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Consumer Styles: Research Review

By Darrin Coe

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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 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 line 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 i

t'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>.

Darrin F. Coe, MA holds a master's degree in psychology and operates "Consumer Thinking.com"

Internet Shopping Tips

By News Canada

Consumer Styles: Research Review

(NC) – Here are some Internet shopping tips from Industry Canada's Office of Consumer Affairs:

Know the merchant you are dealing with.

Look for detailed product information.

Read the contract's terms and conditions and print or save them.

Check for quality assurance certificates or seals.

Verify that the merchant has a fair and clear complaint–handling process.

Make sure that you're comfortable with the merchant's purchasing process and that you know how to cancel your order.

Make sure the merchant has a secure transaction system to protect your financial information.

Review the merchant's policy for protecting personal information.

Watch out for mass e–mails, scams etc.

For more information on Internet shopping scams, and how to be a clever consumer, visit Consumer Connection's Web site at

. This is an award–winning Web site developed by the

Office of Consumer Affairs of Industry Canada. It provides rapid access to consumer information, powerful tools to cut research time, and many useful links to consumer and other organizations. Canadians can access Consumer Connection from home, the public library, community access points or from Government of Canada, provincial and territorial service outlets. For a variety of information on everything from bank fees, to privacy rights, to the latest scams or frauds, this is the place to go.

provides a wide selection of current, ready–to–use copyright free news stories and ideas

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is a niche service in public relations, offering access to print, radio, television, and now

the Internet media, with ready–to–use, editorial "fill" items. Monitoring and analysis are two more of our primary services. The service supplies access to the national media for marketers in the private, the public, and the not–for–profit sectors. Your corporate and product news, consumer tips and information are packaged in a variety of ready–to–use formats and are made available to every Canadian media

organization including weekly and daily newspapers, cable and commercial television stations, radio stations, as well as the Web sites Canadians visit most often. Visit

and learn more about

the NC services.

Internet Shopping Tips

Consumer Handbook Available

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