Chapter 3

Consumer needs and motivation

Book Content

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- understand the types of human needs and motives and the meaning of goals

- understand the dynamics of motivation, arousal of needs, setting of goals, and interrelationship between needs and goals

- learn about several systems of needs developed by researchers

- understand how human motives are studied and measured.

Discussion Questions

1. (a) 'Marketers don't create needs; needs pre-exist marketers.' Discuss this statement.

Marketers satisfy basic needs. But these can be satisfied in a number of ways. Take for example basic physiological needs, such as food and drink. These can be met in a variety of ways (e.g. drinking sports drinks instead of water), some of which also meet higher motives of self-esteem (linking a sports drink to a healthy lifestyle).

Marketers do not create needs, though in some instances they may make consumers more keenly aware of unfelt needs. The fact that many new products

fail illustrates that marketers often do not recognise or understand consumer needs and that they cannot *create* a need for product. On the other hand, there are countless examples of products that have succeeded in the marketplace because they fulfil consumer needs.

(b) Can marketing efforts change consumers' needs? Why or why not?

Marketing efforts are generally not designed to change consumer needs but to create or trigger 'wants' for products/services that consumers would then purchase to satisfy needs that already exist. Market-oriented companies use consumer research to uncover relevant needs, translate them into 'wants' by designing appropriate products and services, and position their offerings as satisfying needs and wants better than competitors' products/services. Although it must be remembered that consumers usually purchase products to meet more than one need (e.g. a car) and that consumers may have needs that they may be unaware of (subconscious needs of ego) or not admit to (needs for social recognition).

2. Consumers have both innate and acquired needs. Give examples of each kind of need and show how the same purchase can serve to fulfil either kind of need or both kinds.

Innate needs are physiological in nature (e.g. food, water, air, clothing, shelter, sex). *Acquired* needs are generally psychological in nature (e.g. esteem, prestige, affection, power and the like). The purchase of a house satisfies the individual's innate need for shelter, but the type of house he or she buys, its interior and exterior design, and its location is likely to reflect acquired needs. For example, an individual may seek a place where large groups of people can be entertained (fulfilling social needs) and want to live in an exclusive community to impress friends (fulfilling ego needs).

3. Specify the innate and/or acquired needs that would be useful bases for developing promotional strategies for:
(a) global positioning systems in cars
(b) jeans that can be customised online
(c) a new version of the Samsung tablet
(d) recruiting university graduates to work for a company in the oil

industry.

An innate need is a physiological need including the need for food, water, air, clothing, shelter and sex. An acquired need is a need learned in response to culture or environment and includes the need for self esteem, prestige, affection, power or learning

Some of the innate and/or acquired needs that would be useful bases for the listed products can be summarised in the following table

Product	Innate Need	Acquired Need
Global positioning systems in cars	Need for safety (e.g. not being lost)	Belonging to fit in with everyone else who has one Prestige if this is a new or complex variation
Jeans that can be customised online	Need for protection from the elements (e.g. warmth)	Self esteem as a way of expressing oneself Prestige if the product is expensive and unique
New version of the Samsung tablet	Need for safety and belonging	Prestige to be first with a new device Power to demonstrate wealth and status Self esteem to demonstrate connectedness
Recruiting university graduates to work for a company in the oil industry	Basic social needs and security needs (getting a steady wage for a job) are met with employment.	Achievement (personal accomplishment) self-actualisation (realising one's full potential).

4. Why are consumers' needs and goals constantly changing? What factors influence the formation of new goals?

Needs and goals are constantly growing and changing in response to an individual's physical condition, environment, interactions with others and experiences. As individuals attain their goals, they develop new ones. If they do not attain their goals, they continue to strive for old goals or they develop substitute goals. Some of the reasons why need-driven human activity never ceases include the following: (l) existing needs are never completely satisfied; they continually impel activity designed to attain or maintain satisfaction; (2) as needs become satisfied, new and higher-order needs emerge to be fulfilled; and (3) people who achieve their goals set new and higher goals for themselves.

5. How can marketers use consumers' failures to achieve goals in developing advertisements for products and services? Provide examples.

