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| Freud, Herzberg, Maslow - Theories of Human Motivation |
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**Introduction**

Marketing is defined as “the [management](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/management.html) [process](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/process.html) through which [goods and services](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/goods-and-services.html) [move](http://www.investorwords.com/10366/move.html) from [concept](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/concept.html) to the customer” according to the business dictionary. But in order to market a product, the consumer must have a desire or need for that item. It is important for the market researcher to understand what drives a person to purchase certain products.

The consumers’ psychological state of mind may contribute to what products are consumed or desired. Three psychologists are well known for the development in theories that drive human motivation. They are Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow and Fredrick Herzberg. Each one has a different and unique perspective on what drives human motivation. This paper will describe each theory created and decipher how the human motivation is an important factor to marketing. First, we will begin with Sigmund Freud.

**Sigmund Freud**

The best known theorists of human motivation are Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow and Frederick Herzberg. All of these theorists express different implications for consumer analysis and marketing strategy. Sigmund Freud is best known for his theories of the unconscious mind. He believes the unconscious mind drives are conscious actions such as purchasing products.

Sigmund Freud was born May 6, 1856 in Freiberg, Moravia. He was originally homeschooled by his parents. They then enrolled him in the Spurling Gymnasium in which he graduated Summa Cum Laude. He is mostly known for his psychology research in “childhood, personality, memory, sexuality and therapy.” (Cherry)

We all have many needs at any given time. Most of these needs are biogenic, meaning they arise from physiological states of tension such as hunger, thirst or discomfort. Other needs are psychogenic, meaning they arise from a psychological state of tension such as the need for recognition, esteem, or belonging. The need becomes a motive when it is aroused to a sufficient level of intensity causing us to act or react. “All a man’s ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord” (Proverbs 16:2) “A marketer’s task is to understand what happens in the consumer’s consciousness between the arrival of the outside marketing stimuli and the ultimate purchase decisions.” (Kotler & Keller 2012). “Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.” (1Chronicles 28:9)

Humans are impressionable, emotional and irrational. We buy things we do not need often at high prices and for silly reasons. According to Sigmund Freud “psychoanalytic theory of personality, is composed of three elements.” (Chewy 2012) These three elements of personality are known as the id, the ego and the superego. They all work together to create complex human behavior.

**The Id**

The id is the component of personality that is present from birth. According to Freud, the id is the source of all psychic energy, making it the primary component of personality. (Chewy 2012) The pleasure principle which strives for gratification of all desires, wants and needs of the id. If these needs are not satisfied, results may display tension or anxiety. For example, an increase in hunger or thirst should produce an immediate attempt to eat or drink.

**The Ego**

The ego is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality. (Chewy 2012) The ego is developed from the id and ensures that the impulses of the id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world. The ego functions in both the conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious mind according to Dichter (2011).

The ego operates based on the reality principle, which strives to satisfy the id’s desires in realistic and socially appropriate ways. The reality principle weighs the costs and benefits of an action before deciding to act upon or abandon impulses. For example, “Studies show that when a store plays soothing music shoppers will linge for longer and often spend more.” (Dichter 2011) If customers are in a good mood, they are more susceptible to persuasion. We believe price tends to indicate the value of things and many people will value time to get something free.

**The Superego**

The last component of personality to develop is the superego. “The superego is the aspect of personality that holds all of our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and society, our sense of right and wrong.” (Chewy 2011). The superego provides guidelines for making just and moral judgments. According to Freud, the superego begins to emerge at around the age of five years old.

There are two parts of the superego:

1. Ego ideal, which includes rules and standards for good behaviors. These behaviors include those which are approved of by parental and other authority figures. Obeying these rules leads to feelings of pride, value and accomplishment. (Chewy 2011)

2. Conscience, which includes information about things that are viewed as bad by parents and society. These behaviors are often forbidden and lead to bad consequences, punishments a feeling of guilt and remorse. (Chewy 2011)

Well before Freudian analysis, American businesses have spent decades trying to decipher market patterns. For example, polling techniques were used to sass out the needs of consumers buying motivation. (Dichter 2011) Today analysts continue to study modern man’s crazy instincts for ages. “In America in the 1930’s another Viennese psychologist named Earnest Dichter spun this insight into a million-dollar business.” (Dichter 2011) His genius was in seeing the opportunity that irrational buying offered for smart selling. (Dicther 2011) He also saw human motivation as a “iceberg” with two-thirds hidden from view, even to the decision makers. “What people actually spend their money on in the most instances are psychological differences, illusory brand images.” (Dichter 2011) Sigmund Freud argued that people are governed by irrational unconscious urges over a century ago that still primarily is followed today by consumers.

