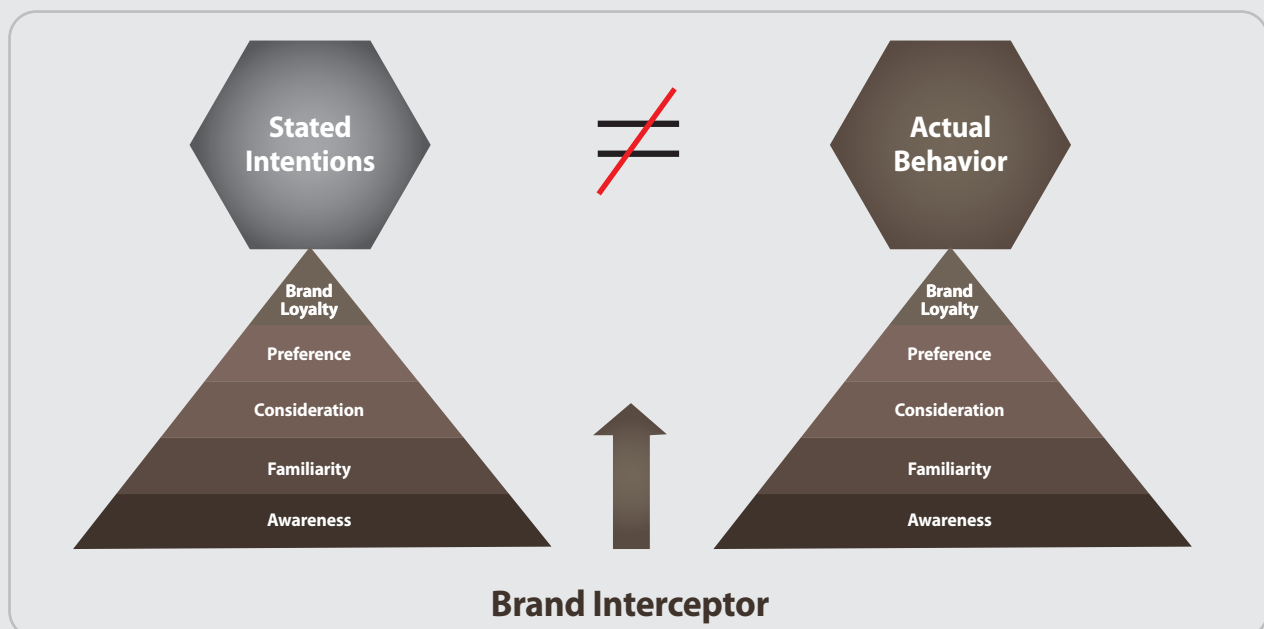


Brand Interceptors

Have you ever wondered what happens between what people say they will do versus what they actually do? I intend to lose weight every January 1st. But, then comes the football parties, and the “let’s go out to dinner” occasions, and the kids are home and we should have a barbeque, and on it goes. On go the things that get in the way of losing weight, and on goes the weight. Sigh.

I think the question is equally valid with customers and prospects. They say they intend to consider your brand or perhaps even buy it the next time they are in the market. But some don’t. Perhaps many don’t. What’s going on? Are they lying when they complete surveys asking them about their intent around the brand? Or, are they truthful, but things change between the time they respond until when they actually are in the market?

Possibly it’s a little of both. Not that respondents necessarily lie, but perhaps they don’t think through all the nuances of what they might do on a future occasion. And, indeed, there may be things that simply come up that respondents don’t anticipate which may yet have a material effect on what they end up doing. These factors of what gets in between what respondents say versus what they actually do are what we call brand interceptors.



A threshold consideration in thinking about the gap between respondent statements of intent versus actual behavior is the degree of involvement a customer has in a category. The conventional school of thought suggests that if a customer is more involved, then he or she will have a tendency to be more loyal, and there will be less of a gap between verbal statements and behavior. We suggest that this issue needs more examination, and that the reverse could be true.

I am not involved in the laundry detergent category. I frankly wouldn't know if my clothes were washed in one brand of detergent or another. But, I am extremely loyal to Tide. Why? Because my wife buys it. Beyond that, I don't care enough about the category to research the various brands, see if I could find any differences, and experiment with different ones to see if I would get any different results.

If you asked me my intent to buy Tide in the future, there would be no gap between my stated intentions and my behavior. I am loyal not because I am involved in the category and have researched the best brand; I am loyal because I am not involved in the category and don't want to invest time to do any homework about the available brands.

In contrast, I love audio equipment. I will spend hours reading about different brands and equipment. I am very involved in the category, but not loyal to any brand. I will be looking for performance and reviews to select a brand and buy. If you asked me today about my intent to buy a brand, I might struggle with the answer but would probably say something like, "I'll consider Onkyo." But how confident should you be about my answer? Not very. Who knows what other brands might come on the market between now and when I am in the market, or what kind of deals might be offered, or how my needs and preferences might change. Lots of potential interceptors.

Also, who knows what channel I might use to purchase when the time comes to buy. Suppose I was on Amazon.com and read a customer review that was unfavorable. I might change my mind right then, without further research. I have done that on Amazon with other purchases, where I went to the site intending to buy one brand and ended up with another because of the customer reviews. Another type of interceptor.

We sometimes think our challenge is to move prospects and customers up the brand pyramid, like the one shown in the earlier exhibit. Build awareness, get prospects familiar with the brand, move them into more of a relationship where they will consider, and then buy, and buy again. But people don't always go through those stages in a logical order.

