PERSUASION:
MARKETING AS BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE IN BUSINESS AND NONBUSINESS CONTEXTS[1]

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I. INTRODUCTION

At a time of national concern over energy shortage, inflation, and international unrest, we may be excused for wishing it were true that the files of corporate offices or behavioral science departments contained the knowledge needed to induce people to change their behavior. We could use a few "hidden persuaders" to get people to conserve energy, desist from debasing the currency, and refrain from threatening lives and engaging in violent actions. It is sobering to consider the actual state of our knowledge of persuasion, particularly in light of the enormous amount of research time and creativity that have been devoted to the subject.

Throughout this paper the term *persuasion* is used in the sense of intended influence (i.e., actions taken for the purpose of influencing the behavior of other

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persons). Within the entire range of such actions, persuasion may be distinguished from coercion by its eschewing the threatened use of physical pain, injury, or death; from brainwashing by its objective of limited rather than pervasive influence on any one target; and from therapy in that the persuader initiates the intervention without first seeking consent from the persuadee. Instead of, or in addition to, the bases just noted for distinguishing persuasion from brainwashing and therapy, it might be suggested that persuasion takes people as it finds them and influences their behavior in relatively minor ways whereas both brainwashing and therapy aim to change people in fundamental ways. Paralleling a debate within marketing as to whether marketing changes people in fundamental or peripheral ways, some authors have used the term *persuasion* to mean or include fundamental change. Furthermore, the distinction between peripheral and fundamental change has not yet been made other than impressionistically. Accordingly, it seems preferable not to exclude fundamental change from the meaning of the term *persuasion* and, as above, to distinguish persuasion from brainwashing and therapy on other grounds. Although persuasion may refer to influence that is attempted via face-to-face or media communication, this chapter focuses on persuasion that uses electronic and print media.

Ask social scientists where their work on persuasion is to be found and the modal answer is likely to be, "Look under 'attitude change.'" Miller and Burgoon (1978) note that the study of persuasion has come to be linked with the fortunes of attitude research, and they discuss a number of dimensions of a more inclusive concept of persuasion. To judge by the titles of some recent books (e.g., Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981; Reardon, 1981; Schwerin & Newell, 1981), persuasion may be having something of a revival as a subject in its own right. The study of persuasion has yet another home, as Weibe (1951) recognized when, with poetic license for his grammar, he asked: "Why can't you sell brotherhood and rational thinking like you sell soap?" (p. 679). During the 1970s, marketing scholars attempted to answer Weibe with demonstrations of the appropriateness of marketing analysis to the objectives of nonbusiness organizations such as charities, colleges, museums, social cause campaigns, and government agencies (e.g., Gaedeke, 1977; Lovelock & Weinberg, 1978a,b).

A. What is Marketing Persuasion?

Notwithstanding the burgeoning literature on nonbusiness marketing and the imputation to marketing by its critics of persuasive power bordering on the absolute, marketing's distinctive approach to persuasion has not been articulated and, perhaps for this reason, marketing is not usually considered when social scientists discuss persuasion. Even within the discipline of consumer behavior, the essential *marketing* contribution to the study of persuasion appears not to have been recognized. Following the lead of basic psychology, consumer psychologists typically construe persuasion in terms of attitude change and, more recently, information processing (e.g., Chestnut, 1980). If marketers indeed possess the persuasive powers that critics of marketing claim, one would have to marvel at the nature of the disciplinary boundaries that could keep the marketer's knowledge from becoming part of behavioral science generally. Likewise, organizations which have had to take large losses on unsuccessful new product ventures and influence agents in the federal government who recently found less acceptance than expected for new forms of currency should rightly feel aggrieved at being denied ready access to marketing's formulas for persuasion. If marketing can make a contribution to the study or practice of persuasion in nonbusiness domains that is different from, and possibly better than, the approaches of other behavioral sciences, wherein do the differences lie? Where may we find described for behavioral scientists in general the distinctively *marketing* contribution to influence? To fill the vacuum, extravagant and erroneous notions of marketing persuasion abound ranging from rumors of communication below the threshold of awareness on the one hand to the embarrassing gimmickry of a whip inflation now (WIN) button on the other.

The decade that saw active "broadening" (Kotler & Levy, 1969; Kotler, 1972) of marketing's scope to include nonbusiness applications is being followed by a period in which we read less optimistic assessments than earlier of marketing's potential in the nonbusiness domain (e.g., Bloom & Novelli, 1981; Rothschild, 1979; Sheth & Frazier, 1982). With few exceptions there appears up to now to have been little interest in formal analysis of the extent to which business and nonbusiness contexts are comparable as regards the applications of marketing thought and practice. Marketing's application to nonbusiness contexts has proceeded in a somewhat atheoretical and pragmatic manner: Marketers saw that many of marketing's abundant analytic concepts and instruments have comparable and appropriate uses in a nonbusiness context. They put them to use and recommended their use to others. We should not have to rely solely on findings from empirical studies to assess marketing's usefulness as an approach to influencing behavior in the nonbusiness domain. Through analysis of the persuasive task in business and nonbusiness settings and of marketing as an approach to behavioral influence, we may form some judgments about marketing's likely value in domains other than that of business.

This paper is intended to be a first step toward describing the nature of marketing persuasion and the respects in which marketing may offer a distinctive approach to persuasion. The remainder of the paper is divided as follows: Section II distinguishes three kinds of persuasive task, namely, MODIFY, STOP, and START, and gives a brief overview of marketing persuasion at the level of the universe of interest and of the individual. Section III describes marketing's approach to deciding whom to persuade in regard to what as a threefold task of (1) defining prospects, (2) specifying the competition, and (3) choosing targets and characteristics of the offering. Section IV develops the assumption that the exchange in which the marketer participates is essentially one in which the individual expends resources to alter person–environment relationships. It describes the marketer's theory of persuasion in a competitive environment in terms of (1) the marketer's general model of action, (2) the marketer's adaptation of the general model to a model of offering (i.e., brand) choice, and (3) the essentials of marketing persuasion at the individual level. Section V reviews marketing persuasion as applied to STOP and START tasks, first at the level of the universe of interest. Selection of targets and message characteristics is discussed as is the question of whether nonbehavioral considerations make marketing inappropriate as an approach in some persuasive contexts. A review of marketing's potential contribution to behavioral influence at the individual level in STOP and START tasks is then followed by discussion of the fresh insights that marketing persuasion offers to the study of behavioral change. It is suggested that changing what people want and influencing how people get what they want may be what is meant by fundamental and peripheral behavioral influence, respectively, and these two behavioral change objectives are discussed in terms of the relevant components of the model of action. In the final section, the implications of the analysis for the meaning of the term *marketing* are discussed.

B. Use of "Marketing" in This Paper

It is necessary at the outset to clarify the sense in which the term *marketing* is used in this paper. Two obvious choices are (1) "marketing" in its newly acquired meaning of a "logic available to all organizations facing problems of market response" (Kotler, 1972, p. 54) including, in addition to its original business domain, applications in nonprofit, government, and social cause contexts; or (2) "marketing" in its earlier sense of a particular approach to the productive decisions of the firm in a competitive environment, specifically the approach embodied in the marketing concept: Don't sell what you happen to make. Make what the customer wants to buy. The necessity to clarify how "marketing" is being used suggests the possibility that the meaning of marketing persuasion changed concurrently with marketing's broadening. The question whether or not that has happened need not detain us here because there are a number of reasons why, for present purposes, "marketing" should be undestood to mean the approach to influence that is embodied in the marketing concept.

First, the behavioral implications of marketing had not been made explicit at the time marketing's sphere of application was broadened and remain to be explicated today. It seems to be a matter of simple prudence to articulate the behavioral implications of the marketing concept before assessing marketing's likely contribution to persuasion in nonbusiness contexts. Second, marketing persuasion is not yet so universally accepted that the request to discuss its value in nonbusiness domains is meaningless or does not deserve a thoughtful answer. Marketing persuasion may benefit from being extended into nonbusiness domains but, in broadening their domain, marketers must have felt that their discipline had contributions to make which are unavailable elsewhere. It would not make sense to speak of marketing's contribution to persuasion in nonbusiness domains if we begin by including those domains in our definition of marketing. Third, there are grounds for asserting that marketing as an approach to behavioral influence has changed significantly by virtue of its extension into nonbusiness domains. In at least some of his statements, Kotler appears to depart from marketing's emphasis on customer wants as its point of departure: "The market may value the consequences (of responding as the marketer recommends) but this is not a necessary condition for defining the occurrence of marketing activity" (1972, p. 50). Other authors have put the issue more boldly as when Capon and Mauser state that adapting the environment, specifically customer needs, "to match the firm cannot be ruled out . . . as a fundamental part of marketing" (1982, p. 127). It is not at all clear what being a "fundamental part" of marketing is intended to mean (e.g., that marketers always did, or now do, or try to, or know how to, or wish that they could, adapt customer needs to suit their purposes). Such questions are best postponed until later. Suffice to say that if there is a serious possibility that marketers now entertain the possibility of attempting to influence not only what people choose but what they want, this would represent a basic change in the meaning of marketing persuasion. It would be unwieldy, if not impossible, to discuss simultaneously an approach to persuasion that both does and does not take as given what people want (i.e., the kinds of satisfactions they are willing to use their resources to obtain).

Accordingly, in this paper essential features of the approach to persuasion which is embodied in the marketing concept are articulated for their possible relevance to persuasion in nonbusiness contexts. Unless otherwise noted, "marketers" are persons or organizations whose actions are guided by the marketing concept. Not every advertisement or advertising campaign or publicist's program is an example of marketing and not everyone engaged in the production, distribution, and sale of goods and services is a marketer. Some "marketing" departments in business organizations are erstwhile sales departments changed only in name. It will be clear that there is interest and complexity aplenty in making explicit the behavioral implications of the marketing concept. The present discussion need not be encumbered by confusing the notions of selling and marketing.

II. THREE TASKS OF PERSUASION

The recent literature of nonbusiness marketing provides a useful overview of the range of contexts and behaviors, beyond the commercial arena, where persuasion is being attempted in today's society. The resulting diversity calls for order and conceptual organization, and efforts are underway to this end. Fine (1979), for example, proposed a two-dimensional typology (profit/nonprofit, tangible/non-tangible) of exchange transactions, and Rothschild (1979) locates business and nonbusiness goods along a dimension of involvement. The approach adopted here is to consider the nature of the persuasive assignment across contexts. We find that three persuasive tasks may be distinguished in terms of the kind of change attempted in the target. With regard to a small region of the target's behavior—the focal activity—the influence agent's task is to attempt to have the target:

MODIFY a currently performed or contemplated activity (e.g., smoke "our" cigarettes, use "our" toothpaste, apply to "our" graduate school, attend "our" play)

2. STOP (or not start) performing an activity (e.g., stop smoking)
3. START (or not stop) performing an activity (e.g., brush your teeth, pursue a graduate degree, attend live theater, wear seat belts)

The influence agent's essential message and illustrative contexts are shown in Figure 1. While it is possible to point to familiar examples to illustrate each task, the assignment of a specific influence attempt to one or another task may be somewhat arbitrary. For example, persuading motorists to wear seat belts (START) may also be viewed as persuading motorists, upon entering the car, not to drive off without buckling up (STOP). Unlike the classificatory approaches of Fine (1979) and Rothschild (1979), the present analysis does not offer a once-and-for-all classification of specific contexts for attempted influence. Regardless of context, an influence agent may consider which persuasive task or tasks a particular assignment implicates. The point has inter- and intraindividual implications. Between groups, for example, a political campaign may be addressed to the voting public (MODIFY) or to the nonvoting public (START/STOP), with different strategic implications in each case.[2] Within the group consisting of nonvoters, it is useful to consider an assignment to increase citizen participation

MODIFY	CHOOSE (e.g., buy, use, give to, apply to, join, vote for, attend) MINE. IT SUITS YOU BEST.
STOP	DON'T DO THIS. IT'S HARMFUL TO YOU, OTHERS, OR SOCIETY IN GENERAL (e.g., smoking, using drugs, speeding, coughing while an audience member, abusing children).
START	DO THIS. YOUR OWN, OTHERS', OR SOCIETY'S GOOD REQUIRES IT (e.g., brush teeth (often), give blood/time/money i.e., among nondonors, get medical checkups/immunization, vote, mail early).

Figure 1 Three Persuasive Tasks: Change Agent's Essential Message

in elections as one of persuading potential voters both to go to the polls (START) and not to schedule conflicting activities (STOP) on election day.

The influence agent's objective may be clarified by comparing the states of affairs that would exist in the presence and in the absence of successful persuasion. In the MODIFY case, against a baseline of observations made in the absence of persuasion, successful persuasion means that more persons are observed to engage in a modified form of the focal activity (e.g., to choose "our" brand of cigarettes, or toothpaste, or graduate school, or live theater when they smoke cigarettes, brush their teeth, apply to graduate school, or attend live theater). In the STOP case, against a baseline of observations made in the absence of persuasion, successful persuasion means that fewer persons are observed to perform the focal activity (e.g., to smoke cigarettes). In the START case, again against a baseline of no persuasion, successful persuasion means that more persons are observed to perform the focal activity (e.g., to brush their teeth, pursue a graduate degree, attend live theater, or wear seat belts). In all three cases, there is some amount of change compared with the baseline condition that influence agents will regard as satisfactory in specific assignments. They may quantify change in terms of the number of persons among whom their recommended behavior is observed and/or the number of total occurrences of their recommended behavior (i.e., considering multiple occasions per person).

A striking difference between MODIFY on the one hand and START and STOP on the other is the amount of analysis that precedes the selection of the offering and the targets for the offering. In the MODIFY task, the influence agent is going to recommend change in the way a certain activity is carried out, such as when you do the laundry, use "our" detergent; when you attend live theater, see "our" play. The exact nature of the modification (i.e., detergent, play) to be recommended as well as the persons who will be urged to adopt the modification are decided following analysis and research. In STOP and START assignments the persuasive task specifies the change to be recommended and the implication is that all current performers (Smokers! Stop smoking!) or nonperformers (Nonvoters! To the polls!) are targets of the persuasive effort.

More basically, the tasks differ in respect to the relationship between the influence agent's assignment and favorable action tendencies in the population. In the MODIFY task, influence agents assume that favorable action tendencies are a precondition for persuasion. They develop a recommendation that builds on existing action tendencies. The STOP and START tasks are defined independently of the presence of favorable action tendencies in the universe of interest. In the STOP task all of the people addressed may be expected to have action tendencies opposing the change agent's recommendation. Some may also have favorable action tendencies but this possibility is irrelevant to the terms of the STOP task as defined. Likewise, the START task is defined independently of the presence of favorable action tendencies, although some in the universe of interest may have action tendencies favorable to the recommended action. In contrast to the MODI-

FY task which is designed to build on existing action tendencies, opposing or absent action tendencies are likely to present difficulties for change agents in STOP and START tasks.

A. Overview of Marketing Persuasion

The MODIFY task exemplifies the marketing concept. It has not been generally recognized that marketing, as an approach to persuasion, to a significant degree answers the question of how to persuade with an analysis of whom to persuade in regard to what. Although they are intertwined in practice, the questions may be considered separately.

1. *Whom to Persuade in Regard to What*

A marketing analysis maps the behavioral ramifications of a proposed persuasive effort, specifically the heterogeneous perspectives, purposes, states of belief, and competing influences, in a universe of interest. It delineates the likely dimensions of attempted influence; the kinds of approaches that may be needed and a rough ordering, in terms of likelihood of influence, of subgroups which the analysis has revealed. Faced with such a map, the characteristic marketing approach in the commercial arena is to select as targets the analytic groups who seem most ready to be influenced (e.g., not the satisfied loyal customers of a competitor but customers hitherto neglected by all brands who have not yet found an offering to their satisfaction and for whom the marketer may be able to devise an offering). Note that the substance of the persuasive message—in the business application comprising tangible and intangible attributes of the offering—follows rather than precedes the marketing analysis. Once the question of whom to persuade in regard to what is answered, marketing's persuasive strategy is largely in place. What remains is implementation of the strategy consisting of producing the offering, communicating its existence, facilitating exchange, and assessing the appropriateness of the strategy.

2. *How to Persuade*

Considering actual contact with the target, marketing persuasion works by promising and delivering value. Value is something people spend resources to obtain, or would spend resources to obtain if they knew of its availability, because they believe it is instrumental in bringing about states they desire. Accordingly, customers, not marketers, determine whether value has in fact been delivered and they often make the determination out of the presence of marketers or their representatives. Marketers attempt to influence this determination by offering for sale goods and services which they believe will deliver the particular value a customer seeks. Being open to change the substance of their offering and the prospects to target gives marketing the flexibility to promise and deliver satisfaction to whichever prospect groups appear to offer the best opportunity. Fundamental to marketing persuasion is a healthy respect for the difficulty of influencing unknown individuals at a distance, through the media, in a real world setting where one's potential customers are bent on pursuing their everyday purposes and where if, by chance, they hear one's message or see one's offering on display they may promptly be exposed to countervailing influences from one's competitors as well as much more significant messages from loved ones, bosses, and the Internal Revenue Service.

Marketing persuasion can only be understood if one considers that the marketer's success depends on many individuals using their resources in a competitive environment to process the marketer's message, pay for the offering, and come back for more (or, in the case of infrequently bought items, be sufficiently satisfied not to scare off prospective customers by their negative evaluation of the offering in use). Relying as they do on the prospective customer's willingness to move the goods, marketers have every incentive to harness the customer's energy in favor of their own brand and away from the competition. As in any application of natural science, harnessing energy is accomplished by creating devices tailored in such a way as to capitalize on the characteristics of the energy system being tapped. Windmills, sails, and water wheels harness naturally occuring sources of energy by adapting to their characteristics. Humans allocate their energies to bringing about, by thought and action, states they desire, and they may use goods and services in the process. From among offerings available in the marketplace, they will choose those that are most likely to help them achieve states they desire. To be chosen, the marketer's offering must be tailored to the ways customers currently allocate their energies. The moving force of marketing persuasion is competition among producers assuredly for the customer's dollar but, more basically, for success in harnessing the customer's energy. In Section IV. of this paper a representation of the implicit model the marketer uses for this purpose is discussed. In Section III. marketing's approach to the topic of whom to persuade in regard to what is discussed in greater detail.

