



Ipsos-ASI

The Creators of Motivation

Advancement in the Exploration of Emotions

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June 2004 • © 2004 Ipsos-ASI

Introduction

The role of advertising and marketing is to positively influence consumers' attitudes towards an advertiser's brand or service, either directly, or indirectly by building brand equity. And since Ipsos-ASI specializes in advertising and communications research and the building of brand equity, it is important for us to understand motivation best.

Our leading advertising pre-test tools have always focused on testing the ability of the ads to persuade. That is, to assess advertising, Ipsos-ASI has focused on the desired outcomes: (1) did the ad prompt branded recall, (2) did it persuade, and (3) will it support or build brand equity. This has been our focus, and we have derived proprietary models that have been validated to sales over and over again. Thus we have built a strong leading copy-test business by being *evaluative*. Although like other research vendors we ask many standard pre-test questions (message communication, credibility, likes and dislikes, and so on) and standardized diagnostics (humorous, boring, informative, etc.), we feel we can do better to explain the *why* behind the motivation. Conventional research questions have served us well, but largely only tap into consumers' conscious cognitive thinking without regard for what lies beneath.

This paper shares our journey to discover what drives consumer motivations. To be clear, it is not our aim to join the interesting discussions on the theories of human emotions. Instead, we are looking for practical ideas that we can use in our research tools to better understand the why behind motivation.

Emotions Matter!

It is now widely accepted that emotions regulate, influence, and even organize our behavior. Sub-conscious emotions mediate our attitudes, our cognitive thinking, and our motivations; they transform our perceptions and experiences with products and services, and can build associations to brands. In short, emotions influence our disposition to do things – or not. Therefore, emotions are important in understanding why consumers do what they do. Frankly, people's emotions may be so influential that they are more important than what people actually say.

In marketing and, in particular, advertising, emotions can become associated with the brand and can create extra-positive attitudes. Emotions can directly affect how the brand logs into the brain, and how the brand later recalls/triggers these thoughts. Thus, for assessing advertising and why the advertising is or is not working, it is important to understand how emotions influence brand perceptions.

If a researcher asks a consumer why they bought a particular brand, the respondent is most likely to talk about rational features and rational benefits of the product or service. The respondent provides conscious, cognitive responses – which are likely guarded, socially acceptable, and safe. The respondent will also likely use cognitive thinking by providing expected answers to try to help the researcher. What the respondent will not likely do so well is describe his or her personal driving motivations, emotions associated with the brand context, their unconscious thinking, and their personal values.

So, to better understand the *whys* about motivations and behavior, we need to look deeper and we need to help our respondents to provide the insight we are searching for.

Emotions Are Complex

The simplest thing to say about emotions and motivational drivers is that the brain works in mysterious ways. We have discovered that emotions are not easy to define and they do not operate independently. Emotions represent a complex set of interactions. Some emotions are true basic feelings, while others tend to be more cognitive: just because one can say 'I feel hungry' does not mean that hunger is an emotional state (it is a physical state). Nonetheless, for advertising research purposes we are happy to accept some states that may be more cognitive than emotional, such as 'confusion' or 'doubt,' because they are useful insights into how the advertising affects motivations (or not).

Emotions are very often expressed, that is, they have a physiological component (for example, respiration, heart rate, and body temperature), an expressive component (facial display), an experiential component (subjective feelings), and, eventually, a behavioral response. Several research approaches suggest that emotions should not be measured by words or text because this methodology relies more on cognitive processing and involves a common understanding of the words. Owing to the sensual characteristics of emotions, it appears logical to try to measure emotions via non-textual measures such as physiological detectors (ECG, skin response) and non-verbal graphics or pictures. But physiological detectors do not describe nor identify why the body is responding the way it is. However, since the body expresses and reacts to emotions, and humans can interpret this body language, it is logical to use graphics in our research that relate to facial and whole-body expressions.

It requires several expressions to understand and describe emotions. Thus, research purposes require a balance of not too many emotional state descriptors, and not too few, which might not be descriptive enough. And we likely want to avoid using semantic differential scales because the lack of one emotion may not relate to the existence of an opposite or other emotion: emotions interact and they are not simplistically summarized in a few fixed semantic differential scales.

