



Practical Digital Marketing and **AI Psychology**



How to Gain Online Consumer Trust and Sales
Using Technologies and Psychology

J. Jonathan Gabay



Practical Digital Marketing and AI Psychology

Practical Digital Marketing and AI Psychology explores how successful brands utilise both psychology and cutting-edge artificial intelligence technologies to maximise digital marketing strategies.

Psychology has long been a foundation for successful marketing strategies, and evolving AI technologies are opening up new opportunities for marketers to help brands build trust and loyalty online. In this exceptional book, award-winning writer Jonathan Gabay delves into fascinating psychological digital marketing techniques and concepts, explaining the practical psychology and science you need to lift your marketing career to the next level. Gabay explores how new technologies can be harnessed to increase their impact significantly. The book provides practical tips and contemporary best-practice examples, including prompt engineering, the psychology behind mission statements and logo design, gamification, the possibilities and pitfalls of social media, among many more areas that will ensure your brand is trusted, valued, and desired.

This definitive book is perfect for marketing students up to PhD level and digital marketing, PR, and sales professionals looking for a fascinating, compelling read, packed with ideas and examples, that combines academic excellence with practical advice – all written and presented in a highly accessible style.

J. Jonathan Gabay is an award-winning copywriter, author of 15 books, an international podcaster, keynote speaker, and senior university lecturer. He regularly appears on news channels including BBC, CNN, SKY News, Al Jazeera, and The Times (Radio Network). His digital psychology courses are delivered at major universities, as well as for official trade organisations, such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing and DMANC (Direct Marketing Association of North California). He has also devised and delivered highly successful graduate-level programmes for universities throughout Europe and advises major educational institutions on the use of AI.

“This book does a magnificent job of fusing the latest – and oldest – thinking in neuroscience with the best of modern digital marketing.”

Rory Sutherland, *Vice Chairman, Ogilvy*

“Interested in how we got here and where we might go next? Gabay blends the history of science, business, culture, and more with insights into the evolution of neuroscience for more thoughtful marketing and communications.”

Ben Page, *Chief Executive Officer, Ipsos*

“As a Unilever graduate and a Persil brand manager, I was trained that great brands never forgot F, P, & E – Function, Psychology, and Emotion. It is perhaps one of the weaknesses of modern marketing that these three pillars of brand equity are forgotten or treated unequally. Indeed, I needed a real understanding of the importance of psychology to solve many of the strategic problems I have faced over my career. To this day, I remember my lessons in psychophysics and its application to the dishwasher market and was able to apply this to an explanation of Castrol’s success in engine lubricants. Basically though, if brand marketing is forging a relationship with people, it ought to be basic foundational training to understand the relevant psychology. This book makes that clear and is thus a very useful contribution to the academic marketing bookshelf.”

Jane Frost CBE, *Chief Executive Officer, Market Research Society*

“This book is a welcome and timely guide to the changing marketing landscape created by AI tools. It gives a grand tour of the issues, benefits, pitfalls, and dilemmas unfolding.”

Gerald Ashley, *Advisor and Author on Risk and Uncertainty,
Managing Director, St. Mawgan & Co Limited*

“Understanding and applying the power of AI is vital to the future career of each and every marketer. Jonathan Gabay is your ideal guide to the new frontier of neuromarketing, who in *Practical Digital Marketing and AI Psychology* will step you through how generative AI, including ChatGPT, can be used to make brands more compelling and boost conversions.”

Dave Chaffey, *Winning Marketing Author, Founder, Smart Insights*

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With thanks

Once you stop exploring depths, you stop scaling heights.



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Author's note



Psychology has long been recognised as a vital “P” in the marketing mix.

With AI dramatically transforming the modern marketer’s role, a nuanced grasp of human behaviour and motivation has become more crucial than ever.

This approach applies classical and contemporary psychology to today’s fast-moving digital marketing needs.

As a sophisticated digital marketer, you stand at the vanguard of a new era – armed with the ability to analyse customer data and identify behavioural patterns as never before.

Yet, while AI uncannily mimics processes and dramatically improves efficiencies, it lacks true AGI (artificial general intelligence). For example, currently, it cannot fully experience the multi-layered facets of life as you experience. It cannot feel joy, disappointment, yearning, love, hate, passion, cynicism, optimism, anger, remorse, empathy, compassion, surprise, stress, humour, wonder, courage, calmness, jealousy, sadness,

shame, pride, faith, fear, disgust tenderness – along with countless more interconnected threads of human experiences that form the colourful tapestry of life that is uniquely you.

As we push further into the 21st century, a brand's fundamental message (content) remains consistent. What changes is how we connect with consumers.

Microtargeting, for example, is a game changer, pinpointing individual preferences through their online behaviour to deliver almost one-on-one content.

Marketers and, perhaps worryingly, political campaigners are getting sharper, tuning their messages to individual profiles based on deeper psychological insights, delivering them at the right moment and place.

Beyond content alone, it's about creating a community, making each person feel part of a trusted group that understands and appreciates them. That's the new context for data-driven, psychology-based branding – it's personal, timely, and all about belonging.

Whether studying digital marketing or psychology at university or implementing strategies in the workplace, this book is written with you in mind.

Join me as I share a vision of coupling data-driven tools with timeless wisdom around human nature and motivation. Embracing this approach, I trust it will lead to your greater understanding of the human condition and ethical innovation that promises to enrich your career and consumers' lives.

Enjoy.