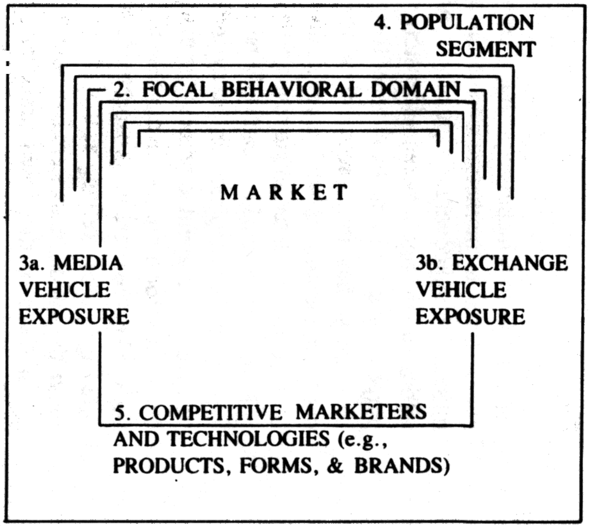
III. WHOM TO PERSUADE IN REGARD TO WHAT

Figure 2 shows the sequence of steps which precede the selection of offering and targets in the MODIFY task. The question of whom to persuade in regard to what breaks down into (1) deciding whom/what to study, that is, which people who perform which activities are going to be studied to provide information needed for strategic development; (2) specifying the competitive frame, that is, who or what forces may oppose the marketer's attempt to influence; and (3) choosing whom/what to target with what, that is, which persons who perform which activity are selected to be persuaded to adopt an offering fashioned with them in mind. Each of these topics is discussed briefly in this section.

MARKET DEFINITION (see Figure 2a)

1. IDENTIFY DOMAIN OF OWN (i.e., MARKETER'S) EXPERTISE
2. SELECT A (CORRESPONDING) DOMAIN OF CONSUMER EXPERIENCE/ACTIVITY ("FOCAL BEHAVIORAL DOMAIN").
3. EVALUATE LOCATABILITY OF PERSONS WHO PERFORM FOCAL BEHAVIOR (e.g., study their media exposure and exchange vehicle patronage in light of own resources) FOR PURPOSES OF:
   - — Communication from them—of information needed to develop marketing strategy (via marketing research)
   - — Communication to them—of brand availability and attributes (via marketing communications)
   - — Exchange with them—good/service for money.
4. DEFINE OUTER LIMITS OF CURRENT PROSPECT GROUP (e.g., select a population segment as analytic frame—US adults, US adult male blacks, US females 15–45, US teens residing in west).
5. SPECIFY COMPETITIVE MARKETERS/TECHNOLOGIES (ACTUAL AND PERCEIVED) IMPLICATED BY OPTIONS AVAILABLE IN TASKS 1–4.

Figure 2a Dimensions of Market Definition



MARKET SEGMENTATION (see Figure 2b)

Within *market as defined* (i.e., set of options in tasks 1–4):

6. DESCRIBE ELEMENTS OF HETEROGENEOUS DEMAND (e.g., custom information about activating conditions, desired states, instrumental attributes for universe of person-activity occasions).

7. FORM & QUANTIFY DEMAND SEGMENTS

8. ASSESS:

   (a) STATE OF WANT—SATISFACTION IN DEMAND SEGMENTS

   (b) POTENTIAL FOR BRAND INROADS IN DEMAND SEGMENTS (e.g., custom data on: Form preference; Brand consideration status, general and specific; Brand awareness, experience, beliefs, knowledge, perceived positionings overall).

   (c) RELATIVE WORTH OF DEMAND SEGMENTS

9. REPEAT TASKS 6–8 FOR ALTERNATIVE MARKET DEFINITIONS/SEGMENTATIONS

10. SELECT BRAND POSITIONING i.e., target segment(s) of demand (one, some, or all conditions activating prospects to perform focal behavior as defined) and corresponding brand attributes, tangible and intangible.

Figure 2b Components of Market Segmentation Analysis

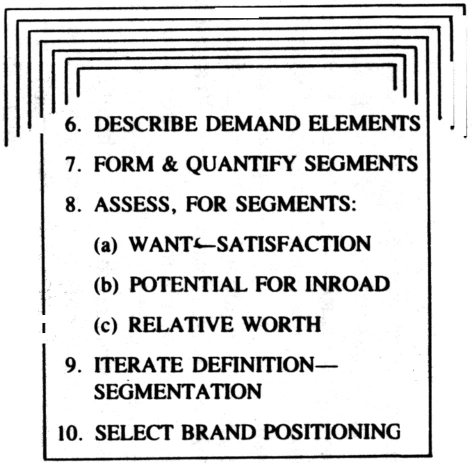


Figure 2. Market Definition and Segmentation: Major Task Components

A. Defining Prospects: Whom/What to Study

A major difference between the approaches to persuasion found in the social psychological laboratory and in the practice of marketing is marketing's use of behavioral qualifiers to screen respondents for inclusion in research. Very little has been written about how marketers proceed with this task. Even when selecting people to study for strategic development, marketers typically do not proceed by recruiting people at random from the population at large. They first identify for study potential buyers, broadly defined. What marketers want at this point is to be able to talk with people in the population who have action tendencies that are favorable to their proposed offering category. These are the people from whom to obtain information that will be helpful for strategic development. But how are marketers to identify people with favorable action tendencies? In practice, various kinds of qualifiers are used, each with advantages and disadvantages as means of locating prospects for research.

Typically, qualifiers are stated in terms of (1) actual or planned product use or ownership (e.g., persons who use laundry detergent, use headache remedies, own a station wagon, own a calculator), or (2) activities or conditions that do or may involve the use of a marketplace offering (e.g., doing the laundry, having a headache, providing short-distance transportation for self/family, doing certain kinds of mathematical calculations). Probably the most often used type of qualifier is self-reported use or planned use of a product of interest. Acknowledging such activities as using remedies for minor pain, flying for business reasons, having attended live theater in the past three years, planning to apply to graduate school within the next two years may qualify a person for inclusion in marketing research for strategic development. In some well-researched product categories where incidence of product use in the population is high (e.g., mouthwash) the definition may be stated in terms of frequency or heaviness of use (e.g., persons who use mouthwash daily). Other ways in which the product–user universe may be restricted are by specifying a context of use (e.g., users of laundry detergent residing in hard-water regions) or time of the year (e.g., persons planning to fly to a winter vacation resort or to attend live theater during the summer). Where product use is the sole screening criterion, marketing strategy is probably not concerned with increasing the market as defined (e.g., with making users out of previous nonusers of headache remedies, mouthwash, laundry detergent, winter vacation air travel, or summer stock). The goal is likely to maintain or increase incidence of use of the marketer's offering on some or all of the occasions when people use the product. The marketing objective is directed to share rather than size of market.

Qualifying respondents in product use terms offers a number of advantages not the least of which are simplicity and convenience. In addition to the fact that questions about product use/ownership are usually well understood by survey respondents, they serve as surrogates for the focal behavioral domain, thus relieving the analyst of the task of separately specifying all the individual activities and occasions in conjunction with which the offering may be used. This convenience is bought at the cost of ignoring the individual activities and occasions which the focal behavioral domain may comprise unless special efforts are made to compensate for this deficiency.

One use of qualitative research is to explore the behavior referenced by use of a product. Prior to conducting large-scale surveys, in individual depth or focused group interviews the marketing analyst has an opportunity to identify the activities and types of occasions for which the product may be used as well as other information to be discussed later. To provide as broad a perspective as possible consistent with marketing relevance, respondents for qualitative research are usually recruited based on their performance of an activity that is stated at a level of generality greater than that of the focal behavior.

This discussion has referred to four ways of thinking about activity that are of interest to the marketer. In the MODIFY task, the influence agent's recommendation concerns brand use (choose "our" soap; attend "our" play). Product use refers to use of one or more of the brands in a product category (persons who use soap, persons who attend live theater). It designates what is likely to be the most immediate competitive context for the marketer's offering. Focal activity refers to an activity which is or may be performed with the aid of a marketplace offering (bathing, showering) or, in the case of a service, replaced by a marketplace offering (writing/reading plays; amateur theater; other forms of adult, away-from-home, evening entertainment). This is the activity whose form marketers attempt to influence in favor of their brand or offering. Marketers try to understand the kinds of conditions that give rise to the focal activity and the external conditions and internal states people perform the activity to secure. This information is helpful in designing or adapting their offering to suit the function that the activity serves for the person. Finally, qualitative research aimed at understanding the focal activity usually begins by directing respondents' attention to a still broader behavioral class (personal hygiene, leisure time activities). By this means the marketing analyst strives to minimize the possibility of imposing on respondents an unwarranted framework and to make it possible for them to reveal the place the focal activity holds in their scheme of things.

Andreasen and Belk (1980) address issues relevant to specifying the focal behavioral domain where market extension is the strategic objective, in this instance extending incidence of attendance at live theater and symphony. These authors used a wide variety of activities to qualify respondents from whom they also obtained a self-report of likely product use (attendance at theater or symphony in the next year or two) and they explored specific possibilities for market extension among prospects as defined by a cutoff on the likelihood of attendance scale (Belk & Andreasen, 1980). Should further analyses and future research show self-reported likelihood of product use to have acceptable validity, such a measure may be a convenient substitute for more specific screening criteria for locating prospects among current nonusers of the product of interest. The screening problem would then be greatly simplified in the case of well-known products such as symphony and live theater. Identifying currently performed activities which may metamorphose into live theater and symphony attendance could still be pursued in preliminary qualitative research which would also identify relevant topics for inclusion in the survey.

In the case of less well-known, low-incidence products, respondents may be qualified based on their current use of broadly similar products (e.g., for herbal tea, current use of regular tea or hot beverages). Similarly, in the case of new products (e.g., TV video games, disposable diapers), respondents may be qualified based on current product ownership or use (e.g., television set owners/ arcade game users, users of regular diapers/diaper services) or likely gift giving (e.g., for video games, persons planning to give gifts to young people). In general, marketers qualify prospects for inclusion in research based on performance of some activity (1) that has a higher incidence in the population than the activity the marketer is going to recommend and (2) for which using their offering could reasonably be considered a substitute or variant. Articulating in greater detail the features that marketers use in searching for these analogous activities and the underlying favorable action tendencies is a subject in need of study.

In summary, whether the persuasive objective is to increase share or size of market, the first assignment in a MODIFY task is to identify prospects in the population. Prospects are locatable persons who perform the focal activity, that is, who currently engage in activity which, in slightly modified form, could make use of some offering within the marketer's field of competence. Self-reported actual or planned use of selected, currently available products may be used as a convenient surrogate for the focal activity in order to locate a sample of prospects for strategic research. For guidance on the topics to include in this research, an in-depth study of the conditions activating and directing performance of the focal behavior and of forces likely to oppose attempted influence is called for.

B. Specifying the Competition: Who/What May Oppose

Influence agents need to know who the competition is, that is, to identify and understand the influences that may counter their intended influence. There are two ways to think about opposing influences, namely, those that exist whether or not the prospect is aware of them and those known to the prospect. In the first category are sources of influence as the marketer would specify them, which traditionally are designated as competing products (plays, musicals), forms within product (tragedy, comedy), and brands within form (individual tragedies, individual comedies). It can sometimes be a fruitful exercise to play around with alternative ways of assigning the terms: product, form, and brand. In the domain of live theater, competition at the brand level could be construed as alternative productions of the same play (e.g., two *Hamlets* or *Merchant of Venices* in the same season) or competing theaters or competing companies. In marketing practice, "brand" refers to the entity that a marketer offers for exchange in the marketplace. Any aspect of an offering about which the marketer may exercise choice helps define the marketer's brand.

One reason to formalize the marketer's statement of competitors is to obtain as complete a list as possible prior to investigating the competitive frame from the prospect's viewpoint. As perceived by prospects, competing influences are the alternative actions and objects, available inside or outside the marketplace, that they may consider for use along with or instead of the focal activity. Where the objective is to increase market share, marketers focus analytic attention on competition at the brand level. Few competing alternatives at the brand level and/or the objective of increased market size call for attention to a more broadly based competitive frame. To a greater extent, perhaps, in nonprofit compared with profit applications, significant competition for the target's attention and energy is to be found outside the marketer's immediate offering category, including outside the marketplace.

It is important to know who or what the competition is and why prospects consider particular objects and actions in the context of the focal activity because of the light this information casts on (1) the prospect's wants and (2) possible sources of deficiency, in the prospect's eyes, in offerings that the marketer may make available.

C. Choosing Targets and Offering: Whom/What to Target with What

Not everyone in the population is a prospect for a marketer of laundry detergent or live theater and some prospects more than others are worth pursuing. Among those people who launder clothes or attend live theater, whom should the marketer select for a persuasive effort aimed at influencing them to choose an offering from the marketer? What should be the characteristics of the offering made to these targets? Note that although it is usual and convenient to speak of selecting "prospects" to study and "targets" to persuade, at any one time a marketer addresses a tiny region of a person's activity (i.e., one or a few activities that constitute the focal behavioral domain). Choosing one's targets becomes a question of deciding which prospects (some or all) who perform which activities (some or all in the focal behavioral domain) on which occasions (some or all) to achieve which ends (one or more activating conditions/desired states) represent the best use of one's persuasive resources (Fennell, 1982b). Major steps in the research are sketched under market segmentation analysis in Figure 2 and comprise obtaining and analyzing information of the following kind.

Prior to conducting large-scale quantitative research to help choose targets and the characteristics of the offering, it is usually necessary to conduct exploratory research to help generate question content. This preliminary qualitative research covers the topic areas indicated in Figure 2, namely, the activities and occasions constituting the focal behavioral domain, prospects' views of the competitive frame, of conditions activating the focal behavior, and the external and internal states which they wish to secure by performing the focal activity.

In the quantitative phase, marketers obtain information on topics such as the following: First, they want to describe prospects' views of the kinds of conditions that activate performance of the focal behavior (activating conditions). For example, what are the beliefs and feelings that prompt attendance at live theater? Is the person seeking restoration for a weary body and overtaxed mind; or relief from boredom, drudgery, banality, and stultifying routine, or from absorption with the concerns of young or ailing charges; or leaving an environment that is oppressive or distracting or lacking in privacy? Is the person considering the implications of attending the performance for his or her self-concept as a (discerning) cultivator of the good life, a generous provider/host, a thoughtful lover/spouse/parent/child? Is attendance a routine matter engaged in with minimal investment of thought and interest? Is attending the performance intrinsically interesting to the student of human condition or the *aficionado* fascinated by the complexities and finer points of the theater arts? Is going to the theater an opportunity to feast the senses? Is it some of these things yet perceived as entailing some troubling elements, such as expense, inconvenience, possibilities for embarrassment, for feeling more "out of it" than if one stayed home? Is it something that likely as not may be less enjoyable than one would wish? What do prospects view as the desirable external conditions and inner experiences (desired states) corresponding to orientations to theater attendance such as those just described? Their imagery here may be particularly instructive. What are the attributes of attending live theater that will help prospects to achieve these desired states (instrumental attributes)? What kinds of actions and objects do prospects consider as alternatives to theater going, as alternative forms of theater going, and as available alternatives on any one occasion (offerings considered)? What do prospects consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of these alternatives and how do they order the alternatives (preference ordering)? Do they consider theater going worth the cost (cost–benefit ratio)? What form (s) of theater going have prospects tried and now use seldom, regularly, most often (behavioral domain)?

From survey data in the form of responses to items based on topics such as the above, marketers study the varied nature of demand associated with the focal activity (typically using cluster analysis to form demand segments) as well as prospects' views of the competitive frame within which their offering will be considered, if at all. The information obtained also helps to pinpoint the kinds of difficulties that the marketer's offering may have to overcome, such as not being considered at the right time, being misperceived in some way, being overshadowed by a powerful competitor, being favored but judged too costly in time, money, or effort. The marketer examines all of this information searching for a region of demand not yet being addressed or not being adequately addressed, or for an opportunity to be considered by prospects among a set of competitors who appear not to be too strongly entrenched, or for an opportunity to shortcut or simplify an aspect of some prospects' efforts to satisfy their wants. The "competitive advantage" the marketer seeks is realized by finding a means of channeling some prospects' energies away from the competition and toward the marketer's offering. Since prospects are already allocating their energies in certain ways, the marketer's basic task is to discover the directions in which that energy is already headed and to smooth the way for it to take an offering from the marketer along with it.

The research likely provides direction for specific features that may make offerings attractive to prospects relative to their other options. More generally, the decision the marketer now faces is whether to select some or all prospects to target. Given the heterogeneous orientations prospects likely have as regards the focal activity, opting to target all prospects requires that the marketer's message be fairly ambiguous. For example, "Season's Best" or "Longest Running" followed by name, location, and dates of a particular offering is a theme that is unlikely to exclude prospects who have any of the orientations sketched above. It does not, of course, promise satisfaction tailored specifically to any segment of demand but allows prospects in each segment to read into it a response to their particular point of origin. The role such an ambiguous positioning likely plays, if communicated repeatedly, is to increase the chance that targets give consideration to the marketer's offering. For this strategy to be maximally effective great care should be taken to ensure that elements in the communication foster decision occasion bonding (Fennell, 1979) for the marketer's offering (i.e., to ensure that the offering becomes part of prospects' decision process when live theater is a realistic action alternative). It is advisable to pretest ways of achieving such bonding (cf. Wright, 1979). More explicit positionings communicate with their targets by touching beliefs and feelings implicated in activating the focal behavior and in describing desired states. As discussed elsewhere (Fennell, 1978), orientations appropriate to some demand segments may not be appreciated by other prospects. To assess likely impact in the market as a whole, marketers consider the implications for nontargets of choosing a particular segment to target.

