



## How to Influence Customer Attitudes & Behaviours

by Ken Mison, Ipsos Loyalty

In this installment of *Simply Loyal* – regular column focused on understanding why people are at risk of switching brands/suppliers and what to do about it in simple, practical terms – I discuss why people do what they do, and how marketers can identify opportunities to influence their attitudes and ultimately their behaviours.

In order to influence attitudes and behaviours we need to answer only one simple question – *Why do consumers leave the brands they are using?* This is the most fundamental question we can ask about consumer behaviour for two reasons:

1. We want to keep as many of our customers as we can.
2. We want to understand why people leave so that we can attract people who are leaving a competitor – in fact we might be able to use our insight to undermine loyalty to competitive brands.

If you can't answer this question you cannot develop response strategies. So, here is the first truth about loyalty: There are only three basic reasons why consumers switch brands.

1. **Their needs are not met by the brand/category.**  
There are two sub-reasons why needs are not met.
  - a. First, there dissatisfaction in all aspects including bad products/poor service/price (to high or to low)/lack of required features or options etc.
  - b. Second, there is the case of category churn/drop-out which can be thought of as a "natural rate of churn" if most of the churn results from people no longer needing the product/service (e.g. I quit smoking or I don't buy another car because I can't drive anymore). Category churn can sometimes be related to satisfaction if no supplier/brand can meet a person's needs.

2. **A person likes some other brand/supplier at least as much.** You score 9 out of 10 or even 10 out of 10 with a customer then they switch – why? This is not unusual at all and it highlights one of the limitations of customer satisfaction research itself. People change for alternatives that they like more even when they are perfectly satisfied. We mustn't forget categories that are typically repertoire and where we find category enthusiasts who purchase more than one brand in order to satisfy their needs/interests. Satisfaction is not the driver of this behaviour though and loyalty cannot be seen as exclusive in any way. People engaging in a repertoire are often loyal to multiple brands in the category although in some cases the enthusiasm for the category is so great that loyalty to any brand is actually rare as the consumer is driven to try as many brands as possible (think categories like wine, fine chocolate and collector categories). So if you want to manage "loyalty" in these instances you must manage the offer rather than "satisfaction." For repertoire categories you need to accept that your brand share of spend will be only a portion of the total category spend and you need to defend your share without an expectation that you can grow it (although trying to grow the whole category might be an option).
3. **They just don't care.** Probably every category contains people who really don't care at all which brand they buy. They switch easily (and sometimes often). This type of person requires a completely different response from the previous two and depending on "why" they don't care different strategies can be more or less effective (for example telling them what is different about your brand vs. telling them why the category itself is important).





At this time some readers may be saying “but there are other reasons” and my challenge to you is to carefully look at the above points and consider whether or not your “additional reasons” don’t actually belong to one or more of the above categories. For example, you might feel that some churn is the result of rational or emotional elements but ask yourself a question – would rational or emotional elements not fit within all three of the above? It can be argued they do. But that is not to say that you wouldn’t want to know specifically how much churn is directly related to each because if you want to respond correctly it would be useful to know whether or not you should respond with a rational or emotional appeal to build loyalty or attraction to your brand.

In the next installment we’ll begin with the hardest sort of vulnerability to deal with – what you can do when people really don’t care about your brand or in some cases even the category.

## Your Take Away for Today

The appropriate response strategy to build loyalty or attraction needs to be based on understanding what is undermining brand loyalty. Is it...

- Dissatisfaction
- Competitive appeal
- Indifference towards the brand/category

## About *Simply Loyal*

*Simply Loyal* is an ongoing column where we get to the bottom line – how do you actually go about managing loyalty or more specifically loyalty and attraction. The focus will be on understanding why people are at risk of switching brands/suppliers and what to do about it in simple, practical terms.

We won’t be writing a series of case studies. It’s not that a case study can’t be useful and interesting it’s just that the specifics of one case are rarely duplicated in another company – even within the same category.

Our purpose with *Simply Loyal* is to focus on some simple universal concepts about why people do what they do, and help you to identify opportunities to influence their attitudes and ultimately their behaviours. For more information related to this installment, please contact:

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## About Ipsos Loyalty

At Ipsos, we specialize in Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty Research. We are committed to being at the forefront of analytical approaches to studying, identifying and reporting on how companies can leverage loyalty for their business. We help companies focus on their most profitable customers: those who want to do business with you, give you more than your share of business, and are the most profitable. For more information, please visit:

[www.ipsosna.com/loyalty](http://www.ipsosna.com/loyalty)

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