TEACHING GUIDE

The Stadium of Validation

How other people shape what we buy



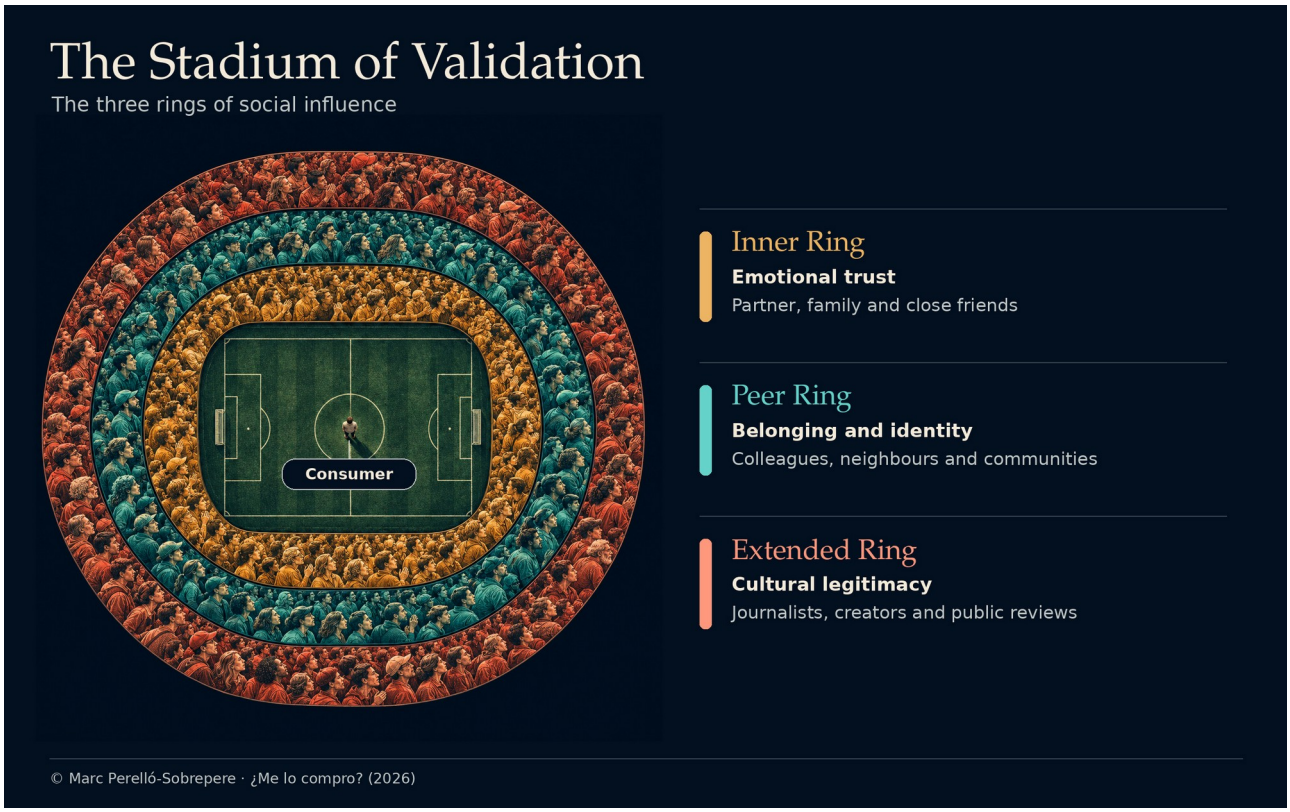
Imagine you have found the car you want. You like the way it drives, it fits your budget, and you can already picture yourself behind the wheel. Then you get home. Your partner asks how much it costs to maintain. A colleague tells you they have just read a review of the model. Within a few hours, a purchase that seemed settled is open again.

The Stadium of Validation helps you make sense of that conversation. The person making the decision stands on the pitch. In the stands are people who can reassure the buyer, help them picture how the purchase fits their life, or raise an objection. Look at the stands and you see reasons a buyer profile alone would miss.

Marc Perelló-Sobrepere · ¿Me lo compro?

