

# Consumer Perception

**Consumer Perception** is a marketing concept that tells us what Consumer think about a brand or a company or its offerings. It can be positive or negative feelings, perceptions, inhibitions, predispositions, expectations or experiences that a customer has.

A marketing concept that encompasses a customer's impression, awareness and/or consciousness about a company or its offerings. Customer perception is typically affected by advertising, reviews, public relations, social media, personal experiences and other channels.

If you understand the concept of Consumer perception, you will figure out that it is arguably the most important factor that decides the success of a brand, product or a company as a whole. How a particular brand or company is positioned also plays a vital role in this. The characteristics of a brand and its personality play a big role.

If we look at the company Apple, we can see that the company is positively perceived by most of its customers. In fact, there are die-hard fans of Apple. The reason being that the company has been repeatedly innovative, it has good performing products which make a connect with their customers. As a result, Apple is one of the consistently top performing brands across the world.

Customer Perception decides how much a product sells and how a company is perceived.

## **Factors deciding customer perception**

In general, customer perception can be influence by a lot of factors. Some of the major factors are

### **(i) Consistency of performance**

How has the brand performed in the past and how it is performing currently.

### **(ii) Emotional Connect**

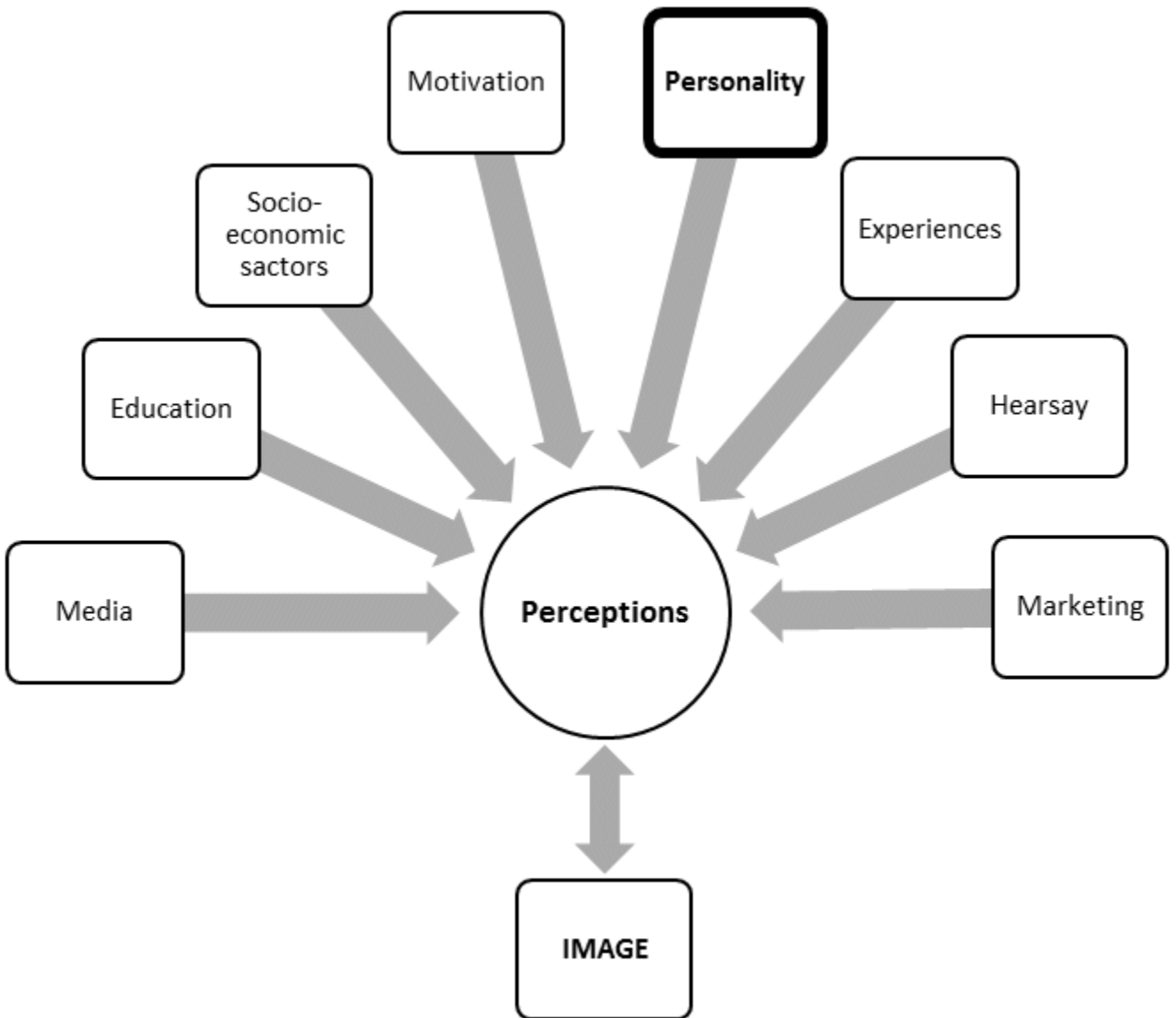
Superb brands know that emotional connection with the customer is critical to brand development.

