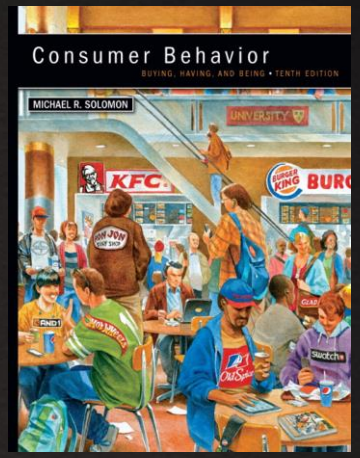

Chapter 14
Culture

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR, 10e

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Chapter Objectives

When you finish this chapter, you should understand why:

1. A culture is a society's personality; it shapes our identities as individuals.
3. Many of our consumption activities including holiday observances, grooming, and gift giving are rituals.
4. We describe products as either sacred or profane, and it's not unusual for some products to move back and forth between the two categories.

Chapter Objectives

5. Styles act as a mirror to reflect underlying cultural conditions.
6. Many modern marketers are reality engineers.
8. New products, services, and ideas spread through a population. Different types of people are more or less likely to adopt them.
9. Many people and organizations play a role in the fashion system that creates and communicates symbolic meaning to consumers.
10. Fashions follow cycles.

Learning Objective 1: What is Culture

- A culture is a society's personality; it shapes our identities as individuals.
- Includes values, ethics, and the material objects its members produce
- Culture is the accumulation of shared meanings, rituals, norms, and traditions
- A consumer's culture determines the overall priorities he or she attaches to different activities and products.

Source: Rob Marmion/Shutterstock

Understanding Culture

- Products can reflect underlying cultural processes of a particular period:
  - The TV dinner for the United States
  - Cosmetics made of natural materials without animal testing
  - Driving a hybrid car to preserve the earth
  - Texting and driving

INFLATION®

Arrow-Black

Camo-Green

Camo-Tree

Dino

Elephant

IKat
Coral/Mint

Quad Grey

Robots

Scroll
Aqua/Hot Pink

Whales

Consumption Activities

- Many of our consumption activities including holiday observances, grooming, and gift giving and rite of passage rituals.
- Common rituals: Grooming, gift giving, holiday, rites of passage
  - Mother's Day
  - Father's Day
  - Birthday
  - Anniversary
  - Christmas/Hanukkah
  - Graduation
  - Valentines Day
  - Easter
  - Chinese New Years
  - Wedding
  - Engagement
  - Baby Shower

Rituals

- Rituals are sets of multiple, symbolic behaviors that occur in a fixed sequence and that tend to be repeated periodically
- Many consumer activities are ritualistic
  - Trips to Starbucks
  - Sunday brunch
  - Haircut every 6 weeks

- Virtually all consumers practice private **grooming rituals**, or ceremonies that help us transition from our private self to our public self or back again.
- Marketers try to get their products to become part of your weekly, daily rituals

Fortress Brands

- **Brands** that become embedded in our ceremonies, and we are unlikely to replace them.
- Many businesses owe their livelihoods to their ability to supply **ritual artifacts**, or items used in the performance of rituals, to consumers.

Gift Giving Ritual

- We buy (or make) the perfect object, remove the price tag, wrap and deliver the object.
  - There is a gift-giving norm of reciprocity.
  - Gift giving is a form of economic exchange in which the giver transfers and item of value to a recipient, who must reciprocate.
- Gift giving also involves a <u>symbolic exchange</u>.
- Gift giving ritual proceeds in three distinct stages:
  - Gestation
  - Presentation
  - Reformulation

New gift giving rituals thought up by marketers

- A **push present** is a present a father gives to the mother to mark the occasion of her giving birth to their child. In practice the present may be given before or after the birth, or even in the delivery room. The giving of push presents has supposedly grown in the United States in recent years.
- Kindergarten graduation
- Social gifting
  - Giving Tuesday

Holidays are filled with rituals

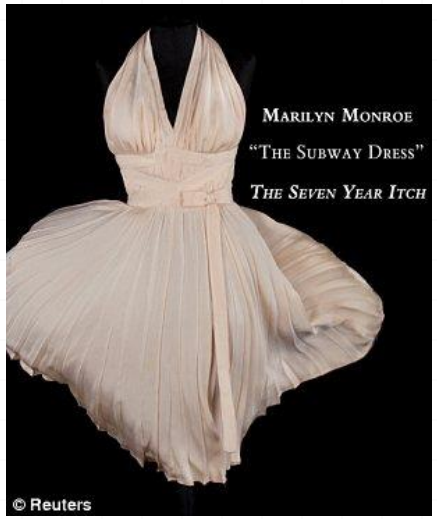
- Christmas
- Halloween
- Valentine's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Easter
- Passover
- New Years
- Chinese New Years

