

教育部高校工商管理类教学指导委员会 双语教学推荐教材



BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION  
CLASSICS

Business

工商管理经典教材·市场营销系列

Administration Classics

消费者

行为学

CONSUMER

(英文版·第8版)

BEHAVIOR

(8th Edition)

迈克尔·R·所罗门 (Michael R. Solomon) 著



中国人民大学出版社

教育部高校工商管理类教学指导委员会双语教学推荐教材



工商管理经典教材·市场营销系列

Administration Classics

# 消费者行为学

(英文版·第8版)

## CONSUMER

## BEHAVIOR

(8th Edition)

迈克尔·R·所罗门 (Michael R. Solomon) 著

中国人民大学出版社

· 北京 ·

# 总 序

随着我国加入 WTO,越来越多的国内企业参与到国际竞争中来,用国际上通用的语言思考、工作、交流的能力也越来越受到重视。这样一种能力也成为我国各类人才参与竞争的一种有效工具。国家教育机构、各类院校以及一些主要的教材出版单位一直在思考,如何顺应这一发展潮流,推动各层次人员通过学习来获取这种能力。双语教学就是这种背景下的一种尝试。

双语教学在我国主要指汉语和国际通用的英语教学。事实上,双语教学在我国教育界已经不是一个陌生的词汇了,以双语教学为主的科研课题也已列入国家“十五”规划的重点课题。但从另一方面来看,双语教学从其诞生的那天起就被包围在人们的赞成与反对声中。如今,依然是有人赞成有人反对,但不论是赞成居多还是反对占上,双语教学的规模 and 影响都在原有的基础上不断扩大,且呈大发展之势。一些率先进行双语教学的院校在实践中积累了经验,不断加以改进;一些待进入者也在模仿中学习,并静待时机成熟时加入这一行列。由于我国长期缺乏讲第二语言(包括英语)的环境,开展双语教学面临特殊的困难,因此,选用合适的教材就成为双语教学成功与否的一个重要问题。我们认为,双语教学从一开始就应该使用原版的各类学科的教材,而不是由本土教师自编的教材,从而可以避免中国式英语问题,保证语言的原汁原味。各院校除应执行国家颁布的教学大纲和课程标准外,还应根据双语教学的特点和需要,适当调整教学课时的设置,合理选择优秀的、合适的双语教材。

顺应这样一种大的教育发展趋势,中国人民大学出版社同众多国际知名的大出版公司,如麦格劳-希尔出版公司、培生教育出版公司等合作,面向大学本科生层次,遴选了一批国外最优秀的管理类原版教材,涉及专业基础课,人力资源管理、市场营销及国际化管理等专业方向课,并广泛听取有着丰富的双语一线教学经验的教师的建议和意见,对原版教材进行了适当的改编,删减了一些不适合我国国情和不适合教学的内容;另一方面,根据教育部对双语教学教材篇幅合理、定价低的要求,我们更是努力区别于目前市场上形形色色的各类英文版、英文影印版的大部头,将目标受众锁定在大学本科生层次。本套教材尤其突出了以下一些特点:

- 保持英文原版教材的特色。本套双语教材根据国内教学实际需要,对原书进行了一定的改编,主要是删减了一些不适合教学以及不符合我国国情的内容,但在体系结构和内容特色方面都保持了原版教材的风貌。专家们的认真改编和审定,使本套教材既保持了学术上的完整性,又贴近中国实际;既方便教师教学,又方便学生理解和掌握。

- 突出管理类专业教材的实用性。本套教材既强调学术的基础性,又兼顾应用的广泛性;既侧重让学生掌握基本的理论知识、专业术语和专业表达方式,又考虑到教材和管理实践的紧密结合,有助于学生形成专业的思维能力,培养实际的管理技能。

● 体系经过精心组织。本套教材在体系架构上充分考虑到当前我国在本科教育阶段推广双语教学的进度安排，首先针对那些课程内容国际化程度较高的学科进行双语教材开发，在其专业模块内精心选择各专业教材。这种安排既有利于我国教师摸索双语教学的经验，使得双语教学贴近现实教学的需要；也有利于我们收集关于双语教学教材的建议，更好地推出后续的双语教材及教辅材料。

● 篇幅合理，价格相对较低。为适应国内双语教学内容和课时上的实际需要，本套教材进行了一定的删减和改编，使总体篇幅更为合理；而采取低定价，则充分考虑到了学生实际的购买能力，从而使本套教材得以真正走近广大读者。

● 提供强大的教学支持。依托国际大出版公司的力量，本套教材为教师提供了配套的教辅材料，如教师手册、PowerPoint 讲义、试题库等，并配有内容极为丰富的网络资源，从而使教学更为便利。

本套教材是在双语教学教材出版方面的一种尝试。我们在选书、改编及出版的过程中得到了国内许多高校的专家、教师的支持和指导，在此深表谢意。同时，为我们后续推出的教材更适于教学，我们也真诚地期待广大读者提出宝贵的意见和建议。需要说明的是，尽管我们在改编的过程中已加以注意，但由于各教材的作者所处的政治、经济和文化背景不同，书中内容仍可能有不妥之处，望读者在阅读时注意比较和甄别。