Jonathan Gabay
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Foreword

Psychology has always been pivotal in informing successful marketing strategies, and when partnered with cutting-edge technology, its impact can be amplified significantly. With the adoption of AI becoming more widespread, this exploration of digital marketing, psychology, and the ethical use of AI could not come at a more critical juncture.

In addition to revealing how psychology can be responsibly and practically applied in digital marketing, this book considers how marketers can use artificial intelligence to support and extend existing communications.

By adding prompt engineering to their skill sets, new generations of marketers and communications professionals are opening exciting opportunities not just for themselves but significantly for the brands they represent, the consumers they serve, and society at large.

As a Fellow of The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and a highly experienced course director, Jonathan is able to clearly articulate the practical aspects of AI in areas such as copywriting whilst sharing knowledge and insight that helps delegates remain ahead of the learning curve; this ensures delegates can continue to be indispensable assets for both established brand leaders as well as innovative start-ups.

CIM members adhere to an exacting code of professional conduct. In his role as a CIM course director, Jonathan is well versed in contextualising the importance of ethical conduct and integrity in marketing as well as best practices to those he teaches on behalf of CIM.

As this book demonstrates, one of the keys to successfully using generative AI marketing is to employ intelligent, highly innovative critical thinking and conduct rigorous quality assessments. This results in keenly streamlined processes that help marketers deliver targeted, valuable content.

In terms of psychology and digital marketing, today's consumers actively seek brands that demonstrate authenticity, honesty, and transparency. This trinity of good practices has become indispensable in building consumer trust. Whilst increasingly customers may be open to data being processed by AI systems, vigilant businesses remain transparent about these practices.

AI is altering the traditional marketing and communications landscape. Studying carefully researched and clearly explained books like this is vital to remaining

abreast of the latest developments, best practices, privacy concerns, and potential legislation.

The fusion of classical psychology and practical ethics lies at the core of effective and responsible digital marketing in the AI era. By embracing such principles, and with this book as your guide, marketers can address business and consumer needs whilst harnessing the full potential of AI technology, safeguarding customer trust, and maintaining brand integrity.

James Sutton
Strategy and Commercial Director, Chartered Institute of Marketing

Log-in

Like the Internet, this book is interconnected. The sections and chapters support each other.

Forethought sets out the pieces of the jigsaw. As a time traveller, you are invited to collect pieces from history that complete a picture explaining how current cultural and online perceptions have been shaped over a long collective past. These cornerstones form how we interact with and imbue meaning to digital communications.

You are now ready to progress to the next chapter of what I hope will be an illuminating journey.

Chapter 1 explores science's understanding of the brain's biology, leading to how thought patterns relate to the web and meaning. This provides context to techniques covered throughout the book.

Next up, a specially extended Chapter 2 thoroughly explores AI's good, bad, and ugly and its practicalities, affecting commerce, politics, education, and beyond.

Chapter 2 is divided into five parts:

Ai Am

That asks whether what we experience online or offline accurately reflects our true selves.

The storm ahead

That explores the hype and subsequent paranoia surrounding AI.

Deeper perspectives

That considers how AI is revolutionising every aspect of how people work, think, and play.

Ready?

That explores leaders' roles and responsibilities in ensuring AI improves consumer, student, and all-around experiences.

Jump!

That shows the practical benefits of AI for marketers, including how to write an AI creative brief and become a highly sought-after prompt engineer. This includes a list of 50 prompts for you to try.

As with the other chapters, Chapter 2 informs the lessons that follow in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 is about the inner YOU – the Self – a work in progress from the day an infant first presses a toy keyboard to the moment you swipe your latest notification on WhatsApp.

Chapter 4 picks up the story, exploring Freud's Id, Ego and Superego as applied to digital marketing, along with Jung's Shadow about social media.

Chapter 5 immerses you in the fascinating world of online branding. It reveals how to establish profound marketing communications with personas, how political brands exploit rhetoric, and why Maslow's hierarchy of needs is ready for a makeover.

Chapter 6 continues to update established classical marketing formulae, making them directly relevant for today's savvy, connected consumers. It lifts the lid on sociological and psychologic controversial areas like gamification, suggesting novel ways to build trusted and profitable connections.

By crafting offers that appeal to consumers' beliefs and values, Chapter 7 reveals how to responsibly sell online by addressing the consumer's ME drive.

Chapter 8 is dedicated to understanding the business and psychological implications of the fast-moving world of social media. Delving deep, it tackles social identity, trolls, social videos, and user-generated content – helping you implement carefully considered techniques designed to lift your AI and social content to a higher level.

Chapter 9 is your go-to chapter, summarising and adding more theories, cognitive biases, and heuristic principles.

