

CASE 3-1**PARFUM NINEVEH***

Noureddine Naybet, proprietor of Parfum Nineveh, a Moroccan Corporation, was considering the possibilities of exporting the company's line of perfume to Canada. It seemed to him possible that the behavior of consumers in Canada might be different than in Morocco, so he hired Herkimer Enslow Associates, a well-known Canadian market research firm, to undertake a study of the consumer behavior of Canadians with respect to perfume.

At a meeting set up in Toronto in early 1998 between Naybet and Enslow, the following research objectives, research questions and hypotheses were agreed upon. It was also agreed that Herkimer Enslow Associates would start by conducting a focus group study in accordance with the agreed upon objectives, questions, and hypotheses and that the target group would be Canadian women attending Canadian universities.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To determine, study and analyze the seven steps of the decision making process using perfume as a model product.
2. To detect the specific factors that influence the decision process when purchasing perfume.
3. To identify to which stages of the consumer decision process the given influential factors apply.
4. To examine the similarities and/or differences in the decision process when purchasing for oneself in comparison to purchasing for others.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our research is based on the following key questions, applied specifically to perfume/cologne.

1. What are the steps of the decision making process?
2. What factors have the greatest influence in this process? (personal, situation, etc.)
3. At what stages of the decision making process is

the consumer most likely to be influenced by these factors?

4. Does the decision making process differ when buying for oneself in comparison to buying for others?

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were agreed upon at a meeting held in January of 1998.

1. The decision process of perfume purchasing follows the general consumer model stated by Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard in their book *Consumer Behavior*, 8th edition (NY: The Dryden Press), a well-known book about North American consumer behavior.
2. The most influential factor consumers take into account when purchasing perfume is the existence of some kind of personal identification with the product (feeling).
3. The pre-purchase stage is the one in which the consumer is most susceptible to many surrounding influential factors.

The steps of the decision making process and key influential factors do differ when buying for someone else compared with buying for oneself.

RESEARCH METHODS

Our research identifies the decision making process consumers observe when they purchase perfume/cologne, and what key factors lead the consumer to choose a specific perfume. The research is based on an independent qualitative study.

The qualitative research was done through focus groups. A small group of five women were interviewed concerning their attitudes, involvement, and behaviors in regards to perfume and cologne.

The sessions were conducted by a mediator who asked random questions to the group members seeking out the responses to our research questions. These sessions were recorded to provide the research group

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the opportunity of completing the analysis at their own convenience (see Exhibit 1 for focus group dialogue).

Focus groups are a method from which accurate information is gathered. They provide an open and easy atmosphere for consumers to express themselves. A focus group also encourages participants to provide details and personal experiences along with their prod-

uct views to support their feelings and findings. It also presents the researchers with the opportunity to clarify any ambiguous aspects of given information as the questioning is done face to face. The limitation of a focus group is that the small representation of views and opinions is not an accurate portrayal of the existing consumer market.

EXHIBIT 1 Focus Group Transcript—Women

FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS:

Moderator (Ms. Joanne De Mello)
Naomi
Pauline
Monica
Darlene
Kelly

TRANSCRIPT:

