

CB in Action Assignment

Marketing 3320 • Consumer Behavior • Online
Summer 2020 • Dr. Renée Gravois

Examples of interesting consumer behaviors and marketing practices based on consumer behavior research are all around us. This assignment is designed for you to:

- 1) identify and analyze a specific example of Consumer Behavior in Action that interests you,
- 2) identify and analyze six or more multi-media resources on your topic,
- 3) connect your CB in Action example to four or more specific CB course concepts from your textbook and/or Learning Guides,
- 4) synthesize your analysis and resources in a “CB in Action Slide Deck,” and
- 5) write a subject line and brief introduction that could entice your audience to want to know more about your topic and engage with your slides.

Below are more details about each of these assignment components.

I have also posted a sample assignment – with some commentary – to Blackboard in the Assignments folder. Be sure to carefully read all of the instructions, the sample, and the comments within the sample.

After you read the instructions, assignment sample, and notes, please let me know if you have any questions. I am also happy to do one-on-one phone calls or Zoom sessions to help you as you develop your work on this assignment. Sometimes students find it helpful to get feedback on their topic and/or slides-in-progress. Please schedule these meetings soon and do not wait until only one or days before the assignment is due.

For this assignment, you may work individually or in a small team (maximum three students). If you work in a team, be certain to manage your group dynamics so that everyone contributes meaningfully; does their fair share; and helps to plan, develop, polish, and strengthen all of the slides.

Enjoy the assignment!

1) Identify and Analyze a Specific Example(s) of “CB in Action”

To get started on your *CB in Action Assignment*, identify one or more examples of consumer behaviors and/or consumer-driven marketing practices that you find interesting and that illustrate specific course concepts from our course.

Your inspiration for identifying examples could come from many sources. Use your daily life and the world around you as a source of stimuli for possible examples. For instance, perhaps one or more of the following stimuli from your daily life might spark your interest in CB in Action examples that you wish to explore through this assignment:

- questions you are curious about,
- readings and resources from our MKTG 3320 class,
- books or articles you have read,

- news headlines or stories,
- expert videos, documentaries, or podcasts,
- popular media sources such as movies, TV shows, songs, or cartoons,
- situations at your workplace and/or discussions with bosses or coworkers,
- situations related to your hobbies, interests, or leisure activities,
- shopping experiences or your observation of another person's shopping behaviors, and/or
- marketing practices you observe, read about, experience, plan, or implement.

This list of possible stimuli is not exhaustive, but is meant to help get your brain juices flowing about how you can discover examples of CB in Action from many sources in your daily life and the world around you.

In addition, read (or skim) the Appendix to these instructions, which provides some sample scenarios of using your daily life as inspiration for identifying CB in Action examples.

2) Identify and Analyze Six or More Multi-Media Resources on Your Topic

For the CB in Action topic that you select to analyze for this assignment, identify and review multiple (at least six) credible outside sources to help you explore and learn about your topic.

Some possible sources could include:

- research studies or reports,
- news articles,
- industry publications or reports,
- podcasts, videos, documentaries, slide decks, or blog or vlog posts by recognized experts,
- podcasts, videos, or blog or vlog posts by consumers with interest and/or expertise on the topic,
- entertainment sources such as TV clips, movie clips, YouTube videos, song lyrics, or cartoons, and/or
- other types of resources you identify.

Keep track of the most interesting and helpful resources that you review. In preparing your slide deck (see Step 4), integrate at least six or more of these sources into your slides from at least three TYPES of resources from the list above. Entertainment sources can only comprise ONE of the three types of resources.

3) Connect Your “CB in Action” Example to Four or More CB Course Concepts

Connect your “CB in Action” topic to four or more CB course concepts that cut across at least three units from our class. State clearly how your CB in Action example relates to the concepts and units. For each CB course concept connection you make, use course terminology and include a specific chapter number and page number OR a reference to a particular part of a Learning Guide.

4) Synthesize Your Analysis and Resources into a “CB in Action Slide Deck”

Synthesize and “bring to life” your analysis and resources in a “CB in Action Slide Deck.” Key requirements for your slide deck include the following.