徐二明

中国人民大学商学院

# Contents

*Preface* i

## ■ SECTION 1

### **CONSUMERS IN THE MARKETPLACE 1**

#### **Chapter 1: Consumers Rule 2**

Consumer Behavior: People in the Marketplace 3

What Is Consumer Behavior? 4

Consumers' Impact on Marketing Strategy 6

Marketing's Impact on Consumers 8

The Global Consumer 10

Blurred Boundaries: Marketing and Reality 12

Marketing Ethics and Public Policy 13

The Dark Side of Consumer Behavior 18

Consumer Behavior as a Field of Study 23

Taking It from Here: The Plan of the Book 27

Review Questions 28

Consumer Behavior Challenge 28

## ■ SECTION 2

### **CONSUMERS AS INDIVIDUALS 31**

#### **Chapter 2: Perception 32**

Introduction 33

Sensory Systems 34

Exposure 41

Attention 44

Interpretation 47

Review Questions 52

Consumer Behavior Challenge 52

#### **Chapter 3: Learning and Memory 54**

Learning 55

Behavioral Learning Theories 56

Cognitive Learning Theory 63

Memory 66

Review Questions 77

Consumer Behavior Challenge 77

#### **Chapter 4: Motivation and Values 78**

Introduction 79

The Motivation Process 79

Motivational Strength 80

Needs versus Wants 81

Consumer Involvement 85

Values 93

Review Questions 106

Consumer Behavior Challenge 106

#### **Chapter 5: The Self 108**

Perspectives on the Self 109

Sex Roles 118

Review Questions 136



Consumer Behavior Challenge 136

## Chapter 6: Personality and Lifestyles 138

Personality 139

Lifestyles and Psychographics 149

Review Questions 163

Consumer Behavior Challenge 163

## Chapter 7: Attitudes 165

The Power of Attitudes 166

The Functions of Attitudes 166

The Standard Learning Hierarchy 168

Forming Attitudes 171

Attitude Models 176

Review Questions 183

Consumer Behavior Challenge 184

## Chapter 8: Attitude Change and Interactive Communications 185

Changing Attitudes Through Communication 186

The Elements of Communication 187

An Updated View: Interactive Communications 187

Who's in Charge of the Remote? 188

New Message Formats 189

The Source 190

The Message 196

Review Questions 207

Consumer Behavior Challenge 207

### SECTION 3

## CONSUMERS AS DECISION MAKERS 209

### Chapter 9: Individual Decision Making 210

Consumers as Problem Solvers 211

Steps in the Decision-Making Process 215

Review Questions 234

Consumer Behavior Challenge 235

## Chapter 10: Buying and Disposing 237

Situational Effects on Consumer Behavior 238

The Shopping Environment 245

Atmospherics 251

What Is Quality? 255

Review Questions 261

Consumer Behavior Challenge 262

## Chapter 11: Group Influence and Opinion Leadership 264

Reference Groups 265

Review Questions 286

Consumer Behavior Challenge 287

## Chapter 12: Organizational and Household Decision Making 289

Organizational Decision Making 290

The Family Unit 294

Review Questions 310

Consumer Behavior Challenge 311

### SECTION 4

## CONSUMERS AND SUBCULTURES 313

### Chapter 13: Income and Social Class 314

Consumer Spending and Economic Behavior 315

Review Questions 334

Consumer Behavior Challenge 335

### Chapter 14: Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Subcultures 336

Subcultures, Microcultures, and

Consumer Identity 337

**Religious Subcultures 348**

Review Questions 351

Consumer Behavior Challenge 351

**Chapter 15: Age Subcultures 353**

Age and Consumer Identity 354

The Youth Market 356

Review Questions 369

Consumer Behavior Challenge 370

**SECTION 5****CONSUMERS AND CULTURE 371****Chapter 16: Cultural Influences  
on Consumer Behavior 372**

Understanding Culture 373

**Sacred and Profane Consumption 386**

Review Questions 390

Consumer Behavior Challenge 390

**Chapter 17: Global Consumer Culture 391**

Creating Culture 392

Cultural Selection 395

The Fashion System 406

Diffusing Product Meanings Globally 414

The Diffusion of Consumer Culture 419

Review Questions 423

Consumer Behavior Challenge 423

**Glossary 425**

# Preface

I love to people-watch, don't you? People shopping, people flirting, people consuming. Consumer behavior is the study of people and the products that help to shape their identities. Because I'm a consumer myself, I have a selfish interest in learning more about how this process works—and so do you.

In many courses, students are merely passive observers; they learn about topics that affect them indirectly, if at all. Not everyone is a plasma physicist, a medieval French scholar, or a marketing professional. But we are all consumers. Many of the topics in this book have both professional and personal relevance to the reader, regardless of whether he or she is a student, professor, or businessperson. Nearly everyone can relate to the trials and tribulations of last-minute shopping; primping for a big night out; agonizing over an expensive purchase; fantasizing about a week in the Caribbean; celebrating a holiday, or commemorating a landmark event, such as graduating, getting a driver's license, or (dreaming about) winning the lottery.

