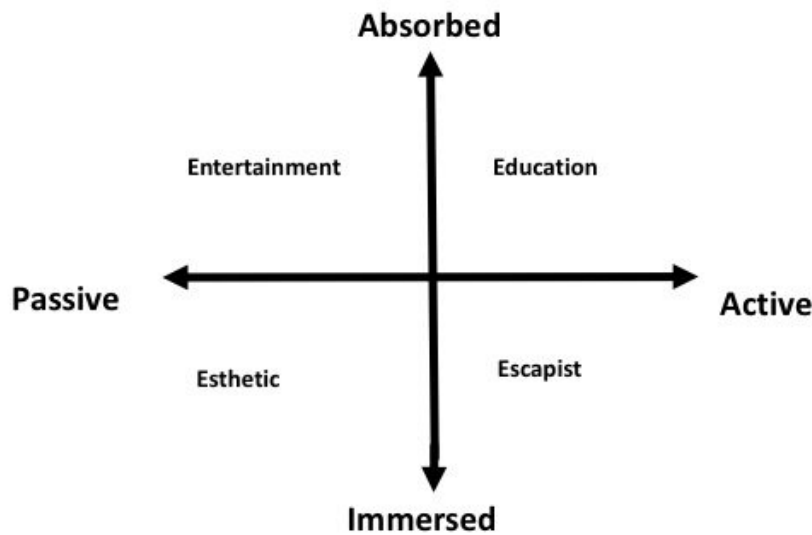


# The landscape market has a category for any activity level

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The Experience Realms presented by Pine, B.J., and James H. Gilmore. *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999.

Theoretical framework for experience types, shown in each quadrant, derived from engaging with products in two dimensions. Credit: B.J. Pine and J.H. Gilmore. *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*. Harvard Business School Press, 1999

A new study produced as a collaboration between Michigan State and Texas A&M universities assessed the overall market condition for landscape plants using consumers' activity level as rated with the use of

an active/passive continuum.

Bridget Behe, Melinda Knuth, Charles Hall, Patricia Huddleston, and R. Thomas Fernandez gauged that a consumer's activity level, or the quantifiable amount of action/interaction that person has with a given product, can be an indication of interest in a product category and influence purchases.

The researchers have fully explained their procedures and the consequences of their findings to the Green Industry in their article "Sit Back or Dig In: The Role of Activity Level in Landscape Market Segmentation" available in *HortScience*, published by the American Society for Horticultural Science.

Markets are rarely homogenous, and market segmentation can be a viable means of efficiently and profitably reaching different consumer groups. But for the customers of ornamental [plants](#), finding a common denominator among reasons to purchase is not as simple as in other industries. Some suggest that the most essential services provided by residential landscapes are cultural, as they promote human mental and physical well-being and are places for recreation and gathering with family and friends.

The benefits of interacting both actively and passively with [ornamental plants](#) are numerous, indicating that a person's motivation and attitudes may not be the only attributes for market segmentation.

Approximately 75% of Americans live in [urban areas](#) where an estimated 41% of the land area is residential—half of which is primarily vegetation. The amount of residential area used for yard or landscape depends on socioeconomic characteristics, housing density, and property size. But how individuals engage in and derive enjoyment from processes and products potentially influences their activity level and

purchases.

The researchers used an X-Y Axis template proposed by Pine and Gilmore in the book "The Experience Economy" for their theoretical framework that would create four different quadrants. One axis would label the graduating degrees of activity/passivity. And the intersecting axis would label the graduating degrees of absorption/immersion in the activity.

Actively immersed experiences were classified as escapist experiences. Passively immersed experiences were classified as more aesthetic experiences in which a person may not interact with the environment but rather merely view the scene.

Actively absorptive experiences were labeled educational. Passively absorptive experiences were considered entertainment. Both active and passive plant interaction are proven to promote human health and well-being. But the continuum contributes to an impact on plant purchases.

Behe commented that "understanding activity level truly can help many business better target products, services, and experiences to their customers. I'm surprised it's not been done before."

With data collected from more than 1000 U.S. residents, the researchers used cluster analyses to investigate the relationship between plant purchases and the type and extent of activities engaged in with those products. Anything from types of vegetables to grow in one's garden to types of tools one might use on various landscaping projects can be reasonably applied, with an admirable rate of accuracy, to continuum.

For plant producers, wholesalers, and retailers, the knowledge ascertained for this study can be used to market plants more effectively to consumers, to respond to customers more efficiently. The Active

segment will likely be a better target for messaging about a wide variety of plants and engaging in the landscape in a wider variety of ways. If the Passive group feels landscaping is more of an obligation, it would likely take a significant marketing effort to increase their spending. However, the Passive group may well prove to be a rich target for services, to make their properties aesthetically pleasing for them to appreciate.

**More information:** Melinda Knuth et al, Sit Back or Dig In: The Role of Activity Level in Landscape Market Segmentation, *HortScience* (2019). [DOI: 10.21273/HORTSCI14158-19](https://doi.org/10.21273/HORTSCI14158-19)

Provided by American Society for Horticultural Science

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