### **(iii) Marketing Communications**

How the brand communicates with the customers using the various media vehicles.

### **(iv) Holistic Marketing**

A brand cannot be excellent if it has good sales staff but pathetic support staff. A brand has to be a good all rounder and satisfy customers from all its touch points.



### **Importance of Consumer Perception**

When customers buy your products, they purchase much more than physical objects. Successful marketing involves building a brand with sensory and emotional triggers and then working daily to reinforce the image that your brand triggers in the hearts and minds of customers.

The consumer perception that can make or break your brand may be carefully cultivated through clever and effective advertising. Changes in consumer perception of brands can also spring seemingly out of nowhere, as when the Hush Puppies shoe brand became a fad during the '90s with little engineering from the company itself.

Whether your company has painstakingly fostered customer perception or had the great fortune to unwittingly benefit from it, the importance of your brand's reputation should never be underestimated.

### **(i) Importance of Marketing and Action**

Successful marketing is a process of reaching out to customers through advertising, selling strategies and the product itself to create an impression that inspires loyalty. However, that impression is unlikely to endure unless you work hard to maintain it. The outdoor apparel company L.L. Bean has a return policy of replacing any product that a customer returns for any reason, regardless of how long it has been worn. This policy surely costs the company extra when unscrupulous customers choose to take advantage and return items that have been worn for a considerable period of time. Over the long term, though, this legendary return policy has worked to the company's advantage by building trust and extraordinary loyalty.

### **(ii) Influence of Negative Perceptions**

Negative consumer perceptions can be at least as powerful as positive ones especially in the era of social media when stories about companies' bad behaviors spread quickly and can have devastating repercussions. When United Airlines had a ticketed customer dragged off a flight in April 2017, the story spread through both social and mainstream media, creating a backlash from consumers who boycotted the airline and canceled credit cards affiliated with it. The negative publicity rippled among shareholders as well causing the company's price to plummet by \$1.4 billion.

### **(iii) The Power of Referrals**

Referrals are a powerful way to foster positive consumer perception because they often come about organically through customers telling their friends which products they buy and why they buy them. Because they come from customers rather than from marketing or advertising, referrals give your company genuine credibility. Referrals grow out of brand loyalty and generate additional loyalty to your brand. You can give customers incentives to make referrals such as by offering free products or services, but if you've done a good job fostering positive consumer perceptions, you'll get customer referrals whether or not you reward customers for them.

Your company's brand isn't only about what you want customers to see, it's also about how they already see you. Public perception can make or break a business today, making it the most valuable commodity you have in your sales and marketing arsenal.

### **The Role of Perception**

The idea of perception theory is often capitalized by haunted houses and amusement parks. The visitors are forced to walk into a dark are, which is pretty small and claustrophobic. Visitors are led to a panoply of attractions that look and and sound like like monsters, rodents, and so on. All this to overwhelm our senses. The idea is to stimulate an adrenaline rush, which would then surge through the patrons as they are forced to face their fears. The people who enjoy these things usually love the idea of conquering their fears, and they often find this experience exhilarating. However, this can be turned on its head. If you're in the wrong neighborhood, attractions in a haunted house could easily attract customers to a haunted house but could easily chase customers away from your storefront.

