

Model: Kapferer’s Brand Loyalty Model

Type of model: Brand model (structure and process model)
 Author(s): Jean-Noël Kapferer
 Domain: Brand loyalty

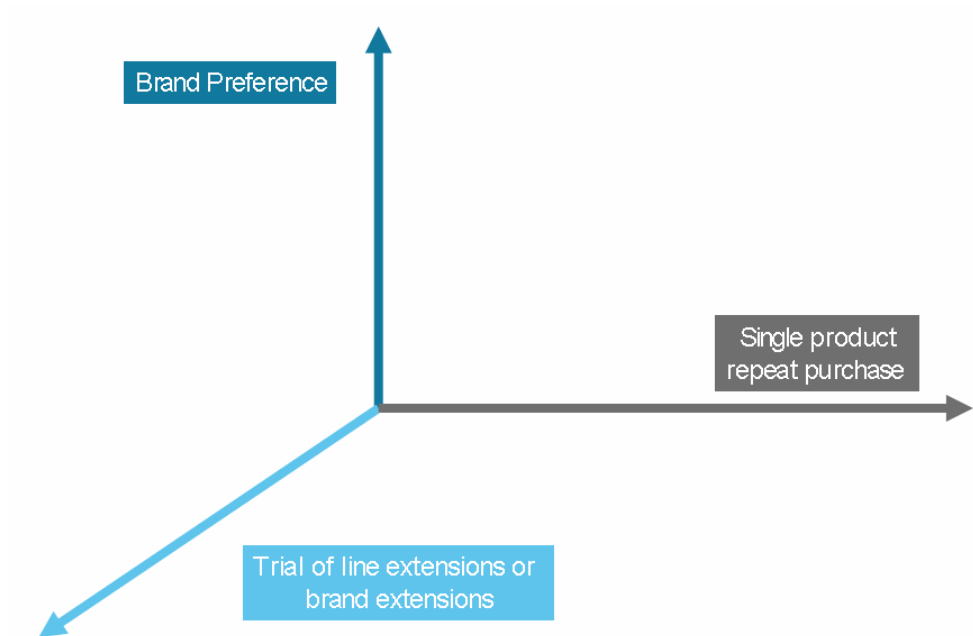


Figure 1: The three dimensions of brand loyalty according to Kapferer

In his brand loyalty model, Jean-Noël Kapferer identifies three dimensions of brand loyalty. In successive order: (1) brand preference, (2) single product repeat purchase and (3) trial of line or brand extensions. This model provides insight into these three levels of brand loyalty, with *brand preference* being the lowest level and *trial of line or brand extensions* the highest.

Kapferer posits that consumers with a certain brand preference can be considered potential loyals. These are consumers that are not loyal to a brand, but could become loyal to that brand in future. Consumers making repeat purchase of a certain brand (single product repeat purchase) can be seen as active committed loyals. These are consumers that have adapted their behaviour to their brand preference. But these can, however, also be pseudo-loyals. That means that it seems as if they are loyal to a brand, but only make repeat purchases because there are no better alternatives available to him/her. As soon as they are presented with alternatives, they will switch. Truly loyal

customers can be recognized as customers willing to try out line or brand extensions of the brand in question (trial of line or brand extensions). Consumers in this phase have, in Kapferer's opinion, reached a high level of brand loyalty.

Kapferer identifies six levels of brand attachment, for which he describes the drivers behind customers' bonds with brands. The level someone finds him/herself in at any given time will eventually determine the extent of his/her brand loyalty. The six levels of attachment are, in ascending order of brand loyalty: (1) (hedonistic) satisfaction, (2) quality of the relationship, (3) shared values, (4) increased self image, (5) pleasure of a lasting relationship and (6) specific brand associations. In the following we will describe these six levels in greater detail:

1. (Hedonistic) satisfaction: this is the lowest level of brand loyalty, and encompasses brand potential (or pseudo-loyal). The extent to which a consumer is tied to a brand at this level is mainly driven by the level of satisfaction with the use of the product or service. The quality of the contact with representatives of a brand/ company can play a role here. These representatives include account managers, shop staff and call centre staff.
2. Quality of the relationship: this level of attachment can be described as a bond with a brand resulting from experienced quality. The consumer is here satisfied with the performance of the brand product or the company in question, and also appreciates his/her treatment as a valued customer. It may also be that a consumer feels the brand or company operates in an ethically responsible manner, which strengthens the bond the consumer feels with the brand or company.
3. Shared values: this is the third bonding level between customer and brand, where the feelings towards the brand are mainly determined by shared values. The consumer and the brand or company are on the same wavelength, which comes to the fore in a shared vision or philosophy. This can concern bio products, fair-trade products, or brands/ companies that are otherwise committed to corporate social responsibility. But other values, such as a sporty focus, ambition, beauty, care, etc. can also lead to a shared values set.
4. Increased self-image: from this level onward the brand plays an increasingly important role in the creation of a bond (as opposed to the physical features of the product or service). Consumers at this level stay loyal to a brand because they have started to identify with the brand in question. Consumer may at this stage even think using the brand in question actually makes them feel better, which means a great boost to their self-confidence and self-

image. Identification is often enabled by so-called transformational advertising, the organisation of events, sponsoring etc, with a clear focus on building a certain brand image (for example, D&G, Gucci, Hugo Boss, Nike, Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger).

5. Pleasure of a lasting relationship: consumers at this level of attachment value the brand in question because it has been playing a role in their lives for quite some time. For example, a brand that someone has been using since they were a child because his/her parents bought it, a brand that someone grew up with. In that case, the brand will have acquired a special meaning in that person's life, leading to him/her being very reluctant to switch to another brand. Examples are food brands that people consume during their childhood years, such as Werther's Original.
6. Specific brand associations: at this, the highest, level of attachment, a bond with a brand is, surprisingly enough, hardly ever the result of the efforts of the brand manufacturer. Kapferer states that it is predominantly driven by brand usage by certain influential people in a consumer's personal environment. As a consumer starts feeling a closer emotional bond with these people, he/she will be quicker to copy their brand choices. An example is provided by the brand Lonsdale. This brand was, at one point, adopted by right-wing extremist youth in the Netherlands, which led to the importer trying his utmost to shake this image.

Reference(s)

Kapferer, J.N. (2004), *The new strategic brand management (creating and sustaining brand equity long term)* (3rd ed.). Kogan Page, London, U.K. *

* : available in the EURIB library.