

Motivation, values and involvement



The motivation, value and involvement constructs and their theoretical underpinnings are integral to the comprehension and appreciation of the phenomenon of consumer behaviour. Indeed, as influenced by the aforementioned constructs, consumer behaviour is both dynamic and mercurial; it is constantly changing in reaction to both external and internal influences. If marketers are to direct consumer behaviour towards the purchase decision where a particular product/service is concerned, it is imperative that they understand what it is that motivates consumers, how they define and identify value and the strategies by which consumer involvement with a particular brand/product/service is incited.

Motivation is a complex phenomenon. In direct relation to consumer behaviour, it refers to the facts which incite consumers to behave in a certain way, as in, all these being equal, to repeatedly purchase one brand instead of another. Generally speaking, motivation is a response to latent or overt biological or learned need. Indeed, products have the potential to address overt needs, or awaken latent ones and, in so doing, create a sense of want which can only be satisfied through the purchase of the product. In direct relation to the aforementioned, it is important to point out that the assumption that the purchase/use of a certain product will satisfy need/want is the crux of the expectancy theory and, in itself, contributes to the intensification of motivation.

Proceeding from the above stated, it is important to clarify that there are different types and categories of need. This phenomenon is referred to as need hierarchy and has been fully explained by Maslow's theory of need. According to the aforementioned, people have different types of needs, some of which, such as the need to shelter, are more pressing than others,

such as the need for recognition. Insofar as marketers are concerned, the implication here is that they need to structure a brand image/advertising message in such a way so that the product/service appears to address a pressing need, thereby ensuring the arousal of motivation to purchase/use, as a means for needs fulfilment.

Apart from motivation, it is necessary to discuss the concept of values and how they might influence motivation and consumer behaviour. Values are culturally acquired and, as such, become part and parcel of personality and psyche. Possible to define as a conviction in the inviolability of a particular principle, as in stealing is wrong, values have the potential to enter into the consumer purchase decision-making process. It is not at all unlikely that products which have been manufactured using exploited sweat-shop labour may influence consumers to avoid purchase and use, while products which have been manufactured under ethical conditions (as in observance of animal rights and no testing of products on animals) may encourage the purchase decision.

Involvement also emerges as an important factor in the purchase decision. Involvement levels, which range from disinterest to obsession, effectively determine the consumer market's reaction to a certain product and its performance. Should a product/service fail to incite consumer interest, it is unlikely to perform well on the market. Conversely, if it arouses obsession, its performance may exceed all expectations. The point here is that it is important that the advertising message generate product involvement as would ensure market interest in the product. The marketing strategies for doing so include appeal to hedonic needs, the use of novel and/or prominent stimuli, the recruitment of celebrity sponsors and the establishment of a

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bond with customers. Advertisers can use any one of these strategies to incite involvement.

In sum, and as the foregoing has tried to demonstrate, motivation, value and involvement are critically important consumer behaviour concepts.