

THE
WHY
OF THE
BUY

2ND EDITION

CONSUMER
BEHAVIOR
AND FASHION
MARKETING

PATRICIA MINK RATH
STEFANI BAY
RICHARD PETRIZZI
PENNY GILL

BLOOMSBURY

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Second Edition



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Preface

How do people decide what to buy for their wardrobes and their homes? What makes them select a particular item or brand instead of another? Consumer behavior can appear to be a mysterious set of activities, sometimes not even recognized by consumers themselves as they make up their minds for or against purchasing a new outfit, pair of shoes, set of towels, or sofa. There are, however, certain internal and external influences and patterns of decision making that shed some light on that enigma. Exploring what those influences and patterns are, and how they are interwoven in the fashion consumer's decision-making process, is the purpose of this text.

This book was originally developed because no previous work existed to meet the needs of college students as they explore the consumer buying process specifically as it relates to the fashion industries; it has been updated in this new edition to reflect the dramatic impact that social media and mobile computing, among other current trends, now exert on many aspects of consumer behavior and fashion marketing. The text begins with an overview of why the study of consumer behavior is important and the relationship between consumers and marketers. It continues by explaining the internal and external factors that influence fashion consumers, describes how fashion marketers communicate their messages and how fashion consumers make their decisions, and concludes

with a discussion of fashion consumers, ethics, and responsible citizenship. To provide relevant industry examples of fashion interest to consumers, each chapter contains related Point of View and Case in Point sidebars as well as Key Terms, Questions for Review, Activities, and Mini-Projects.

Organization of The Text

Part I: We Are All Consumers

Chapter 1 explains why consumer behavior is important, and Chapter 2 elucidates the relationship between consumers and fashion marketers.

Part II: Internal Factors Influence Fashion Consumers

Chapter 3 describes how consumers perceive, learn, and remember; Chapter 4 explains motivation in relation to consuming fashion goods. In Chapter 5 consumer attitudes are explored; while personality and the consumer are the topics of Chapter 6.

Part III: External Factors Influence Fashion Consumers

In Chapter 7, age, family, and life cycle influences are covered; Chapter 8 deals with the topic of social influences on consumers; while demographics and psychographics important in understanding consumer behavior in fashion are found in Chapter 9.

Part IV: How Fashion Marketers Communicate and Consumers Decide

Chapter 10 is concerned with marketing research, how marketers obtain and use consumer information; Chapter 11 delves into the impact and importance of social media to fashion consumers and marketers. Chapter 12 details how consumers reach their buying decisions; while Chapter 13 explores when, where, and how consumers purchase fashion goods. The global aspects of fashion design and consumption are the topic of Chapter 14.

Part V: Fashion Consumers and Responsible Citizenship

Chapter 15 explains how ethics and social responsibility influence consumer behavior; and Chapter 16 describes the role of government and how laws and regulations, as well as consumer advocacy groups, play a role in consumers' decisions to purchase fashion goods.

Text Features

In addition to its enthusiastic and engaging writing style, *The Why of the Buy* contains a number of features concerning consumer behavior and marketing strategies that arouse student attention and maintain interest. They are useful for further investigation, class discussion, individual reports, and team projects.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT . . . ?

Each chapter opens with a list of major concepts that students will find covered within that chapter, providing a roadmap for their study and an easy

reference to ensure they have met the objectives upon completing the chapter.

CASE IN POINT

Each chapter contains one or more Case in Point sidebars that put a spotlight on current examples of consumer behavior or consumer-driven marketing concepts in real-life situations or activities. These features add timeliness and interest to the chapter content and make the material more meaningful to the student. Following are some examples:

- Why Millennials don't shop online
- How Dove celebrates diversity in its advertising
- The changing face of the American family
- Macy's use of YouTube personalities to promote its fashions
- Burberry's multimedia store design that replicates the online experience for customers

POINT OF VIEW

The chapters also feature one or more Point of View sidebars that offer fresh, timely insights or current viewpoints on relevant consumer behavior and marketing topics. These segments, too, add a slice of reality and add to students' understanding of the fashion world in an intriguing way. Examples include the following:

- The "buttons" that help generate buzz
- How emotions influence what consumers buy
- How Millennials are creating their own circles of fashion influence
- The issues involved when social media sites monetize user reviews
- How consumer advocates have taken on the cosmetics industry over unsafe ingredients

