

Consumer Learning and Knowledge

Consumer Learning

- According to Kotler's Definition, learning involves changes in an individual's behavior arising out of the experience. Most of the human behavior is learned over time, out of the experience.

Following are the **features of consumer learning**

- Consumer learning is a process. A process which continually changes and acquires new knowledge.
- This knowledge can be obtained from reading, discussing, observing, thinking, etc.
- Newly acquired knowledge or personal experience, both serve as feedback.

Elements of Consumer Learning

1. Motivation is the driving force of all important things to be learnt. Motives allow individuals to increase their readiness to respond to learning. It also helps in activating the energy to do so. Thus the degree of involvement usually determines the motivation to search information about a product.

- For example, showing advertisements for summer products just before summer season or for winter clothes before winters.

2. Cues: Motives encourage learning and cues stimulate the direction to these motives. Cues are not strong as motives, but their influence in which the consumer responds to these motives.

- For example, in a market, the styling, packaging, the store display, prices all serve as cues to help consumers to decide on a particular product, but this can happen only if the consumer has the motive to buy. Thus, marketers need to be careful while providing cues, especially to consumers who have expectations driven by motives.

3. Response signifies how a consumer reacts to the motives or even cues. The response can be shown or hidden, but in either of the cases learning takes place. Often marketers may not succeed in stimulating a purchase but the learning takes place over a period of time and then they may succeed in forming a particular image of the brand or product in the consumer's mind.

4. Reinforcement: The reward -- the pleasure, enjoyment and benefits -- that the consumer receives after buying and using a product or service is called reinforcement. Reinforcement is critical to the learning process and can significantly impact future responses, even though this element typically happens after purchase. It is very important as it increases the probability of a particular response in the future driven by motives and cues.

Consumer Learning Theories

- There are two main types of consumer learning theories
- **Behavioral Learning and Cognitive Learning**
- Both can be used to drive awareness, consideration and purchase of your product or service.

- **Behavioral Learning**

Behavioral learning theories, often referred to as stimulus-response theories, focus on the premise that learning occurs in response to external cues or stimuli that the consumer is exposed to. Classical conditioning, one well-studied theory of behavioral learning, suggests that when two stimuli are paired together to produce a specific learned response, eventually, through repetition, the absence of one of the stimuli will produce the same response.

- ***Two theories are there:***

1. Classical conditioning
2. Instrumental conditioning

- **Cognitive Learning**

Cognitive learning, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with how information is processed by the human mind: how it is stored, retained and retrieved. It emphasizes the role of gathering facts about the products or services being considered, processing those facts and recalling them - rather than the repetition and association of rewards that are the hallmarks of behavioral learning. Factors that can affect a consumer's ability to practice cognitive learning include:

- Their familiarity with the information
- The relevance of the information
- Their interest in the information
- Their ability to process the form in which the information is provided

Types of Learning Process

Learning process can be two types:

1. Routine learning process
2. Elaborate learning process