

Chapter 4: Comprehension, Memory and Cognitive Learning

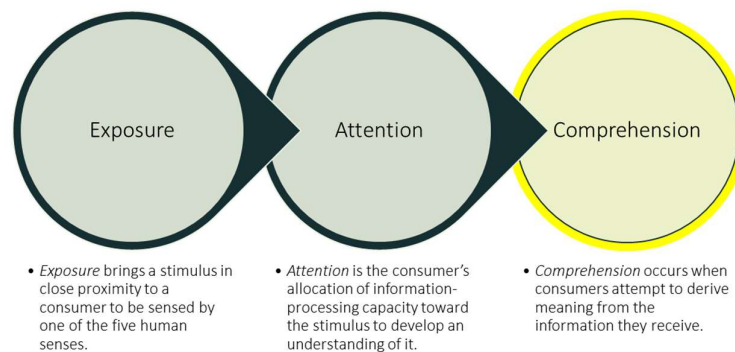
Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the factors that influence consumer comprehension.
2. Explain how knowledge, meaning, and value are inseparable using the multiple stores memory theory.
3. Understand how the mental associations that consumers develop are a key to learning.
4. Use the concept of associative networks to map relevant consumer knowledge.
5. Apply the cognitive schema concept in understanding how consumers react to products, brands, and marketing agents.

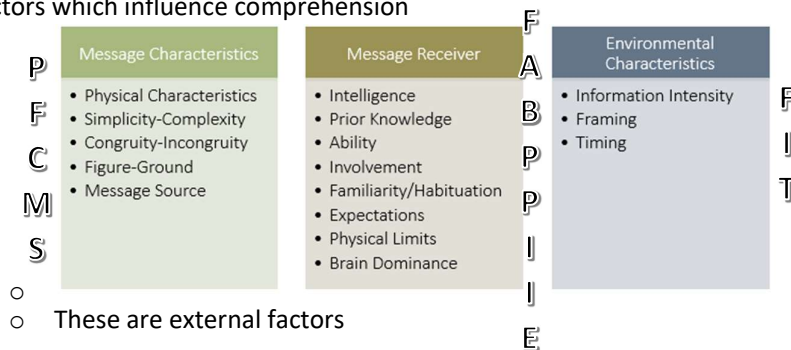
Learning Outcome 1

Identify the factors that influence consumer comprehension.

- Elements of Consumer Perception



- What is **comprehension**?
 - o Refers to the interpretation or understanding that a consumer develops about some attended stimulus in order to assign meaning
- Three important issues with regard to comprehension include:
 - o The process of comprehension is largely influenced by other internal factors within the consumer.
 - o Comprehension includes both cognitive and affective elements, thereby involving both thoughts and feelings.
 - o Consumers don't always comprehend messages in the intended way, and, to this extent, consumer comprehension is not always "correct."
- Factors which influence comprehension

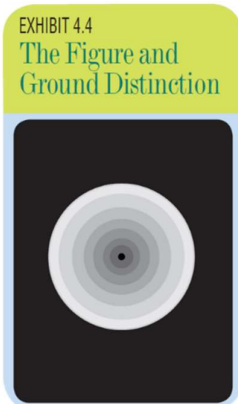



- For example
 - **Characteristics of the message** – A message presented with theme-consistent music is more easily comprehended than a message with inconsistent music (advertisement for traveling to China accompanied by Chinese music).
 - **Characteristics of the message receiver** – This involves the consumer's habituation/adaptation level. Consumers who are accustomed to receiving bad service at a health clinic may not be negatively affected by another instance of bad service.
 - **Characteristics of the environment** – This involves consumer priming. Information presented in a negative context may make consumers less afraid of risk than information presented in a positive context. A consumer thinking about being \$20 ahead in the casino may be less afraid of risk than a consumer thinking about losing \$20 and needing to win it back.
- Message Characteristics
 - P ○ Physical characteristics
 - F ■ tangible elements or the parts of a message that can be sensed
 - C ○ Simplicity-complexity
 - M ○ Congruity-Incongruity
 - M ○ Figure-Ground
 - S ○ Message Source
- Physical characteristics
 - **Intensity** – Larger print and fonts can be used, and the sound of the message can be intensified.
 - **Colour** – Use of colour depends on the culture and can impact how an ad is comprehended.
 - F ■ E.g. Fast food companies use red to symbolise energy or green = environmentally friendly
 - N ○ **Font** – Research suggests that some fonts portray a masculine image while others portray a feminine image (send meaningful signals e.g. brand personality)
 - I ○ **Numbers** – Names with letters and numbers used in combination signify a "technologically based" meaning. Numbers are often used in the auto industry as model names of cars.
 - S ■ Especially important in Asian countries
 - **Spacing** – Three 30-second ads spread over three hours achieve better consumer recall than one 90-second ad.
 - **Shape** - Product designers influence the comprehension of products through many factors but perhaps the shape that they choose is the most basic
- Simplicity/Complexity
 - Simple phrases such as "fat free" often communicate more clearly than detailed information.
 - Keep message simple as it's easier to interpret/ process
 - Depends on target market though (e.g. if they have knowledge)

- Congruent or Incongruent Message Sequences?



