HUMAN MOTIVATION
Physiological, Behavioral, and Social Approaches

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Motivational Factors in Consumer Response to Advertisements

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In the preceding chapters you have seen how human behavior is influenced by a wide variety of needs and motives. This chapter contains a review of some of these motives and discussion on how an understanding of human motivation is important in the multibillion-dollar-a-year business of advertising. For example, in 1983 the top national advertiser, Proctor & Gamble, spent more than $500 million on commercials in an attempt to tell consumers about its products (Jif peanut butter, Duncan Hines cake mixes, Pampers disposable diapers, Scope mouthwash). Sure antiperspirant, to name just a few. Advertisements for these products are such an ever-present part of people's lives that with just a little thought one can probably think of a particular ad for most of the products listed above (e.g., "Chooey mothers choose Jif!").

The earliest researchers interested in consumer behavior and advertising tended to emphasize a person's ability to remember an ad as an index of advertising effectiveness. Recently, more extensive analyses of the process of influencing the consumer have been undertaken; these indicate that recollection of an ad is not a good predictor of the ad's effectiveness, if effectiveness is defined in terms of getting a person to purchase the product (e.g., Britt, 1978; Engel & Blackwell, 1982; McGuire, 1978). In other words, just because a person can recall the ad about Jif peanut butter does not mean that she or he is especially likely to buy it and lack of ad recall does not mean that the ad has failed to be persuasive (see Ross, 1982). Most contemporary analyses of advertising effectiveness view the process as one that requires a consumer to go through a sequential series of steps, beginning with exposure to the advertisement and ending with the purchase of the product being advertised. The first section of this chapter outlines and briefly describes this series of steps. The remaining sections of the chapter contain a discussion of the role that motivational variables play at the various stages in the sequence. The goal here is not to provide an exhaustive survey of the literature on consumer behavior, but to show how the study of human motivation can be useful in analyzing an important applied problem.

STAGES IN CONSUMER INFLUENCE

The goal of advertising is to influence people's behavior. Often this involves convincing them to purchase a particular product but may also involve convincing them to vote for a certain candidate or change a personal behavior (e.g., a public service message against smoking). In essence, then, the psychology of advertising may be viewed as the psychology of influence or persuasion. Given this strong link, it is not surprising that the models of advertising effectiveness proposed by consumer behavior researchers are similar to the models of persuasion that have been proposed by social psychologists. Figure 14.1 presents a model of the stages in consumer influence that has been traced back to the writings of E. St. Elmo Lewis, in 1898 (see Strong, 1925); but that has received the most contemporary attention as a result of the pioneering work on persuasion initiated in the late 1940s by Carl Hovland and his colleagues (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield, 1949) and continued by William McGuire (1969, 1978) and others.

EXPOSURE TO THE AD

A prerequisite to any successful advertising campaign is that people be exposed to the ad. That is, the ad impinges on their sensory receptors: e.g., the sound waves from a radio ad reach their ears. The goal of exposure is to reach as many people in the target audience as possible. Sometimes the target audience for a product is just about everyone, but sometimes the target audience for a product is a select group (e.g., farmers). The subscription rates of newspapers and magazines and the radio and television ratings of various programs provide one clue as to the potential number of exposures that can be expected. This information is not always sufficient, however, because if a product is designed for a particular audience, the advertiser may also want to know who is reading the paper or listening to a program. Some people may look only at certain sections of the newspaper (e.g., the sports pages) or watch only certain programs (e.g., news). Therefore, any ad in the wrong section of the paper or on the wrong
program may have no chance of reaching the target audience. To assist advertisers in exposing their material to the correct audience, extensive surveys have been made not only of the likelihood that people will actually be exposed to ads in different media, but also of what kinds of people are most likely to be exposed.

For example, survey research indicates that the average page in a newspaper has an 84% chance of being opened. This indicates that most people at least go through most of the pages of their daily papers, so a newspaper ad presumably has the potential to reach most of the subscribers. However, because readership surveys rely on people's own reports of their behavior, and there is some reason to believe that people might overestimate the extent of newspaper readership (to impress the survey taker), the 84% figure is probably the uppermost boundary on probability of exposure (A National Survey, 1973). In a clever study on the probability of exposure to magazine advertisements, Look magazine surveyed a sample of subscribers in the late 1950s by sending each subscriber a copy of the magazine with a small spot of glue on the pages that would not stick after the pages were separated. Later examinations of these magazines (taking into account some accidental separation because of rough handling in the mails) indicated that the average page had an 85% chance of being opened

(A Study of Advertising, 1959). Analogous studies of radio and television audiences indicate that if the person is being exposed to the program, exposure to the advertisements within the program is highly likely (see Engel, Warshaw, & Kimner, 1979).

Clearly, then, the available research suggests that if an advertiser wants exposure to a mass audience, this is not a particularly difficult problem. As noted above, however, in addition to wanting exposure to a large audience, an advertiser might want to maximize exposure to a particular audience, and survey data can be helpful in this regard as well. For example, 1972 Simmons data (cited in Engel et al., 1979, p. 331) indicate that 73% of men reported reading the sports pages in the newspaper, whereas only 31% of women reported doing so. However, 85% of women reported reading the food pages, whereas only 17% of men reported doing so. This information is clearly valuable if advertisers want to maximize the likelihood that either men or women will be exposed to their ads. Targeting exposure to a particular audience is easier now that most magazines print special editions for particular geographic and demographic audiences (e.g., Time magazine now has over 300 special editions) and information about the demographic characteristics of radio and television audiences is readily available.

**ATTENTION TO THE AD**

As seen above, advertisers can almost guarantee exposure to their ads by placing them in popular media. Guaranteeing attention to an ad is more difficult, however. Attention refers to whether or not a person has become actively aware of the ad, if only for a moment. When a person turns the pages of a newspaper or a magazine, he or she is exposed to all the advertisements on those pages, but not all the ads get the person's attention. Considerable research has been directed to the question of how to increase consumer attention to ads. Experimental psychologists talk about the attention problem as one of getting the message recipient to orient to the communication. The orienting response to a stimulus is characterized by a number of physiological changes in the person: pupil dilation, increased muscle tone, a desynchronized electroencephalographic (EEG) pattern, a Galvanic skin response (GSR), and so forth; see Sokolov, 1963. This orienting reaction, signifying that some stimulus has gotten the person's attention, is activated particularly by stimuli that are novel and surprising (such as stimuli that are different in intensity or color from the background stimulus) or by stimuli that have acquired a special meaning through classical conditioning or other learning processes (e.g., a picture of a sizzling steak on a grill; see Kohman, 1973).