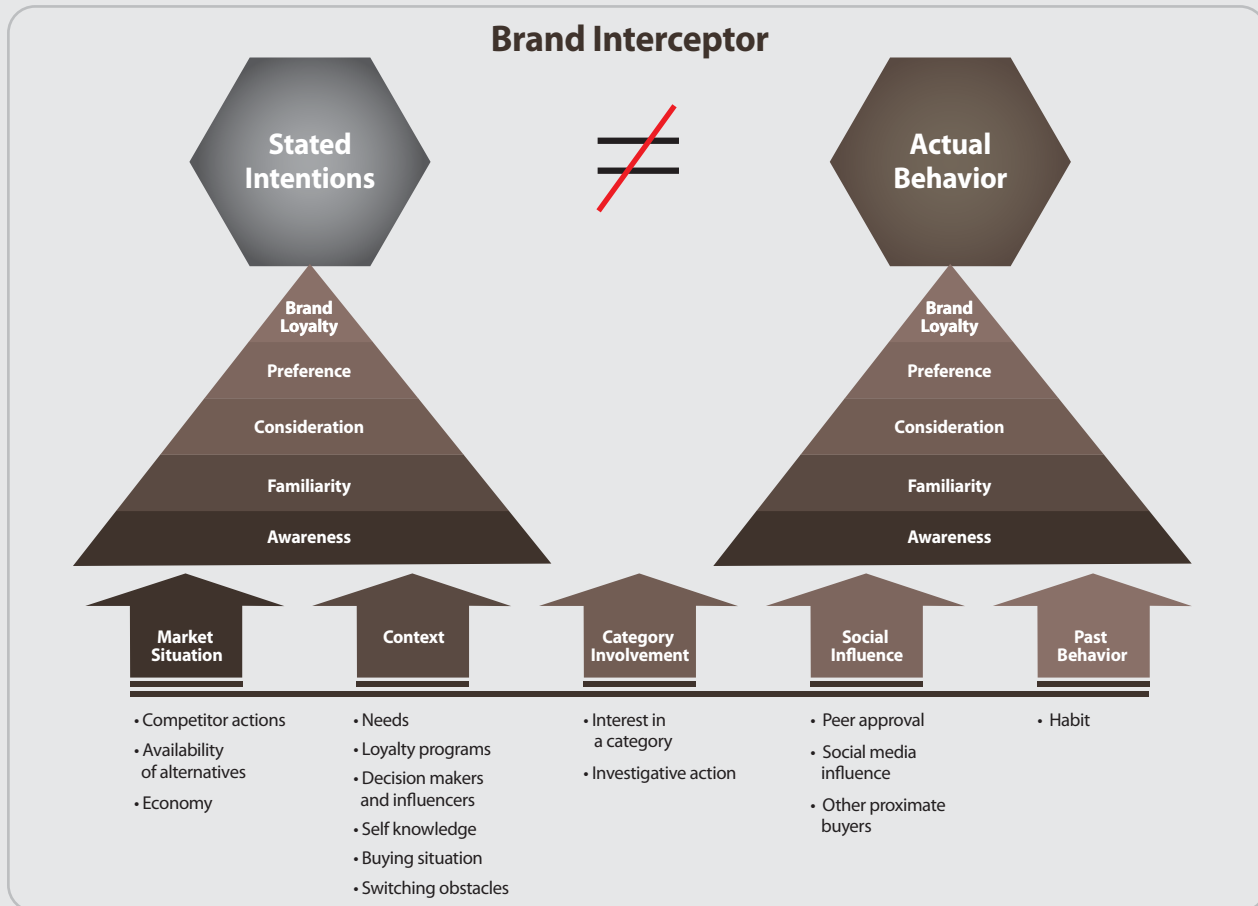
For example, I may go to Best Buy and see a cool laptop sound system, and I buy on spur of the moment. Then I go home and start researching the system to find out more about what I bought, frankly hoping to justify my impulse decision.

I went in reverse from “purchase” on the brand pyramid to “familiar.” Other steps were skipped. Measuring my awareness of this brand prior to my in-store experience would not have predicted me to buy. If I were a competitor, I might have relaxed, mistakenly. If the company from which I bought had measured my brand awareness and familiarity, it might have thought – “We have to stimulate impulse purchase at POS because we lack awareness.” The company I purchased from created a brand interceptor at POS for its competitor.

I, like others, was caught up in the Beanie Baby frenzy of 10+ years ago. Had to have them,

because my wife wanted them, because my kids wanted them, because their friends wanted them, because you couldn't find them. Owning a Beanie Baby of a particular type was having what someone else did not have. The emotion of greed and ego. Best stuffed animals on the planet? Debatable. Expensive? Yes. Rational decision? No. Emotional decision? Absolutely! Brand measurement of Beanie Baby buyers would have found highly loyal customers. Without understanding the emotions behind purchase and only having measured brand attachment from the traditional brand pyramid, however, we would not have predicted the outcome as the brand became more common: Consumer saturation and loss of attachment. Krispy Kreme suffered the same fate (among other issues). The market factor of scarcity bred demand and would typically have not been measured in a brand study. Another interceptor.

At Hansa, we look carefully at the role brand interceptors might play or are playing to understand the potential gap between what customers say they will do versus what they actually do.



We uncover brand interceptors through multiple techniques including integration of select factors into brand quantitative studies and qualitative work to understand how the factors are exerting themselves. If you would like to discuss how we might help you understand the deeper picture around your brand, please contact us below.

Hansa provides a full range of qualitative and quantitative research services. Our experienced research and consulting team, including PhD-level statisticians, uses innovative, data-driven methodologies tailored to our clients' research needs.

We pride ourselves on our ability to truly understand the voice of the customer and translate that voice into winning strategies for brand development, marketing communications, customer relationship enhancement, and product/service innovation.