

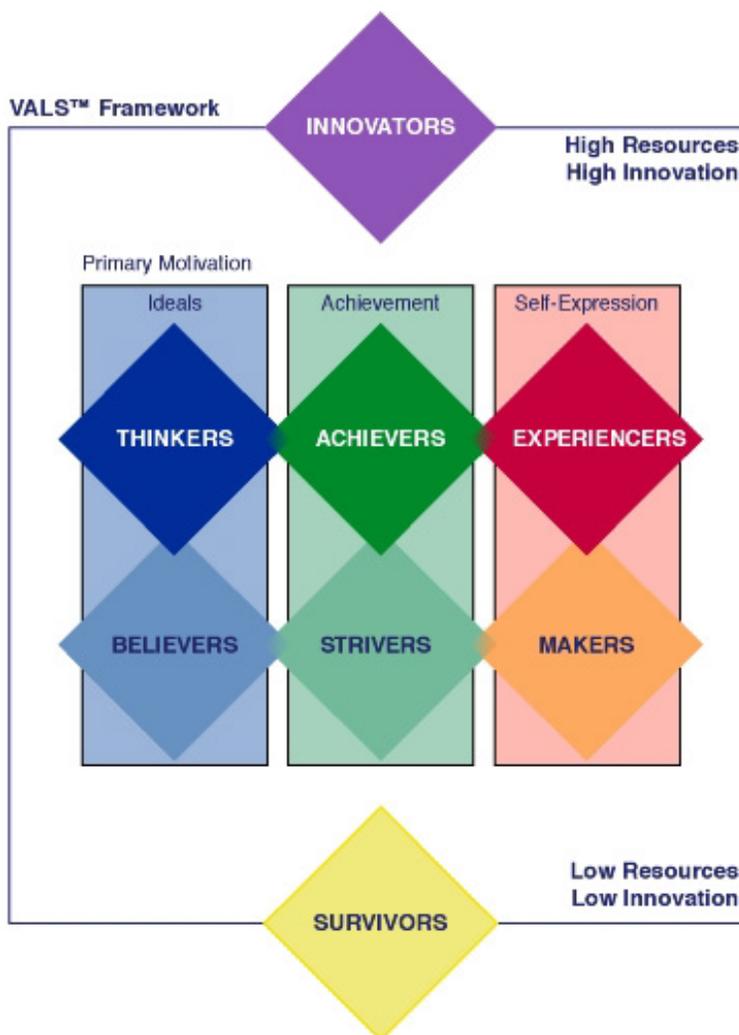
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The VALS™ Segments

VALS™ places U.S. adult consumers into one of eight segments based on their responses to the [VALS questionnaire](#). The main dimensions of the segmentation framework are **primary motivation** (the horizontal dimension) and **resources** (the vertical dimension).



Descriptions of the VALS types:

- [Innovators](#)
- [Thinkers](#)
- [Achievers](#)
- [Experiencers](#)
- [Believers](#)
- [Strivers](#)
- [Makers](#)
- [Survivors](#)

Additional info:

- [How individuals relate to a "VALS type."](#)
- [What do we mean by *primary motivation* and *resources*?](#)
- [What's your VALS type? Take the survey to find out!](#)
- [Getting permission to use The VALS Framework \(or other VALS info\) in your own publication.](#)

Primary Motivation

Consumers buy products and services and seek experiences that fulfill their characteristic preferences and give shape, substance, and satisfaction to their lives. An individual's primary motivation determines what in particular about the self or the world is the meaningful core that governs his or her activities. Consumers are inspired by one of three primary motivations: ideals, achievement, and self-expression. Consumers who are primarily motivated by ideals are guided by knowledge and principles. Consumers who are primarily motivated by achievement look for products and services that demonstrate success to their peers. Consumers who are primarily motivated by self-expression desire social or physical activity, variety, and risk.

Resources

A person's tendency to consume goods and services extends beyond age, income, and education. Energy, self-confidence, intellectualism, novelty seeking, innovativeness, impulsiveness, leadership, and vanity play a critical role. These personality traits in conjunction with key demographics determine an individual's resources. Different levels of resources enhance or constrain a person's expression of his or her primary motivation.



