

Module - 6

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Sangeeta Sahney

**Assistant Professor,
Vinod Gupta School of Management
Indian Institute of Technology
Kharagpur, India**

Email. sahney@vgsom.iitkgp.ernet.in

LESSON – 17

CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT MODELS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

Instructional Objectives:

After completion of this lesson, the student shall know about:

6.1.9 Consumer Behavior Models based on Involvement

6.1.10 Consumer Involvement and Implications for Marketers

6.1.9 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR MODELS BASED ON INVOLVEMENT:

Consumer involvement affects the ways in which consumers seek, process, and transmit information, make purchase decisions and make post-purchase evaluation. As the level of consumer involvement increases, the consumer has greater motivation to gather, comprehend, elaborate and assimilate on information. A marketer needs to design his marketing mix in a manner that he can activate the involvement process to his favor, and marketing communication has a key role to play. A few models have been proposed that are based on consumer involvement; these are discussed below.

6.1.9.1 The Low-Involvement Learning Model:

As explained in the previous section, low involvement products are those products that are inexpensive or maybe moderately priced; they are low in value and risk; and, are frequently purchased. Often, they are purchased as a matter of routine. Example, toothpaste, soap, bread etc. For such products, the consumer gives little thought, and feelings may not be formed for the product until after the purchase has been made. So the tri-component, cognition, attitude and behavior are arranged in a manner such that cognition leads to behavior that finally leads finally to attitude. Cognition → Behavior → Attitude. (Hierarchies of effects for low and high involvement decisions, Assael, 1992).

Marketing communication through audio visual media, i.e. TV and radio follows this principle. Through the advertisement, the marketer educates the consumers about his product offering and the brand; this may be a new product or a modified version of an existing product; he tries to create awareness and form beliefs about the brand. At this

stage he does not aim at forming/changing attitudes; he just aims at developing cognition through the message content. Thus, the marketer tries to replace the old beliefs with new ones, without first changing the attitude. Further through special effects and picturization of the product/service offering, message context, jingle and music, as well as the celebrity/spokesperson, the marketer tries to elicit a behavior on part of the consumer to buy his product. If the consumer is satisfied with the purchase, he feels that he has received a positive reinforcement, and he learns to buy the same brand again. On the other hand, if he is dissatisfied, he receives a negative reinforcement and the likelihood of repetition of that behavior (i.e. of buying the same brand) is reduced.

Implications for a marketer:

1. Low involvement products need to be dealt with differently from high involvement products; The marketer needs to follow a sequence of Cognition→ Behavior→ Attitude.
2. Low involvement products could make best use of the low involvement media, i.e. TV and radio for bringing about a desirable behavior. For high involvement products, the print media works (high involvement media) better to bring about a change from cognition to attitude to behavior.
3. The marketer could benefit if he tries and relates low involvement products with day to day needs and present them in the form of slice-of-life commercials. These products would be essentially day to day routinized purchases and could also be impulse items.
4. The marketer could also benefit if he manages to move people from low to high involvement through effective brand management. He should be able to build a brand, and relate it to the segment by tapping it to the need and benefit, lifestyle and social class etc. By building such a connection, he could create brand loyalty.

6.1.9.2 The Learn-Feel-Do Hierarchy Model:

With implications for marketing communication, the learn-feel-do-hierarchy model, was proposed by Vaughn and his colleagues in the 1980's at Foote, Cone and Belding; thus, it also came to be known as the FCB Matrix. Consumer decision making varies across the nature of product/service offerings. According to the model, some purchases are backed by a lot of cognition and thinking, while others are based on feelings and emotions. The combination of these reference points produces a strategy matrix. The marketer has to choose appropriate strategies for different kinds of product/service offerings. He needs to analyze the nature of his product, and design his promotion strategy accordingly; the advertising medium should relate to the product category.

The learn-feel-do model is a simple matrix that links consumer decision making and consumer choices to three components which are information (learn), attitude (feel), and behavior (do). The matrix classifies consumer decision-making along two dimensions, high/low involvement and thinking/feeling. Involvement as a dimension is represented on a continuum as high and low; over time one moves from high to low involvement. Thinking and feeling represent the other axis again as two ends of a continuum; with time, there is a movement from thinking toward feeling (See Figure 1).