- Moderator: "We're going to start off first by talking a little about the product, like, why do you think perfume is so marketable? Why is it such a big deal? Why are there all those types of ads—whatever. What makes it so attractive?"
- Pauline: "The people who advertise for it, you know."
- Naomi: "Ya, so when you wear a fragrance you know, it's kinda like your personality, and you can show something of you without having to say anything."
- Darlene: "Others think it makes people more appealing to their boyfriends or girlfriends."
- Kelly: "I think people just want to smell nice."
- Naomi: "There's other things too, for instance certain fragrances make you feel good you know, for spring-time, sexy..."
- Pauline: "Sexual arousal."
- Naomi: "...or clean, fresh and natural, that kinda thing."
- Moderator: "What's your favorite perfume ad or..."
- Naomi: "I don't like CK, I can tell you that."
- Moderator: "Why?"
- Naomi: "I just find it kinda grungy, that's not what I like. I don't like the ads. I don't like it when their pants are hanging off or when you can see that half their breast is showing, like that kinda of thing."
- Moderator: "So you don't like their image?"
- Naomi: "I don't know."
- Moderator: "Would that make you not buy that perfume?"
- Naomi: "Probably not."
- Pauline: "I don't like the smell of it, ya, I don't like the smell..."
- Monica: "Ya, I don't like the smell either."
- Pauline: "...and look at it, they look like druggies to me."
- Naomi: "Ya, they do, and it almost looks dirty, even their eye makeup, it just looks like they just rubbed their eyes."
- Moderator: "So you would say that advertising has a big effect on..."
- Pauline: "The advertising, who is the advertising for..."
- Monica: "How, and how they advertise it."
- Darlene: "Not for me really, I don't ... it doesn't really affect me. If it smells good, if I like it, I'll go for it. But if I see Kate Moss or 'this guy,' I won't go..."
- Naomi: "Ya, me neither, I won't buy it because who, oh, it's Cindy Crawford. Oh wow, I won't buy it because it's Cindy Crawford."
- Kelly: "Ya, if it gives me a headache or makes me dizzy, I won't buy it"
- Moderator: "Who here has purchased perfume recently? Within the last..."
- Naomi: "Just bought perfume?"
- Moderator: "Ya."
- Naomi, Pauline and Monica raise their hands.
- Moderator: "Who wants to start? Tell us what you bought and why."
- Naomi: "Why I bought it? Why I bought it is because I like it obviously. But I found it, it was one I came across by looking for something else. It was a scent, a perfume that I haven't heard of before. It's called *ibaccio*, it's from an Italian maker, which is one I don't see like the ones thrown here. So I like that, it's not something that everyone wears. I don't like the fact when someone smells and it's like, oh—CK. Like I don't like that kind of ... it's something's that's different."
- Moderator: "So you were just shopping around?"
- Naomi: "Yup, I wasn't even looking for perfume, I was just shopping."
- Moderator: "So you picked up a tester?"
- Naomi: "Yes, the tester was on the counter."
- Moderator: "You smelled it, you tried it?"
- Naomi: "Ya, I don't think it would have advertising for it. You wouldn't find it in a magazine. I've never seen it in a magazine."
- Moderator: "Did you ever buy perfume before that or was that your first purchase?"
- Naomi: "I actually work in a Shoppers, I give free perfume. I don't really buy perfume, like I get stuff."
- Moderator: "I don't know what your name is but that's okay."
- Pauline: "I was like shopping and I wanted to smell this new perfume that just came out and then this

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EXHIBIT 1 Continued

lady who works there kinda introduced me to this new ... because I was looking at the Hugo Boss for men and I like that smell right and then she just showed me that there was a Hugo Boss for women and I smelled it. I just liked it—that's why I bought it."

Monica: "I was just shopping and I actually like to go and spray all the different types of perfume and I just picked up one that I think I had heard of but I didn't think much of it; it's Fire and Ice. And I love that smell. I loved it and so I just said okay let's buy it! Plus it was cheap!"

Moderator: "How important is price do you think, when you purchase a perfume?"

Monica: "It's important but sometimes you'll pay the extra bucks if you really like the perfume, for me personally."

Naomi: "And I always get it so you always have to buy the big size anyways, because like 30ml is \$40 and the 100ml is \$60 which is two times as much so you end up buying the big one anyways."

Pauline: "That's what happened to me when I bought mine. I ended up paying like \$85 plus tax because you end up getting like twice as much more but \$15 more, so it's kinda like stupid not to buy."

Naomi: "They give you those free things like a lot of times ... the knapsack, the sun visor, those types of things."

Moderator: "How many people here are loyal to one brand?"

Pauline: "When it comes to a perfume you mean?"

Moderator: "Ya"

Monica: "I used to be into Obsession. Always, everything, everything..."

Moderator: "You were obsessed by Obsession?"

Pauline: "...yes, I was obsessed by Obsession but then I explored and tried a new perfume, this is the one, Fire and Ice."

Naomi: "But I get bored easily, like I won't wear one more than a year—I can't."

Moderator: "Does it vary between day and night?"

Naomi: "It's sometimes the mood I'm in, sometimes I want something light. Like I find I wear different things in the springtime than I do in the winter-time. I wear lighter things in the spring, and at nighttime I use something more musky as opposed to light."

Moderator: "Like would you say that perfume is something you wear every day, like when you go to school, or is for something when you want to feel a certain way, or for a certain occasion?"

Darlene: "Ya, that's me. I just wear it occasionally but not all the time. I don't always like it but I like the light scents better, but generally, I don't wear it every day."

Darlene: "Only if I want to, I don't know. Because I don't buy it a lot, so when I wear it, it's more for special. Not every day, I don't wear it every day."

Naomi: "I wear it every day. It's the last thing I put on so if I didn't put it on and leave the house I think 'oh no, maybe I didn't put it on,' like I notice when I don't. Also because I sell it, so I'm always smelling it, so I feel weird when I don't."

