits they have, and the exquisite tastes provoke consumers to buy food and beverages.

If you're selling a food or drink; you fit into this realm.

### 3. Freedom from fear, pain, and danger.

Fear is a big motivator. The news relentlessly reports horrific events happening all over the world — even the smallest, more secure towns may turn into a twisted Circus when the sun goes down.

So, people buy guns to feel safe at home. Men and women take self-defense classes in case of late night attacks. Drivers buy dash cams so when an accident happens, they have proof it's not their fault.

To feel safe is a natural influencer for any consumer, no matter their culture or desire.

### 4. Sexual companionship

Despite how horrendous those Cosmo articles are, with their ridiculously click-baiting and cringey headlines — the magazine is still bought. Because those articles might help the consumer get into a happy sexual relationship.

Nothing has changed: sell still sells.

Take any fitness program for men.

Men's desire is attributed to the need for sexual relationships. To be better looking means getting hotter women. It's their influencer to hit the gym more.

And it works.

Tinder, the “ dating app”, had reportedly 6 billion matches in April of 2015. These are people meeting and hooking up with other people for sexual companionship.

Clearly, sex will always be a buying motivator.

#### 5. Comfortable living situations

Would you rather live in a box on the side of the road or in a house?

No brainer, right? The house.

But it goes deeper.

It's not just the physical location (box vs. house or shelter vs. apartment). It's products too: like a method to minimize how loud your neighbor is when he walks around his apartment.

Or feng shui: used to declutter and minimize bad energy for a comfier, happier you (and home).

No one wants to be uncomfortable in their living situation so this influences consumers to buy products that help them relax.

#### 6. To be superior and prove they're winning.

This speaks to Joe who makes 25k a year but wants that Tesla because all his friends drive Mercedes and BMWs.

He wins by having an ultra cool electric car that's so different than his friends. More expensive, more luxurious, more special.

Joe is a consumer influenced to walk the walk because he only ever talks the talk.

Sure, he'll be crushed by debt so huge he'll need at least 3 more full-time jobs to move an inch out of the hole he's dug. But hey, at least his car looks great!

#### 7. Care and protection of loved ones.

On the other hand, Bob needs a car that'll run well and for a long time. It needs to be road-ready and safe for his family.

He also makes 25k a year, but knows he can't afford anything Tesla-like. He needs practicality and safety first.

Products designed to keep loved ones safe is a consumer influencer. Think car seats to new mothers. If you neglect to show how these car seats keep babies safe — you're doing the product a disservice.

Really, a consumer taking care of someone will buy products specifically designed for protection.

#### 8. Social approval.

Let's go back to good old Tesla buying Joe.

Joe is proving he deserves to hang out with the guys who eat BMWs for breakfast by buying the Tesla. He's desperately looking to prove his worth, despite his lousy salary.

People who buy products for social approval only want one thing: to prove they're just as good as everyone else.

And that's it!

What influences consumer behavior is both emotional and logical triggers. The eight desires are what we need in any given moment. But when businesses don't include these influences in their marketing, consumers are less likely to buy.

Again, product fits into any (or maybe even) all of the eight desires. See which desires your product fits to strengthen your marketing.

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