Some years ago, it was necessary in business marketing to remind managers (other than those representing trade associations) not to make the mistake of promoting their product (e.g., ice cream, peanut butter) at the expense of registering their individual offering or brand. This advice may bear repeating in the nonprofit domain where individual organizations serving numerically small markets may want to extend the incidence of the focal activity in the population as a

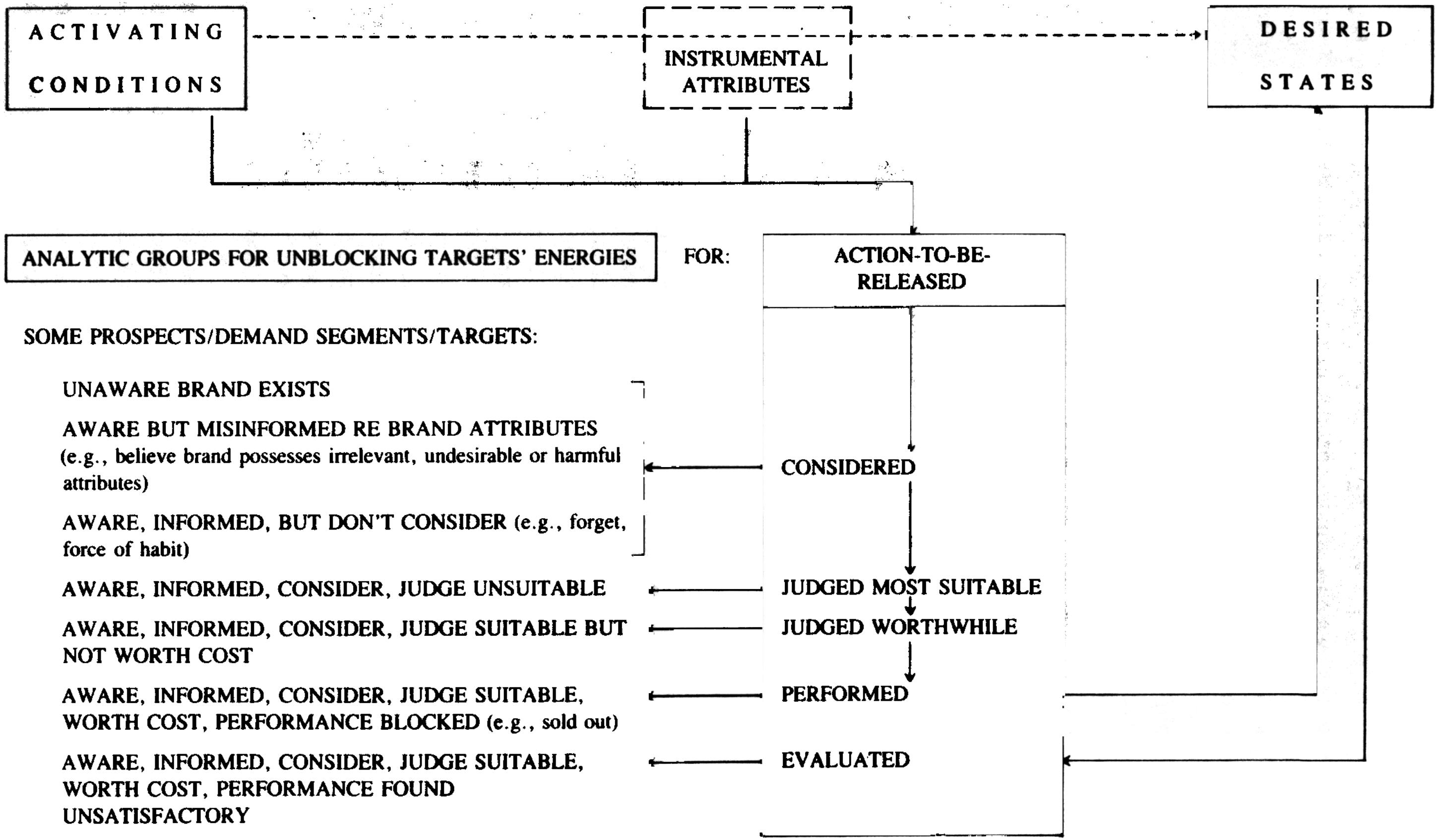


Figure 3. Information Needed for Strategic Evaluation: MODIFY

whole. It is important to have the focal activity (e.g., attending live theater) included whenever prospects consider any of a functionally equivalent set of activities (e.g., protracted dining out, dining and dancing, attending the symphony/opera/ballet, visiting friends to watch cable television, taking out-of-town visitors on an evening drive). A generic positioning (e.g., "I love live theater") cast in the context of adult evening entertainment outside the home may be helpful in broadening consideration of theater going. However, on any particular consumer decision occasion the offering category is represented by individual brands and it will be a brand of the offering category that is or is not chosen. Accordingly, whether a generic approach is adopted on an individual or cooperative basis the strategic objective of facilitation must not be overlooked. That means smoothing the way for prospects to translate inclination into the purchase of seats for a particular performance.

This discussion has merely highlighted some of the many considerations that may enter the marketer's selection of a persuasive offering and targets. With the availability of survey data in specific applications, the particular options to be considered may be fairly few. Following implementation of the persuasive program, research is conducted to assess the program's impact and to provide guidance for further development. In particular, the research shows the extent to which awareness of the marketer's offering has penetrated the various segments of demand and how the offering is judged relative to the competition. The kinds of information to be obtained are diagrammed in Figure 3, where "prospects" are locatable persons who perform the focal activity, "demand segments" are prospects clustered on the basis of the motivational items, "targets" are prospects selected for persuasion, and the "action to be released" is the influence agent's recommended form of the focal activity, specifically, choosing an offering which the marketer has tailored to the wants of some prospects.

Once the positioning decision has been made and an offering exists, further persuasive effort may take the form of (1) market development and (2) repositioning. Each of these will be discussed briefly.

1. *Market Development*

The marketer makes special efforts within cost constraints to locate targets for the offering. The marketer places emphasis on strategic variables other than product and focuses on having the offering considered by persons who may be interested in it. Prospects are now defined in terms other than performance of the focal activity (e.g., special markets may be defined, in part, on demographic similarity to persons who perform the focal activity or their performance of some activity similar to or compatible with the focal activity, such as, for theatergoing: leisurely dining out, going out with adult friends in the evening or afternoon). The availability of special media directed to persons thus identified is usually a major consideration in the selection of markets for development.

A somewhat superficial implementation of market development results in placing ads for the offering in special interest media. This strategy may rely on affecting the perceived relevance of the offering should the message be noticed in a personally relevant medium or on creating an association between the offering and some activity with which it may be compatible. A more interesting implementation of market development occurs when marketers conduct exploratory research in order to understand why it is that, given a basis for presupposing their interest, special market members may not consider the offering or, considering it, may reject it. The analytic groups likely to emerge are shown in Figure 3. Analytic interest focuses particularly on identifying analogous activities or offerings that de facto are competing with the offering. The strategic objective here is to identify the specific weaknesses of the offering when considered in a broadened competitive context with a view to addressing those weaknesses via changes in marketing variables. Some of the changes indicated may be compatible with the offering's current positioning (e.g., some performances at a different time, location); others may suggest repositioning.

2. *Repositioning*

Repositioning involves retracing the steps outlined in Figure 2, paying particular attention to the credibility of a proposed new positioning in the light of what is currently believed about the offering.

IV. HOW TO PERSUADE

Although the focus of this chapter is persuasion via the mass media, any discussion of marketing persuasion is incomplete unless we also consider marketing's implicit theory of persuasion at the individual level. The approach to selecting targets and offering that was described in the previous section is not an accidental agglomeration of research questions, but springs from the marketer's coherent view of the origins of action and the way to influence action.

Selection of targets and offering has proceeded roughly along the lines just described in marketing practice for some time. From where does the general approach come? Why is information collected on the particular topics referenced by the research questions and not on other topics? The general approach and the content of the research questions reflect the marketing concept in operation, specifically the marketer's implicit model of action and theory of persuasion. As Kotler put it, "The marketer . . . knows what it takes for someone to act" (1972, p. 53). Access to what the marketer knows about action awaits representation of that knowledge in formal terms. Preliminary steps toward such a representation follow. First the marketer's implicit model of action is described followed by a brief overview of how the marketer uses this model to guide strategic development. Finally, the essentials of marketing persuasion are discussed.

A. The Marketer's Implicit Model of Action

Given that the objective of a persuasive attempt is to influence action, it is necessary to consider how action is to be conceptualized. A model of action may suggest points upstream from the action itself where influence agents could direct their persuasive strategy. The marketer's offering succeeds or fails depending on how useful the consumer finds it as an adjunct to individual actions or, in the case of a service, as a substitute for action by the consumer. At any one time the outer limit of actions that are of interest to the marketer is a universe consisting of one of a few activities performed over a period of time by individuals in a population of interest. This universe of person–activity occasions (Fennell, 1982b) consists of discrete actions taken by individuals in a particular place at a particular time. There is no action that is not "situational" in the sense of being unique to a person, place, and time. It is these individual actions that marketers need to study if they are to design an offering that consumers find useful. Accordingly, marketers must understand the elements that constitute a person–activity occasion or, stated otherwise, they need to model the antecedents of a single instrumental act.

As adults we have an extensive repertoire of actions—there is an enormous, possibly infinite number of things we can do. Yet from this behavioral potential we perform a tiny fraction at any one time. What determines our selection? Action results from the motivating influences operating at a particular time, which direct the person's search and processing of information about past behavioral outcomes and the current environment. The answer to the question, why did I do that? may be stated: Because I wanted something and among the things I could think to do to get it, that action seemed best and worthwhile. This very general answer to the question of what determines action may be unfolded in many ways. One representation that is useful in developing strategies for persuasion is shown in Figure 4. The two main sources of influence on action are found within the person and the person's environment, each of which comprises numerous systems. Action results from the intersection of person and environment systems to form a situation. Figure 4 shows the main descriptors of the *situation as perceived.* Five main aspects of the decision process in a prototypical situation (Fennell, 1980b) (i.e., motivation, search, judgment, exchange, and evaluation) are briefly described as follows.

1. *Motivation*

A situation begins when person and environment elements combine to create activating conditions, that is, disparity beyond some threshold level between the present and an imagined state of affairs (desired states) favoring the latter. The person's resources are marshalled in the service of dispelling the unpleasantness, bringing about a changed relationship between the person and the environment,

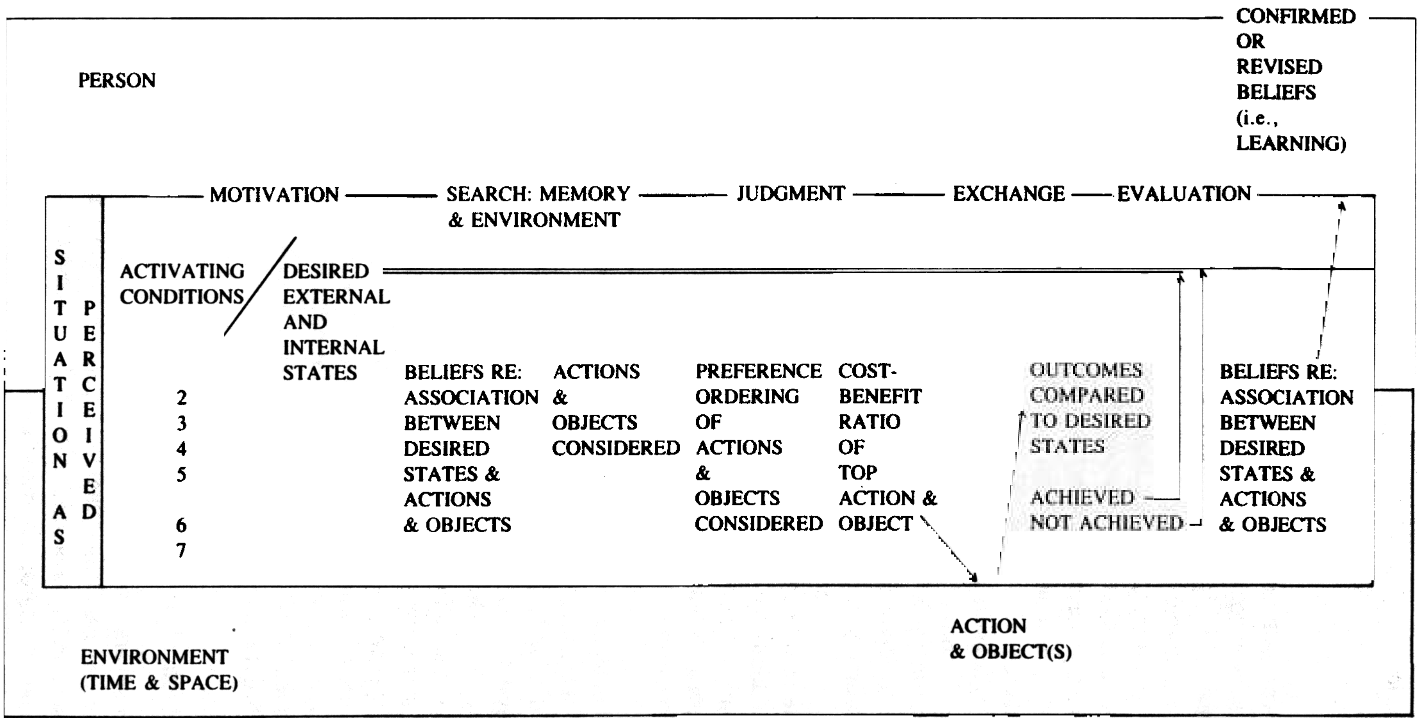


Figure 4. Descriptors of a *situation as perceived*.

Source: Adapted from Fennell (1980b).

PERCEIVED ACTIVATING CONDITION	DIRECTION FOR BEHAVIOR
SIMPLE	
1. CURRENT PROBLEM	SOLVE PROBLEM
2. POTENTIAL PROBLEM	PREVENT PROBLEM
3. NORMAL DEPLETION	MAINTAIN STABLE STATE
4. INTEREST OPPORTUNITY	EXPLORE
5. SENSORY PLEASURE OPPORTUNITY	FACILITATE
COMPLEX	
6. PRODUCT-RELATED PROBLEM	RESOLVE CONFLICT
7. SATISFACTION-FRUSTRATION	RESTRUCTURE SITUATION

Figure 5. Activating Conditions and Corresponding Behavioral Direction

Source: Adapted from Fennell (1978).

in one of two ways: (1) cognitive reorganization or reappraisal may result in deactivating the motivational process (cf. "benign reappraisal"; Lazarus, 1968) or (2) overt behavior may occur which neutralizes the activating condition, that is, brings about the person's desired state and terminates the situation. The set of seven different kinds of activating conditions shown in Figure 5 have been described elsewhere (Fennell, 1978, 1980b). The first three simple cases (current problem, potential problem, normal depletion) may be regarded as "stick-type" motivations, where conditions goad or prod us into action. The other two simple cases (interest opportunity, sensory pleasure opportunity) are "carrot-type" motivations, where the presentation of something interesting or attractive makes us uncomfortable until we possess it (Fennell, 1980b). In addition, there are two complex cases where neutralizing or attempting to neutralize the activating condition brings an additional source of activation. They implicate more than one source of behavioral activation (i.e., at least one of the five simple cases and one other). Most fundamentally, activating conditions select the sample of a person's behavioral repertoire from which the action eventually performed is chosen.

2. *Search*

Selecting this sample necessitates a search of memory and the current environment. Stored in memory are outcomes occurring upon the performance of certain actions as well as information about the environment (e.g., where certain kinds of objects are to be found). In addition, when a particular activating condition is operative, the person may experience incoming stimuli including word of mouth, news, advertisements, and other kinds of environmental information. Both memory and the current environment are potential sources of knowledge and beliefs relevant to neutralizing the activating condition (beliefs). People search this information, intentionally and/or incidentally (Fennell, 1979), for actions and objects with some likelihood of securing their desired states and terminating this particular situation (actions/objects considered). It is a directed search for particular qualities and on this account likely uses noncompensatory processing (Fennell, 1980a).

"Search" is used here in a different and, perhaps, broader sense than has been customary in consumer behavior (e.g., Olshavsky & Granbois, 1979). The decision at issue here refers not only to a choice among roughly equivalent actions but to the selection of action from the behavioral repertoire. The present model does not entertain the statement, "We conclude that for many purposes a decision process never occurs, not even on the first purchase" (Olshavsky & Granbois, 1979, p. 98). From the present perspective a simplified decision process is also envisaged in which well-practiced actions are cued by stimuli or other actions. Focal attention becomes involved only by exception, as when we become aware that we are putting salt in our coffee. Even in these cases we would speak of choice from the behavioral repertoire based, however, on attributes of identification and bypassing judgmental processes. In the present model, "search" is understood to comprise a range of selection processes varying in regard to the kind and number of attributes used and involving, in some cases, the need to learn the relationship between attributes available in the environment and those specified by the person's activating conditions.

3. *Judgment*

If two or more actions are being considered, the person needs some way to reduce the pros and cons of each to a single value for purposes of comparison (preference ordering), suggesting compensatory processing (Fennell, 1980a). Costs of performing the sole or most preferred action are assessed in relation to the degree of discomfort associated with the activating condition (cost–benefit ratio).

4. *Exchange*

Resources (e.g., energy, time) are expended to perform the action in the expectation that the changed state of affairs following performance is within the range of values which the person's desired state comprises. The marketer may want to participate in this exchange.

5. *Evaluation*

Following performance, the person experiences the external and internal outcomes (i.e., changed external conditions and accompanying inner experiences) and evaluates the outcomes relative to the desired states. Depending on whether or not the desired states have been achieved, the activating condition may have been neutralized or may continue in effect. In either case, the person's knowledge and beliefs relative to one or more means of terminating this situation are confirmed or revised (learning).

