

## CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

### A yardstick for all of our actions

Now we want to introduce you to a concept that is so powerful that it colors all our actions as consumers. The concept is *involvement*, and it describes our relationship with all of the products we consume or do not consume and all of the activities in which we do or do not want to engage.

**Involvement** is a general term that can be defined as the degree of interest a consumer finds in a product, service, object, or activity. At the most basic level, involvement stems from the *personal relevance* of an object, product, or service to a consumer. Paul is not into golf, so golfing equipment is not relevant to him, but he has a cat, so cat foods are relevant. Accordingly, Paul is not involved in golf clubs or golf balls but is involved in cat foods. Perceived relevance, then, identifies a consumer's involvement as a 'yes' or 'no'—involved or not involved—category.

Once we cross the "relevance" threshold, involvement becomes a matter of degree—high or low, corresponding to the *degree* of interest a consumer feels in a product or object. Thus, both cat food and video games are relevant to Paul, but he takes less interest in cat food than in video games.

Of the hundreds of products and services we consume in our lifetimes, we cannot be equally excited about each one. There are some products we consume casually and take for granted. In these, our involvement is low. There are other products we consume with some interest, pausing to savor their tastes, smell their aromas, feel their textures, or hear their sounds. Still others—a few in number—we consume with extreme interest. We like them; we enjoy them; we love them. Everyone has a favorite activity, a favorite product, a favorite brand. Some of us are fashion-obsessed; others, car buffs; still others, computer jocks. We are eager to get to know these products—fashions, cars, and tech gizmos—to find out everything there is to know. We get excited whenever the topic comes up. And, of course, we want to be shopping for or using them whenever possible. In these, we have high involvement; moreover, in these, we have *enduring* involvement. **Enduring involvement** is the degree of interest a consumer feels in a product or service on an *ongoing basis*.<sup>22</sup> The extreme form of enduring involvement is deep involvement.

Want to know whether you have enduring involvement in something? Take the surveys in Table 2.3 and find out.

The linkage between involvement and motivation should be self-evident. Involvement acts as a "master switch" that turns our motivation on or off. No involvement, no motivation. Low involvement, low motivation. High involvement, high motivation. As black and white as that! This concept, *involvement*, will keep us company throughout this book.

Quite possibly,  
the most  
important concept  
in  
Consumer  
Behavior!



**TABLE 2.3 A Scale to Measure ENDURING/DEEP INVOLVEMENT**

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

1. I am very interested in \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I feel emotionally attached to my \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_
3. My \_\_\_\_\_ holds a special place in my life. \_\_\_\_\_
4. My \_\_\_\_\_ is central to my identity, my sense of who I am. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I quite enjoy using this product. \_\_\_\_\_

Add item scores. Scores below the mid-point, 15, indicate low or absent *Enduring Involvement*. Scores above 15 mean High *Enduring Involvement*.

[Adapted in part from much longer lists in: P. Bloch, "Involvement with a Product Class," *Adv. in Cons. Res.* 8, 61-65; and K. J. Dodson, "Peak Experiences and Mountain Biking: Incorporating the Bikes in the Extended Self," *Adv. in Cons. Res.*, 1996.]

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