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Welcome to VALS™

VALS™ is a marketing and consulting tool that helps businesses worldwide develop and execute more effective strategies. The system identifies current and future opportunities by segmenting the consumer marketplace on the basis of the personality traits that drive consumer behavior. VALS applies in all phases of the marketing process, from new-product development and entry-stage targeting to communications strategy and advertising.

The basic tenet of VALS is that people express their personalities through their behaviors. VALS specifically defines consumer segments on the basis of those personality traits that affect behavior in the marketplace. Rather than looking at what people do and segregating people with like activities, VALS uses psychology to segment people according to their distinct personality traits. The personality traits are the motivation—the cause. Buying behavior becomes the effect—the observable, external behavior prompted by an internal driver.

Explore our Web site: [See what VALS has done](#) for businesses in the past, read about what differentiates [the VALS types](#), purchase our special [VALS handbook designed for the academic community](#), or take the survey to [find out your VALS type!](#)

About VALS™

VALS reflects a real-world pattern that explains the relationship between personality traits and consumer behavior. VALS uses psychology to analyze the dynamics underlying consumer preferences and choices. VALS not only distinguishes differences in motivation, it also captures the psychological and material constraints on consumer behavior.

VALS is based on current personality research into specific components of social behavior. VALS asserts that people express their personalities through their behaviors. People with different personalities engage in different behaviors or exhibit similar behaviors for different reasons.

History

The original VALS system was built by consumer futurist Arnold Mitchell. Mitchell created VALS to explain changing U.S. values and lifestyles in the 1970s. VALS was formally inaugurated as an SRI International product in 1978 and was cited by *Advertising Age* as "one of the ten top market research breakthroughs of the 1980s."

In 1989, VALS was redefined to maximize its ability to predict consumer behavior. A team of experts from SRI International, Stanford University, and the University of California, Berkeley, determined that consumers should be segmented on the basis of enduring personality traits rather than social values that change over time.

By using psychology to analyze and predict consumer preferences and choices, the current VALS system creates an explicit link between personality traits and purchase behavior. The current VALS system is described in depth in [The VALS Segments](#).

MORE ABOUT VALS™

- [The VALS™ Store](#)
- [Permission to use VALS™ Info](#)
- [VALS™ for Education Newsletter](#)
- [Applications of VALS™](#)
- [Representative Projects](#)
- [GeoVALS™](#)
- [Japan-VALS™](#)
- [CAT: Consumer Acceptance of Technology](#)
- [VALS™ Survey](#)



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- [VALS™ for Education Newsletter](#)
Sign up for this periodic e-mail newsletter which announces special VALS materials for academic professionals (for example, the Understanding U.S. Consumers handbook).
- [Applications of VALS™](#)
Read about how VALS can work in real-world applications.
- [Representative Projects](#)
See what VALS has done for businesses in the past.
- [GeoVALS™](#)
Enhance the power of VALS by incorporating geographic statistics.
- [Japan-VALS™](#)
Learn about VALS for the Japanese marketplace.
- [CAT: Consumer Acceptance of Technology](#)
Identify early adopters of new technology and develop strategies for managing an innovation's life cycle.
- [VALS™ Survey](#)
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VALS™: The Psychology of Markets

VALS™ provides product designers and marketers with a lens to view the consumer marketplace—a lens that enables real-world, real-time decisions. Download the VALS brochures (pdf format) for more information about the program.

- [VALS Brochure](#)
- [VALS Framework and Segment Descriptions](#)
- [Family of Products](#)
- [GeoVALS™](#)
- [Applications](#)
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The VALS™ Survey

This online version of the VALS™ questionnaire has been optimized for Netscape Navigator 4.x and Internet Explorer 5.01 or higher. **You need to have Java, Javascript, and cookies active to take the questionnaire.** Please check your browser preferences to ensure that Java, Javascript, and cookies are active. Company and personal firewalls may also interfere with the survey.

AOL users: If you are not aware that these options have been set for your AOL Internet access, please contact AOL technical support for help.

Once you click on the "Take the survey" link below, the survey will open in a separate browser window. **If your computer or Web browser has an automatic pop-up blocker, you may need to turn it off to successfully open the survey.** Answer all the survey questions to the best of your ability, then hit the submit button at the bottom of the survey page. After a few seconds, your browser will be automatically directed to another Web page displaying your results. **Your survey results will not be e-mailed to you.** If you have other questions, please see the [Survey Help/VALS FAQ](#) page.