A simple, naturalistic illustration follows: I am working at my desk and, without awareness on my part, the room temperature drops. After some time, I feel sensations of cold which I ignore for a while. Finally, I give focal attention to the sensations and my interpretation of them as being due to a drop in temperature and I wish I felt otherwise (e.g., "not cold," or "warm," or "comfortable") (activating condition/desired states). I consider whether I should close the window, adjust the thermostat, get my jacket out of the closet, get a hot drink (actions/objects considered), all of which I know to be warm making and possible in my immediate environment (beliefs). My preferred action is to get my jacket (preference ordering), but before I move to do so I check as to whether I am sufficiently uncomfortably cold to warrant the effort (cost–benefit ratio). Depending on the outcome of that comparison I may or may not act (i.e., expend energy to secure a desired state) (exchange). If I put on my jacket I may later note (outcomes) that I am still uncomfortably cold or, although now warm, feel restricted in my jacket.

A few words are called for on the functions served by one of the distinctive features of this model, namely, its vertical dimension. The term *activating conditions* serves a number of purposes which include representing (1) the heterogeneous conditions that may activate the "same" focal behavior, (2) the determinants of value in particular situations, (3) the activation of tendencies directed to a class or kind of satisfaction that may in some cases be realized in different ways, and (4) motivation as arising from the cost of inaction. Furthermore, the model identifies the conditions of action as threefold: (1) an allocation of the person's resources in a particular way (specified by the activating conditions) that sensitizes the person to information of a certain kind (i.e., relevant to securing desired states), (2) construction or availability to the person of one or more action possibilities in the relevant environment (actions/objects considered), and (3) judgment that action is worthwhile (cost–benefit ratio). We refer to the first of these—the allocation of resources—as action tendencies, to the second as availability of relevant action, and to the third as costworthiness. Activating conditions trigger biased allocation of resources by making inaction costly (i.e., uncomfortable). Because action entails its own costs to construct as well as to implement, availability (i.e., strength of association between specific action and the action context) and costworthiness enhance the possibility for action. Accordingly, the occurrence of action may be favored by increasing costs of inaction (to a point) or reducing the costs of action. The model also gives us a way to talk about what people want as distinct from how they realize what they want. What people want is represented by activating conditions/desired states. How they go about getting what they want is represented by actions/objects considered.

As may be apparent later (Figure 6), the selection of terms for the model of action has been guided by the twofold objective of staying as close as possible to (1) familiar operations in use in marketing research practice and (2) the marketing objective of identifying opportunities for strategic action. The model also serves as a vehicle for marketers to use in seeking to understand relevant human psychological processes and in attempting to communicate to basic and consumer psychologists a context in which basic research could be made relevant to a marketing application.

B. Marketer's Adaptation of the General Model of Action

The reader may have noted that the marketer's model of action has no terms that refer explicitly to goods/services or to the marketplace. A subtle and, in marketing writings, often overlooked implication of the marketing concept suggests that it must be this way. Goods and services are the end product of marketing. The marketer's point of departure is the actions of people as they go about their lives *outside the marketplace*. To the producer of goods and services the marketing concept is saying: Goods and services are our tools. We may fashion them much as we please. The specific form our goods and services take changes with changing technology and fashion. Forget about existing goods and services for the moment. First understand what people are trying to do. Then assess how well existing goods/services accommodate their goals. Finally, call on your productive know-how and devise offerings accordingly.

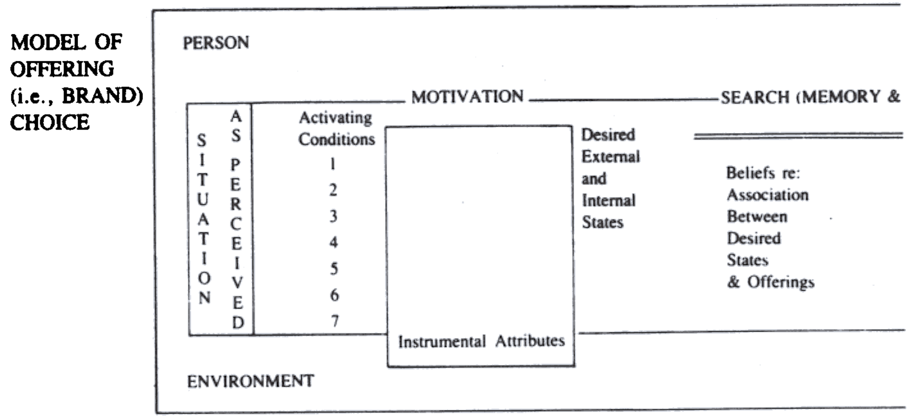
The marketer thus enjoined wants to understand what people are doing when they shower or prepare a meal, or go out for an evening, or look at paintings, or study, or do research.[3] What is the action achieving for this person? What conditions give rise to the action (i.e., make the person expend his or her energy in that manner rather than in some other)? What other actions did the person consider and reject in favor of the one actually performed? When marketers have the answers to questions such as these they may be able to bring their resources to bear in helping people to achieve their purposes.

What the person is trying to do is locked in the psychological space where activating conditions generate desired states. The marketer's task is to understand the conditions activating the behavior of interest and to identify the attributes of goods and services that may be offered to prospects as a means of securing their desired states. In essence, the marketer is required to unlock the process by which people allocate their resources when they expend energy in one action rather than another. Specifically, it is the marketer's task to identify the attributes that qualify actions and objects to be considered as instrumental in bringing about a person's desired states. The task is not easy if only because people may generate a number of actions and objects that are quite appropriate for their purposes without articulating the qualifying attributes, even subvocally. Action itself is motivationally ambiguous. The activity, that is, the focal behavior, which is the marketer's initial evidence of a person's wants may arise from differing kinds of activating conditions. In the normal course of events, the person's observable actions are a poor indicator both of the experience that motivates the action and the experiential state the person seeks to secure by means of the action. Inescapably, it is the experience of people, the privately experienced activating conditions and desired states, that the marketer serves.

Whatever the difficulties, in the market economy where user and producer roles are severed, if marketers are to perform their function as intermediaries between customer wants and technological capability, they must be able to articulate the attributes of goods and services that will bring about customers' desired states. To reflect this aspect of the marketer's task, a model of brand or offering choice specifically recognizes the separation of user and producer roles by including "instrumental attributes"[4] as a separate term. Marketers decompose the term "actions and objects" in the general model of action into "instrumental attributes" and "offerings" (i.e., brands of goods/services offered for sale by the marketer and competitors). Accordingly, the marketer's model of offering choice is an adaptation of the general behavioral model in which "instrumental attributes" is included as an additional term and "offerings" is substituted where "actions and objects" appears in the general model (Figure 6). In this form, the marketer's model of offering choice represents marketing as an activity that seeks to influence particular human actions by tapping into an ongoing process. Success in understanding the direction of the particular system of which the focal activity is a part may mean beating the competition to participate in the exchange that is underway. "Make what the customer wants to buy" means that the marketer attempts to participate in exchanges that people are disposed to make and do make when they can conceive and execute behavior likely to neutralize activating conditions.

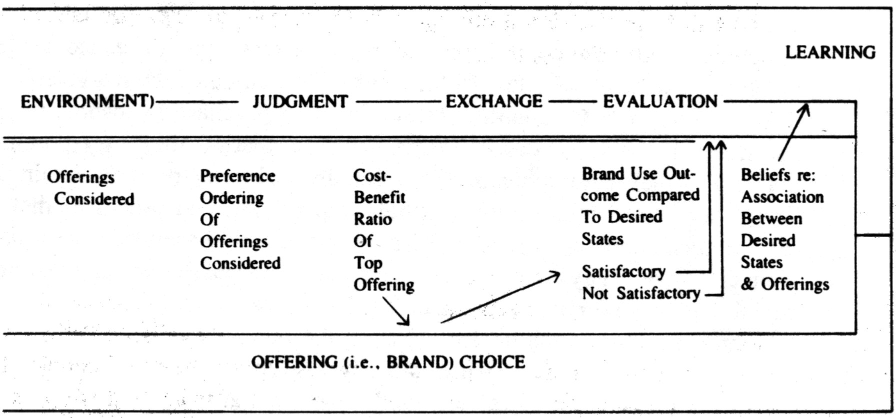
C. Marketer's Domains of Strategic Choice

Once the marketer's model of brand or offering choice has been articulated, the systematic significance of the traditional "four Ps" of the marketing mix becomes apparent, as does the need to give explicit recognition to a fifth P, namely, prospects. In the lower portion of Figure 6, the marketer's domains of strategic choice are shown coordinated to the terms of the model. "Prospects" refers to marketers selecting persons (i.e., person–activity occasions) to study in order to decide whom to select as targets for persuasion. "Product" refers to marketers choosing attributes for their offering (i.e., brand) that allow them to promise assistance to targets in achieving particular desired states. "Promotion" refers to marketers communicating to targets (and possibly to prospects and nonprospects) the association between their offering and particular external and internal states that targets want to experience. This involves creating a communication that serves three functions: (1) locating and engaging the attention of targets in the audiences of media vehicles, (2) registration of the message, that is, the association between offering and desired states, and (3) associating the message and the psychological context for selecting the recommended action, that is, message and decision occasion bonding (Fennell, 1979). "Price" refers to marketers adjusting price so that the cost–benefit ratio is acceptable to targets.



DOMAINS OF STRATEGIC CHOICE:	PROSPECTS (The POSITIONING Decision)	PRODUCT	PROMOTION
DIAGNOSTIC AND EVALUATIVE INFORMATION	Psychographic Segmentation	Reactions to Product Benefits & Attributes (direct and derived), Benefit Segmentation	Brand Awareness. Brand Beliefs. Perceptual Mapping

Figure 6. Marketers Adaptation of the General Model of Action to Guide Behavioral Influence



		PRICE	PLACE		
Brand Consideration Set	Preference Ranking, Purchase Intent Rating, Constant Sum Scale	Value Rating	Out-of-Stock Reports, Sales Data	Brand-in-use Ratings	Brand Knowledge e.g., Brand Beliefs among Triers/ Users

"Place" refers to marketers choosing a location or, more generally, a vehicle acceptable to the target, where the physical exchange of good/service for money occurs. The joint selection of prospects to target and of attributes to offer is what marketers refer to as the *positioning* decision.

The Ps of the marketing mix have been referred to as controllables, that is, variables "under the control" of the marketer that can "influence the level of customer response" (Kotler, 1972, p. 88). The nature of the marketer's control differs among the P variables. Marketers may purchase exposures to persons described in the audiences of media vehicles, that is, they may purchase the delivery of their communication into the physical time/space of certain people. They may also purchase raw materials, equipment, and processes that permit certain goods and services to be offered for sale, and they may set a price for their offerings. They may not, in many cases, purchase exchange locations or vehicles as they purchase raw materials. In all cases what influences the level of customer response is the decision among the options available. What is it that makes a message, delivered into the physical environment of people, leave a (useful) impression on a (useful) mind? The short answer is: It is the decisions that influence agents have made in strategic domains (i.e., domains where marketers' choices are likely to affect buying of the offerings they may make available). Ultimately the operative "control" is the indirect control obtained through understanding the antecedents of action. To avoid confusion between "control" in its direct and indirect senses, it is preferable to describe the P variables as referring to domains of strategic choice.

Figure 6 also shows, coordinated to the domains of strategic choice, the major kinds of information and, in some cases, special analytic tools that marketers use for diagnostic and evaluative purposes. The systematic significance of the different research categories is apparent.

D. Essentials of Marketing Persuasion

The objective of marketing persuasion at the individual level is to influence the form an activity takes, specifically, to influence the target to select the marketer's offering. Within constraints of profitability the objective is to secure repeated choice of the marketer's brand.[5] Marketing persuasion may be thought of as actions taken in the light of (1) the marketer's model of prospects' instrumental acts and (2) a competitive environment.

1. *Strategy vis-à-vis the Prospect*

In regard to the prospects the mechanism by which marketing persuasion occurs is twofold: symbolic learning (cf classical conditioning, modeling) and learning by experiencing the outcomes of action (cf instrumental/operant conditioning). It is necessary to describe the process in four stages (Figure 7):

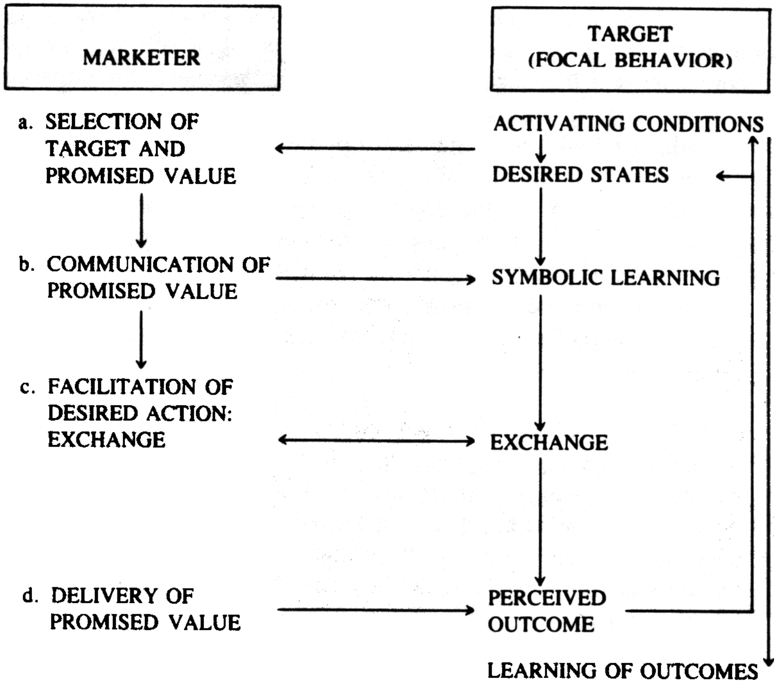


Figure 7. Marketing Persuasion at the Level of the Individual

a. Selection of Target Activity and Promised Value. With regard to the focal behavioral domain, elements in the prospects themselves in combination with elements in their environment lead to the allocation of prospects' energies in certain ways, sensitizing them to information relevant to securing their desired states and readying them for behavior that neutralizes their activating conditions. In a universe of interest, marketers assess the chances that an offering they could make would be perceived relevant to achieving prospects' desired states and they choose the attributes of an offering which they believe at least some prospects will perceive to be valuable relative to other options.

b. Communication of the Promised Value. Marketers announce details of the availability of this offering. Their promise to deliver a particular value is contained in a communication placed in time and space appropriate to their targets. Having adjusted the offering to targets' desired states and the exposure of the communication to their media behavior, marketers believe they may rely on targets' own processes to select the communication (Fennell, 1979) and use the information it contains to guide their ongoing search for means of securing their desired states. Marketers have taken the initiative to make available to targets an action possibility that is relevant to securing their desired states.

c. Facilitation of the Desired Action. Marketers also do what they can to minimize all costs associated with obtaining their offering. Persuasion is not complete until the customer has had a chance to have a confirming experience that the offering does indeed secure a desired state. Accordingly, marketers do everything possible to ensure this opportunity to the target, specifically by attempting to keep the costs of action within a range proportionate to the activating discomfort throughout the decision process, that is, through purchase and use. Ensuring that the target experiences the outcome of using the offering is such an important part of marketing persuasion that marketers sometimes are not willing to rely on symbolic communication and normal facilitation alone, but take the additional step of a one-time delivery of the offering, gratis, to prospects (e.g., sampling a new brand).

d. Delivery of the Promised Value. In the course of experience with the marketer's offering, the person may develop some feeling, positive or negative, toward the offering. Upon a recurrence of the activating condition, an associative bond between the offering and the desired state may bring the offering to mind as a candidate means of securing the desired state. Now the customer is in a position to assess the brand not only on the basis of promised value but also on the basis of value delivered.

2. *Strategy vis-à-vis the Competition*

Three elements are essential to action: action tendencies, availability of relevant action, and costworthiness of action. In the MODIFY task, marketers address availability and costworthiness and rely for the third on their having correctly assessed the manner in which some persons in the universe of interest are disposed to allocate resources. Within this framework, in seeking to gain a competitive advantage marketers may favor improving the relevance of their offering to (some) prospects' wants, the readiness with which their offering comes to mind at the opportune moment in the target's decision process, or the ease with which targets may acquire the offering.

For repeated action, a fourth condition is essential, namely, the target's satisfaction with the outcome experienced upon following the marketer's recommendation. Value known or believed to be available from competitive offerings may enter the customer's assessment of satisfaction received.

E. Difficulties and Constraints

Limitations on the marketer's success in meeting customers' requirements involve identifying what prospects require and implementing their requirements. The former is mainly a limitation of behavioral science in finding ways to help people articulate essentially private experience that (1) they may not make explicit even to themselves, (2) often concerns routine activities which they perform mindlessly, and (3) they may, in stressful cases where no solution has been available, appropriately deal with by mechanisms of denial and repression (Fennell, 1980a, 1982b).

Difficulty in implementing the prospect's requirements, once identified, has different sources depending on the application. In business applications, constraints may be due to the inability of technology to meet the target's requirements profitably. In nonbusiness applications the profitability limitation is not present but its place may be taken by constraints imposed by funding sources, the special interests represented by management, ideology, or personal belief. For example, politicians seeking votes or financing, symphony orchestras and museums seeking to attract patrons, colleges seeking students, medical facilities seeking patients, and organizations seeking donations of time or money may study the motivations of, respectively, the voting and political funding public, concert and museum patrons, college applicants, persons in need of medical services, and persons who volunteer time and donate money to organizations. Each of these groups/organizations may endeavor to tailor their offerings according to what they have learned about their prospects' wants, but they will likely do so only up to a point that is still compatible with their essential mission as they perceive it. Whether imposed by considerations of profit or mission, there is some point beyond which the offering is not modifiable.