As a business owner, you want to maximize the amount of time that customers spend in your store. You want them to purchase an item on a whim, and to then go on a spree of impulse

buying. You want them to browse your shelves, and walk through your aisles, discovering and exploring with each step. Whether your store is a brick-and-mortar store or an online store, you want them to browse and buy, so that you increase your sales.

As a business owner, you should seek to improve their experience and give them the right perception, no matter what.

### **Using Customer Perception to Your Advantage**

So to get customer perception right, you should look into what turns your consumers on, so to speak, and then to use it to your advantage when you want to attract them. If you wish to attract high-end customers, then make a play on such things as quality, cleanliness and hygiene, lighting, packaging, and general details in the way you present your products and services. Segment your customers into the different consumer groups they fall into, and use these groups to figure what is important to each group and what to show to different categories of customers.

When you make an effort to improve consumer perception of your products, your bottom line will quickly reflect your hard-won effort. You will also make your customers and your community feel as if they are part of your family – and there is no better recipe for brand loyalty than family.

## **Consumer Perception: Perception Process & Involvement**

**Three important stages involved in perception process**

**(1) Perceptual Inputs**

**(2) Perceptual Mechanism**

**(3) Perceptual Outputs**

### **(1) Perceptual Inputs**

A number of stimuli are constantly confronting people in the form of information, objects, events, people etc. in the environment. These serve as the inputs of the perceptual process. A few of the stimuli affecting the senses are the noise of the air coolers, the sound of other people talking and moving, outside noises from the vehicular traffic or a street repair shop or a loud speaker playing somewhere plus the impact of the total environmental situation. Some stimuli do not affect the senses of a person consciously, a process called subliminal perception.

### **(2) Perceptual Mechanism**

When a person receives information, he tries to process it through the following sub processes of selection, organisation and interpretation.

## **(A) Perceptual Selectivity**

Many things are taking place in the environment simultaneously. However, one cannot pay equal attention to all these things, thus the need of perceptual selectivity. Perceptual selectivity refers to the tendency to select certain objects from the environment for attention. The objects which are selected are those which are relevant and appropriate for an individual or those which are consistent with our existing beliefs, values and needs. For this, we need to screen or filter out most of them so that we may deal with the important or relevant ones.

### **The following factors govern the selection of stimuli**

(i) External Factors

(ii) Internal Factors

**Various external and internal factors which affect our selection process are as explained below:**

#### **(i) External Factors**

**(a) Size:**

The bigger the size of the stimulus, the higher is the probability that it is perceived. Size always attracts the attention, because it establishes dominance. The size may be the height or weight of an individual, sign board of a shop, or the space devoted to an advertisement in the newspaper. A very tall person will always stand out in the crowd on the other hand; a very short person will also attract attention. A full page advertisement will always catch attention as compared to a few lines in the classified section.

**(b) Intensity**

Intensity attracts to increase the selective perception. A few examples of intensity are yelling or whispering, very bright colours, very bright or very dim lights. Intensity will also include behavioural intensity. If the office order says "Report to the boss immediately," it will be more intense and effective as compared to the office order which says "Make it convenient to meet the boss today."

**(c) Repetition**

The repetition principle states that a repeated external stimulus is more attention drawing than a single one. Because of this principle, supervisors make it a point to give the necessary directions again and again to the workers. Similarly, the same advertisement or different advertisement but for the same product shown, again and again on the TV will have more attention as compared to an advertisement which is shown once a day.

**(d) Status**

High status people exert greater influence on the perception of the employees than the low status people. There will always be different reactions to the orders given by the foreman, the supervisor or the production manager.

### **(e) Contrast**

An object which contrasts with the surrounding environment is more likely to be noticed than the object which blends in the environment. For example, the Exit signs in the cinema halls which have red lettering on a black background are attention drawing or a warning sign in a factory, such as Danger, written in black against a red or yellow background will be easily noticeable. In a room if there are twenty men and one woman, the woman will be noticed first because of the contrast.

### **(f) Movement:**

The principle of motion states that a moving object receives more attention than an object which is standing still. A moving car among the parked cars catches our attention faster. A flashing neon-sign is more easily noticed.

### **(g) Novelty and Familiarity:**

This principle states that either a novel or a familiar external situation can serve as an attention getter. New objects in the familiar settings or familiar objects in new settings will draw the attention of the perceiver. A familiar face on a crowded railway platform will immediately catch attention. Because of this principle, the managers change the workers jobs from time to time, because it will increase the attention they give to their jobs.