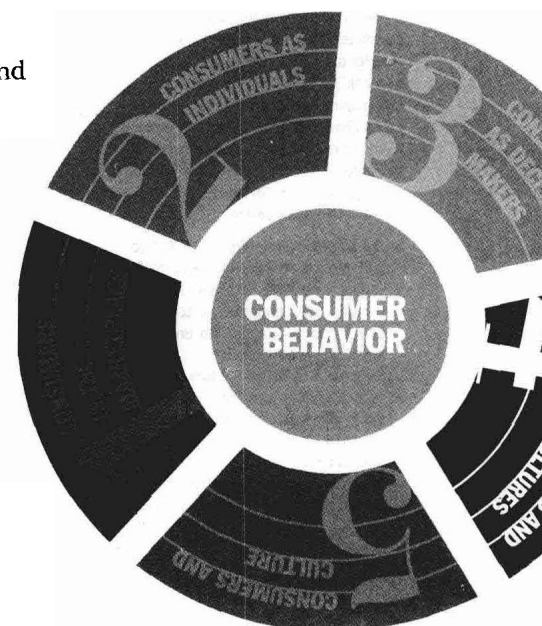
In this edition, I have tried to introduce you to the latest and best thinking by some very bright scientists who develop models and studies of consumer behavior. But that's not enough. Consumer behavior is an applied science, so we must never lose sight of the role of "horse sense" when we try to apply our findings to life in the real world. That's why you'll find a lot of practical examples to back up these fancy theories.



## What Makes This Book Different: Buying, Having, and Being

As this book's subtitle suggests, my vision of consumer behavior goes well beyond studying the act of *buying*—*having* and *being* are just as important, if not more so. Consumer behavior is more than buying things; it also embraces the study of how having (or not having) things affects our lives and how our possessions influence the way we feel about ourselves and about each other—our state of being. I developed the *Wheel of Consumer Behavior* that appears at the beginning of text sections to underscore the complex—and often inseparable—interrelationships between the individual consumer and his or her social realities.

In addition to understanding why people buy things, we also try to appreciate how products, services, and consumption activities contribute to the broader social world we experience. Whether we are shopping, cooking, cleaning, playing basketball, hanging out at the beach, or even looking at ourselves in the mirror, the marketing system touches our lives. As if these experiences aren't complex enough, the task of understanding the consumer multiplies geometrically when we take a multicultural perspective.





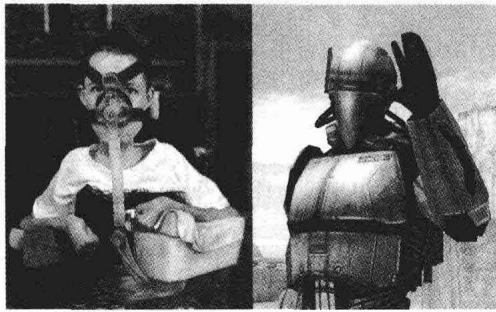
Web sites and how those Web page strategies compare to the self-promotion strategies used in real life. The authors found that events such as graduations or promotions trigger many of these personal sites; other prominent sites include a lecture for personal growth (assessing of technology, search for a job, etc.), an *album* (a homage to a favorite artist or product). The creators choose every element of the site carefully, selecting images and text that symbolize something about their self-identity, and many of them digitize their physical selves as part of their self-presentation. Also the sites often reveal intimate aspects of the self that people wouldn't necessarily share in real life (Bilal).

In the influential cyberpunk novel *Snow Crash*, author Neal Stephenson envisioned a virtual world, called the *Metaverse*, as a successor to the Internet. In the *Metaverse*, everyday people take on glamorous identities in a three-dimensional but non-physical world. The book's main theme is to deliver a message: In the *Metaverse*, there's a warmer price and a less conspicuous figure.

The digital depth is to come to life as we witness the tremendous growth of real-time, interactive virtual worlds that allow people to assume virtual identities in cyberspace. More than 7 million people worldwide belong to the virtual world of *Second Life*, more than 4 million play the online game *World of Warcraft*, and one-third of Korean adults belong to *Cyworld*. Add to that the millions more who play *The Sims Online* or who visit other computer-mediated environments (CMEs) such as *HotDate*, *Hot*, *Hybrid*, *Internet Database*, *MAX Virtual Legends* (<http://www.maxvirtual.com/eng/legends.html>) and so on and you're looking at a lot of serious role-playing.

On these sites people assume virtual identities, or avatars, ranging from realistic versions of themselves to masked-out versions with "exaggerated" physical

In a virtual world, you can be anyone you want to be. These are all people with their avatars.



We'll explore these ideas with intriguing and current examples as we show how the consumer behavior discipline relates to your daily life. Throughout the eighth edition, you'll find up-to-the-minute discussions of topics such as social networking, twittering and consumer-generated content, sustainability and carbon footprints, virtual identity and online avatars, Übersexuals, the long tail, brand sluts, machinimas, being spaces, shopmobbing, microloans, fortress brands, and plinking™. If you can't identify all of these terms, I can suggest a textbook you should read immediately!