Designing a Research Tool for Emotions

So where does this lead us? As part of our research and development efforts at Ipsos-ASI, we focused on generating a manageable list of emotional states. We also hired two independent artists to try to illustrate various emotions. Through consumer research, we asked respondents to tell us how well each emotion associated with other emotions (very similar or very different) in one-to-one pairs across 40 different clusters of emotional states. Through multi-dimensional scaling, we mapped all of these emotions. Then we asked respondents to assess the many graphic illustrations of the emotional states from both artists. Our goal was to verify that the illustrations were good at portraying each of the desired emotions and to select the best illustrations.

Using the multidimensional scaling (MDS) map of emotional states, we plotted each of the graphic illustrations on the map where the emotion the illustration represented was located. We refer to this as our Emoti*Scape.

We also confirmed with respondents that these emotional graphics were easy to understand and that they were preferred to text only.

Which Emotions to Measure?

So now we have an emotions landscape, called Emoti*Scape. But what emotion questions do we want to ask? Does this work? Does it discriminate? And does it offer extra insights? We settled on three distinct questions about emotional feelings from advertising. In research, these questions proved to contribute different insights and are not simply repetitive:

1. What feelings do you have from this ad?
2. What feelings is the advertiser trying to get across?
3. What emotions do you associate with being a brand user?

We ask respondents to indicate where on the Emoti*Scape best represents their feelings for each of these three questions. We have tested by allowing just one selection on the Emoti*Scape, as well as allowing a couple of selections on the map (which better represents the combination and interaction of emotions).

In contrast, we separately assessed many of the same ads without the Emoti*Scape, but asked the exact same questions of respondents using open-ended questions. As one can imagine, the open-ended, volunteered responses were less robust, less specific, and not as insightful as the responses gained using the Emoti*Scape.

Emotions Alone Do Not Explain Behavior

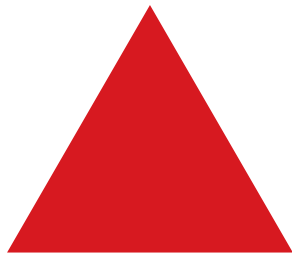
Just because a consumer feels curious or feels appreciated, does not fully explain their motivation: is the consumer curious and want to try the product, or is he or she curious but not likely to buy the product until they hear what others say about the brand? It appears that these emotions run through a filter or checklist of the person's values, needs, memories, and aspirations. And the person must also care to do something about it. That is, consumers must become activated, engaged, agitated, or excited in order for motivation to evolve. Thus, measuring emotions is insightful, but we can add to our learning by going beyond emotions to include personal values and motivators.

Beyond Emotions to Personal Values and Motivations

In the most basic sense, an emotion is assessed in terms of being positive or negative (approach or avoid). This is a basic instinct shared by all animals. We decide if something is good or bad based on a value system. This is based on experience, memories, instincts, and, yes, some cognitive thinking.

But this approach or avoid concept is somewhat reactionary to the stimuli. Separately, we also have wants, desires, and needs. These can either be utilitarian or expressive. In a general sense, this follows Maslow's pyramid; from the basic needs at the bottom, up to self-esteem near the top.

Emotional Reaction



Personal Values

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**Motivators/
Drivers**

Thus to understand motivation better, we wanted to supplement our emotional work with an exploration of two other areas:

- (1) the personalities of the consumer, and
- (2) their motivational drivers.

Personal Values That Lead Our Motivations

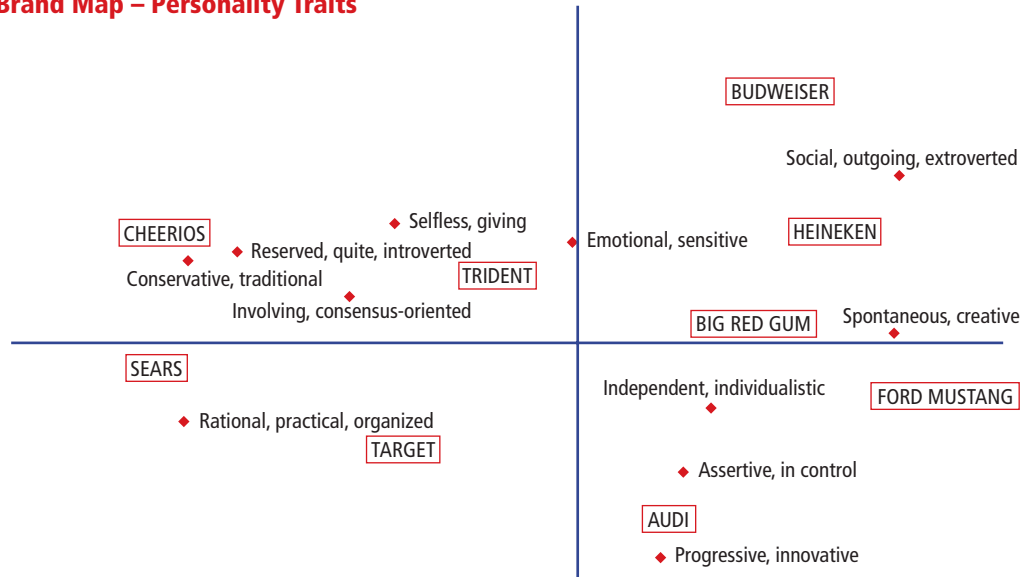
Similar to what we created for the Emoti*Scape, we tried to create a useful research tool for very complicated things. For the personal values, we conducted an extensive review of personality traits and, to cut a long story short, we settled on eleven clusters of different personality types which appear to explain human actions or behavior (that is, why we are the way we are):

