

Unilever Case study

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## Introduction

Customer behaviour is one of the key drivers for a business's success. Marketers have some major concerns influencing customer behaviour in favour of the company. Among those companies, Unilever is one of the major brands that effectively considers the working of customer behaviour (Reddipalli, 2020). They started using different strategies to influence their behaviour that could favour the company. In achieving this, the company targeted different factors that majorly aimed to influence customer choice. Therefore, the report aims to highlight major factors used by Unilever to influence customer behaviour through the help of relevant theories and Howard Sheth Model of Buying Behavior.

## Factors Influenced by Unilever

### Customer Attitude

Consumer attitude has a great impact on the buying decision of people. This consists of the combination of cognitive information based on emotions, beliefs, intentions etc., all of which are focused on the consumer reference for making purchase decisions (Sivakumar, 2021).

Similarly, the same aspect and scenario have been used by Unilever when marketing Dove soap. The idea for a real beauty campaign was the best way to encourage women based on their emotions and attitude. They further utilized all the stereotypes that could be used for the campaign outcomes.

As per the reason action theory of consumer behaviour, it can be seen that women took part in this regard for a specific reason. They have a proper aim to achieve the beauty standards as per their preference (Crespo and Mukhopadhyay, 2021). The brand tried to link the brand of the soap and the positive reinforcement with the women's self-esteem. This includes self-satisfaction for women of all ages, sizes, and shapes.

Based on that, this campaign resulted as one of the most important and effective mediums. Unilever tried to consume all the information related to women and converted their campaign into great value. By targeting actual customers in this regard, they finally achieved their goals.

### Coordination and communication

The modern time required proper understanding and working of the people in the most effective manner. Marketers are consuming the latest trends and technology to reach their customers, which is one of the major campaigns of the companies (Calderon-Monge et al., 2020). In the case of Unilever, the company has utilized this aspect and got a great connection with the customer. Such connection is based on the communication channels they tried to develop through the help of social media. Unilever realized that their target customers are much involved in consuming relevant information from social media (Wagner and Steiner, 2019). Based on that, they started communication and coordination with their customers through similar mediums.

For instance, the food brand Unilever started a campaign on social media as one of the major and most powerful tools to influence people. They developed communication bridges for the marketers and the general public who are their customers. In this regard, the company started to spread effective messages to the public to make them aware of the hygienic aspect of food consumption (Tien, 2019). They coordinated with the public by raising questions regarding the child's eating habits. As a result,

many people partied in the conversation and posted several ideas. Considering such aspects, Ragú's ad agency turned into helpful online videos that dish up tips with a sense of humour.

Through such effective use of social media competitions, they developed a good relationship with the customers, which is one of the major tools behind the motivation for the consumer purchase (Suryana, 2021). This directly impacts the overall behaviour of the customer in a mostly positive manner. This is how they also understand customer chagrining needs and emotions. In this regard, Woods' theory of consumer behaviour claims that Consumer behaviour in the market mainly depends on the three major factors (See appendix 02). This includes psychological aspects, Personal aspects and social aspects.

- Psychological Aspects

This includes different aspects that motivate an individual to make a purchase. In this regard, Unilever tried to focus on the perception of the people and their attitude (Murphy and Murphy, 2018). In this regard, they started comparing people to make them feel that the company has a good connection with the customer. That was the major supporting point for the company.

- Personal Factor

The personal factor in this regard includes the customers' characteristics such as age, income, background, cultural interest, etc. Through proper campaigns, the company easily targeted their customers (WU et al., 2020). All of them shared their personal experience and advice for the children's eating behaviour. This included their attention as well as their interest.

- Social Factors

This is one of the major and most impactful aspects; this includes the involvement of the other options and through on the purchase decision of the individuals. Through the use of social media. The company engaged many individuals who shared their thoughts that were quite effective to engage all the public in a single platform.

In this regard, the compassion focused on the Latino families as well. Based on that, the company majorly hold Disfruta la Pasión de la Vida events placed at supermarkets. Also, the campaign was majorly focused on multicultural market insights.

