

Factors influencing buying behavior

(D) Psychological Factors:

Buying behaviour is influenced by several psychological factors. The dominants among them include motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes. It is difficult to measure the impact of psychological factors as they are internal, but are much powerful to control persons' buying choice. Manager must try to understand probable role the factors play in making buying decisions.

i. Motivation:

It has a significant impact on consumer behaviour. Motivation is closely related to human needs. One has many needs at a given time. Some needs are biogenic or physiological in nature arising from physiological states of tension, such as hunger, thirst, or discomfort.

Other needs are psychogenic or psychological in nature arising from psychological state of tension, such as recognition, esteem, or belonging. Motivation comes from motive; motive is expression of needs; or intensified need become a motive. Thus, a motive is the need that is sufficiently pressing to drive the person to act. Satisfying the need reduces the felt tension.

People hold one or more of following motives to buy:

- i. To satisfy basic needs like hunger, thirst, or love
- ii. To protect from economic, physical or mental hazards
- iii. To get social status
- iv. To be recognized or appreciated
- v. To be respected
- vi. To be self-actualized
- vii. To avoid physical or mental stress

Motivation is, thus, a driving force that makes the individual to act to release the tension aroused from unmet needs. A motivated person is ready to act/react. Marketer should

identify why people buy the products. What are the motives to purchase the products? If product is connected with their motives, they definitely respond positively.

In fact, the product is a source of satisfying unmet needs. So, product is presented as a solution of tension resulted from unsatisfied needs. Several theories are available to understand motivation aspect.

Most popular theories include Maslow Need Hierarchy, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Stacy Adam's Equity Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Porter-Lawler Theory, McClelland's Achievement Theory, etc. Knowledge of these theories assists the manager to understand deeper motives the people hold for buying different products.

ii. Perception:

Person's motivation to act depends on his perception of situation. It is one of the strongest factors affecting behaviour. The stimuli – product, advertising appeal, incentives, or anything – are perceived differently by different people due to difference in perception. Marketer should know how people perceive marketing offers.

Bernard and Gary define:

“Perception is a process by which an individual select, organize, and interpret information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world.” Perception depends on physical stimuli and stimuli's relation to surrounding field, too. People perceive the same stimulus differently due to selective attention, selective distortion, and selective retention. So, all consumers may not see the product or message in a way the marketer wants.

Marketer should take these perceptual processes carefully while designing marketing programme. It is necessary that the product or marketing offer must be perceived in a way the market wants to be perceived. Marketer is also required to know the factors that affect people's perception. Tactful interview or questionnaire can help to measure perception of target groups.

iii. Learning:

Most human behaviour is learned. Learning is basically concerned with experience of an individual. Learning can be defined as: Relatively permanent changes arising from experience. If an individual has satisfactory experience of buying and using the products, he is more likely to talk favourably or repeat the same.

Most of purchase decisions depend on self-experience or experience of others, whose opinion carry value in buying decisions. Learning is produced through the interplay of drives, stimuli, cues, responses, and reinforcement. Learning theories help marketer to build up demand for the product by associating it with strong drives, using motivating cues, and providing positive reinforcement.

New company can enter the market by using competitions' drives, cues and reinforcement. Sufficient knowledge of learning is an important input for the marketer to design the meaningful marketing programme.

iv. Beliefs:

People hold beliefs about company, company's goods or services, and they act accordingly. Beliefs of the buyers affect product and brand image. We can define the term as: Belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something. Beliefs may be based on knowledge, opinion, or faith.

Note that beliefs have nothing to do with facts or reality. People may have wrong beliefs for the superior product, or they hold positive beliefs for inferior product. Positive and negative beliefs have their impact on purchase decisions. Marketer can create positive belief by associating strong aspects related to product and brand, or can correct wrong beliefs by proper campaign.

It is clear that people buy only if they believe it is worthwhile to buy. So, beliefs play decisive role in the buying decision. Marketer must try to know what type of beliefs people hold about company, products, and brands. Such knowledge must be incorporated in preparing an effective marketing programme.

v. Attitudes:

An attitude is a person's enduring favourable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies toward some object or idea. These emotional feelings are usually evaluative in nature. People hold attitudes toward almost everything, such as religion, politics, clothes, music, food, product, company, and so on.

Attitudes decide liking or disliking of object. People can judge good or bad, beautiful or ugly, rich or poor, or desirable or undesirable about an object, a product, or a person. Attitudes play a vital role in accepting or rejecting, appreciating or criticizing the

product or brand. People do not react to every object in a fresh way. Object is evaluated by attitudes.

So, it is imperative that marketer must know what type of attitudes people hold about the company, products, and brands. Attitudes can be learned or developed. Learning plays an important role in developing attitudes. Even unfavorable attitudes can be changed into favourable ones by systematic campaign. Mostly, beliefs and attitudes are taken simultaneously.