THE MODEL

Who is in the stands?



Inner Ring. Partners, family and close friends sit nearest the pitch. Their opinions matter because the purchase becomes part of their lives too. Think of the person who asks about maintenance and knows how you use the car every day.

Peer Ring. The middle tier is for people who share expectations and social codes with you. The model you drive can send a message in the office car park before you tell anyone why you chose it.

Extended Ring. The highest tier is for people who shape public conversation. A motoring journalist, a creator or other drivers' reviews give people ways to compare models and bring particular brands into the conversation.

The same person can sit in different tiers depending on the purchase. A colleague might share the codes of your professional group. If they are also a close friend, their opinion may carry weight because you trust them. Ask yourself why their opinion matters for this decision.

Before, during and after a purchase

The first time you think about the car may be well before you set foot in the dealership. Perhaps you saw it in a review and later recognised it in the office car park. By the time you start looking, some brands are already familiar.

Before looking

Conversations and public references make some options come to mind first. A friend’s comment can point you towards a brand you had overlooked.

While choosing

Once you start comparing, practical questions come up. Will the luggage fit? How much fuel does it use? What will it cost to maintain? That is when a conversation at home can reopen a choice that seemed settled.

After buying

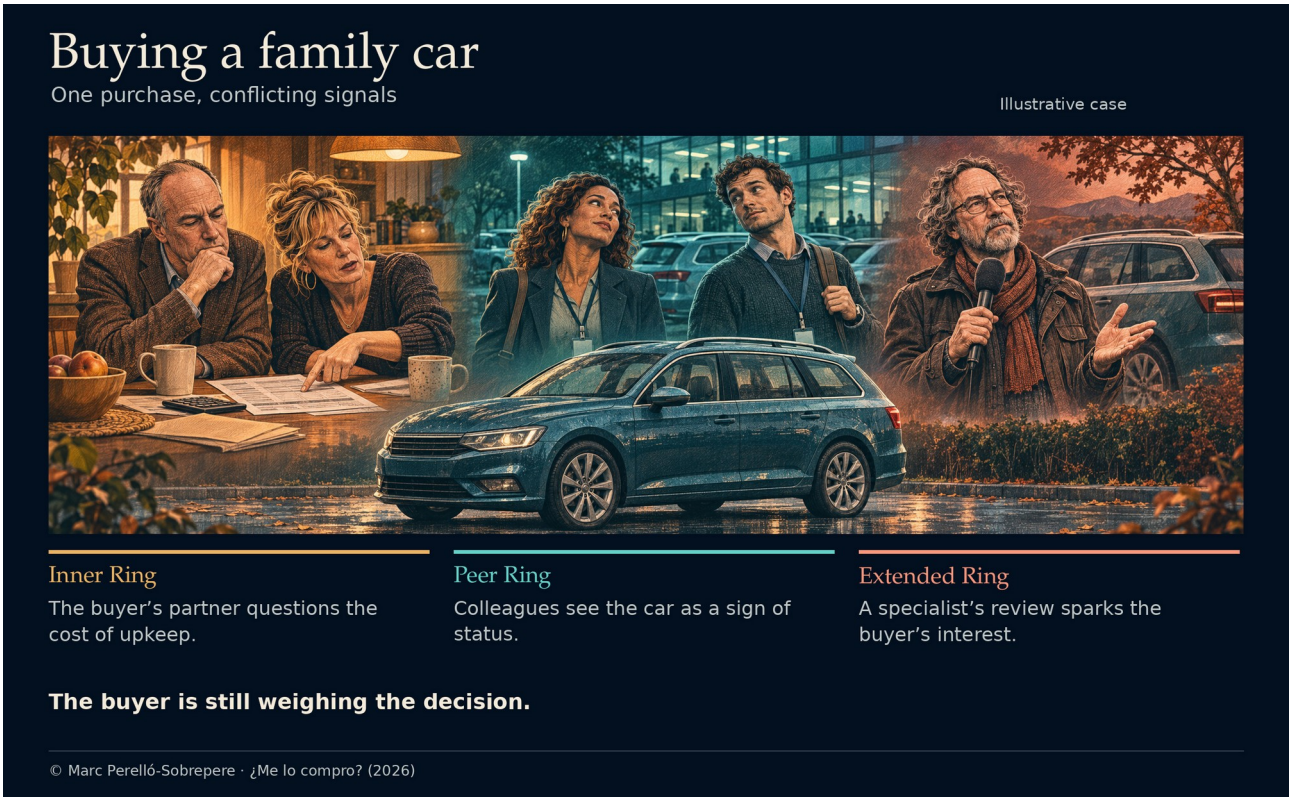
A colleague asks how the car is going. If you tell her the boot has made family trips easier or that maintenance cost more than expected, your experience becomes part of someone else’s decision.