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- **Message congruity** represents the extent to which a message is internally consistent and fits surrounding information.
- Congruent = same, incongruent = different
- Congruent is easier to process
- Incongruent is distinct and stands out, also a novelty effect
- The Figure and Ground Distinction
 - The **figure** is the object that is intended to capture a person's attention in the message.
 - Everything else is of lesser importance and simply represents the **ground** (or background) relative to the central message.
 - Exhibit 4.4 illustrates how this occurs psychologically.



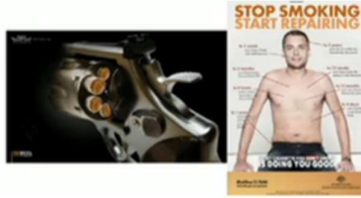
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- Examples on contrast
-  contrast

-  no contrast

- Message Source Factors
 - L ○ Likeability
 - A ○ Attractiveness
 - T ○ Trustworthiness
 - how honest and unbiased the source is perceived to
 - E ○ Expertise
 - amount of knowledge that a source is perceived to have about a subject
 - E.g. Katy Perry for proactive is all of these factors while Justin Bieber for Proactive isn't trustworthy or likeable
- Message Receiver Characteristics
 - **Intelligence/Ability** – Intelligent and well-educated consumers are more likely to accurately comprehend a message than are less intelligent or educated consumers.
 - Keep it simple if no intelligence
 - F ○ **Prior Knowledge** – Consumers display a preference for things that are consistent with their prior knowledge.
 - A ○ **Involvement** – Consumers are not equally involved with every message. Therefore, marketers face the challenge of designing messages that will be comprehended by both highly involved and uninvolved consumers.
 - B ○ More information is needed for higher involvement
 - P ○ **Familiarity/Habituation** – In terms of comprehension, familiarity can lower a consumer's motivation to process a message and reduce comprehension.
 - P ○ Habituation is the process by which continuous exposure to a stimulus affects the comprehension of and response to the stimulus.
 - E ○ **Expectations** – Beliefs of what will happen in some situation. Expectations have a major effect on comprehension. Studies indicate that many consumers cannot identify their "favourite" brand of beer if the packaging is removed.
 - **Physical Limits** – A person's physical limitations in their ability to hear, see, smell, taste, and think can influence comprehension.
 - **Brain Dominance** – Some people tend to be either "right-brain" or "left-brain" dominant. Right brain-dominant consumers tend to be visual processors, while left-brain-dominant consumers tend to deal better with verbal processing.
- Environmental Characteristics
 - **Information Intensity** – This characteristic refers to the amount of information available for a consumer to process within a given environment.
 - F ○ **Framing** – Captures the idea that the same information can take on different meanings based on the way the information is presented.
 - J ○ E.g. watching Toy Story as a family and then run insurance ads
 - T ○ **Timing** – Timing refers to both the amount of time a consumer has to process a message and the point in time at which the consumer receives the message. For example, consumers tend to see coffee advertising in the morning as more enticing.



- high intensity so hard to stand out



- framing



- timing daytime TV e.g. Household items as it's relevant

- Prospect Theory

- **Prospect theory** posits that losses loom larger than gains for consumers, even when they are of the same magnitude.
 - a) For example, in the endowment effect, sellers typically ask for a higher price (as they are losing the item) than buyers are willing to pay (as they will be gaining the item).
 - b) Consumers have a stronger reaction to price increases than price decreases.
 - E.g. petrol prices
 - c) Consumers' promotion- and prevention-focused goals will impact this decision process.