- Social, outgoing, extroverted
- Emotional, touching, sensitive, feeling
- Reserved, quiet, introverted
- Spontaneous, creative, impulsive
- Involving, consensus-oriented, harmonious
- Assertive, in control, decisive
- Independent, individualistic
- Selfless, giving
- Rational, practical, organized
- Conservative, traditional
- Progressive, innovative

With these, we conducted more consumer research. We asked paired assessments of each personality statement versus each of the others to see how they related to each other. After running an MDS map and, separately, a factor analysis, we concluded that these personality types cannot be well represented in a two dimensional map. Life is more complex than that! Thus, we needed a check-list instead of a personality map (not an equivalent to the Emoti*Scape, which worked quite well in two dimensions). We also concluded that our choice of eleven personality statements were quite exclusive and independent of each other.

To determine if these personality values were appropriate and useful as a research tool, we asked respondents to evaluate many different brands from across many categories. We asked respondents to indicate which traits in our list they associated with the brand. From this we discovered good discrimination for our traits (between the categories and between the brands within the same categories).

Brand Map – Personality Traits



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Each person has different levels and values for what they want, and these levels get out of balance from time to time. The more a person aspires to a certain value, the more they respond and search or act to get it. That is, these desires and emotions, once activated, drive motivation. For example, each of us has a unique specific equilibrium or balanced level for how much excitement we want in our lives. If we have a long, hard work-week without much excitement in our lives, then this element gets out of balance (the excitement level starts to run down). In turn, we look to rectify this by searching out something fun and exciting, or we will respond more favorably to a choice or stimulus that promises to deliver fun and excitement. Conversely, after a fun and exciting week-end, we might be over-balanced and wish to avoid another exciting event so soon. Instead, we might wish to top up our level for harmony and fitting-in with others or search out traditional family time.

Thus, it appears that motivational research can be enhanced by also looking at such drivers or 'buckets' (such as excitement, harmony, possession of prestigious things, and so on).

Another Layer of the Onion: Motivational Drivers

Although the assessment of personality values discriminates and is useful, we also conducted R&D on motivational drivers. After extensive reading and Internet searches, we settled on a consensus of sorts on eleven buckets of motivational drivers. These are felt to be quite universal and represent motivations and emotions that we all want (to greater or lesser degrees), around the world.

- It is prestigious for people (something special to own). "Look at what I have."
- To be self-sufficient, independent, autonomous.
- To be in better control of our lives.
- For the appreciation or protection of others (or nature).
- To experience personal success or achievement (ego).
- In respect and acceptance of our culture and community (traditional values).
- For a pleasurable sensuous feeling.
- To affiliate with others. To be harmonious. To fit in. "Consensus."

- For greater efficiency and an easier life.
For practicality.
- To increase our safety, security, or make our life less risky (to avoid problems).
- For fun, excitement, or something different (a novelty).