Failure to achieve a goal often results in feelings of frustration, and individuals react differently to frustrating situations. Some people are adaptive and cope with frustrating situations by finding their way around the obstacle or, if this fails, by selecting a substitute goal. People who cannot cope with frustration adopt **defence mechanisms** to protect their egos from feelings of failure when they do not attain their goals (e.g. aggression, rationalisation, regression, withdrawal projection, day dreaming, identification, repression, escapism). Consumers, for example, not being able to attain important motives, such as self-actualisation (driving for pleasure through the Australian outback) may do so by escapism (purchasing a car capable of doing so but never actually taking it out of the city).

6. Most human needs are dormant much of the time. What factors cause their arousal? Give examples of household products that are designed to arouse latent consumer needs.

The arousal of any particular set of needs at a specific point in time may be caused by internal stimuli (e.g. a drop in blood sugar level or stomach contractions trigger awareness of hunger need); emotional processes (e.g. daydreaming results in arousal or stimulation of latent needs); or cognitive process or environmental cues (e.g. fast-food commercials may arouse the need for food). Among household products, an advertising campaign for a new laundry detergent with a popular fragrance is a classic example of emotional arousal of needs.

7. For each situation listed in question 3, select one level from Maslow's hierarchy of human needs that can be used to segment the market and position the product (or company). Explain your choices. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of using Maslow's hierarchy in segmentation and positioning?

(a) Global positioning systems in cars

(b) jeans that can be customised online

(c) a new version of the Samsung tablet

(d) recruiting university graduates to work for a company in the oil industry.

See the answer for Question 3 for the needs satisfied. In terms of positioning a global positioning system in cars, marketers might use safety needs with a slogan such as 'you feel safe when you always know where you are and how to get where you're going'.

Maslow's need hierarchy received wide acceptance in many social disciplines because it appears to reflect the assumed or inferred motivations of many people in our society. The five levels of need postulated by the hierarchy are sufficiently generic to encompass most lists of individual needs. Some critics, however, maintain that Maslow's concepts are too general. To say that hunger and self-esteem are similar, in that both are needs, is to obscure the urgent, involuntary nature of the former and the largely conscious, voluntary nature of the latter. The major problem with the theory is that it cannot be tested empirically; there is no way to measure precisely how satisfied one need must be before the next higher need becomes operative. The need hierarchy also appears to be very closely bound to our contemporary Australian culture (it appears to be culture- and time-bound) such as it is, given that there are many different sub-cultures. Food, for example, is extremely important in Italian and Chinese subcultures because it is also linked with the social needs of the family.

Despite these criticisms, Maslow's hierarchy is a useful tool for understanding consumer motivations and is readily adaptable to marketing strategy. For example, the following well-known advertising slogans reflect various levels of Maslow's framework:

* 'Have you got what it takes?' (Australian Defence forces) - self-actualisation.

* 'Jenny: Your style' (Jenny Craig weight-loss) - self-esteem.

* 'Join the Pepsi generation' - affiliation needs.

* 'Help Protecting Your Castle' (NRMA Insurance) - safety and security needs.

8.   **(a)**   **What is motivational research?**

        (b)   **What are its strengths and weaknesses?**

        (c)   **How did Ernest Dichter apply Freudian theory to consumer behaviour?**

        (d)   **How was motivational research used in the 1950s?**

        (e)   **How do marketers use the technique today?**

The term *motivational research* is used to refer to qualitative research designed to uncover the consumer's subconscious or hidden motivations concerning product or service usage. In marketing, this term is closely associated with the work of Ernest Dichter who, during the 1950s and 1960s, composed written descriptions of many products, services and human activities which, he believed, represented the inner, psychological subconscious meanings of these objects and activities to the consumer. An example was the explanation that women baked cakes to fulfil their reproductive yearnings and men regarded cars as surrogate mistresses. Prior to this work, marketers focused primarily on what consumers did rather than why they did it. Today's marketers use qualitative research techniques such as metaphor analysis, storytelling, word association and thematic apperception tests to delve into consumers' unconscious or hidden motivations.

Exercises

1. You are a member of an advertising team assembled to develop a promotional campaign for a new heating system. Develop three slogans for this campaign, each based on one of the levels in Maslow's needs hierarchy.