Because there are literally hundreds of advertisements vying for a person's attention each day, it is not surprising that few are successful in arousing it. As Bogart (1969) summarized: "Advertising research data accurately reflect the fact that many messages register...no impressions at all on many of the people who are exposed to the sight or sound of them" (p. 6). Nevertheless, in an
attempt to capture attention, advertisers have resorted to unusually loud (or soft) television commercials, surprising pictures and headlines, and other means. Much money is also spent on prerecorded ads before they are run in order to assess their likely impact on the audience’s attention. The simplest procedure involves asking a panel of consumers which ads would get their attention or testing their ability to pick out (recognize) an ad from several that they have and have not been exposed to previously (see Sandage, Fryburger, & Rotzoll, 1979). More sophisticated procedures include the use of the eye-camera (to track movement of a person’s visual focus of attention on an ad) and the tachistoscope (to see which of several ads presented simultaneously are noticed; see Engel & Blackwell, 1982). Also, because an orienting response results in a number of bodily reactions, advertisers are increasingly testing different versions of their ads on people whose physiological signs are being monitored during exposure (e.g., GSR, pupilary reactions, EEG activity; see Appel, Weinstein, & Weinsteins, 1979; Kroeger, Riel, 1979; Watson & Gatchel, 1979). In this way, the ads that receive the most attention can be determined.

RECEPTION OF THE AD

Once a person is exposed to the ad and attention occurs, the next question of interest is: Did the person get something memorable out of the ad, and if so, what? This is the question of reception. A person who notices an ad may perceive the colors used in the ad but may not be able to tell what product was being advertised or what was being said about the product. Reception of an ad is usually determined with a test of message learning and comprehension. The typical procedure is to have consumers exposed to television or magazine advertisements under natural conditions as possible and then to test them from a few minutes to 24 hours after exposure. In a free recall test, consumers may be asked to list everything that they can remember about a particular ad, or they may be asked to respond to particular open-ended questions (e.g., What did the ad say about the refrigerator’s price?). In some cases, consumers are given multiple-choice tests about the ads in order to test precisely what information they have received.

Much of the research on reception of information from the mass media has led to pessimistic conclusions. For example, in one study, Neuman (1976) called people who had watched one of the network news shows earlier that evening and found that, on the average, they could recall only 1.2 of the 19.8 stories covered in the average program (a recognition test revealed that subjects could recall details of an additional 4.3 stories). Recall of television commercials is not any better. Bogart (1967) found that only 24% of people who had watched a television program could name at least one advertised product and fewer than one third could identify a commercial that they had seen 2 minutes earlier. Clearly, then, just because a person’s eyes and ears receive the sights and sounds emanating from the television set exposure) and he or she is consciously aware of the presentation of the commercial (attention), there is no guarantee that any aspect of what has been seen and heard will create any more than a fleeting impression. Unless some aspect of the ad remains in memory for a brief period, no further thought can occur about the ad, and it is unlikely that the ad will have a further impact on the person’s attitudes or buying intentions. The typical way advertisers maximize the likelihood of reception is by repeating the ad a number of times.

ELABORATION OF THE AD

Once information is received from a commercial, it is idiosyncratically interpreted and evaluated so that it makes some psychological sense to the person. In this stage of information processing the person attempts to determine the personal meaning and importance of the ad. This stage involves relating the material in the ad to ideas, images, or information previously stored in memory. The material in an advertisement can be evaluated in a number of ways. The simplest kind of evaluation might involve the person’s noticing how the ad makes him or her feel. Is there a cool, babbbling brook in the background that is reminiscent of a relaxing and pleasant summer vacation? Is there a table full of food that brings to mind a sumptuous feast that was once enjoyed? Certain ads rely on a kind of associative learning (classical conditioning) for their effectiveness. These ads call to mind images, sounds, tastes, smells, and experiences that have proved pleasant in the past in the advertiser’s hope that these pleasant feelings will become associated with the product being advertised.

In the first kind of evaluation noted above, no extensive cognitive effort is required, because the ad almost immediately triggers certain associations that provide a personal meaning for the stimulus. Sometimes elaboration of the ad stops at this level. At other times a more elaborate evaluation is undertaken. Another relatively simple way to evaluate an ad is to examine the source of the information. Is a doctor saying that the pain reliever is effective or is it a telephone operator saying this? Is the person’s favorite television star endorsing the product or is the endorser someone that she or he dislikes? Some ads (see Figure 14.2) provide relatively simple cues that allow people to evaluate the products or recommendations without much cognitive work.

Sometimes, however, people are not content to evaluate an ad on the basis of the first associations that come to mind or simple cues like the source of the message. Sometimes people are interested in finding out about the particular attributes of the product or merits of the recommendation. Ads that employ an informational appeal typically have neither majestic scenery in the background nor celebrities or prestigious sources surrounding the product. All that is presented is a large amount of information for the person to think about. If any thoughts are generated in response to such an ad, they will probably focus on specific attributes of the product (e.g., how good the car’s gas mileage is) rather than on things that are seemingly irrelevant to the product. One way to categorize the differences in advertisements is to place them on a continuum ranging from those ads that would probably elicit little cognitive evaluation of
the true merits of the product because the ads emphasize something quite tangential to the product (e.g., cool mountain streams, sports heroes) to those ads that might elicit a great deal of thinking about the true merits of the product because they emphasize product-relevant information (e.g., durability). Ads that fall on the low-thinking end of the continuum are characterized as following a *peripheral route* to persuasion, and ads that fall on the high thinking end are characterized as emphasizing a *central route* to persuasion (Petry & Cacioppo, 1981a). Recent research suggests that attitudes that are changed by way of the central route tend to be more enduring than attitudes that are changed by way of the peripheral route (Chaiken, 1980), and are more predictive of behavior (Petry & Cacioppo, 1983). Interestingly, however, sometimes employing the peripheral route is a more effective advertising strategy than employing the central route. Further discussion of this distinction occurs later in the chapter.

The extent to which a person is thinking about an advertisement and the kinds of thoughts that the advertisement elicits are usually measured directly by asking the person to list or speak into a tape recorder these thoughts either during or after exposure (for details, see Cacioppo & Petry, 1981; Wright, 1980). After the thoughts are obtained, trained judges rate them to determine how many thoughts were elicited, whether they were favorable or unfavorable, and whether they were primarily about the product or about some ancillary feature of the ad (e.g., the message source). Measures of a person’s idiosyncratic thoughts in response to an ad are an important supplement to message comprehension or recall tests, because a person may understand an ad and be able to recall it but may at the same time be generating numerous unfavorable thoughts (counterarguments) about the ad that would render it ineffective (see Greenwald, 1968; Petry, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981).

**INFORMATION INTEGRATION**

Once an ad has elicited various thoughts, this information must be integrated or combined into an overall impression or feeling about the product. Psychologists have given considerable attention to the question of how beliefs are combined to form an overall attitude. Two combination rules have received the most research attention: adding (e.g., Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, 1981; Lutz, 1975; Rosenberg, 1956) and averaging (e.g., Anderson, 1971, 1981). These different integration rules have important implications for the design of advertisements. For example, assume that an advertisement for car X makes you think of two extremely positive aspects of owning the car: much higher-than-average gas mileage (+1 on a -3-to-+3 scale) and much higher-than-average preasure (also a +3). Also assume that an ad for car K makes you think of the same two highly positive features of the car and an additional feature that is also desirable but only moderately so (e.g., slightly higher-than-average repair record, a +1 on the -3-to-+3 scale of car attributes).
In this example the ad for car X makes you think of two positive features of the car and the ad for car K makes you think of three positive features. According to an additive model of information integration, you should like car K more than car X because (assuming an initial attitude of neutrality, or 0, toward each car) your attitude toward car X would be $0 + 3 = 3$, whereas your attitude toward car K would be $0 + 3 + 3 + 1 = 7$. The averaging model of information integration would make a different prediction, however. Under the averaging model, your attitude toward car X would be equal to $0 + 3 + 3 = 6$, whereas your attitude toward car K would be equal to $0 + 3 + 3 + 1 = 7$. The averaging model predicts that you would like car X more than car K.

