

# CHAPTER 4

## Consumer Motivation

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter students should be able to:

1. Understand the types of human needs and motives and the meaning of goals.
2. Understand the dynamics of motivation, arousal of needs, setting of goals, and interrelationship between needs and goals.
3. Learn about several systems of needs developed by researchers.
4. Understand how human motives are studied and measured.

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

Motivation is the driving force within individuals that impels them to action. This driving force is produced by a state of uncomfortable tension, which exists as the result of an unsatisfied need. All individuals have needs, wants, and desires. The individual's subconscious drive to reduce need-induced tensions results in behavior that he or she anticipates will satisfy needs and thus bring about a more comfortable internal state. Motivation can be either positive or negative.

Innate needs—those an individual is born with—are physiological (biogenic) in nature; they include all the factors required to sustain physical life (e.g., food, water, clothing, shelter, sex, and physical safety). Acquired needs—those an individual develops after birth—are primarily psychological (psychogenic); they include love, acceptance, esteem, and self-fulfillment.

All behavior is goal oriented. Goals are the sought-after results of motivated behavior. The form or direction that behavior takes—the goal that is selected—is a result of thinking processes (cognition) and previous learning (e.g., experience). There are two types of goals: generic goals and product specific goals. A generic goal is a general category of goal that may fulfill a certain need; a product-specific goal is a specifically branded or labeled product that the individual sees as a way to fulfill a need. Product-specific needs are sometimes referred to as wants. For any innate or acquired need, there are many different and appropriate goals. The specific goal selected depends on the individual's experiences, physical capacity, prevailing cultural norms and values, and the goal's accessibility in the physical and social environment. Needs and goals are interdependent and change in response to the individual's physical condition, environment, interaction with other people, and experiences. As needs become satisfied, new, higher-order needs emerge that must be fulfilled.

Failure to achieve a goal often results in feelings of frustration. Individuals react to frustration in two ways: “fight” or “flight.” They may cope by finding a way around the obstacle that prohibits goal attainment or by adopting a substitute goal (fight); or they may adopt a defense mechanism that enables them to protect their self-esteem (flight). Defense mechanisms include aggression, regression, rationalization, withdrawal, projection, daydreaming, identification, and repression.

Motives cannot easily be inferred from consumer behavior. People with different needs may seek fulfillment through selection of the same goals; people with the same needs may seek fulfillment through different goals. Although some psychologists have suggested that individuals have different

need priorities, others believe that most human beings experience the same basic needs, to which they assign a similar priority ranking. Maslow's hierarchy-of-needs theory proposes five levels of human needs: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, egoistic needs, and self-actualization needs. Other needs widely integrated into consumer advertising include the needs for power, affiliation, and achievement.

There are self-reported and qualitative methods for identifying and "measuring" human motives, and researchers use these techniques in tandem to assess the presence or strength of consumer motives. Motivational research and its current extended form (commonly referred to as "qualitative research"), seeks to delve below the consumer's level of conscious awareness, and to identify underlying needs and motives. Moreover, quantitative research has proved to be of value to marketers in developing new ideas and advertising copy appeals.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

1. Human needs—consumer needs are the basis of all modern marketing.
  - a) Needs are the essence of the marketing concept.
  - b) The key to a company's survival, profitability, and growth in a highly competitive marketing environment is its ability to identify and satisfy unfulfilled consumer needs better and sooner than the competition.
2. Marketers do not create needs, although in many instances they may make consumers more keenly aware of unfelt or dormant needs.
3. Savvy companies define their business in terms of the consumer needs they satisfy rather than the products they produce and sell.
4. Because consumers' basic needs do not change but the products that satisfy them do, a corporate focus on developing products that will satisfy consumers' needs ensures that the company stays in the forefront of the search for new and effective solutions.

### MOTIVATION AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL FORCE

1. **Motivation** can be described as the driving force within individuals that impels them to action. This driving force is produced by a state of tension, which exists as the result of an unfilled need.
2. Individuals strive both consciously and subconsciously to reduce this tension through selecting goals and subsequent behavior that they anticipate will fulfill their needs and thus relieve them of the tension they feel.
3. Whether gratification is actually achieved depends on the course of action pursued.

### Needs

1. Every individual has needs; some are innate, others are acquired.
2. **Innate needs** are physiological or **biogenic**, and include food, water, air, clothing, shelter, and sex.
  - a) These needs (innate) are considered **primary needs** or motives.
3. **Acquired needs** are needs that we learn in response to our culture or environment and include the need for self-esteem, prestige, affection, power, and learning.
  - a) Because acquired needs are generally psychological (i.e., **psychogenic**), they are considered **secondary needs** or motives.

- b) They result from the individual's subjective psychological state and from relationships with others.
- 4. Motives or needs can have a positive or negative direction. We may feel a driving force toward some object or condition or a driving force away from some object or condition.
- 5. Some psychologists refer to positive drives as needs, wants, or desires and to negative drives as fears or aversions.
- 6. However, although **positive** and **negative** motivational forces seem to differ dramatically in terms of physical (and sometimes emotional) activity, they are basically similar in that both serve to initiate and sustain human behavior.
- 7. For this reason, researchers often refer to both kinds of drives or motives as needs, wants, and desires.
- 8. Some theorists distinguish wants from needs by defining wants as product-specific needs. Others differentiate between desires, on the one hand, and needs and wants on the other.
- 9. There is no uniformly accepted distinction among the terms needs, wants, and desires.

### Goals

- 1. Goals are the sought after results of motivated behavior. All behavior is goal oriented.
- 2. **Generic goals** are the general classes or categories of goals that consumers select to fulfill their needs.
- 3. **Product-specific goals** are the products they select to fulfill their needs.
- 4. Marketers are particularly concerned with product-specific goals, that is, the specifically branded products and services that consumer select for goal fulfillment.
- 5. Individuals set goals on the basis of their personal values and they select means (or behaviors) that they believe will help them achieve their desired goals.

### The Selection of Goals

- 1. Goal selection by individuals depends on:
  - a) Their personal experiences.
  - b) Physical capacity.
  - c) Prevailing cultural norms and values.
  - d) The goal's accessibility in the physical and social environment.
- 2. Like needs, goals can be positive or negative.
- 3. A positive goal is one toward which behavior is directed; thus it is often referred to as an **approach object**.
- 4. A negative goal is one from which behavior is directed away and is referred to as an **avoidance object**.
- 5. Because both approach and avoidance goals are the results of motivated behavior, most researchers refer to both simply as goals.
- 6. Many studies applied goal selection into consumption situations.
- 7. One study found that approach-oriented and avoidance-oriented consumers are likely to respond differently to promotional appeals.
- 8. Goals are also related to negative forms of consumption behavior.

### Interdependence of Needs and Goals

- 1. Needs and goals are interdependent; neither exists without the other.
- 2. People are often not as aware of their needs as they are of their goals.

3. Individuals are usually more aware of their physiological needs than they are of their psychological needs.

### **Rational Versus Emotional Motives**

1. Some consumer behaviorists distinguish between so-called **rational motives** and **emotional motives**.
2. They use the term rationality in the traditional economic sense, which assumes that consumers behave rationally when they carefully consider all alternatives and choose those that give them the greatest utility.
3. In a marketing context, the term rationality implies that consumers select goals based on totally objective criteria, such as size, weight, price, or miles per gallon. Emotional motives imply the selection of goals according to personal or subjective criteria (e.g., pride, fear, affection, status).
4. Recent studies illustrate the complexity of rational versus emotional motivation during consumption.