

Need vs. Want

In the end, consumer behavior is stimulated either by needing something or wanting something. Guess where marketing communications plays the bigger part? As I mentioned some posts earlier, Comcast has some very funny commercials. It doesn't make me WANT to be a Comcast customer but I am a Comcast customer. Why? Because, at the time, they were the only cable tv alternative available to me. I NEEDED to sign up with them. Yet no amount of advertising is going to make me get their voice package. Why? Because I already have a telephone service I am satisfied with, so I have no NEED or WANT.

This need vs. want dichotomy explains why you never see advertisements for certain items. How often do you see an ad for plain rice? Never. Uncle Ben's Wild Rice? More often. You probably need plain rice, but you have to **want** wild rice. The whole advertising business is built around the idea of creating desire. That is the AIDA theory—Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. An ad is supposed to catch your attention and then create a want for something, which will lead you to spend money on something. It's not all nefarious—charities do this to. Who hasn't seen pictures of starving children in Africa and not wanted to help?

Successful marcomm will stimulate a want. We get what we need anyway. You'll want to try new brands, new items, new services, all because the advertiser has convinced you that they have some unique or special attribute.