[Take the survey...](#)



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VALS™ Survey Help

- **"I'm trying to take the survey, but it isn't working."**
The VALS questionnaire has been optimized for Netscape 4.x and Internet Explorer 5.01 or higher. *You need to have Java, Javascript, and cookies active to use the questionnaire.* Please check your browser preferences to ensure that Java, Javascript, and cookies are active. **AOL users:** If you are not aware that these options have been set for your AOL Internet access, please contact AOL technical support for help.
- **"Help, I'm still having troubles taking the survey!"**
If you are having troubles taking the survey and you have cookies, Javascript, and Java turned on, try clearing your cache, restarting your browser, and then resubmitting the survey. If you have firewall software on your computer, such as Norton Personal Firewall, you may need to turn it off before taking the survey. Other application firewalls or company firewalls may need adjustment to allow for the survey to be submitted.
- **"I can't find my results."**
After filling out the survey, hit the submit button at the bottom of the page. (If you cannot see the submit button, you may be using an outdated browser version; please upgrade to a newer web browser.) Processing may take a few seconds, but then you will be redirected to a web page that displays your survey results. Your results will not be e-mailed to you. We do not store your results and can not send them to you. If you took the survey before and can't remember what your results were, you will have to take the survey again.

VALS™ FAQ

Here you can find some additional information about the creation of VALS™ and use of the VALS survey.

1. [What does VALS stand for?](#)
2. [What is VALS used for?](#)
3. [What are primary and secondary VALS types?](#)
4. [Why did you change three of the VALS Segments' names?](#)
5. [Why did you change "self-orientations" to "primary motivations"?](#)
6. [The VALS questionnaire is so short. How do you know about product, service, and activity preferences by VALS segment if you ask only these questions?](#)
7. [How did the VALS questionnaire develop?](#)
8. [What is the idea behind the VALS questionnaire?](#)
9. [How will my answers to the questionnaire be used?](#)
10. [So why are you providing this questionnaire to the public?](#)
11. [Some of the questions in the VALS questionnaire seem overly simplistic. Why?](#)
12. [Why do many of the questions in the VALS questionnaire seem to ask the same thing?](#)
13. [Are you aware that some of the questions in the VALS questionnaire are politically incorrect?](#)
14. [What good is the VALS questionnaire anyway?](#)
15. [What are the weaknesses of the VALS questionnaire?](#)

16. [Where can I find information about VALS2 and/or iVALS?](#)
17. [May I have permission to reprint VALS information in my book or newsletter?](#)
18. [How can I learn more about VALS?](#)

1. What does VALS stand for?

VALS is not currently an abbreviation for anything. The first VALS system was based on social values, and at that time VALS was an acronym for Values and Lifestyles. However, the current VALS system is based on psychological traits instead of social values, so we dropped "Values and Lifestyles" but retained the VALS brand.

2. What is VALS used for?

Marketers use VALS to understand why consumers make the choices they do. The more marketers know about the target, the better they can design messages that resonate with the target. By using VALS to understand the motivations that stimulate consumer behavior (such as buying a product or participating in a loyalty program), marketers increase their chance of cutting through today's advertising clutter.

3. What are primary and secondary VALS types?

An individual's primary VALS type is the group with which the individual has the strongest affinity—the group with which the individual has the most characteristics in common. An individual's secondary VALS type is the group that the individual is next most like. Secondary VALS types can expand the number of groups in the system and enable marketers to target smaller, more niche groups.

4. Why did you change three of the VALS segments' names?

We changed the VALS segment names to make them more intuitive and easier to remember. We now call Actualizers "Innovators" to highlight that these consumers are at the leading edge of change. Fulfilleds are now "Thinkers" because one of their distinguishing characteristics is their rational approach to decision making. Strugglers are now "Survivors" because although they have limited material resources, they do not stress about their limitations but live complacently within their means.

5. Why did you change "self-orientations" to "primary motivations"?

We made this change to emphasize that VALS, unlike demographic segmentations and other marketing tools, measures the *psychological drivers* of consumer behavior. Thinkers and Believers are primarily motivated by ideals. Achievers and Strivers are primarily motivated by achievement. Experiencers and Makers are primarily motivated by self-expression.

6. The VALS questionnaire is so short. How do you know about product, service, and activity preferences by VALS segment if you ask only these questions?