LET'S TALK

Also contained within each chapter are several Let's Talk questions relating to the content just presented. These questions enable instructors and students to discuss, react to, and perhaps elaborate on the topics explained. Following are some examples:

- How do you decide what to buy? Do you base your decisions on trends, practicality, brand name, or the suggestions of friends?
- For each of the last three fashion purchases you made, which of the three elements of the hierarchy of attitude was the greatest influence? Explain.
- Why do you think consumers might tend to leave more positive feedback than negative comments about a brand on social media? Have you ever offered your feedback to a brand? Was it positive or negative? Did you get a reply?
- What products would you consider purchasing online? Are there any items you'd prefer to buy in a physical store? Why or why not?

SUMMARY AND REVIEW

At the end of each of the 16 chapters, the following features are designed to reinforce and strengthen student comprehension of that chapter's consumer behavior concepts in an interesting way:

- The Summary reviews the major chapter topics in a succinct, step-by-step manner.
- A Key Terms list recaps the most useful words in comprehending consumer behavior and in grasping the chapter emphasis. (Each term is fully

defined both in the chapter and in the Glossary at the end of the text.)

- Review Questions cover the major points brought out in the chapter, while Activities provide an opportunity for students to connect the study of consumer behavior to fashion marketing in a realistic setting.

MINI-PROJECTS

Rounding off the end-of-chapter materials are one or two Mini-Projects that offer an opportunity to apply, in a realistic fashion setting, some of the concepts presented in the chapter. Examples include the following:

- Creating a consumer profile and a corresponding brand personality
- Recalling a recent fashion purchase and identifying the decision-making process
- Teaming with other class members and identifying a product or service each team member recently purchased using either routine, limited, or extensive decision making
- Selecting an entry on a fashion-oriented blog and analyzing how it might (or might not) influence readers to purchase a particular product

GLOSSARY

The Glossary at the end of the text contains all the key terms from each of the 16 chapters, plus their definitions. These terms enable students to understand communication within the consumer behavior and fashion communities and to put their words to use.



INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

An Instructor's Manual accompanying *The Why of the Buy* is available and contains chapter outlines, answers to review and discussion questions and mini-projects, plus a test bank and answers.

POWERPOINT SLIDES

A PowerPoint program presents the text's major concepts by chapter, facilitating instructor lectures and class discussion.

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Wherever we live, whatever our age, occupation, and background, we are all alike in that we are all consumers of fashion—but at the same time, we all have different reasons for buying. Maybe we just want a coat to keep us warm and dry; perhaps we're aiming to succeed in a job and so dress to look the part; or we might be buying a ring, hoping to bring joy to someone we love. The purpose of this newly revised and updated text is twofold: to examine our many reasons for buying and using fashion goods, and to recognize how fashion marketers use their understanding of consumer behavior to inform and persuade us to try their products.

Welcome, then, to the intriguing world of consumer behavior, the series of thoughts we have and actions we go through in deciding to buy and use goods and services. The focus of this book is consumer behavior as it relates specifically to fashion goods—that is, the variety of products including apparel, cosmetics, furniture, mobile phones, home accessories, cars, and other designed goods that are popular at a given time. Because fashion, by its nature, can change rapidly—and because of the dramatically changing landscape created by social media and mobile/digital communications—this revised edition presents an updated examination of both the ways in which consumers make fashion decisions and the ways in which fashion marketers track and anticipate consumer behavior trends in order to satisfy our needs for goods and services.

In working to meet customer needs, marketers look for those product qualities that will make people feel good about their purchases; these qualities are known as consumer benefits. We buy emotionally and justify logically. Consumer benefits can be tangible—for example, the beauty and value of a diamond ring—or intangible, such as the delight the recipient will feel when presented with the gift. When people buy fashion goods, they are buying benefits—what the product will do for them. “Will the dark suit make me look slimmer?” “Does that bronzer make me look healthier?” “By driving that convertible, will I stand a chance with that certain someone?” “Will my friends be impressed by my new smartphone?” Of course, everyone's ideas of product benefits are different, but marketers have found that large groups of people may be looking for the same kinds of benefits and that their marketplace behavior is similar. Marketers identify these groups and organize them according to those similarities. Businesses, particularly fashion businesses, know that they cannot serve every customer equally well, so they have to decide which customers they can serve most efficiently and profitably. To do this, marketers use a process called market segmentation: dividing the total population into distinct groups seeking similar customer benefits and showing similar purchasing behaviors. In this way, fashion marketers can best work to meet customer needs.