## Going Global

The American experience is important, but it's far from the whole story. This book also considers the many other consumers around the world whose diverse experiences with buying, having, and being we must understand. That's why you'll find numerous examples of marketing and consumer practices relating to consumers and companies outside the United States throughout the book. You'll find a list of those examples, with specific page references, on the inside back cover of this book. If we didn't know it before the tragic events of September 11, 2001, we certainly know it now: Americans also are global citizens, and it's vital that we all appreciate others' perspectives.

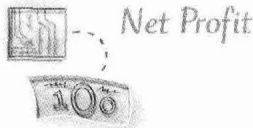


## Digital Consumer Behavior: A Virtual Community

As more of us go online everyday, there's no doubt the world is changing—and consumer behavior is evolving faster than you can say “World Wide Web.” This eighth edition continues to highlight and celebrate the brave new world of digital consumer behavior. Today, consumers and producers come together electronically in ways we have never before experienced. Rapid transmission of information is altering the speed at which new trends develop and the direction in which they travel—especially because the virtual world lets consumers participate in the creation and dissemination of new products.

One of the most exciting aspects of the new digital world is that consumers can interact directly with other people who live around the block or around the world. As a result, the meaning of community is radically redefined. It's no longer enough to acknowledge that consumers like to talk to each other about products. Now we share opinions and get the buzz about new movies, CDs, cars, clothes—you name it—in electronic communities that may include a housewife in Alabama, a disabled senior citizen in Alaska, or a teen loaded with body piercings in Amsterdam. And many of them are meeting up in computer-mediated environments (CMEs) such as Facebook, MySpace, and Second Life. I'm totally fascinated by what goes on in these virtual worlds and you'll see a lot of material in this edition related to these emerging consumer playgrounds.

We have just begun to explore the ramifications for consumer behavior when a Web surfer can project her own picture onto a Web site to get a virtual makeover or a corporate purchasing agent can solicit bids for a new piece of equipment from vendors around the world in minutes. These new ways of interacting in the marketplace create bountiful opportunities for businesspeople and consumers alike. You will find



Along with the increase in time poverty, researchers also note a rise in *polychronic activity*, or *multitasking*, where consumers do more than one thing at a time.<sup>19</sup> We're especially likely to multitask when we eat. Consumers often do not allocate a specific time for dining but instead eat on the run. In a poll, 64 percent of respondents said they usually do something else while eating. As one food industry executive commented, “We've moved beyond grazing and into gulping.”<sup>20</sup> The food industry is racing to meet consumers' desires to eat on the run. Here are a few on-the-go products:

- General Mills is turning its Yoplait yogurt into a meal with Nouriche, a nonfat yogurt smoothie fortified with 20 vitamins and minerals. A television commercial proclaims, “No time for a meal? Nouriche yourself.”
- Kraft Foods launched Nabisco Go-Paks, cupholder-ready contour packages featuring mini versions of its cookies and crackers, similar to the Frito-Lay Go Snacks already on the market.
- Tubes to squeeze on the run are the next big things: Look for Hershey's Portable Pudding in tubes as well as Jolly Rancher Gel Snacks.<sup>21</sup>

globe (including Americans at last!) wake up to the “inconvenient truth” and start to change their ways. The marketers that understand this and change their ways as well will profit, both morally and financially.

On a more cheerful note, marketers create wonderful (or at least unusual) things, such as holidays; comic books; Krispy Kreme donuts; nu-jazz music; Webkinz; and the many stylistic options that beckon to us in the domains of clothing, home design, the arts, and cuisine. I also take pains to acknowledge the sizable impact of marketing on popular culture. Indeed, the final section of this book reflects very recent work in the field that scrutinizes, criticizes, and sometimes celebrates consumers in their everyday worlds. I hope you will enjoy reading about such wonderful things as much as I enjoyed writing about them. Welcome to the fascinating world of consumer behavior!



## Consumer Behavior in the Trenches

I’m a huge believer in the value of up-to-date information. Our field changes so rapidly that often yesterday’s news is no news at all. True, there are “timeless” studies that demonstrate basic consumer behavior constructs as well today as they did 20 years ago or more (I may even have authored some of them!). Still, I feel a real obligation to present students and their professors with a current view of research, popular culture, and marketing activities whenever I can. For this reason, each time I start to contemplate my next edition, I write to colleagues to ask for copies of papers they have in press that they believe will be important in the future. Their cooperation with my request allows me to include a lot of fresh research examples; in some cases these article will not yet have been published when this book comes out. I’ve listed those who help me in this endeavor in the Acknowledgments section, which follows.

I’ve taken this initiative to the next level in this edition with a new feature I call *CB as I See It*. In every chapter you’ll find the writing of a “flesh-and-blood” consumer behavior professor sharing his or her perspective as a leading researcher in a particular area of specialization about an appropriate topic. I’ve let these esteemed colleagues largely speak for themselves so now you can benefit from other voices who chime in on relevant research issues. Again, I’ve listed these participants in the Acknowledgments section and I’m grateful for their wonderful cooperation—and for letting me share their words—and their photos!—with you.