Sacred and Profane Consumption

- We divide consumer activities into *sacred* and *profane* domains.
- Sacred consumption: involves objects and events that are set apart from normal activities that are treated with respect or awe
  - Wedding dress
- Profane consumption: involves consumer objects and events that are ordinary and not special
  - Dress to work

Sacralization

- *Sacralization* occurs when we set apart everyday people, events, or objects from the ordinary -- objects take on a sacred meaning
- *Objectification* occurs when we ascribe sacred qualities to products or items that sacred people once owned
- *Desacralization* occurs when formerly sacred objects or activities become part of the everyday, as when companies reproduce "one-of-a-kind" works of art in large quantities.
- *Collecting* is the systematic acquisition of a particular object or set of objects



Domains of Sacred Consumption

1. A society "sets apart" sacred places because they have religious or mystical significance
   - Stonehenge, Mecca, Ground Zero in New York City
2. Sacred people we idolize: celebrities, royalty
   - Jerry Garcia
   - John Lennon
   - Princess Diana
   - Martin Luther King
- Public events can resemble sacred, religious ceremonies (e.g. sporting events, where athletes are central figures in a ***hero tale***; tourism, which is often marked by souvenirs).
-

Sacred Souvenir Icons

- Local products (e.g., regional wine, local spices)
- Pictorial images (e.g., postcards, photos)
- ‘Piece of the rock’ (e.g., seashells, cement)
- Literal representations (e.g., mini icons)
- Markers (e.g., logo-oriented t-shirts, caps)

Pop Culture

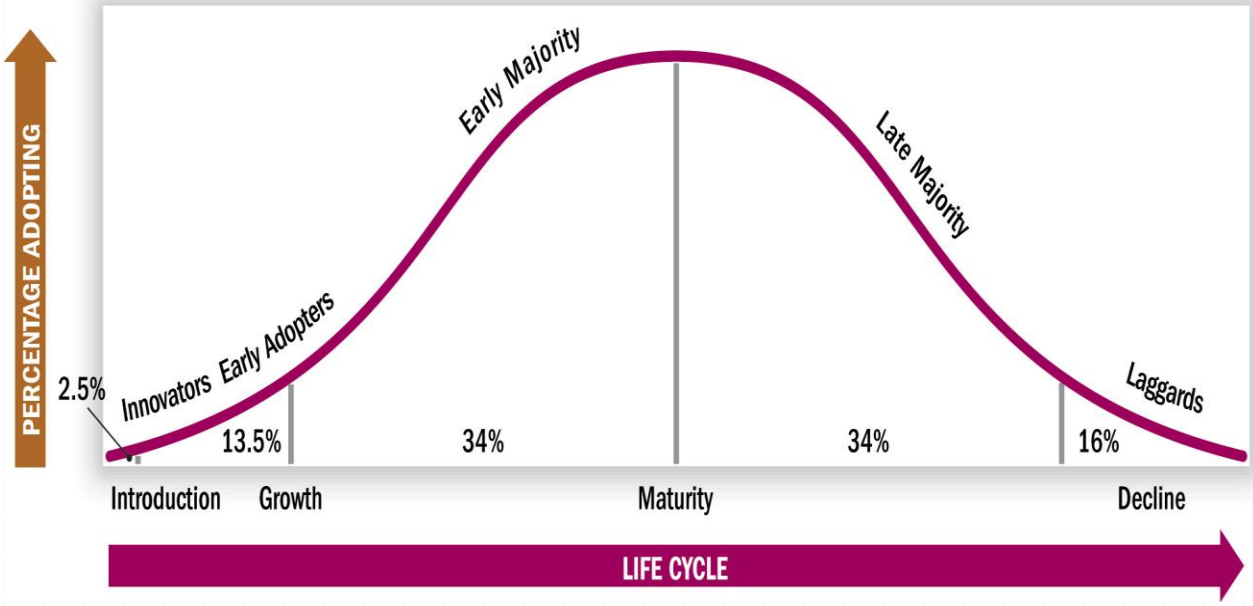
- Commercial culture based on popular taste.
- Pop culture, short for popular culture, describes the lifestyle and tastes of the majority of mostly younger people.
  - Pop culture changes with the youth of the world.

Popular Culture

- Styles act as a mirror to reflect underlying cultural conditions.
  - Urban fashion is very popular even though inner-city teens represent only 8% of all people in that age group and have incomes significantly lower than their white suburban counterparts.
- It is common for mainstream culture to modify symbols from subcultures for a larger audience to consume.

The Diffusion of Innovation

- New products, services, and ideas spread through a population. Different types of people are more or less likely to adopt them.



