**FAMILY LIFE CYCLES AMD ITS IMPACT ON MARKETING**

Families pass through a series of stages that change them over time. This process historically has been called the **family life cycle** (FLC). The concept may need to be changed to **household life cycle** (HLC) or **consumer life cycle** (CLC) in the future to reflect changes in society. However, we will use the term **FLC** to show how the life cycle affects consumer behavior.

**Family Life Cycle Characteristics**

The traditional FLC describes family patterns as consumers marry, have children, leave home, lose a spouse, and retire. But consumers don’t necessarily have to pass through all these stages-thy can skip multiple stages

**Stages in Family Life Cycle**

**Young Singles**

Young singles may live alone, with their nuclear families, or with friends, or they may co-habitate with partners in this stage. Although earnings tend to be relatively low, these consumers usually don’t have many financial obligations and don’t feel the need to save for their futures or retirement. Many of them find themselves spending as much as they make on cars, furnishings for first residences away from home, fashions, recreation, alcoholic beverages, food away from home, vacations, and other products.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Newly Married Couples**

Newly married couples without children are usually better off financially than they were when they were single, since they often have two incomes available to spend on one household. These families tend to spend a substantial amount of their incomes on cars, clothing, vacations, and other leisure activities. They also have the highest purchase rate and highest average purchases of durable good (particularly furniture and appliances) and appear to be more susceptible to advertising.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Full Nest I**

With the arrival of the first child, parents begin to change their roles in the family, and decide if one parent will stay to care for the child or if they will both work and buy daycare services. In this stage, families are likely to move into their first home; purchases furniture and furnishings for the child; and purchase new items such as baby food, toys, sleds, and skates. These requirements reduce families’ ability to save, and the husband and wife are often dissatisfied with their financial position.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Full Nest II**

In this stage, the youngest child has reached school age, the employed spouse’s income has improved. Consequently, the family’s financial position usually improves, but the family finds itself consuming more and in larger quantities Consumption patterns continue to be heavily influenced by the children, since the family tends to buy large-sized packages of food and cleaning suppliers, bicycles, music lessons, clothing, sports equipment, and a computer.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Full Nest III**

As the family grows older and parents enter their min-40s, their financial position usually continues to improve because the primary wage earner’s income rises, the second wage earner is receiving a higher salary, and the children earn from occasional and part-time employment. The family typically replaces some worn pieces of furniture, buys some luxury appliances, and spends money on education. Families also spend more on computers in this stage, buying additional PCs for their older children. Depending on where children go to college and how many are seeking higher education, the financial position of the family may be tighter than other instances.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Married, No Kids**

Couples who marry and do not have children are likely to have more disposable income to spend on charities, travel, and entertainment than others in their age range. Not only do they have fewer expenses, these couples are more likely to be dual-wage earners, making it easier for them to retire earlier if they save appropriately.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Older Singles**

Single, age 40 or older, may be single again (ending married status because of divorce or death of a spouse), or never married (because they prefer to live independently or because they co-habitate with partners), either group of which may or may not have children living in the household. This group now has more available income to spend on travel and leisure but feels the pressure to save for the future, since there is no second income on which to rely as they get older.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Empty Nest I**

At this stage, the family is most satisfied with its financial position. The children have left home and are financially independent allowing the family to save more. In this stage discretionary income is spent on what the couple wants rather than on what the children need. Therefore, they spend on home improvements,luxury items, vacations, sports utility vehicles, food away from home, travel, and product for their grand children.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**Empty Nest II**

But this time, the income earners have retired, usually resulting in a reduction in income and disposable income. Expenditures become health oriented, centering on such items as medical appliances and health, and medicines. But many of these families continue to be active and in good health, allowing them to spend time traveling, exercising, and volunteering. Many continue working part time to supplement their retirement and keep them socially involved.

PRODUCT & PROMOTION DESCRIPTION:

**FCL ROLES**

**Marketers use the descriptions of these FLC stages when analyzing marketing and communication strategies for products and services, but they often add additional information about consumer markets to analyze their needs, identify niches, and develop consumer-specific marketing strategies. A look at these roles provides further insight into how family members act in their various consumption-related roles:**

1. **Influencers**: Those family members who provide information and advice and thus influence the purchase. The housewife tells her family about the new eatery that has opened in the neighborhood and her favorable description about it influences her husband and teenaged children.

2. **Gatekeepers:** Those family members who control the flow of information about a product/service thus influencing the decisions of other family members. The teenaged son who wants a racing bicycle, may withhold from his father much of the relevant information on all brands except the one that he fancies, thereby influencing his father’s decision in favour of his preferred brand.

3. **Deciders:** Family members who have the power to unilaterally or jointly decide whether or not to buy a product or service. The husband and wife may jointly decide about the purchase of a new refrigerator.

4. **Buyers**: Those family members who actually buy a particular product or service. A housewife may be the person who actually buys all the foodstuffs, rations and toiletries, which are consumed by all the family members.

5. **Preparers**: Those family members who transform or prepare the product into the form in which it is actually consumed. The housewife may prepare the family meal using raw vegetables, lentils, spices, oil and other ingredients.

6. **Users:** Those family members who use or consume a particular product or service. All family members may use the car, watch the television, and listen to the stereo music system

7. **Maintainers:** Family member(s) who service or repair the product so that it will provide continued satisfaction.

8. **Disposers:** Family member(s) who initiate or carry out the disposal or discontinuation of a particular product or service.