Opening Slides

- Cover slide that includes a title specific to your topic and your name(s)
- Secondary cover slide *for Dr. Gravois* that indicates your intended audience for your slides (specify the audience(s) for whom you are writing who would be interested in your content)
- Subject line and brief introduction (maximum 150 words for the introduction) that could be used to entice readers to want to know more about your topic and, if your slide deck was posted in a public space, would entice readers to click on and engage with your content (See Step 5)

Body of Slide Deck

- Repeat the cover slide that includes a title specific to your topic and your name(s)
- One or more slides to get attention and pull your specified audience into your topic
- Two or more slides that give background information to help readers understand your topic at a general level
- Four or more CB course concept connections
 - In this section, analyze your topic through the lens of Consumer Behavior. Explain each CB course concept connection clearly to your readers. For each course concept connection, use course terminology **and** include a specific chapter number and page number OR a reference to a particular part of a Learning Guide.

Throughout your slides, remember to integrate six or more credible outside resources, of at least three different types, to support your ideas and analysis. Again, integrate at least six or more credible outside sources into your slides from at least three TYPES of resources listed above in Section 2.

Closing Slides

- Recap of your key points
- Reference List with full citations and links (remember to also include in-text citations)
- Image credits for all images you incorporate

5) Write a Subject Line and Brief Introduction to Gain Interest from Others

After you have completed your slides, write a subject line and brief introduction that could entice your readers to want to know more about your topic and, if your slide deck was posted in a public space, would entice readers to click on and engage with your content. For this part of the assignment, assume that you are sharing your CB in Action slides with a specific audience (state your intended audience on Slide 2 of your deck).

Students will not post their slides publicly. The reason for identifying an audience is to practice writing your slides with particular readers in mind.

Whatever audience you would like to imagine, write the subject line and introduction as if you are sharing your slides with that specific audience and you want to spark their interest in learning more about your CB in Action example(s).

Type the subject line and brief introduction on Slide 3 of your deck.

Here are guidelines for your subject line and introduction.

- Get attention!
- Convey that your CB in Action topic and examples are interesting.
- Use vivid language.
- Be clear and concise. Be sure that your subject line and introduction are clear and quick and easy to understand. Be brief.
- The introduction is limited to 150 words.

Grading Criteria for the CB in Action Assignment include:

- Complete assignment that follows all instructions.
- Compelling analysis of your topic and clear demonstration of critical thinking.
- Integration of six or more outside sources, from three or more types of sources.
- Clear connection to four or more CB course concepts, with chapter and page numbers.
- Clear and effective writing, with no (or minimal, only 1-2) errors throughout the assignment. Use practices of effective writing, including clarity, organization, style, and mechanics. For example:
 - Are you slides clear? interesting? compelling? well-written?
 - How effective is the writing in terms of content, analysis, organization, style, and mechanics?
 - Is the assignment of high quality and professional?
 - Is the assignment free of writing mechanics errors?
 - Is it clear that the student took time to revise and polish the assignment?
 - Is the assignment complete and does it follow the instructions?
- A few reminders on mechanics. The word “I” should be capitalized. Proofread carefully to avoid errors that some people make such as there/their/they’re, your/you’re, its/it’s, then/than, and our/are. Proofread also to avoid errors in plural vs. possessive, subject/verb agreement, and subject/pronoun agreement. *Aim for zero mechanical errors so that your document is easy to read.*

Have fun with this assignment, connecting your “CB in Action” example to the units in our course, and tailoring the assignment based on your interests.

Appendix Using Your Daily Life as Inspiration for Your Topic

Here are some sample scenarios of using your daily life as inspiration for identifying CB in Action examples.

Scenario 1. You're standing in the cereal aisle at the grocery store. You're in the mood to try something new, but aren't sure which cereal to select because of so many options. This consumer experience could be connected to one of many CB course concepts to help form the basis of your slide deck, such as:

- the influence of packaging, labeling, shelf placement, store layout, or other marketing practices on consumer decision-making (see Chapters 12, 13, and 11),
- the impact of choice overload on consumer decision-making (see Unit 2 readings and resources on choice overload),
- family and peer influences on consumer decision-making (see Chapter 8), or
- the role of habit, ritual, personality, perception, culture, value systems, and/or brand loyalty on your decision (multiple chapters).

Scenario 2. You recently read a news headline about a new kind of vending machine, developed by researchers, that delays how quickly unhealthy snacks come out of the machine by 25 seconds, but delivers healthy snacks immediately (<https://time.com/4720854/vending-machines-25-second-delay-study/>). When you clicked on the headline and read more about the research, you learned that some of the key points from the study were:

- the researchers hypothesized that the delivery countdown displayed on the screen of the vending machine would influence consumers to select a healthier and faster snack, instead of waiting and
- the research DID find a small increase in healthy snacks purchased from the machine.