### **(h) Nature**

By nature we mean, whether the object is visual or auditory and whether it involves pictures, people or animals. It is well known that pictures attract more attention than words. Video attracts more attention than still pictures. A picture with human beings attracts more attention than a picture with animals.

## **(ii) Internal Factors**

The internal factors relate to the perceiver. Perceiving people is very important for a manager, because behaviour occurs as a result of behaviour.

### **Following are the internal factors which affect perception:**

**1. LEARNING :** Although interrelated with other internal factors learning may play the single biggest role in developing perceptual set. A perceptual set is basically what a person expects from the stimuli on the basis of his learning and experience relative to same or similar stimuli. This perceptual set is also known as cognitive awareness by which the mind organizes information and forms images and compares them with previous exposures to similar stimuli. A number of illustrations have been used by psychologists to demonstrate the impact of learning on perception.

**2. PERSONALITY** – Personality traits influence how a person selects perceptions. For instance, conscientious people tend to select details and external stimuli to a greater degree.

**3. MOTIVATION** – People will select perceptions according to what they need in the moment. They will favor selections that they think will help them with their current needs, and be more likely to ignore what is irrelevant to their needs.

**4. EXPERIENCE** – The patterns of occurrences or associations one has learned in the past affect current perceptions. The person will select perceptions in a way that fits with what they found in the past.

### **(3). Perceptual Outputs**

Perceptual outputs encompass all that results from the throughout process. These would include such factors as one's attitudes, opinions, feelings, values and behaviours resulting from the perceptual inputs and throughputs. Perceptual errors adversely affect the perceptual outputs. The lesser our biases in perception, the better our chances of perceiving reality as it exists or at least perceiving situations with the minimum amount of distortions.

This will help us to form the right attitudes and engage in appropriate behavioural patterns, which in turn will be beneficial for attaining the desired organisational outcomes. It is essentially important for managers who are responsible for organisational results to enhance their skills in order to develop the right attitudes and behaviours.

#### **Key Takeaways**

##### ***Key Points***

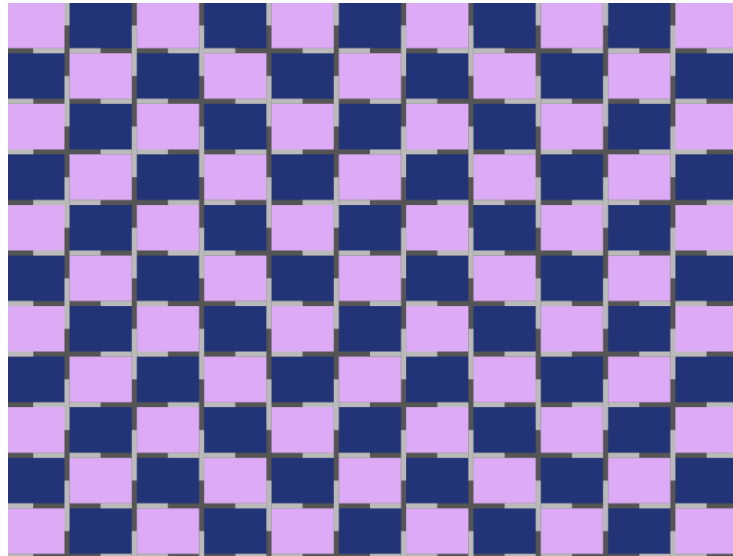
- Cognitive biases are instances of evolved mental behavior that can cause deviations in judgement that produce negative consequences for an organization.
- Understanding how perception can be distorted is particularly relevant for managers because they make many decisions, and deal with many people making assessments and judgments, on a daily basis.
- Bias arises from various processes that are sometimes difficult to distinguish. These include information-processing shortcuts (heuristics), mental noise and the mind's limited information processing capacity, emotional and moral motivations, and social influence.
- A few examples of perceptual distortions include confirmation bias, self-serving bias, causality, framing, and belief bias.

##### ***Key Terms***

- **cognitive:** The area of mental function that deals with logic, as opposed to affective functions which deal with emotion.
- **heuristic:** Experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning, and discovery. An exhaustive search is impractical, so heuristic methods are used to speed up the process of finding a satisfactory solution.