A conversation at home, a review and a message in a group chat can echo one another. Platforms and algorithms affect which comments become visible or resurface. As those comments circulate, they connect people across the three tiers.

Class question. Has someone ever changed your mind about a purchase you thought was settled? Where would that person sit in your stadium?

THE CAR EXAMPLE

Why the decision is still open



A specialist review sparks interest. At work, the model is associated with a certain status or way of life. At home, someone asks about the cost. Each reaction introduces a different consideration, and all three are in play at once.

If you were the brand, you could publish a clear breakdown of maintenance costs or offer a test drive that helps the family see how the car fits their routine. The response depends on who raises the objection and what they need to know to judge the purchase.

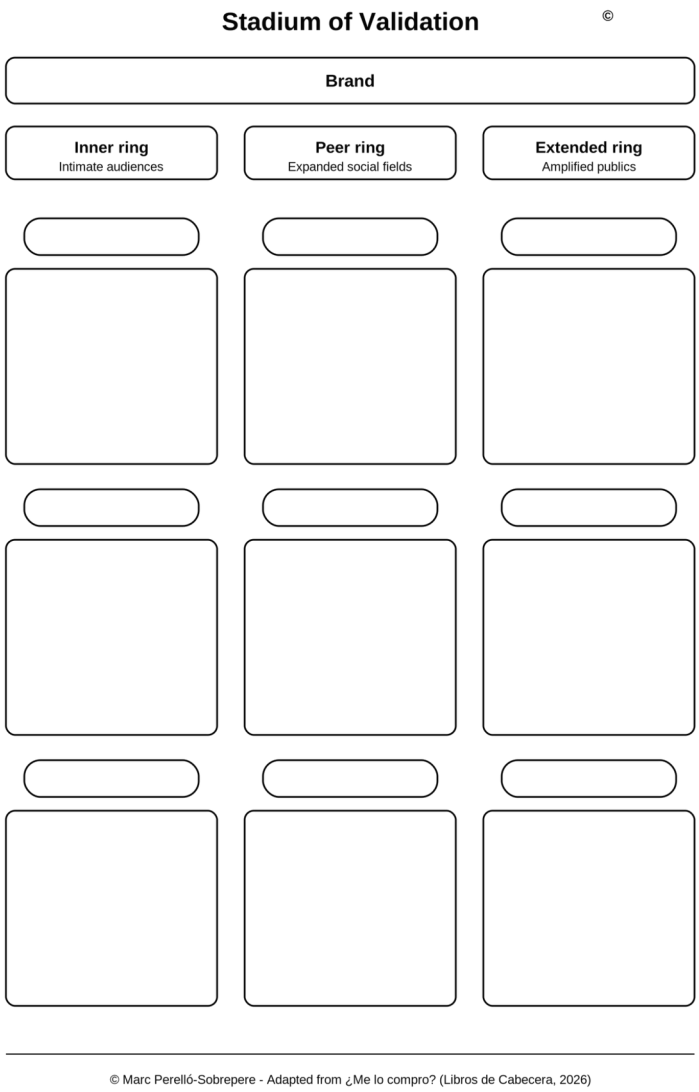
Try a different purchase. For a hotel, a travel companion may hold up the booking because of the location. With cereal, children may decide that a particular box never comes home again. Whose opinion matters most in each case, and what would that person ask?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Choose a brand and fill in the worksheet