A marketer advertising a new heating system can:

a) Appeal to *physiological* needs by featuring the system's heating capabilities, e.g. 'heat on demand – when you need it and how much you need'.

b) Appeal to *safety and security* needs by stressing the product's durability and dependability, e.g. 'the most reliable system you'll ever buy'.

c) Appeal to *social* needs by showing that the consumer's peers highly approve the selection of the heating system and to *ego* needs by featuring peers who are

impressed by the purchase, e.g. 'be the envy of your friends with the latest heat pump'.

d) Appeal to *self-actualisation* by showing how the heating system enables the consumer using it to continuously improve his/her performance, e.g. 'always be warm and ready to take on any challenges life throws at you'.

2. Find an advertisement that depicts a defence mechanism. Present it in class and discuss its effectiveness.

The marketer can reduce consumer frustration by presenting ads that depict frustrating situations with which the consumer can identify, and then demonstrating how to solve the frustration. For example, a 'slice-of-life' commercial may show a young man faced with the problem of convincing a girl he likes to accept a date with him. A friend advises him to change his toothpaste, or his shampoo, or whatever, to the advertised product; when he does, he gets the girl and his problem is solved.

3. Choose three magazine advertisements for different consumer goods. Carefully review Murray's list of psychogenic needs (Table 3.3). Through the advertising appeal used, identify which need(s) each product is presumed to satisfy.

This is a practical exercise in which students demonstrate their ability to analyse current ads in terms of Murray's extensive list of human needs. Have students make an overhead copy of these ads for class discussion.

4. Explain briefly the needs for power, affiliation and achievement. Find three advertisements for different products that are designed to appeal to these needs.

Power needs relate to an individuals desire to control his or her environment, both animate and inanimate. An automobile ad that stresses speed capability utilises this notion. *Affiliation* needs refer to the human need for friendship, for acceptance, for belonging. Advertisements for personal care products often suggest that use of the advertised product will improve the user's social life - thus fulfil the need for affiliation. *Achievement* needs refer to those individuals who regard personal accomplishments as an end in itself. Such individuals are often

good prospects for do-it-yourself products and for such advertising appeals as 'we try harder'.

Case Study Solutions

Tasmanian wine: Best served with a unique cultural experience

Question 1

Outline the characteristics of wine connoisseurs, art enthusiasts, music lovers and fine food fanatics. What common values do they all share?

Answer

As the case demonstrates, wine connoisseurs, art enthusiasts, music lovers and fine food fanatics can be considered as cultural consumers. They share a desire for the finer things in life, and are prepared to pay for their passion. Because these consumers most likely have a tertiary education, a white collar or professional job and high disposable income, they can afford to indulge themselves. They are also willing to travel in their search—cultural tourists are an increasing market segment for Tasmania, with MONA now having the highest visitation of any Tasmanian attraction. In some ways though, such consumers require a deeper experience that might be seen in other product categories—the quest for pleasure associated with the 'purchase' can easily be diluted if the experience does meet their expectations.

Students should therefore understand that there is a connection between art, wine, food and music as a range of products that can be linked to this type of consumer. These are hedonistic products that form the basis for pleasure-seeking consumer behaviour. Importantly, art, wine, food and music are also speciality products that consumers need to seek out to buy, and they consequently need to be of a high quality to meet consumer expectations. If firms are looking to target this market segment they need to engage the consumer by stressing the high quality, pleasurable nature of the cultural experience.

Question 2

What types of physiological needs and psychological needs do consumers satisfy when consuming wine and cultural experiences?

Answer

Physiological needs include an individual's need for food, water, rest, air, clothing, shelter and to some extent sex. These are innate needs – meaning that every human being has them. When drinking or tasting wine, consumers are satisfying a basic need of thirst, and in some cases a cellar door/restaurant experience may satisfy their basic need for food.

However, as the case demonstrates, wine and cultural experiences are more likely to satisfy the psychological needs of consumers, such as their need for self-esteem, prestige, affection, power or learning. In particular, through art exhibitions, customised wine tastings, or even history lessons, wine producers share a vast amount of knowledge with the cellar door visitor. In turn this satisfies a consumer's desire to learn more about a product or even the region where a product is produced. In addition, drinking wine is typically a consumption experience shared with others, and thus, many consumers engage in this behaviour as a way of satisfying their need to project a certain image or perhaps feel a sense of belonging.