CB

AS I SEE IT



**Professor Roland Rust**  
University of Maryland

them, I recently received a mouse pad that had a radio, calculator, clock, alarm, and even a user’s manual. This trend is not going away, so it is important for us to understand how consumers deal with this kind of complexity.

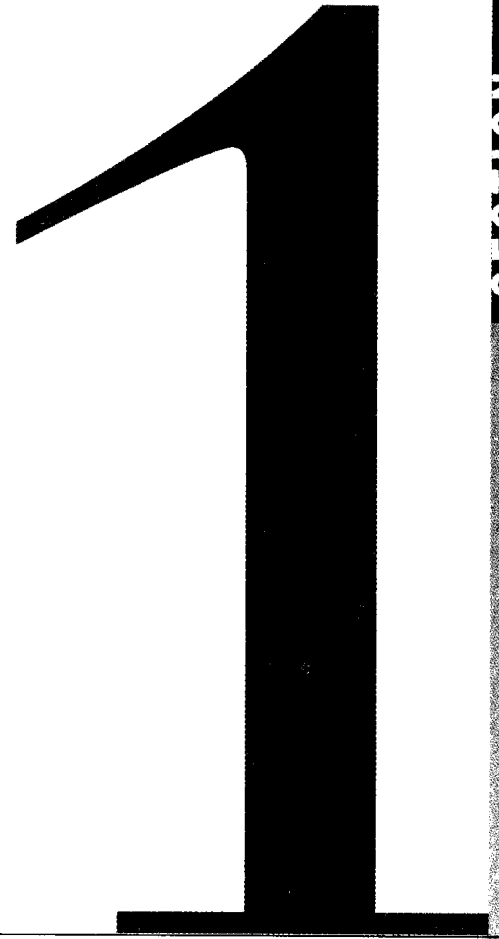
With my co-authors, Debra Thompson and Rebecca Hamilton, I have studied the concept of “feature fatigue.” We discovered that consumers actually tend to want and choose products that are too complicated, only to be sorry later. We need to know more about how consumers react to complex products and whether the problem is going away as the generation that grew up with PC’s, iPods, and text messages take the lead role in consumption.

Our studies showed that consumers place more weight on product capabilities than on usability before purchase, leading them to buy products with lots of features. After usage, though, the importance of usability increases a great deal, and consumers prefer a smaller number of features. This can have an important impact on customer retention because customers who buy a product with too many features may become frustrated and not repurchase. So the firm is actually better off putting fewer features in the product and counting on better customer retention rates and better word-of-mouth to counteract the perhaps somewhat lower initial sales. This strategy can be phenomenally successful, as we have seen from the success of the Apple iPod.

As information technology advances, it is easy for companies to build products that are increasingly complicated. We see cell phones that do everything but the laundry, and even old-fashioned appliances such as televisions and cars are becoming so complicated that people can’t use

# 简明目录

前言 .....	(i)
<b>第 I 篇 市场中的消费者</b> .....	<b>(1)</b>
第 1 章 消费者行为学导论 .....	(2)
<b>第 II 篇 作为个体的消费者</b> .....	<b>(31)</b>
第 2 章 知觉 .....	(32)
第 3 章 学习与记忆 .....	(54)
第 4 章 动机与价值观 .....	(78)
第 5 章 自我 .....	(108)
第 6 章 个性与生活方式 .....	(138)
第 7 章 态度 .....	(165)
第 8 章 态度改变与互动传播 .....	(185)
<b>第 III 篇 作为决策者的消费者</b> .....	<b>(209)</b>
第 9 章 个体决策 .....	(210)
第 10 章 购买与处置 .....	(237)
第 11 章 群体影响及意见领袖 .....	(264)
第 12 章 组织决策与家庭决策 .....	(289)
<b>第 IV 篇 消费者和亚文化</b> .....	<b>(313)</b>
第 13 章 收入和社会阶层 .....	(314)
第 14 章 种族、民族和区域亚文化 .....	(336)
第 15 章 年龄亚文化 .....	(353)
<b>第 V 篇 消费者和文化</b> .....	<b>(371)</b>
第 16 章 文化对消费者行为的影响 .....	(372)
第 17 章 全球消费文化 .....	(391)
术语表 .....	<b>(425)</b>



# *Consumers in the Marketplace*

---

This introductory section provides an overview of the field of consumer behavior (CB). In Chapter 1, we look at how consumers influence the field of marketing and also at how marketers influence us. We describe the discipline of consumer behavior and some of the different approaches to understanding what makes consumers tick. We also highlight the importance of the study of consumer behavior to such public policy issues as addiction and environmentalism.

## ■ CHAPTERS AHEAD

CHAPTER 1  
Consumers Rule

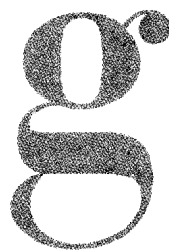
## 1

# Consumers Rule

## Chapter Objectives

When you finish this chapter you should understand why:

- Consumer behavior is a process.
- Consumers use products to help them define their identities in different settings.
- Marketers need to understand the wants and needs of different consumer segments.
- The Web is changing consumer behavior.
- Consumer behavior relates to other issues in our lives.
- Consumer activities can be harmful to individuals and to society.
- Different types of specialists study consumer behavior.
- There are two major perspectives that seek to understand and study consumer behavior.



