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## ***From Needs to Means of Satisfaction and Consumption***

**Daniel GHERASIM, Adrian GHERASIM**  
**George Bacovia University, Bacău, ROMANIA**  
*daniel.gherasim@ugb.ro*  
*adrian.gherasim@ugb.ro*

**Abstract:** *With the appearance of man on earth, man consumed exclusively the goods that he, without claiming to receive anything in return, offered him: light, heat, water, air, fruit, fish, even shelter, etc. - that is, goods indispensable (even today) to life. If there were only one such argument, we believe that it would be sufficient to argue in favor of the primacy of consumption over production. Any market study (marketing, in other words) aimed at estimating consumer needs must aim to identify and treat them appropriately.*

**Keywords:** *consumption need, consumption behaviour, marketing optics, needs estimation*

### **Introduction**

Consumption and consumers are the alpha and omega of good business. The road from need to consumption (as a way of covering the need) crosses several sections in the following chronological order:

*Production - Distribution - Exchange – Consumption*

Therefore, in order to reach consumption (in order to extinguish the various needs) , the goods having such a destination must, first, *be produced*. In the second stage, all participants in the production process (workers, shareholders, the state) enter the process of distribution (division of production output), in which each receives its share (salaries, profit, taxes and fees). With what has been allocated to them, in order to cover their needs, the participants in the production and distribution process only very rarely consume directly what has been distributed to them, most of the time they have to take part in the exchange process. Only in the end do the goods obtained from the *exchange* enter the *consumption* process.

### **1. Consumption and Consumers**

The totality of the actions that man undertakes throughout life is dictated by the need to satisfy his needs. The resources that people have been able to attract and use to meet their needs have always been below their level. If humanity had been able to fully cover its consumption needs with what it had at its disposal, economics as a science and economists would have been useless.

Consumption occupies a central position in the mechanism of economic life, having a close link with the production of goods and the provision of services and playing an active role in them, in the sense that any economic activity, but also non-economic, must be completed by consuming its results. Otherwise, we would witness the development of inefficient activities, consuming large material, technical, financial, human resources, and unnecessary expenses without a correspondent to meet the needs of their beneficiaries.

On the other hand, consumption influences the production of goods and services, through the fact that it creates the motivation to resume economic and non-economic activities, even on a larger scale. However, regardless of the importance given to it in different types of societies, its role in any economy is irreplaceable.

Consumption is a universal phenomenon. Any system, in order to maintain or develop its structure, must interact with its environment. These interactions can be understood as a consumption cycle, when the system takes over certain elements from the environment (external consumption) that it processes with the help of its own resources (internal consumption) transforming them into elements

assimilable by the system. The by-products of the consumption cycle are in turn disposed of in the environment. A system is maintained as long as domestic consumption is lower than external consumption. If the internal consumption exceeds the external consumption, the system decomposes and, finally, ceases to exist.

## 2. Needs, Desires, Demand

From all the definitions given to marketing, it results that its *basic preoccupation is the needs of the consumers*, respectively *the care for finding the best solutions to cover them*. *Man was preoccupied with covering the needs of consumption, and consumed goods*, before being at all preoccupied with production. Obviously we are referring here to the mature man, who takes care of his existence and that of his family.

Immediately after he appeared on earth, man consumed exclusively the goods that he, without claiming to receive anything in return, offered him: light, heat, water, air, fruit, fish, even shelter, etc. - that is, goods indispensable (even today) to life. If there were only one such argument, we believe that it would be sufficient to argue in favor of the primacy of consumption over production. However, others can be invoked. [1]

Although there are very concrete *forms of concern for the best possible coverage of consumer needs*, which today is the essence of marketing, these four ways of ensuring consumption independent of production, at the expense of goods generously offered in nature (the last three being genetically transmitted to people to this day) are considered to have nothing to do with marketing. The care of the individual (not of others) to cover at the highest level his own consumption needs, even if it makes him (including when he is in the position of simple collector, beggar, aggressor or thief) to choosing the goods they procure in order to maximize the coverage of the need, it is an absolutely natural thing, so it is not a marketing concern. On the other hand, *the care of others* to cover our needs does not automatically fall into the realm of marketing. We consider here the care shown by those who took (or received) the task of maintaining some people (parents, foundations, centers for the protection of disadvantaged people etc.).

There is also a fifth form of extinguishing consumer needs, this time related (dependent) to production, which is considered not to be related to the field of marketing: *that of goods produced by their consumers*. It is found not only in the *natural economy*, where people, families or communities directly consume what they produce, without resorting to the market (which persists, on a completely different scale, even today), but also in the most modern economies (which do not take the producer-owners the right to directly consume part of what they produce).

