

To Innovate, know the unconscious of your Market

By Ricardo Perret

The end of segmentation through demography (age, gender and social classes) is reaching its end, and in its place a kind of segmentation is brewing, based on people emotions, their feelings and more specifically in their surrounding perceptions.

The world of perceptions, we all have different “glasses” to see the world, some psychologists called them personal constructs (G. Kelley) others called them meaning patterns and others referring to collective perceptions as cultural archetypes (Jung). Truth is there is no doubt that a 40 year old woman living in the same city to that of another woman of the same age, both divorced and with children, can perceive differently the love of their mate. And the same happens when these two women chose clothing for their children, furniture for the house, and lipstick for themselves. However, even with the different perceptions they may have, we could find patterns of motivations repeating in them. For example, even if thinking differently in regards to love, both feel that in the absent of a man to provide them physical, emotional and economic security, both may have to rely upon themselves and have developed a scheme of important defense mechanisms, that could be reflected in that both enrolled in an online masters degree, both have searched for scholarships available to their kids in good schools, both have acquired SUV’s (as portraying a sense of control and survival), both see *Desperate Housewives*, and both have been impacted by the same “Anti-intruder locks” that they are thinking to purchase for their homes. And in these psychological patterns of perceiving the world is where the new market segmentation begins, the psychographic, the one that at the present actually matters.

To understand how psychographic segmentation works opposed to socioeconomic segmentation, let’s look at the shoe for women example. The idea is to be able to innovate and develop products targeted at different personalities and psychological perceptions of women instead of selling a line of shoes for the rich, another for the poor, and creating a shoe store for little girls and another for adults.

The first thing that we have to understand is, at a unconscious level, what do shoes mean to women.

If we were to ask this to a woman of about 30 years of age, standard class executive, she would rationally say that she has around 50 pairs of shoes (including boots, slippers, dress and casual shoes) because she needs to perfectly combine them with the color of her clothing and that depending on the occasion is how she will use the shoes. What we would have in our “innovation pipeline” if we started creating shoes based on that answer is very obvious: shoes of every color that could easily be combined with the clothing with most sales at the moment.

Now, if we asked the same woman to remember a moment in her life in which she felt very frustrated after unsuccessfully finding the perfect shoes for the occasion, we could listen to something like this: “I was desperate, had the perfect dress, perfect make-up, did my hair at the salon, and couldn’t decide on shoes, couldn’t find the right ones, ohhhhh!, it was frustrating, I did not want to be seen with something I had already worn, did not want to feel uncomfortable, wanted to feel good since it was going to be a long night and if I felt uncomfortable then I would be worried all the time”. If we take notice, shoes are part of the social life of this woman (and maybe all women). For this woman shoes, unconsciously, are a form of feeling comfortable and project that feeling towards others and shoes are a point for comparison from her to herself and from her to others. Under this perspective, now we have valuable information to

understand the psychographic motivation of the women that we can incorporate to our strategies for innovation. But let's not stop there and go a little further, if we have a simple exercise of hiding from women the shoes she is planning to wear right on the day that she's having her menstrual period, this woman would fall crying due to the lack of power to "change her personality", unwillingly manipulated by her hormones and not being able to project this in a different manner to the public. That is, when we dig deeper into the psychology of women we understand that she feels emotionally vulnerable in front of society during her days and those shoes are a way to modify her personality temporarily, of acquiring full control of her emotions and her persona. At last, we now have the information in detail that we need to conquer that psychographic market niche to which women belong, and it's not about age, social class, or place of residency (as we would traditionally segment it).

If we were to innovate with that kind of information, results would change dramatically, being that we now know that not only do shoes mean something to wear and combine, but rather they project personality, and what's even more, they are used to alter the women's personality, so that the key meaning in women's unconscious in regards to shoes is: POWER TO DECIDE...MY PERSONALITY. Knowing this we can innovate correctly. For example: the store has to transmit the feminine power, collaborators of this store have to attend to women as if they are capable to make their own decision but with the need to intelligently choose from among many options, I would create spaces inside the store simulating *walk-in closets* in which women could pose and have a personal attendant, walk-in closets would be organized by sizes, and the women could have at their disposition 100 pairs of shoes to pick from and try only those of her size, she would have a huge mirror in front of her framed in a way that would express power and control and, of course, there would be a space for her mom, or friends, to look at how the shoes fit her, being that women buy in a collective manner looking for approval from other women. I would train attendants to have the all the patience in the world knowing that women take much longer than men to make decisions and I would change shoe boxes for transparent ones with a chalkboard on the outside so that she could self-suggest the occasion and combinations to wear them.

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