

Influencing the Consumer

GETTING STARTED

Discuss the following questions with your classmates.

- ▶ Look around at items that you or your friends own. Why did you purchase the particular pair of shoes you are wearing? What influenced your choice of book bag or backpack? What toothpaste or shampoo did you use this morning? Why?
- ▶ How much does the brand name of a product affect your decision to buy it?

TARGET WORDS—Assessing Your Vocabulary Knowledge

Look at each of the target words in the box. Use the scale to give yourself a score for each word. After you finish the chapter, score yourself again to check your improvement.

- 1 I don't know this word.
- 2 I have seen this word before, but I am not sure of the meaning.
- 3 I understand the word when I see it or hear it in a sentence, but I don't know how to use it in my own speaking and writing.
- 4 I know this word and can use it in my own speaking and writing.

TARGET WORDS

___ accompany	___ design	___ image	___ revenue
___ acknowledge	___ distribute	___ impact	___ strategies
___ appreciate	___ dynamics	___ issues	___ underlying
___ attachment	___ emphasis	___ policy	___ via
___ bond	___ features	___ primary	___ visible
___ controversial	___ fundamental	___ principle	___ whereby

The following passage is adapted from an introductory textbook on marketing. It describes and explains factors affecting consumer behavior. As you read, pay special attention to the target vocabulary words in **bold**.

MARKETING'S IMPACT ON CONSUMERS

1 For better or worse, we live in a world that is significantly influenced by marketers. We are surrounded by marketing stimuli in the form of advertisements, shops, and products competing for our attention and our cash. Much of what we learn about the world is controlled by marketers, whether through conspicuous consumption shown in glamorous magazine advertising or **via** the roles played by family members in TV commercials. Ads show us how we ought to act with regard to many diverse issues, including recycling, what we eat and drink, and even the types of house or car we desire. In many ways, we are “at the mercy” of marketers, since we rely on them to sell us products that are safe and that perform as promised, to tell us the truth about what they are selling, and to price and **distribute** these products fairly.

POPULAR CULTURE

- 2 Popular culture—the music, films, sports, books, and other forms of entertainment consumed by the mass market—is both a marketing product and an inspiration for marketers. Marketing affects our lives in very **fundamental** ways, ranging from how we **acknowledge** key social events such as marriage, death, or holidays to how we view societal **issues** such as addiction and air pollution.
- 3 The role marketing plays in the creation and communication of popular culture is hard to ignore. However, many people fail to **appreciate** how much their view of the world—their film and music icons, the latest fashions in clothing, food, and interior **design**, and even the physical **features** that they find attractive in another person—is influenced by the marketing system. Product placement, **whereby** products and brands are used in popular movies or TV programs, or sponsorships of various events such as rock concerts or the Olympics, is an example of how companies command our attention.



A busy shopping area at night

- 4 Consider the product characters that marketers use to create a personality for their products. From the Michelin Man to Ronald McDonald, popular culture is peopled with fictional heroes. In fact, many consumers are more likely to recognize characters such as these than to be able to identify former presidents, heads of corporations, or world leaders. Although these product characters may not actually exist, many of us feel that we “know” them, and they certainly are effective “spokes-characters” for the products they promote.

THE MEANING OF CONSUMPTION

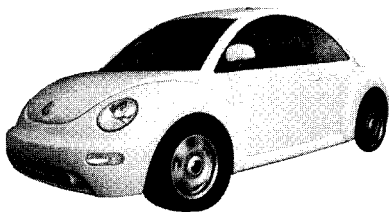
- 5 One of the **fundamental principles** of consumer behavior is that people often buy products not for what the products do, but for what they *mean*. This **principle** does not mean that a product’s **primary** function is unimportant, but rather that the roles products play and the meanings that they have in our lives go well beyond the tasks they perform. The deeper meanings of a product may help it

stand out from other similar goods and services—all things being equal, a person will choose the brand that has an **image** (or even a personality!) that matches his or her **underlying** ideas.

- 6 For example, although most people probably can't run faster or jump higher because they are wearing Nikes versus Reeboks, many consumers make it a **policy** to be loyal to their favorite brand. Rival brands like Nike and Reebok are marketed in terms of their **images**, which have been carefully crafted with the help of rock stars and athletes, slickly produced commercials—and many millions of dollars. So, when you buy a Nike “swoosh,” you may be doing more than choosing footwear—you may also be making a lifestyle statement about the type of person you are or want to be. For a relatively simple article made of leather and laces, that's quite amazing!

MARKETING AND THE CUSTOMER

- 7 The key characteristic of marketing **strategies** today is an **emphasis** on building relationships with customers. The nature of these relationships can vary, and these **bonds** help us to understand some of the possible meanings products have for us. Here are some of the types of relationships a person may have with a product.
- *Self-concept attachment*—the product helps to create the user's identity.
 - *Nostalgic attachment*—the product serves as a link with a past self.