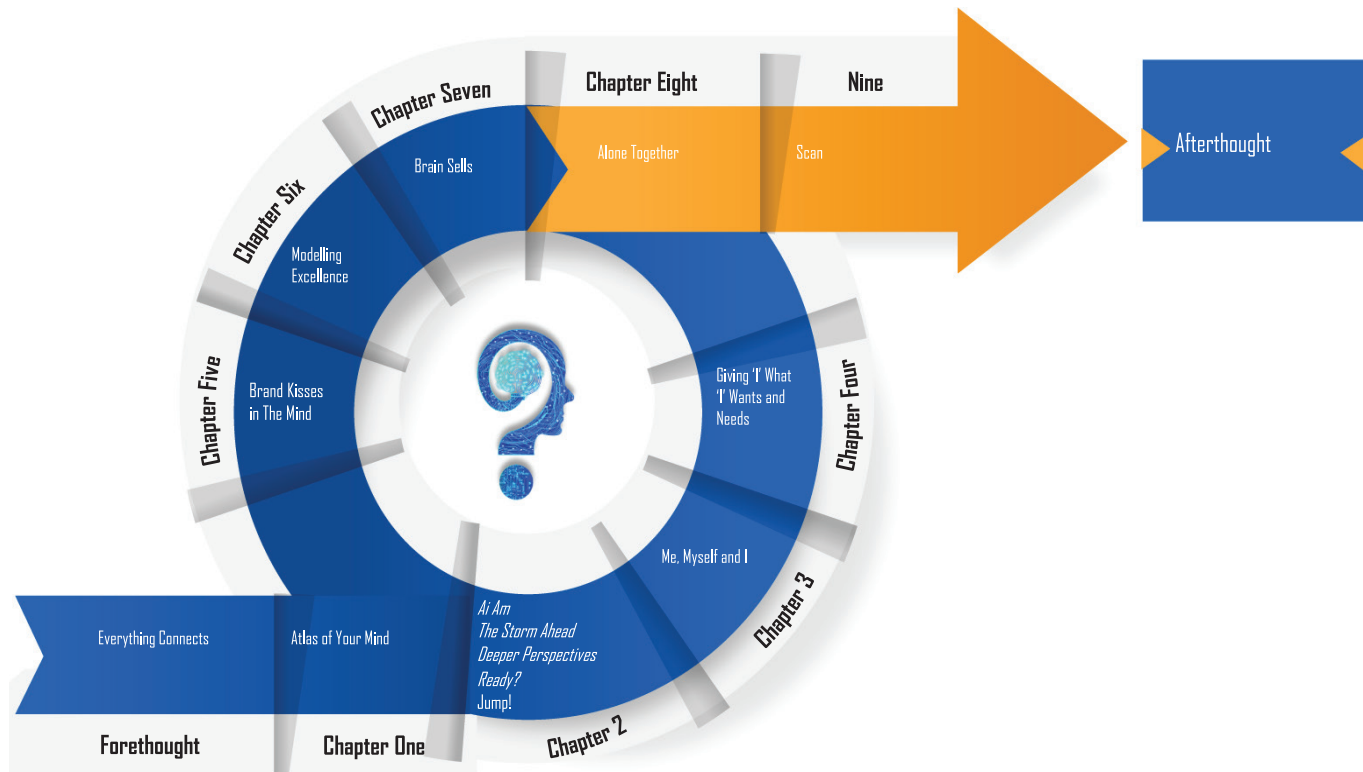
Finally, the afterthought is a crucial lesson that is best appreciated once you have studied the earlier sections.

The book has been written with MA, PhD, and working digital marketing and psychology professionals in mind.

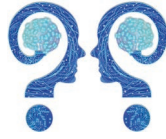
Enjoy.

JJG

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Book overview



Forethought

Everything connects

Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change.

—Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Digital marketing psychology and maturing technologies like AI are part of a rich timeline. It makes sense to understand how key historical moments have influenced modern thinking, communications, marketing, and tools to fully grasp how to influence consumers and work with new technologies.

The following “drone ride” across the chasm of time reveals some of the most important developments that have helped shape the world of culture, technology, politics, advertising and PR, the sciences, arts, and communications.

Every generation uses the available media to tell stories involving the powerful and powerless, the good and bad, early adopters and the late majority.

Disparate pieces of history fit together to create an ever-growing picture of progress in managing consumer perceptions and brand communications.

Just as in psychology, by standing back to take in a bigger picture, this introduction shows how the past can help you better manage the present and future.

While technologies and fashions change, people always share hopes, worries, and ambitions. Realise that you are at the start of a remarkable journey, appreciating and serving others through gaining a deeper understanding of your past, present, and future Self.

YOU’VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

The road leading to “you” is pitted with pivotal revolutionary moments in the arts, sciences, culture, and technologies, all delivering you to this > **word**.

The first Industrial Revolution: (coal – from 1765) transformed the economy from agriculture to industry. Processes were automated. Products were mass manufactured.

The second Industrial Revolution: (gas – from 1870), which witnessed the invention of the combustion engine, was buoyed with gas, electricity, and oil. Steel- and chemical-based products entered the market. Communication technology matured from the telegraph to the telephone. Planes took to the skies and cars to the road.

The third Industrial Revolution (electronics and nuclear – 1969) ramped up the production of micro-circuits that automated computers, production lines, and electronics, which helped open the doors to space expeditions, research, and biotechnology.

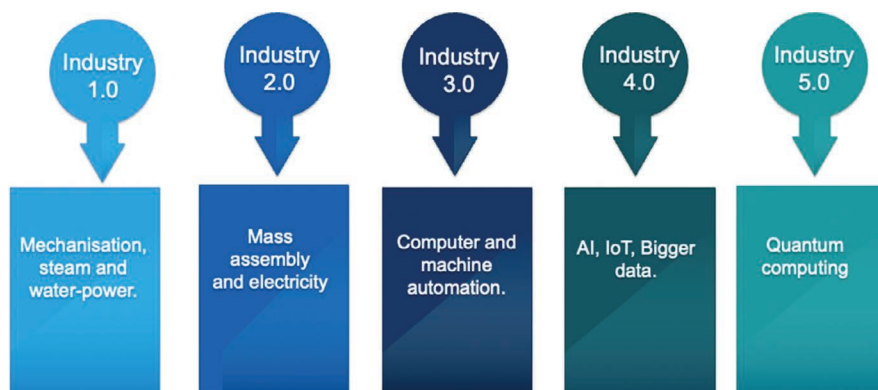
We are currently in the fourth Industrial Revolution: the Internet and renewable energy – from 2000). As climate change sharpens its teeth, there is an 11th-hour push for renewable energy. At the same time, digital technology delivers greater control and connection at work and home. AI (artificial intelligence) further streamlines traditional processes, saving time and labour.