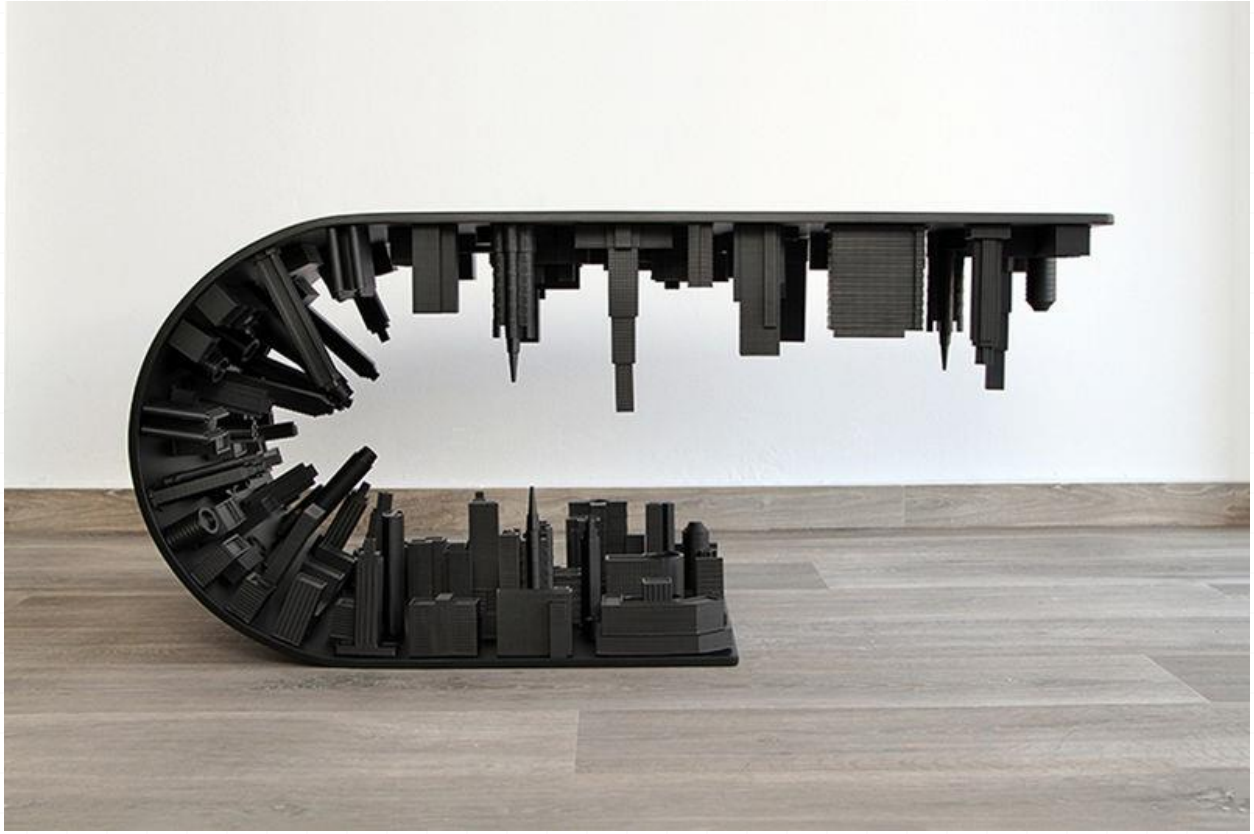
Thriller-Themed Burgers

Bright Bean Bag Cinema

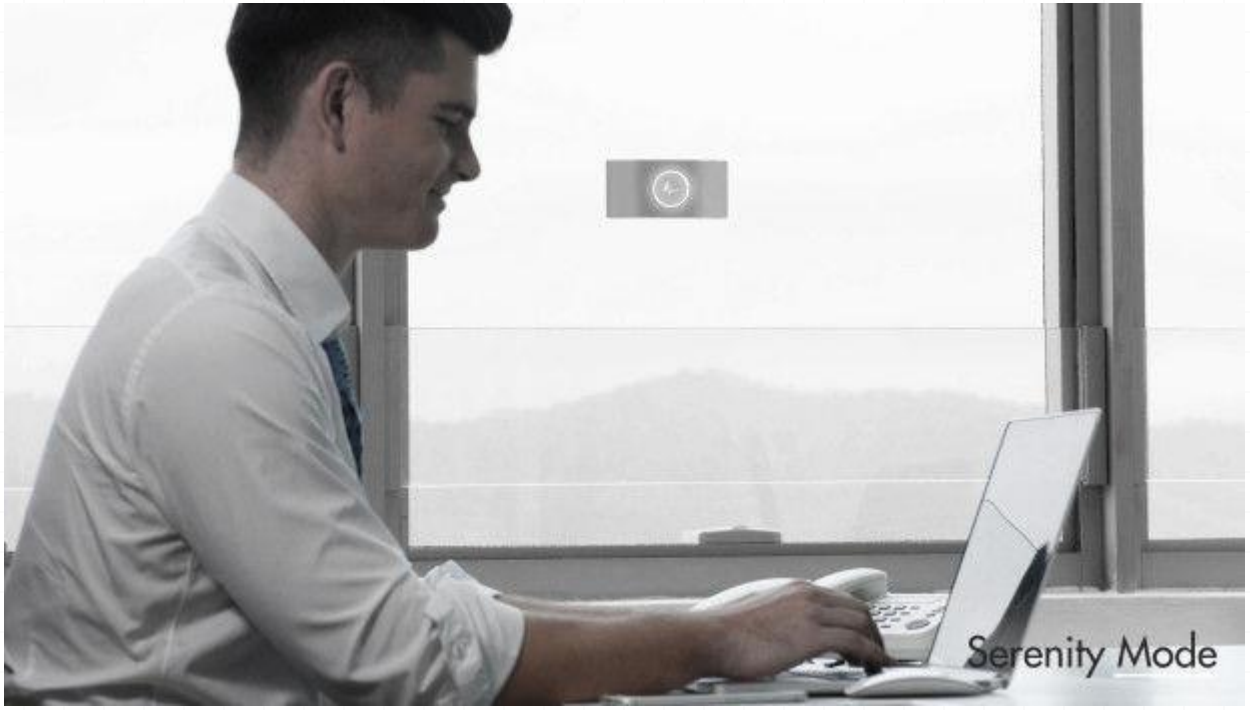
Super Hero Science Kits

Portable Cinema Headsets

Skyline Coffee Tables



Noise Blocking Sound Fields



Light Socket Projectors

Velvet Holiday Sneakers

Opulent Sneaker Remix

College Degree

- 1. Good health
- 2. Happiness
- 3. Family harmony
- 4. Strong relationships
- 5. Smarter decisions

College graduates earn more than $30,000 more than high school graduates per year on average, according to a recent study.

Consumer Behavior Job

- Companies hire analysts to research consumer behaviors, such as which products they prefer, and to prepare reports and forecasts to help them improve sales or customer relations.
- Many different types of companies hire consumer behavior analysts, and although most of these companies sell physical products, other companies sell services, entertainment, or other intangible products. Generally, employers seek analysts who have at least a **bachelor's degree** or its equivalent in either marketing or psychology, but educational and work experience requirements vary, depending on the company's needs.
- Some employers refer to the position as a director of consumer insights or a consumer insights manager.
- A consumer behavior analyst typically is a researcher and data analyst who studies consumer purchasing habits and other behaviors that affect company sales. Many employers expect the analyst to prepare reports about past customer habits and forecast future habits and develop this information into an improved sales campaign. Usually, analysts use this information to target customers by various demographics, including age, gender, and location. Other demographics may be the consumer's buying habits, social status, or income bracket.

- **CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ANALYST**
- Responsible for researching and identifying the needs and desire of customers in order to benefit a company and increase profits and customer service experience.
- PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES
  - Determine needs of customers through intense research, surveys, and focus groups.