This CB in Action example prompted you to think about how this example is connected to many concepts from our class. For example, the *situational influence of time* (Chapter 11) is at play, because consumers do not like to wait. The vending machine example also connects to Chapter 2 – Value – because *consumers value immediate gratification, a form of hedonic value*. When the vending machine imposes a 25-second delay on receiving the unhealthy snack, that's a form of *external influence* on consumer behavior, as opposed to internal influences on CB, such as personality or motivation. (Chapters 1 and 2 provide an overview of the key differences between external and internal influences on CB. A big-picture summary of these differences is provided in Exhibit 2.1 in your textbook - the Consumer Value Framework.)

In this scenario, a news headline about the research on these special vending machines led you to your CB in Action example.

An excellent early step would be to learn more about the actual research study and get more details than those provided in the *time.com* link above. Here is one press release from Rush University Medical Center, where the research was conducted, that could help you get started in learning more about the study: https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2017-03/rumc-tdi032317.php.

Scenario 3. You recently bought a new cell phone and you have been second-guessing that you spent too much money and that your new phone has more features than you really need. You are wondering to yourself if perhaps you should have gotten a simpler and less expensive phone.

This consumer experience could possibly form the basis of your slide deck. What are some things you could incorporate into your slides to connect to course concepts, incorporate outside readings/resources, and make the slides interesting for the audience you select?

In looking for resources, perhaps you decide to do some reading about cognitive dissonance. Here is one article about finding strategies to reduce dissonance, to help improve a person's everyday health, that might give you some ideas:

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/emotional-health/cognitive-dissonance/how-why-reduce-cognitive-dissonance-you-feel/>.

Perhaps you would also like to find a video to add value to your slides? Here are two videos from the popular television show *Friends* that vividly illustrate the pain of cognitive dissonance from the viewpoint of one of the main characters, Phoebe.

Phoebe and the Fur Coat: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1RV-vUQpFE>

Phoebe about Cancelling Plans with Joey: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SqHv4DUTHo>

In this scenario, thinking about one of your life experiences (the cognitive dissonance you experienced over your recent cell phone purchase) led you to think more deeply about this course concept. Next, you would identify other course concepts related to consumer decision making, and identify six or more interesting outside readings and resources related to course concepts, to discuss in your slides (a few examples are provided in the previous paragraphs).

Scenario 4. You recently stayed at an Airbnb property for the second time, once in Dallas and once in Chicago, and you had a great experience both times. Now you are reading about the Airbnb “Experiences” arm of the company’s offerings. The Experiences are “one-of-a-kind activities hosted by locals” (<https://www.airbnb.com/s/experiences>) that “offer a deep-dive into the local host’s world through their passion . . . [offering] guests special knowledge, unique skills, and inside access to local places and communities that guests couldn’t find on their own . . .” (<https://blog.atairbnb.com/what-are-airbnb-experiences/>). Want to learn salsa dancing with a local dance teacher in Miami? Visit a DJ’s home music studio in Havana, Cuba? Take a sushi-making class with a local expert in a city you have always wanted to visit? Thousands of interesting experiences are available.

As you begin to read and learn more about Airbnb “Experiences,” you wonder what kind of consumer research led Airbnb to debut this program and what kind of trends in consumer travel behavior are fueling the success of this program.

In this scenario, your Airbnb stays sparked your interest in the Airbnb “Experiences” program. You are curious about many things, such as why the program started, what consumer research fueled the initiation and development of the program, what consumer behaviors are influencing the rise of this trend, whether the Experiences idea is poised to go mainstream across the travel industry, and what marketing practices are helping Airbnb to be successful.

Next, you would identify a specific question or two that you'd like to explore in your slide deck, connect your interests to four or more CB course concepts, and identify six or more interesting outside readings and resources related to your topic of exploration. Then, start thinking about what you have learned and building your slides.

[Please note – I wrote Scenario #4 before the current pandemic.]

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Notice how, in each scenario listed above, something in your daily life (1-grocery shopping experience, 2-article you read about vending machines that influence healthier snack choices, 3-cognitive dissonance experience, 4-your interest in the Airbnb Experiences program) serves as a stimulus for looking at the situation through a CB in Action lens.

If you have questions or need help selecting or developing your CB in Action topic, please let me know soon. I will be happy to brainstorm with you about possible directions you could take with your assignment.