The interconnected society is here to stay. It potentially liberates people in astonishing ways never previously experienced. Instead of grey elders in dusty libraries, promising young start-ups using AI and other technologies carry the torch, lighting up every aspect of businesses, from creating virtual retail showrooms to building connected workplaces, classes, and more.

In just a few years, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and Facebook have amassed at least 1200 petabytes (PB) between them (1 terabyte [TB] is 1000 gigabytes [GB] (BBC Science Focus). Yet, that pales in significance compared to humankind's history stretching back around 6 million years. During that time, psychology has illuminated why people think and act as they do – whether in a cave, on the street, in homes and offices, or whilst interacting with their freshly generated AI avatar.

Next stop, Industry 5.0.

Quantum computing will harness the principles of quantum mechanics to process information in a fundamentally different way than classical computers. Unlike classical computers, which rely on bits representing data as 0 or 1, quantum computers use quantum bits or *qubits*, which can exist simultaneously in multiple states. This allows quantum computers to perform complex calculations and solve problems much faster than classical computers.



Industry 1.0–5.0

Quantum computing will supercharge data analysis and processing, enabling marketers to gain deeper insights and make more informed decisions in real time.

For example, quantum computing will significantly impact search engine optimisation (SEO). Traditionally, SEO relies on algorithms that analyse keyword relevance and backlinks, but quantum computing will process these algorithms at an unprecedented speed, allowing for more accurate and dynamic SEO strategies.

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED, INCLUDING YOU-TO-YOU

Culture, the arts, civilisation, the sciences, humanities, and technology are all part of Carl Jung's melting pot called *synchronicity*. It underpins how different types of psychology – including cognitive, developmental, personality, humanistic, behavioural, psychodynamic, and social psychology – huddles under the umbrella of progress. By authentically addressing life's realities, the good and bad, digital psychology helps brands gain a profound connection with consumers.

The ingenious Internet is the latest station on a long and winding track taking in the history of people using technology to promulgate culture, commerce, lifestyles, politics, and theologies: power.

Just as a computer needs a processor, ideally every great story is recorded. Stories hold mirrors to readers. They help people to understand themselves. They tell of events and experiences. They allow for introspection. They educate. They comfort, warn, entertain, inform, and inspire. They pose and answer clues in a relentless search for meaning and purpose.

During Palaeolithic times, stories in cave paintings such as those in Lascaux (south-western France) recorded tales of wealth and technology. Narratives were directed as much at neighbourhood tribes (to forewarn of capabilities and status) as to cousins and clans.

The paintings were far more than records of local animals like mammoths. They imagined potential cultural possibilities. From such dim caverns, they prophesied an expansive future by which the ascent of humankind would eventually see the species firstly command animals and conquer agriculture. It would go on to control fire, forge minerals, build shelters, barter, express through language, wield weapons, harness energy, design technologies, connect circuits, command machines, manipulate perceptions, and gain dominion to construct the Self and direct others.

Resolved to make progress and refusing to believe they were alone, people stepped out and gazed towards the heavens to trace shapes into celestial heroes and heroines.

During the early Neolithic period (around the 7th millennium BCE in eastern Europe and China), ideographic and mnemonic symbols represented sacred concepts. These developed into proto-writing – visible marks that communicated basic information.

Around the Bronze Age, ancient Sumerians documented agricultural produce and contracts.

Hieroglyphs spread the message of God-kings (Pharaohs). Writing started to include phonetic elements, gradually replacing round-stylus and sharp-stylus script.

About 2600 BCE, cuneiform began to represent syllables of the Sumerian language. The script was adapted from the 26th century BCE to the Akkadian language and Hurrian and Hittite. The first citing of a pen dates to the 4th century BCE when ancient Egyptian scribes would write hieroglyphics on papyrus.

FROM AN ANCIENT LIBRARY TO A MODERN SMARTPHONE

According to Cisco's annual Global Web Traffic Report, annual global web traffic exceeded a zettabyte (ZB) for the first time in 2015. Today's web offers more than 5 trillion megabytes of data served to some 15 billion devices (Statista, 2022). By 2025, it's on target to reach 175 ZB. (It will increase to 660 zettabytes, the equivalent to 610 iPhones (128GB) per person, by 2030.) That is quite an upgrade from when the world's oldest known library (around the 7th century BCE) was built in Nineveh in modern-day Iraq. Then, the Library of Ashurbanipal held around 30,000 cuneiform tablets organised according to the subject matter. Most modern smartphones can save at least three times that amount.

Around 323 BCE, Ptolemy I Soter sought to establish a learning centre. As a result, the Library of Alexandria became the intellectual jewel of the ancient world. It is estimated that it included over 500,000 papyrus scrolls containing literature and texts on history, law, mathematics, and science. In addition, the library and its associated research institute attracted scholars from around the Mediterranean.

As with the Library of Ashurbanipal, the Library of Alexandria was partly a vanity project whose works were only accessible to the great and good and rich and powerful. In contrast, the web is universally available. The library's demise is traditionally dated to 48 BCE, when it supposedly burned after Julius Caesar accidentally set fire to Alexandria's harbour during a battle against the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy XIII.

Thanks to the rise of Islam in the 7th century, Arabic and Persian quickly surpassed Greek's role as the language of scholarship. During the 14th century, there was a temporary revival of the importance of Greek and Latin as significant literary languages.