F. Range of Application

The essential features of marketing persuasion (Figure 7) pertain wherever people are ready to exchange resources for expected assistance in securing desired states and an influence agent offers to participate in the exchange. That the influence agent "offers" to participate in the exchange implies that the prospect is not constrained to an exchange with a particular influence agent because there are competing influence agents or the person may use his or her own resources. In one sense, there is reason to investigate what the customer wants whether or not conditions of free competition prevail. Division of labor entails the separation of user and producer roles and obligates producers to stand in the user's shoes in order to serve the purposes of users. The role competition plays is to make it more likely that producers have users' purposes in mind when they make production and distribution decisions. In essence, the marketing concept gives advice to producers as to how to proceed in a competitive environment.

Beyond the business arena, the exchange activities of nonprofit institutions and groups in health, education, the arts, and politics fall under the general rubric. Within the general framework of marketing persuasion, accommodation is readily made for a variety of special circumstances relating to customers, customer–offering interaction, and offerings such as the differing circumstances of consumer/industrial/government customers, of low/high involvement activity occasions, stick/carrot type of motivation, first time and repeat buying, repeat buying when particulars of activity occasions/offerings have changed, offerings used with few/many activities, with homogeneous/heterogeneous activity occasions, nondurables/durables, goods/services. The particular circumstances of marketing persuasion in the major nonprofit domains may similarly be identified and accommodated. Among the more obvious are those that relate to the special nature of the offering (e.g., its expert role in the differing contexts of health services and education, its expression of human individuality in the differing contexts of the arts and politics). In the arts, for example, there likely will always be individuals who pursue their own vision with no regard for current customer taste and who may suffer the consequences of obscurity and lack of recognition temporarily or for their entire lives. Many would find the notion abhorrent that they should take heed initially of what the customer wants. On the other hand, individuals and organizations who must choose the program to be made available to the public have the further option to decide solely according to their own lights what the public shall have or, by using marketing's tools, to gain an understanding of the varied functions which the arts serve for people and take into consideration the corresponding attributes of a customer-oriented program. Likewise, in the realm of campaigning for political office there is a limit to the extent to which individual candidates may with sincerity adapt their views to please prospective voters. While the range of maneuverability is wider for party bosses who may choose among potential candidates, neither the individual candidate nor the power brokers may design a candidate from scratch. But then, a good/service is not infinitely variable either.

Just as, in the business application, existing technology and the profitability requirement limit the product options available to marketers, the special nature of their offerings confronts nonprofit marketers with tough questions about their personal or organizational view of the range of modifiability within which their offering maintains its essential character. Once they understand that the issue is who participates in the choice of offering characteristics, the conceptual tools of marketing persuasion are available to help them understand the nature of the demand they may wish to address and the behavioral implications of successfully putting forward an offering to compete for a share of exchanges.

V. MARKETING PERSUASION IN STOP AND START TASKS

We turn now to consider what, if anything, marketing persuasion has to offer to the furthering of social causes; to promoting desirable actions such as buckling up, voting, and mailing early (START); and to restraining undesirable actions such as smoking cigarettes, abusing children, littering, and wasting resources (STOP). At the outset, one can express only admiration for the boldness of the assertion that marketing, grounded in the notion of rolling with the punches, has anything to offer when what is needed is swimming against the tide. Clearly, if marketing persuasion has a contribution to make in STOP and START tasks, it must be at a level deeper than surface similarity.

In STOP tasks, for example, the focal activity is being performed and persuasive strategy is directed to stopping the activity. In sharp contrast to the MODIFY task, where the influence agent accepts action tendencies, the change agent is searching for ways to thwart action tendencies. To take smoking cigarettes as an example and for the moment considering only the health-related reasons for urging people to quit, the most obvious application of marketing persuasion to the hazards of smoking is typified by the development of low-tar/nicotine cigarettes. Here the marketer accepts the general direction in which the person is ready to expend resources (smoking tobacco). Recognizing that many smokers have health concerns, the marketer identifies appropriate attributes and makes available a cigarette believed to be less hazardous. There are numerous examples that illustrate a similar marketing response to consumer concern about possibly injurious ingredients, such as low-cholesterol margarine and other foods, low-caffeine coffee, nonaspirin pain remedies, low-calorie foods and drinks. In all these cases the marketing response is to make available, for those persons who have some special concern, a version of the basic product that lacks or has reduced amounts of the objectionable ingredient. Also typical of marketing is to respond to those persons who would like to quit by developing and offering stop-smoking devices. Once again, building on action tendencies already in place, the marketer tries to identify attributes for goods/services appropriate to prospects. It appears, however, to have been impossible so far to produce a cigarette that is not hazardous to health and many smokers do not try to stop smoking. Furthermore, there are other features of smoking cigarettes that many people find undesirable (e.g., fire hazard, messy ash, unsightly and smelly cigarette butts). Accordingly we may ask: Beyond construing the problem as a MODIFY task, does marketing have a contribution to make in terms of getting people to stop smoking? In this section, an application of marketing persuasion to STOP and START tasks is considered, first at the level of the universe of interest and then at the level of the individual.

A. Marketing Analysis in a Universe of Interest

1. STOP

It may appear that the elaborate research and analysis that characterizes planning for persuasion in the MODIFY case is unnecessary in a STOP assignment where the question of whom to persuade to do what is readily answered, smokers should be persuaded to stop smoking. We may want such an outcome just as brand managers might wish that every resident of the United States would eat their particular cereal for breakfast. Something considerably less than 100 percent incidence of use may be regarded as a superb performance for a breakfast cereal. Likewise, something considerably less than 100 percent success in persuading people to stop smoking may be a realistic goal in the short run. The objectives in the two cases may not be commensurable but their realization depends, similarly, on successful behavioral influence. The obvious social utility of succeeding in reducing cigarette smoking is not a rationale for unrealistically high goals in the socially desirable case. Indeed, the present analysis suggests that the influence assignment in STOP/START tasks is likely much more difficult than in MODIFY tasks. If a goal of anything less than 100 percent change is accepted in a STOP assignment, the question of who should be persuaded arises. If we open the door to selecting among prospective persuadees, we also open the door to the idea of tailoring our offering (i.e., message) to our targets.

In STOP assignments there may be nonbehavioral reasons (e.g., considerations of law or equity) why it is considered unacceptable to attempt to influence less than 100 percent of prospective persuadees. Even if the question of whom to persuade is answered, "All those who engage in the focal activity," it does not follow that one message is equally effective for all or that we can say without analysis and research what the characteristics of a "good" stop-smoking message are. Accordingly, by analogy with the MODIFY task, persons who perform the focal activity are regarded as prospective persuadees (i.e., "prospects") until information has been obtained that permits the strategic selection of some or all prospects to be the targets for a persuasive effort. At the same time, one or more messages appropriate to the targets will also be selected. In order to select the prospects to target and the appropriate messages to use, or for guidance on message strategy only, the steps of market definition and market segmentation analysis as shown in Figure 2 are available to change agents planning STOP campaigns.

a. Whom/What to Study. First the change agent considers the outer limits of the universe of interest. As in the MODIFY task, whom to persuade in regard to what becomes, in practice, whom/what to study and whom/what to target. In the case of a STOP assignment there is rarely any reason to select for study anything less than a universe embracing all occasions when people residing in one's region of jurisdiction or responsibility engage in the focal activity. However, looking ahead to communicating the persuasive message, if it appears that only a portion of the universe of interest is locatable via the available media, it may make sense to restrict the universe to be studied to prospective persuadees in the media audiences. It is well to use the occasion of specifying the universe of interest as a reminder that our language misleads us into thinking of activity in the abstract (Fennell, 1982b). In fact, "smoking" never occurs other than as a specific act by a person in a particular psychological and environmental context. Some more than others of these intra- and extrapsychic contexts may offer opportunities for effecting change. Qualitative research is used to obtain information on relevant features of the internal and external environment, including the competitive frame.

b. Specifying the Competition. Marketing reminds us to consider the influences that compete with our persuasive objective. In the STOP task, our main competitors are not, as they are in the MODIFY task, other persuaders and the alternative actions/objects the person may consider, but the conditions that activate and maintain the behavior we say ought to be discontinued. Conditions activating the focal behavior are studied as a matter of course in connection with the positioning decision (discussed next). Accordingly, for STOP assignments, specifying the competition may be construed as identifying all the forces that may be marshalled to oppose performance of the focal activity, in effect, the *allies* of the change agent. In this case, the change agent wants to learn as much as possible about alternative actions the person may sometimes consider and use in place of the focal activity, as well as the extent to which the person may have action tendencies favoring quitting. Qualitative research among successful quitters is helpful here.

c. Whom/What to Target with What. For the universe as defined, the information outlined under items 6–8 in Figure 2 is obtained. First, with regard to activating conditions, we may expect to find that the action to be stopped is initiated in various ways. In the case of cigarette smoking, for example, discomfort arising from stress, worry, boredom, nervousness may be implicated; or considerations of being or projecting a certain type of personality (e.g., cool, mature, "with it"); the action may be engaged in routinely with minimal awareness, or in an exploratory frame of mind (e.g., to observe speed of burn under various environmental conditions); or as an opportunity to enjoy the sensations of taste, smell, activity of the hands, arms, lips. In addition to orientations such as these, smoking may be accompanied by some unpleasant thoughts or feeling, or by a sense of having a less than satisfying experience. Similarly, the states people hope to secure by lighting and smoking cigarettes may be explored for the relevant universe of person–activity occasions. We would expect to find a clustering of these various orientations to smoking a cigarette and we may ask what proportions of total cigarettes smoked in a year fall into each cluster.

Given the activating conditions that smokers experience, what, if any, actions other than smoking do they consider and on what criteria and how do they judge these actions? What, if any, misgivings do they have about smoking? How do they assess their misgivings, if any, in relation to smoking's benefits to them in dealing with the activating conditions? What is their experience in circumstances when smoking is not permitted? Do they experience activating conditions for smoking and how do they deal with them? What is and has been their smoking behavior pattern? How often have they tried to quit and what was their experience? Do they intend to/believe they can/wish they could quit/wish they had never started?

The general model of action (Figure 4) suggests questions for research such as those just outlined as well as the analytic groups indicated in Figure 8. Each analytic group points to the broad thrust of appropriate strategic action as well as to the kinds of specific information that would be helpful for strategic development. As described in this research, the universe of interest contains a great

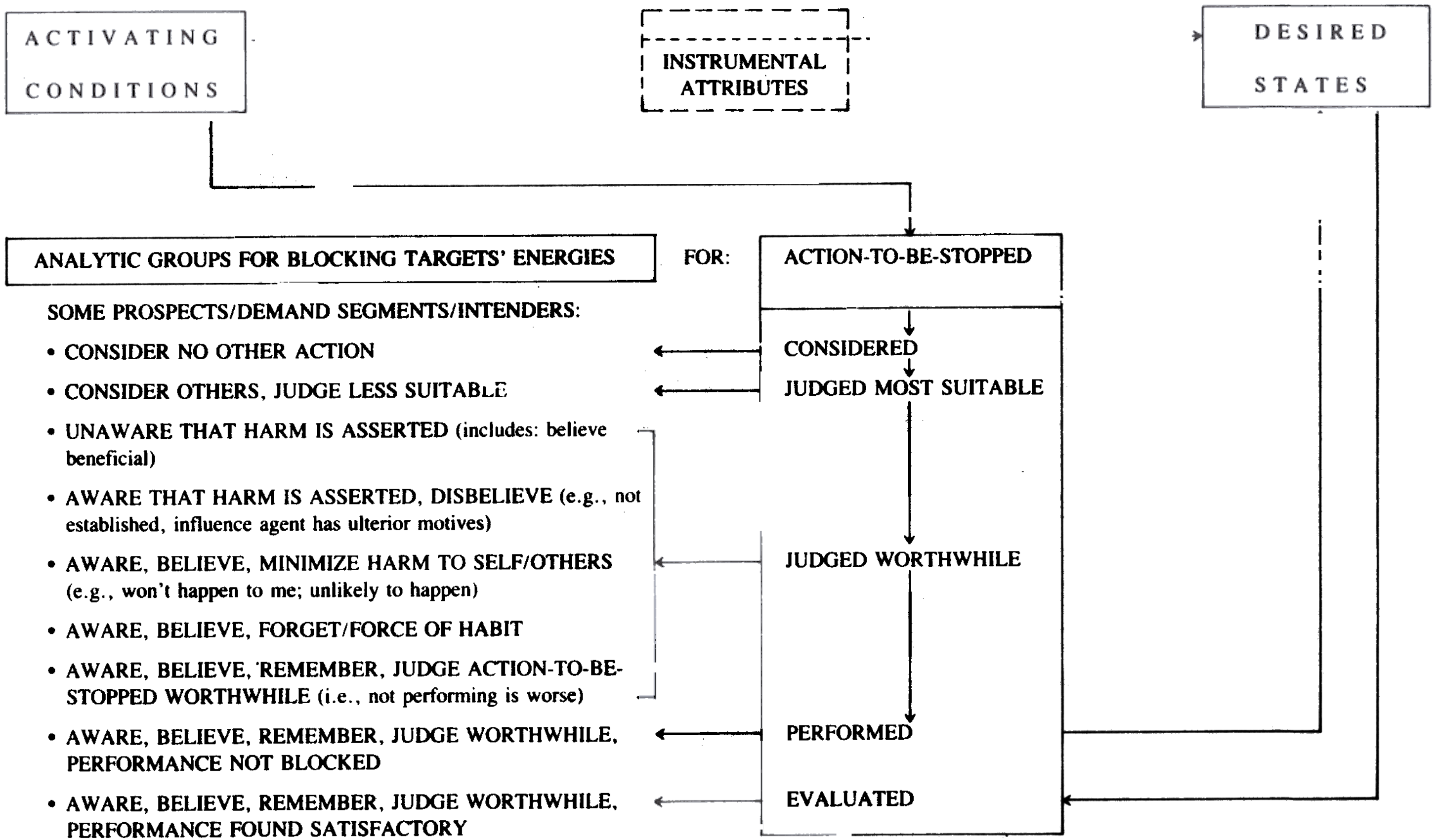


Figure 8. Information Needed for Strategic Development: STOP

diversity of reasons and types of occasions; of awareness, recall, and beliefs; and of behavior patterns and intentions relevant to the focal behavior and to quitting. Correspondingly varied strategies for influencing smokers to quit are suggested. Questions of strategy and policy abound. Is one message likely to be equally effective among all prospects? What is the appropriate content for that message? Are resources best allocated to persons who currently have or have not action tendencies toward quitting? Are there groups (defined in terms of activating conditions, beliefs, behavior) who are more likely than others to quit on their own or with help of a persuasive effort? Given the alternative uses for antismoking funds, are resources best spent in a media campaign or in first studying alternative approaches to use with the various prospect groups identified in research such as that just described? To what extent would the various analytic groups favor greater use of the force of law to restrain performance of the focal activity? Is any expenditure of funds in a STOP media campaign justified?

2. *START*

We now consider, for the START task, the likely outcomes of a marketing analysis designed to guide the strategic decision on whom to persuade in regard to what. As with the STOP task, considerations relative to prospects, competition, targets, and message are considered in turn.

a. Whom/What to Study. Who should be studied to provide strategic guidance for a START campaign? The obvious answer—all nonperformers of the focal activity—is deceptively simple, as becomes evident with the next question: In regard to what? By definition, there is no focal activity to study. Herein lies the essential difference between MODIFY and START. The MODIFY task takes off from existing action tendencies, usually already being expressed in the form of the focal activity. The influence agent defines prospects based on their performance of the focal activity or some surrogate. In the START task, prospective persuadees are defined based on their nonperformance of the focal activity and without regard to whether or not they have relevant action tendencies. Marketing is differentiated from selling on precisely this point: It is not enough that the change agent have action tendencies favoring the focal behavior.

A marketer would attempt to construe a START assignment in MODIFY terms and would qualify prospects either on the basis of likelihood of performing the focal activity or based on shared characteristics with current performers of the focal activity or on engaging in some behavior for which the focal activity could be a substitute or a special form. Examples of such recruited focal activities are as follows: for getting people to volunteer their time, persons may be qualified based on their donating money; or for participating in a community effort to stop vandalism, persons may be qualified on the basis of maintaining their home in good condition; or for carpooling, drivers may be qualified based on their dem-

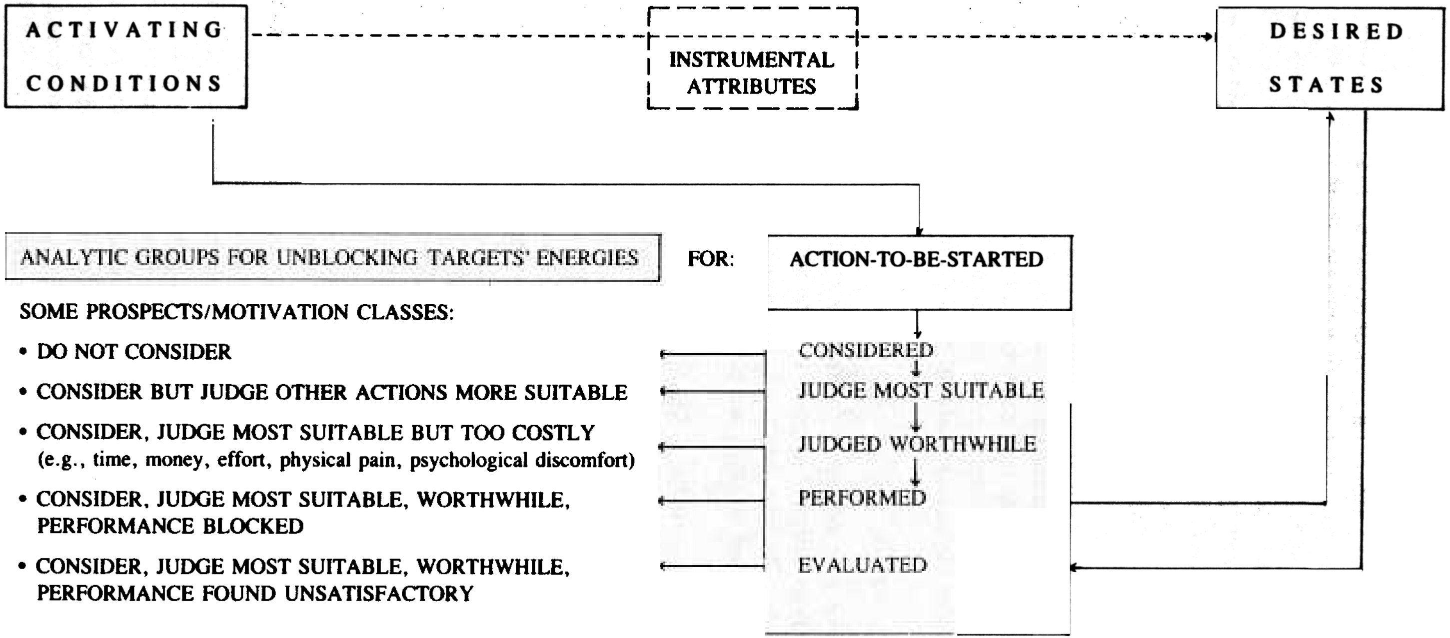


Figure 9. Information Needed for Strategic Development: START (recruit)

onstrated or professed interest in conserving scarce resources. In general, however, defining prospects in a way that would exclude any relevant nonperformers of the focal activity (i.e., for carpooling, all persons who drive to work) is likely to go against the grain for change agents who are addressing START assignments. Possible exceptions are cases where economic considerations predominate (e.g., in a mail early campaign) and where the feasibility of exposing prospective persuadees to the persuasive message may suggest restricting the universe to be studied to persons believed to be locatable in media audiences.