These questions are not the only ones that we ask. The VALS questionnaire on our Web site is our VALS-location battery. Its purpose is to identify a person's VALS type. We gather consumer product, service, and activity data by integrating the VALS questionnaire into larger custom or syndicated questionnaires. We integrate the VALS questionnaire into [Consumer Financial Decisions's MacroMonitor](#) questionnaire, giving us a source of detailed financial behavior by VALS types. We also integrate it into various client-specific questionnaires, and Mediamark Research Inc.'s (MRI's) *Survey of American Consumers*.

7. How did the VALS questionnaire develop?

The VALS battery of attitude items—the VALS questionnaire—is based on a \$1.5 million development effort and several large national surveys of consumer opinion that SRI International, a nonprofit research organization in Menlo Park, California, conducted between 1987 and 1992. These surveys allowed SRI to identify the psychological characteristics and key demographics that have a strong correlation with a large range of consumer preferences about products, activities, and media. The current VALS questionnaire is the third version based on this kind of extensive empirical research, and VALS is now wholly owned and operated by SRI Consulting Business Intelligence (SRIC-BI).

8. What is the idea behind the VALS questionnaire?

The motivations and demographic characteristics that this questionnaire asks about are very strong predictors of a variety of consumer preferences in products, services, and media. The main advantage, therefore, is predictive power: To understand consumers' individual preferences and likely reactions to new products or services, we can ask this relatively short list of questions in place of a very long list of questions about current product, activity, and media choices.

9. How will my answers to the questionnaire be used?

Any information that links your responses to your identity (for example, through your IP address or e-mail address) is strictly confidential. Thus, the connection between who you are and what you enter will never be sold, given away, or otherwise revealed. The only way we will use the information you enter is in aggregation, in which case

the identities of the respondents will be anonymous.

10. So why are you providing this questionnaire to the public?

We plan to use the survey results to understand the Internet population better and to guide the creation of new, Internet-specific research tools. In particular, we are investigating how psychographic systems such as VALS can help online users identify content of interest and how content providers can understand their potential audiences better. The other reason we are providing this questionnaire—actually, the primary reason—is that we think that doing so is an interesting use of the Web and that people might enjoy it.

11. Some of the questions in the VALS questionnaire seem overly simplistic. Why?

The questions measure very basic individual motivations with as little confusion as possible. Therefore, we refer to commonplace, concrete activities or interests, and we ask the questions in straightforward and simple terms.

12. Why do many of the questions in the VALS questionnaire seem to ask the same thing?

Asking repeatedly about an issue provides a more accurate measure of opinions about that issue. For instance, a single item permits an opinion to fall into only 1 of the 4 numbered response categories; with two items, an opinion may fall into 1 of 16 categories (four times four). Asking about the same issue in different ways also reduces the possibility that respondents may misunderstand what we want to know.

13. Are you aware that some of the questions in the VALS questionnaire are politically incorrect?

We are measuring how people think, not prescribing how they should think. Thus, the statements refer to possible attitudes of the person taking the questionnaire, not to the possible attributes or attitudes of other people. If someone finds a question objectionable, he or she should register his or her disagreement by selecting the "mostly disagree" option.

14. What good is the VALS questionnaire anyway?

Using questionnaires such as the VALS questionnaire is one of the primary ways that businesses come to understand consumers' individual preferences, needs, and interests. Imagine, for instance, that a company must design a new kind of software program, knowing only that most of its potential users are between 30 and 40 years old, with a college education. VALS adds the human side of the equation: preferences for control or freedom, tradition or novelty, information or stimulation, hands-on activity or intellectual abstractions.

15. What are the weaknesses of the VALS questionnaire?

People can always provide false answers to this kind of questionnaire, out of malice or curiosity. The more accurate the responses, however, the more trustworthy the results. Added problems arise through the misinterpretations or ambiguities inherent in the use of words. Because no conversation or interactivity exists to clear up possible misinterpretations or ambiguities, the VALS questionnaire asks more than one question about each topic. Finally, words themselves characterize only a small portion of human experience. Future tests may be more sensory and more interactive, much like a multimedia game.

16. Where can I find information about VALS2 and/or iVALS?

VALS2 and iVALS are no longer in use. iVALS is no longer a part of the VALS family of products because it became less applicable as the Internet evolved. Given the explosive growth of the Internet user population, looking at Internet behavior through the standard VALS system is appropriate and sufficient. The VALS types exhibit distinct behaviors on the Internet just as they do in traditional consumer marketplaces.