As the golden age of Islam set, western Europe modified the Latin alphabet into what would become the basis of today's classical language for written storytelling.

THE NEXT STITCH IN THE TIMELINE TOWARDS YOU

For thousands of years, the invisible threads of history wove art, anthropology, the media, communication technology, sex, and psychology into a complex timeline. Each thread strengthened the next. Finally, acting as a yoke, the rope wound around the credulous masses, pulling them towards an end goal controlled by the few.

(The Ebers Papyrus (c. 1500 BCE) contained the first known mention of psychological conditions like dementia and depression.)

Allegedly, Pharaoh Psamtik I (c. 700 BCE) pioneered psychological experiments. Ancient Egyptian economy and culture spread throughout North Africa and parts of the Levant until the Macedonians conquered it in 332 BCE. Architecture and paintings featured Pharaoh towering over common subjects and enemies.

During the early 1st millennium BCE, Assyria dominated the Middle East, stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. Later, the Babylonians conquered the Assyrian Empire. During the 6th century BCE, Babylon became the largest city in the world. Upon entering Babylon, spellbound visitors passed through the imposing Ishtar Gate, decorated in vivid blue glazed bricks and reliefs showing dragons, bulls, and lions.

Just as today's web can misshape perceptions, contrary to popular belief Egyptian, Greek, and Roman sculptures and temples were painted brightly. (One of the most iconic ancient Greek buildings, the Parthenon (c. 447 BCE–432 BCE), was painted in effervescent reds, Aegean blues, and lush greens). Sadly, hundreds of years of outright vandalism by Christians, especially during the early Middle Ages, stripped architecture to bare rock.

Hellenists were happy to promote the idea that everything and anything (including clothes) goes – and usually went. They revered nudity, including the athletes at the Olympic Games. Arguably, the Greek and latterly Roman imagery of flawless bodies was a precursor to some of today's more salacious online “influencers.”

Back then, the ordinary citizen longed to be like their heroes. As then, today's young impressionable men and women remain susceptible to body dysmorphia. The only difference is that then, celebrities were occasionally spotted in arenas; today, influencers are within reach of any back pocket 24/7.

SEX, CLASS, AND OTHER ART FORMS OF PROPAGANDA

A famous aphorism holds that a person's biggest sex organ is the brain. Just as online porn offers a viewing peephole into the mind's shadier corners. (See Chapter 1, *Atlas of your mind*.)

Latin for “wolf's den,” the Lupanar of Pompeii featured two floors, housing ten modest rooms, each fitted with a stone bed. Beds were cold and hard, whilst walls and ceilings were painted in soft, warm frescoes. The design was ideal for a brothel. Gazing beyond the silhouettes pressing down on their shoulders, clients contemplated sensual paintings on the ceiling depicting a world of bliss. (Also see Chapter 1, *Atlas of your mind*.)

Modern marketing equally dangles instant gratification. From daydreaming about a sun-kissed beach or driving the latest electric car, to visualising roles in sex play online or getting a dopamine buzz from surfing and clicking on TikTok shopping channels in the middle of the night, instant gratification remains an enduring aspect of marketing psychology. (See Chapter 1, *Atlas of your mind*.)

Greek iconography of beautiful people and anthropomorphic gods appeared on Roman jewellery; gold, silver, bronze, and terracotta vessels; weapons; and commercial weights.

Then, as now, the media affected an individual's perception of what was right, wrong, moral, or indecent. Communities generally conceded to the era's political, economic, or dogmatic dictates.

Technology had not yet shortened distances. People only knew of the principles, rituals, and traditions taught by immediate families and local elders. That heavily influenced the view of Self.

Post-Judeo-Christian instruction on what was or is not moral and correct, including how to improve the Self, can be traced to the ancient Greeks with philosophers like Thales of Miletus (620 BCE–546 BCE), Pythagoras (570 BCE–495 BCE), Socrates (469 BCE–399 BCE), Plato (427 BCE–347 BCE), and Aristotle (384 BCE–322 BCE).

Always masters of rhetoric, the Romans understood that social media (*amicabiliter interventus*) helped sway the masses. It gave the plebs a sense of self-determination. Under the banner SPQR (*Senatus Populus Que Romanus* [Senate and the People of Rome]), Roman myths incorporated ordinary “courageous” citizens.

To cover all options, including upsetting any local deities, as long as a captured populace agreed to include the worship of the official Roman imperial cult, and any local prophet wannabe didn't threaten the political status quo, the Romans generally tolerated a polytheistic or monotheistic society's local God.

The ancient Chinese used art to propagate a balance of nature and wisdom.

Japan's first settlers, the Jōmon (c. 11,000 BCE–300 BCE), dexterously decorated pottery, sculpture, ink painting, and calligraphy on silk and paper. Artefacts included *ukiyo-e* paintings, woodblock prints, ceramics, and origami.

Many traditional African art forms were narratives between the mortal and spirit worlds. Their legends had it that the faithful could enhance physical as well as material beauty and potency.

Europe experienced unprecedented economic, social, and political change during the 11th and 12th centuries CE. As a result, landowners and monasteries became fabulously wealthy.

Gothic art developed during the 12th century in Northern France. Paintings primarily depicted religious and mythological narratives. Gothic cathedrals with imposing stained-glass windows epitomised the style.

The term *Renaissance* specifically describes the “rebirth” in Europe of a new interest in classical antiquity. Art became convincingly lifelike. Renaissance artists studied nature and understood biology, space, perspective, and the qualities of light.