Marketers would consider it essential that preliminary qualitative research to obtain guidance on question content for a survey of nonperformers be conducted among performers as well as nonperformers of the focal activity. There is no focal activity to study among prospects. Accordingly, as a means of generating topics to investigate among nonperformers it is useful to study the *situation as perceived* by persons who currently perform the focal activity.

b. Specifying the Competition. Without doing research relative to a particular START assignment, it is hard to specify the competition other than in general terms. Aside from perceived unpleasantness associated with the action to be started, clues may be obtained from studying the place the focal behavior occupies in the lives of its performers. In general terms, the competition consists of conditions activating and maintaining prospects' behavior at those points in the stream of a person's behavior where the focal activity would occur. Construing the assignment as a STOP task may suggest specific conditions and activities that compete for the prospect's energy and attention.

c. Whom/What to Target with What. Among nonperformers of the focal activity marketing analysis and research produces analytic groups such as those shown in Figures 9 and 10. In Figure 9 (START—Recruit) the task is being construed in MODIFY terms. The figure is based on the assumption that the change agent has identified a currently performed activity for which the action to be started may conceivably be viewed as a substitute or special form. "Prospects" are persons who perform the recruited focal activity. It will be evident that the action to be started is not performed due to (1) its not being considered in connection with prospects' currently experienced activating conditions or being considered but not performed for a variety of other reasons, such as those shown in Figure 9, or due to (2) the prospects' not experiencing any activating conditions which the action to be started could neutralize or to their experiencing activation but using cognitive coping strategies to deactivate the motivating process as shown in Figure 10 (START—Instate).

As in the STOP case, following the research, prospects are no longer an undifferentiated group identified solely as nonperformers of the action to be started. They are now differentiated in terms of their reasons for nonperformance and whether or not they currently experience activating conditions which the

ACTIVATING CONDITIONS

INSTRUMENTAL ATTRIBUTES

DESIRED STATES

ANALYTIC GROUPS FOR CHANGING TARGETS'
ENERGY DIRECTING SYSTEMS

AS REQUIRED FOR:

ACTION-TO-BE-STARTED

SOME PROSPECTS:

- UNAWARE THAT HARM IS CLAIMED
- AWARE HARM IS CLAIMED, DISBELIEVE
- AWARE, BELIEVE, MINIMIZE (HARM/PERSONAL RELEVANCE/LIKELIHOOD)
- AWARE, BELIEVE, FORGET/FORCE OF HABIT
- AWARE, BELIEVE, REMEMBER, KNOW OF NO APPROPRIATE ACTION
- AWARE, BELIEVE, REMEMBER, USE OTHER ACTION (see Figure 9)

- UNAWARE THAT PLEASURE IS CLAIMED
- AWARE PLEASURE IS CLAIMED, DISBELIEVE
- AWARE, BELIEVE, MINIMIZE (PLEASURE/PERSONAL RELEVANCE/LIKELIHOOD)
- AWARE, BELIEVE, FORGET/FORCE OF HABIT
- AWARE, BELIEVE, REMEMBER, KNOW OF NO APPROPRIATE ACTION
- AWARE, BELIEVE, REMEMBER, USE OTHER ACTION (see Figure 9)

Figure 10. Information Needed for Strategic Development: START (instate)

recommended action could neutralize. Correspondingly differentiated influence strategies are indicated which the change agent may devise and test with a view to spending scarce resources where the chance of success is promising.

B. Planning for Persuasion in a Universe of Interest

Outside of marketing, discussions of persuasion do not usually address issues relating to identification of prospects, competition, and target and, more generally, the variety of orientations and states of information to be found in any universe of interest. Instead, they have tended to focus on one or a few hypotheses for attitudinal or behavioral change which frequently are tested without first qualifying subjects in terms of the appeal's possible relevance to them individually. Basic to a marketing approach is the going-in idea that the universe is heterogeneous and that the first goal is to describe the various perspectives that are relevant to the persuasive task. Marketing's expectation of finding heterogeneity has been grounded in an implicit sense of the antecedents of action so that efforts to describe this heterogeneity proceed in a systematic manner reflecting the components of a behavioral decision process. When the heterogeneous orientations of prospects are known, marketers may devise specially tailored strategies and test them among representatives of the appropriate analytic groups.

As indicated in Figures 3 and 8–10, marketing's model of action permits the influence agent, in advance of conducting research, to map the terrain in a universe of interest and to consider various options for persuasive strategy. Using a blueprint of the likely orientations (e.g., motivations, information, beliefs, and recall), change agents confronting STOP and START assignments may be assisted in clarifying their own objectives for the persuasive effort. Even if the change agent's objective is simply to inform, alternative ways of presenting the same informational content may be differentially suitable across the range of prospect orientations in the relevant universe. In addition, it is clear that for some prospects it is not new information that is needed but rather reminder messages. For others, the issue is costworthiness of the recommended behavior: A major shift in their relative valences for the activating and terminating components of the relevant *situation as perceived* may be called for if they are to come to view the to-be-stopped action as disproportionately costly (Figure 8) or the to-be-started action as proportionately costly (Figure 10) relative to activating conditions which they experience.

A marketing analysis of the universe of interest identifies a range of options for persuasive strategy which change agents may consider. At the end of the present section we discuss the implications for behavioral influence of these strategic options. The question to be addressed here is whether in some persuasive contexts the selective, differentiated approach that is one of marketing's strengths may be deemed inappropriate.

1. Nonbehavioral Criteria for the Selection of Targets

Are there contexts in which change agents may not be able to use a segmented persuasive strategy? Do nonbehavioral criteria dictate that change agents may not use different strategies within a universe of interest? A number of authors have reported that a strategy of market segmentation, particularly when it means ignoring certain segments, runs into difficulties with some social agencies: "The notion of treating certain groups differently or with special attention while perhaps ignoring others completely is not consistent with the egalitarian and antidiscriminatory philosophies that pervade many social agencies, particularly those in government" (Bloom & Novelli, 1981, p. 81). Lovelock and Weinberg (1978b) had made a similar point: "Although a marketing organization can often satisfy consumer needs better and be more effective when it focuses its attention upon carefully defined market segments, it may be politically infeasible for a public agency to deliberately focus its attention on one group and ignore the interest of others covered by its operating responsibilities" (p. 31).

Both sets of authors seem to use the term *market segmentation* to embrace the tasks of market definition and market segmentation (Figure 2). The issue needs to be considered separately for each task. As one illustration of the problem, Bloom and Novelli (1981) refer to a program to persuade persons exposed to asbestos to take certain specific health precautions. Although workers exposed during world war II were the "primary" targets, difficulties arose when "due to the mandates of some of the agencies involved it became necessary also to target the effort to current workers" (p. 81). In marketing terms, the client wanted to address two markets. Given the likely age difference between the two groups of workers, the "constant problem" that arose about "whether to divide limited resources or simply take a general audience route" appears to implicate the locatability of each group in media audiences, clearly an issue of market definition.

Questions of market segmentation would arise *within* each group and, in the present case, would have involved first addressing a descriptive task along the lines of Figures 8–10 (for the campaign objectives of stop smoking, get regular check-ups, seek prompt help for respiratory problems). It would be apparent that some more than other workers in each group were in need of information, reminders, or convincing if they were to act as the client agencies were recommending. The question of whether or not to adopt a strategy of market segmentation would have arisen at that point: Could one message be devised that would be equally appropriate and effective for all? Are multiple messages needed, different ones for different segments identified in terms of appropriate message content and persuasibility? Are funds or volunteered contributions from ad agencies available to develop, test, and communicate multiple campaigns? Are the funds to be apportioned equally to all campaigns or directed disproportionately to targets who are most unlikely to take proper steps, or disproportionately to targets where influence is most likely to result in appropriate actions?

Considerations relevant to discussion of the appropriate yardsticks to use in profit (e.g., Anderson, 1982) and nonprofit (e.g., Weinberg, 1980) settings are a starting point, but concepts of equity in the allocation of public services additionally need to be taken into account in the present context: equal opportunity—allocating equal amounts of services to all citizens regardless of need or the amount of taxes paid; compensatory equity—allocating services so that disadvantaged receive extra resources; market equity—allocating services to groups in proportion to the tax or fee revenue they produce (Crompton and Lamb, in press). A marketing analysis also raises issues of operationalizing any concept of equity, such as whether the *identical* message delivered into the physical environment of each prospect ensures equal opportunity. A case can be made that *only* a segmented effort may approach the goal of giving equal service once the basis for allocating funds has been decided.

As regards not wanting to engage in differential treatment in the legal sense, it is particularly important to disentangle the concepts of market definition and market segmentation (Fennell, 1982a). Authors have been needlessly concerned that a strategy of market segmentation may discriminate against classes protected by statute. Their concern seems to spring from equating market segmentation with market definition. A market or universe of interest may be defined, at least in part, in terms of population segments as, for example, the black or teen or women's market. A strategy of market segmentation acknowledges the fact that because a market, or universe of interest, thus defined is heterogeneous, differentiated strategies are likely necessary in order to communicate effectively with individual market members. This analysis appears to be totally consistent with the idea of *not* acting toward individuals on the basis of their class membership. Market segmentation studies conducted for business purposes typically show that analytic groups such as those suggested in Figure 3 do not coincide with major population segments. Accordingly, a segmented persuasive strategy is unlikely to entail differential treatment of classes protected by statute and discrimination in the legal sense is unlikely to be an issue. In the event funds are not available to implement an appropriately differentiated persuasive effort, issues of equity in the allocation of public funds remain to be addressed: Are public funds to be spent to make information available to those disposed to remember to use it, or to help people remember to use the information at the appropriate time, or to convince all or some (which?) unwilling people to change their ways? For the present, our contribution *qua* marketers is not to pronounce on the questions of justice, but to develop our science to the point where we may attach validity coefficients to our estimates of the persuasibility of the various analytic groups.

Marketing's highly differentiated conceptualizations can be drawn on at the very start of strategic planning to map the likely range of motivating influences and states of awareness, belief, and recall in the relevant universes as well as to raise the issue of alternative definitions of the universe of interest. Policy considerations may be addressed and clarified at this early stage in advance of conducting research to quantify the size of the various analytic groups and to uncover the clustering of orientations within the universe(s) of interest. The fact that concerns of social justice may arise in regard to responding to heterogeneity in the universe for a persuasive effort in no way makes a marketing approach unsuited to the furtherance of social causes. Rather the behavioral analysis that is so intrinsically a part of marketing helps to clarify the practical ramifications of effecting change.

C. Influencing Action in STOP and START Tasks

At the level of the universe of interest the analytic and research approaches of marketing have much to contribute in the planning stages of STOP and START assignments. We turn now to consider marketing's contribution at the level of the individual, that is, to influencing action.

1. *STOP*

The behavioral model represents action as emerging from the person's repertoire according to criteria of relevance to currently experienced activating conditions and desired states. In its present form the model suggests that the person generates and considers the action to be stopped and possibly others, compares the alternatives, and judges the value of performing any action given the measure of discomfort to be neutralized. The chances of the action's being repeated relate to its success in securing the desired states. By suggesting the structure of possible psychological contexts in which the to-be-stopped action is embedded, the model raises possibilities for persuasive strategies aimed at stopping the action. For example, the model suggests that prospects are likely to desist from the to-be-stopped action (1) when they can defuse the motivating process, that is, when they no longer experience previously activating elements as requiring the expenditure of their resources of attention and action (e.g., when, over time, people come to regard as harmless ineptitude a child's "bad" behavior that previously had triggered rage, or to recognize that they may not be ostracized by their friends if they do not smoke cigarettes); (2) when they consider and judge most suitable some other action as a means of neutralizing the activating condition (e.g., putting candy bar wrapper in one's pocket, or holding it in the hand until a waste basket is sighted; chewing gum rather than smoking to relieve the edginess of working against a deadline); (3) when the to-be-stopped action is experienced as entailing discomfort greater than that arising from the activating condition (e.g., feeling of revulsion at aspects of the action itself such as the smell of cigarette smoke, or thinking, "I'm not the sort of person who needs to reach for a cigarette"); (4) when performance of the to-be-stopped action is blocked as it is in those locations where smoking is prohibited; or (5) when performance of the to-be-stopped action no longer is believed to secure desired states.

Behavioral objectives such as these are largely foreign to the practice of marketing. With regard to defusing the motivating process, marketers typically study the conditions that activate their prospects with a view to taking guidance for the design of goods and services. It may perhaps be the domain of the therapist rather than the marketer to attempt to change a person's susceptibility to activation or the person's ability to use thought processes to deactivate. Faced with the objective of attempting to change people's susceptibility to activation, marketers' interest in heterogeneity suggests examining the different conditions activating the focal behavior. Some more than others of the perceived conditions may afford an opportunity for changing the person's susceptibility to activation.

With regard to the other possible means of blocking the to-be-stopped action, while it is true that influencing choice of action rather than motivation is familiar ground for marketers, change agents who would address these objectives in the context of STOP assignments do so with one hand tied behind their backs. They may not now call on control over outcomes to help in the persuasive task. For example, if smokers who want to cut down the number of cigarettes smoked are willing to enter into exchange with a marketer of chewing gum, they give the marketer the opportunity to effect some control over the outcome of their experience of gum chewing. The marketer is able to test various gum formulas for this purpose and to choose flavor, consistency, persistence of flavor, texture, and so on in the hope of finding a formula best suited to the smokers' purpose. The marketer then announces the availability of a stop-smoking gum and relies on interest in such an item to get targets to attend to the message, learn where the gum is available, buy and use it. Furthermore, the marketer's potential control reaches to the outcome targets experience upon following the recommendation to buy and use "our" stop-smoking gum. If the marketer has been able to develop a gum which targets find helpful, this satisfactory outcome may lead to successful persuasion in the form of repeat purchase. In contrast, in a STOP assignment, change agents may use the mass media to urge that targets adopt alternative actions to smoking as a means of neutralizing some of the conditions activating smoking. To the extent they are talking to people with no interest in quitting, they may not rely on interest in their message to engage smokers' attention. Even if with repetition they achieve some registration of their message, or if their message is attended to by persons interested in quitting, they lack a vehicle for contact with the target other than the persuasive message itself. The further contact that exchange affords is missing. Specifically, they have no direct means of controlling the outcome the target experiences upon performing the recommended action.

In summary, marketing's model of persuasion (Figure 7) is not appropriate to the conditions of a STOP assignment at the individual level. It remains to be seen whether we may nevertheless use some of the elements of marketing's approach to persuasion to further our understanding of ways to approach the STOP task. Discussion of possibilities along these lines is best postponed until we have first reviewed marketing persuasion at the level of the individual for the START task.

2. *START*

The behavioral model suggests that targets are likely to perform the focal activity when it becomes an action that they think of and choose over others as likely to secure a state they desire without undue cost relative to activating discomfort. For this to happen, change agents need to recruit or instate an activating condition. Among its current performers, the heterogeneous conditions activating the recommended behavior likely contain personal and environmental elements that are a useful source of ideas for change agents searching for sources of behavioral activation.

To recruit an activating condition, the change agent searches for (1) activating conditions that the prospect currently neutralizes by means of an action for which the to-be-started action could be substituted (e.g., carpooling in place of driving to work to neutralize the conditions activating getting to work) or (2) where the to-be-started action could be added as another way of neutralizing activating conditions which the prospect currently experiences (e.g., for prospects among whom concern about the shortage/cost of energy has been a source of discomfort and has given rise to their acquiring a gas-economical car, it may be possible to present carpooling as another way of dealing with the discomfort attendant upon thinking about the shortage/cost of energy). In each case the change agent attempts to build on activation currently experienced by the prospect—a strategy similar, thus far, to the MODIFY task. Here, however, the change agent is not bent on responding to the prospect's activation with a specially tailored good or service but with a readymade solution: Do it my way. To the extent that change agents can (1) tailor the recommended action to conditions that currently activate the target, (2) foster the required association between the recommended action and activating conditions currently in place, and (3) effect control over the targets' outcomes in performing the recommended action, they may approximate the conditions of the marketing persuasion model (Figure 7). A recruited activating condition is the basis for the analysis outlined in Figure 9.