Moderator: "Anyone a collector?"

Naomi: "I know people that do."

Moderator: "So what would you say you would evaluate a perfume on? Would you say it would be ... like what are its most important features? Like the price or the fact that it's the scent or it's long lasting, I don't know, it's image or the way it makes you feel. Like what would you say is the most important feature for you?"

Kelly: "For me it's the smell but second I'd say price. I don't know why but price is important I find, maybe it's because I don't make too much so, smell and then the price."

Darlene: "Ya me, it's the smell and then the price. But for makeup, it's if I like it, I don't care what the price is, I don't know, I don't know why I'm that way but for perfume, I care about the price too."

Monica: "Scent and then the price."

Pauline: "Ya, I agree, scent and then the price."

Naomi: "I would say the same thing, I think that's the most, for me it's the most important, for example personality, you know what I mean, by the certain fragrances you wear it comes across what kind of person you are. Like strong scents, or lighter ones ... like people tend to be floral something I'd never wear. Like I don't find myself being that soft person, like I can never wear, like it wouldn't suit me, my particular personality."

Moderator: "Has anyone bought perfume as a gift for someone else?"

Monica: "Ya."

Moderator: "And how would you go about buying perfume for someone else?"

Pauline: "If I like it."

Moderator: "If you like it, you would buy it for someone else?"

Pauline: "Ya, if it's for my dad, and my dad doesn't really care. Like it depends on really who you buy it for. Like if it's for your dad then you buy something you like and your dad just wears it anyway. But I guess if it's someone like your boyfriend, then you kind of think what he usually wears."

Naomi: "Also what you like too?"

Pauline: "Ya, what you like of course. What you would like to smell all the time, ya."

Moderator: "You're forcing people to wear it!"

Pauline: "Ya."

Naomi: "Ya, I think for me when it comes to men, like if I'm buying for my father or boyfriend or brother,

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EXHIBIT 1 Continued

- whatever, I'd pick what I like, but I think they should wear it. But when it comes to a woman, I usually know what they like anyways so I kinda buy along that range..."
- Pauline: "Yup. Buy what they want, what they wear."
- Naomi: "...usually they mention something they like."
- Moderator: "And when you're buying for someone else, would you say it's the same features like first the smell, then the price as it would have been for you or are there different features that are more important?"
- Kelly: "If it was a gift and I knew, like I wouldn't buy, I wouldn't take a guess and guess at what they would like. I would only buy it if I knew that they wear that particular brand so if it's for a gift and I know what they like then it wouldn't be important, like the price wouldn't be important. Because it is a gift and it is what they want so I don't think it would matter as much for me."
- Darlene: "That's true, ya, I think that what they like is important, I once tried to change my mother's perfume, but she didn't wear it, so I've learned, ya."
- Monica: "I would say the same, once you're actually buying it for someone else, especially as a gift, price shouldn't, well, it does play a part but it wouldn't be the biggest part as for yourself you know, you could cut for yourself but you don't want to cut for somebody else."
- Pauline: "Ya, I agree. But sometimes you have to pay more because it's cut like the size of the bottle like you said before, it adds up like if you buy just a bigger bottle twice the size it costs a bit more, and sometimes the bit more can collect the tax. It costs a lot but you kinda have no choice when it comes to price and buying the perfume."
- Naomi: "It's the same thing but usually when I get a gift, I never buy a bottle, I always buy a gift set. Because you're only paying a dollar more and you get your shower gel, body lotion, or whatever and it always looks boxed you know. It's usually what I buy if it's for a gift, it'll always be a gift set."
- Moderator: "Do you think you're influenced by the outside factors? Like would you be influenced by the packaging?"
- Monica: "Like the shape of the bottle?"
- Moderator: "Or, let's say you're in the store, would you be influenced by a salesperson for something like purchasing perfume?"
- Monica: "I hate salespeople. I tell them to get lost, I'm like no thanks!"
- Naomi: "It depends where you go, sometimes they swarm you with blotters and they try to spray you, that I don't like. But I think if something's very colorful and attractive, then it might get my attention to go pick it up and look at it. But I don't think the shape of a bottle will make me buy it more than the shape of another bottle."
- Moderator: "Does everyone agree?"
- Kelly: "Ya, I don't like the salespeople either because they just want to sell..."
- Naomi: "Shoppers Drug Mart."
- Darlene: "Ya, the bottle for me, it's not a big factor it's mainly the scent but then again especially if I'm buying for somebody else if the bottle is really, I don't know, ugly I guess but the smell's nice, I won't buy it if it's a gift for someone else."
- Moderator: "So if it's a gift for someone else then the packaging is important?"
- Darlene: "Ya."
- Monica: "I'm like her too, I like things that look nice too. I always think that they have to look nice even though I might be paying extra for the nice-shaped bottle. But if it doesn't look nice, I don't want it usually. It has to catch my eye and if it doesn't then I don't want it."
- Pauline: "I don't know, if it's a gift for somebody and they like a particular bottle or whatever, but I don't think about the shape or whatever; it's mainly the scent. But ya the shape, the color would catch your eye to walk across the counter and maybe to look at it. But it doesn't really play a factor."
- Naomi: "For me it does, just to look at it but not to buy it. It's like when something's sitting on the counter that's different from the ones talked about a lot. You would always have the interest to just go and pick it up. And if there wasn't that hype or it didn't look like that or it wasn't those colors then I wouldn't have ever looked at it in the first place. But it's not the final, it doesn't have anything to do with the final factor but I wouldn't have considered it in the first place if it wasn't nice to look at."
- Moderator: "So would it matter where you bought it? Like would it matter if you were choosing between Wal-Mart, Eatons, or the Bay? Or even Holt Renfrew? Where you could buy the same perfume but at different settings, does it matter to you?"
- Pauline: "Well if you could get it at Holt Renfrew compared to like Eatons, I think I'd buy it at Eatons you know. Like if they hike up the price depending on where you buy it I think that's kinda stupid."
- Naomi: "I don't think they do though it's usually set by the company, the price..."
- Pauline: "OK."
- Naomi: "...but sometimes Eatons will have a gift set and the Bay doesn't. I know that Shoppers only have gift sets during Christmas and Mother's Day. You can't find them during any other time of the year..."