### Consumer Preference

Apart from the other factors, the customer's preference also contains great value in the overall development of the customer behaviour. This includes their choices in which sustainability is one of the most important and effective measures (Kartawinata et al., 2020). Therefore, Unilever used this customer aspect to promote sustainability worldwide through means of healthy behaviour and the environment. In this regard, they started working on customer perception and awareness. They generated the need for change. This was the influential measure for promoting health that is one of the major concerns of the people. This attracted several customers and made it easy for the company to promote their business structure with great importance all over the scenario.

### Implementation of the Model

#### Howard Sheth Model of Buying Behavior

This is one of the most important and effective decision-making models of the buyer's journey for making a methodical and rational decision-making process (Chandrasekhar, Gupta and Nanda, 2019). The model considers the Problem-solving measure and for the step to step solution. As per the model, there are three major steps to resolve the problem and reach the desired solution (See appendix 1). Following are the major steps followed by Unilever to support their customer behaviour.

**Extensive Problem solving:** At this step, customers start building information about the brand and options available in the market (Soares and Sousa, 2021) (Hwang, Cho and Kim, 2019). When it comes to Unilever, it has been seen that Unilever effectively achieved this stage.

They made their customer clear about their existence and coordinated with them (Hwang, Cho and Kim, 2019). The clearest example in this regard was the customer communication in which they utilized social media discussion. At this point, they connected to their customers and started sharing valuable information with them. This not only influences customers but also engages with them with a clear awareness that they are operating in the market with the customers' desired products.

**Limited Problem solving:** This step contains customer comparison processes for their available choices (Soares and Sousa, 2021). Similar to this aspect, Unilever made its products stand out from others. For instance, while dealing with customer attitudes, the company provided their soap compassion in the most effective manner (Jhala, Natarajan and Pahwa, 2018). This was one of the major themes that the company followed to engage their final customers in the product. At that point, their target population (females) easily connect to brands and consider the importance of Dove soap compared to others. They created some exceptional value in the eye of the customer through their actions. This further led to developing a positive perception of their products regarding them.

**Habitual Response Behavior:** At that point, customers finally preferred the brand and made their purchase (Tseng et al., 2021). When it comes to the Strategic management of Unilever, it has been claimed that the company is quite sufficient and effective in managing its business structure. There is a clear indication that the company changed all of their targets. In this regard, they got involved with the people through social media, worked in customer preference through sustainability and influenced customer attitudes by delivering the most appropriate products (Sirgy, 2018). This strategic measure influenced customers to make decisions in favour of the company. The use of smart strategies allowed them to achieve so.

## Conclusion

Unilever is the most effective and smart brand in dealing with customer behaviour. When it comes to the factors, it has been seen that they used customers' attitudes, perceptions and communication in the best way to achieve their goals. As a result, they stand out from others as the winning brand. In future, the company is expected to do the same with changes in customer behaviour.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 01:

#### Howard Sheth Model of Buying Behavior

The Howard Sheth model of consumer behavior posits that the buyer's journey is a highly rational and methodical decision-making process. In this model, customers put on a "problem-solving" hat every step of the way — with different variables influencing the course of the journey.

According to this model, there are three successive levels of decision-making:

- **Extensive Problem-Solving:** In this stage, customers know nothing about the product they're seeking or the brands that are available to them. They're in active problem-solving mode to find a suitable product.
- **Limited Problem-Solving:** Now that customers have more information, they slow down and begin comparing their choices.
- **Habitual Response Behavior:** Customers are fully aware of all the choices they have and know which brands they prefer. Thus, every time they make a purchase, they know where

to go.

### Appendix 02:

#### Wood theory of consumer behavior

**Psychological:** When people buy something, their mental headspace and mindset play a large factor. Ultimately, their perception, attitude, and background influence their final purchase.

Personal: Personal identification factors like age, financial background, culture, interests, and hobbies also play a role in a purchasing decision.

Social: Customers consider other people's thoughts and opinions before buying a product. They think, "What do my family and friends think of this product?" and, "How are the reviews?" Sometimes, they'll consider these elements without even thinking about it.

