

Communication perception and how it takes place

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

29 Jun 2015

There are a number of steps that our minds go through between, say, an advertising message and the purchase of a product...

Problem recognition

This is sometimes called "arousal" and it is the perception, within the individual's mind, that there is a distinct difference between an ideal, required state and the actual, existing state. What this means in English, by way of example, is "I am hungry - I don't want to be, but I am."



© Andriy Popov – [123RF.com](#)

This arousal can be the result of a number of influences. It could be natural (e.g. "I haven't eaten for 24 hours and I really am hungry now") or it could be developed (e.g. "that pizza looks good, suddenly I feel hungry").

Whatever the source, it means there is a need which requires satisfaction.

Drive

This is the first motivational step - the creation of ambition or initiative that can only be satisfied by taking action. It means "I will eat something" (because I am hungry).

Options

Within each fundamental step of the process, options will be made available to the potential customer. It is clearly the responsibility of the advertising function to describe and present these options as favourably as possible.

Information gathering

This is sometimes referred to as "search" and is the examination/consideration of known alternatives.

In other words, having realised I am hungry (Problem recognition) I have decided to eat something (Drive). I can now eat

something sweet or savoury (Options) so now I look in the refrigerator or go to the shop (Information gathering or Search) to see what is available.

Cues

These are the ideas and fragments of pieces of information which are stored in the individual's memory bank. A good advertising campaign should have resulted in such valuable data being retained by the consumer. As such, we refer to "top-of-mind-awareness". Somebody like KFC (for example) may have recently advertised a special price for their products which I remember because, in the photograph, it looked so delicious.

Response

This is the superficial acceptance of the given cues where, for example, a need for deep-fried chicken will have been identified - the options could be that any close KFC shop will have it available. The cues might be the recall of an advertisement in last night's paper where KFC is running a price-off promotion on that product. The response would then be to decide to visit one of their shops and buy the chicken.

Reinforcement

When a positive response occurs (e.g. I go to KFC) as a result of the Drive and Cues, Reinforcement will take place when I prove to myself that everything is in order - I arrived at the shop, found the product at the price I remember being advertised.

Motive

This is the reason, or justification, to finally commit Action. In my example it will be that, having arrived at the shop and reinforced my response, I now examine the product and it looks as good as it did in the photograph.

Action

This is, obviously, the physical act of making/concluding the purchase OR rejecting it and returning to the information-gathering stage.

Purchase evaluation

The outcome of a purchase will normally result on satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Satisfaction, generally, should result in post-purchase happiness and repeat re-purchasing.

Dissatisfaction with the purchase is sometimes called "post-purchase dissonance" and can arise from a number of faults found with the product or the product promise.

I may find, for example, that Kentucky Fried Chicken gives me terrible indigestion and that I would probably be much better suited to eating Nando's which is flamed-grilled rather than being deep-fried. So I would begin the entire process again.

Post-Purchase Dissonance can also occur without any attributable negatives towards the product. For example, I may have regretted parting with my cash and thought "I could have made do with just a sandwich". Whilst I may be unhappy for that reason it will not, at a later stage, prevent a re-purchase.

Of course, it goes without saying, that any vendor or any product wants post-purchase satisfaction because that will, hopefully, itself create the most powerful advertising campaign known to man - Word-of-Mouth.

chris@brewers.co.za

Read my blog (brewersdroop.co.za) or see what other amazing things we do at brewers.co.za

Note that Bizcommunity staff and management do not necessarily share the views of its contributors - the opinions and statements expressed herein are solely those of the author.

ABOUT CHRIS BREWER

Having joined the ad industry in London, Chris Brewer spent most of his career in media analysis and planning - but has performed just about every advertising task from Creative to Research. He's an honorary lifetime member of the Advertising Media Association and regularly advises agencies and clients regarding their media plan costs and strategies. He is also often asked to talk at industry functions. Email: chris@brewers.co.za. Twitter: [@brewersapps](https://twitter.com/brewersapps). Read his blog: www.brewersdroop.co.za

- Welcome to the latest Monty Python fiasco - 21 May 2020
- Is digital advertising worth all the hype? - 4 Dec 2017
- TV we got right - 20 Nov 2017
- Innuendo and the power of the pen - 6 Nov 2017
- When was the sale lost? - 23 Oct 2017

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>