As illustrated in the matrix, based on cross combinations, there are four cells, viz., High Involvement/High Thinking, High Involvement/High Feeling, Low Involvement/Low Thinking and Low Involvement/Low Feeling. Put together they Each of these quadrants holds relevance to designing of marketing communication and can be explained as follows:

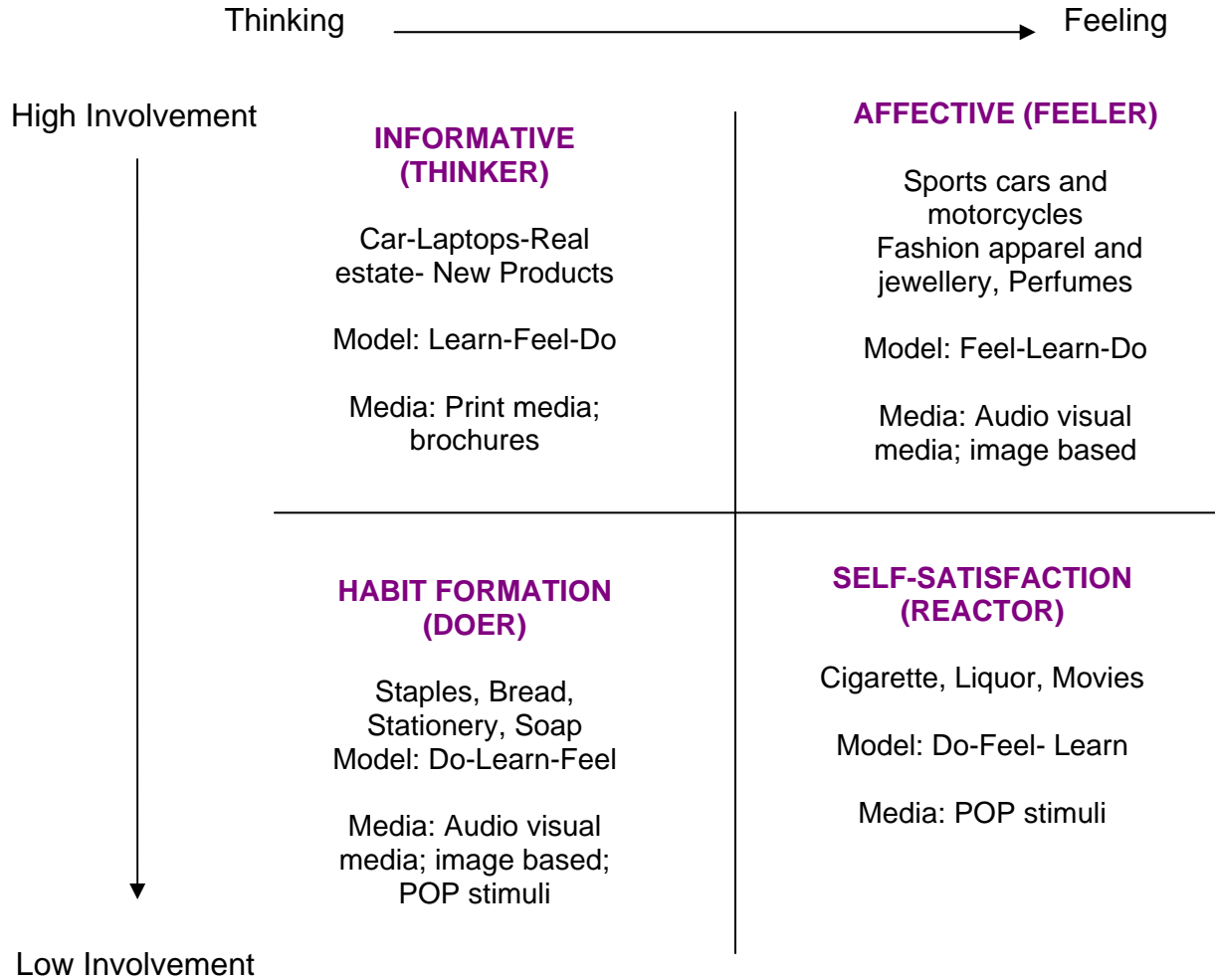


Figure 1: The Learn-Feel-Do Hierarchy Matrix

Source: Adapted from “Vaughn, R., The Consumer Mind: How to Tailor Ad Strategies” The Advertising Age, June, 1980.

