



Consumer Decision-Making Process

TOPIC 6

CHB1203 PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING

By Dr. Nalin Simasathiansophon


"Every purchase tells a story — understanding that story is the heart of marketing."



This Week's Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

#	Learning Outcome
1	Explain the five stages of the consumer decision-making process
2	Identify how digital touchpoints influence each stage of the journey
3	Map a consumer journey for a real brand using the five-stage model
4	Reflect on ethical responsibilities in influencing consumer decisions

 **Today's Activity:** Activity 3 — Customer Journey Map Workshop







Meet Somchai — Our Consumer for Today

 **Somchai, 19 years old**

First-year university student |
Bangkok, Thailand

"My old laptop just crashed the night before midterms. I need a new one — fast."

Somchai's Situation

-  Student budget: ~฿15,000–20,000
-  Heavy user of Shopee, TikTok, and YouTube
-  Lives with family — parents have opinions
-  Nearest mall: MBK Center and Central World

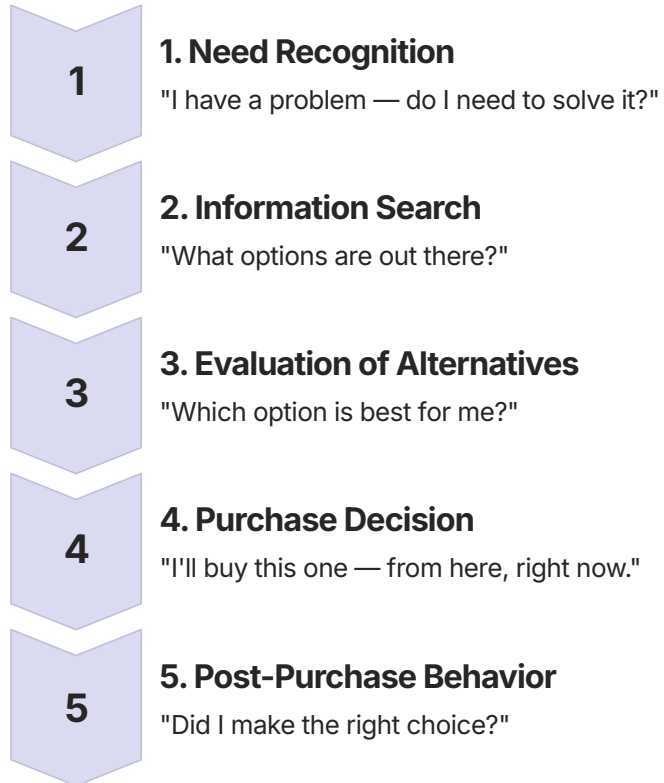
As we go through today's lesson, follow Somchai's journey from problem to purchase — and beyond.





The Five-Stage Consumer Decision-Making Model

KOTLER & ARMSTRONG, 2024



⚡ **Important:** Consumers don't always follow every stage — they may skip steps or loop back. But marketers must be present at every possible stage.



Stage 1 — Need Recognition

The journey begins when a consumer recognises a gap between their current situation and a desired state.

Internal Stimulus

Comes from within the person
(physical or emotional need)


Somchai's Example: Laptop crashes → panic, frustration

External Stimulus

Comes from outside (ads, friends, environment)

Somchai's Example: Friend shows off new MacBook; TikTok ad for ASUS

Marketers create campaigns that **activate latent needs** — making consumers realise they want or need something even before a crisis hits.

 **Thai Example:** True Move H and AIS run back-to-school campaigns in May–June that trigger students to "need" a new phone plan before semester starts.





Stage 2 — Information Search

Once a need is recognised, consumers actively or passively search for information.



Personal Sources

Friends, family, classmates

Somchai asks roommate and older sibling



Commercial Sources

Ads, brand websites, salespeople

Watches ASUS and Lenovo YouTube ads



Public Sources

Reviews, forums, news

Reads Pantip.com reviews, checks Shopee ratings



Experiential Sources

Touching, testing the product

Visits iStudio and JIB at MBK Center

73%



Online Research

Thai consumers research online before buying electronics

3

Top Platforms

Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop are major research platforms

  **Key Insight for Marketers:** Be visible and credible at every search touchpoint. SEO, reviews, and influencer content matter enormously.