We conducted consumer research with these eleven buckets. We told respondents:

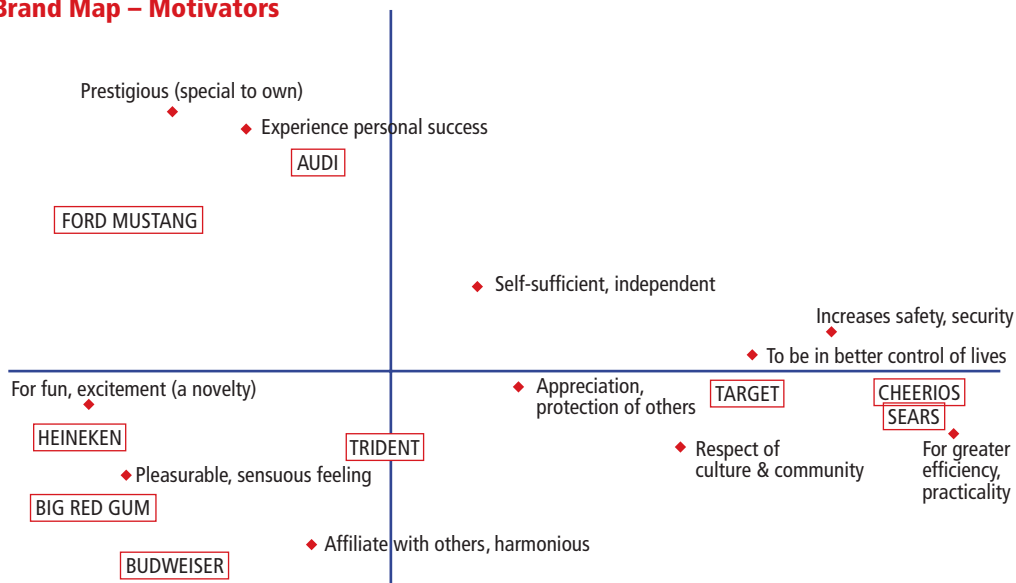
There are many reasons why consumers buy or choose a specific brand. These reasons are often about the features or benefits of the specific product. But experts tell us we also have deeper, more emotional reasons or desires. The deeper, more emotional reasons can be grouped into one of several types of motivations. These are listed below in our list of motivations. Please indicate which of these motivations would apply to most people as reasons to buy [brand x].

We did this for a control cell of many brands and then repeated this for several test cells that exposed the respondents to the respective brand's advertisement. We observed good discrimination between brands and categories and between ads (test versus control).

Our Lazy Brain

Our literature review also came across some interesting insights from anthropologists and biologists. The function of evolution in humans and animals is to make life easier and safer. Over centuries, our evolution rewards the things that work to our benefit, to our survival, and to greater efficiency. One of these manifestations is the formation of habits. By having memories and habits, we reduce the need for the brain to work. We reduce the risk of dealing with new, different, and unfamiliar things. That is, it is beneficial and efficient for our brains to have purchase habits and defined brand imagery. This is instinctive to how we have evolved—the lazy brain. We do not need to engage our brain and use energy to rethink each brand decision. We can rely on habits and past memories. In turn, these past memories and habits influence our present and future actions.

Brand Map – Motivators



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For marketing, in order to achieve change, such as brand switching or new uses for our current brands, we must disrupt the habitual brain patterns and inject a new, different stimulus. This forces the consumer to emotionally respond to the stimulus (approach or avoid). This causes the brain to engage: the beginning step for motivation.

And marketers need for consumers to log this new stimulus in as a new, simplistic memory so it is easily triggered with the desired associations for our brand. Future advertising then needs to work to trigger these associations: to cause recall of them consciously or subconsciously. The richer the brand trigger is in emotions, the easier its retrieval with the brand associations.

In a nutshell, it is the brain's goal to be energy efficient and to follow safe practices. It is marketing's goal to challenge this processing efficiency by always being different and new to the brain, to constantly refresh and add to the brand triggers and associations, thus avoiding the same old thing.

In Closing

Ipsos-ASI has been exploring three main areas to help better understand motivation and the why behind the persuasiveness of an ad: emotions, personality, and motivation drivers. And all of these interact and have crossing associations.

Our Emoti*Scape, 'Personal Values,' and 'Motivators' may appear somewhat simplistic in light of the complexities of our brains, but these new techniques are proving to be discriminating and insightful. This research is exposing a whole different part of motivational insight that respondents were not bringing to us with the old standard open-ended questions. We are encouraged by our findings and we are pushing on with bringing our work to market. We also continue with the natural next steps of this R&D program. Your feedback and comments are certainly welcome.

Author

John Hallward co-founded Tandemar Research in 1986 after working at Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson. Tandemar joined the Ipsos Group in 2000, and was aligned with Ipsos-ASI to specialize in advertising research. John is now responsible for product development within Ipsos-ASI worldwide, focusing on copy testing, Equity*Builder for brand health, and in-market tracking.

