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# Michael R. Solomon

Marketing Expert and Best-Selling Author of Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having and Being

**Consumer Behavior in The New Normal. Step on the G.A.S. (Gratification, Agency & Stability)**
The Pandemic has changed our world and will continue to do so for years after the virus disappears. We've had to rethink and modify our purchase decisions, large and small. Some disruptions in consumer/marketer relationships that already were looming come faster and more decisively. How do we define brand value? How should companies talk to customers? How do people function in an emerging gig economy where every encounter might be fatal? How do we redefine what it means to go to work or to socialize? The virus poked the bear, and now marketers need to respond to life in The New Normal. The changes that started before 2020 reflect the transition in our society from a modernist to a postmodern culture. Postmodern consumers don't always follow the rules that marketers decree. That's because we don't buy products because of what they do… we buy them because of what they mean. Today's consumers define themselves by the brands they choose. Their idiosyncratic choices create a pastiche of meaning that gets updated 24/7. Marketers no longer drive the train, even though they can still ride it. This means that the firm categories we love to use to understand our world – and our customers – are no longer valid. In particular, the traditional labels we use to segment consumers have stopped working. Today's consumers are like chameleons, who change color constantly. They no longer sit passively in the tidy cages we put them in. The convenient dichotomies we rely upon, such as Male vs. Female, Young vs. Old, I vs. We, Consumer vs. Producer, Offline vs. Online, and many others, no longer mean very much. In the New Normal, we'll see these cages open even faster as people are exposed both to new possibilities and to new constraints on their daily lives. Many of us for example will rediscover the value of community, and others will rethink the value of commuting to work every day. In this presentation, we'll explore some of these comfortable cages, and show why marketers need to ignore them in order to prosper. You'll learn why you need to step on the GAS to modify your offerings in light of the new drivers of consumer behavior.

**Profit from Disruption. Tear Down Marketing's Old Walls to See the Future of Your Business**
Fundamental categories that form the bedrock of marketing strategy and customer insights simply no longer exist. You need to understand the new landscape of consumer behavior, so you don't get left in the dust.
In this program you will learn: How you can reach today's consumers, who plug into a "hive mind" that tells them what to buy. Why the debate about "offline versus online" marketing strategies is useless. How to market with rather than market to your customers. Why your customers rely upon your brands to tell them who they are. How to develop new killer products and services by demolishing your industry's walls.

**The Many Faces of Artificial Intelligence. Persuasive Salesbots and Tomorrow's Customer Experience. The Face of AI THEN versus The Face of AI NOW** Everyone is buzzing about Artificial Intelligence these days, as well as they should. Machines that "think" for us already are transforming how we work, play – and shop. McKinsey tells us that some 29 million U.S. homes used some form of smart technology last year, and that number grows by over 30 percent a year.
Many organizations now deploy robots, avatars and chatbots to perform tasks we used to ask flesh-and-blood people to do. This suddenly makes the age-old question of what makes us human much less theoretical. Self-driving cars threaten to replace truck drivers. IBM's Watson beats chess masters and veteran Jeopardy game show contestants. Movies and TV shows like Blade Runner, Westworld, and Humans that focus on the civil rights of synths, replicants and androids are center stage in popular culture. Alexa and Siri are our new guardian angels. Where does the person stop and the machine start? Marketers need to grapple with this question, and soon. As customers increasingly interact with machines instead of people, there are huge ramifications for the way we think about sales interactions, communications strategies, product design and marketing channels. Will consumers more readily accept a product recommendation from an AI agent if an attractive avatar delivers the message? Will customers become loyal to an intelligent agent, much as some do with their favorite salespeople now? Will shoppers prefer to see computer-generated models in advertising rather than real people? Very soon, the rise of the machines will become the race of the machines. Don't be left at the starting line. In this thought-provoking presentation we will ask: How does the physical appearance of a robot or avatar sales advisor affect the likelihood that customers will trust and follow its' recommendations about what to buy? How will chatbots and affective computing (where software detects a consumer's emotional state) impact sales interactions? As advertisers use machine learning to generate artificial images for their messages, how will AI influence ideals of beauty and the fashion industry? What will be the impact of dating apps, sexbots and other smart devices on interpersonal relationships? How will facial recognition and wearable computer technologies meld with AI to create "markets of one?"

**Be the First Choice!** Everything is a choice. From making someone a leader of an organization or team to deciding which company to work for. Preparing for change management in an organization or buying one brand over another or even responding on a dating site, a choice is a problem to be solved. Some economists tell us that we are like robots – calm, cool, collected decision-making machines that carefully weigh all the evidence and make the best objective choice.
The real world doesn't work that way! Have you ever asked yourself: How do I convince my team that the choice I made is best for us? Why in the world did I pick this toxic place to work? What genius responded to a downturn in the market by selecting this really lame strategic option for us? On what planet is this the best brand? What was I thinking when I decided to go out with him? Our choices and other behaviors often seem "irrational" after the fact, but there's often a method to our madness — even if we don't know what it is. So, what drives our choices? To answer that question, we need to understand the hidden forces that bias our decisions. Don't be #2! I can help you to identify the hidden triggers that drive our choices. BE THE FIRST CHOICE.