A cognitive bias is a pattern of deviation in judgment that occurs in particular situations and can lead to perceptual distortion, inaccurate judgment, illogical interpretation, or what is broadly called irrationality. Implicit in the concept of a pattern of deviation is a standard of comparison with what is normative or expected; this may be the judgment of people outside those particular

situations, or a set of independently verifiable facts. Essentially, there must be an objective observer to identify cognitive bias in a subjective individual.



**Optical illusion:** In this optical illusion all lines are actually parallel. Perceptual distortion makes them seem crooked.

Bias arises from various processes that can be difficult to distinguish. Bias is not inherently good or bad—it is pointedly subjective or contrary to reactions or decisions that one might objectively expect. Ways in which biases are derived include:

- Information-processing shortcuts (heuristics)
- Mental noise
- The mind's limited information processing capacity
- Emotional and moral motivations
- Social influence

The notion of cognitive biases was introduced by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman in 1972 and grew out of their experience of people's innumeracy, or inability to reason intuitively with greater orders of magnitude. They and their colleagues demonstrated several replicable ways in which human judgments and decisions differ from rational choice theory. They explained these differences in terms of heuristics, rules which are simple for the brain to compute but which introduce systematic errors.

## Perceptual Distortions and Management

The ways in which we distort our perception are particularly relevant for managers because they make many decisions, and deal with many people making assessments and judgments, on a daily basis. Managers must be aware of their own logical and perceptive fallacies and the biases of others. This requires a great deal of organizational behavior knowledge. A few useful perceptual distortions managers should be aware of include:

1. **Confirmation bias** – Simply put, humans have a strong tendency to manipulate new information and facts until they match their own preconceived notions. This



inappropriate confirmation allows for poor decision-making that ignores the true implications of new data.

2. **Self-serving bias** – Another common bias is the tendency to take credit for success while passing the buck on failure. Managers must monitor this in employees and realize when they are guilty themselves. Being objective about success and failure enables growth and ensures proper accountability.
3. **Belief bias** – Individuals often make a decision before they have all the facts. In this situation, they believe that their confidence in their decision is founded on a rational and logical assessment of the facts when it is not.
4. **Framing** – It is quite easy to be right about everything if you carefully select the context and perspective on a given issue. Framing enables people to ignore relevant facts by narrowing down what is considered applicable to a given decision.
5. **Causality** – Humans are pattern-matching organisms. People analyze past events to predict future outcomes. Sometimes their analysis is accurate, but sometimes it is not. It is easy to see the cause-effect relationship in completely random situations. Statistical confidence intervals are useful in mitigating this perceptive distortion.

## **Impression Management**

Impression management is a goal-directed conscious or unconscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of others.

### **Learning Objectives**

Outline the way in which impressions and impressions management affect management, organizations, and branding

### **Key Takeaways**

#### **Key Points**

- Influencing others and gaining rewards, along with other motives, govern impression management from a general perspective.
- Impression management theory states that an individual or organization must establish and maintain impressions that are congruent with the perceptions they want to convey to their stakeholder groups.
- Organizations use branding and other impressions management strategies to convey a consistent and repeatable image to external and internal audiences.
- Management must also consider the impressions they make on others, both subordinates and business partners. Every organization has an image to maintain—and so does its management.

#### **Key Terms**

- **impression:** The overall effect of something, e.g., on a person.

In sociology and social psychology, impression management is a goal -directed conscious or unconscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of others about a

person, object, or event. Impression management is performed by controlling or shaping information in social interactions. It is usually synonymous with self-presentation, in which a person tries to influence how others perceive their image. Impression management is used by communications and public relations professionals to shape an organization's public image.

While impression management and self-presentation are often used interchangeably, some argue that they are not the same. In particular, Schlenker believed that self-presentation should be used to describe attempts to control "self-relevant" images projected in "real or imagined social interactions." This was because people manage impressions of entities other than themselves, such as businesses, cities, and other individuals.

## **Application to Management**

From the managerial and/or organizational frame, the basic premise is the same. Organizations put forward a self-proclaimed (and strategized and refined) organizational perception. This is most commonly referred to as brand image or brand perception. Management must ensure that all aspects of the organization conform to and fulfill the desired brand image, and communicate it to the public.

