Exhibit 13.2

Product, Feature, Benefit

Product	Feature	Benefit
Smartphone	Screen size	Easy viewing
Garage door opener	Programmable code	Security
Tablet case	Detachable front	Ease of use

result that is derived from the presence of a particular feature.[1] Screen size on phone is a feature. The benefit is ease of viewing. These concepts are illustrated in Exhibit 13.2.

Benefits play an important role in the value equation. Consumers don't really buy a garage door because of programmable codes. They are seeking security! If there was some other way to deliver this benefit without the feature, consumers would be quick to buy this other solution. You may remember that benefits represent "what you get" in the value equation.

Value = What you get (Benefits) − What you give (Costs)

13-1b Determinant Criteria

Not all evaluative criteria are equally important. **Determinant criteria** (sometimes called determinant attributes) are the evaluative criteria that are related to the actual choice that is made.[2]

Consumers don't always reveal, or may not even know, the criteria that truly are determinant. This is true even when several attributes are considered to be important. For example, airline safety is definitely an important feature of an airline, and consumers would quickly voice this opinion. But because consumers do not perceive a difference in safety among major airlines, safety does not actually determine the airline that is eventually selected. For this reason, statistical tools are often needed to establish determinance.

Which criteria are determinant can depend largely on the situation in which a product is consumed. For example, a consumer might consider gas mileage as a determinant criterion when buying a car for himself. However, the safety of a car would likely be a determinant factor if he were buying a car for his daughter. Marketers therefore position products on the determinant criteria that apply to a specific situation.

determinant criteria criteria that are most carefully considered and directly related to the actual choice that is made

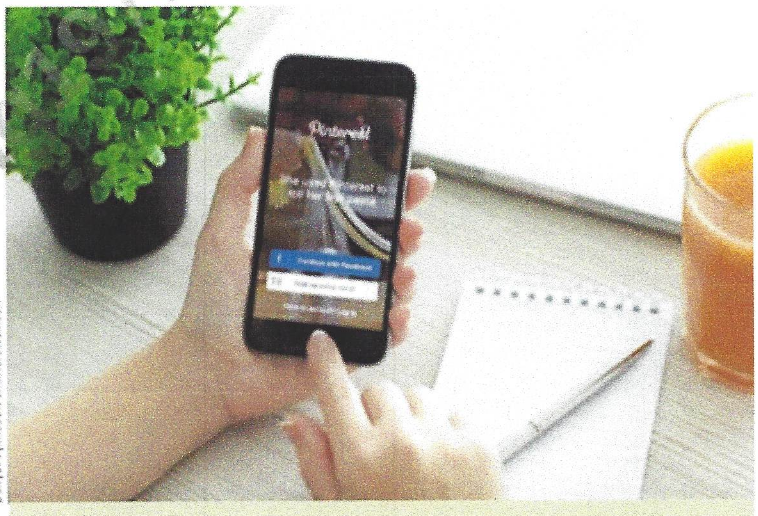
13-2 VALUE AND ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION

To understand how alternatives are evaluated and how final choices are made, we must again highlight the key role that value plays in decision making. The value that consumers believe they will receive from a product has a direct impact on their evaluation of that product. In fact, the word *evaluate* literally means to set a value or worth to an object. Remember that benefits are at the heart of the value equation, and value is a function of both benefits and costs.

13-2a Hedonic and Utilitarian Value

It should be clear that consumers seek both hedonic and utilitarian value. The criteria that consumers use when evaluating a product can also often be classified as either hedonic or utilitarian.[3] Hedonic criteria include emotional, symbolic, and subjective attributes or benefits that are associated with an alternative. For example, the prestige that one associates with owning a BMW is a hedonic criterion. These criteria are largely experiential. Utilitarian criteria pertain to functional or economic aspects associated with an alternative. For example, safety of a BMW is a utilitarian criterion.

Marketers often promote both the utilitarian and hedonic potential of a product. For example, the advertisements presented in Exhibit 13.3 promote utilitarian and hedonic automobile attributes. Consumers often use


Denys Prykhodov/Shutterstock.com

Screen size is an important feature on a phone.

