



Influencing the
Impulse Buyer
and Answering the
Rational Buyer

DMIN3

Do you address the needs of both Impulse Buyers and Rational Buyers?

In the world of marketing, we spend a good deal of time getting to know our buyers. The more we learn about them, the more we can position our strategies in a way that influences them to buy our products or services. There are seemingly endless types of buyers out there; however, we've learned that an individual's buying behavior can be divided into one of two predominant categories: Impulsive or Rational. It's estimated that 40 percent of consumerism is driven by the Impulse Buyer while the remaining 60 percent is done by the Rational Buyer.

Marketing strategies for each of these buying behaviors is very different. Much research has been done analyzing these two buyer types, including brain imaging and psychological profiling. Learning all we can about these contrasting behaviors allows us to customize our clients' marketing dollars according to buyer behavior.

Psychologist and philosopher John Dewey described the consumer buying process in the following five steps:

- 1 Identifying needs/wants
- 2 Researching how to meet and achieve them
- 3 Weighing alternatives
- 4 Making a purchase
- 5 Evaluating the purchase

While this process seems very rational, Impulse Buyers might still hit all five steps, they just move through them very quickly. They also tend to put more emphasis on steps one and four, leading them to rush through (or ignore) any red flags that might emerge during the other steps.

Let's take a look at each buyer's profile so you have a better idea of what, and more specifically with whom you are targeting.

The Impulse Buyer

Common characteristics of an Impulsive Buyer include:

- Purchases are often unplanned, spontaneous and might not be needed
- Loves to shop
- Easily seduced by slogans, hype and discounts
- Experiences a positive, bio-chemical rush after getting a good deal, or making a satisfying purchase
- Highly social and status oriented
- Has a difficult time reigning in emotions
- Usually struggles with money management skills
- Uses shopping as a means of consolation, i.e. he or she believes undesirable feelings are soothed by a new purchase

The Rational Buyer

Traits associated with Rational Buyers include:

- Ability to manage a budget
- Appreciates a "good deal" but won't make a purchase solely because it's a good deal
- Derives pleasure from a satisfying purchase, but doesn't often consider it an emotional comfort
- Prefers to research options before making a final decision
- Might be wary of super slogans and high-pressure sales
- Is not off-put by delayed gratification and might even enjoy the anticipation
- Places less emphasis on social status
- Has better emotional control

As you can see from reading these profiles, we need to take two very different approaches in order to influence an Impulse Buyer as opposed to answering the needs of the Rational Buyer. The irony being that since the Impulse Buyer is acting spontaneously, we have to know how, when and where to expose them to a product so they are more likely to make a purchase.

Answering the Needs of the Rational Buyer.

Don't make the mistake of picturing the Rational Buyer as a boring automaton with minimal emotional currents. They are still excited about new products, eager to have their wants and needs met and are looking for a good deal. The difference is that they aren't quite as emotionally charged as an Impulse Buyer, so they might require more time to move through the five-part buying process.

Remember, rational-buying behaviors account for 60 percent of the market. This means our marketing efforts need to be as rational, trustworthy and quick to the point. So what is the Rational Buyer looking for? According to the Harvard Business Review, your customers want decision simplicity, above all else. They want to be able to find information easily, written in a language they understand, and they don't want to have to sort through a lot of smoke and mirrors.

How do we know this?

We are always trying to discover what makes buyers tick, so we can learn how to better capture their attention and, eventually, their sale. Marketers are constantly testing, optimizing and researching to find the best solution. After a series of surveys, led by the Corporate Executive Board Corporation, 7,000 respondents made one thing very clear: they are tired of being bombarded by confusing marketing messages.

These messages, often designed to capture the Impulse Buyer — not the Rational Buyer — with energetic exclamations about “Buy NOW!” “We're the Best!” and “Your Life Will be Miserable without Product XX!” are a complete turn off to the Rational Buyer. Plus, times have changed. In past decades, the Rational Buyer had access to just a few television ads, one daily newspaper or a couple of magazine subscriptions. It was easy to decide what was appealing and what wasn't when comparing just a few brands, and using a handful of advertisements. As Gord Hotchkiss points out in *The Death of the Purchase Funnel*, all their consumers were headed down virtually the same path. The Internet, however, has changed everything.



If you'd like to talk about how DMN3 could help you generate more revenue from your marketing, please contact Pam Lockard at pam.lockard@dmn3.com or 832-844-2645.