17. May I have permission to reprint VALS information in my book or newsletter?

SRIC-BI frequently receives requests to reprint information about VALS in books, newsletters, or other publications. VALS materials are copyrighted, and are unavailable for use without express written permission from SRIC-BI. However, we are happy to grant this permission on a case-by-case basis. For details about contacting us to obtain permission, see the [VALS Reprint Permission](#) page.

18. How can I learn more about VALS?

In response to overwhelming demand, the VALS team has published a special handbook—*Understanding U.S. Consumers*—for anyone who is interested in learning a little bit more about the psychological attributes and demographics that underlie consumer decision making. You can purchase *Understanding U.S. Consumers* for \$50.00 (USD) plus shipping charges.

The VALS program periodically makes special materials available to academic professionals. Future materials may include educational videos, presentations, and reports. Please let us know if you would like us to contact you about future products by adding your name to our [VALS for Education](#) mailing list. Subscribers will be notified periodically by e-mail about new VALS materials designed for academics.

We also welcome any questions, inquiries, or comments about VALS at vals@src-bi.com.



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Publications

- [VALS™ Licensee Clients](#)

Publications and tools for standard VALS licensee clients only. Includes the *VALS™ Handbook*, the *Questionnaire Users Manual*, a variety of published VALS reports, and more.

- [Scarborough Research Clients](#)

Publications for Scarborough/VALS clients only. Includes the *VALS™ Handbook for Scarborough Users*, the *Scarborough Research and VALS Information Sheet*, and *Using VALS™ to Design and Deliver Messages*.

- [The VALS™ Store](#)

More information about VALS and consumer behaviors for students, professors, and the general public.



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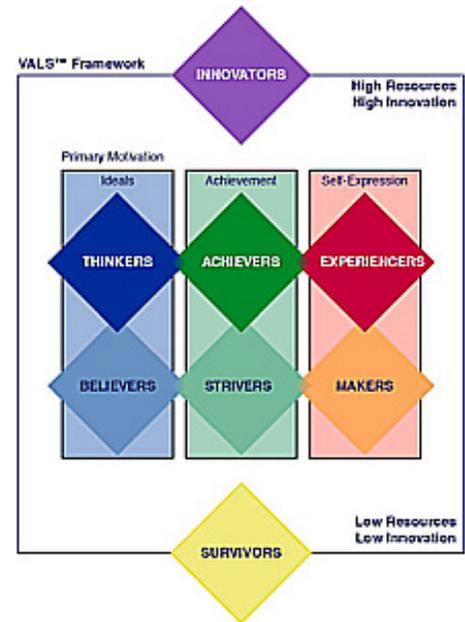


Survivors (formerly Strugglers)

Survivors live narrowly focused lives. With few resources with which to cope, they often believe that the world is changing too quickly. They are comfortable with the familiar and are primarily concerned with safety and security. Because they must focus on meeting needs rather than fulfilling desires, Survivors do not show a strong primary motivation.

Survivors are cautious consumers. They represent a very modest market for most products and services. They are loyal to favorite brands, especially if they can purchase them at a discount.

Looking for more detail about this and other VALS types? Visit the [VALS Store](#) to read about our special handbook designed for students, professors, and anyone else who is interested in learning a little bit more about the psychological attributes and demographics that underlie consumer decision making.



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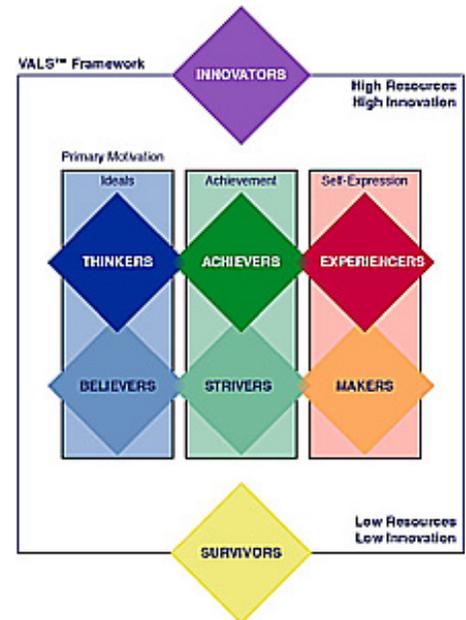
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Makers

Like Experiencers, Makers are motivated by self-expression. They express themselves and experience the world by working on it—building a house, raising children, fixing a car, or canning vegetables—and have enough skill and energy to carry out their projects successfully. Makers are practical people who have constructive skills and value self-sufficiency. They live within a traditional context of family, practical work, and physical recreation and have little interest in what lies outside that context.