Managers must also consider the impressions they make on others, both subordinates and business partners. Managers have to ensure that they too are promoting the company brand image. Maintaining a consistent and reliable impression in a professional context that is conducive to the organizational impression is a central communicative skill managers must practice to be successful.

## **Impression Management Theory**

Impression management theory states that any individual or organization must establish and maintain impressions that are congruent with the perceptions they want to convey to their stakeholder groups. From both a communications and public relations viewpoint, impression management encompasses ways of communicating congruence between personal or organizational goals and their intended actions in order to influence public perception.

The idea that perception is reality is the basis for this sociological and social psychology theory. Perception of an individual—a manager or employee—fundamentally shapes how the public perceives an organization and its products.

## **Motives and Strategies**

There are several motives that govern impression management. One is instrumental: we want to influence others and gain rewards. Giving the right impression facilitates desired social and material outcomes. Social outcomes can include approval, friendship, assistance, or power, and conveying an impression of competency in the workforce. These can trigger positive material rewards like higher salaries or better working conditions.

The second motive of self-presentation is expressive. We construct an image of ourselves to claim personal identity, and present ourselves in a manner that is consistent with that image. If people feel that their ability to express themselves is restricted, they react negatively, often by becoming defiant. People resist those who seek to curtail self-presentation expressiveness by adopting many different impression management strategies. One of them is ingratiation, the use

of flattery or praise to highlight positive characteristics and increase social attractiveness. Another strategy is intimidation, which is aggressively showing anger to get others to hear and obey.

### **Basic Factors Governing Impression Management**

There are a range of factors governing impression management. Impression management occurs in all social situations because people are always aware of being observed by others. The unique characteristics of a given social situation are important: cultural norms determine the appropriateness of particular verbal and nonverbal behaviors in different situations. These behaviors and actions have to be appropriate to the culture and the audience in order to positively influence impression management.

A person's goals are another factor governing impression management. Depending on how they want to influence their audience regarding a certain topic, presenting themselves in different ways can shape different impressions and reactions in their audience.

Self-efficacy is also important to consider; this describes whether a person is confident that s/he can convey the intended impression successfully. If they aren't confident, the audience will be able to tell.

# **Consumer Attitudes and Changes in Attitude**

Consumer attitudes is a composite of three elements: cognitive information, affective information, and information concerning a consumer's past behavior and future intentions. In other words, attitude consists of thoughts or beliefs, feelings, and behaviors or intentions towards a particular thing, which in this case is usually a good or service. For example, you may have a very positive view of a particular sports car (for example, you believe it performs better than most), it makes you feel good, and you intend to buy it.

Marketers need to know what are consumers likes and dislikes. In simple explanation, these likes and dislikes or we can say favourable or unfavourable attitudes. Attitudes can also be defined as "learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way".

This means attitudes towards brands are consumers learned tendencies to evaluate brands in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way. More formally, an overall evaluation done by consumers for choosing a particular product.

Attitudes help us understanding, why consumers do or do not buy a particular product or shop from a certain store etc. They are used for judging the effectiveness of marketing activities, for evaluating marketing actions ever before they are implemented within the market place.

## **Changes in Consumer Attitude**

Companies may focus on changing consumer attitudes for a variety of reasons. Dropping sales, increased product or service complaints and new, or renewed, competition in the marketplace can all necessitate a hard look at the reasons behind trends related to consumer perceptions and attitudes. Deciphering the cause of negative perceptions requires appropriate planning and the commitment to make the necessary changes to ensure success. For small businesses, analyzing consumer behavior becomes an essential part of developing a targeted marketing and promotional campaign.

### **1. Identify consumer perceptions**

In order to develop an action plan for changing consumer attitudes, you need to understand current perceptions of products and services. Evaluate captured feedback, such as customer service contact statistics regarding complaints and concerns. Service businesses can leave comment cards for customers to complete and mail back. Utilize surveys, paper and electronic, and focus groups to receive an accurate representation of problems or concerns that may exist.

### **2. Compile data for interpretation**

Interpretations derived from statistical data can provide immediate feedback related to possible product or service defects. Evaluate survey responses for information related to consumer views and perceptions of the business's products or services. Focus on repeated or habitual problems experienced by customers. Find the common thread among complaints and negative perceptions. Determine if a negative consumer attitude is the result of employee neglect or product deficiencies.

