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Behavioural Segmentation: Strategies & Outcomes Across Sectors

At Cúlra, we know you want to give your customers the best experience possible. In order to do that you need amazing software to help you understand your customer's preferences.
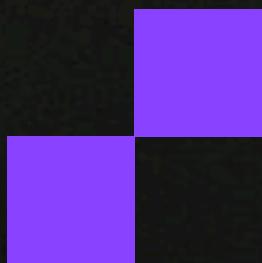
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Introduction

Customer purchase expectations are rising, with <u>71% of customers</u> now wanting personalised experiences. Demographics like age or location provide a partial picture, but they don't explain how purchases or engagement differ across channels.

Behavioural segmentation closes this gap by grouping audiences based on their actions rather than their assumptions to help organisations refine campaigns and reduce acquisition costs in both commercial and non-commercial sectors.

We're analysing the core strategies within behavioural segmentation to give you a more comprehensive view of how industries are applying them and the challenges that impact their effectiveness.

Behavioural segmentation strategies
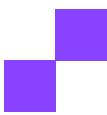
Journey stage identification

This approach uses past customer behaviours to identify their position in the buying funnel, from awareness to purchase. Organisations can then tailor communications like email sequences and personalise their offers to help move customers to the next stage of their journey.

However, these journeys are often circular rather than linear. McKinsey's research shows consumers frequently add or drop brands based on the competitiveness of their offers or the quality of their reviews. Because customers loop in and out of consideration rather than moving neatly from awareness to purchase, brands need visibility into those shifts.

So, by using tools like CPDs or analytic platforms like Google Analytics 4, they can track behaviours and sentiments in real time to maintain relevance against competitors and design offers that build loyalty.

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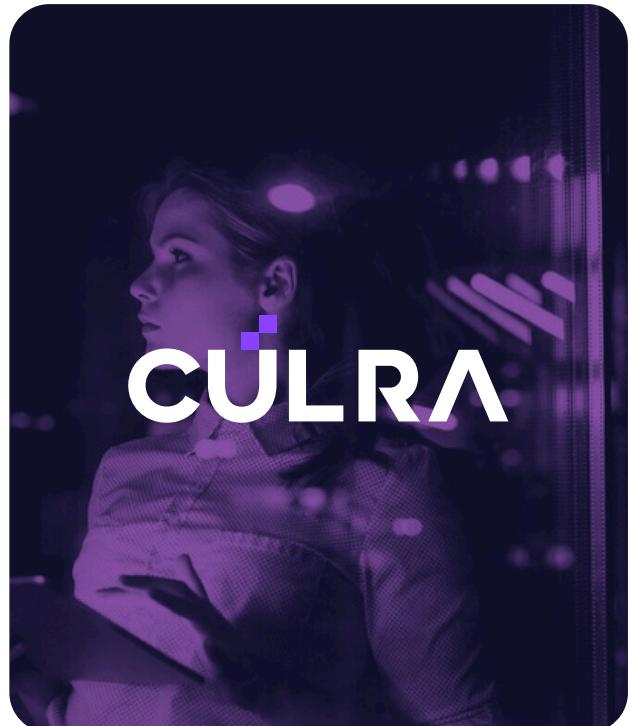
Behavioural segmentation strategies cont.
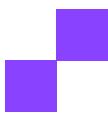
Customer engagement

Segmenting by engagement levels shows how actively individuals interact with a brand and where those interactions occur. This can include:

- Brand engagement: Browsing a website, signing up for a mailing list
- Channel engagement: Preferring social media apps like TikTok or Instagram
- Content engagement: Favouring blogs, newsletters or videos

Tracking metrics such as conversion rates, CSAT, NPS and CLV provide a structured way to identify high and low-engagement customers and the content or channels that deliver higher CTR and conversions.

Organisations can then allocate spend on the areas that drive uplift with targeted campaigns that re-engage inactive customers and scale back on lower-performing channels.

Behavioural segmentation strategies cont.
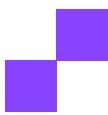
Purchase behaviour

According to Statista, cart abandonment reached 70.19% in 2025, while average e-commerce conversion rates remained at 1.7%, so it's never been more critical for businesses to gain a deeper understanding of their customers' purchase behaviours.