To provide an empirical test of the two models of information integration, Troutman and Shanteau (1976) exposed consumers to various combinations of highly and moderately positive information about different products (e.g., disposable diapers). Consistent with the averaging model of information integration, these researchers found that the addition of moderately positive information to highly positive information decreased the favorability of attitudes toward the products (see also Shanteau & Ptacek, 1983).

**PERSISTENCE OF ATTITUDES**

Once the information that is made salient by the ad has been integrated into a coherent positive or negative evaluation of the product (an attitude), how long does this attitude persist? Because people usually do not have an opportunity to purchase a product immediately after exposure to an advertisement, the ability of an ad to have an enduring impact on attitudes is important. It was initially believed that attitudinal persistence depended on the person’s ability to recall all or most of the information presented in the commercial message (e.g., Miller & Campbell, 1959). This view was based on the notion that the initial attitude change depended on the person’s ability to learn the information provided. More recent views do not describe the consumer as a passive learning machine, but as an active evaluator of and contributor to the information received externally. According to this more recent view, the person’s own cognitive responses to the information presented in the ad determine the amount of initial influence, and to the extent that these idiosyncratic beliefs remain salient, the attitude change will persist (see Love & Greenwald, 1978; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981a; Perloff & BrocK, 1980). The salience of a person’s cognitive responses to a persuasive message depend on the amount of initial processing the message receives. Two groups of ad recipients may differ in the amount of initial processing of an ad because (a) one group generates more message-relevant thoughts than another group, or (b) even though both groups generate the same number of thoughts, one group spends more time rehearsing these thoughts than the other. The more thoughts a person generates in an ad or the more these thoughts are rehearsed, the more likely it is that the person’s later attitude will be based on the thoughts elicited at the time of message exposure. Thus the more likely it is that the attitude change produced by the initial exposure to the ad will persist. If many of the favorable cognitive responses elicited at the time of message exposure persist, it is also more likely that the person will be more resistant to counterpropaganda (other ads) than if few prior cognitive responses are salient at the time of exposure to another ad.

This analysis makes it clear why attitude changes induced by way of the central route are more likely to persist than changes induced by way of the peripheral route. Recall that the central route involves changing attitudes by getting the person to generate thoughts fundamentally related to the product (e.g., the good gas mileage that this car gets will save me money). To the extent that an attitude is based on an extensive foundation of product-relevant beliefs and these beliefs are thought about a great deal (i.e., rehearsed), any attitude based on those beliefs is likely to persist, because even if a few of the positive thoughts elicited by the ad are forgotten, others are likely to remain. Attitude changes by way of the peripheral route, which usually occur because of one simple association, are more vulnerable to forgetting (and may endure only if the person has been exposed to the ad a considerable number of times, rendering the simple association relatively permanent). Also these ads might be highly susceptible to counterpropaganda, because the person has so little on which to base a positive or negative feeling. Thus the attitude would be difficult to defend if severely challenged.

Finally, changes induced by way of the central route involve more cognitive work on the part of the ad recipient than do peripheral changes. Research from experimental cognitive psychology strongly suggests that the more cognitive work involved in evaluating something, the longer that evaluation will persist in memory (cf. Tyler, Hertz, McCallum, & Ellis, 1979). The accumulated literature on persuasion is also consistent with the view that the more cognitive work involved in producing an attitude change, the longer that change persists (Cook & Flay, 1978).

**ATTITUDES AND ACTION**

Advertisers want people to form positive attitudes toward their products because of the assumed link between attitudes and action. People will presumably buy products that they like and avoid products that they dislike. Although this assumption is generally correct (Aizen & Fishbein, 1977), a number of factors prevent product attitudes from being perfect indicators of product purchases. First, as Aizen and Fishbein (1980) note, one’s attitude toward a product and one’s attitude toward purchasing the product are not isomorphic. Thus a person might generally have a more positive attitude about a Mercedes than a Chevrolet, but the person’s attitude about buying the Chevrolet might be more positive than the attitude about buying the Mercedes because of the extremely high cost of the Mercedes. Thoughts about the cost of the car may only become salient to the person when the evaluation concerns actually purchasing the car. This important point, of course, suggests that ads should attempt to change people’s beliefs and attitudes about buying the product and
not just about the product itself. Certainly, however, a person's general positive or negative feeling about the product itself is an integral part of the attitude about buying the product.

Another reason that attitudes will not perfectly predict behavior is that a person's attitudes are not always salient at the time of purchase. Consider the juvenile executive who hurriedly runs into the store to grab a pack of cigarettes on the way to a business meeting for which he is already late. This person may grab the brand he has purchased many times before, even though a recent commercial has convinced him that a new brand may be superior. Because no attempt is made to think about the decision in this case, a long-established habit may be more influential than the newly acquired attitude (Triandis, 1977, 1980). Some social psychologists have in fact characterized much of a person's daily behavior as "mindless" in that habits and well-practiced "scripts" are more likely to determine behavior than are internal beliefs and attitudes, because people do not always think before they act (e.g., Langer, Blank, & Charowitz, 1978).

Recent reviews of the attitude-behavior literature suggest that attitudes may be good predictors of behavior if they have been formed by way of the central route, but not if they have been formed by way of the peripheral route (Gladstone, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1981). As noted above, attitude changes that are the result of intensive information processing activity and cognitive effort are likely to remain salient for a considerable length of time and thus can influence subsequent behavior. In addition, people may have more confidence in these attitudes and may therefore be more willing to act on them (cf., Fazio & Zanna, 1981). If a peripherally induced attitude change is to affect behavior, it may be necessary for the person to be continually reminded of the positive cue on which the favorable attitude is based. For example, product displays in stores that remind people of the celebrity who has endorsed the product are one means of making a peripherally induced attitude salient at the time of the purchase decision.

Finally, an attitude may not be a perfect predictor of behavior even if it was salient and held with great confidence, because there are other sources of influence on behavior. Fishbein and Ajzen (1981) argue that the primary alternative source of impact on a person's behavior is normative influence. Normative influence refers to what other people think about purchasing and using a particular product. If a person has a positive attitude about using a product but important people in the person's life despise the product, it probably will not be used. Conversely, people may purchase products that they personally do not like if they feel that the product is liked by important others and they want to please those others. Some ads appeal to a person's normative beliefs directly by attempting to convince him or her that many other people like and enjoy the product.

SUMMARY

Clearly, the information processing model outlined here indicates that advertisers have a hard job. Getting people to notice and pay attention to an ad is a difficult enough task, given the many sources of competing stimuli, but difficult though this is, it is not sufficient for effective influence. The ad must also trigger certain associations or elicit cognitive responses that provide a personal meaning for the product. Depending on the technique used to affect the product evaluation (central or peripheral route), the influence produced may be either relatively stable or temporary. Perhaps not surprisingly, the more desirable enduring attitude change is the more difficult to produce. The remainder of this chapter shows how motivational variables can be important at the various stages of the information processing sequence from ad exposure to product purchase.