- fear of flying

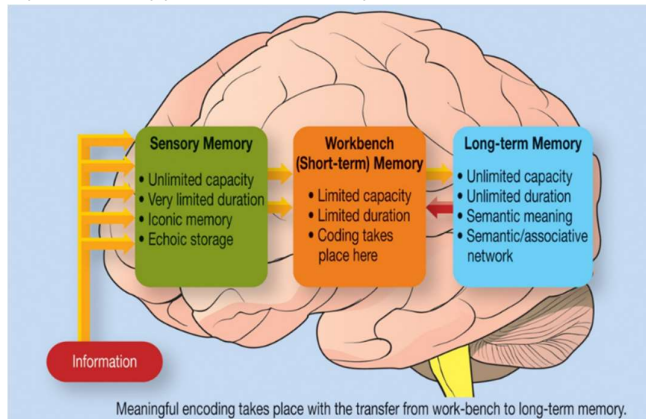


- what you're missing out on by not buying

Learning Outcome 2

Explain how knowledge, meaning, and value are inseparable using the multiple stores memory theory.

- Multiple Store Theory of Memory
 - o “Views the memory process as utilizing three different storage areas within the human brain”
- The Multiple Store Approach to Memory



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- o **Sensory memory:** area in memory where a consumer stores things exposed to one of the five senses
 - **Iconic storage:** storage of visual information in sensory memory and the idea that things are stored with a one-to-one representation with reality
 - **Echoic storage:** storage of auditory information in sensory memory
- o **Workbench memory:** storage area in the memory system where information is stored while it is being processed and encoded for later recall
 - **Encoding:** process by which information is transferred from workbench memory to long-term memory for permanent storage
 - **Retrieval:** process by which information is transferred back into workbench memory for additional processing when needed
- o **Long-term memory:** repository for all information that a person has encountered
 - **Semantic coding:** type of coding wherein stimuli are converted to meaning that can be expressed verbally
- o Long-term memory = meaning instead of just remembering

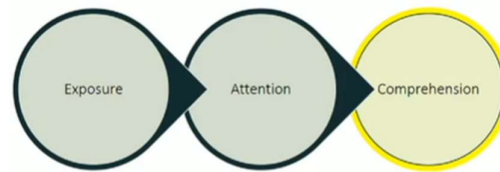
Learning Outcome 3

Understand how the mental associations that consumers develop are a key to learning.

- Mental Processes Assisting Learning
 - o **Repetition:** A process in which a thought is held in short-term memory by mentally “saying” the thought repeatedly.
 - E.g. remembering phone numbers
 - Limited memory
 - o **Dual Coding:** A process in which two different sensory “traces” are available to remember something. A trace is a mental path by which some thought becomes active.
 - E.g. trying to remember a name by associating it with something else e.g. Taylor Lautner’s face with an alpaca

- **Meaningful Coding:** A process that occurs when pre-existing knowledge is used to assist in storing new information.

- Associate something with a range of things



- E.g.

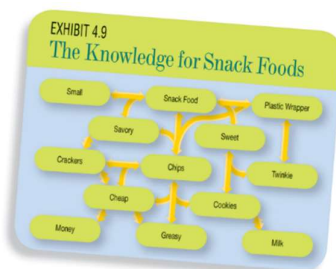


- He sees her = exposure, pretty = attention, sees she's in a relationship = comprehension
- **Chunking:** A process of grouping stimuli by meaning so that multiple stimuli can become a single memory unit
 - Breaking it down e.g. textbook chapters

Learning Outcome 4

Use the concept of associative networks to map relevant consumer knowledge.

- **Associative Network**
 - "A network of mental pathways linking knowledge within memory"



- Made up of paths and nodes
- E.g. thinking of song leads to thinking of dead dog and vice versa

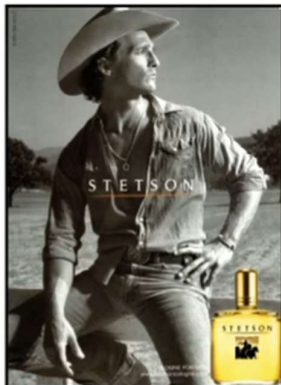
Learning Outcome 5

Apply the cognitive schema concept in understanding how consumers react to products, brands, and marketing agents.

- Cognitive Schemas
 - **Scheme:** A type of associative network that works as a cognitive representation of a phenomenon that provides meaning to that entity.
 - **Exemplar:** A concept within a schema that is the single best representative of some category.
 - E.g. MP3 player = iPod
 - **Prototype:** Characteristics more associated with a concept.
 - E.g. 5 star hotel rooms are the same



- Episodic Memory, Social Schemata, and Elaboration
 - **Episodic memory:** memory for past events in one's life
 - may elicit fond childhood memories of playing cowboy.
 - Can be both positive and negative memories
 - **Social schema:** cognitive representation that gives a specific type of person meaning
 - Stetson is relying on the social schema or stereotype of the cowboy to provide meaning.
 - **Elaboration** allows the consumer to picture himself using the cologne resulting in better recall.



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- Link to memory and meaning an get you to try and buy it