

Consumer Behavior Lesson 1: Shopping with “Pretty Woman”

SUBMITTED BY: Leya Matthew

SUBJECT(S): Marketing

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

Consumer Behavior is often referred to as the psychology of marketing, and is an integral part of all marketing decisions. Since marketing itself is customer oriented, it makes sense to understand the motivations and behaviors of customers while designing a marketing strategy. What factors affect an individual’s purchase decision? What does the buying process look like? These are some of the questions this module examines. This is the introductory lesson in this module, and it gives an overview of the study of consumer behavior.

In this introductory lesson, I chose to open with a video clip from the Hollywood film *Pretty Woman*, and present a particular shopping sequence for analysis (the scene where Julia Roberts (Vivian in the film) goes shopping with Richard Gere (Edward)). I use this concrete example to explore some of the questions raised earlier. This lends itself to an examination of personal shopping behaviors and typical experiences of the students, in later lessons.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Marketing, I. Foundations of Marketing
- Marketing, II. Consumers and Their Behavior

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“Zara’s ‘Fast Fashion’ Business Model”](#)

- “Purchase Power: How to Make Smart Consumer Choices”
- “Laying the Framework for a Successful Startup”
- “Educator Toolkit: Sustainability and Recommerce”
- “Economic Partnership: Coffee Beans, Moroccan Rugs and the Future of Fair Trade”
- “6 Grim Realities Facing Today’s Retail Stores”

Common Core Standard(s):

1. CCR Standard for Reading: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it.
2. CCR Standards for Listening: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on each other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
3. CCR Standards for Speaking: Present information, findings and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Objectives/Purposes:

Students will analyze how knowledge of consumer motivations and behaviors impact marketing decisions.

Knowledge@Wharton Article: [“The Shopper of Tomorrow: Trading Down”](#)

Other Resources/Materials:

Internet Access

Activity:

1. Teacher opens the lesson by screening the video clip from the Hollywood film *Pretty Woman*. *Pretty Woman* is a 1990 film featuring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts. The film plot centers on down-on-her-luck Hollywood prostitute Vivian Ward who is hired by a wealthy businessman, Edward Lewis, to be his escort for several business and social functions, and their developing relationship over the course of Vivian's week long stay with him. The clip chosen for screening shows Vivian on a shopping trip accompanied by Edward. The importance of understanding consumer behavior will be analyzed in this clip. The clip can be accessed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGPbvOirz8I> (2 mins)

2. Group Discussion (10 mins)

Teacher leads a group discussion about the events of the clip. In the clip Vivian enters a high-end women's clothing store. Edward makes it clear to the sales person that they have a lot of money to spend and would like to be pandered to.

Most of the students in my class were familiar with the film, so I also referred to the earlier scene where Vivian is spurned at a similar shop since she does not seem to fit the social class that shops at such stores.

From the perspective of the shop owner, Vivian does not fit the typical target segment, but forms a potential new segment of customers. Only an astute shop owner, who understands customer behavior would have recognized this and waited on her without the explanation from Edward.

Teacher leads the class discussion on the importance of understanding consumer behavior for the marketing process. According to Wikipedia, *consumer behavior is the study of when, why, how, and where people do or do not buy a product.*

Some prompt questions that could be used are:

- *Why does Vivian buy what she buys?*
Need to fit in with Edward's social class (Social)
Desire to own expensive labels, look good (Psychological)
- *What is her buying process like?*
Has a need, looks at options, (money is not a consideration), looks to Edward for suggestions, makes decisions, thinks she has done well with her purchases.

- *If you are designing a product, how does an understanding of consumer behavior help you?*

3. Brainstorming (10 mins)

The class brainstorms about how marketing can benefit from a study of consumer behavior.

Prompt questions:

- What is marketing?/What are the elements of marketing?
- How does knowing your customer's motivations and behaviors help each element of marketing?

Knowing your consumers motivations and behaviors help you to position you product and target specific segments; develop products that provide better value; price appropriately; target advertising campaigns and other promotional strategies successfully.

4. Small Group Activity (10 mins)

Teacher gives handouts of the Knowledge@Wharton article "The Shopper of tomorrow." The article talks about the economic downturn and of the impact it has on consumer behavior. Students are asked to be aware of the current situation and use this knowledge to design or revise product-marketing strategies. For example, if the students choose to design a luxury item, how would this affect their design? Or if they had to revise the marketing design of a current product keeping in mind the economic downturn how would that plan look like?

Students are also asked to consider: What assumptions did you make of each customer's motivations and behaviors during this activity?

5. Presentations, feedback (10 mins)

Teacher wraps up

Tying It All Together: Consumer Behavior is an important aspect of marketing and affects almost all marketing decisions. Understanding why individuals buy the products they buy is crucial for, among other things, product development, pricing, and promotional strategies. This introductory lesson begins with a film clip to draw in student attention to the topic. The clip provides a particular example for analysis. From this particular example we move to a range of examples to generate generalizations. Students build the fundamental concepts based on their own experiences, discussions with peers, and with the inputs from the Knowledge@Wharton article.

Practice Outside of the Classroom: The next time you make a purchase, examine what prompted you to buy this particular product.

Read the Wharton Global Youth Program article “Purchase Power: How to Ask the Right Questions and Make Smart Consumer Choices”

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: The initial movie clip is a ruse to orient the students towards the lesson. Any culturally relevant activity can be used in its place, for e.g. shopping catalogues, personal anecdotal stories etc. For e.g. in a class I taught in India, many of my students helped their parents run grocery shops. It will be fascinating to ask these students to analyze the behavior of consumers who shop at their stores, and use that rich fund of knowledge to generate the concepts discussed in this lesson.