Gail has some time to kill before her Accounting class, so she fires up her laptop and surfs the Web. Between studying for her Accounting and Marketing exams she hasn't checked out anything interesting in weeks—even her Facebook friends have been pretty quiet. Enough of the serious stuff, she decides. It's time for some *really* educational surfing.

So, where to go first? Gail figures she'll start at one of the popular women's portals and see what happens. She goes to [iVillage.com](http://iVillage.com), where she checks her horoscope (cool! a good day to start a new relationship), scans a few beauty tips, and takes a Great Date quiz (uh-oh, she may need to replace this new guy Byron she's been seeing). Similar stuff is going on at [Oxygen.com](http://Oxygen.com); its [oomph.net](http://oomph.net) social networking site shows the usual bloggers posting on loves gained and loves lost. Then she checks out the new Web site for her sorority at [sigmadeltatau.com](http://sigmadeltatau.com), which reminds her, "The mission of Sigma Delta Tau is to enrich the college experience of women of similar ideals, to build lasting friendships and to foster personal growth. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Very nice, but she learned all that at Rush. Time to move on. . . .

After an hour of surfing some fascinating e-commerce sites—and vowing to return to some of them to reward herself with a present after exams—Gail decides to get the 411 on what "real people" are doing on the Web. First she checks in on the clubs she belongs to at [collegeclub.com](http://collegeclub.com)—wow, more than 30 people from her campus are logged on right now! Looks like other students are studying as hard as she is! The site's *Campus Culture* link takes her to a story another female student posted, "I was a Hooter's Girl." She reads with a chuckle how she ". . . undergoes a babelicious transformation so she can serve wings to fat guys."<sup>2</sup> As Gail glances at the clock she realizes she'd better come back to the real world or she'll miss her class. In one final impulse, she logs on to [RateMyProfessors.com](http://RateMyProfessors.com) and posts a nasty comment about her Accounting professor. With a sly smile, Gail throws her laptop in her backpack and heads out to class. She can't wait to sit on the campus shuttle and IM her friends to check out the latest snide comment about Prof. Boring.

\* 本书全部注释见中国人民大学出版社工商管理分社网站 [www.rdjg.com.cn](http://www.rdjg.com.cn)。



## Consumer Behavior: People in the Marketplace

This book is about people like Gail—and like YOU. It concerns the products and services they buy and use, and the ways these fit into their lives. This introductory chapter describes some important aspects of the field of consumer behavior and some reasons why it's essential to understand how people interact with the marketing system. For now, though, let's return to one "typical" consumer: Gail, the business major. The preceding vignette allows us to highlight some aspects of consumer behavior that we will cover in the rest of the book.

Gail is a consumer, so let's compare her to other consumers. For some purposes, marketers find it useful to categorize her in terms of her age, gender, income, or occupation. These are some examples of descriptive characteristics of a population, or **demographics**. In other cases, marketers would rather know something about Gail's interests in clothing or music, or the way she spends her leisure time. This sort of information comes under the category of **psychographics**, which refers to aspects of a person's lifestyle and personality. Knowledge of consumer characteristics plays an extremely important role in many marketing applications, such as defining the market for a product or deciding on the appropriate techniques to employ when a company targets a certain group of consumers.

Gail's sorority sisters strongly influence her purchase decisions. The conversations we have with others transmit a lot of product information, as well as recommendations to use or avoid particular brands; this content often is more influential than what we see on television commercials, magazines, billboards, or even [MySpace](#). The growth of the Web has created thousands of online **consumption communities** where members share opinions and recommendations about anything from Barbie dolls to Palm Pilots. Gail forms bonds with fellow group members because they use the same products. There is also pressure on each group member to buy things that will meet with the group's approval. A consumer may pay a steep price in the form of group rejection or embarrassment when she doesn't conform to others' conceptions of what is good or bad, "in" or "out."

As members of a large society, such as the United States, people share certain cultural values, or strongly held beliefs about the way the world should be structured. Members of subcultures, or smaller groups within the culture, also share values; these groups include Hispanics, teens, Midwesterners, or even Lindsay Lohan fan clubs and "Hell's Angels."

While examining Web sites, Gail was exposed to many competing "brands." Numerous sites did not capture her attention at all, whereas she noticed and rejected others because they didn't relate to products, people, or ideas with which she identified or to which she aspired. The use of **market segmentation strategies** means targeting a brand only to specific groups of consumers rather than to everybody—even if it means that other consumers who don't belong to this target market aren't attracted to that product.

Brands often have clearly defined images, or "personalities," that advertising, packaging, branding, and other marketing strategies create. The choice of a favorite Web site is very much a *lifestyle* statement: It says a lot about a person's interests, as well as something about the type of person she would like to be. People often choose a product because they like its image or because they feel its "personality" somehow corresponds to their own. Moreover, a consumer may believe that if she buys and uses the product or service its desirable qualities will "magically" rub off onto her.