The purpose for which we used this concept was to suggest that such cases (which we still encounter today in the form of exceptions to the general case) *can neither be included nor excluded from the field of marketing*, as well as the fact that they *existed before* marketing was ever heard of.

Meeting even today, when the marketing perspective is ubiquitous, *any market study (marketing, in other words) aimed at estimating consumer needs must aim to identify and treat them properly*. It is not enough to know, based on a market survey, that the population in a certain area really needs a product like the one you want to launch on the market, and that they have enough income to be able to buy it, to conclude that he will sell it. If the individuals surveyed can insure it from their own production, receive it for free, as gifts or by begging, theft, violence or corruption, they will never become its buyer, the success in that business being endangered. Therefore, the Marketing Study that is carried out must necessarily identify all the categories of people that cover their need for that good in any of the special ways indicated and include them among the non-buyers, which to treat as such, all these operations effectively related to marketing concerns.

On the other hand, we find the option for such a term justified by the fact that, being forms of manifestation of **concern for harmonizing** the *characteristics of goods with the needs of consumers*, in the **acts of choice** that they, or those who care for them, they have them at hand (and they make

them), in them are found the first signs of what marketing itself means today. The *adaptation of products to the needs of the consumer* cannot be conceived in a more obvious and direct form than that specific to self-production (in which the producer and the consumer are one and the same person).

**a) Consumer needs.** The study of consumer needs and desires is the starting point and the terminus of any marketing approach. *Need is the alpha and omega of marketing concerns.*

Although economists invoke it incessantly, the task of defining it has been assumed (with some priority even) by linguists, psychologists and sociologists alike.

In the current language, by *need (necessity, necessity or requirement - as it is also called) we mean the state of lack in which someone is and which involves a pressing solution, respectively everything it requires to be done.*

Ph. Kotler formulates a much shorter and clearer definition. In his opinion, *the need is the state of awareness of a feeling of lack.* Going beyond the fact that some needs manifest at the level of the *subconscious*; we believe that such a definition is fully acceptable in marketing.

The state of lack, deprivation, anxiety, imbalance, tension and, therefore, discomfort that translates into a need is what mobilizes the intelligence and energies of man who is aware in the direction of finding ways to extinguish it. A. Maslow, who was particularly concerned with the study of needs, stated in this regard that unmet needs are those that ultimately explain the behaviour of individuals.

In today's society, which is characterized in terms of marketing as a consumer society, we can talk about the emergence of pseudo-needs [2]. The complexity of human needs is strictly related to the degree of economic and social development of the type of society in which the individual lives. In this sense, in order to satisfy their need for assertion, to acquire a certain social status, some consumers resort to branded products by paying huge sums of money, such as for example for clothing products. In the field of tourism For example, the value of a tourist area is given and by what kind of world people / consumers frequent that area, the services offered may be similar to those found elsewhere but without the so-called good world. As an extreme negative of this tendency to look for your place in society, we can talk about snobbery. In the field of marketing, where the one who earns the most is the best, a lot of money is earned from snobs. [3]

**b) Desires.** A need (simply) to generate extinction concerns must first turn into desire.

In current language, desire means the state of mind of one who covets or aspires to something. Starting from here, the marketers defined the desire as the aspiration of man towards concrete means to cover the need etc.

The needs do not therefore generate abstract preoccupations for their extinction, but orientations towards goods as concrete as possible. The needs (as well as desires, by the way) have some characteristics that must be taken into account in marketing studies. They are dynamic, elastic, and renewable.

The microeconomic theory of consumption (like marketing) does not operate with any type of needs, but only with the so-called consumption needs (the term consumption having here the meaning of use), which can be covered with goods resulting from economic activities. However, needs covered other than through the market are not to be neglected in marketing studies.

In an attempt to systematize consumption needs (by which we will understand all the needs that, in order to be extinguished, impose consumption of goods of any kind - so not necessarily of goods), we could reach several main types: primary and secondary subconscious and conscious; instinctual and national; material and spiritual; such as those of education and culture.

People's consumption needs are manifested through the desire to take possession of the means by which they can be met.

**The means of covering a need** (or desire) is, above all, called good. In general, good means any result of a natural or artificial process capable of covering a need. The goods take the most diverse forms. Thus, they are material or immaterial (when they are also called services), and can come directly from nature (water, air, light and heat of the sun) or from human actions (bread, cars). If they are intended for exchange, the latter are called goods.

In marketing, the means of covering the needs, respectively the goods, are also called products, by which are meant not only the outputs of the processes conceived, led and made by man (called production), but also the results of natural processes that can be consumed directly. The category of means of covering needs also includes: people who, in one way or another, directly cover certain needs (singers, footballers), places (such as leisure spaces), ideas, etc., i.e. everything that serves extinguishing needs.