The Volkswagen Beetle has nostalgic appeal.

- *Interdependence*—the product is a part of the user's daily routine.
- *Love*—the product brings out feelings of warmth, passion, or other strong emotion.

THE GLOBAL CONSUMER

- 8 One highly **visible**—and **controversial**—result of sophisticated marketing **strategies** is the movement toward a *global consumer culture*, in which people are united by their common loyalty to brand-name consumer goods, film stars, and rock stars. Some products in particular have become so associated with a particular lifestyle that they are prized possessions around the world.



Jeans are an “image” of America throughout the world.

- 9 On the other hand, popular culture continues to evolve as products and styles from different cultures mix and combine in new and interesting ways. For example, although superstars from the United States and the United Kingdom dominate the worldwide music industry, a movement is taking place to include more diverse styles and performers. In Europe, local music acts are grabbing a larger share of the market and overtaking the popularity of international (that is, English-speaking) acts. **Revenue** from Spanish-language music has quadrupled in five years. In Asia, new songs are being written to **accompany** promotions for American movies. For example, in Hong Kong the movie *Lethal Weapon 4* was promoted with a song by a local heavy metal band called “Beyond.” Shots from the movie were mixed with clips of band members, even though the band does not appear in the film and the song is not included on the soundtrack.
- 10 Marketing activities have a major **impact** on our lives. They influence our personal and group identities and are used to promote both social ideas and commercial products. Therefore, a greater awareness of consumer behavior is important to our understanding of both social **issues** and the **dynamics** of popular culture.

Adapted from Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., and Askegaard, S. (2002). *Consumer Behaviour: A European Perspective*, 2nd ed. New York: Prentice Hall Europe, pp. 13–17.

UNDERSTANDING THE READING

Respond to the following in writing. Base your responses on the reading and your own personal experiences.

1. What are three ways that marketing affects popular culture or individual behavior? Give examples of each.
2. List the spokes-characters mentioned in the reading and any other spokes-characters you know about. What product or cause is each character associated with?
3. Describe two ways that globalization has affected marketing in your country.

FOCUSING ON VOCABULARY

WORD MEANING

Match the words with their definitions. If you are unsure about a word's meaning, try to figure it out from the context by rereading the passage on pp. 38–39. Then check your dictionary.

Set 1

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ___ 1. visible | a. able to be seen |
| ___ 2. accompany | b. noticeable parts or characteristics of something |
| ___ 3. controversial | c. by means of which or according to which |
| ___ 4. design | d. causing a lot of disagreement |
| ___ 5. whereby | e. subjects or problems that people are thinking or talking about |
| ___ 6. features | f. be or go with |
| ___ 7. issues | g. the way something has been planned or made |

Set 2

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| ___ 1. dynamics | a. by way of or by use of |
| ___ 2. image | b. money that a business, government, or organization receives |
| ___ 3. underlying | c. a well-planned series of actions for achieving a goal |
| ___ 4. strategies | d. very basic or important, but not easily noticed |
| ___ 5. principle | e. a belief or idea on which a set of ideas, laws, or a system is based |
| ___ 6. revenue | f. a picture of what something or someone is like or looks like |
| ___ 7. via | g. the ways in which things or people behave, react, and affect each other |

Read the row of words and phrases below each numbered word. One word or phrase in each list is *not* a synonym for the numbered word. Cross it out.

1. **primary**
key plan major main
2. **bond**
tie ideal connection relationship
3. **appreciate**
be aware realize understand stop
4. **fundamental**
money basic original elementary
5. **impact**
influence improvement impression effect
6. **acknowledge**
accept allow recognize deny
7. **emphasis**
feeling importance stress weight
8. **policy**
plan rule government guideline
9. **distribute**
hand out share let out give out
10. **attachment**
connection friendship link separation

WORD FAMILIES

The table below contains word families for some of the target words in the reading. Complete the table. An X indicates that there is no form or that the form is not common. Sometimes there may be more than one form possible. If you are unsure about a form, check your dictionary.

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
accompany	accompaniment		X
acknowledge		1. acknowledged 2. acknowledging	X
appreciate	appreciation		X
	attachment	attached	X
X	controversy	controversial	
distribute	distribution	distributional	X
	emphasis	emphasized	X
	strategy	strategic	
	X	underlying	X
X		visible	visibly

Choose the correct form of the word in **bold** in sentence **a** to complete sentence **b**. Use the word families table you just completed as a guide.