Students should also acknowledge that psychological needs are classified as acquired needs. As highlighted in the chapter, psychological needs result from the individual's subjective psychological state and from their relationships with others. Such needs are often referred to as secondary or higher-level needs, because they are more advanced than physiological needs and are typically a more powerful form of motivation.

Question 3
Using motivation theory, explain how Tasmanian wine producers influence consumer behaviour.

Answer
As noted in the chapter, motivation is the driving force within individuals that impels them to action. Actions include seeking out more information about a product, sampling a product, or even making a purchase. Motivation is produced by a state of tension that exists between a consumer's actual and desired state. This discrepancy must be significant enough to drive their behaviour. Consumers endeavour to reduce this tension through choosing products and experiences that they anticipate will fulfil their needs and therefore relieve them of any anxiety and tension.

To be successful, marketers must identify the different motives that compel consumers toward their brands and encourage them to purchase their products. From the case it is clear that Tasmanian wine producers understand that the reasons consumers buy premium wine are typically emotional and non-rational. They influence consumer behaviour through offering an enriching and sometimes hedonistic experience at their cellar door, and develop their marketing mix around this. This enables them to appeal to a consumer's higher level needs and to satisfy a range of different consumer motives. Over time this strategy would help to cement product-specific goals in the consumer's mind - for example, their desire to drink Tasmanian branded wine, dine at a Tasmanian winery or visit Tasmania as a wine tourist. The strength and type of consumer motive also depends on the situation. Wine producers take advantage of this aspect of motivation theory by creating consumption situations where consumers may feel more obliged to behave in a certain way because they are either surrounded by lots of people, or are in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

Motivation theory is closely related to the different levels of human needs. Therefore, students may discuss the different approaches to understanding consumer needs, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Question 4
Given the profile of the cultural consumer you have discussed in Question 1, what other experiences could wine producers offer at their cellar door to attract cultural consumers? What other products could benefit from linking to the cultural consumer?

Answer
It is difficult to imagine any other cultural experiences not already being used by vineyards, either in Australia or overseas. However, art, music and food have a logical connection to the consumer, and any further extension of the idea needs to take into account the fact that consumers will spot any experience lacking authenticity. MONA has the largest range of experiences available, with a museum, accommodation, a boutique brewery, and a restaurant, as well as music and art events. Vineyards in France have a series of artists in residence working for three months at a time and installing site-specific artworks in and around the vineyards.

The most obvious products to benefit from linking to the cultural consumer are the other hedonistic products connected to the cellar door/wine tasting experience. For example, it is not uncommon for restaurants to have evenings that showcase local wines. Similarly, food and wine festivals often link with music events and incorporate live artistic performances. In other words, the offering of a broad range of cultural experiences to the same type of consumer at the same event is a strategy that has been used successfully in the cultural sector. One very good example is museums that now offer their buildings for private and corporate functions, as well as hosting other cultural events, such as poetry readings. The issue is that cultural consumers are looking for products that engage all of their senses, while providing a thought provoking experience.

Teaching Notes

Lectures

1. When beginning the discussion of motivation, students could be asked to consider their own personal motivations for engaging with social media. For example, lecturers could ask students who are regular users of Facebook why they post photos and personal information on a regular basis. These students should be asked how they feel when they cannot access Facebook (e.g. 'theoretically' during lectures – as an aside the lecturer can ask who is connected to Facebook during lectures) and how they deal with this frustration (e.g. defence mechanisms).

2. When discussing positive and negative motivations, ask students for examples of approach objects (positive goals) and avoidance objects (negative goals). Students should be encouraged to draw on their own personal experience and provide examples where positive or negative motivation (or a combination) was the strongest determinant of their behaviour. For example, going to the gym might be a combination of positive and negative motivation e.g. desire to be fit with desire not to be overweight.

Discussion Notes

Beginning of lecture - Begin your discussion by posing this situation to the class: 'Assume you have just won $25,000. What would you do with it?' Randomly ask a few students for their responses until you have enough diverse responses to make the point that people are motivated differently.

