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Three separate psychographic segmentation strategies on health: Health in general, Health Information, and Health Compliance

Motivo|consulting, a division of Strategic Directions Group, Inc., used more than 200 attitude statements to create three separate psychographic health segmentation strategies on the U.S. population 40 and older. These three strategies include Health in general, Health Information, and Health Compliance. Motivo|consulting has now conducted 10 studies over the past 30 years using nationally representative samples of 22,000 persons.

“Our three separate psychographic segmentations,” says Carol M. Morgan, M.A., the firm’s president, “help us understand the motivations behind our health-related choices. It is clear that attitudes impact behaviors. Demographics and behaviors aren’t sufficient to target marketing and communication efforts. Psychographic segmentation can identify the segment most open to your product or service and also the true size of your market.”

The firm’s three separate attitudinal segmentation strategies are outlined below and detailed in ***Health Motivations: 7 Dimensions That Shape America’s Health*** and in ***Marketing to the Mindset of Boomers and Their Elders***, both by Carol M. Morgan and Doran J. Levy. Both books are available at Amazon.com.

Health Segments

Proactives

Those in this segment are intensely committed to exercise, eating a balanced diet, and avoiding foods high in fat. Proactives are convinced that taking such actions will have a positive effect on their health. They are also unique in their interest in collecting information on how to stay in good health. Proactives trust their doctors and respect the health-care system. They are compliant patients concerned with taking a prescription drug as directed.

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Faithful Patients

Those in this segment know what they should be doing to improve their health but admit they don't take action. Since Faithful Patients don't take responsibility for their health, they are apt to turn to doctors, pharmacists, and medications to help them get better. They are the only Health segment that says it turns to religion in times of poor health. Faithful Patients are very interested in joining a health-maintenance organization (HMO) covering all their health-care needs.

Optimists

Thanks to good luck, great genes, or infrequent health exams, those in this segment believe they are in terrific health. Optimists think they rarely get sick. And if they were to get sick, Optimists would think there wasn't much they could have done to have avoided the illness. Optimists try to avoid taking prescription medications and see little need for health care delivered by an HMO: after all, they have no health problems.

Disillusioned

This segment's greatest concern is having insufficient health insurance. The Disillusioned are highly critical of today's health-care system and feel alienated from doctors. According to this segment, prescription medications are to be avoided if possible. One concern they have is that of harmful drug interactions. The Disillusioned would like to live a long life and act to improve their health. Their interest in achieving good health, however, is thwarted by their lack of access to health care.

Health Information segments

Uninvolved Fatalists

Those in this segment have a fatalistic view of their ability to improve or preserve their health. They believe there is little they can do. Perhaps because of this viewpoint, Uninvolved Fatalists say they pay little attention to health information. They have a short-term perspective and have little concern for their future health. Although confused over health information and lacking confidence in making health-related decisions, Uninvolved Fatalists still view themselves as in charge of their health.

Self-directed Positives

Those in this segment believe they are very smart people blessed with exceptionally good health. Because they have only a few vices, Self-directed Positives anticipate enjoying good health in the years ahead. Perhaps because of an optimistic view of their health, Self-directed Positives have little interest in health information. Those in this segment believe they are in charge of their own health care. Although they don't seek out health-care information, Self-directed Positives are supremely confident they will know what to do when faced with a health-care decision.

Fearful Listeners

Fearful Listeners constantly absorb health-related information from a wide variety of sources. They may be motivated to do this because they are pessimistic about their current state of health and believe they are frequently sick. Fearful Listeners want to live a long life, but doubt they will achieve this goal. They see themselves as procrastinators when it comes to making health-related changes. Feeling in charge of their own health care, Fearful Listeners waffle on complying exactly with their doctor's instructions, and they resent those who advise them to change their habits.

Internal Health Actives

Those in this segment want to live a long, healthy life. They are convinced that what they do now will help them to attain their goal. Internal Health Actives are willing to sacrifice present pleasures in order to preserve their health for a long time. Interested in health-related information from a variety of sources, they say they act on this information in their everyday lives. Those in this segment are confident about how they handle health-care choices and are not at all confused about making them.

Confused Compliant

Confused Compliant don't know what they should do to avoid major diseases. They don't seek out health-care information so they can become knowledgeable consumers. Instead, they rely on their doctor's insights and direction. Confused Compliant don't procrastinate when it comes to taking care of themselves. They believe such efforts will have a beneficial effect on their health. Confused Compliant would like to live a long life, but do not view their present health as very good.

External Health Actives

Those in this segment are motivated by external forces to absorb health-related information and take care of their health. External Health Actives want to stay healthy primarily so they can take care of their families. Weighed down with this responsibility, they are concerned with living long, healthy lives. External Health Actives collect an arsenal of health information from a variety of media sources and also from authorities, such as their doctor. Confident health-care consumers, External Health Actives believe their actions will enable them to stay healthy. If these efforts fail and they fall ill, those in this segment turn to an external force: religion.

Health Compliance segments

Trusting Believers

Trusting Believers transfer responsibility for their health care to their doctor in whom they have total faith and who, they believe, cares about them as people. This profound faith comes with an enormous expectation: their doctor knows exactly how to cure them. For their part, Trusting Believers exhibit a resilient compliance.

Informed Avoiders

Informed Avoiders will do anything they can to avoid taking a prescription drug. They, not their doctors, are in charge of making final decisions regarding their health care. Informed Avoiders do everything they can to be informed about their health-care problems and conditions and use a variety of sources to achieve these ends. Of the Health Compliance segments, only Informed Avoiders believe they understand what their doctor tells them.

Resentful Compliers

Resentful Compliers are stuck in a series of double binds. They distrust their doctors, but totally transfer responsibility for their care to them. While they don't believe what doctors tell them about their health conditions, they do little to become informed. Their non-compliant behavior is further fueled by their disbelief in having any disease whose symptoms are not seen or felt.

Cost-concerned Cynics

Burdened by the high cost of prescription drugs, Cost-concerned Cynics are angry they must pay for them. If they can, they will choose generics. While they would like to think they are in charge of their health care, other factors, such as their disinterest in becoming informed patients, conflict with this position. Marginally compliant, those in this segment do little to increase their knowledge about their conditions or diseases. Cost-concerned Cynics believe their doctors care about them.

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