

What Level of Information Search?

In this activity, you need to determine what factors influence the consumer to proceed through the information search phase of the decision process. In some purchase situations, this phase is optional, or the amount of information required varies, depending upon the consumer's purchase involvement.

Therefore, your task here is to determine (from each of the two choices listed) what would lead the consumer to extend (increase) his/her information search efforts.

Choose the appropriate column that would result in the consumer increasing his/her level of information search:

| | | | |
|----|--|--------|---------|
| 1 | Prior product knowledge/experience | HIGH | LOW |
| 2 | Any previous purchase dissatisfaction? | YES | NO |
| 3 | Like to switch brands? | YES | NO |
| 4 | Like to shop? | YES | NO |
| 5 | Amount to be saved by shopping around | HIGH | LOW |
| 6 | Perceived differences in products/brands | HIGH | LOW |
| 7 | Amount of time on hands | HIGH | LOW |
| 8 | Ability to get information | EASY | HARD |
| 9 | Level of risk in purchase | HIGH | LOW |
| 10 | Visibility of product to others | PUBLIC | PRIVATE |

Student Discussion Questions

1. Determine which of the options would increase the extent of information search (from the above table).
2. What sources do consumers primarily rely upon for their external information search?
3. What product categories would you expect to have a relatively long/detailed information search phase? What sort of products would an external information phase be generally not required?
4. Do you expect a correlation between product involvement and the consumer's need for information search?
5. Given that some consumers will proceed through this phase, what actions should firms take to take advantage of this process?