**MOTIVATIONAL IMPACT ON CONSUMER INFORMATION PROCESSING**

There are many human motives and many ways of categorizing and organizing them. To facilitate discussion in this chapter, human motives have been organized into three broad classes. In the first class are the biological or physiological motives, such as hunger, thirst, sex, and pain avoidance. These are called primary motives and are linked to the survival of the organism. The second class of motives are the social motives. These motives are all based on one's interactions with others and range from strong desires to be with affiliation, control (power), and impress others to desires for privacy and autonomy from others. The motives in the third class do not depend on interaction with others and are shown most strongly in humans. These needs, which are characterized by their mental or intellectual nature, are referred to as the cognitive motives. Included in this final category are such motives as the need for cognitive consistency and the need for information (curiosity). The remainder of this chapter examines two examples from each broad class of motives and specifies their effects on the relevant stages of consumer information processing outlined in the first part of this chapter.

**BIOLOGICAL MOTIVES**

To some extent, the primary motives are the most important, because they are directly tied to a person's survival. Much of the advertising work on primary motives has focused on how these motives might be used to enhance the attention accorded to an ad. For example, research indicates that people who are hungry are more likely to notice or to notice more quickly ads with pictures or words representing food objects (Wispe & Drinbecar, 1953; Jenkins, 1957). Thus the local pizza parlor might be advised to advertise just before dinner time. Will the presence of food in an ad increase liking for the advertised product as well? In an early study relevant to this issue Razran (1940) presented a variety of controversial slogans to subjects, and they expressed how much they approved of each one. Later, Razran repeated these slogans to his subjects while they were either eating some free food or sitting in a neutral setting. On
a second rating of the slogans, subjects showed more approval of those slogans that had been paired with the free meal (see also Janis, Kaye, & Kirschner, 1965). Although these data do suggest that the association of actual food with an object or issue can enhance liking, it is not yet clear if the mere pictorial representation of delectable food cues will increase liking for the associated product through classical conditioning. Because there is so little published work on the role of hunger or food cues in advertising, the discussion moves to two biological motives that have received more research attention: sex and pain avoidance.

Sex. Undoubtedly, the most controversial ads appealing to biological motives are those relying on explicit sexual themes. These types of ads have been the subject of considerable recent research. How effective is sex in advertising? One noncontroversial fact is that the use of sex in advertising is on the increase (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Sexton & Haderman, 1974) and may now represent a majority of all ads in certain media. For example, Venkatesan and Losco (1975) reported that about 65% of all prime time advertisements appearing in several popular magazines (e.g., Reader’s Digest, Time) in the period from 1969 to 1971 portrayed women as sex objects. Clearly, one goal of sex in advertising is to achieve greater attention for the ad. Just the use of the word sex or sexually oriented words may be sufficient to enhance an ad’s attention-getting power (see Figure 14.3). In a specific test of the attention hypothesis, Chestnut, LaChance, and Lubitz (1977) called a wide variety of advertisements from magazines. Some ads featured attractive female models who were included in the ads solely for their decorative (attention-getting) function; other ads focused primarily on the product and were devoid of sexual content. All the ads employed in the study, however, were judged to feature a prominent display of the product brand name. Subjects were exposed to either 50 of the sexual or 50 of the nonsexual ads each ad was displayed on a screen for 15 seconds. Later, subjects were given a recognition test in which they were asked to distinguish ads that they had seen from those that they had not seen. Correct recognition of the ads was significantly higher when the ads featured sexy models than when they did not, suggesting that the sexy models enhanced attention to the ads.

As noted earlier, however, greater attention cannot be equated with greater ad effectiveness. How did the sexy models affect the reception of information from the ads? Although subjects were more likely to identify the ads correctly when they contained sexy models, were subjects also more likely to recognize the brand names of the products depicted? Data from the Chestnut et al. (1977) and other studies (e.g., Steadman, 1969) indicate that sexual stimuli do not enhance brand recognition. Thus, on the one hand, sexual stimuli may enhance the general attention accorded to an ad, but they do not appear to enhance reception of the crucial brand name information (at least with only one exposure). On the other hand, as long as the sexual stimuli do not reduce the reception of brand name information, it is possible that ads with sexual themes could still be more effective than nonsexual ads if they produce more liking for the advertised brand. More liking may result because the sexy ad elicits positive feelings that become associated with the product or because the ad elicits positive thoughts that are integrated into a favorable impression of the product. Peterson and Kerin (1977) conducted one of the few studies to examine the effect of sexually oriented advertising on product evaluation. In their experiment, subjects’ ratings of the quality of two different products (female body oil and a ratchet wrench set) were assessed after subjects were exposed to one of four different ads for the products. Three of the ads featured a female model positioned behind a waist-high pedestal displaying the product. In one of the ads the model was conservatively dressed in slacks and a completely buttoned blouse (seductive model condition). In the second ad the model was dressed in the same outfit except that the blouse was completely unbuttoned (labeled the seductive model condition). In the third ad the model was undressed (nude model condition). In the control (no model) advertisement the product was displayed on the pedestal in front of a neutral background (a wall of bricks). Subjects viewed one of the experimental ads and two irrelevant ads and then provided ratings of the products. Both the body oil product and the ratchet set were rated as lowest in quality when they were displayed with the nude model. The effects of the seductive model depended on which product was being advertised. The seductive model produced enhanced ratings of the female body oil product compared with the demure and no model conditions, but the
seductive model produced reduced ratings of the ratchet sex compared with the
demure and no model conditions. The authors conclude that a moderately sexy
appeal may be effective if there is product/audience congruency. In other words, if the
sexual stimuli are relevant to the product (e.g., body oil, body building
equipment), the use of a sexually oriented appeal may lead to favorable
thoughts and positive evaluations, but if the sexual stimuli are irrelevant to the
product (and therefore seem inappropriate or offensive), the use of sexual
appeals may lead to unfavorable thoughts and negative evaluations. If the ads
are too sexual and thereby offensive to most people, they will probably lead
to unfavorable thoughts and negative evaluations regardless of product/audience
congruency. Similar congruence effects may apply to other biological motives.
Thus, for example, food cues may be more effective in ads for baking mixes
than in ads for laundry detergent. One reason for this, of course, is that when the
sexual or food stimuli are relevant to the product, the pictures may provide
visual product-relevant arguments.

Pain Avoidance Communication research on the motive to avoid pain has
generally focused on the question of whether or not it is effective to employ
pain-arousing materials in a persuasive advocacy, because, as noted in an earlier
chapter, fear is the classically conditioned form of the pain reaction. The typical
ad using a fear appeal explicitly presents some noxious consequence that will
occur (e.g., lung cancer) if certain advocated actions are not taken (e.g.,
stopping smoking). Janis (1967) proposed that fear arousal could be effectively
employed in producing attitude change, because people would be motivated to
reduce the unpleasant drive state (fear) induced by the message. Accepting the
message recommendations would presumably reduce the fear and be rewarding.