### **3. Create a plan of action**

Once you have identified consumer perceptions, develop a plan to improve areas where consumer perceptions reflect a negative attitude toward the company, product or service. This can include improved employee training to handle concerns and help cultivate customer loyalty. Involve product development on needed product improvements. Enlist the help of the marketing department to develop campaigns focused on increasing brand awareness and resolving common concerns.

### **4. Share vital information with affected employees**

Educate the appropriate personnel on the goals of any new campaigns and promotions. Ensure customer service representatives understand the impact of creating a positive customer environment. Changing consumer attitudes is essential to ensuring future loyalty and creating a secure job environment.

### **5. Measure success**

Use customer service metrics as one way to measure success. This can include keeping track of incident reports, positive feedback and complaints. Signs of a shift in consumer attitudes include reduced complaints and increased sales.

## **Components of Attitudes**

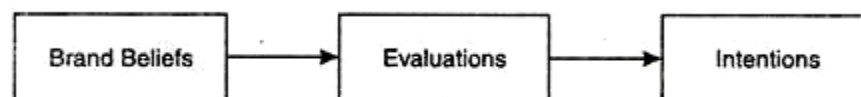
### **(a) Cognitive**

A person's knowledge and beliefs about some attitude object reside within the cognitive component. Through marketing research, marketers develop a vocabulary of product attributes and benefits.

### **(b) Affective**

The affective component represents a person's likes or dislikes of the attitude object. Beliefs about them are multidimensional because they represent the brand attributes consumers perceive but this component is one dimensional. Consumer's overall evaluation of a brand can be measured by rating the brand from "poor" to "excellent" or from "least preferred" to "most preferred".

Brand evaluation is central to the study of attitudes because it summarizes consumer's predisposition to be favourable or unfavourable to the brand. Brand beliefs are relevant only to the extent that they influence brand evaluations which in turn leads to behaviour.



**Three components of Attitudes**

### **(c) Conative**

The conative component refers to the person's action or behavioural tendencies toward the attitude object. This is measured in terms of intention to buy. For developing marketing strategy, this measured buying intent is important. To avoid failures in the market, marketers frequently test the elements of the marketing mix like – ads, packages, alternative product concepts or brand names. All this is done to know what is most likely to influence purchase behaviour.

There are important predicting and diagnostic differences among three components and measures when prediction is of prime concern then behavioural intention measures are most appropriate, since they offer the greatest predictive power as shown in Fig. But are limited in their diagnostic power.

This is basically because of their inability to reveal why consumers intend or don't intend to perform a behaviour. For example – consumer doesn't want to shop from a particular store for a number of reasons. Intention measures do not reveal these reasons like convenient shopping hours. Therefore, reasons for consumers attitudes and intention can be known by measuring beliefs.

## **Properties of Attitudes**

Attitudes can vary along a number of dimensions or properties. They are:

### **(i) Favourability**

A person may like Coke or Pepsi and dislike others like Fanta, Mirinda, Canada Dry etc.

### **(ii) Intensity**

This means, the strength of liking or disliking. For example, consumer may be liking two brands at a time but he/she may be more positive towards one.

### **(iii) Confidence**

This means, attitude is the confidence with which they are held. Intensity and confidence differ slightly. For example, a person may be equally confident that he/she really likes Pepsi but may be slightly favourable toward Coke.

# CONSUMER MOTIVATION

Consumer motivation is an internal state that drives people to identify and buy products or services that fulfill conscious and unconscious needs or desires. The fulfillment of those needs can then motivate them to make a repeat purchase or to find different goods and services to better fulfill those needs.

Needs are the core of the marketing concept. The study of Motivation refers to all the processes that drives in a person to perceive a need and pursue a definite course of action to fulfill that need.

**What are Needs:** Every individual has needs that are required to be fulfilled. Primary needs are food, clothing, shelter and secondary needs are society, culture etc.

**What are Wants:** Needs are the necessities, but wants are something more in addition to the needs. For example, food is a need and type of food is our want.

**What are Goals:** Goals are the objectives that have to be fulfilled. Goals are generic and product specific in nature. Generic goals are general in nature, whereas product specific goals are the desires of a specific nature.