Overall, Freud is still best known for his theories of the unconscious mind. Freud’s contribution was to give the unconscious content, a repressive function that would run counter to the positivism of his era, suggesting that free will is delusion and that we are not entirely aware of what we think and often act for reasons that have little to do with our conscious thoughts. (Freud 2006). Today, motivational researcher continues to the tradition of Freudian interpretation, which identifies different motives a product can satisfy. Motivational researchers will continue to collect data such as interviewing consumers to uncover deeper motives triggered by unconscious moods and behaviors with consumer spending and buying power. In contrast to Freud’s theory, we will next examine the theory of Abraham Maslow.

**Abraham Maslow**

Another key psychological theory was produced by Abraham Maslow known as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. “Abraham Harold Maslow was born April 1, 1908 in Brooklyn, New York… he first studied law at the City College of New York (CCNY). After three semesters, he transferred to Cornell, and then back to CCNY.” (Boeree 2006) He received his PhD in psychology from the University of Wisconsin in 1934. Throughout his career and life, Maslow studied how rhesus monkeys reach their full potential. From his study, he transferred the information into how humans grow psychologically. In 1954, Maslow created his theory to reach the highest level of human growth, self-actualization. The levels begin at the lowest level then progress based on what has been accomplished in the person’s life.

This theory is useful in marketing because it allows the researcher understand what products will sell depending on what level their target audience is on. A person not only, ascends to the top of the pyramid in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, but they can also descend based on the current events in their lives. The easiest products to market are items derived from the lowest level of the pyramid. These goods and services are geared to suffice the basic physiological needs.

The levels in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs are listed on a pyramid and range from the lowest point on the pyramid to the highest point: physiological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. In order to ascend to the next higher level, one must fully understand and fulfill the previous level. ”[Classic economic theory, based as it is on an inadequate theory of human motivation, could be revolutionized by accepting the reality of higher human needs, including the impulse to self actualization and the love for the highest values.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/classic_economic_theory-based_as_it_is_on_an/154450.html)” (Maslow)

**Physiological needs**

The lowest level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is physiological needs. These needs are what is vital to survival and include, but not limited to shelter, food, and water. One must also maintain the proper balance of nutrients and health needed for survival. This is evident in the presence of a baby. A baby’s main focus is food and water. Once all of the basic needs have been met, then one must seek the next level-safety and security.

**Safety and Security**

The second level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is safety and security. One must overcome the first need to be safe and secure. A person may feel safe by living in a neighborhood that has a low crime rate or knowing that the police are at their discretion. Safety can be also obtained by having a strong family and people that one can depend on. Also included in this need is security. This can be obtained by having a successful career and available funds in their checking or savings account in the event that the funds are needed. Being protected from harm and having a sense of security will allow one to proceed to the third level in the pyramid. This level is titled the love and belonging need.

**Love and Belonging**

The need to find that special someone, get married and start a family is part of the love and belonging need in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Finding that right one can be a challenge that many unable to accomplish, thus trapping a person on the third level. If this level cannot be accomplished, then one cannot excel to the next level. Along with finding love, one also seeks the need to belong. This can include an organization, such as church, school’s extracurricular activities like sports teams, or charitable or civil services such as nonprofit organizations. One must be able to distinguish which activities will accentuate their personality. Once one feels loved and included, then they can accelerate to the fourth level in the hierarchy- the esteem needs.

**Esteem**

For most people, the fourth level in the hierarchy is the highest level achieved. Many people have difficulty transgressing beyond this level because he or she cannot determine between the two levels of esteem. The lowest level consists of “the need for the respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity, even dominance” (Boeree 2006) The highest level consists of self-esteem. This is one’s overall evaluation of self-worth. Self-esteem is our own self-image. Once a person is able to realize that they are worthy as a person, then and only then, can they move to the highest level in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, self-actualization.