As reasonable as this drive reduction hypothesis sounds, the accumulated
research has not supported it. For example, in one study, Mewborn and Rogers
(1979) exposed subjects to either a high- or a low-fear appeal recommending a
certain treatment should they ever contract a sexually transmitted disease.
Physiological measures (heart rate and skin conductance) indicated that subjects
showed elevated autonomic activation during exposure to the high-fear mes-
sage, and self-report measures indicated that these subjects reported feeling
more afraid as well. After exposure to either the high- or the low-fear communi-
cation, subjects heard a second message that reassured them about the effective-
ness of the advocated treatment. For subjects in the high-fear condition, both
physiological and self-report measures of fear showed reductions during the
reassurance message. For subjects who had heard the low-fear message, no
changes in their already low levels of fear were evident. The drive reduction
model would clearly predict that willingness to adopt the treatment recommend-
ations should be the highest in the condition where fear increased during the
initial high-fear message and decreased during the reassurance message. How-
ever, no significant differences in willingness to adopt the recommendations
were found as a result of the fear manipulation.

This and other studies (see reviews by Beck & Frankel, 1981; Sternthal &
Craig, 1974) have led researchers to reject the drive reduction model of fear in
regard to its effects on attitude change. How, then, does fear affect persuasion?
Leventhal (1970) noted that it was important to distinguish between the
emotional reaction to a fear appeal and the cognitive attempts to cope with the
implied threat. Leventhal proposed that the former (fear per se) was relatively
unimportant in affecting persuasion but that the latter (cognitive coping) was
highly important. Rogers (1983) extended this cognitive framework by examin-
ing the coping process in greater detail. According to Rogers, a fear appeal will
be effective to the extent that (a) it clearly depicts a noxious event that could
occur to the message recipient, (b) the message makes it clear that the noxious
event is highly likely if the message recommendations are not followed, (c) the
message provides strong assurances that the noxious event can be avoided if the
recommendations are followed, and (d) the message makes it clear that the
recipient has the ability to carry out the recommendations. When these com-
ponents are present the use of fear appeals has proven effective in a variety of
circumstances, including campaigns designed to get people to conserve energy (Hass,
Bagley, & Rogers, 1975), help an endangered animal species (Shelton &
Rogers, 1981), or join a health maintenance organization (Burnett, 1981).

The extensive programs of research by Leventhal and Rogers have made it
clear that fear arousal per se does not facilitate attitude change directly. Fear
arousal may indirectly affect attitude change on the one hand, by affecting a
person's cognitive appraisal of the severity of the threat (point [a] above; see
Rogers & Mewborn, 1976). On the other hand, if fear increases the perceived
threat but the message does not provide the other necessary information (e.g.,
assurances that the threat can be avoided if the recommendations are followed),
detensive avoidance may occur and severely reduce the effectiveness of the
message (see Janis & Feshbach, 1953).

Summary Appeals to biological motives may be quite effective in capturing
the attention of the audience (i.e., most people will orient to a strawberry
shortcake, a scary face, a nude model), but the effectiveness of the ad in
producing a favorable attitude toward the product appears to depend on a
variety of more complex cognitive factors that occur during the elaboration
stage of consumer information processing. For sexually oriented ads, the
primary cognitive consideration affecting elaboration appears to be the per-
cieved relevance of the sexual material for the product being advertised. For fear
appeals, the primary cognitive considerations affecting elaboration are the
person's perceptions of the noxiousness of the threat, the likelihood that it will
occur, the degree to which it can be avoided by following the recommendations,
and the extent to which the person feels capable of carrying out the
recommendations.

SOCIAL MOTIVES

As noted earlier, one's social motives can range from an intense desire to be with
and impress other people to strong desires to be independent of and autonomous
Affiliation Relating...
A second effective advertising technique based on social motives is to associate the product with a large number of endorsers. This kind of ad gives consumers the impression that everybody is using the product. As with a single-endorser ad, the group ad is probably effective for a low-involvement product to the extent that either the consumer would like to identify with the group depicted or the ad leads to the simple perception that so many people are using the product, it must be good.

Finally, some ads do not appeal to affiliative needs through the use of celebrity or group endorsers but instead attempt to convince consumers that the use of certain products will enhance their desirability to other people with whom they may actually come into contact (cf. Schlenker, 1978). A typical ad might depict a person who brushes with a particular toothpaste or sprays with a particular deodorant going from a dreamy social life to an exciting one. Alternatively, an ad might appeal to a certain image that the consumer would like to project to others (e.g., smokers of Marlboro cigarettes are rugged outdoorspeople).

Autonomy/Uniqueness. Many times people have a high desire to identify with and affiliate with other people; but at other times the desire for uniqueness and individuality dominates (see Snyder & Fromkin, 1981). If most people have the conflicting desires to identify with others but at the same time be unique, a particularly effective advertising strategy would be to make a product appear to be one that almost everybody would have but that only a few people are able to have. Advertisers have accomplished this goal in various ways. In some ads the product is presented as one that is desirable but too expensive for the average person. In other ads the product is made to appear to be scarce; thus oneness would make one unique. Considerable research in social psychology indicates that people tend to find common products more desirable the scarcer they become (see Brock, 1968). For example, in one study, Worcel, Lee, and Adewole (1975) asked subjects to taste a cookie from a jar in front of them that contained either 10 or only 2 cookies. Subjects reported liking the cookies more when fewer cookies were available than when the cookies were believed to be relatively plentiful. Similar scarcity effects have been found for other consumer products, ranging from record albums to pornography (see Brehm, Stires, Sensenig, & Shahen, 1966; Fromkin & Brock, 1973).

In his influential theory of psychological reactance, Brehm (1966) has suggested that people are especially motivated to assert their autonomy and independence when others deliberately try to restrict their freedom. In other words, people often choose to go along with others, but if others exert strong pressure on them to conform, psychological reactance may be aroused, and they may become highly motivated to reassert their freedom to think, feel, and behave in a manner opposite to that suggested. One important determinant of the degree of reactance felt is the personal importance of the freedom that is threatened; the more important the threatened freedom, the greater the reactance.

When the product was of low involvement, attitudes toward the product were determined primarily by the celebrity status of the product endorsers; the quality of the arguments had no significant impact on attitudes. When the product was of high involvement, however, attitudes were affected by the quality of the arguments presented but were unaffected by the fame of the product endorsers. An additional result of this study was that subjects' attitudes toward the product were better predictors of purchase intentions under high involvement (central route; r = .59) than under low involvement (peripheral route; r = .36).