There are many ways to identify customers who share similar behaviors and lifestyles. Furthermore,

consumers are often grouped by characteristics including gender, age, geographic location, income, even apparel size, in order to provide the right products for a targeted customer group. For example, the mid-price retailer Gap recognized that many of its female customers were either too large or too short to wear regular sizes, so the company began offering plus and petite sizes. Market segmentation, then, allows fashion marketers to most accurately anticipate, identify, and respond to consumer fashion needs with the hope of keeping their customers' loyalty and thus staying in business and improving their profits. Another example of how companies cater to specific market segments can be seen in the efforts of handbag and accessories marketer Coach, which, in addition to its leather handbags in the upper price ranges, established a lower price handbag line for younger customers.


As you can tell, marketers respond to consumer needs because customers—as they decide what they will buy and use—are the reason for the existence of a business. However, any given business cannot serve everyone; therefore, by using strategies such as market segmentation, a business finds those customers it can best serve profitably. For example, Target understands that its customers want current fashions—even designer names like Missoni or Peter Pilotto—but at a very moderate price. Target needs to generate a profit in order to continue its business. Identifying customers' needs and focusing on the needs that a company can best serve while making a profit is the marketing concept. In the highly competitive fashion field, the most successful businesses pay close attention to the marketing concept—their very existence depends on it!

Today's fashion marketplace is global, and fashion news is spread instantly around the world via

the Internet and mobile communications. At the same time, social media has opened a two-way dialogue between consumers and marketers—not to mention providing consumers with a vast source of fashion information and influence at their fingertips. This communications network permits consumers to express their needs and marketers to understand those needs and fulfill them at faster speeds than ever before. In this updated text, we explore the many ways in which digital communications and social media have changed the entire game plan both for consumers making fashion decisions and marketers eager to influence those decisions.

Our approach begins with a look at the relationship between consumers and the field of fashion, showing the contributions that consumers make to fashion and design. Next we explore the minds of consumers to observe how humans perceive and learn. We then look at what motivates consumers and how attitudes and values influence their selection and purchase of fashion goods. Our focus then shifts to examine how marketers' methods of persuasion work to influence consumer actions. As consumers we see ourselves a number of ways, and our self-perceptions can also influence our choice of fashion goods.

The outside world has an effect as well; factors such as family, age, and ethnicity can have an impact on our fashion purchases, as can our friends, social class, income, and lifestyle. Fashion marketers collect extensive information on consumer motivations and decisions in an effort to ensure their persuasion will lead to our ultimate satisfaction as consumers. Before buying, consumers may go through numerous decision-making steps, seeking information from sources such as social networks,



stores, catalogs, the Internet, TV, and friends, among others. For some consumers, this search can be local; for others, it can be worldwide. Organizations (both private and governmental) have been created to help consumers in reaching buying decisions, and to protect consumers from potentially

harmful products or business practices. These topics and more are what we will be exploring as we delve into the “why of the buy.” Consumer behavior and fashion marketing are fascinating processes—let’s see how they interact!

THE
WHY
OF THE
BUY





Part I

WE ARE ALL CONSUMERS

SHOPPING has become an American pastime. Consumers buy both for need and for entertainment, as Part I describes.

Through learning as much as possible about consumers, fashion businesses can work to influence customer purchasing today and in the future. Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for *The Why of the Buy*, discussing what consumers want and how marketers can best serve them. Chapter 2 examines what consumers value, and the connection between companies and customers, followed by a description of how businesses gather consumer information, develop strategies, and create what they hope will be lasting marketing relationships with their customers.

Why Is Consumer Behavior Important to the Fields of Fashion and Design?

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE FASHION AND DESIGN FIELDS?