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EXHIBIT 1 Continued

- Pauline: "Depends because like, I guess it depends because I work at Pharma Plus and sometimes the price is cheaper than it is at Shoppers! It's a diss! It's true, I'm so sorry."
- Naomi: "I don't know what to say there."
- Pauline: "It's true!"
- Naomi: "But the thing is that we don't make our prices. They're set by the companies..."
- Pauline: "Ya."
- Naomi: "...so you get mad at the companies and don't get mad at Shoppers."
- Pauline: "But if they separate the companies then it should be the same right because I've gone to my store and I've gone to your store and it's been a couple more bucks expensive than yours see so like, I can see..."
- Naomi: "I went to your store and I couldn't find it, oh, don't worry..."
- Pauline: "Ya, that's what I mean like our store doesn't carry all of it right, but I'm just saying pricewise. Like if, like the drugstore is cheaper than the department store."
- Naomi: "I've never noticed that before so that's why..."
- Pauline: "Oh really? I've noticed."
- Naomi: "...we've actually called department stores to get prices for our products, like we'll get an Obsession and find the retail of it. We'll call department stores and find the retail of it. I believe you."
- Pauline: "But stuff like that. I don't know if I'll shop around a lot like if there's a time constraint then I'll just buy it. With perfumes, there won't be that much of a difference sometimes."
- Naomi: "I think we're also limited like if you go to a drugstore we don't carry a full range of everything like that. Depends on what you're looking for."
- Moderator: "By what means would you become aware of new perfumes?"
- Darlene: "Advertising I think, especially that new Happy one that came out. Ya, I heard about that, because I work at Eatons anyway so there is big in-store things. And then newspapers, TV, I think it was a TV, ya, so advertising."
- Naomi: "Because they bombard you, if you go to a department store, they have this CD—you can kill it. It's on everywhere on the TV screens with the girls dancing around ... that's the same one over, and over."
- Moderator: "So you would say advertising but in-store?"
- Pauline: "TV."
- Darlene: "Ya, TV, magazines, but I guess for me since I was working all the time and I'd be walking past the makeup counter and perfume. Like they'd play the music and they would have the big signs..."
- Monica: "Happy, happy."
- Darlene: "...they'd have the makeup people there, you know, so everybody's 'happy.' So it worked, ya."
- Kelly: "Mainly magazines and I also get, I don't know if you can call them tips but ... from friends. And they usually tell me that this smells nice and I just check it out, that way."
- Monica: "Mostly from magazines and TV actually, I'd say."
- Pauline: "Magazines, now when I buy magazines they're like this fat but half of it's advertisements."
- Naomi: "I'd say magazines and friends."
- Moderator: "Do you use the whole bottle? Or what do you do after you've —"
- Naomi: "Never, I've never used a whole bottle. I can't finish one. I find that I'll have it for a long time then I'll like something else, and then by the time I go back to use it, it'll go bad. Like after a certain while, they smell bad almost."
- Moderator: "Do you throw them out?"
- Naomi: "Ya, I throw them out."
- Monica: "I use the whole bottle. If I pay for it, I'm going to use it."
- Darlene: "Well, I throw them away but my mom, I know she likes to keep them. She's had some perfume there for years. I tell her it doesn't smell the same but she figures that she's paid the money so she wants to use it up."
- Moderator: "How long would you say you'd spent on actually going through, like thinking about perfume and then buying it? How long is that process?"
- Naomi: "A week."
- Moderator: "Like the effort that you'd put into a search, like for a perfume."
- Monica: "One day."
- Pauline: "Ya."
- Darlene: "Ya."
- Monica: "One day."
- Moderator: "You go out and find it, and you find it that day."
- Monica: "Yup. I'm not into those long drawn out things, go out, go shopping, can't find something I like, find something I like, done."
- Naomi: "I'd probably go through the effort to find it. Like if I go to a store and a certain something is only exclusive to the Bay or something like that and I was looking in Eatons and that mall didn't have a Bay. Yes, I'd go to a Bay at another mall. But I don't think I'd go out shopping on two different occasions or three different occasions, maybe I'd wait till a couple of months later when I happen to be out at a mall, whatever."
- Moderator: "Is everyone else the same? Like you go and you find it?"
- Darlene: "Ya, I'd rather just get it done so that I can move on and do something else."
- Naomi: "Ya, it depends on if you know what you're looking for. If you know what you're looking for I'd probably go to different stores. If I didn't know what I was looking for I'd probably go to one store and do it, I'd pick the one I liked and then leave."

