

MODULE 4 OF 11 · FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING

Consumer & Buyer Behaviour

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Identify factors that drive buyer behaviour and describe the five stages of the buyer decision process.

KEY VOCABULARY

Buyer behaviour

Need recognition

Information search

Evaluation of alternatives

Purchase decision

Post-purchase behaviour

WHY THIS MATTERS

Marketing only works if it fits how people actually decide to buy things. This module opens up that decision process so later modules (segmentation, the mix, communications) can be designed to fit it.

WARM-UP QUESTION

“Think of the last thing you bought that cost more than \$20 — what made you finally decide to buy it?”

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What's an example of "post-purchase behaviour" you've experienced — did you ever regret a purchase, or tell someone else how good it was?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

How might a business try to shorten a customer's information-search stage?

Core Concepts

Buying decisions have psychological, social and personal roots

Motivation, perception and attitudes (psychological), family and social groups (social), and age, lifestyle and personality (personal) all shape what someone buys.

Example: A teenager might choose trainers partly based on what their friend group wears — a social influence — not just personal preference.

The five-stage decision process

Need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour — though not every purchase moves through all five carefully.

Example: Buying a laptop typically involves real research and comparison; buying a chocolate bar at the till usually skips straight to purchase.

The process compresses for low-involvement purchases

Cheap, frequent, habitual purchases barely touch information search or evaluation; expensive, infrequent purchases usually involve all five stages in depth.

Example: Choosing a phone network contract gets real evaluation; choosing a bag of crisps usually doesn't.

COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID

Assuming every purchase gets the full five-stage treatment — most everyday purchases are far more automatic than that.

Running the Lesson

TEACHING OUTLINE

1. Explore psychological, social and personal influences on buying.
2. Walk through the five-stage decision process.
3. Discuss how the process differs for a cheap, habitual purchase vs an expensive one.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Students map their own recent purchase decision onto the five stages.

MINI CASE STUDY

A student comparing two mobile phone plans read reviews, asked friends, and compared prices for a week (full five-stage process) before choosing one — then posted about the decision online afterwards, which is itself post-purchase behaviour other buyers will read during their own information search.

RECAP

- Buyer behaviour is shaped by psychological, social and personal factors.
- The buyer decision process has five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, post-purchase.
- Low-involvement purchases compress or skip several of these stages.

HOMEWORK / EXTENSION

Track your own next purchase over \$10 through all five stages and write one sentence for each.

Full lesson & free auto-marked quiz: marketingteacher.com/courses/foundations-of-marketing/lessons/the-buyer-decision-process/

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