**Self-Actualization**

The highest level in the pyramid is termed self-actualization. This is the level in which one reaches their full potential. This person has achieved all of their short and long term goals. On this level, one is free to purchase anything that is marketed that fits their personal desires. They tend to buy more luxurious items because all of the other levels have been satisfied. They do not have to worry about where or when they will get their next meal. He or she has a home in which they can go to daily. This person is not worried about being unsafe or unsecure. All of the organizations that fit their personality become a major part of their life. They are spending their life with someone that makes them feel special and loved. These people also have the respect of their peers and realize that they are important.



(Boeree 2006)

**Frederick Herzberg Theory**

The final theorist that we will review is Frederick Herzberg. “[He] was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on April 18, 1923. He did his [undergraduate](http://www.lib.uwo.ca/programs/generalbusiness/herzberg.html) work at CCNY and then obtained [graduate degrees](http://www.lib.uwo.ca/programs/generalbusiness/herzberg.html) at the University of Pittsburg. Prior to his move to Utah, Herzberg was professor of management at Case Western Reserve University where he established the Department of Industrial Mental Health.” (http://www.lib.uwo.ca/programs/generalbusiness/herzberg.html)

Frederick Herzberg developed a two-factor theory that distinguishes factors that cause dissatisfaction from factors that cause satisfaction. An example of this is a computer that does not come with a warranty. The computer would be a satisfier; however, the lack of a warranty would be considered the dissatisfier. The presence of a product warranty would not act as a satisfier or motivator of a purchase. It is not a source of intrinsic satisfaction. The ease of use would be considered a satisfier. (Kotler & Keller 2012).

**Satisfiers vs. Dissatisfiers**

Herzberg’s theory has two implications. The first implication happens when a seller should do their best to avoid dissatisfiers. The disastisfiers are a poor training manual or a poor service policy. The second implication is the seller should identify the major satisfiers or motivators of purchase in the market and then supply them. (Kotler & Keller 2012).

A motivated person is ready to act on influence by his or her perception of a situation. In marketing, perceptions are more important than reality, because perceptions affect consumers’ actual behavior. Perception is a process which we select, organize and interpret information to create a meaningful picture of the world. The perception depends on physical stimuli and also on the stimuli’s relationship to the surrounding environment and conditions within each of us. A person might perceive a fast–talking salesperson as aggressive and insincere. Another person may view the person as intelligent and helpful. Each person may respond to the person differently. (Kotler & Keller 2012).

**Selective Distortion**

Selective distortion is the tendency to interpret information in a way that fits our preconceptions. Consumers will distort information to be consistent with prior brand and product beliefs and expectations. (Kotler & Keller 2012).

**Consumer Brands**

The power of consumer brand beliefs is demonstrated in a blind taste test. A group of consumers will participate in a blind taste test to sample a product without knowing the brand. Another group of consumers will have a different opinion regarding the same product. When consumers report different opinions of branded and unbranded versions identical products, it must be the case of their brand and product beliefs created by what the past experiences, marketing activity for that brand. When Coors changed its label from “Banquet Beer” to “Original Draft,” consumers claimed the taste had changed even though the formulation had no ingredients added or removed. (Kotler & Keller 2012) This is an example of how people perceive certain brands and identify with successful marketing.

**Subliminal Perception**

Subliminal perception has fascinated marketers for ages. Marketers embed covert, subliminal messages in ads or packaging. Consumers are not consciously aware of them and they affect behavior. It is clear that mental processes include many subtle subconscious effects. There is no evidence that supports that marketers can systematically control consumers at a level to change important or strongly held beliefs. (Kotler & Keller 2012) These subliminal perceptions may increase a person’s subconscious desire to purchase a product.

**Selective Retention**

Selective Retention works to the advantage of strong brands in marketing. We are more likely to remember good points about a product we like and forget good points about competing products. Marketers need to use repetition to make sure their message is not overlooked. (Kotler & Keller 2012)

**Conclusion**

Three of the best known theories of human motivation are those of Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow, and Frederick Herzberg. Freud assumed that psychological forces shaped people’s motivations; Maslow explained why people are driven by particular needs at particular times; and Herzberg developed a two-factor theory that showed the difference between dissatisfiers from satisfiers. All three of these theories are important to marketing because it allows the market researcher understand what drives a person to purchase a product at any given time in their life. By knowing this information allows the market researchers to properly market their products to consumers and yield a profit for their company.

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