

Model: Brand Conversion Model

Type of model: Brand model (process model)
 Author(s): J. Hofmeyr & B. Rice
 Domain: Brand loyalty

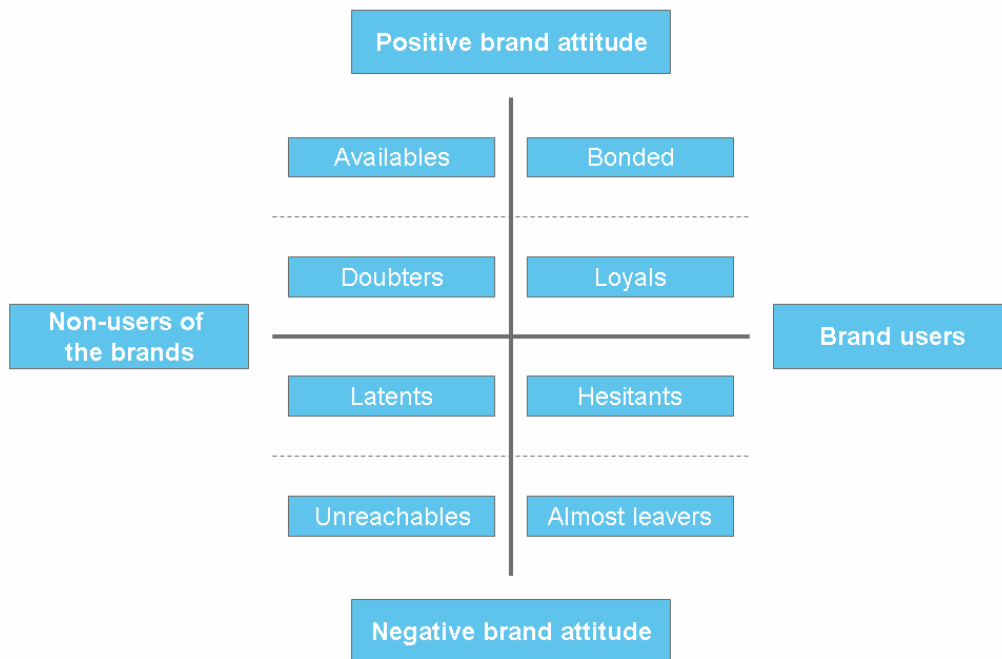


Figure 1: Hofmeyr & Rice’s Brand Conversion Model.

The brand conversion model by Hofmeyr & Rice is a loyalty model identifying eight types of consumers. This model classifies/ segments the market on the basis of two variables: consumers’ brand attitude (vertical axis) and brand behaviour (horizontal axis). These two variables are measured (and classified) on the basis of four so-called bonding factors. These are: (1) the extent to which a brand/ product meets expectations, (2) the level of consumer commitment to a product category, (3) the level of attractiveness of alternatives and (4) the level of ambivalence (i.e. the love-hate relationship someone has with a brand). Based on these factors, the researchers discerned eight types of consumers: bonded consumers, loyals, hesitants, almost leavers, availables, doubters, latents and unreachables. This model can be used to make accurate predictions about the brand switching behaviour of users and non-users of the brand. The model is also very suited to forecast market shares and market developments.

For a brand manager, four out of these eight types of consumers hold particular relevance where loyalty to that brand manager's brand is concerned:

1. Bonded users: these consumers have shown long-term loyalty to the brand in question and are also referred to as safe buyers. This kind of consumer is placed in the top-right quadrant of the brand conversion model, i.e. classified as brand users with a positive brand attitude.
2. Loyals: these are also safe buyers, with the only difference with the previous group of bonded users being that loyals do sometimes change brands in the long term. Long-term loyalty is not guaranteed here. But loyals do have a strong affinity for the brand, ensuring they will not be quick to switch to a competing brand. This group is classified in the same quadrant as bonded users, albeit that their positive brand attitude is a little weaker.
3. Hesitants: this type of consumer shows the first signs of doubt regarding a brand. Their loyalty level is below average, and their attention is slowly shifting towards other brand products. This group is sometimes also referred to as potential leavers. They find themselves in the bottom-right quadrant of the brand conversion model (brand users with a negative brand attitude).
4. Almost leavers: these consumers are about to switch to another brand. Their current brand will have to pull out all the stops to retain them. Almost leavers have a negative attitude towards the brand, and are classified in the bottom-right quadrant of the mode, below the hesitants. They too are potential leavers, but they are more likely to leave than hesitants.

Apart from abovementioned types of consumers, a brand manager can also focus on four other types of consumers, namely those that never or hardly ever buy his brand (so-called non-brand users):

5. Availables: this type of consumer has a positive attitude towards the brand manager's brand, and is considering buying it. They are unhappy with the brand they are currently using. They can also be referred to as potential joiners. They are in the top-left quadrant (non-users of the brand with a positive brand attitude).
6. Doubters: this kind of consumer is not really sure what he wants. They are not satisfied with the brand they buy, but not impressed by the offered alternatives either. Although they are indeed potential joiners, the brand manager will have to put in great effort to attract these doubters. Doubters are in the same quadrant as availables, albeit that their attitude to the brand manager's brand is less positive.
7. Latents: this group of consumers tends to be loyal to the brand they are currently using. They are so-called unavailable users, and fall into the

bottom-left quadrant. They have a negative brand attitude towards the brand manager's brand, and are not very likely to make the switch.

8. Unreachables: this group of consumers has a strong preference for the brand they are already using, and a very negative attitude towards the brand manager's brand. Unreachables therefore continuously see their choice confirmed. This kind of consumer is considered to be a hater of the brand manager's brand. They are in the bottom-right quadrant of the brand conversion model, below the latents.

Questions that can be answered using the brand conversion model include:

- What is a brand's overall market position? Which segment of the brand users have a positive attitude and which a negative one?
- Is it easy for the brand to attract other consumers?
- Which non-brand users could be tempted to switch, and which non-brand users are really beyond reach (unreachables)?
- Which competing brands are the most attractive for current brand users? And which other brands could we lure customers away from?
- How strong or weak are competing brands?

Reference(s)

Franzen, G. (2006), *The SWOCC Book of Brand Management Models*, SWOCC, Amsterdam. *

Hofmeyr, J. & Rice, B. (2000), *Commitment-led marketing*, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons.

*: available in the EURIB library.