

The Definition of Attitude and Its Properties

The ABC Model of Attitude and Its Measurement

Know-Feel-Do Hierarchies and How Involvement Affects Them

Four Functions that Attitudes Serve for Consumers

A Theory of Reasoned Action and Its Application in Consumer Brand Attitudes

Three Routes to Molding Attitudes—Convincing, Charming, and Inducing the Consumer

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TO UNDERSTAND

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

Apple Watch was launched on April 24, 2015. Much awaited by fans of everything Apple, since it was first announced on September 9, 2014, the watch was made available first online and then slowly rolled out in its own stores and selected offline retail stores. It is estimated that the company received almost one million pre-orders in the US during the initial six hours of the pre-order period on April 10, 2015.

Many early adopters were happy just to get their hands on the watch. But to many consumers, such as Esther Levy, while the design of the watch was cool, its benefits were a mixed blessing. Leaving them with an attitude wavering between the joy of the surprise and the annoyance of push notifications.

In the marketplace, consumer attitudes rule!

At this very moment, thousands of marketers are pitching their products and services to millions of consumers around the world. Interrupting our TV program viewing, enveloping our favorite race car on the track, delaying our YouTube streaming, pushing a free sample into our hands at the city beer festival, and lurking on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Are consumers listening to them? How are they reacting to this cacophony of slogans and promises, and to that visual parade of product images? Aside from these marketers of material goods, also soliciting the favorable opinion of consumers are charities, schools, tourist spots, casinos and nightclubs, films, TV shows, sports teams, and even presidential candidates. How do consumers come to form an opinion about these entities? What persuades them to embrace some of these marketplace offerings, while spurning others? And how can marketers win favorable consumer reactions to their offerings?

This chapter is our answer to these questions. In this chapter, we explain the concept of attitude—the supreme precursor to all of our actions in the marketplace. We peek deep inside the mind of the consumer and witness the dynamic interplay of our thoughts, feelings, and intentions. Here we will also meet TOVA, TORA, and TOTA—no, these are not the names of some new renditions of Depeche Mode’s 1981 album; these are, instead, the nicknames of three models of attitude.

Understanding attitudes can help us fashion our market offerings—advertising and all—to be consumer-friendly. This chapter is a key, in other words, to getting consumers to develop a good attitude toward our product offerings, and, consequently, to throw some dough our way. It is also a key to becoming a market success.



Smart Watches, such as shown here—not intended to resemble Apple Watch—are often a mixed blessing for some consumers.

ATTITUDE: DEFINITION

Do you have it?

Do you have an attitude? Toward Toni Braxton & Babyface and their album *Love, Marriage & Divorce*. Toward Tom Brady (New England Patriots quarterback) and NFL's so called *deflategate* (under-inflation of the footballs in the 2015 AFC title game)? Toward Lady Gaga and the lyrics of her songs in *Bad Romance*? Do you like or dislike them? And were you repulsed by Kanye West's Shenanigans (for example, the one where he snubbed Taylor Swift at the 2009 Grammys and then again Beck at the 2015 Grammys)? And charmed by Tim Tibow's signature expression of gratitude? And which college courses did you like the most? The least? Which is your favorite drink—Coke, Pepsi, or the Dew? And what is your own opinion about Apple Watch, based on direct experience, or based on your reading of the reactions expressed by Esther Levy? All of these questions are designed to elicit your attitudes. So, just what is an attitude?

In common parlance, when we refer to attitude as a concept, we simply refer to a person's "like" or "dislike" of something, his or her opinion about something. If you like something, then your attitude toward it is positive; if you dislike it, then your attitude is negative. However, to fully understand the nature of attitudes, we need to examine a classic definition of attitudes, offered by psychologist Gordon Allport: **Attitudes** are learned predispositions to respond to an object in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way.¹

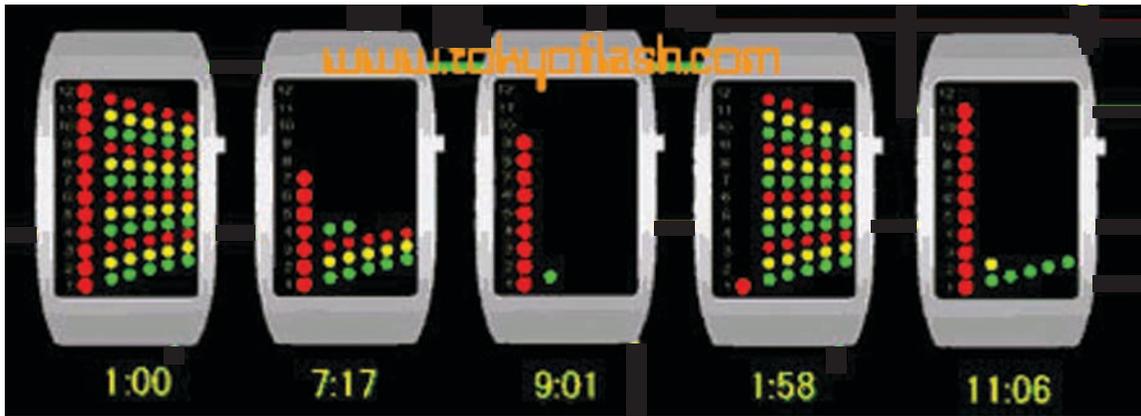
This definition has several elements:

- **Attitudes are learned** That is, no one is born with them. We were not born with an attitude toward Lady Gaga, Kanye West, Tim Tibow, Coke, or Pepsi, for example; instead, we have acquired (i.e., "learned") our attitudes during our time here on this earth. And how did we learn them? On the basis of some experience with or information about these things or persons.
- **They are targeted toward an object or a class of objects** If we were to ask you what your attitude is or what your opinion is, you would ask, "Opinion about what?" or "Attitude toward what?" That "what" is the "object" in our definition—attitude toward an object. And that object can be anything—a brand, a product, a company, a class, a movie, a presidential candidate, and even an idea (e.g., the idea of 'freedom of speech'). Thus, we hold different attitudes toward different objects.
- **Attitudes cause responses** That is, they are the reason we respond, or act, in a certain way toward these objects. Thus, we drink Coke and avoid Pepsi (or the other way around) because of our attitudes toward Coke and Pepsi. And our attitude toward Lady Gaga and her music makes us buy or not buy her albums.
- **The response that an attitude causes is consistent** Thus, we don't buy Lady Gaga's music today and avoid it tomorrow. And we don't willingly eat sushi today and avoid it tomorrow. Instead, we act toward a given object the same way over a period of time; i.e., consistently.
- **Attitude is a predisposition** By predisposition, we mean it is our "inclination." Thus, it resides in our minds. We are predisposed to doing (or not doing) something (not by birth; but by learning about an object). For example, we become predisposed (or inclined) to buy Apple Watch, and we become predisposed to eat Reese's Pieces.

Predisposition

Pregnant with meaning

This word, *predisposition*, is a wonderful word, pregnant with rich meaning. It is the key to the concept of attitude and to understanding the true nature of this concept. No other term can cut it as well. We could say, for example, that an attitude is our opinion about something, and broadly speaking we would be right, but opinion is what we think of something. That is all. It is not quite the same thing as predisposition. We could say attitude is our general evaluation of something—whether we view it as a good thing or a bad thing—and we would be approximately right. But the word *evaluation* does not quite



If you have never seen this Japanese watch before, then you can't possibly have an attitude toward it. Because no one is born with attitudes.

Now look at it, grasp how time is read on this watch, and then decide if you like or dislike it.

You now have an attitude, and we mean attitude *toward the watch*. You just *learned* it. And now you want to get one—that is your *response*. You want it today, and you would want it tomorrow (*consistency*), unless, of course, you change your attitude itself (toward the watch). You will buy it as soon as the opportunity arises (*predisposition*). You can buy it from www.tokyoflash.com.

YOUR ATTITUDE IS WAITING FOR ACTION!!!

capture it either. *Predisposition*—it means we have something in our minds—a thought, an opinion, an evaluation, a view, even a feeling—and that we are going to do something about it. We are going to act toward the object of our attitude. Predisposition makes us inclined to act. Thus, an attitude is our mental code to release some action toward something. It is an *action in waiting*.

Action in Waiting

This idea of attitude as predisposition and predisposition as *action in waiting* is very useful to marketers. Marketers are interested in predicting consumers' future actions or future behaviors. A behavior is something we *do*; an attitude (predisposition) is something we have in our minds. So marketers use consumer attitudes to predict consumer behaviors. Thus, for example, if marketers knew that you had a positive attitude toward, say, Adele's music, but a negative attitude toward Coldplay, then they could predict that you would be likely to buy Adele's music but not buy Coldplay albums. Marketers want to predict consumers' behaviors—specifically whether consumers will or will not buy a product, *before* marketers invest the money to make and market that product.

Here again are the key elements in the definition of attitude:

(1) learned (2) predisposition, (3) toward an object, (4) to respond or act (toward that object and in a favorable or unfavorable way); (5) consistently.

MEASURING CONSUMER ATTITUDES

As marketers, we are interested in finding out what consumers' attitudes are toward our brand. Suppose we wanted to find out consumers' attitudes toward Allison Moorer's new album *Down to Believing* (released March 17, 2015). Before its mass production, we could play a sample of the tracks to consumers and ask them some questions that could reveal their predispositions. Something very simple like, "What do you think of this music?" However, to assess their attitudes on a numerical scale (so we can compare consumer attitudes across several brands and also across consumers), marketers use scales (a set of measurement questions like this are called *scales*). One such scale is shown below. We can average the three items to arrive at the attitude score. Suppose this score comes to -1.67 for consumer Ross, -1.33 for consumer Joey, and $+1.33$ for consumer Chandler; then, Chandler's attitude toward Moorer's music would be favorable, Joey's attitude unfa-

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