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Please visit the website linked below. It is an excellent site with loads of information related to perception. It will help if you watch it in parts. You should listen to and view as many of the videos and slides as you can.

Visit this website:

**Consumers in the Marketplace: Perception**

<http://k3hamilton.com/cb/cb2.html>

**Perception – What is it?**

*“Perception in advertising relates to a consumer's impression of a particular product or service that [may or] may not be rooted in truth. For example, a soda commercial using a thin movie star drinking the product may skew consumer perception of the brand and what they may look like after drinking it. This perception through advertising works to encourage more demand for the product. Unlike a product's true characteristics that may be defined by research and statistics, the perception of a product can be impressionable and more ephemeral.”* (Vogt, 2020, para.2).

Solomon (2017 pg. 86 – 90) indicates to us that perception is the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information.

How we view the world/Deciding what a stimulus means/How we select and interpret (abstract) data/How we see the world around us/what we think affects our actions and our buying behavior.

**Percept** a mental representation of a stimulus (Boundless) 2016

**Perception Process** through which we are exposed to information/we attend to it/comprehend it/place it in memory/and retrieve it for later use.

A sequence of steps that involves, sequentially: selection of stimuli in the environment, organization of that information, and interpretation of those stimuli.

**Perception – How do we interpret?**

We interpret by using our senses:

Vision – size and color – influence our emotions, reactions to color, can be symbolic

Hearing – music as a stimulus

Taste – subjective and cultural

Touch – sometimes we like to touch a product

Interesting note: Full and complete hand function begins in children ages eight to 12 years. Through exploration and repeated motions, hands learn how to knit together multiple actions. For example, the reason the classic push-and-turn safety pill bottle cap works is because young children can push and turn separately, but they do not yet have the cognitive ability to combine those two actions into one fluid motion.

An aging hand easily combines the push-and-turn motions but has reduced strength, range of motion and sensory feedback that erode dexterity and control. So neither the young nor old hands can get into the pill bottle, but for entirely different reasons.

Raw sensory input by itself does not produce or explain the coherent picture of the world that we possess. When we observe and study perception we are studying what we subconsciously add to, or subtract from raw sensory input in which we envision our own private picture of the world. Not only is perception process the result of sensory input by itself, but rather a combination of input that interact – one input is physical stimuli from the outside environment and the other is our expectations, motives and what we have learned from previous experiences.

A combination of these two very different inputs give us our own personal picture and view of the world around us. Our perceptions are unique to each of us.

### **Perception – Why is it important?**

What we perceive affects our actions/we act upon our perceptions

### **Perception – When do we notice a difference?**

Stimulus must be at a level we notice

Consumers perceived Heinz ketchup as having artificial ingredients.

JND – just noticeable difference Heinz ketchup – Heinz replaced the pickle in its label (preserved) with a tomato (fresh) and also came up with the slogan “Grown not Made.” Minimal difference that is detected.

Better understanding of what you are eating, more natural food, etc. Sweeter and fresher without pickle.

So we can see there is barely any difference to suggest to the consumer that this is still Heinz ketchup, so they will continue to buy it.

This is according to Weber's Law – the stronger the stimulus the greater the change to be noticed

### **Why do marketers use JND?**

Price changes, brand name changes, packaging changes, ingredient changes

### **Stage 1 Exposure: We receive information through our senses/our senses are activated by a stimulus**

– when we come into physical contact with a stimuli, possibility of noticing information, within range of our sensory receptors (the science that focuses on how the physical environment is integrated into our personal world (our subjective world)

**Psychophysics:** the study of the relationships between sensory experiences and the physical stimuli that cause them

Whether or not a stimulus is actually detected depends upon its intensity:

Lowest intensity of a stimulus that we detect – threshold for that receptor

**Absolute Threshold** – minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a sensory channel (dog whistle – beyond or auditory absolute threshold) Ex. Commercials seem louder than the program.

If you have ever have a hearing test the different pitches of tones, the intensity in which you lose the tone is your absolute threshold. When we detect a difference between something and nothing is your absolute threshold.

**Differential Threshold** – sensory system has ability to detect changes (or differences) between two stimuli

Minimum difference is **J.N.D.** just noticeable difference (marketers' job to show that minimal difference) can be detected 50% of the time

**Weber's law** – the stronger the stimulus the greater the change to be noticed (Cereal boxes) (price discounts – retailers believe discount has to be 20 % for us to notice it)

**Subliminal Perception** below the threshold. Below our level of awareness. Research does tell us that this does not work. (Ex. Airbrushing to exert strong but unconscious influences) We vary widely in our differences in our threshold levels and advertisers cannot control all variables.

## **Stage 2: Attention – How we allocate processing capacity to a stimulus**

Solomon (2017 pg. 91 – 95) We are usually on sensory overload. Teens report they engage in multi tasking from more than one at a time. Marketers constantly search for ways to break through the clutter and grab people's attention.