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Moderator: "But would you say that the shopping itself just takes one day? Like what about before that?"

Moderator: "Like the whole like ... let's say you see an advertisement and wonder what it smells like or whatever, the pre ... before buying it, before running in the store. How interested are you in finding out what's coming out or...?"

All agree that they are not interested.

Pauline: "It's kinda like you're looking at it, you'll think about it then it's out of your mind. And if you go shopping it then may happen to click at that time you know, you might be at the department store and the perfume section is right in front of you, you might go look at it but sometimes you usually just buy it just from looking for it, but if I'm not then I don't have the urge to buy it. If it's just instinct that I like it."

Kelly: "If I see it in a magazine I might think, oh the next time I go out I'll look for it. But I don't do it, like it won't make me go the next day. Just if I'll remember, I'll be going."

Moderator: "Would you say that there's too many perfumes?"

Pauline: "Well you need different perfumes for different people of different types."

Naomi: "And things smell different on people. The same fragrance will smell different on two different people."

Moderator: "So would you say like if you found something would you try it first? Like would you test it out for a week then buy it? Or just buy it?"

Pauline: "Just spray it in the air and see if it smells good. Maybe like I'll spray some on myself and walk around the mall, do a bit of shopping."

Naomi: "I would probably be too lazy to go back."

Pauline: "Sometimes I would. It smells different after a while. But I like it, I don't know."

Moderator: "So would you like to get other people's

opinions first before you make the purchase or would you just buy it because you like it?"

Darlene: "I like other people's opinions sometimes, from friends saying what do you think? Or sometimes I wish people would have asked me, like my brother, before he bought..."

Naomi: "Before it's too late."

Darlene: "...ya, it's good to ask."

Pauline: "It's good to have opinions because I think I was shopping with someone and they said something smelled like lemons and it smelled like, ya Pine Sol, something you clean with. You got to think because the other person might think 'oh ya, it's good.' Like if I'm smelling that person they might want to know what they smell like."

Monica: "Like Pine Sol."

Naomi: "It's always nice to take complements because it's flattering when they say that you smell good with what you wear."

Moderator: "Do you relate with the image of a perfume? Or do you think it's important to relate to that image of a perfume?"

Naomi: "The image no, I think the image you see would be the advertising."

Pauline: "It's all in sex."

Naomi: "I think it gives you your own, I think you'll smell something and that smell will remind you of something and I think that it puts you in a good mood. But I don't think the advertising will, like CK after I look at it. I don't feel grungy."

Moderator: Well, thank you very much. You have been extremely helpful and nery, ah, I appreciate your, ah, willingness to talk; it made my job easier. Thank you very much. Did everybody get as many doughnuts and coffee as they would like? Please take some with you if you would like to. Thanks very much we appreciate it. Thanks, very much.