When a person has low personal involvement with an issue or product there is little reason to spend much time in an extensive evaluation of product attributes. Thus the product endorser may become a simple cue for product acceptance or rejection. In addition to the desire to avoid cognitive work on low-involvement issues and products, the power of prestigious and likeable sources in these instances probably also stems from the consumer's desire to identify with the endorser. (Kelman, 1958; and from the fact that the general attractiveness of the product endorser may provide a simple link to the perceived quality of the product (i.e., attractive people use high-quality goods; Friedman, Termun, & Washington, 1976).
In an application of reactivation theory to attitude change, Petty and Cacioppo (1979) had students evaluate a radio editorial. Some students were told that the editorial was specifically designed to try to persuade them to change their minds about a particular university regulation, whereas others were told that the editorial merely represented a journalism class project. The former group should feel that the editorial posed a threat to their present attitudes (high reactance), whereas for the latter group, the persuasive intent of the editorial was disguised (low reactance). In addition to the reactivation manipulation, some subjects were led to believe that the change in university policy was being advocated for their own university in the next year (high personal importance), whereas other subjects were led to believe that the change in policy was being advocated for 10 years later (low personal importance). After listening to the editorial all subjects gave their opinions and listed their thoughts about the position advocated. As predicted by reactivation theory, the forewarning of persuasive intent led subjects hearing the high-importance message to counterargue and disagree more with the message than subjects in whom reactivation was not aroused (Ward, Wackman, & Wartella, 1977). However, when children do attribute persuasive intent to commercials, they “believe them less, like them less, and are less likely to want the products advertised” (Roberson & Rosset, 1974, p. 13). Also, when children are taught about commercials and their manipulative purpose, an increase in skepticism results (Roberts, Christiansen, Gibson, Mooser, & Goldberg, 1980).

Perhaps the most pervasive reaction effect responsible for decreased ad effectiveness is the reactivation aroused by repeated levels of message repetition. The accumulated research on advertising repetition indicates that moderate exposure frequencies can enhance attitude change if the arguments presented are compelling, because each additional repetition gives the recipient one more opportunity to consider the persuasive arguments presented. When the repetition becomes excessive, however, people may feel overly pressured into adopting a certain attitude, and reactance is aroused (Cacioppo & Petty, 1980; Sawyer, 1981). In an explicit test of this hypothesis, Cacioppo and Petty (1979) exposed subjects to a persuasive message advocating a position that was either consistent or inconsistent with the subjects’ initial attitudes. Each message, which contained compelling arguments, was presented either once, three times, or five times in succession. After hearing the message an appropriate number of times, subjects gave their attitudes about the recommended position and listed their thoughts about the message. Repeating the message three times led to more agreement than only one presentation. Also, with three presentations of the good arguments and more opportunity for further thinking about them, the subjects generated more favorable and fewer unfavorable implications of the arguments than with only one exposure. When the number of repetitions increased to five, however, agreement declined. In fact, at this high level of repetition, subjects began to cognitively attack the now obnoxious stimulus. Thus, at the highest level of repetition, counterargumentation increased and favorable thoughts decreased. In a conceptually similar study, Gorn and Goldberg (1980) exposed children to either one, three, or five repetitions of a commercial for a particular brand of ice cream in the context of a Flintstones television program. Liking for the ice cream increased with three but decreased with five repetitions. At the highest repetition level, Gorn and Goldberg report that “remarks such as ‘Oh no, not again’ or ‘Not another one’ were common” (p. 23). Thus, unlike persuasive intent, excessive repetition appears capable of producing reactance and resistance to influence in children.

In addition to reactance leading to resistance to influence, it can sometimes lead to positive attitude changes, as illustrated by Mazis’ (1975) interesting analysis of the effects of an anti-phosphate law on consumers’ perceptions of laundry detergents. On January 1, 1972, an anti-phosphate law went into effect in Miami, Florida, prohibiting the sale, use, or possession of any cleaning products that contained phosphates. Because few cleansers that contained no phosphates were available at the time, the freedom of Miami residents to choose a product was severely restricted (high reactance). Meanwhile, Tampans, Florida, residents were unaffected by Miami’s anti-phosphate law, and they continued to choose whatever products they desired (low reactance). Although one’s freedom can be reasserted in several ways in this instance (e.g., picketing the city government), one relatively simple way to reassert one’s freedom is to become even more positive toward phosphate detergents (i.e., If the government doesn’t want me to have them, I’ll want them all the more). As expected by this reasoning, Miami residents rated the desirability of phosphate detergents as significantly higher than their Tampa counterparts, who had no restrictions on the purchasing of phosphate products. (Note the similarity of this effect to the greater attractiveness of the scarce cookies in the Worchel et al. [1975] study discussed previously).

How might advertisers use the reactance motive to their advantage? A moment of reflection will probably bring several examples to mind. For instance, how many people were tempted to squeeze Charmin bathroom tissue because they were told not to by Mr. Whipple in countless television commercials? Figure 14.6 presents a particularly blatant use of the reactance principle in a mail advertisement. The notice on the envelope asks that you do the opposite of what the sender really desires.

Summary As with the biological motives, the social motives can be used to increase attention to an ad, but their primary use is to generate favorable attitudes toward the product depicted. The use of attractive product endorsers is an effective strategy for producing favorable attitudes about products that are generally low in consumer involvement. For such low-involvement products,
Consumers are usually uninterested in critically evaluating a wealth of product-relevant information, and thus simple, positive cues can be highly effective in inducing momentary attitude shifts. As involvement increases, however, consumers become more concerned with product information, and advertisers need to be careful to avoid a hard-sell approach that could instill psychological reactance. If reactance occurs, cognitive derogation of the commercial and product becomes likely.

**COGNITIVE MOTIVES**

The cognitive motives deal with needs that people have that relate to information. The first motive to be discussed is perhaps the most general and deals with the factors that affect a person's objective search for information and understanding. The second motive deals more with a postulated motivational bias that may affect a person's information search and processing—the need for cognitive consistency.

**The Need for Information** People seek information for a wide variety of reasons: to reduce uncertainty, solve problems correctly, or make competent decisions or just out of curiosity (Berkman, 1960; White, 1959; Festinger, 1954).

As Dember (1974) noted: "Cognition is at times instrumental, and at other times an end in itself with its own demands. Without adequate input, in the form of information, the cognitive system begins to deteriorate" (p. 167). Thus psychologists have tended to view the need for information as a motive that is as important as the more basic biological and social motives. Of course, people differ in their desires to seek information and in the extent to which they enjoy thinking (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Similarly, situations and issues differ in the extent to which they elicit information-seeking behavior and extensive cognitive processing. In some situations and for some issues, people are avid seekers of information, whereas at other times they are best described as "cognitive misers," who eschew any difficult intellectual activity (Bunkrant, 1976; McGuire, 1969; Miller, 1976). Varasayas, Beaver, & Valone, 1976. Recall from the discussion in the first part of the chapter that in many situations people do not engage in any extensive cognitive activity before acting but instead rely on well-rehearsed habitual behavior sequences (e.g., Langer et al., 1978). In recognition of this fact, Haines (1974) has proposed a principle of information processing parsimony, according to which consumers seek to process as little data as is necessary in order to make decisions.

The important question for advertisers, then, is: When will consumers actively seek and process information, and when will they be more cursory in their analysis of ads? As already noted, consumer researchers have focused on the concept of involvement or personal relevance as the most important moderator of the amount and type of information processing elicited by an ad (Krugman, 1965; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Wright, 1973). When involvement is high the product-relevant information in an ad will receive considerably more scrutiny than when involvement is low. Mitchell (1981) provides the example of two people who are exposed to an ad for a new fuel-efficient automobile. In addition to information about the incredible gas mileage the car gets, the car is displayed on a dock surrounded by a beautiful collection of sailboats. On the one hand, if the person is considering purchasing a new car in the near future (high involvement), it is likely that he or she will carefully attend to and think about the factual information in the ad, integrating this information into a coherent and enduring evaluation of the new car. On the other hand, if the person has no intention of purchasing a new car in the near future (low involvement), the liking for the car will be determined primarily by his or her feelings for the cues associated with the car. If the person likes sailboats, momentary liking for the car will probably be high, but if the person hates sailboats, momentary liking for the car will probably be low (see also Lutz, 1979).