Makers are suspicious of new ideas and large institutions such as big business. They are respectful of government authority and organized labor, but resentful of government intrusion on individual rights. They are unimpressed by material possessions other than those with a practical or functional purpose. Because they prefer value to luxury, they buy basic products.



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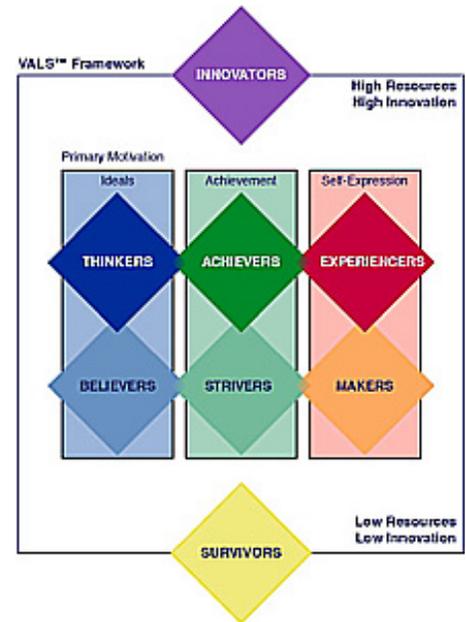


Strivers

Strivers are trendy and fun loving. Because they are motivated by achievement, Strivers are concerned about the opinions and approval of others. Money defines success for Strivers, who don't have enough of it to meet their desires. They favor stylish products that emulate the purchases of people with greater material wealth. Many see themselves as having a job rather than a career, and a lack of skills and focus often prevents them from moving ahead.

Strivers are active consumers because shopping is both a social activity and an opportunity to demonstrate to peers their ability to buy. As consumers, they are as impulsive as their financial circumstance will allow.

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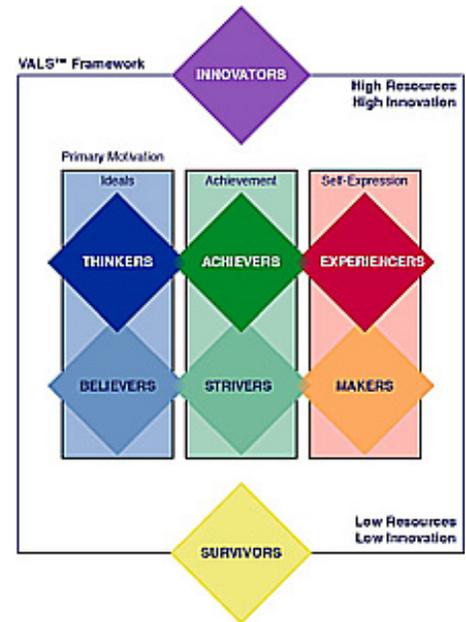


Believers

Like Thinkers, Believers are motivated by ideals. They are conservative, conventional people with concrete beliefs based on traditional, established codes: family, religion, community, and the nation. Many Believers express moral codes that are deeply rooted and literally interpreted. They follow established routines, organized in large part around home, family, community, and social or religious organizations to which they belong.

As consumers, Believers are predictable; they choose familiar products and established brands. They favor American products and are generally loyal customers.

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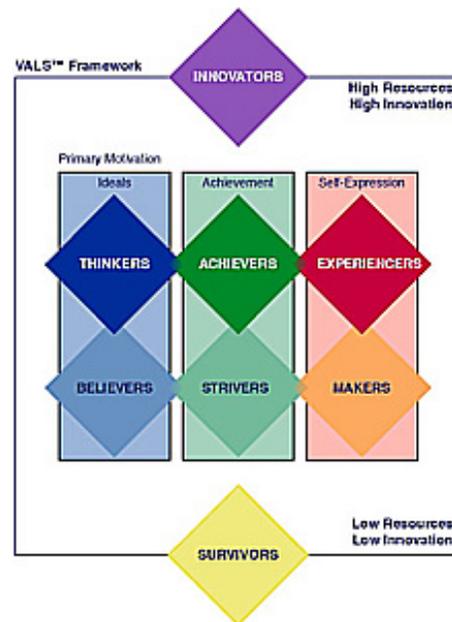


Experiencers

Experiencers are motivated by self-expression. As young, enthusiastic, and impulsive consumers, Experiencers quickly become enthusiastic about new possibilities but are equally quick to cool. They seek variety and excitement, savoring the new, the offbeat, and the risky. Their energy finds an outlet in exercise, sports, outdoor recreation, and social activities.