IN Lindquist, J.D. and Sirgy, J.M., Shopper, Buyer and Consumer Behavior, Theory and Marketing Applications, Second Edition, 2003, Biztantra.

a) High Involvement/High Thinking: This quadrant of the matrix consists of high involvement and thinking, typically signifying higher level of rationality. Products that fall into this quadrant are high involvement products, where decision making involves a lot of thinking. Because of the nature of product/service offerings that fall in this category, consumers have a high need for information. Also, consumer decision making is driven by economic motives. Examples of products that would fall into this quadrant include cars, laptops, real estate etc as well as innovative products. The strategy model is learn → feel → do.

b) High Involvement/High Feeling: This quadrant is representative of situations which are high involvement and high feeling; while there is a level of involvement, information and thinking is less important than the feeling factor; this is because such purchases are related to the persons self-esteem. The affect component is stronger than the information factor. The person is drawn by the feeling, emotional and psychological motives; and, they become a "feeler" about the product. Examples include sports cars and motorcycles, fashion apparel and jewellery, perfumes etc. The strategy model is feel → learn → do.

c) Low Involvement/Low Thinking: The third cell requires minimal effort on the part of the consumer, both in terms of involvement and thinking. It actually results from habit forming within the consumer (or the doer), as a result of habitual buying and purchase. He becomes a reactor in the sense that whenever he has a need, he reacts and immediately purchases whatever brand he has been purchasing. Over a period of time, almost all products would fall into this quadrant. Examples of products that would involve the low involvement/thinking dimensions include staples, bread, stationery, soap etc. The strategy model is feel → learn → do.

d) Low Involvement/Low Feeling: The products that fall in this quadrant signify low involvement and low feeling; yet, they promote self satisfaction. Consumers buy such products to satisfy personal tastes, many a times influenced by peer influence and social pressures. Examples include cigarettes, liquor, movies etc. The strategy model is do→ feel → learn.

Implications for a marketer:

1. For high involvement/high thinking products, the marketer should provide such information about the product/service and the brand offering that helps build a favorable attitude for his brand, so that it could lead to a purchase. The focus of the advertisement should be on factual relevance.
2. For products that fall in the high involvement/high feeling quadrant, a marketer should devise a promotional strategy that arouses an affective state that is positive and favorable. A good psychological emotional and mood state would create an urge within the consumer to learn more about the offering, and finally buy the product/service. The advertisement should focus on both facts and entertainment.
3. For low involvement and low thinking products, the marketer needs to create and maintain brand loyalty; promotional strategies should focus on creation of brand recall. The advertisement should focus on both facts and entertainment.
4. This proves to be challenging for marketers as consumers are driven by social pressures and brand loyalty is short lived. The promotional strategy should include social appeals with an entertainment orientation.

6.1.9.3 The Level of Message Processing Model:

The level of involvement has an impact on the information gathering and processing. Based on this premise, the level of message processing model states that a consumer's attention to advertising is influenced by varying levels of involvement, and runs across preattention, focal attention, comprehension, and elaboration. Each of these levels is indicative of different level of message processing, and is explained as follows:

a) Preattention: This level of involvement requires only a limited processing and, thus the desire is just to gain some amount of familiarity;

b) Focal attention: A degree greater than the first stage, here the consumer concentrates on the message source and context, and becomes receptive to basic information like product/brand name and usage.

c) Comprehension: At this level, the consumer focuses on the message content and tries to understand it in terms of features, attributes, benefits, price, availability etc.

d) Elaboration: During this highest stage of involvement, the consumer integrates the message into his memory, forms beliefs and either adds to or modifies the information that already exists in his memory.

Implications for a marketer:

1. The marketer should design his promotion message according to the level of involvement that exists for the majority of the segment for that product/service category.
2. For high involvement products, the marketer needs to move the consumers from a state of preattention to elaboration. This becomes all the more necessary for consumers who are typically low on involvement because of their basic personal traits.