Stage 3 — Evaluation of Alternatives

Consumers compare options using a set of criteria that matter to them personally.

Somchai's Evaluation Criteria for a Laptop:

Criterion	Weight	ASUS VivoBook 	Lenovo IdeaPad 	MacBook Air 
Price	High	✓ ฿16,990	✓ ฿17,500	✗ ฿39,900
Battery Life	Medium	✓ 10 hrs	✓ 9 hrs	✓ 15 hrs
Brand Prestige	Low	◆ Moderate	◆ Moderate	✓ High
Student Discount	High	✓ Available	✗ None	✓ Available
After-Sales Service	Medium	✓ 3-yr warranty	✓ 2-yr warranty	◆ iStudio only

Key Concept: Evoked Set

The shortlist of brands a consumer actually considers. Marketers must get INTO the evoked set.

💡 Strategic Insight

Positioning is most powerful at Stage 3 — this is where brand image wins or loses the sale.



Stage 4 — Purchase Decision

The consumer has chosen a brand — but the final purchase can still be disrupted.

Disruptor 1: Attitudes of Others



Somchai chose ASUS — but his father says, *"Just use your sister's old Mac."* This creates conflict and may reverse the decision entirely.

Disruptor 2: Unexpected Situational Factors

Somchai arrives at MBK — the ASUS model is out of stock. The salesperson recommends Lenovo instead.

The Purchase Decision Involves More Than "Which Brand?"

Sub-Decision	Somchai's Choice
Brand	ASUS VivoBook
Dealer	JIB Computer, MBK Center
Quantity	1 unit
Timing	Today—exam pressure
Payment Method	Debit card + installment plan

  **Marketers:** Reduce friction at the point of purchase. Availability, payment options, and staff training all matter.



Stage 5 — Post-Purchase Behavior

The journey doesn't end at checkout — this stage determines loyalty, reviews, and word-of-mouth.

Satisfaction = Perceived Performance – Expectations

😊 Performance > Expectations

Outcome: Delight → loyalty, positive reviews

Response: Encourage reviews, build community

😐 Performance = Expectations

Outcome: Satisfied → may repurchase

Response: Maintain quality, loyalty rewards

😞 Performance < Expectations

Outcome: Dissatisfied → returns, complaints, bad reviews

Response: Respond quickly, service recovery

After buying, Somchai sees a Lenovo ad on Instagram. He wonders: *"Did I make the right choice?"* This is **cognitive dissonance** — very common for high-involvement products.

 **Shopee & Lazada Strategy:** "Rate your purchase" notifications, follow-up emails, and after-care content all reduce dissonance and build loyalty.



ASEAN Focus — Digital Touchpoints Across the Journey

How digital platforms shape each stage for Thai and ASEAN consumers

Stage	Key Digital Touchpoints in Thailand
Need Recognition	TikTok ads, Instagram Reels, LINE notifications, influencer posts
Information Search	Shopee reviews, YouTube unboxings, Pantip.com forums, Google Search
Evaluation	Price comparison on Priceza.com, Shopee vs Lazada side-by-side
Purchase Decision	Flash sales, COD option, GrabPay/TrueMoney Wallet payment
Post-Purchase	Shopee review system, LINE customer service, brand loyalty apps

ASEAN Comparison: Most Influential Touchpoints

 Thailand TikTok Shop + LINE	 Indonesia Tokopedia + WhatsApp
 Vietnam Facebook + Zalo	 Singapore Google + Instagram



High-Involvement vs. Low-Involvement Decisions

Not all buying decisions are equal — consumer effort depends on risk and importance.