An empirical study described earlier (Petty et al., 1983; see Figure 14.5) provided strong support for the view that when product involvement was high, people carefully scrutinized the product-relevant information presented, but when product involvement was low, people evaluated the product based on such simple cues as the attractiveness of the product endorsers. This analysis of involvement assumes that as involvement increases, people become more concerned with making an optimal decision. One of the most reasonable ways to form a subjective evaluation of product quality is to attend to and think about the product-relevant information contained in the ad. What if an ad does not contain much product-relevant information? Then the high-involvement consumer must rely on other procedures for assessing product quality. For example, consider an ad that depicts an attractive sports hero using a certain product but does not provide any real factual information about the product. As noted
earlier, the person might reason that if an important person endorses the product, it must be good. However, further thought, as would be likely under high involvement, might also lead to the realization that an athlete might endorse a product primarily for money and not because the product is of high quality. To determine which attribution concerning why the sports hero has endorsed the product is correct, the person must search the ad or memory to obtain further information. For example, the person might consider whether or not the sports hero endorses many other products or only the product appearing in the current ad (this is the attributional question of distinctiveness; see chapter 8). To the extent that the sports hero endorses only one product, it is more reasonable to attribute the cause of this behavior to the quality of the product rather than to the offer of money (because presumably, the sports hero would have been offered money for endorsing other products too). Various social psychological and consumer studies have documented that this kind of attributional reasoning can affect attitudes about issues and products (Eagly, Chaiken, & Wood, 1981; Mowen & Brown, 1981).

As a second example, consider an ad that depicts a group of people endorsing a product but does not provide the reasons why they like the product. Burnstein, Vinokur, and Trope (1973) have suggested that when people learn that many others endorse a particular product, they may become motivated (especially if involvement is high) to explain to themselves why this is the case. The desire to understand why the product is so popular could lead to the self-generation of favorable features of the product. These self-generated arguments would then produce more positive attitudes about the product. Considerable research indicates that self-generated arguments are highly persuasive (see Tesser, 1978) and may even be more persuasive than arguments that are externally originated (Burnstein & Vinokur, 1975; Greenwald, 1968; King & Janis, 1966).

The Need for Consistency Of the various motivational theories relevant to persuasion, Festinger’s (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance has generated the most interest among social and consumer psychologists (see Jacoby, 1976; Cummings & Venkatesan, 1976). Although Festinger’s original statement of dissonance theory dealt generally with the need for consistency among beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, recent dissonance theorists have described dissonance more specifically as a state of uneasiness that occurs when a person feels responsible for bringing about some foreseeable negative consequence (Fazio & Cooper, 1983; Wicklund & Brehm, 1976). As in Festinger’s original formulation, however, dissonance leads to activity (either mental or physical) designed to eliminate the unpleasant feeling. Dissonance theory has been applied to each of the stages of consumer information processing outlined in Figure 14.1, and two general areas of application to consumer behavior are examined briefly in this section.

The most controversial application of dissonance theory to consumer information processing has been in regard to the stages of exposure and attention to information. Therefore, most of the discussion focuses on this issue. If people were to voluntarily expose themselves to information that was inconsistent with their initial beliefs, they would run the risk of learning that their opinions and attitudes were incorrect. The more important an attitude is, or the longer a person has publicly displayed and acted on a certain attitude, the greater the negative consequences of learning that the attitude is incorrect. For example, a person who has a favorable attitude toward Fords and has always purchased Fords would presumably prefer to see advertisements espousing the virtues of Fords rather than ads claiming that Fords were the worst cars on the road. To hear that one’s attitude was incorrect would have a number of negative consequences (i.e., holding an incorrect attitude would imply that all previous car purchases may have been foolish and that the advice given to friends was incorrect and subject to later ridicule and so forth). Given the negative consequences that could arise from learning of one’s incorrectness, it is reasonable to propose that people would show a preference for attitude-consistent information over attitude-discrepant information.

Considerable evidence suggests that such selective exposure and attention do occur. For example, in the relevant conditions of one study, Brock (1965) asked smokers and nonsmokers to rank order a list of magazine article titles. The subjects’ ranks would presumably be affected by articles to which they would later be exposed. Embedded in a list of 13 articles was one title indicating that smoking caused lung cancer and one title indicating that smoking did not cause cancer. In their rankings, smokers showed a clear preference for the no-cancer article, postulating no link between smoking and cancer, whereas nonsmokers showed the reverse preference. In a study on selective attention, Kleinheeselink and Edwards (1975) exposed subjects to a tape-recorded message that was either consistent or inconsistent with their initial attitudes. In addition, these investigators manipulated how convincing the arguments in the message were. The measure of attention was how many times the subjects pressed a button that removed static from the tape recording. The greater the number of button presses, the more the subjects presumably wanted to attend to what the speaker was saying. The results of this study indicated that when the message contained convincing arguments, the selective exposure effect emerged: Subjects who agreed with the position engaged in more button presses than subjects who disagreed with the message. When the message contained weak, easily refutable arguments, however, subjects who disagreed with the position taken engaged in more button presses than subjects who agreed with the message. Subjects presumably wanted to avoid hearing silly arguments in favor of their position but were eager to hear the spurious arguments in favor of the opposite side. Clearly, then, the direction of the message is not as important as the implication of the message for the correctness of one’s attitude in determining selective attention (see Louw, 1967, for a similar finding regarding selective exposure).

One implication of the selective exposure/attention hypothesis for advertising is that people should prefer to read advertisements for products that they already like or own than for products that they do not like or own. Although some research is consistent with this reasoning (e.g., Ehrlich, Gurman, Schon-
A second area of application of dissonance theory to consumer behavior concerns the effects of making a decision. As a result of virtually any decision, a person must accept the negative features and consequences of the chosen alternative and must forgo the positive features and consequences of the rejected alternative. The more positive features associated with the freely rejected alternative and the more negative features associated with the freely chosen alternative, the greater the dissonance experienced. Considerable research indicates that as a result of the dissonance induced by a choice, people will come to reevaluate the alternatives after the choice. This reevaluation results in the person viewing the chosen alternative as more desirable and the rejected alternative as less desirable than at the time of the choice. For example, in one early study, Brehm (1956) told female students that various manufacturers were interested in determining consumer reactions to certain products. The women rated the desirability of a wide variety of products, e.g., a stopwatch, a portable radio, and then were given a choice of two products to take home with them in payment for their participation. In the control condition the women were given a product by the investigator and thus made no decision on their own. After the selection of a product, the women made reports about some of the products and then were asked to rate them again. As expected by dissonance theory, the women who were responsible for their own choices came to overvalue the chosen product and undervalue the rejected product. The women in the control group did not show a reevaluation of the product that they had been given. Similar results have been obtained in many other studies dealing with a wide variety of consumer products (see Holloway, 1967; LoScuro & Perloff, 1967; Sheth, 1970).