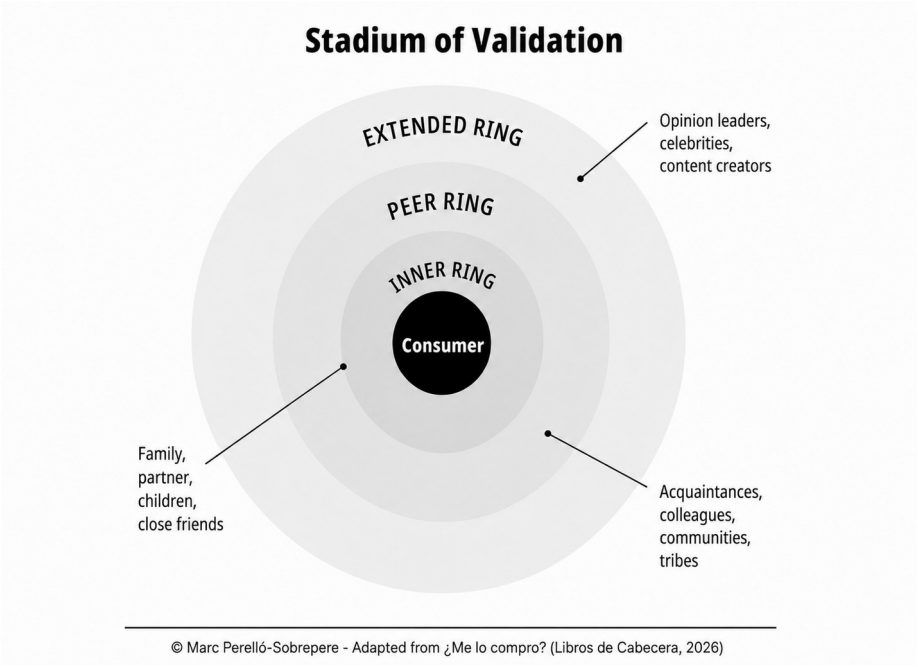
1. Choose a brand. Write it at the top and specify what the buyer is considering.

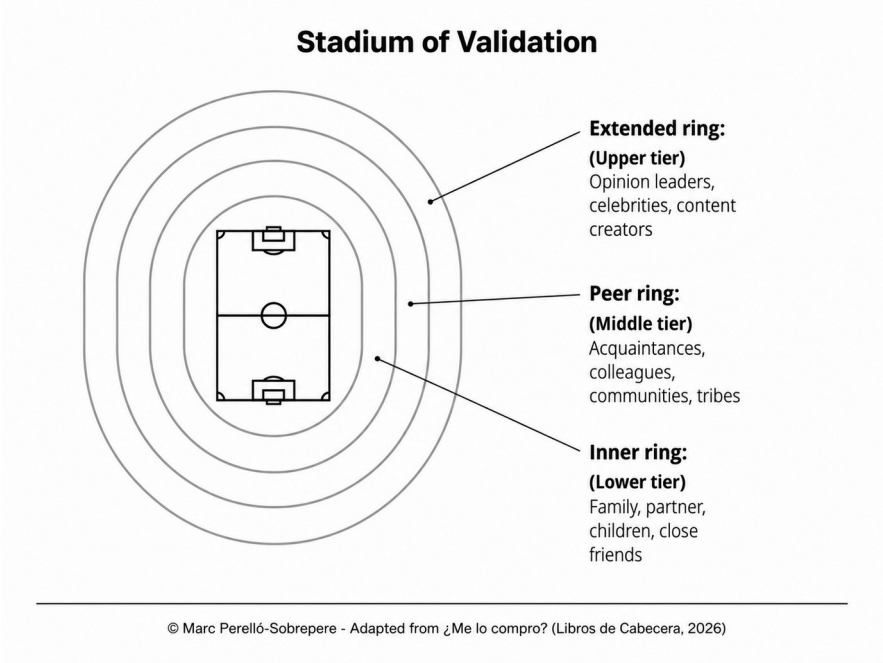
2. Fill in the stadium. Place the people and groups who matter in the appropriate ring. In each box, write what that person does or says to support or hold up the purchase.