In 1450, goldsmith and inventor Johannes Gutenberg developed a commercially viable printing machine – the Gutenberg press. As with present-day fears of AI, at the time people were frightened that the printing press would put scribes out of work. To a point printing did – yet equally it gave rise to an entirely new class of careers.

BRANDING GOD'S MESSAGE

An upswelling of interest in classical literature, philosophy, and art coincided with inventions and discoveries of continents. Artists considered individualism as divine. It was freely available to all, rather than just the immortal.

To regain centralised control, the Vatican wanted to leave congregants feeling a sense of awe at the Church's former glory. So, popes commissioned Renaissance artists, including Raphael and Michelangelo, to produce magnificent projects featuring Catholicism at the epicentre of the story of humankind. (The most famous artwork was probably the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.)

Handwritten news sheets featuring news of war and politics in Italy and Europe circulated in Venice as early as 1566.

During the 16th century, responding to religious strains grasping Europe, Baroque art combined emotion, dynamism, and drama with robust pragmatism.

In France, the Baroque became synonymous with the reign of Louis XIV. Between 1643 and 1715, prodigious buildings were erected in Paris, Versailles, and other parts of France. Stunning towers, including the Palace of Versailles, were opulent and majestic. King Louis built the palace to move the seat of the French government away from bickering Parisian noble families.

In 1609 the world's first weekly printed newspapers began publication in German. Heavily censored by the government, they exclusively reported on foreign news and current prices.

In 1627 Gregory XV established the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide). It assigned territories and trained priests and missionaries to spread "the good word" to the West. Its materials were known as "propaganda."

By 1695, newspapers flourished in London and other cities, including Boston and Philadelphia. On November 7, 1665, the *London Gazette* (first called the *Oxford Gazette*) began publication.

The Rococo movement became associated with the powerful Madame de Pompadour (1721–1764), the mistress of the new King Louis XV (1710–1774), also known as "Pompadour." The movement's name derives from the French word, *rocaille*, or pebble. As a result, shell forms became a common Rococo feature.

Metaphorically, a stone's throw away from "Pompadour art," the French 17th-century philosopher René Descartes introduced the concept of dualism to Parisians. He told them that the mind and body were two entities that coalesced to form the human experience.

Inspired by the excavations of the ancient Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, Neoclassicism exemplified the rational thinking of the Age of Enlightenment (aka the Age of Reason). Its sense of order and restraint balanced Rococo's hedonism and decadence.

In 1789, France was on the brink of its first revolution. Painting and sculpture exerted calmness and restraint. Heroic themes conveyed noble political notions such as self-sacrifice and nationalism.

In 1793 the American inventor Eli Whitney invented a mechanical cotton gin based on the Indian worm-gear roller gin, introduced around the 16th century. It was patented in 1794. Just as with 21st-century AI, cotton pickers grew nervous that the machine would devastate livelihoods.

FAKES, SYMBOLS, AND PICTURES IN THE MIND

In 1873, the German physiologist Wilhelm Wundt published *Principles of Physiological Psychology*. It linked the science of physiology with studying human thought and behaviour. In 1879 Wundt opened the world's first psychology lab at the University of Leipzig. With emphasis placed on human consciousness, psychology was becoming a more scientific discipline.

Edward B. Titchener, one of Wundt's students, went on to found psychology's first major school of thought. He taught that human consciousness could be compartmentalised. A process known as *introspection* broke down responses and reactions to basic sensations and perceptions.

By the 1830s, high-speed presses were printing thousands of daily papers cheaply.

In 1867, thanks to Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, the circle of spoken communication widened from person-to-person to place-to-place.

With the Age of Enlightenment came the call for revolutions and democracies in America and France. Along with the Industrial Revolution, the era had far-reaching effects throughout Western culture. People, commodities, ideas, and information could travel unimpeded between countries and continents.

In the mid to late 1800s, the American William James published his classic textbook *The Principles of Psychology*. It became the standard text of a new school of thought called *functionalism*, which showed how behaviour helps people adapt to environments. The book established James as the father of American psychology.

While structuralists of the time like Titchener broke down mental processes into their minor parts, functionalists believed that consciousness existed as a more continuous and changing process.

The birth of photography in 1839 forever changed the traditional view of art involving the use of paint. During this period, high-speed presses ramped up. As a result, more papers could be printed and distributed more cheaply.

As with today's sites like TMZ and PopSugar, sensationalism sold well. To increase circulation, by the early 19th century newspapers flaunted scoops and exposés along with fake stories. For example, the *New York Sun's* Great Moon Hoax of 1835 claimed an alien civilisation was on the moon.

The term “fake news” was first used in the 1890s when sensationalised newspaper reports were routine (although in 2017, Donald Trump claimed that he had “really started this whole “fake news’ thing”; ironically, in fact, Hillary Clinton used the term in a speech 2 days before Trump’s first use of the phrase).

REAL SITUATIONS ALWAYS EXPOSE FAKE PEOPLE

In 1917, armed with a camera, Elsie and Frances ventured into the Cottingley Woods. With a touch of magic, they captured what appeared to be ethereal fairies dancing amidst the natural beauty of their surroundings. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the mastermind behind Sherlock Holmes, was instantly captivated by the Cottingley Fairies. He considered them as proof of the existence of supernatural beings.

Conan Doyle’s article in *The Strand Magazine* introduced the Cottingley Fairies to a broad audience. Some embraced the photographs as evidence of the existence of fairies. Others dismissed them as cleverly crafted fakes.