High-Involvement Purchase

Example: Laptop, university course, car

- Expensive price point
- High risk: financial, social, functional
- Extensive information search
- All five stages used
- **Marketer's Focus:** Build trust, provide detail, reduce risk

Low-Involvement Purchase

Example: Chang beer, Mama noodles, gum

- Inexpensive price point
- Low risk overall
- Minimal information search
- Often just 1–2 stages used
- **Marketer's Focus:** Create habit, ensure shelf presence

📌 **Key Takeaway:** Marketers must design strategies that match the involvement level of their product category. A laptop brand needs educational content; a snack brand needs emotional recall.



The Consumer Journey ≠ A Straight Line

Modern consumers loop, skip, and return — the journey is non-linear.

Somchai's Actual Path



The Zero Moment of Truth

Consumers now make key decisions **before** they ever enter a store — through online search, reviews, and social proof.

(Google, 2011)

68%

Changed Plans



Thai shoppers say online research changed what they planned to buy in-store



Ethics Spotlight — Responsible Influence in the Consumer Journey

"Marketers have the power to shape decisions at every stage. With that power comes responsibility."

Stage	Potential Ethical Issue	Responsible Practice
Need Recognition	Creating artificial urgency (fake "limited stock")	Honest scarcity communication
Information Search	Fake reviews and paid endorsements without disclosure	Transparent influencer labeling (#ad)
Evaluation	Hiding fees or unfavorable product comparisons	Full price transparency
Purchase	Dark patterns (e.g., auto-subscriptions, hidden charges)	Clear opt-in, easy cancellation
Post-Purchase	Ignoring complaints, making returns difficult	Responsive service recovery

  **Cultural Consideration:** In Thailand and ASEAN, "**face**" (หน้า) plays a major role—consumers may not voice dissatisfaction publicly but will silently switch brands. Marketers must proactively check in.

"A Shopee seller inflates ratings by giving free products for 5-star reviews. Is this marketing — or manipulation? Where is the line?"



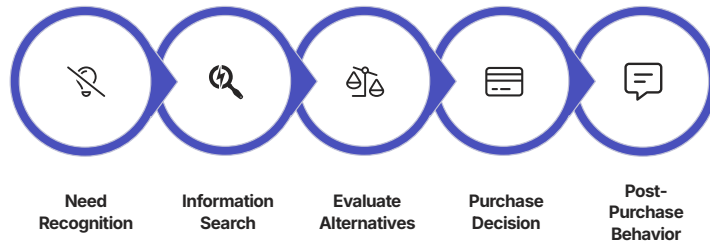
Class Activity 3: Customer Journey Map

25 MINUTES

GROUPS OF 4-5 STUDENTS

Choose ONE Scenario

A	New Smartphone	Thai university student, ฿8,000 budget
B	Hotel Booking for Songkran Holiday	Young professional couple, Bangkok
C	Language Learning App <i>(e.g., Duolingo vs Babbel vs AIS Play)</i>	University student improving English or a third language for future career



Your Journey Map Must Cover All 5 Stages

- What the consumer is **thinking/feeling**
- **Information sources** they use
- Key **digital touchpoints** (apps, platforms)
- One **marketing opportunity** for a brand
- One potential **ethical concern**



Need Recognition

What triggers the consumer's awareness of a need or want?



Information Search

Where do they look? Social media, reviews, friends, ads?



Evaluation

How do they compare options? Price, features, brand trust?



Purchase Decision

What finalizes the choice? Promotions, UX, peer influence?



Post-Purchase

Satisfaction, reviews, loyalty, or regret?

Deliverable: Present your completed journey map to the class — **3 minutes per group**. Be ready to explain your marketing opportunities and ethical concerns at each stage!



Topic Summary — Key Takeaways



5-Stage Model

Need → Search → Evaluate → Purchase → Post-Purchase



Need Triggers

Internal (personal) vs External (marketing-driven)



Evoked Set

The shortlist — marketers must be IN it



Purchase Disruptors

Social influence and situational factors can change decisions



Post-Purchase

Satisfaction = Performance – Expectations



Digital Touchpoints

Thai consumers are highly digital across ALL stages



Ethics

Marketers must influence responsibly — no dark patterns

⚡ **The Big Idea:** Understanding the consumer journey means you can be in the right place, with the right message, at the right moment — ethically and effectively.