The most challenging problem presented by the START task to a marketer occurs when prospects appear to experience no activating conditions for which the recommended action could conceivably become one of the actions considered. This state of affairs is diagrammed in Figure 10. Prospects' orientations to the harmful outcomes that may occur if they do not perform the to-be-started action are such that the possibility of these outcomes is not an effective source of activation for the focal behavior. Likewise the pleasurable outcomes that may occur upon performance of the focal activity are no source of activation for these prospects.

It is not at all clear that it is possible to instate an activating condition, short of coercion, that will generate the action that a change agent desires. Although marketers are often credited with absolute power to impose their wishes on unwilling consumers, the case in point has received scant treatment in the marketing literature. In fact, marketing has been explicitly oriented toward satisfying existing motivations (i.e., the MODIFY task). There are two problems for behavioral influence here: (1) ensuring that the target considers performing the recommended action at the appropriate time and (2) inducing an activating condition that will result in the recommended action. Regarding the first problem, information obtained from persons who currently perform the recommended action may suggest events or other behaviors with which targets may be made to associate the thought of performing the recommended action. The second problem arises because even if an informational campaign creates the desired associations, something more than thinking about the action may be necessary if the target is to perform the action. For example, the thought of not performing the recommended action may have to be experienced as disquieting or anxiety arousing, as it might be if performing the action had come to be viewed as essential to the person's notion of what is appropriate (e.g., "I'm the sort of person who drives responsibly and takes care to buckle up"). The seatbelt buzzer is presumably intended to secure timely consideration of buckling up. In fact, among some prospects it may be regarded as nothing more than a bothersome noise. Research is needed to study the efficacy of timely reminders with and without motivation. An important question, and a difficult one to research, is whether among persons initially unwilling to perform the focal behavior any amount of exposure to timely reminders (e.g., media portrayals of buckling up at the sound of the seatbelt buzzer) is effective in the absence of change in perceived cost of noncompliance.

Change agents seldom have the degree of control over their targets' lives that permits them to create activating conditions with ease, particularly activating conditions of the stick type. Exceptions may be observed. Organizers of campaigns to induce people to contribute money to worthy causes sometimes request organizations to show to their employees movies depicting heartrending scenes related to the cause. The movie is likely to induce discomfort in audience members which some may attempt to dispel by donating money to help alleviate suffering such as they have just seen depicted. Such movies would probably not secure substantial exposure among the noncaptive audiences of mass media. Taking another cue from promotional practice rather than marketing theory, a possible approach is the use of an unrelated incentive (i.e., an incentive unrelated to the essential function of the recommended action). An example would be making the receipt of money or the chance to win valuable prizes contingent on performance of the recommended action. This approach may be particularly suitable when the recommended action of its own nature may need to be performed once only (e.g., vasectomy). It is possible that in some cases (e.g., a campaign to secure increased incidence of volunteering one's time and services) rewards arising from performance of the activity itself may be sufficient to ensure continued performance once the person has been induced to engage in the recommended action.

As regards behavioral influence, marketing's model of persuasion is not directly appropriate to the START task. An approach to persuasion that builds on existing action tendencies literally has the ground cut out from under it when faced with a START assignment. In the MODIFY task, marketers begin by trying to understand an action already in place. They recruit people who perform the action in order to study the situation in which the action is embedded. They may eventually recommend that at least some prospects accomplish their goals with the aid of an offering which the marketer makes available. The STOP task also begins with an action in place and change agents may study the entire *situation as perceived* by persons who perform the action. The START task begins with only a recommended action. Among prospective persuadees there may or may not be relevant action tendencies or a relevant *situation as perceived.* In effect, the change agent has an action looking for a situation (i.e., in terms of Figure 4, looking for the components of the *situation as perceived* and, most importantly, for activating conditions). Change agents may be able to recruit or instate a useful activating condition and, in some cases, to participate in exchange involving performance of the action to be started (compare carpooling in an employer-supplied bus vs. advocacy of carpooling by the department of motor vehicles). In contrast, then, to the STOP task, change agents may have an opportunity in START tasks to use a measure of control over outcomes to attempt, as in the MODIFY task, to give targets a satisfying experience in performing the focal activity. Marketing persuasion offers no readymade, simple path to behavioral influence in START or, as we saw, in STOP tasks. Nevertheless, it has some contributions to make to furthering our understanding of what may be involved in changing behavior, a subject to which we now turn.

D. Options for Behavioral Influence

To influence action, the general model (Figure 4) suggests that we change elements in the person and in the person's environment. The changes that we would attempt to make are those that appropriately affect the conditions for (repeated) action. Depending on the circumstances of a particular persuasive effort, an influence agent may focus on affecting one or more of these conditions: action tendencies, availability of relevant action, costworthiness of action, and outcome satisfaction. By definition, in a MODIFY task the influence agent accepts action tendencies and focuses on availability, costworthiness, and satisfaction. Change agents may also include action tendencies as a possible focus of influence in STOP/START tasks where, among at least some persons in a universe of interest, persuasive success depends on changing action tendencies.

Some proportion of individuals in a universe of interest will likely change their behavior based on the receipt of the essential STOP/START message (Figure 1). Change is more likely to occur should the information be new to the person or should the person be in changed circumstances so that old information takes on a new import. Old or new information about the health hazards of cigarettes, food, or beverages received by pregnant women or nursing mothers, for example, may result in some behavioral change. Doubtless, many prospects for persuasion will receive the same information and not change their behavior in any discernible way. What are marketing's special contributions to increasing the proportion who change? Analysis of the conditions for action suggests fresh perspectives on the subject of persuasion as discussed under the five headings that follow.

1. *Action Availability*

Marketing's interest in behavioral facilitation is often understood to refer to modifying physical and social arrangements associated with performance of the recommended action. Marketers' notions of behavioral facilitation go deeper than this and flow from their sense of the conditions for action. They make it an objective of persuasive communication to ensure that desirable action is available to the target at the appropriate times (Fennell, 1979; Wright, 1979). Given action tendencies, in order for action to occur a person must construct an act (i.e., know what to change in the environment to bring about the desired result), consider the act worth the cost, and provide for making the required environmental change at the appropriate time. We postpone costworthiness to the next section and discuss here two aspects of action availability, namely, timely consideration and action construction.

a. Timely Consideration. Precious media time and space are often wasted depicting the to-be-changed state of affairs. For example, we are already too familiar with littered streets and the sight of needlessly lighted buildings. Media time and space could be devoted to depicting the message at the point in a behavioral sequence where the message may conceivably affect action, such as before a candy bar wrapper is unwrapped (stop-littering campaign), or upon approaching the light switches (stop-wasting-electricity campaign). Portraying only the timely consideration of the change agent's recommended action is an application of marketing thought that warrants more widespread use and further testing and development.

b. Action Construction. When the recommended action does not involve exchange between change agent and target, thus preventing direct influence on its environmental aspects, change agents may be able to suggest specific actions that at least some prospects will find acceptable. Stating specific ways to stop littering or stop wasting electricity may produce better results than general exhortations. In certain circumstances, of course, specificity may work against desirable facilitation, for example, "pitch in," while more specific than "don't be a litterbug," may initiate a throwing action which is inappropriate if there are no containers available. Stating the recommendation in terms of specific acts often leads to positive rather than negative exhortation. More generally, advertising time or space is probably going to be used to show or describe the change agent's recommendation, whether STOP or START. The same time and space can be used to best advantage by portraying the recommendation as specifically as possible and in a context that fosters targets' timely consideration of the desired action.

In a universe of interest there likely may be some, possibly a sizable proportion, whose main reason for not following a change agent's advocacy is indifference, inattention, or habit. With prospects who are indifferent or positive toward the change agent's recommendation but forgetful, a persistent effort in the media to associate desirable action with some stimulus or event that occurs before the relevant behavioral decision is made may be more effective than mere exhortation. The suggestion is grounded in the availability of action as one of the conditions for action. If a media campaign can succeed in creating a strong association between the recommendation and some timely feature of the action context, the chances of building on whatever favorable action tendencies are present may be enhanced.

2. *"Fear Appeals" and Costworthiness*

Executing an action involves contemporaneous costs such as time, money, effort, pain, and other unpleasant psychological effects and, possibly, future costs. Cost in itself is not an impediment to action, although cost viewed as disproportionate, or disproportionate beyond a certain point, is. In the MODIFY task, marketers try to gain competitive advantage by reducing the cost of action, often by making changes in physical and social arrangements appropriate to the recommended action. As noted, operating on the environment to facilitate the recommendation directly may not be available to change agents in STOP/START tasks. Accordingly, persuasive effort has often addressed costworthiness by focusing on undesirable future consequences of action (STOP) or inaction (START). These "fear appeals" (e.g., Sternthal & Craig, 1974) present information, "factually" and/or "emotionally" and with varying degrees of explicitness, indicating the harmful consequences of performing (STOP) or not performing (START) the focal activity. However well intentioned, when viewed from a marketing perspective the fear appeal tradition appears to be product- and not customer-oriented in that it generally focuses on beliefs and feelings that are of interest and concern to the change agent, with little apparent regard for the current perspectives of prospective persuadees. A marketing analysis conducted among prospects makes good this deficiency by showing the range of reasons for performance/nonperformance of the focal activity as well as relevant states of awareness, recall, and belief, and of behavior patterns and intentions. Some of the reasons fear appeals may not be effective are apparent (see Figures 8 and 10).

In STOP tasks fear appeals may be ineffective because of people's ability to use cognitive activity to protect themselves from disquieting information likely to prevent them from doing what they want to do. Counterarguments readily come to mind, such as the possibility that the change agent has ulterior motives, the fact that not everyone suffers horrible consequences, or that advice and forecasts based on scientific or expert opinion are often tentative, even faddish, and subject to change. Also, the fear appeal strategy may ignore the fact that the activity it aims to change may be well established. Harmful consequences accruing in the future may not come to mind when the activating condition occurs and triggers the well-practiced focal behavior. Lastly, because the person is experiencing activating conditions that prompt neutralizing action, harmful consequences from the to-be-stopped action may be judged more acceptable than tolerating the currently experienced activating discomfort.

Likewise in START tasks, the target may well believe that unpleasant outcomes will arise in the future, but this thought may not come to mind at the time the recommended action should be performed (e.g., after a meal for oral hygiene), and even if it comes to mind it must compete with targets' currently experienced activating conditions and behavioral routines already in place (e.g., lunch time errands or relaxation). The focal activity entails its own costs in time, effort, inconvenience or discomfort, which are experienced in the here and now and, on that account, may outweigh possible hurt accruing in the future.

Recent fear appeals research suggests three conditions which enhance effectiveness in inducing attitude change: (1) making strong arguments that the recipient will suffer some extremely negative outcomes, (2) explaining that these outcomes are likely if the recommendations are not accepted, and (3) giving strong assurances that adoption of the recommendations eliminates the negative outcomes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). These conditions are congruent with the present analysis which adds, in the context of behavioral change, that fear appeals are unlikely to be effective unless they result in discomfort being experienced at a time when the feeling is relevant to nonperformance (STOP) or performance (START) of the focal activity. For this discomfort to act as a deterrent (STOP), it has to be experienced simultaneously with the initiation of the action to be stopped. In the case of well-practiced actions, only a strong association between the threat of negative consequences and the elements that result in behavioral activation may be effective. In START tasks, for the feeling of discomfort to be effective in initiating the focal activity it must be experienced at a moment relevant to incorporating the action to be started into the prospect's stream of behavior.

The present analysis suggests that fear appeals address two possible objectives relative to the costworthiness of performing the focal activity (Figure 11). As noted elsewhere (Fennell, 1979, 1982a), fear appeals research has not been relevant to the MODIFY task where action tendencies are assumed (i.e., inaction is costly). The change agent offers a relevant action and may gain competitive advantage by reducing costs of action. Similarly, in STOP tasks, action tendencies and costly inaction are assumed. Here, however, change is directed to reducing the cost of *not* performing the focal activity (e.g., the discomfort of not smoking) and *increasing* the cost of performing the focal activity (e.g., by making actual some horrible future consequences of smoking). In START (recruit), the change agent construes the task as MODIFY and the costworthiness analysis is similar in both cases. In the START (instate) task, action tendencies favorable to performance of the focal behavior may not be assumed nor may prospects be considered to experience any costs for nonperformance. Change is directed to making inaction costly (e.g., making actual the future consequences of not conserving energy; making actual the pleasures of carpooling) and to uncovering and decreasing the perceived costs of performing the focal activity (e.g., the perceived costs of carpooling).

PERSUASIVE TASK	ASSUMPTION RE: PERCEIVED COST OF NOT PERFORMING THE FOCAL ACTIVITY	PERSUASIVE OBJECTIVE RE: INFLUENCING COST OF—	
		NOT PERFORMING THE FOCAL ACTIVITY	PERFORMING THE FOCAL ACTIVITY
MODIFY	PRESENT	NONE	REDUCE
STOP	PRESENT	REDUCE	INCREASE*
START (RECRUIT)	MAY BE PRESENT AMONG SOME	NONE	REDUCE
START (INSTATE)	MAY BE ABSENT AMONG SOME	INCREASE*	REDUCE

*Stategic focus of "fear appeals."

Figure 11. Costworthiness: Assumptions and Persuasive Objectives

It is apparent in Figure 11 that fear appeals at best offer only a partial approach to addressing the costworthiness of action by attempting to increase the costs of action (STOP) and inaction (START). It is also clear that some of the ways to change the costworthiness of action involve attempting to change a person's susceptibility to behavioral activation (i.e., change the way in which a person allocates his or her resources). That means attempting to influence not only how a person does what he or she wants to do (the focus of the MODIFY task) but what the person wants to do.

3. *Influencing How vs. Influencing What*

The model of action helps to clarify the difference between the kind of influence that the marketing concept envisages and behavioral change that is more fundamental. We suggest that influence directed to changing action tendencies is "fundamental" while influence directed to changing the relevant actions that are available and chosen is "peripheral." Persuasion as described in the marketing concept accepts action tendencies as it finds them and attempts to influence action availability and costworthiness (i.e., the way activation is neutralized). More fundamental change implicates altering a person's susceptibility to activation. This means making people no longer (STOP) or newly (START) susceptible to certain kinds of activation. How does one proceed to change a person's susceptibility to activation? Essentially, by changing the affective significance of information. Considering separately stick and carrot type of activation, this means for STOP tasks taking something that now is activatingly aversive (e.g., threatened ostracism by peers) and making it no longer so, or taking something that now is activatingly desirable (e.g., imagined sensations of smoking) and making it no longer so; and for START tasks taking something currently viewed as neutral or desirable and making it activatingly aversive (e.g., scarce energy) or something currently viewed as neutral or undesirable and making it activatingly desirable (e.g., carpooling).

Being able to specify what it would mean in terms of the behavioral model to change a person's susceptibility to activation is not the same as knowing how to do it. Here we would turn to the study of attitude change for guidance on changing beliefs and feelings. Following a comprehensive review of research in attitude and persuasion, Petty & Cacioppo (1981) suggest that we should distinguish two routes to attitude change, namely, a central route emphasizing the information a person has about the topic and a peripheral route which embraces a variety of considerations relevant to the persuasive attempt other than those that are issue-relevant (e.g., information about the communicator, the immediate consequences of adopting an attitude, pleasantness of the setting, and others). Compared with the peripheral route, attitude change by the central route is more enduring and more difficult to achieve. It requires that the recipient of the message have

> both the motivation and the ability to process the information contained in the communication, and the information presented must elicit favorable cognitive responses that are rehearsed and stored in long-term memory. Favorable cognitive responses will be elicited only if the message recipient finds the message arguments to be compelling (1981, p. 266).

The authors then discuss the great difficulty of implementing these requirements in real-world persuasive assignments because, among other problems, it is difficult to know which specific elements to include. The clear direction from the present perspective is to take guidance on specific content by first conducting a behavioral analysis among prospects to identify specific elements implicated in activation of the focal activity and then to attempt to change these elements. Petty and Cacioppo also acknowledge the difficulty of motivating people to attend to and think about the message. There may be more range for maneuverability in motivating a person to attend to a communication than in motivating action and, in this connection, Petty and Cacioppo consider the same three kinds of variables—relevance, cognitive comparison processes, and repetition—that we discussed elsewhere along with a fourth (intensivity) relative to engaging attention for purposes of advertising communication (Fennell, 1979). A fruitful next step for research relevant to STOP and START assignments is to combine the preliminary behavioral analysis characteristic of marketing with the attitude research tradition in order to explore the merits of a persuasive effort that is specially tailored for the *situation as perceived* by research subjects.

As a perspective for doing behaviorally relevant attitude research, the present analysis suggests that it is essential to clarify the systematic significance of the attitude object: Are subjects being asked to consider the attitude object in the context of the activating or of the terminating aspects of the *situation as perceived?* Experimenters may also ask themselves whether they are thinking in terms of a MODIFY or a STOP/START assignment. If it is a MODIFY task, then what is likely at issue are reactions to the attitude object as a means of terminating the *situation as perceived.* In the context of attitude formulations with cognitive and affective components, this may, with some provisos, translate into assessing the extent to which the attitude object is believed to be instrumental in securing the subject's desired states. As noted elsewhere (Fennell, 1980a), behaviorally relevant attitude research requires, among other considerations, that the experimenter identify activating conditions and desired states that are appropriate for the subjects and make provision for dealing with the motivational ambiguity of language (i.e., the fact that the "same" attribute may be desired by persons experiencing quite different activating conditions).