Exhibit 13.3

Utilitarian and Hedonic Criteria in Advertising

Ads promote utilitarian and hedonic value.

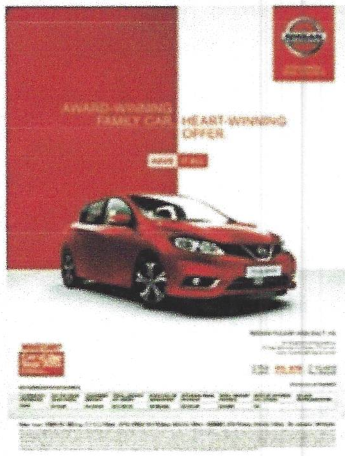


Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

Utilitarian Ad—Nissan

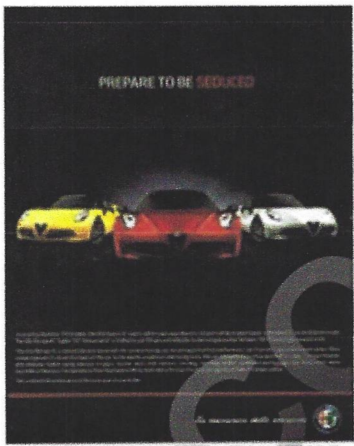


Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

Hedonic Ad—Alfa Romeo

both categories of criteria when evaluating alternatives and making a final choice.

RATIONALITY, EFFORT, AND VARIETY

As discussed previously, consumers are not always rational when they are evaluating and choosing from possible solutions to a problem. What's more, consumers often have limited ability to process all the information that's available in the environment. The term **bounded rationality** describes the idea that perfectly rational decisions are not always feasible due to constraints found in information processing.

Even when consumers have the ability to consider all possible solutions to a problem, they do not always do so. Quite simply, sometimes the task just isn't worth it. In fact, consumers often minimize the effort that they put into alternative evaluation and choice. As we discussed in our need recognition and information search chapter, consumers often settle for a solution that is simply good enough to solve a problem. Realistically, there are just too many choices out there. In fact, even though variety is a good thing, studies indicate that too much variety actually contributes to feelings of discontent and unhappiness![4] The attractiveness of alternatives also impacts satisfaction. More attractive alternatives reduce satisfaction with a selected product, while more unattractive ones increase this satisfaction.[5]

13-2b Affect-Based and Attribute-Based Evaluations

We can distinguish between two major types of evaluation processes: affect-based and attribute-based. With **affect-based evaluation**, consumers evaluate products based on the overall feeling that is evoked by the alternative.[6] A consumer remark like "I'm not even sure why I bought this sweater; I just liked it" reflects an affect-based process. Emotions play a big role in affect-based evaluation, as do mood states.[7]

In general, positive mood states lead to positive evaluations, while negative mood states lead to negative evaluations. Mood is also influential when limited information is found about an alternative.[8] For example, when you are in a good mood, you may evaluate a product positively even if there is not a lot of information given about the product. Happiness affects product choices in many ways. And being "happy" can mean different things at different times. For example, some people may need to feel nice and calm to be happy. In this case, they might seek out a relaxing trip to a day spa. Others may seek excitement as a means to finding happiness. In this case, they might decide to go to an amusement park. In either case, the decision is influenced by the overall feeling that is sought.[9]

As discussed elsewhere, consumers often seek variety in order to combat the feeling of boredom. Fast food marketers are constantly adding variety to their menus. For example, restaurants like Subway and Taco Bell have moved into the breakfast market. These moves not only fulfill consumers' needs, but they also help build excitement toward the brand. The fast food industry knows that consumer excitement plays a key role in success. The selection of a restaurant is often based on hedonic criteria, and variety plays a role in the decision.[10]

bounded rationality
idea that consumers attempt to act rationally within their information-processing constraints

affect-based evaluation
evaluative process wherein consumers evaluate products based on the overall feeling that is evoked by the alternative