Needs and fulfillment are the basis of motivation. Change takes place due to both internal as well as external factors. Sometimes needs are satisfied and sometimes they are not due to individual's personal, social, cultural or financial needs.

## **Theories of Motivation**

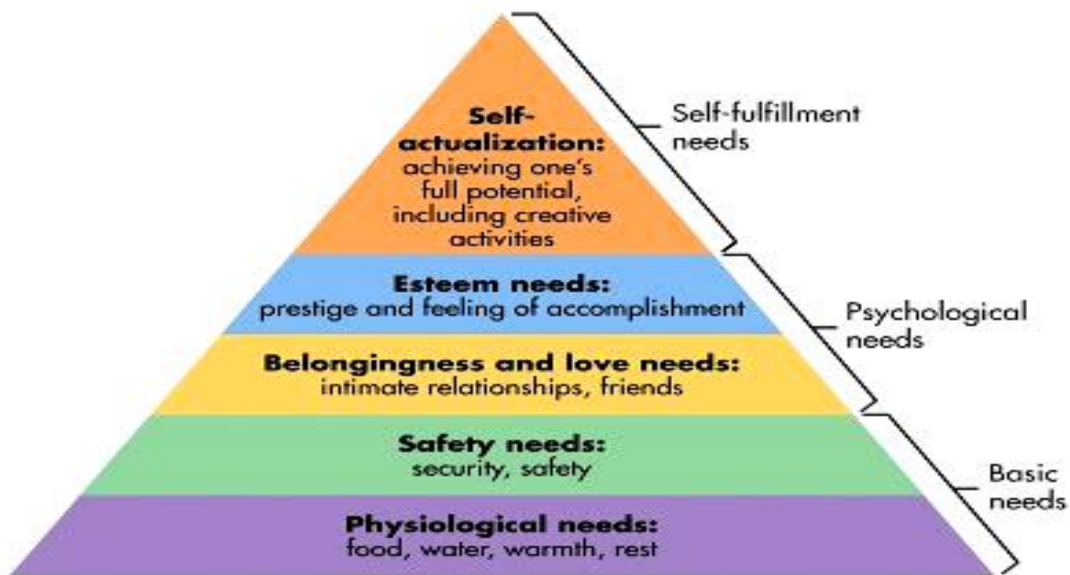
### Maslow's Theory of Need Hierarchy

Based on the notion of a universal hierarchy of human needs Dr Abraham Maslow, a clinical psychologist formulated a widely accepted theory of human motivation. This identifies five basic levels of human need which rank in order of importance from lower level needs to higher level needs.

This theory signifies the importance of satisfying the lower level needs before higher level needs arise. According to this theory, dissatisfaction motivates the consumer.

Following are the levels of human needs

## Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory



- **Physiological Needs:** Food, clothing, air, and shelter are the first level needs. They are known as the basic necessities or primary needs.
- **Safety or Security Needs:** Once the first level needs are satisfied, consumers move to the next level. Physical safety, security, stability and protection are the security needs.
- **Social Needs:** After the safety needs are satisfied, consumers expect friendship, belonging, attachment. They need to maintain themselves in a society and try to be accepted.
- **Esteem Needs:** Then comes esteem needs such as self-esteem, status, prestige. Individuals here in this stage want to rise above the general level as compared to others to achieve mental satisfaction.
- **Self-Actualization:** This is the highest stage of the hierarchy. People here, try to excel in their field and improve their level of achievement. They are known as self-actualizers.

### **Critics to Maslow's Need Hierarchy Level**

#### **(i) Concepts are too general**

It is said that hunger and self-esteem are considered to be similar needs but the former is urgent and involuntary in nature whereas latter is a conscious and voluntary type.

#### **(ii) This theory cannot be tested empirically**

This means that there is no way to measure precisely how satisfied one need must be before the next higher need becomes active.

Need hierarchy is also used for the basis of market segmentation with specific advertising appeals directed to individuals on one or more need levels. For example- cigarette ads, soft drink ads etc., often stress a social appeal by showing a group of young people sharing good times as well as the product advertised. It is also used for positioning products policies, education and vocational training etc.



## **REFERENCE & CREDITS**

1. Various educational Websites.
2. <https://indiafreenotes.com/>
3. <https://bbamantra.com/bba-notes/>

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