If, for the sake of simplicity, we refer to cognitive and affective elements as beliefs and importances, respectively, then for some prospects the attitude change objective in STOP/START tasks could be stated as changing what is important to people. For at least a decade, authors have discussed importances as a variable that marketers may try to change (e.g., Boyd, Ray, & Strong, 1972; Lutz, 1977; Capon & Mauser, 1982). The experimental literature in marketing and consumer behavior contains no compelling evidence of changed importances in the laboratory or of changed brand choice associated with changed importances. In order to attempt to change importances, we would look to the antecedents of importance ratings, namely, to the activating conditions that people experience. To be important or valuable means, in the present context, to be instrumental in neutralizing activating conditions. Accordingly, to change what is important to people means creating the environmental conditions that may activate behavior or changing reactions to conditions currently experienced. Typically, marketers or other change agents cannot reach into people's lives to create activating environmental elements at will. Only in the fantasy world of the television series "Mission Impossible" may we see such manipulative structuring of the everyday environment, and even there the intervention is usually directed to just one target person and requires elaborate disguises and miraculous feats of engineering. The other avenue open is to attempt to change people's reactions to conditions they currently experience. In other words, in a STOP/START task, the attitude object may be one or more elements that currently (STOP) or that may (START) activate the focal behavior. We are drawing attention here to the frequently overlooked conative (i.e., action tendencies) component of attitude.

It would not be at all surprising when we attempt to change people's susceptibility to activation that our only recourse will be to build on what they already want at some other level. Conceivably, there is no other way to proceed than that suggested by the marketing concept which tells us to build on inclinations as we find them. For the present, we have no reason to doubt that the task of changing what people want is much more formidable than that of influencing how they bring about the states they desire.

4. *Outcome Satisfaction*

Emphasis on outcome satisfaction as a condition for repeat purchase suggests the possible relevance to marketing of operant conditioning. Beyond sharing common ground on the fundamental notion that behavior is controlled by its consequences, the relevance of operant principles to marketing practice remains to be elucidated. Expressed in the language of operant conditioning, the marketer's most basic assignment is to create reinforcers (i.e., to select, from an infinity of possible combinations of ingredients and processes, those that will result in repeat purchase in a competitive environment). Viewed from a marketing perspective, operant conditioning offers a set of procedures for using subjects' wants to shape and control their behavior, sometimes with remarkable precision and specificity. However, the circumstances within which marketers and operant experimenters operate are different in two most fundamental respects: (1) In the operant laboratory, the experimenter may control both the onset and the satisfaction of wants, whereas marketers address the satisfaction of wants. The operant experimenter knows, for individual subjects, the general direction of their action tendencies at any time while marketers face a universe of persons whose action tendencies must be identified. In the laboratory, the experimenter's absolute control of the subject's necessities of life and hence over the creation of action tendencies diverts experimental interest from the process by which reinforcers are selected where, as in marketing, the activating conditions are not known. (2) Operant experimenters do not have to contend, as marketers do, with the simultaneous efforts of competitors to gain control over their subjects' behavior. In contrast to conditions in the operant laboratory, marketers must try to uncover not only the conditions that activate their prospects but the degree to which prospects' wants are being addressed and satisfied by competitors. Accordingly, selection of reinforcers has occupied a much less pivotal role in the experimental laboratory than in marketing. The trial and error approach practiced in the animal laboratory is primitive by comparison with marketing's work in product development and brand positioning.

With regard to the great achievements of operant conditioners in demonstrating the fine grain of behavioral control by varying schedules of reinforcement, before applications to marketing are made a number of issues need to be addressed: the real-world analogs of training and extinction, the presence of competition during training and extinction (for profit and nonprofit applications), the questionable systematic equivalence of reinforcers (e.g., brand attributes which experience proves to be want satisfying) and incentives (e.g., inducements to action such as money off, premiums, prizes), the varying applicability of operant principles in the contexts of MODIFY, START, and STOP tasks. Responsible treatment of these and other issues is absent from recent papers purporting to discuss the applicability of operant principles in marketing practice (e.g., Nord & Peter, 1980; Peter & Nord, 1982). Rather than ignoring the conditions in which marketers operate or assuming them to be identical to those of the operant laboratory, understanding of marketing and of operant conditioning is likely to be enhanced by simulating marketing conditions in the operant laboratory or clearly specifying the real-world analogs of laboratory conditions in which operant principles have been developed.

5. *Perspective on Persuasion*

Surprisingly in view of its importance in applied behavioral science, the subject of persuasion has received little formal analysis. Individual authors have used the term "persuasion" in a variety of ways, some of which appear remarkably limited in scope. For example, Miller, Brickman, and Bolen (1975) compared "persuasion" and "attribution" as means of inducing behavioral change, in the "persuasion" treatment telling children they should be neat and tidy people and in the "attribution" treatment telling children they are neat and tidy people. Scott's (1976) distinction between persuasion and behavioral influence appears to parallel our distinction here between symbolic learning and learning by experiencing the outcome of action. Whereas Scott seems to view persuasion and behavioral influence as alternative approaches "used by marketers to modify demand" (p. 263), the present analysis suggests that in any universe of interest continuing behavioral influence by marketers requires both forms of learning in addition, of course, to prior tailoring of the offering for the action tendencies of prospects.

We defined persuasion at the outset as actions taken for the purpose of influencing a person's acts without obtaining his or her prior consent for any specific intervention and excluding coercion, therapy, and brainwashing. We have seen that the nature of the persuasive task changes depending on the range of behavior which the persuader considers to be acceptable. In the MODIFY task the objective is to influence persons to effect exchange(s) with the persuader. Within broad limits, the particular persons and the substance, vehicle, and terms of exchange are matters about which the influence agent is prepared to be flexible. In STOP and START tasks, the objective is to secure fairly specific environmental effects by particular persons. By comparison with the MODIFY task the change agent's room for maneuverability is restricted as regards specific persons and environmental aspects of the persuasive objective.

Instrumental action is the product of a person operating in an environment. To secure desired action by persuasion, some environmental change and effect on the person is necessary. Beyond this, persuasive tasks differ in the emphasis placed on environmental change that adapts to, changes, or participates in creating action tendencies. In these terms, the MODIFY task adapts environmental change to action tendencies as found. Across a universe of interest, STOP and START tasks may additionally use environmental change to change, or to participate in creating, action tendencies. Success in all three tasks implies understanding the kinds of influence that are relevant to performing the focal behavior. Additionally, would-be persuaders' ability to effect appropriate environmental change depends on the nature of the relationship between change agent and target (e.g., the extent to which the change agent may control the informational input, the environmental aspects of following the persuasive recommendation, or the activating conditions which prospects experience). Opportunities for regulating action tendencies are increased with increasing power to control the space that prospects occupy (par excellence in the animal laboratory and in the case of some institutionalized humans) or to dictate the disposition of a person's time (as employers may). The unavailability of these kinds of environmental control in the competitive environment in which business marketing developed has given marketing persuasion its distinctive form. It achieves influence by using information and other environmental change to gain a competitive edge in studying and responding to existing action tendencies.

VI. MARKETING PERSUASION AND THE BROADENED CONCEPT OF MARKETING

As marketers we are fortunate to have within our purview all three persuasive tasks: MODIFY, STOP, and START. We may deepen our understanding of the techniques at our disposal and of want-satisfying human behavior by considering both from the perspective of these three tasks.

Marketing has a contribution to make in nonbusiness domains but in our zeal to spread the word we have neglected first to refine our understanding of the nature of its contribution and, because there is no panacea, its likely limitations. When we offer marketing analyses and techniques in nonbusiness domains and particularly as a means of furthering social causes, we are suggesting that marketing is an approach to behavioral influence. If it is indeed true, as Kotler says, that "the marketer is a specialist at understanding human wants and values and knows what it takes for someone to act" (1972, p. 53), formal representations of that knowledge should be available. Curiously, representations of wants, values, and actions are to be found in marketing texts at a level of formalization only slightly higher than that of everyday language. Further, it has not been readily apparent what marketers have to say on the subject of wants, values, and action that has not been said elsewhere.

It has been our purpose in this paper to take a first step toward making explicit marketing's approach to persuasion (i.e., to articulating what it means as an approach to behavioral influence, to "make what the customer wants to buy"). We have suggested that the marketing concept implies a particular view of the conditions for instrumental action and hence of the possibilities for influencing action in a mass market. Instrumental action represents energy exchanged for expected satisfaction, specifically a change in person–environment relations. It depends for its occurrence on action tendencies, availability of relevant action, and costworthiness and, for its recurrence, on a satisfactory outcome. To an influence agent competing for a share of exchanges, the marketing concept recommends gaining a competitive edge in one of three ways, namely, (1) enhanced relevance of the offering to action tendencies, (2) enhanced availability of a relevant offering in the decision context, and (3) greater ease of implementation. Marketing persuasion is an approach to behavioral influence that maximizes net action tendencies favoring the influence agent's participation in an exchange.

We have examined in some detail the possible appropriateness of marketing as an approach to influence in STOP and START tasks. We have concluded that the marketer's model of persuasion is not fully appropriate. In STOP tasks, by the nature of the assignment the change agent is constrained to attempt to thwart action tendencies and is denied the opportunity to control the target's outcome upon following the recommendation. In START tasks, by the nature of the assignment, change agents are constrained to attempt to find or create action tendencies for a ready-made action and only in some cases may have the opportunity to control the target's outcome upon following the recommendation. At the same time, we have concluded that marketing persuasion is of value to change agents in two respects. The marketer's implicit model of action when articulated, even in the rudimentary form presented here, provides a conceptual framework that is helpful to change agents as an aid to (1) strategic planning for behavioral change and (2) basic research.

Alone among behavioral sciences, marketing has addressed itself to behavioral influence in a universe of interest and has accordingly developed characteristic analytic and research approaches. A marketing analysis involves defining the universe of interest, specifying the competitive frame, and conducting research to establish the current values of variables relevant to strategic action, as discussed elsewhere under the heading of state-descriptive research (Fennell, 1982a). This analysis maps the dimensions of behavioral change by describing the conditions activating the focal behavior and relevant states of awareness, recall, and belief among prospects. It makes it possible for change agents to consider and test a wide range of strategic options among appropriate subgroups and to develop rough estimates of the likely success of informational campaigns in achieving their behavioral objectives. Given the apparent difficulty of changing behavior by means of informational campaigns when prospects' action tendencies are unfavorable or absent, change agents may also use the marketing analysis to consider other options for behavioral influence such as supporting basic research or investigating the potential support for legislation to achieve their objectives.

A marketing analysis of STOP/START assignments raises the urgent necessity of addressing the issue of whether and to what extent informational campaigns are effective in changing behavior. In cases where the change agent's recommendation is not being followed because of habit or forgetfulness rather than strongly opposing action tendencies, media campaigns may serve to enhance the availability of the desired behavior in the action context. Where the change agent's recommendation must compete with strongly opposing action tendencies or the absence of favorable action tendencies, only information capable of creating, at the appropriate moment in the target's behavioral stream, a net cost for *not* following the recommendation is likely to be effective.

Of particular interest is the possibility of integrating the attitude research tradition with a behavioral analysis by considering the systematic status of the attitude object as instrumental in neutralizing the activating condition (in the MODIFY task) or as implicated in behavioral activation (in STOP or START tasks).

Given alternative uses for limited funds, a marketing analysis makes it possible for change agents to consider realistically the advisability of supporting informational campaigns in the mere hope of the campaign's having some beneficial impact and, in advance of committing funds to informational campaigns, to know with some clarity which prospects have been selected for attempted influence and why.

A final contribution of marketing analysis to be noted here is the light cast on a possible way to distinguish fundamental from peripheral behavioral influence. Considering the conditions for action, peripheral influence accepts action tendencies and aims to influence availability of relevant action, costworthiness, and satisfaction while fundamental change is directed to changing action tendencies. Peripheral influence is attempted in the MODIFY task and fundamental change is likely to be required for at least some prospects in STOP and START assignments.[6]

In summary, we have concluded that marketing persuasion as exemplified in the MODIFY task is an approach to influence that attempts peripheral behavioral influence rather than fundamental change and that it is appropriate where influence agents compete to participate in an exchange whether in profit or nonprofit contexts. At the level of the individual, marketing's model of persuasion is not fully appropriate to STOP and START assignments. However, marketing's approach to planning for persuasion in a universe of interest draws on the marketer's general model of action (Figure 4) without implicating marketing's model of persuasion. Hence, marketing analysis is available across the board to influence agents who are planning behavioral influence or change via electronic and print media.

We return now to a question raised at the beginning of this paper concerning the meaning of the term *marketing* when used in the context of marketing persuasion. As an expedient for expository purposes we restricted the meaning of "marketing" to conform to the sense of the marketing concept. Marketing persuasion, then, has been used throughout this paper to refer to attempted influence that accepts as given what prospects want and seeks to influence the manner in which prospects realize their wants. We now raise the question of whether it is desirable to broaden the meaning of marketing persuasion to encompass persuasion that adopts as, or includes in, its avowed objective attempting to change what people want.

Doubtless, the reader already appreciates the relevant arguments for a broadened concept of marketing persuasion—principally to maintain consistency with the broadened definition of marketing and to avoid limiting marketing's range of application. We believe that a definition of marketing persuasion that is congruent with the marketing concept is consistent with, even essential to, a broadened application for marketing persuasion. In fact, a demonstration that marketing persuasion consistent with the marketing concept is useful outside the business domain supports an extension of marketing's subject matter to contexts of application beyond its original business domain.

There are affirmative reasons for taking marketing persuasion to mean a form of influence that is consistent with the marketing concept. They flow from the original distinction between the notions of selling and marketing. In the business domain the effort to communicate the distinction between the activities of marketing and of selling, where successful, has established marketing concept connotations for the term "marketing." There, and in those quarters where success remains to be achieved, using "marketing" now to encompass attempts to change what people want would be counterproductive, indeed, unthinkable.

As an approach to planning for persuasion in a universe of interest, a marketing analysis is applicable regardless of context and without competition. This, we believe, is the sense in which we may speak of the generic (Kotler, 1972) concept of marketing. We need yield no part of that broadened range by retaining the essential meaning of marketing at the level of the individual, namely, influence that assumes wants as given. Even when marketers confront STOP and START assignments that may implicate thwarting or creating action tendencies, the distinctively marketing approach is to ask whether there may not be some action tendencies on which attempted persuasion may build. Furthermore, it is not outside the bounds of possibility that it will become apparent as behavioral science develops that marketing was on the side of the angels all along. The only way to achieve behavioral change may be to build on action tendencies in the prospect.

There is a strategic reason favoring retention of marketing concept connotations for the term *marketing persuasion.* Each one of us can attest to having experienced countless exposures to attempted influence that did not result in our buying the item promoted. Should we be tempted to attribute that outcome to our own greater than average discernment, we may then consider, beyond the obvious examples of new product failures, more subtle evidence in support of an action tendency interpretation of influence. It can be found in the everyday observation of the selective effect of media advertising. Aside from secondary uses, how many nonwearers of dentures regularly buy denture cleanser or denture adhesive? How many nonowners of pets, charmed by the engaging performers in television ads, have found flea collars to be irresistible? It is possible, however, that in the practice of marketing persons who believe they are guided by the marketing concept nevertheless are using influence strategies that do in fact change the kinds of things people want as opposed to how they go about satisfying their wants. Marketing's critics and, from time to time, persons within marketing (e.g., Capon & Mauser, 1982) assure us that this is the case. If it is occurring it is as a result of implicit, personal knowledge that has not been formalized as yet. Scientific knowledge is public and as scientists we cannot know of such an influence process until it has been made publicly accessible to all who are willing to learn the representational system used. In this paper we have put forward a first attempt to represent the influence process implied in the marketing concept. We would urge those who have identified forms of persuasion that change people's susceptibility to activation at least to describe how such behavioral influence might be effected. Change agents facing STOP and START assignments will be appreciative and behavioral science will be advanced.

The final reason favoring using the term "marketing persuasion" in the marketing concept sense is one of professional integrity in not claiming more than we can deliver. One thing is certain: At present, we do not know how to do more than what marketing has meant in its traditional customer-oriented sense.

NOTES

1. This chapter is an expanded version of "Persuasion: Planning for Behavioral Change in Business and Nonbusiness Contexts" (Fennell, 1980c), which was also the basis for a paper presented at the American Marketing Association workshop on nonprofit marketing, Columbia, SC, March 31–April 2, 1982.

2. Basic though this point may seem, it is not routinely reflected in research designs. Consider Swinyard & Ray's (1977) research where "female household residents" (p. 510) were exposed to a Red Cross persuasive appeal without apparent regard for their current status as volunteers. The effectiveness of the experimental treatments was assessed by responses to (p. 512): "If you were going to do volunteer work for one of these organizations, which one would be your first choice? Second choice?"—a dependent measure that provides no information on persuasive success among nonvolunteers (i.e., the START aspect of the assignment).

3. Elsewhere we have referred to these as "premarketplace activities" (Fennell, 1982b) to underscore the fact that these activities are logically prior to exchanging goods/services for money in the marketplace. We have been particularly concerned to avoid using the term "consumption situation," which seems to (1) emphasize the consumption of marketplace goods/services to the exclusion of the instrumental value, for the person, of the activities in question, and (2) preclude consideration of nonmarketplace actions and objects as realistic options for securing the person's ends and, hence, as competition for the marketer.

4. "Instrumental attributes" is used here to represent the marketer's selection of all attributes of the offering—those that are used in advertising and those contained in the technical specifications that make possible the kinds of promotional claims the marketer makes for the offering. In many cases the claims marketers actually make for their offering are stated in the language of desired external and internal states (cf. product "benefits").

5. In the case of major durables or single/rare occasion goods (e.g., wedding gown) or services (e.g., wedding reception, funeral, major medical treatment), the equivalent of repeat purchase is customer satisfaction sufficient to ensure that unfavorable word of mouth does not negatively affect the offering's subsequent chances among prospects.

6. Recall that at the outset we distinguished persuasion from therapy on the basis that the therapist but not the persuader has the client's (target's) permission for the intervention. Even though the knowledge does not yet exist to make it an imminent possibility, we raise the question of whether, or under what circumstances, it is ethical to use persuasion to change what people want, even for their "own good." Change agents have another option namely, polling prospects for their readiness to support legislative action to curb undesirable behavior and launching an influence campaign directed toward gaining acceptance for restrictions imposed by law.

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