Experiencers are avid consumers and spend a comparatively high proportion of their income on fashion, entertainment, and socializing. Their purchases reflect the emphasis they place on looking good and having "cool" stuff.

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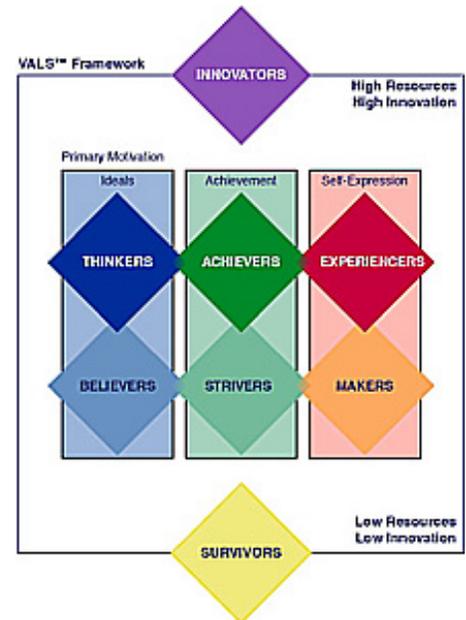


Achievers

Motivated by the desire for achievement, Achievers have goal-oriented lifestyles and a deep commitment to career and family. Their social lives reflect this focus and are structured around family, their place of worship, and work. Achievers live conventional lives, are politically conservative, and respect authority and the status quo. They value consensus, predictability, and stability over risk, intimacy, and self-discovery.

With many wants and needs, Achievers are active in the consumer marketplace. Image is important to Achievers; they favor established, prestige products and services that demonstrate success to their peers. Because of their busy lives, they are often interested in a variety of time-saving devices.

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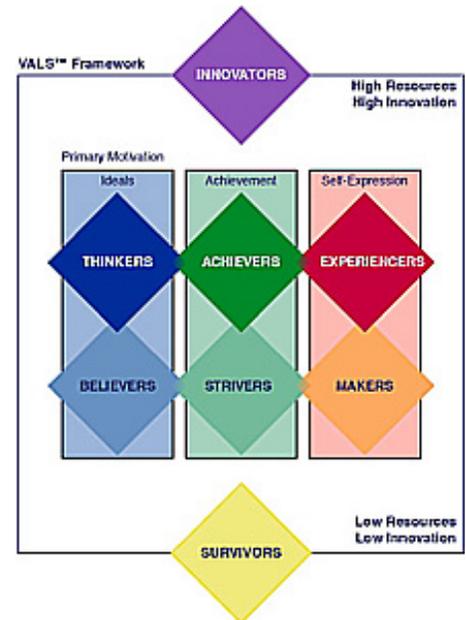


Thinkers (formerly Fulfilleds)

Thinkers are motivated by ideals. They are mature, satisfied, comfortable, and reflective people who value order, knowledge, and responsibility. They tend to be well educated and actively seek out information in the decision-making process. They are well-informed about world and national events and are alert to opportunities to broaden their knowledge.

Thinkers have a moderate respect for the status quo institutions of authority and social decorum, but are open to consider new ideas. Although their incomes allow them many choices, Thinkers are conservative, practical consumers; they look for durability, functionality, and value in the products they buy.

