

## ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOGRAPHICS: IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRIAL MARKETING

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### Abstract

The use of psychographic profiles to analyze buyers and organizations appear to be a viable alternative in the segmentation process of organizational markets. The type of information acquired from the use of psychographics allows the industrial marketer to fine tune his promotional efforts as well as other elements of the marketing mix. The basic thrust of this article examines the efficacy of psychographics to the industrial marketing area. Examples are presented to show specific ways of implementing and applying psychographics to industrial marketing.

### Introduction

Most examples of buyer profiles in the marketing literature deal with ultimate consumers. The profiles include certain motives, personality characteristics, role structures, and economic and demographic characteristics that influence the purchase decision. The development and analysis of the same kind of profiles may provide useful insights for the study of organizational buying behavior. With few exceptions (Wilson, 1971) marketers have all but ignored the potential usefulness of psychographic data in analyzing organizational buying behavior.

In addition to developing psychographic profiles of organization buyers, psychographic information about the organization may be ascertained. Robertson and Wind (1980) proposed a model of organization psychographics to explain innovativeness, which included the following elements: direction, decision centrality, openness of communication, achievement motivation, resistance to change, and conflict.

A synthesis between the psychographic profiles of organizational buyers and the organization can serve as a valuable analytical tool for industrial marketers attempting to better understand their customers.

### Behavioral Characteristics of Organizational Buyers

Psychographic information helps in developing personality and life style profiles of organizational buyers. It makes some attempt to understand the motivation, cognition, and learning processes of these individuals. This information is helpful to the industrial salesperson in analyzing the industrial buyers' cognitive and conative styles.

The emphasis on cognitive and conative elements of buyers is drastically contrary to traditional thinking about organizational buyers. They were thought to be completely objective in decision-making, being influenced solely by tangible factors such as: quality of product, low price, service, reliability in delivery, and variety in selection.

### Industrial Marketing Implications

Psychographic information can be useful in designing and developing sales training programs. More sophisticated products and more complex customer problems both indicate a need for a higher level of training if customers are to be adequately served. Psychographic

information requires that sales training programs go beyond the traditional knowledge area requirements such as product, competition, etc. It helps the salesperson to truly understand the individual needs of organizational buyers. Training programs designed to present the usefulness of psychographic knowledge about buyers would focus on the salesperson's ability to: (1) be sensitive to cues sent forth by his customers; (2) interpret the cues; (3) integrate them into a meaningful picture of each customer; (4) respond appropriately to customer stimuli; and (5) have available flexible strategies for relating to each customer's individual differences (Hanan, 1973). Some of the basic skills to be acquired from a training program emphasizing psychographics are: development of intercommunicative skills, knowledge of customer rationale, and skill development in the conduct of selling tasks.

Sales training programs, using life style information, can teach salespersons probing skills and techniques. The salesperson using probing skills and techniques is basically concerned with getting the organizational buyer to talk so he can learn the appropriate language with which to communicate so he can discover more about his predispositions.

In addition to training sales representatives to handle various buyer types, programs can also help sales representatives develop strategies for dealing with different organization characteristics. These characteristics may include the ones discussed by Robertson and Wind (1980)--direction, decision centrality, openness of communication, achievement motivation, resistance to change, and conflict. These characteristics are included under what Hutt and Speh (1981) call macro and micro bases of segmenting organizational markets. A combination of macro and micro factors is recommended by Wind and Cardozo (1974) in their attempt to develop a comprehensive model delineating an approach to segmenting industrial markets.

### Conclusions

This approach to analyzing and evaluating organizational markets provides another opportunity to improve the product/market match within the industrial sector and thus contributes to improved efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of an industrial marketing program. The use of psychographics in an industrial context allows for the extension of techniques and approaches to the study of household behavior to the organizational buying area. This has the long run potential of enhancing the analytical skills of industrial marketers.

### References

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