**Walk a Mile in Your Customer's Shoes** The customer is king (or queen). Yet the best product or service will fail if consumers don't have a positive encounter when they consume it. That's because what you sell is NOT a product – it's an experience that consists of the core offering plus everything that goes with it. This includes the physical or digital environment where shoppers find it, the people who sell it, and even how others react to the purchase. This experience is what attracts – or repels – the customer. With so many options available, he or she will quickly walk away from a negative encounter. But he or she also will reward organizations that provide satisfying experiences with long-term loyalty. At the end of the day, it's vital for marketers to become more consumer-centric – to understand the experience from the customer's perspective rather than just the manager's perspective. And, that challenge is even more daunting when we understand that today's consumer is changing dramatically as he or she finds new ways to interact with companies. This fundamental insight is what is drives increased interest in customer experience management (CEM or CXM). A growing number of organizations now recognize the importance of tracking every interaction with customers as if it is their last – because it could be. You'll get a through overview of today's consumer, and the major issues we need to understand in order to create and maintain a positive customer experience over the long-term.
At the end of this presentation, you will understand: Today's consumer experience and how it is changing due to technological and cultural disruptions. What determines a shopper's level of satisfaction with a consumer experience and how to increase engagement with the organization. How an organization can gather insights about its customers' experiences in order to improve them. How to design an outstanding customer experience and emerging techniques that will help you to bond with your customers for the long-term.

**We Really ARE What We Wear: How the Psychology of Fashion Influences Consumer Behavior** "We buy products because of what they mean, not because of what they do." That insight is crucial for any industry that touches consumers. Customers literally choose from thousands of options – and most of them have very little to do with functionality. However, that doesn't make these decisions unimportant by any means. The selection of a watch, a bracelet, a pair of glasses or many other items reflects deep-seated values and beliefs about appearance and the consumer's identity. We can think of the body as a canvas, where the shopper chooses from a "palette" of accessory items, apparel, footwear, cosmetics and other products to paint a picture s/he wants the world to see at a fixed moment in time. Marketers need to dig deeper if they want to sync their offerings with what their customers seek. In this presentation, we'll look at some of the powerful cultural forces that influence how consumers use a range of products to make "statements" about themselves. We'll examine some of the important factors that influence what that "self-portrait" looks like, including feelings about the body, peer pressure, celebrity endorsements and the messages our culture sends about what men and women need to look like. We'll also consider how new technologies such as social media communities, wearable computing and augmented reality will color this picture in the near future.

**The Young and the Restless: Capture the Hearts, Minds and Wallets of Millennials** U.S. Millennials spend $600 billion per year, but their choices change faster than Lady Gaga changes her outfits. How can you adapt to connect with these “always on” but always changing shoppers? We’ll dive into keyways that Millennials think about products and stores, and we’ll identify emerging tech solutions that sync with young consumers’ lifestyles. Discover best practices to develop brand loyalty with a notoriously fickle group. After this session you will understand: How Millennials think Why brands matter to them – and don’t What you can learn from “World of Warcraft” and other online videogames Why “haul videos” and other consumer-generated content will transform the way you think about customer insights How cutting-edge technologies like virtual reality will revolutionize the shopping experience

**A Moving Target** When we try to figure out consumers, there’s only one thing we can count on: We can’t count on anything. Consumer behavior is a moving target but understanding how “deep meanings” influence customers worldwide will improve your aim. In this session you will learn how to connect with the most diverse consumer base ever – Millennials, Third Genders, Omniculturals, Creatives, Mass Class and others worldwide. You will understand that: Advertising is a mirror that reflects a culture’s hidden tensions and desires Marketers succeed only when they seize the moment and sync their brands with the path of popular culture A “global consumer culture” sways your customers no matter where in the world you sell The forces of fashion rule all products (not just haute couture) Colors, shapes and symbols send very different signals around the globe “Fortress brands” succeed because they help us to perform primal rituals Brands play a starring role in a culture’s myths that surface in movie and TV plots, holidays and even fairy tales.

**Earthshaking Trends. What You Need to Know NOW About Keeping your Top Consumers** For years, marketers put customers into tidy little boxes, such as age, income or gender groups. Consumers don’t like boxes! Fundamental categories that form the bedrock of marketing strategy and customer insights simply no longer exist. You need to understand the new landscape of consumer behavior before the earth shifts on its axis again. The top earthshaking trends that will dramatically change how you think about your customers: How consumers plug into a “hive mind” that tells them what to buy Why “offline” versus “online” marketing strategies are useless How our bodies are product delivery platforms Why yesterday’s customer is today’s subcontractor How we play at work and work at play Why your customers want to rent what you sell rather than own it