6.1.9.4 The Product versus Brand Involvement Model:

This model assesses consumer involvement at two levels, product and brand. A consumer may be involved with a product/service category but may not be necessarily involved with the brand. The converse may also be true, where he may be involved with the brand and not with the product/service category.

According to the model, consumers can be classified into four types according to their involvement with the product/service category and with the brand. These categories are as

follows: Brand loyalists, Information seekers, Routine brand buyers and, Brand switchers. The model could hold relevance when involvement is used as a segmentation criteria (See Figure 2).

		PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT	
		High Involvement	Low Involvement
BRAND INVOLVEMENT	High Involvement	Brand loyalists	Routine brand buyers
	Low Involvement	Information seekers	Brand switchers

Figure 2: The Learn-Feel-Do Hierarchy Matrix

Source: Adapted from Cushion, P. and Douglas-Tate, M., "The Effect of People/Product Relationships on Advertising Processing",
IN Alwitt, L and Mitchell, A.P., eds, Psychological Processes and Advertising Effects Hillsdale, NJ, 1985
IN Lindquist, J.D. and Sirgy, J.M., Shopper, Buyer and Consumer Behavior, Theory and Marketing Applications, Second Edition, 2003, Biztantra.

a) Brand loyalists: Brand loyalists are consumers that are highly involved with the product category as well as the brand. As both product and brand are of high involvement, the marketer should provide information about the product category as well as the brand. As the consumers are involved with the brand as well, they exhibit brand loyalty.

b) Information seekers: This is a consumer category that is highly involved with the product category but shows low involvement with the brand. The consumers here do not think much about the brand, show less preference towards the brands and would not have established a preferred brand; brand loyalty is absent in most cases, and maybe very low in a few cases. Such consumer put in efforts to search out collect information about the product category and the various brands. After they have processed such information and compared the various options, they make a decision on which brand is best.

c) Routine brand buyers: Routine brand buyers are not highly involved with the product category but shows involvement with a particular brand within that category. They tend to show a level of loyalty towards the brand, although they are not particularly interested in the product category. If and when they need to use a product, they patronize a particular preferred brand only.

d) Brand switchers: Consumers who fall in this category are neither involved neither with the product category nor with the brand. They buy anything they can get hold off and not particular about the product or the brand. As the term suggest, they keep on switching their brands. They do not have an emotional bond with any brand. Generally, such consumers are price sensitive and respond to price.

Implications for a marketer:

1. For brand loyalists, the marketer should place emphasis on winning customers and creating brand loyalty. The marketer should provide information about the brand, and portray how their brand is better than the competitor. Apart from providing information, the marketer should also try an emotional connect with the consumer. Promotional messages should be informational as well as emotional; they should provide facts, as well as reinforce brand loyalty.
2. Promotional messages for information seekers must lay emphasis on information rather than emotions. The marketer should make sure that he provides such consumers with relevant facts about the product category as well as the brand. He should tilt brand information in his favor by stressing how his brand is better than the other competitive brands. The product features, attributes, benefits etc as well as information on brand differences need to be emphasized upon.
3. In order to encourage the continuation of loyalty with routine brand buyers, the marketer should use emotional appeals.
4. For brand switchers, the marketer needs to use economic appeals that emphasize on price of the brand, comparison with other brands, discounts, savings, value for money etc.

6.1.10 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

Consumer involvement has implications for a marketer. Consumer involvement affects how consumers gather, comprehend and transmit information, make purchase decisions and make post-purchase evaluation. Thus a marketer needs to understand the process and design his marketing mix in a manner that can activate the involvement process to his favor. The study of consumer involvement can be useful for a marketer in the following ways:

1. The study of consumer involvement helps a marketer assess how the majority of your target market relates to the purchase of the particular product/service category, in terms of high/low involvement.

If the majority of the target segment views it as a high involvement, the decision making becomes rational, although there may be an emotional and egoistic element too. For example, while buying an automobile, a rational mind would look to mileage, engine etc.; an emotional mind would think of color, aesthetics, style; and an egoistic mind would relate it to pride and prestige.