  - Identify market trends.
  - Perform complex analysis and modeling for multiple products with the goal of maximizing profits and asset growth and minimizing risk.
  - Develop program models to extract data.
  - Propose policy and procedure changes to produce optimal results.
  - Build and enhance relationships with vendors and other external parties.
  - Provide analytical and technical guidance during projects.
  - Communicate business trends to senior management.
  - Define, measure, and communicate key performance indicators for consumer segment.
  - Conduct monthly deep dives on product performance.
  - Provide thought leadership on best practices related to e-commerce measurement and testing, segmentation methodologies, customer profile elements, and predictive models.
  - Promote consumer segment interests.
  - Optimize retention email, direct mail, and site merchandising performance, including measurement, campaign testing, prioritizing concepts, and developing and testing new long-term contact strategies and customer treatments.
  - Support the development of customer-centric business and loyalty marketing strategies and analyses.
  - Leverage internal learning, benchmarks and category/business knowledge to provide a bigger picture context to analysis.
  - Provide actionable recommendations for opportunities that support business objectives identified through ongoing program and customer measurement.

End

Chapter Summary

- A culture is a society's personality.
- Myths are stories that express a culture's values.
- Many of our consumption activities include rituals associated with holidays, grooming, rites of passage, and other events.

Chapter Summary

- Products may be sacred or profane and some may shift between the two categories.
- Styles are like a mirror that reflect culture.
- We can distinguish between high and low forms of culture.
- Marketers are also reality engineers.

Chapter Summary

- New products spread through the population. Certain characteristics make it more likely that they will be adopted.
- The fashion system creates and communicates symbolic meaning for consumers.
- Fashion follows cycles.