- ✓ The crucial roles that marketing, in general, and consumer behavior, specifically, play in the success of a product/service.
- ✓ Why an understanding of how people make purchasing decisions is the key to effectively communicating with consumers.
- ✓ Why marketers must study consumer behavior in order to determine and deliver what customers need and want.
- ✓ How culture influences buyers and how, combined with the zeitgeist, it is a major determinant of what people buy.
- ✓ Why market segmentation is vital to identifying the right customer at the right time.

Every January, the National Retail Federation, the world's largest retail trade association, holds its Annual Convention and Expo in New York City. At a recent convention, the most important topics included:

- The Subconscious Mind, Habits, and Behaviors of Consumers
- Retail Goes Personal: Creating Stores Shoppers Want
- Analytics to Understand the Multi-Channel and Multi-Device Customer
- Product Innovation for the People and by the People
- Understanding New Technologies and their Influences on Consumer Behavior
- “Catch and Keep” the Digital Shopper: How to Deliver Retail Their Way¹

Why were these topics of such interest to convention attendees? Because they were seeking the answer to the eternal marketing question—the one that's asked again and again by businesspeople every day: What do customers want, and how can we best serve them?

It's an important question—one that addresses the very essence of doing business successfully. The more we learn about what people purchase and their behaviors before, during, and after those purchases, the more fascinating the issue becomes. Read these examples and you'll see what we mean.

Did you know that there is a group of young African men from the Republic of the Congo, known as *Sapeurs*, or members of the *Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes* (Society of Tastemakers and Elegant People), who, although chronically unemployed and living in the worst poverty, devote themselves to purchasing and

wearing expensive clothing, made in the design houses of Paris, London, and Milan? To possess these precious pieces, *Sapeurs* do whatever it takes to make enough money to buy an ensemble and wear it with pride, while displaying the most gentlemanly bearing and behavior amidst their dismal surroundings (Figure 1.1).²

Did you know that in the United States, there is one group of consumers that shops using a tablet or mobile phone 70 percent more than other groups do, that is more than two and a half times more likely to judge the quality of a product by its packaging, and that is more than twice as likely to follow trends and try new products first? If you guessed that it's top income earners, or maybe the under-30 crowd, you guessed wrong. It's the Hispanic community, which is rapidly becoming the most influential voice in pop culture, business, and politics, and exerting a trendsetting impact that can make or break the success of a product or service.³

Did you know that a recent study reported that children between the ages of 2 and 17 watch an annual average of 15,000 to 18,000 hours of television during which they see 25,000 to 40,000 commercials? (Other studies' precise numbers differ slightly, but all are comparable.) Compare these numbers with the 12,000 hours spent per year in school. Approximately \$15 to \$17 billion is spent yearly by companies advertising to children in the United States, the impact of which is getting stronger due to the lessening of influence by parents and others in the older generation.⁴

These stories all lead to one essential question: Why? Why do people buy what they buy? What are the motivators behind our buying practices? To begin to

uncover the answers, we must start with an understanding of the term **consumer behavior**, which is the central issue of this book. We define consumer behavior as the actions and decision-making processes of buyers as they recognize their desire for a product or service and engage in the search, evaluation, purchase, use, and disposal of that particular commodity. Consumer behavior is the study of **consumption**: the using up of a resource by the person who has selected, adopted, used, discarded, and (hopefully) recycled it.



FIGURE 1.1 The Congolese Sapeurs value dressing like gentlemen; this man proudly models his designer suit in Kinshasa, a city badly damaged by years of conflict and struggling under the weight of refugee camps and poverty.

Fashion and Design Purchases Are Unique

When it comes to the selection of fashion-related goods, some very specific influences determine our buying behavior. Why? We use fashionable items primarily to make statements about ourselves, our tastes, our values, our identities, our aspirations—that is, the way we want others to see us. People seek different goods for different reasons. Some of us are drawn to items that bear the names of famous designers, some to pieces that are comfortable and affordable, some to items that reflect elements of good design.

What, exactly, is *design*? In his book *By Design*, author Ralph Caplan calls it “a process for making things right, for shaping what people need. We all live with designed objects that we love, hate, use, break, and don’t know how to fix . . . we live in a designed world.”⁵ *Webster’s New World Dictionary* defines it as “to plan and carry out, especially by artistic arrangement or in a skillful way; to make original plans for or outcome aimed at.”⁶ Our working definition of **design** is a hybrid: a creative process, driven by a need, that leads to an invention of some sort, be it practical or artistic, functional or simply attractive, devised to enhance life in some way.