On the other hand, if the majority of the segment treats it as of low involvement, the decision making becomes emotional.

2. The marketer could gain insights into high involvement and low involvement purchase situations, and accordingly bring about changes in his marketing strategy.

For high-involvement purchases, the consumer searches for information extensively; thus a marketer the marketer needs to provide information about the product category as well as the brand. Marketing communication should focus on product features, attributes, benefits etc. Information on brand differences also needs to be emphasized upon. Longer format media need to be used like (i) print in newspapers, magazines, journals and brochures; (ii) videos.

As far as low-involvement purchases are concerned, these are generally routine in nature; the marketer needs to use emotional appeals. Attempts should be made to create and maintain brand loyalty. Point-of-purchase stimuli, store display and attractive merchandise can also help boost sales. Advertising should focus on audio visual media through emotional appeals.

3. If a marketer is confronted with both high involvement and low involvement segments, he can deal with both the segments separately by bringing about changes in the marketing mix. However he needs to take such a decision after understanding the size and potential of each of such segments; if only a small segment operates on a low-involvement or on high involvement, may not be feasible to cater to both.

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FAQS (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS):

Ques 1 Write short notes on:

a) The Low-Involvement Learning Model

b) The Level of Message Processing Model

Ans 1a) The Low-Involvement Learning Model:

Low involvement products are those products that are inexpensive or maybe moderately priced; they are low in value and risk; and, are frequently purchased. Often, they are purchased as a matter of routine. Example, toothpaste, soap, bread etc. For such products, the consumer gives little thought, and feelings may not be formed for the product until after the purchase has been made. So the tri-component, cognition, attitude and behavior are arranged in a manner such that cognition leads to behavior that finally leads finally to attitude. Cognition→ Behavior→ Attitude.

Marketing communication through audio visual media, i.e. TV and radio follows this principle. Through the advertisement, the marketer educates the consumers about his product offering and the brand; this may be a new product or a modified version of an existing product; he tries to create awareness and form beliefs about the brand. At this stage he does not aim at forming/changing attitudes; he just aims at developing cognition through the message content. Thus, the marketer tries to replace the old beliefs with new ones, without first changing the attitude. Further through special effects and picturization of the product/service offering, message context, jingle and music, as well as the celebrity/spokesperson, the marketer tries to elicit a behavior on part of the consumer to buy his product. If the consumer is satisfied with the purchase, he feels that he has received a positive reinforcement, and he learns to buy the same brand again. On the other hand, if he is dissatisfied, he receives a negative reinforcement and the likelihood of repetition of that behavior (i.e. of buying the same brand) is reduced.

Ans 1 b) The Level of Message Processing Model:

The level of involvement has an impact on the information gathering and processing. Based on this premise, the level of message processing model states that a consumer's attention to advertising is influenced by varying levels of involvement, and runs across preattention, focal attention, comprehension, and elaboration. Each of these levels is indicative of different level of message processing, and is explained as follows:

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d) Elaboration: During this highest stage of involvement, the consumer integrates the message into his memory, forms beliefs and either adds to or modifies the information that already exists in his memory.

Ques 2 Explain the Learn-Feel-Do Hierarchy Model and suggest implications for the marketer.

Ans 2 With implications for marketing communication, the learn-feel-do-hierarchy model, was proposed by Vaughn and his colleagues in the 1980's at Foote, Cone and Belding; thus, it also came to be known as the FCB Matrix. Consumer decision making varies across the nature of product/service offerings. According to the model, some purchases are backed by a lot of cognition and thinking, while others are based on feelings and emotions. The combination of these reference points produces a strategy matrix. The marketer has to choose appropriate strategies for different kinds of product/service offerings. He needs to analyze the nature of his product, and design his promotion strategy accordingly; the advertising medium should relate to the product category.

