

# Customer Perception

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- Derived from the word 'perceive', perception refers to the ability to give meaning to whatever stimuli are sensed by our sense organs. The stimuli are inputs to any of our sensory receptors, be it vision, hearing, smell, taste, or touch.
- Consumer perception is defined as a process by which consumers sense a marketing stimulus, and organize, interpret, and provide meaning to it. The marketing stimuli may be anything related to the product and/or brand, and any of the elements of the marketing mix.

- An individual uses the perceptual mechanism to select a stimulus from many in the environment, organizes them into a coherent picture, and interprets it to derive meaning out of it. Perception is the process through which an individual interprets his sensory impressions to give meaning to them.
- We can classify the marketing stimuli into two types, namely primary or intrinsic and secondary or extrinsic.
  1. **The primary or intrinsic stimuli** comprise the product and its components, namely brand name, label, package, contents, and physical properties.
  2. **The secondary or extrinsic stimuli** comprise the form in which the good or service offering is represented through words, visuals, graphics, and the symbolism, or through other cues such as price, outlet, salespeople, or marketing communication.

- The perceptual process comprises three components, namely the perceiver, the target (stimulus), and the situation. The perceptual mechanism depicts a complex and dynamic interplay of three processes, namely selection, organization, and interpretation.
- Perceptual selection is the process by which people select a particular stimulus or a small portion of the stimuli to attend to, while screening out the rest.
- Perceptual organization is a cognitive process, which is responsible for organizing the stimuli and the surrounding cues, to develop a ‘whole picture’, according to one’s physiological, sociocultural, and psychographic backgrounds, so as to give some meaning to it.
- Perceptual interpretation involves extracting meaning out of the ‘whole picture’.

# Nature and Characteristics

- **Perception can be better explained by understanding its nature and characteristics:**
  1. Perception comprises three components, namely the perceiver, the target (stimulus), and the situation.
  2. Perception is a complex process. After a stimulus is detected by the sense organs, the perceptual process comes into play and involves the interplay of three processes, namely selection, organization, and interpretation.
  3. Perception is also an intellectual process, as it involves a lot of cognitive effort.

4. Perception is broad in nature. It includes a physiological component (through sensation), as well as cognitive, sociological, and psychological components.

5. Perception is a subjective process, as it is unique to each person. Two consumers who are exposed to a particular stimulus may perceive it differently. While they are exposed to the same marketing stimulus, the manner in which they select, organize, and interpret it is different.

# Factors deciding Customer Perception

- Consistency of performance
- Emotional connect
- Marketing communications
- Holistic marketing