This segmentation can include three main areas:

- Product preferences: Specific items or categories chosen most often
- Purchasing process: Whether customers buy on impulse, after research or only with incentives
- Purchase motivators: Factors such as discounts, testimonials or exclusivity

These segments can be built using analytics platforms, CPDs, tracking pixels and loyalty systems to align offers to specific purchase motivations. For example, re-targeting cart abandoners with reminders highlighting free delivery or faster checkout options.

Benefits sought, probabilistic segmentation & loyalty

Benefits sought

This strategy segments customers based on their specific needs or problems. By using tools like tracking pixels, analytics platforms and feedback data, businesses can identify and leverage patterns that indicate what customers value and frame offers as solutions to their problems, improving conversion rates and strengthen brand loyalty.

For example, a beauty brand might find customers searching for "how to tame frizzy hair" and can then recommend an appropriate product. Likewise, patients seeking "low-sugar meal plans" can be directed to tailored nutrition services.

Probabilistic segmentation

AI adoption in marketing is now widespread, with 43% of B2B businesses using it for audience targeting and 41% for analytics.

Probabilistic segmentation uses predictive analytics and AI to group customers based on their likelihood of future actions, such as repeat purchases or churn. Unlike descriptive methods that only analyse past behaviours, this approach forecasts future behaviours.

For example, a retailer might offer loyalty rewards to customers likely to make repeat purchases while providing tailored offers to those at risk of churning.

Customer loyalty

Customer retention is central to sustainable growth. Forbes states that even a 5% increase in loyalty can increase profits by up to 95%. And HubSpot reports that 77% of consumers are more likely to stay loyal to brands that offer loyalty programmes.

Brands can use historic data to identify high-value customers and reward them with loyalty programmes to not only strengthen relationships with loyal customers but also identify disengaged segments. Targeting these groups with tailored campaigns can reduce churn and enhance their lifetime value.

After all, repeat customers are 50% more likely to try new products than new customers, which is why the importance of loyalty programme development for long-term revenue growth cannot be understated.

Cross-sector case studies
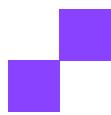
Retail

A study published by ScienceDirect used direct observation of shoppers to segment data based on in-store behaviour rather than demographics. This research found that the same individuals behave differently depending on the store format, such as self-service vs. independent shops, and shopping missions like household goods vs. gifts or apparel.

Key insights:
- Behaviour segmentation uncovered gaps between what customers said in surveys and what they did.
- Real-time in-store factors, such as layout, can shift decisions, proving that their environment is a critical influencer of customer behaviour.

Here we can clearly see how behavioural segmentation provides a more accurate representation of customer intent. By segmenting by actions rather than assumptions, retailers can refine both their store designs and communications to strengthen retention and purchasing outcomes.

Education

A report published by ResearchGate, which sampled 140 students from three universities, shows that the effectiveness of behavioural segmentation can be applied in non-commercial sectors.

The study categorised students based on enrolment frequency, course choices and engagement. It found a significant link between behavioural segmentation and perceived value; students who felt valued through communication and support were more likely to continue their studies and recommend the university.

By applying behavioural segmentation in the same way as businesses, educational institutions can monitor retention and improve loyalty while lowering drop-out rates.

Challenges & considerations

- **Data quality:** Accurate insights are vital for behavioural segmentation. Incomplete or outdated data can lead to misleading segments, resulting in wasted marketing efforts.

- **Privacy concerns:** Compliance with GDPR and other regulations requires careful handling of consumer data. Violations can lead to hefty fines and erode consumer trust.

- **Over-segmentation:** While niche targeting can enhance personalisation, excessive segmentation may increase costs and complicate campaigns.

- **Context and interpretation:** Consumer behaviour shifts due to various factors, including the buying funnel stage. Misinterpreting signals, like assuming cart abandonment indicates disinterest rather than checkout issues, can waste marketing resources.

Conclusion
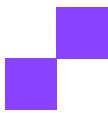
As a strategy for growth that's proving valuable across commercial and non-commercial sectors, behavioural segmentation offers a far deeper understanding of the customer actions businesses can leverage.

However, it's important to note that successful execution requires investment into the collection of accurate data and full adherence to privacy regulations to avoid unnecessary costs or brand reputational damage.

When applied effectively, behavioural segmentation solves problems for customers and breeds their loyalty, while cutting acquisition costs and creating a foundation for growth that moves the focus from short-term wind toward long-term success.

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