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As illustrated in the matrix, based on cross combinations, there are four cells, viz., High Involvement/High Thinking, High Involvement/High Feeling, Low Involvement/Low Thinking and Low Involvement/Low Feeling. Put together they Each of these quadrants holds relevance to designing of marketing communication and can be explained as follows:

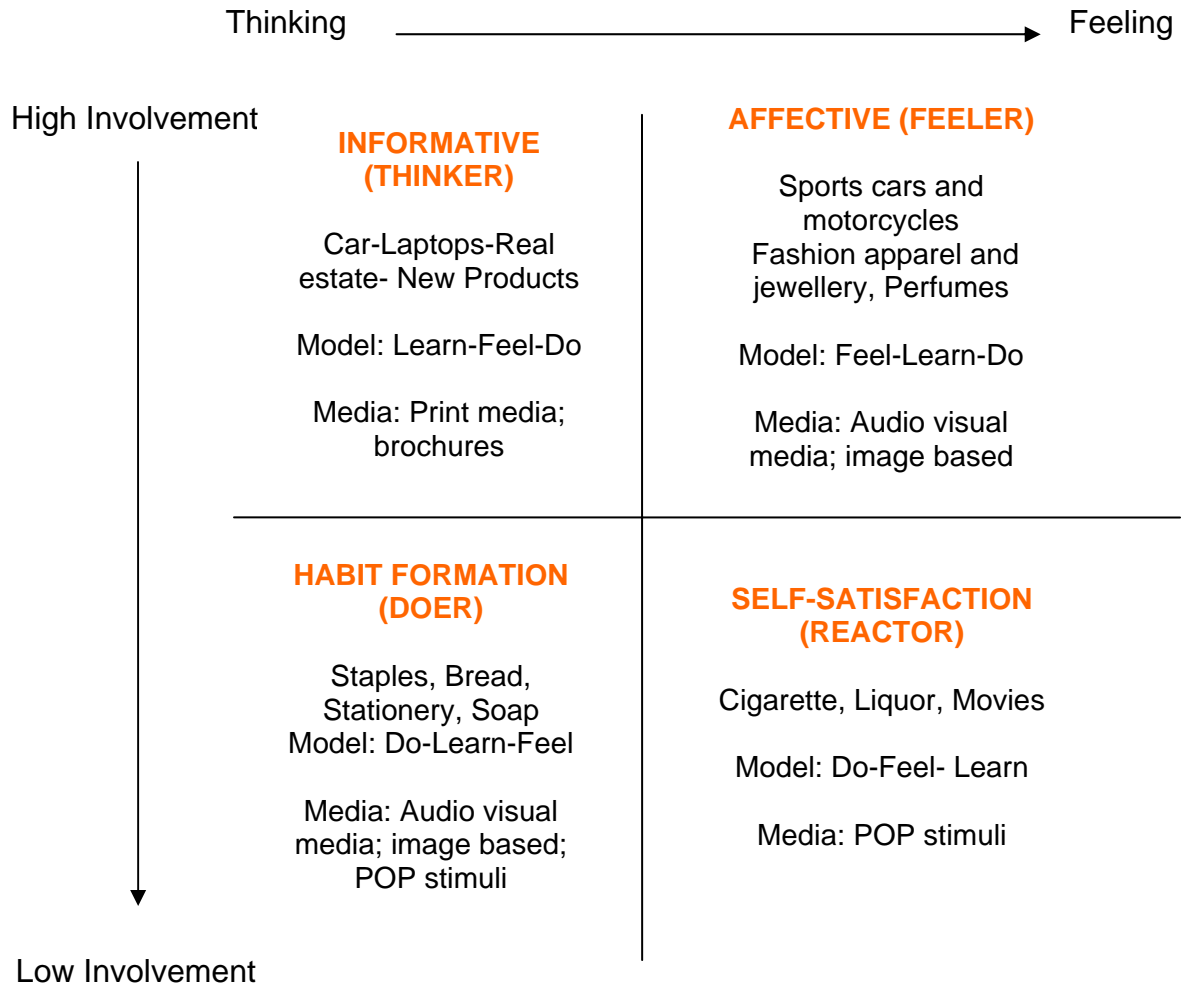


Figure: The Learn-Feel-Do Hierarchy

a) High Involvement/High Thinking: This quadrant of the matrix consists of high involvement and thinking, typically signifying higher level of rationality. Products that fall into this quadrant are high involvement products, where decision making involves a lot of thinking. Because of the nature of product/service offerings that fall in this category, consumers have a high need for information. Also, consumer decision making is driven by economic motives. Examples of products that would fall into this quadrant include cars, laptops, real estate etc as well as innovative products. The strategy model is learn → feel → do.