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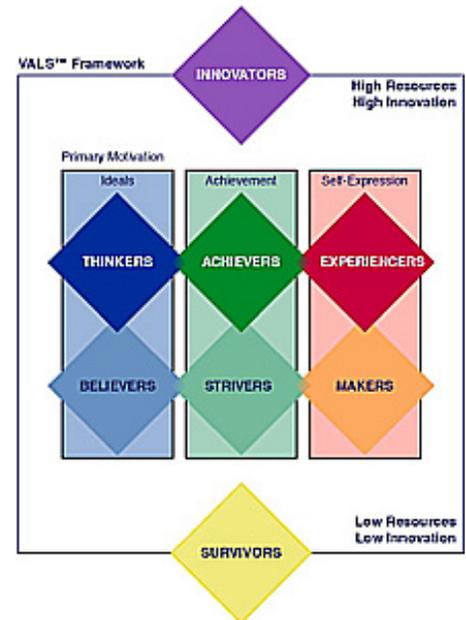
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Innovators (formerly Actualizers)

Innovators are successful, sophisticated, take-charge people with high self-esteem. Because they have such abundant resources, they exhibit all three primary motivations in varying degrees. They are change leaders and are the most receptive to new ideas and technologies. Innovators are very active consumers, and their purchases reflect cultivated tastes for upscale, niche products and services.

Image is important to Innovators, not as evidence of status or power but as an expression of their taste, independence, and personality. Innovators are among the established and emerging leaders in business and government, yet they continue to seek challenges. Their lives are characterized by variety. Their possessions and recreation reflect a cultivated taste for the finer things in life.



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Your VALS™ Type in Context

Each of us is an individual. Yet each of us also has personality traits, attitudes, or needs that are similar to those of other people. VALS™ measures the underlying psychological motivations and resources that many consumers share that predict each group's typical choices as consumers. On this basis, we present you with information about your VALS type.

You may find that some of the details in your VALS description are not like you at all. But don't judge too quickly. The details that are literally unlike you may identify a basic tendency that you express in some other way. Your VALS type implies that you will share many attributes with others of the same type. It does not imply that you will resemble them in all your behavior. The description that we provide you should form an overall portrait that, as a whole, reflects you as an individual fairly well.



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VALS™ Fact Sheet

Before sending us the proposed text of your publication, please check your facts against the following list. It includes several important details about VALS that people frequently question or misunderstand.

- VALS, originally developed by SRI International (a nonprofit research organization in Menlo Park, California), is now owned and operated by SRI Consulting Business Intelligence (SRIC-BI).
- VALS is a consumer psychographic segmentation system because it is based on psychological characteristics and several demographics that correlate with consumer behavior—hence, psychographics.
- The VALS battery of attitude items—the VALS questionnaire—is based on a \$1.5 million development

effort and several large national surveys of consumer opinion that SRI International conducted between 1987 and 1992. These surveys allowed SRI to identify the psychological characteristics and key demographics that have a strong correlation with a large range of consumer preferences about products, activities, and media. The current VALS questionnaire is the third version based on this kind of extensive empirical research, and VALS is now wholly owned and operated by SRIC-BI.

- Clients often ask how we can know about product, service, and activity preferences from the short VALS questionnaire (see the questionnaire at www.sric-bi.com/VALS/presurvey.shtml). The answer is that these questions are not the only ones that we ask. The VALS questionnaire on our Web site is our VALS-location battery. Its purpose is to identify a person's VALS type. We gather consumer product, service, and activity data by integrating the VALS questionnaire into larger custom or syndicated questionnaires. We integrate the VALS questionnaire into SRIC-BI's **Consumer Financial Decisions MacroMonitor** questionnaire, giving us a source of detailed financial behavior by VALS types. We also integrate it into various client-specific questionnaires, and Mediamark Research Inc.'s (MRI's) *Survey of American Consumers*.
- VALS abbreviates nothing. The first VALS system was based on social values, and at the time, VALS was an acronym for Values and Lifestyles. However, the current VALS system is based on psychological traits instead of social values, so we dropped "Values and Lifestyles" but retained the VALS brand.
- "VALS 2" and "iVALS" are no longer in use.
- VALS products include U.S. VALS™, **Japan-VALS™** (also, JVALS™), U.K. VALS™, and **GeoVALS™** (which identifies the concentration of the VALS types by U.S. zip code or block group).
- In response to overwhelming demand, the VALS team published a special handbook—***Understanding U. S. Consumers***—for anyone who is interested in learning more about VALS and the psychological attributes and demographics that underlie consumer decision making. You can purchase *Understanding U. S. Consumers* for \$50.00 plus shipping charges on SRIC-BI's web site.
- You can determine your "VALS type" by completing [the VALS questionnaire](#) online.
- For answers to other frequently asked questions about VALS and the VALS survey, see our [Survey Help and VALS FAQ page](#).



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