What are some of the specific implications of the psychology of choice for consumer behavior? Two implications are examined here briefly. The first stems from the well-established finding that the amount of dissonance after a choice is a direct function of the number of alternatives from which a person selects. When a person chooses 1 alternative from 2, less dissonance is experienced than if he or she selects 1 alternative from 10, because in the latter condition the person is giving up more in making the choice than he or she is in the former condition (see Brehm & Cohen, 1962). On the basis of this research, Mittelstaedt (1969) reasoned that brand loyalty should be a direct function of the number of competing brands. Thus a person should be more loyal to a brand if it was selected over 10 other brands than if it was selected over just 1 other brand.

Dissonance after a choice also varies with the amount of external pressure or incentives provided to make the choice. The greater the incentives or external justification for making a discrepant choice, the less the dissonance and hence the less the need to justify the choice by reevaluating the chosen and rejected alternatives. For example, in a prototypical dissonance study, subjects are offered either a small amount of money (e.g., 50 cents) or a large amount of money (e.g., $20) for agreeing to write an essay or make a statement that is
opposed to their initial opinions. As a result of making this choice, people typically change their attitudes to be more favorable toward the position they have chosen to espouse, especially when they have been offered little external justification for having made this choice (e.g., Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959).

One application of this research result to advertising has to do with the use of money-saving coupons. More than 90 billion coupons were distributed by U.S. manufacturers in 1980 (Strung, 1981) in an attempt to entice people to try new products or brands other than the brands that they normally purchase. Consider the person who was induced to try a new shampoo as a result of a coupon offering the product for free versus a person who tried the same shampoo as a result of a 25-cent-off coupon. According to dissonance theory, although the free offer might stimulate more people to try the shampoo (recall the typical effect of incentives on behavior from chapter 4), the 25-cent offer might be more effective in getting people to like the shampoo once it was tried. This is because people who tried the shampoo for free have ample external justification for abandoning their long-time favorite shampoo and thus should experience less dissonance than those who abandon their favorite shampoo for much less reason. Thus advertisers should offer coupons that provide an incentive just large enough to get a substantial number of people to try the product but not so large as to reduce all the dissonance involved in choosing a new brand over a favorite one.

Summary. The need for information and the need for consistency are aroused primarily for products that have clear personal relevance. For products with high relevance, the need for consistency will bias people toward attending to and thinking about attitude-consistent information rather than attitude-inconsistent information. If people cannot avoid exposure to a highly involving ad, however, they will be motivated to scrutinize carefully the product-relevant information presented in an attempt to form a veridical evaluation. Interestingly, when an ad has high personal relevance, people may be motivated to search beyond the ad into their own memories for information that would either justify their present attitude or allow them to accept the cogent arguments in the ad for switching to a new product.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has shown how a wide variety of human motives can affect the various stages of consumer information processing depicted in Figure 14.1. It has also distinguished between two basic persuasion strategies. One strategy (the central route) is effective primarily when a person's motivation to think about the content of an ad is high. However, this strategy is difficult to employ successfully. Not only must exposure, attention, and reception occur, but the ad recipient must also have the ability to process the product-relevant information presented. If motivation to think about the product is high but the arguments presented are too complex for the person to understand, or if too many distractions prevent issue-relevant thought, the central route cannot be followed (Eagly, 1974; Wright, 1981). Finally, even if both motivation and ability to think about the ad are present, the product-relevant information in the ad must be so compelling and presented in such a nonthreatening context that it elicits primarily favorable cognitions that are rehearsed and stored in long-term memory rather than counterarguments. The best aspect of this strategy is that if it is successful, long-term attitude changes may be produced that are highly predictive of subsequent behavior.

Because the central route to persuasion is generally rather difficult, however, a second general strategy is often attempted (the peripheral route). The second strategy is effective when a person's motivation or ability to think about product-relevant information is low. This low-involvement strategy also requires exposure, attention, and reception of the ad but does not require extensive cognitive elaboration. All that is required is that consumers come to associate the product with something else that they already feel positively about (e.g., a summer cookout at the beach, a famous sex symbol, a Nobel prize-winning scientist). Although these changes are easier to produce, they are not as enduring. Because the favorable attitude is based solely on a positive peripheral cue rather than a full appreciation and understanding of the product's true attributes, the favorable attitude will persist only so long as the positive cue (e.g., celebrity endorser) remains salient and linked to the product (accomplished primarily through extensive advertising repetition). Nevertheless, repeated use of peripheral cues can be highly effective in getting people to buy certain products. Ironically, once a person has purchased a product, because of the dissonance that may be associated with the choice, the person may generate bolstering product-relevant cognitions that then produce a more permanent change in attitudes about the product. Or, once the person owns a product, he or she may become motivated to process any subsequent product-relevant information contained in new ads that are encountered. This subsequent processing may lead to more permanent attitude changes. Thus what begins as a temporary change by way of the peripheral route may end up being a more permanent change by way of the central route.

In summary, when a person's motivation or ability to think about an ad is low, persuasion is typically governed by peripheral cues such as the pictures surrounding the product, the use of attractive endorsers, or other concerns often stemming from biological and social motives. When a person's motivation and ability to think about an ad are high, however, persuasion is typically governed by the cogency or quality of the issue-relevant information presented or the consistency of the information to prior attitudes (stemming from the cognitive motives). Importantly, temporary changes induced by way of the peripheral route can become enduring changes if the person subsequently becomes motivated to process product-relevant information.
NOTES

1. Interestingly, some recent research is consistent with the view that repeated exposure to a stimulus may sometimes affect liking for it without affecting recognition or recall of it (see Zajonc, 1980).

2. Although some psychologists believe that attitude conditioning occurs without a person's awareness (e.g., Staats & Staats, 1958), others propose that subjective awareness of the contiguity involved (cf. Page, 1974). There is little controversy, however, over the fact that attitudes can be formed in this manner (cf. Zanna, Kiesler, & Ilgen, 1970).

3. If the person's primary motive in purchasing a product is to identify with a particular person or group, as involvement increases, thinking about the product endeavor may presumably increase.

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Motivation in Organizations

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BACKGROUND

To this point, the physiological and social aspects of human motivation in their most general form have been the primary focus of this text. Little has been said about the contextual fabric within which these motivational processes exist. This is not to imply that these intrapersonal and interpersonal processes operate independently of the social milieu. To the contrary, it is within one particular social domain—the work organization—that human motivational processes appear to take on added importance. Not only is motivation a primary concern in organizational studies, but exploring motivational processes within organizational contexts also appears to enhance the understanding of the basic processes themselves.

One need look no further than reports in the popular press attributing the United States' "crisis of productivity" to the "sagging motivation" of its work force (Davis, 1980) to gain some appreciation for the significance of motivation in organizational contexts. Moreover, the centrality of motivation as a topic germane to the field of industrial organizational psychology is readily attested to by the plethora of professional literature generated on this topic. The allusion here is to writings ranging from "how to" guides for managers (e.g., Leighton, Buzzotta, Sherberg, & Karraker, 1977) to scholarly theoretical syntheses (e.g., Campbell & Pritchard, 1976; Steers & Porter, 1983). In all, these efforts have left a rich legacy of theoretically based research and applied techniques that will be examined in this chapter.