To be sure, fashion has an important relationship to design of all kinds, because the concept of fashion pertains to more than just clothing. It includes automobiles, furniture, accessories, cuisine, appliances, lighting, bathroom fixtures, jewelry, music, graphics, photography, industrial products, paint colors, electronics, and so on. Simply stated, design covers a lot of ground.

The term **fashion** applies to anything that's of the moment and subject to change; it's anything that members of a population deem desirable and appropriate at a given time. During the past few years, many celebrities have turned their pampered pooches into chic fashion accessories (Figure 1.2). These doggy darlings have accompanied their famous owners to fashion shows and galas, traveling in designer canine carriers, decked out in cashmere, sequins, and feathers (yes, we're talking about the pups!). Who knows what type of pet garb will be *de rigueur* by the time you read this book? But one



FIGURE 1.2 For La Toya Jackson, a pampered pup makes a great fashion statement.

thing is for sure: Fashion trendsetters will likely be on the trail of something entirely different by then.

Fashion and design are both about tuning into the **zeitgeist**, the spirit of the times. To be fashionable or engage productively in the process of design, one must be extremely well read, well rounded, in tune with current aesthetics, politics, popular products, culture, art, architecture, business—everything occurring in the present, which together make up the zeitgeist. Developing awareness and sensitivity must be top priorities, because success in the worlds of fashion and design requires a person to be up-to-date and in sync with the moment, for the moment is the indicator of all that is important, valued, and wanted by customers (whether it be symbolic or functional, real or perceived).

How Marketing Influences the Purchase of Designed Goods

Suppose you want to develop your own fashion-related business in the future—a sportswear manufacturing firm, a video production company, an online designer resale boutique, an interior design consulting service, an art gallery, a contemporary furniture showroom in a bustling mart center, and so forth. There are so many possibilities in the world of design, retailing, wholesaling, and consulting that the choices seem endless. How will you begin? How will you determine who your customers are? How will you connect with them, once you identify them? How will you decide what to offer them next season and the season after that? How will you get them to keep coming back to you and not go somewhere else the next time they go shopping?

CASE IN POINT 1.1

Moen Transforms Faucets into Jewelry

When was the last time you found yourself in the powder room at someone's home and thought, "Gee, that faucet would make a great necklace"? Never? Well, don't blame home-hardware brand Moen. The company believes the designs of its bathroom fixtures are so striking, they could be translated into equally striking jewelry—and set out to prove it by commissioning actual statement-piece necklaces based on its statement-piece faucets.

It was actually The Martin Agency, Moen's advertising firm, that created the campaign, inviting jewelry designers from around the world to submit sketches of necklaces inspired by several of Moen's distinctive faucets. The selected designs were then crafted into actual necklaces, which became the centerpiece of Moen's global advertising campaign. The TV ads used special effects to show the jewelry falling from models' necks and magically reassembling into the actual bathroom faucets that inspired the jewelry.

"Our industry often thinks of faucets as the jewelry of the bathroom," said Tim McDonough, Moen's vice president of global brand marketing, adding, "The perfect faucet can add glamour and style, and highlight a homeowner's personal taste."

Ultimately, six necklaces were produced for the advertising, crafted using a variety of techniques. Some of the jewelry pieces were designed and fabricated by hand, while others were created with the help of computer-assisted design, laser cutters, and even a 3D printer. Moen also had a limited number of the necklaces made to give as gifts to some of the company's key retailers and customers at several home-industry trade shows.

"We've tended over the years to focus more on innovation and reliability, but we always realized that style drives purchase," said McDonough. Thanks to the faucets-as-jewelry campaign, Moen is now putting style at the forefront of its "Buy it for looks, buy it for life" tagline.

Sources: Ann-Christine Diaz, "Moen Turns Its Home Hardware into Fashion Jewelry," *Advertising Age*, September 17, 2013, http://adage.com/article/news/moen-turns-home-hardware-fashion-jewelry/244173/?utm_source=daily_email&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=adage&ttl=1379988078; and Moen, "Moen Incorporated Makes a 'Statement' with New Global Ad Campaign," News release, September 19, 2013.