It wasn’t until the 1980s that Elsie finally admitted that the photographs were staged using paper cut-outs of fairies. And all this originally happened over a century before generative AI tools like Midjourney or Adobe Firefly took Elsie and Frances’ fakery to an entirely new level. (See Chapter 2, I vs AI, part 5:jump)

By the dawn of the 19th century, both art and technology had come of age. An artist’s philosophy often carried greater moral weight than the dictate of the Church – at least for a while (e.g., Francisco de Goya [1746–1828]).

Until World War I, revisions of the past dominated the world of architecture and art. As a result, associations between styles and building types appeared: for example, Egyptian for prisons, Gothic for churches, and Renaissance Revival for banks and exchanges.

There were symbolic artistic associations: the pharaohs, death and eternity; the Middle Ages, Christianity; the Medici family, the ascent of banking and modern commerce.

Sometimes, styles took on a nationalistic perspective. For example, architecture might represent the glory of a nation. Some works were seen as “national styles,” like the Gothic Revival in the UK and the German states or the Romanian Revival in Romania.

Realism emerging in the mid-19th century replaced myths and gods with ordinary places and people going about everyday activities. During the late 1850s, French Impressionism adopted painting out of doors and spontaneously “on the spot” rather than in a studio from sketches. As with Realism, many impressionist subjects were scenes of everyday life. Rather than symbolism, the meaning was the actual picture. Art was what it was rather than what it could *represent*.

Friedrich Nietzsche declared in his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, published in 1883–1885, that metaphorically rather than literally, the all-knowing “God is dead.” He noted

a decline in traditional religious beliefs and values. The foundations of prevailing morality, meaning, and purpose were being challenged. It was time to redefine concepts of truth, morality, and human existence. Changing times would be affected by changes in technology, eventually including AI.

The first commercial typewriters were introduced in 1874 but didn't become commonplace in offices until after the mid-1880s.

In July 1903 the first Ford car, the original Model A, was assembled at the Mack Avenue plant. Within a few short years, workers were worried that mass production would replace jobs. In fact, as with the printing press and cotton gin, it created jobs. The same is true with AI – with a caveat. Whilst printing presses, and mechanisation in general, features machines limited to what they can perform, AI learns from mistakes and keeps developing.

That kind of technology has never been experienced before.

ENTER L'ENFANT TERRIBLE

Around this time (c. 1885), Sigmund Freud became a lecturer in neuropathology. He was interested in the pharmaceutical benefits of cocaine in eye surgery (credited to Freud's friend Carl Koller). However, in general, Freud's studies hit a blind spot.

Fascinated by Egyptian symbolism, mummification, and hieroglyphs, Freud's clinical rooms and offices were crammed with Egyptian antiquities. (Freud described his "addiction" as second only to his love for cigars).

In 1895 Freud started work on *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. He vowed to find a physiological basis for his theories of the psyche. Watching the suffering of hysterical patients convinced him that early childhood experiences and unconscious impulses contributed to adult personality and behaviour development. In his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (published in 1901), Freud explained how unconscious thoughts and impulses are often expressed through slips of the tongue (known as "Freudian slips") and dreams.

He was confident that psychological disorders came from unbalanced unconscious conflicts. For example, in the 1910 essay "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood," Freud recalls being an infant in his cot, attacked by a bird.

Perhaps just as early humans looked to the stars to see celestial beings, Freud was influenced by his mélange of mystical Egyptology. He was convinced his encounter as an infant was a childhood fantasy based on the memory of sucking at his mother's nipple. He backs this up by pointing out that Egyptian hieroglyphs represented the mother as a vulture. For example, Mut, the wife of Amen, was the vulture goddess. (The Egyptians believed that there were no male vultures. Instead, females of the species were impregnated by the wind.) In most pictures, the Egyptians depicted the vulture-headed maternal deity in a phallic manner; her body was distinguished as feminine by breasts, and it often presented an erect penis.

Some treat Freud cynically. Nonetheless, Freud's psychoanalytic theory continues to influence art, science, literature, popular culture, and significantly, cyberpsychology. (See 3, Me, myself, and I.)

Freud's linking myths with meaning echoes a long line of storytelling by people looking to turn disparate patterns into compelling purposes. More than another canvas capturing the mood of an era, the web – more specifically AI – represents the latest chapter in an ever-evolving story.

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In 1895 the Skladanowsky brothers demonstrated the first rudimentary moving picture show to a paying audience. A month later, on December 28, 1895, a public screening of ten short films by the Lumière brothers in Paris herald the first professional motion picture.

Special effects, popularised by the forefather of Adobe, Georges Méliès, in the late 1800s turned movies into magical, mystical experiences.

In the same year that audiences were mesmerised by screens showing rockets landing in the eye of the moon, Guglielmo Marconi was experimenting in his parents' attic. He invented the "wireless telegraph." Radio waves transmitted Morse code. Marconi's instrument became known as the "radio."

The Dutch company Nederlandsche Radio-Industrie and its owner-engineer made the first regular wireless broadcast for entertainment from the company workshop in The Hague on November 6, 1919.

During World War I, American public radio broadcasts were blanket-banned. However, soon after victory, local civilian stations hummed back to life. By December 1, 1921, the US Department of Commerce adopted regulations explicitly establishing a broadcast station category.

As of January 1, 1922, there were 29 formally recognised stations. These mainly broadcast entertainment programmes. However, many educational institutions had other ideas for them.

The BBC was formed in 1922. The oldest major broadcast network in the US, NBC, was founded in 1926 by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA).

Intellectuals of the Weimar Republic (1918–1933) called on the German people to discard romantic idealism. In its place, New Objectivity reacted against expressionism.