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c) Low Involvement/Low Thinking: The third cell requires minimal effort on the part of the consumer, both in terms of involvement and thinking. It actually results from habit forming within the consumer (or the doer), as a result of habitual buying and purchase. He becomes a reactor in the sense that whenever he has a need, he reacts and immediately purchases whatever brand he has been purchasing. Over a period of time, almost all products would fall into this quadrant. Examples of products that would involve the low involvement/thinking dimensions include staples, bread, stationery, soap etc. The strategy model is feel → learn → do.

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Implications for a marketer:

1. For high involvement/high thinking products, the marketer should provide such information about the product/service and the brand offering that helps build a favorable attitude for his brand, so that it could lead to a purchase. The focus of the advertisement should be on factual relevance.
2. For products that fall in the high involvement/high feeling quadrant, a marketer should devise a promotional strategy that arouses an affective state that is positive and favorable. A good psychological emotional and mood state would create an urge within the consumer to learn more about the offering, and finally buy the product/service. The advertisement should focus on both facts and entertainment.
3. For low involvement and low thinking products, the marketer needs to create and maintain brand loyalty; promotional strategies should focus on creation of brand recall. The advertisement should focus on both facts and entertainment.
4. This proves to be challenging for marketers as consumers are driven by social pressures and brand loyalty is short lived. The promotional strategy should include social appeals with an entertainment orientation.

Ques 3 **Why is the study of Consumer Involvement important for a marketer?**

Ans 3 Consumer involvement affects how consumers gather, comprehend and transmit information, make purchase decisions and make post-purchase evaluation. As the level of consumer involvement increases, the consumer has greater motivation to gather, comprehend, elaborate and assimilate on information. Thus a marketer needs to understand the process and design his marketing mix in a manner that can activate the involvement process to his favor. The study of consumer involvement can be useful for a marketer in the following ways:

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SELF EVALUATION TESTS/QUIZZES:

Section A True/false:

1. For high involvement products, the tri-component model arranges cognition, attitude and behavior in a sequence as follows: Cognition→ Behavior→ Attitude.
2. For high involvement/high thinking products, the focus of the advertisement should be on factual relevance.
3. Brand switchers are price sensitive and respond to price.

Section B Fill up the blanks:

1. The learn-feel-do model is a simple matrix that links consumer decision making and consumer choices to three components which _____, feel and _____.
2. _____ results from habit forming within the consumer.
3. _____ are consumers that are highly involved with the product category as well as the brand

Section C Multiple choice questions:

1. Which of the following is false about High Involvement/High Thinking situation?
 - a) Decision making involves a lot of thinking.
 - b) The strategy model is Feel → Learn → do.
 - c) Consumers have a high need for information.
 - d) Consumer decision making is driven by economic motives.
2. Which of the following is true about Brand loyalists?
 - a) Consumers who fall in this category are neither involved neither with the product category nor with the brand.
 - b) Such consumers are price sensitive and respond to price
 - c) Consumers put in efforts to search out collect information about the product category and the various brands
 - d) None of the following.

3. Promotional messages for Information Seekers must lay emphasis on _____ rather than emotions.

- a) Information b) Behavior c) Trial d) All of the above.

Section D Short answers:

1. Name any two products that fall into the category Feel-Learn-Do.
2. Mention characteristics of the high involvement/high feeling quadrant of The Learn-Feel-Do Hierarchy Model?
3. Name the four levels of the Message Processing Model?

KEY

Section A True/false:

1. False 2. True 3. True

Section B Fill up the blanks:

1. Learn, Do 2. Low Involvement/Low Thinking 3. Brand loyalists

Section C Multiple choice questions:

1. b 2. d 3. a

Section D Short Answers:

1. Fashion apparel and jewellery, Perfumes.
 2. The person is drawn by the feeling, emotional and psychological motives, and they become a “feeler” about the product. The strategy model is feel → learn → do.
 3. Preattention, Focal attention, Comprehension and Elaboration
-