When a product, idea, or Web site succeeds in satisfying our specific needs or desires, we may reward it with many years of *brand loyalty*, a bond between product and consumer that is very difficult for competitors to break. Often a change in one's



life situation or self-concept is required to weaken this bond.

The appearance, taste, texture, or smell of the item influences our evaluations of products. A good Web site helps people to feel, taste, and smell with their eyes. We may be swayed by the shape and color of a package, as well as by more subtle factors, such as the symbolism in a brand name, in an advertisement, or even in the choice of a cover model for a magazine. These judgments are affected by—and often reflect—how a society feels that people should define themselves at that point in time. If she were asked, Gail might not even be able to say exactly why she considered some Web sites and rejected others. Many product meanings are hidden below the surface of the packaging and advertising; we'll discuss some of the methods marketers and social scientists use to discover or apply these meanings.

As we learned with Gail, our opinions and desires increasingly are shaped by input from around the world, which is becoming a much smaller place as a result of rapid advancements in communications and transportation systems. In today's global culture, consumers often prize products and services that “transport” them to different places and allow them to experience the diversity of other cultures—even if only to watch others brush their teeth on a Webcam.



## What Is Consumer Behavior?

The field of **consumer behavior** covers a lot of ground: *It is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires.* Consumers take many forms, ranging from an 8-year-old child begging her mother for a Webkinz stuffed animal to an executive in a large corporation deciding on a multimillion-dollar computer system. The items we consume can include anything from canned peas to a massage, democracy, Reggaeton music, or a celebrity such as Lindsay Lohan. Needs and desires to be satisfied range from hunger and thirst to love, status, or even spiritual fulfillment. And, as we'll see throughout this book, people can get passionate about a broad range of products. For example, maybe you are a “sneakerhead” who covets rare models and measures time not by years but by Air Jordan editions. If so, get your kicks at Web sites such as [instyleshoes.com](http://instyleshoes.com) and [kickz.com](http://kickz.com).<sup>3</sup>

### CONSUMERS ARE ACTORS ON THE MARKETPLACE STAGE

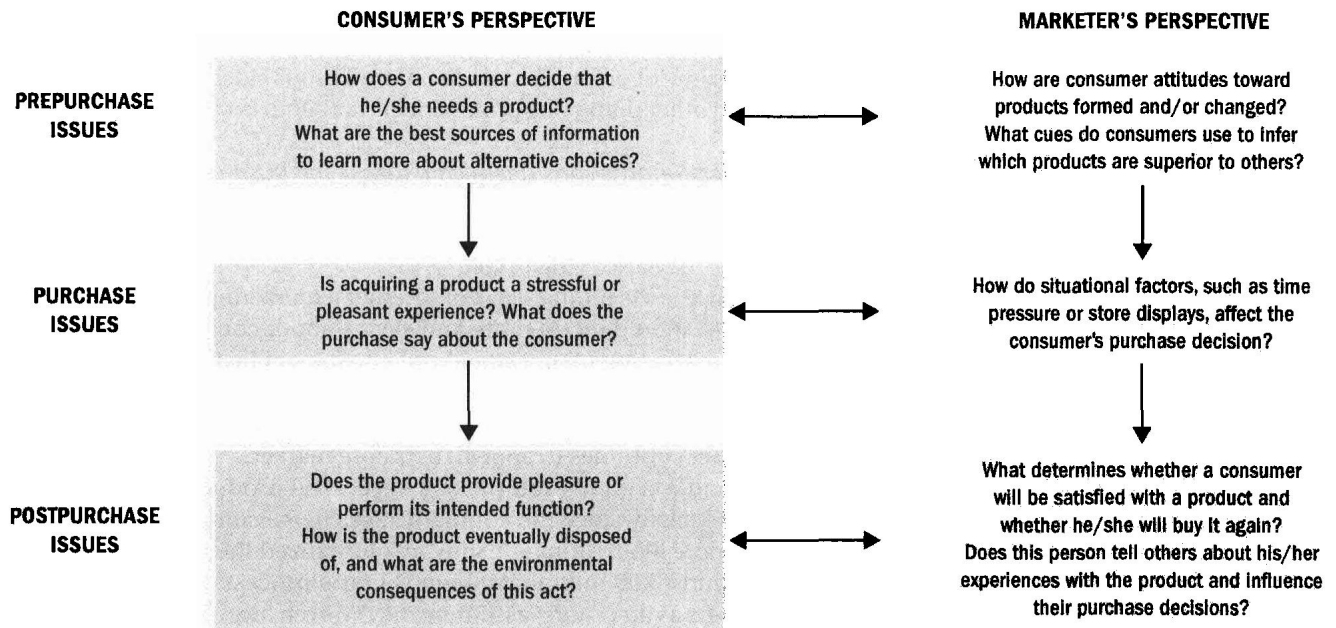
The sociological perspective of **role theory** takes the view that much of consumer behavior resembles actions in a play.<sup>4</sup> As in a play, each consumer has lines, props, and costumes necessary to put on a good performance. Because people act out many different roles, they sometimes alter their consumption decisions depending on the particular “play” they are in at the time. The criteria they use to evaluate products and services in one of their roles may be quite different from those they use in other roles.

### CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IS A PROCESS

In its early stages of development, researchers often referred to the field as *buyer behavior*, reflecting an emphasis on the interaction between consumers and producers at the time of purchase. Most marketers now recognize that consumer behavior is in fact an ongoing process, not merely what happens at the moment a consumer hands over money or a credit card and in turn receives some good or service.

The **exchange**, a transaction in which two or more organizations or people give and receive something of value, is an integral part of marketing.<sup>5</sup> Although exchange

■ FIGURE 1.1 STAGES IN THE CONSUMPTION PROCESS



remains an important part of consumer behavior, the expanded view emphasizes the entire consumption process, which includes the issues that influence the consumer before, during, and after a purchase. Figure 1.1 illustrates some of the issues that we address during each stage of the consumption process.

### CONSUMER BEHAVIOR INVOLVES MANY DIFFERENT ACTORS

We generally think of a **consumer** as a person who identifies a need or desire, makes a purchase, and then disposes of the product during the three stages in the consumption process. In many cases, however, different people are involved in this sequence of events. The purchaser and user of a product might not be the same person, as when a parent picks out clothes for a teenager (and makes selections that can result in “fashion suicide” in the view of the teen). In other cases, another person may act as an *influencer*, providing recommendations for or against certain products without actually buying or using them. A friend's grimace when you try on that new pair of pants may be more influential than anything your mother might say.

Finally, consumers may take the form of organizations or groups. One or several persons may make the decisions involved in purchasing products that many will use, as when a purchasing agent orders the company's office supplies. In other organizational situations, a large group of people may make purchase decisions—for example, company accountants, designers, engineers, sales personnel, and others—all of whom will have a say in the various stages of the consumption process. As we'll see in Chapter 12, one important type of organization is the family, where different family members play pivotal roles in making decisions regarding products and services all will use.



## Consumers' Impact on Marketing Strategy

Surfing cool Web sites is a lot of fun. But, on the more serious side, why should managers, advertisers, and other marketing professionals bother to learn about consumer behavior?

Very simply, *understanding consumer behavior is good business*. The basic marketing concept states that firms exist to satisfy needs. Marketers can only satisfy these needs to the extent that they understand the people or organizations who will use the products and services they are trying to sell.

Consumer response is the ultimate test of whether a marketing strategy will succeed. Thus, a marketer should incorporate knowledge about consumers into every facet of a successful marketing plan. Data about consumers help organizations to define the market and identify threats to and opportunities for a brand. And, in the wild and wacky world of marketing, nothing is forever: This knowledge also helps to ensure that the product continues to appeal to its core market.

The Sony Walkman is a good example of a successful product that needed to update its image—especially since the company faces fierce competition from the incredibly popular Apple iPod. Although Sony revolutionized the mobile music experience and sold almost 300 million Walkmans in the process, today's teens see portable cassette players as dinosaurs (assuming they've even heard of cassettes!). The company's advertising agency followed 125 teens to see how they use products in their day-to-day lives. Based on this consumer research, Sony relaunched the product with a removable "Memory Stick" instead of a cassette player so it works with MP3 files.<sup>6</sup>

### SEGMENTING CONSUMERS

As our society evolves from a mass culture where many consumers share the same preferences to a diverse one where we have almost an infinite number of choices, it's more important than ever to identify distinct market segments and develop specialized messages and products for those groups. McDonald's devotes a third of its U.S. marketing budget to television—compared with two-thirds a few years ago. The company uses that leftover money to sponsor closed-circuit sports programming piped into Hispanic bars and for ads in *Upscale*, a custom-published magazine distributed to barber shops that cater to African American consumers. McDonald's advertises on Foot Locker's in-store video network to reach young men, and it zeroes in on mothers through ads in women's magazines such as *O: The Oprah Magazine* and Web sites such as [iVillage.com](http://iVillage.com).<sup>7</sup>

As we'll see later, building loyalty to a brand is a very smart marketing strategy, so sometimes companies define market segments by identifying their most faithful customers or **heavy users**. For example, in the fast-food industry the heavy user (no pun intended) accounts for only one of five customers but for about 60 percent of all visits to fast-food restaurants. Taco Bell developed the Chalupa, a deep-fried and higher-calorie version of its Gordita stuffed taco, to appeal to its heavy users. The Checkers burger chain describes *its* core customer as a single male under age 30 who has a working-class job, loves loud music, doesn't read much, and hangs out with friends.<sup>8</sup> To attract the same customer, Hardee's unveiled its Monster Thickburger that weighs in at 1,418 calories—comedian Jay Leno joked that the burger comes in a cardboard box shaped like a coffin.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Burger King aims a lot of its promotions (including its weird but popular King character) to its "Super Fans"—mostly young men who pop into fast-food restaurants 16 times a month on average.<sup>10</sup>

Aside from heavy usage of a product, we use many other dimensions to slice up a larger market. *Demographics* are statistics that measure observable aspects of a