Some tactics are straightforward, such as when manufacturers try to get their brands shelved at eye level in a store and toward the center of a display because they know that is where shoppers are most likely to look. In the online world, advertisers keep innovating to get visitors to watch their messages.

One of the most popular today is rich media; the use of animated.gif files or video clips to grab viewers' attention. LowerMyBills.com is notorious for its endless loops of silhouetted dancers and surprised office workers, whereas other ads spring into action when you move the cursor over them.

Other rich media are online versions of familiar TV commercials that sit frozen on the Web site until you click them. Teaser ads, much like those you see on TV that give you a taste of the story but make you return later for the rest, also turn up on Web sites.

We are always screening and filtering out information as the following terms imply:

**Perceptual Selection** – we only attend to a small portion of stimuli to what we are exposed to. Stimulus factors help to decide which stimuli will be received and those that are avoided. We pick and choose which stimuli to avoid so we are not overwhelmed.

**Personal Selection Factors** – our experience, result of acquiring and processing stimulation over time which influences how much exposure to a particular stimulus a person accepts. We become accustom to (habituate) Intensity, Discrimination, Exposure and Relevance

**Perceptual Filters** - we are more in tune to stimuli that relate to our current needs.

**Perceptual Defense** – we may not process the meaning of a threatening stimulus.

**Adaptation** – degree to which we notice a stimulus over time (intensity – less intense), Duration (lengthy), Discrimination (simple), exposure (frequent), and relevance (irrelevant) of stimuli affect (increase) the likelihood of adaptation.

**Stimulus selection factors** – there are factors that call our attention to characteristics of the stimulus itself also affect what we notice and what we ignore. We are more likely to see messages that create contrast – (altering size, color, position or novelty can create contrast)

Position in online advertising. Sophisticated eye-tracking studies clearly show that most search engine users view only a limited number of search results.

When the typical shopper looks at a search page, his or her eye travels across the top of the search result, returns to the left of the screen, and then travels down to the last item shown on the screen without scrolling. Search engine marketers call this space on the screen where we are virtually guaranteed to view listings the golden triangle

Novelty—Stimuli that appear in unexpected ways or places tend to grab our attention. Packages that “stand out” visually on store shelves have an advantage, especially when the consumer doesn’t have a strong preference for brands in the category and he or she needs to make rapid decisions.

### **Stage 3: Interpretation**

Solomon (2017 pg. 95 – 101) Refers to the meaning we assign to sensory stimuli. Everyone interprets things differently.

We interpret the stimuli to which we do pay attention according to learned patterns and expectations.

We don’t attend to a stimulus in isolation. We classify and organize it according to principles of perceptual organization. A Gestalt, or overall pattern, guides these principles. Specific grouping principles include closure, similarity, and figure-ground relationships. The final step in the process of perception is interpretation.

Symbols help us make sense of the world by providing us with an interpretation of a stimulus that others often share. The degree to which the symbolism is consistent with our previous experience affects the meaning we assign to related objects.

To help them understand how consumers interpret the meanings of symbols, some marketers turn to semiotics, a discipline that studies the correspondence between signs and their roles in how we assign meanings.

Semiotics is a key link to consumer behavior because consumers use products to express their social identities. Products carry learned meanings, and we rely on marketers to help us figure out what those meanings are.

As one set of researchers put it, “Advertising serves as a kind of culture/consumption dictionary; its entries are products, and their definitions are cultural meanings.”

**Perceptual positioning** is important because our evaluation of a product is the result of what it means rather than what it does. So, we know that we often interpret a product stimulus in light of what we've learned about a product category and the characteristics of existing brands. Our perception of a brand comprises both its functional attributes (e.g., its features, its price, and so on) and its symbolic attributes (its image and what we think it says about us when we use it)

Our perceptions of this meaning are the basis for the product's market position. Perceptions of a brand consist of functional attributes (e.g., its features, its price, and so on) and symbolic attributes (its image, and what we think it says about us).

**Positioning strategy** is a fundamental part of a company's marketing efforts as it uses elements of the marketing mix to influence the consumer's interpretation of its meaning. When a marketer understands how consumers think about a set of competing brands, it can use these insights to develop a positioning strategy to influence the consumer's interpretation of its meaning in the marketplace relative to its competitors.

There are many dimensions that can be used to establish a brand's position:

- Lifestyle (e.g. Grey Poupon has a higher class condiment)
- Price leadership (e.g. L'Oreal sells Plenitude in discount stores)
- Attributes (e.g. Bounty paper towels are "the quicker picker upper")
- Product class (e.g. Spyder Eclipse is a sporty convertible)
- Competitors (e.g. Northwestern Insurance is "the quiet company")
- Occasions (e.g. Wrigley's gum as an alternative to smoking)
- Users (e.g. Levi's Dockers target men 20s-40s)

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