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CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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Today it's rather critical to understand that consumers' product and service preferences are constantly changing. So, there is a need of researching consumer behavior, which is usually the way the consumer makes his purchasing decision, uses the product or service and evaluates his satisfaction of that purchase. Drawing on that fact consumer behavior is a complex phenomenon. It includes different factors that affect the consumer decision and product use. One of these factors is consumer decision-making process. The understanding of consumer decision-making process helps marketing managers to communicate effectively with their consumers.

Concerning the definition of consumer decision-making process there is one the most notable and the most commonly used. The buying decision process consists of a number of steps followed by consumers regarding market transactions before, during, and after the purchase of a product or service. It's essential to notice that all these steps sometimes can occur in no particular order and some of the stages can repeat a few times in a row.

Considering the stages of the consumer decision-making process in more details, five stages could be distinguished: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchasing itself and post-purchase evaluation.

The first stage in the consumer decision-making process is need recognition. It's important to highlight that need recognition occurs when consumers are faced with an imbalance between actual and desired states that arouses and activates the consumer decision-making process. A want is the way that a consumer goes about addressing a need.

Information search is usually recognized as the second step. It can occur internally and externally. Using an internal information search, the person recalls information stored in the memory. In contrast, an external information search seeks information in the outside environment. There are two basic types of external

information sources: non-marketing-controlled and marketing-controlled. However, in reality information search combines both internal and external elements.

Evaluation of alternatives usually appears after collecting the information on each alternative product. That is, the evaluation is made by examining alternative advantages and disadvantages along important product attributes. A different way consumers can evaluate a product is according to a categorization process. The evaluation of an alternative depends upon the particular category to which it is assigned.

One of the most meaningful stages for manufacturers is purchase. This stage shows whether consumers are loyal to the brand.

It's necessary to say, that after purchasing the consumer can estimate his satisfaction of the product. This refers to post-purchase evaluation. That stage is crucial for the companies because of the fact that customer evaluates not as much as quality of the product but his impression.

Certainly, the mentioned stages are influenced by external factors. There are four categories such as cultural, social, individual and psychological. In general these groups of factors direct the consumer decision-making process.

Taking all the given information into account, the knowledge of a consumer decision-making process is a vital part of consumer behavior research, which in its turn an important factor, which fosters company's profits. As it has been noticed, understanding the consumers' preferences could help the marketing managers to meet the customers' expectations with appropriate products and services and create the proper marketing mix to them.

HOTELS IN MINSK: WILL QUANTITY EVER TRANSFORM INTO QUALITY?

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The hotel is undoubtedly the most recognizable constituent of accommodation sector and the most conservative one. However, hotels like other types of accommodation have not been immune to change. A hotel today is not a mere premise with rooms, food and beverage services but a business oriented towards a constantly changing clientele. Managers and owners unable to respond to change will