Regarding the relationship between desires needs and goods, we would like to make an emphasis that we find absolutely necessary: need is not the only source (cause) of desire (as it is generally considered), as the good does not only have the role of means of satisfying desire (and, of course, of covering need). Defining itself as an orientation towards a means of covering the need, it is very clear that desire has a double determination: on the one hand, it is determined by need, and on the other hand, by the good that can be used. to cover it. The consumer, always crushed by a need, wants something that can serve to extinguish it. If he is hungry, say, he does not simply want food, but various means of quenching hunger (lamb, cow's milk, French fries). When, in order to cover a need, a certain good does not yet exist, the desire to consume such a thing does not manifest itself either.

If by need we mean a state of lack that causes (the one who experiences it) a tension and a dissatisfaction, by means of covering a need we will understand any means that can transform dissatisfaction (caused by a need) into satisfaction. The ability of a good to create, through consumption or use, satisfaction is called utility or subjective value.

A good is not desired unless it has, for its wisher, utility (ability to convey satisfaction). In fact, in terms of the consumer, the very notion of good is associated with the notion of utility. If something is not able to satisfy the consumer, he will immediately be considered by him as no longer a good, but a thing (in a very general sense) useless or useless (that is, a bad thing - if, instead of satisfaction, he offers dissatisfaction). In other words, desire and utility are inseparable notions.

Before invoking the desire-utility binomial, we will discuss the meaning of the term satisfaction, through which utility has been defined. In order to cover a need, the consumer can (today more than ever) choose between several goods (having the same destination), for which he must first evaluate the usefulness of each one.

In an act of exchange, the consumer acquires something (the good he gets, wants), giving up something else (the amount of money paid as a price, as a rule). What he acquires is in fact the utility of the purchased good (respectively the satisfaction offered by it), and what he yields represents a *sacrificed utility* (everything that is lost with the amount paid as price) In other words, the exchange brings him satisfaction), but also dissatisfaction (uselessness). Even though microeconomic theory has long enshrined the terms subjective value, objective value, utility, and uselessness, marketers have adopted other terms, to which they attribute somewhat similar meanings. Is about:

- the *total value* for the client, representing the sum of the advantages that the good provides to the client (which is the same as the total utility);
- *the total cost to the customer*, which designates the amount that the buyer bears for the evaluation, obtaining, use and dispensing of the product in question (which is nothing but the price paid for that product);

- *the value provided to the customer*, which would express the difference between the total value and the total cost for the customer.

These three quantities are brought together in the so-called *customer value triad*, in which the value of a good is conceived as a *combination of the particularities of quality, services and offer price (CSP)*, respectively as *a ratio between what the buyers receives and which gives*.

For the calculation of the value, it was proposed, in a first phase, the relation:

$$\text{Value} = \text{Advantage} - \text{Costs},$$

and then the formula:

$$\text{Value} = \frac{\text{Advantages}}{\text{Costs}} = \frac{\text{Functional advantages} + \text{emotional advantages}}{\text{Money costs} + \text{time costs} + \text{energy costs} + \text{psychic costs}}$$

It follows that the value of an offer for the customer can increase by:

- increasing benefits;
- cost reduction;
- increasing benefits and reducing costs;
- increasing the benefits to a greater extent than increasing the costs;
- reducing benefits to a lesser degree than reducing costs.

**c) Demand.** A good knowledge of the needs and desires of consumers is not in itself a concern of marketers, but only the starting point in estimating demand. In fact, all marketing actions aim at both knowing the demand and influencing it for the benefit of the company that promotes it. If need is the starting point (and destination) of marketing studies, demand is their focal point, to which all the company's marketing actions are linked - all components of the marketing mix ultimately targeting demand. So:

- the product must be able to create, attract and satisfy demand;
- promotion aims to raise awareness and stimulate demand;
- the price is set in such a way as to maintain and attract demand;
- distribution must ensure the best coverage of demand;
- the needs and desires of consumers are studied in order to estimate demand;
- the competition is studied in order for the company to attract its request;
- the marketing environment is researched in order to influence, through it, the demand;
- consumer behaviour must be known in order to understand the mechanism of demand manifestation etc.

### Conclusions

It is not enough to know, based on a market survey, that the people in a certain area really need a product like the one you want to launch on the market, and that they have enough income to be able to buy it, to conclude that he will sell it'.

In an act of exchange, the consumer acquires the good he wants), yielding the amount of money paid as a price, as a rule. What he acquires is in fact the *utility* of the purchased good (respectively the satisfaction offered by it), and what he yields represents a *sacrificed utility* (everything that is lost with the amount paid as price) In other words, the exchange brings him satisfaction), but also dissatisfaction (*uselessness*).

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