What is Motivation? - Ask students if they were ever in a situation where they saw something in a store that they really liked and wanted. After they left the store did they feel that they continued to think about the item and perhaps continued to experience that dissonance until they finally went back to buy the item? Have students search for and bring in examples of ads that attempt to appeal to the achievement of a goal with a particular product or brand.

Dynamic nature of motivation - Ask students to think about how their own motivational level changes from before they buy a product to afterwards.

Frustration – Ask students to think about their own experiences with frustration – failure to attain a goal – in the marketplace. Students should be encouraged to think about how they dealt with their frustration and if they tend to favour particular defence mechanisms.

Application Assignments

1. Find an ad (magazine or television) for a food product. Develop a short questionnaire that attempts to ascertain respondents' desire for the product after seeing the ad. Ask respondents when the last time they had eaten was. Show the ad and administer the questionnaire to at least 20 people. Were there any differences in the ratings of the food product between those who had eaten within the last couple of hours and those who had not? Discuss the implications of your findings in terms of motivational theory.

2. Keep a consumer diary for one week, writing down every purchase made. As each purchase is made, determine the following:
a) how was the need aroused?
b) were you motivated by rational or emotional motives?
c) which level of need in Maslow's hierarchy was satisfied with the purchase and consumption?

d) also note times when you experienced frustration and if you adopted particular defence mechanisms.

Review all entries. Were there any patterns when it came to need arousal? What about types of needs satisfied? How could a consumer products marketer gain insight from your diary?

Additional Readings

Brenton, S. 2013, 'The political motivations of ethical consumers', *International Journal of Consumer Studies* August, pp. 490-497.

This article looks at consumer-driven labelling systems such as *Fairtrade* to determine whether consumers believe they are acting 'on behalf of workers and communities' when making these purchases.

This article shows how motivation research can be applied to politically motivated consumer behaviours.

Schwartz, J. 1992, 'Selling to the Dark Side', *American Demographics,* vol. 14, no. 7, p. 22.

Social taboos against such things as laziness, greed and gluttony have led to 'sanitised' market research that doesn't reflect reality. The ways that businesses sell to the dark side of consumer motivations are discussed.

This reading gives students exposure to some of the realities that aren't discussed in textbooks.

Elliott, S. 1992, 'Symbols that Win, or Lose, Consumers' Seal of Approval', *New York Times,* 16 September, p. 20.

The results of the Logo Value survey, conducted by the Schechter Group, are discussed. The survey found that most companies' logos elicit a different reaction from consumers than just the company name.

This reading illustrates the value of product symbolism and how marketers can use logos to appeal to consumer motivations.

Louro, M., Pieters, R. & Zeelenberg, M. 2005, 'Negative returns on positive emotions: The influence of pride and self-regulatory goals on repurchase decisions', *Journal of Consumer Research*, March, pp. 833–41.

Contrary to the common assumption that positive emotions generally lead to favourable behavioural intentions, feelings of pride can decrease consumers' repurchase intentions. Results from three experimental studies demonstrate that the impact of pride on repurchase intentions is contingent on consumers' self-regulatory goals, but that this is so only among consumers with high levels of pride. Specifically, consumers with high prevention pride are less likely to repurchase than those with high promotion pride, whereas no difference arises between consumers with low promotion pride and those with low prevention pride. These effects generalise across situational and chronic differences in self-regulatory goals and are accompanied by differences in consumers' information requirements.

This article ties in with selection of goals and the consumers' response in accordance with their own 'self-regulatory goals'.

Chitturi, R., Raghunathan, R. & Mahajan, V. 2008, 'Delight by design: The role of hedonic versus utilitarian benefits', *Journal of Marketing*, May, pp. 48–63.

What is the relationship between product design benefits (hedonic versus utilitarian) and the post-consumption feelings of customer delight and satisfaction? The primary insights provided by this research are: 1) products that meet or exceed customers' utilitarian needs and fulfil *prevention* goals to enhance customer satisfaction (e.g. a car with anti-lock brakes and vehicle stability assist); and, 2) products that meet or exceed customers' hedonic wants and fulfil *promotion* goals to enhance customer delight (e.g. a car with panoramic sunroof and six speaker audio-system).