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Consider Consumer Psychology

By Darrin F. Coe, MA

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In your marketing efforts, be they on or offline, it's wise to consider the psychology of the consumer you are targeting. If you've done your homework you've developed a profile of your ideal customer and how your unique selling point speaks to them. Now, as you begin to develop a marketing strategy, writing ad copy, developing radio copy, and creating web copy, it is an understanding of consumer psychology that will help you speak to the consumer.

What is the true need your consumer is attempting to gratify? This is the question you must answer before writing copy or launching advertising. Maslow, would tell us that there are five needs: 1) basic needs; 2) safety needs; 3) social needs; 4) self esteem needs; and 5) self-fulfillment needs.

Along with this information consider that in "The Ramsey Report" published recently by eMarketer.com, we are told that consumer "empowerment" is one of the factors driving the continuing boom of online commerce. Consumers perceive themselves to be in the consumer driver's seat when they are online. They can block popups, can spam, and surf away from site that they dislike. They feel as if they are no longer at the whim of the marketing magicians.

This does not surprise me given that recent research would also indicate that online users tend to suffer from depression, low self-esteem, and loneliness. The internet addresses these issue through empowering them and giving them a perception of control.

Now, as a marketer it is up to you to use this information to speak to the needs of your consumer. Consider someone marketing heart-rate monitors. Whether in a retail sporting goods store or online, what need are you really fulfilling by selling heart-rate monitors? You can assume your client has some athletic training; perhaps they are detrained and attempting to recover their fitness? Perhaps they are an average athlete attempting to go to the next level of athleticism? Or maybe they are recovering from an illness or injury and are working with a personal trainer?

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This consumer is dissatisfied with their current state of existence. They want to perceive themselves in a more positive light. This consumer perhaps has low self-esteem and is depressed because of their poor level of fitness or perhaps they are dissatisfied with their level of athleticism because they know they can excel beyond where they are currently. The bottom line is they are dissatisfied with themselves, with their social image, and with their level of achievement.

With this in mind you're not selling heart-rate monitors, you're selling positive, and encouraging feedback. The heart-rate monitors tell the consumer that they are achieving and meeting their goals. The heart-rate monitor gives positive feedback and brings pleasure to painful exercise. The heart-rate monitor brings satisfaction to a dissatisfied outlook. What you're really selling is pleasure in the midst of pain.

This is what I mean by understanding your consumer's psychology before you begin marketing and advertising. With the above analysis, someone selling heart-rate monitors can develop a marketing campaign that speaks directly to the heart of the consumer and hopeful turns more prospects into purchasing customers.

Take the time to analyze the true needs of your consumer and how your product meets that need before you begin writing your and developing your marketing and you'll be at a distinct advantage over your competition.

Darrin F. Coe, MA holds a master's degree in psychology and works as a mental health professional, wealth building advocate, weekly columnist, and author. His latest information product is "Consumer Thinking Exposed" available at <http://dcoe1.tripod.com>. Contact him at coe@ris.net or subscribe to the Darrin Coe Ezine at <http://dcoe1.tripod.com>

Darrin F. Coe, MA is a mental health professional and author of the special report, "Internet Consumer Exposed" available at <http://dcoe1.tripod.com/exposed1>

Consumer Styles: Research Review

By Darrin Coe

Consumer Styles: Research Review by Darrin Coe

From The Darrin Coe Ezine

According to research done by Elizabeth Sproles and George Sproles (1990) in the Journal of Consumer Affairs, there is a significant link between peoples learning styles and their "consumer styles".

1. The perfectionist consumer style, which describes

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a consumer that searches carefully and systematically for the best quality in products tend to learn through serious, analysis and through both active and observation oriented learning. These types of consumers are highly goal oriented.

2. The brand conscious, price equals quality consumer tends to be oriented toward buying the more expensive, well

known brands tend to find choosing known brands an expedient strategy that replaces thinking and learning in their consumer choices.

3. The novelty and fashion conscious consumer seems to like new and innovative products and gains excitement from seeking out new things. This consumer tends to not be concerned with the implications or consequences of purchasing new or innovative products and services.

4. The recreational shopping consumer finds shopping a pleasant activity and engages in it because it's fun. This consumer engages in shopping as a social experience or because they like to be involved in their shopping.

5. The price value consumer tends to focus on sales and lower prices balanced against quality. This consumer tends to focus on active, fact acquisition. This consumer tends to shop the market in-depth and do many comparisons to find the proper balance of low price and quality.

6. The impulsive consumer buys at the spur of the moment and are unconcerned with how much is spent.

This consumer does not want to be bothered with new information or learning about products or services..

7. The confused-by-overchoice consumer perceives too many brands and stores and experiences information overload in the market. This person is overly detailed and fact oriented in their consumer process and becomes mentally overloaded, especially in a complex multichoice market.

8. The habitual, brand loyal consumer repetitively chooses the same brands and stores. This consumer engages

in a serious learning process to find products and services that provide them with positive experiences and then stick with them.

Research Implications

Know thy consumer. This research indicates how important it is to develop a psychological profile of your ideal consumer. You need to know what consumer frequents your market and from this you can begin to develop, first intuitively, then through ongoing research, a profile of your target customer's consumer style.

For instance if you sell your product or service over the internet you can be pretty sure that you are marketing to people who operate out of a limited number of consumer styles such as the perfectionistic; the novelty/fashion; and

the price conscious consumers. These are all information oriented consumers who engage in seeking information before they purchase.

If you are marketing to other businesses then you're once again probably going to need to market with an orientation to providing sound information coupled with powerful and relevant benefits because you'll be dealing with perfectionist and price conscious consumers.

Also, realize that with this information you can work to turn people from one style to another. For instance you may be able to convert a price conscious consumer to one who is brand loyal by providing consistent quality for a lower price. You may be able to convert the confused-by-overchoice consumer into a brand loyal consumer by providing simple, straight forward information combined with quality that cuts through the information overload.

Conclusions

Study your target market and actively work to know how they think and this will open up new marketing creatives that will better target their particular consumer style. This should prove to increase your bottom line if done thoughtfully and consistently.

Sproles, Elizabeth & Sproles, George (1990). Consumer

Decision-Making Styles as a Function of Individual Learning Styles. The Journal of Consumer Affairs. Vol. 24. Issue 1.

Darrin F. Coe, MA holds a master's degree in professional psychology and specializes in consumer thinking. His latest report, "The Internet Consumer Exposed" is packed with eye-opening insights about the psychology of the internet consumer at <http://consumer-thinking.com/exposed1>.

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