1. **a.** One method of direct marketing is to **distribute** advertising materials by hand on city streets or at special events.
b. The _____ of products for a multinational company is likely to be complex.
2. **a.** Good advice for healthy living places equal **emphasis** on diet and exercise.
b. Guidebooks for businesspeople working abroad tend to _____ differences in foreign business or cultural practices.
3. **a.** Students must take care to **acknowledge** all of their sources when writing an essay; otherwise they risk being accused of plagiarism.
b. Companies may award a year-end bonus to employees in _____ of outstanding work done throughout the year.
4. **a.** Using animals to test for the side effects of beauty products is **controversial**; in fact, many people think that such testing is morally wrong.
b. The teenage years can often be a time of _____ for families as young people begin to break away from their parents' control.
5. **a.** When sending a résumé or a job application form, it is normal to include an **accompanying** letter that highlights one's special qualities.
b. To see a movie rated PG13, children under the age of thirteen must be _____ by a parent.
6. **a.** The marketing department was eager to develop a new **strategy** for targeting young families.
b. The board of directors produced a _____ plan to guide the company's development.
7. **a.** After three months of training, his performance improved **visibly**.
b. Product placement in popular TV programs greatly increases those products' _____.
8. **a.** Visitors to the Grand Canyon often develop a new **appreciation** of nature's power.
b. Many politicians fail to _____ the relationship between poverty, lack of education, and crime.
9. **a.** Children commonly develop deep emotional **attachments** to dolls or other toys.
b. Students of foreign language or literature can become _____ to a culture without ever having visited the country itself.
10. **a.** New medical research allows doctors to better understand the **underlying** causes of many illnesses.
b. A theme of hope for the future of humankind _____ many science fiction movies and novels.

COLLOCATION

Each item below contains three sentences with the same collocation. Write a fourth sentence of your own using the same word partners.

1. a. Closing streets during construction projects can have an **adverse impact** on local businesses.
b. Mass consumerism has had an **adverse impact** on credit card debt.
c. Tax cuts often benefit the rich but have an **adverse impact** on lower-income groups because the government has less money to fund special programs.
d. _____
2. a. The model's most **striking feature** is her long red hair.
b. A **striking feature** of the presentation was the speaker's well-selected use of graphics to emphasize key points.
c. The glass elevator is the hotel's most **striking feature**.
d. _____
3. a. To **fully appreciate** the beauty of a garden, it is best to visit when the flowers are in full bloom.
b. When employers do not **fully appreciate** their employees' talents, staff motivation goes down.
c. Although the principal **fully appreciated** the teacher's position, he refused to remove the problem student from the class.
d. _____
4. a. The company used the results of consumer surveys to **formulate** its new marketing **policy**.
b. The management **formulated** a new **policy** about the use of cell phones at work.
c. The university called together professors and academic support staff to **formulate** a new **policy** on plagiarism.
d. _____
5. a. The university hoped that ticket sales for football games would help to **generate revenue** for the whole sports program.
b. Governments normally view tax increases as a quick way of **generating revenue**.
c. Unlike commercial television and radio stations, public television and radio cannot rely on advertising to **generate revenue**.
d. _____
6. a. The planet Venus is **plainly visible** in the night sky and is sometimes wrongly referred to as the morning or evening star.
b. The eagerness of the students is **plainly visible** despite the poor conditions in which they are forced to study.
c. It is important that road signs be **plainly visible** during the day and at night.
d. _____

7.
 - a. Programs that bring young children and elderly people together can foster the development of **emotional bonds** between the young and the old.
 - b. Many fans develop an **emotional bond** with a favorite sports team.
 - c. Marketing experts are finding that creating **emotional bonds** between product and consumer may be more effective than pricing strategies.
 - d. _____
8.
 - a. The discipline of child psychology places **particular emphasis** on human development and learning.
 - b. Some language teachers place **particular emphasis** on accuracy while others focus on communication strategies and fluency.
 - c. Today, many medical personnel place **particular emphasis** on disease prevention.
 - d. _____

EXPANSION

Read the statements below and indicate whether you agree (**A**) or disagree (**D**). Then discuss your opinions and reasoning with a partner.

- _____ 1. Being **image-conscious** is a greater **issue** for teenagers than for other age groups.
- _____ 2. The **bond** formed between a parent and child is the most important relationship in a person's life.
- _____ 3. The **principle** of equal access to education is violated when students are allowed to enter college **via** programs that give preferential treatment to people of a particular race, gender, or social background.
- _____ 4. Capitalism is an economic system **whereby** the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
- _____ 5. The invention of television has had a **primarily** positive effect on the world.
- _____ 6. The essential **dynamics** of family life are similar worldwide despite differing family structures.
- _____ 7. It is impossible to develop an **attachment** to a new culture without weakening the links to one's own culture.
- _____ 8. When companies market a product in a variety of countries, cultural differences may require **fundamental** changes in product **design**.



Paragraph 7 of “Marketing’s Impact on Consumers” identifies four types of relationships that a consumer may have with a product: self-concept attachment, nostalgic attachment, interdependence, and love. Write a personal essay in which you reflect on the types of relationships you have with two or three products that you own or regularly use.