When you share your work, point out who would carry the most weight and explain why.

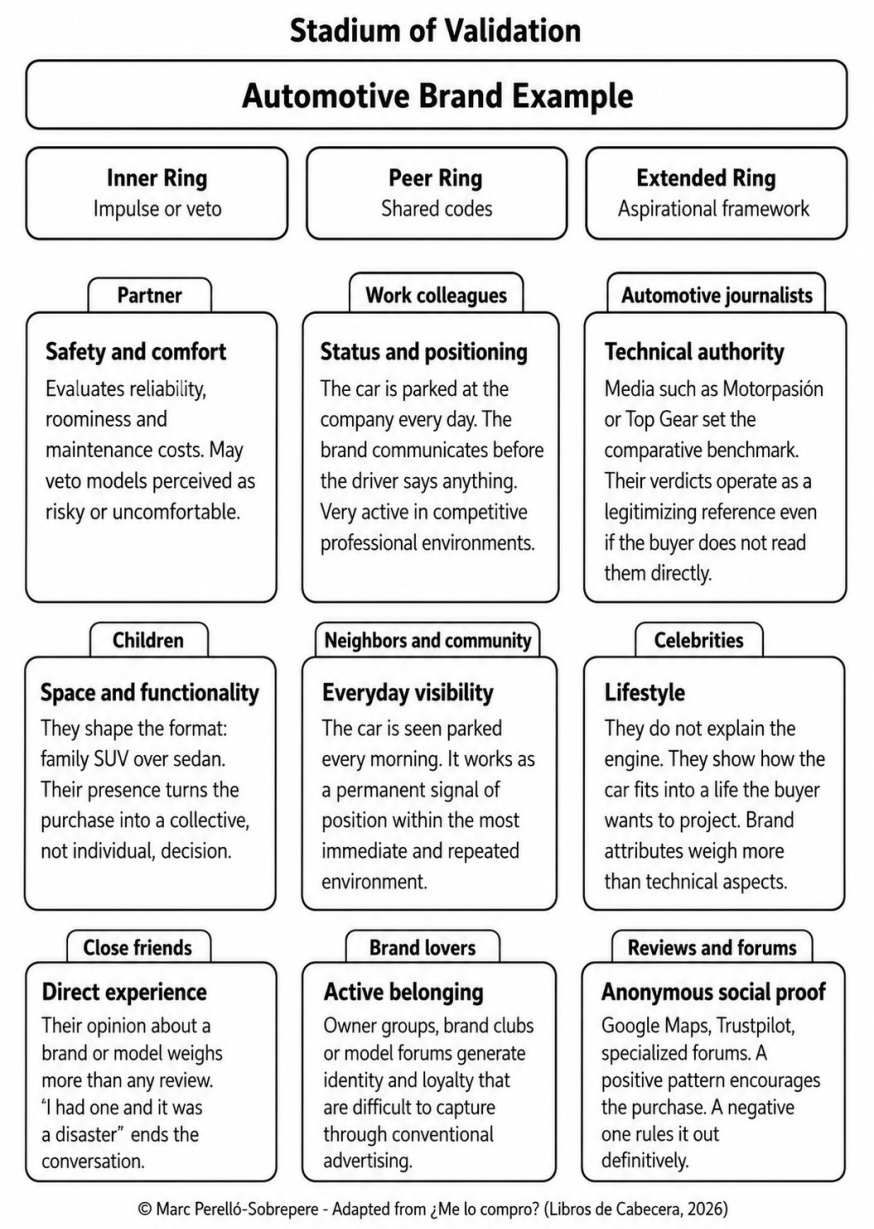
The consumer and the stands





PRINTABLE EXAMPLE

The stadium around a family car purchase



Reading

Perelló-Sobrepere, M. (2026). ¿Me lo compro? La realidad del consumo, la influencia social y el papel de las marcas. Libros de Cabecera.

Perelló-Sobrepere, M. (2027). The stadium of validation: A framework for understanding modern consumer decision-making in the age of social media and algorithms. Journal of Digital & Social Media Marketing, 14(3).

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