Behaviourism changed previous theoretical perspectives. Its early start began with the work of a Russian physiologist named Ivan Pavlov. Pavlov's research on dogs' digestive systems led to his discovery of the classical conditioning process, learnt via trained associations. Pavlov said the learning process could be associated with a naturally occurring stimulus. (See 8, Alone together)

The American psychologist John B. Watson was a powerful advocate of behaviourism:

Behaviourism . . . holds that the subject matter of human psychology is the behaviour of the human being. Behaviourism claims that consciousness is neither a definite nor a usable concept. The behaviourist believes that consciousness's existence goes back to the ancient days of superstition and magic.
(Watson, 1924)

Behaviourism's impact was enormous. It continued to dominate for the next 50 years: the psychologist B. F. Skinner furthered the behaviourist perspective with his concept of operant conditioning, which demonstrated the effect of punishment and reinforcement on behaviour.

As with many movements, behaviourism's popularity eventually waned. However, basic principles remain popular to this day. Psychologists widely used therapeutic techniques such as behavioural modification and token economies. (See Gamification, 6, Modelling excellence)

Cubism (1907–1919) rejected perspective. Instead, multiple viewpoints delivered an inside-out, upside-down, back-to-front outlook on the world. People, places, and objects were scrutinised, dismantled, and reassembled in an abstract, utterly impersonal form reminiscent of a poorly prompt-engineered Midjourney picture.

Named after the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts held in Paris in 1925, Art Deco captured the essence of the Roaring Twenties. It was an escape from the gloomy Great Depression (1929–1939). Influences came from ancient Greek, Rome, Africa, the Aztecs, and Japan.

Surrealism surfaced in 1924. It sought to express pure, uncensored thought unaffected by political, religious, moral, or rational principles.

Connected to this is automatism, which describes bodily movements beyond conscious control – like breathing or sleepwalking. Sigmund Freud used free association and automatic drawing or writing to explore the unconscious minds of his patients. (See 1, I vs AI, (Monism).)

In 1927 silent movies became “Talkies.” (Coincidentally, 1927 was also the year that radio phones enabled transatlantic calls from the US to the UK.) During World War II, the Talkies served as propaganda vehicles for governments reporting their accounts of battles.

Skilled movie directors who spun captivating stories produced controversial versions of American patriotism, such as D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. Later, the storytelling techniques in King Vidor's epic *The Big Parade* influenced many future directors, including Stanley Kubrick, who made *Full Metal Jacket* (1987).

CANDLES IN THE WIND

The Great Depression affected everyone – including cigarette manufacturers. Figuring that mostly men smoked, the industry was missing out on half of its potential

demographic. The American Tobacco Company recruited the nephew of Sigmund Freud, Edward Bernays, to change perceptions. However, historically, it would not be an easy sell, as I will explain.

In the 17th century, Dutch painters used cigarettes to symbolise idiocy. In the 19th century, cigarettes were perceived as props of “fallen women” and prostitutes. In 1904 Jennie Lasher was sentenced to 30 days in jail for putting her children’s morals at risk by smoking in their presence. In 1908 the New York City Board of Aldermen prohibited smoking by women in public. All in all, it was little wonder that women tended only to smoke privately.

In 1929, during first-wave feminism in the US, the American Tobacco Company’s public relations campaign, “Torches of Freedom,” linked smoking in public with female emancipation. Drawing on semiotics – the study of signs and symbols, as recognised by Freud – cigarettes became symbols of emancipation and equality. (Also see 7, Brain Sells, (Signs of the times).)

The term “Torches of Freedom” was first used by psychoanalyst A. A. Brill. Bernays took advice from Brill, who said it was normal for women to smoke because of oral fixation. Wikipedia (2020).

The emancipation of women has suppressed many of their feminine desires. Many women bear no children; those who do bear have fewer children. Feminine traits are masked. Cigarettes, which are equated with men, become torches of freedom.

(A. A. Brill)

Inspired by Brill, Bernays hired women to march in the Easter Sunday Parade of March 31, 1929, while smoking their “torches of freedom.” He was very selective about the marchers. He explained, “While they should be good-looking, they should not look too model-y.” The photographs were published globally.

In 1923 women purchased just 5% of cigarettes sold. By 1929 that increased to 12%. By 1935 it was 18.1%. It peaked in 1965 at 33.3% and remained at this level until 1977 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]; Wikipedia Contributors, 2019).

In 2022, 14.1% of males and 11.0% of females aged 18 years old reported cigarette use “every day” or “some days” (smoking at least 100 cigarettes during their lifetime). In 2023, according to NHS Digital, more than 20% of 15-year-old girls in the UK vaped electronic cigarettes – 7% higher than boys of the same age. (Goodier, M. & Gecsoyler, S., 2023).

OXFORD GRAMMAR GUIDE

In 2024, British MPs supported a policy to promote a “smoke-free generation,” which included an annual increase in the minimum age for cigarette purchases, ultimately leading to a planned ban for those born from 2009 onwards.

(“From Morse code and early cinema to cigarettes for ladies”)

NAZIS, ROCK 'N' ROLL, *DALLAS*, AND THE NETWORK THAT CHANGED HUMANKIND

Following their demeaning defeat in World War 1, the German people faced poverty, unemployment, and a deep economic slump.

With the downfall of the German multi-party-political system came the demise of hundreds of newspapers previously published by now banned political parties. Instead, the state handed over printing plants and equipment from the Communist and Social Democratic Parties to the Nazi Party.

As part of the Nazi Party's resolve to change societal behaviours, modern art was dubbed "degenerate."

Within 3 weeks of Adolf Hitler assuming power in 1933, the Nazi regime deployed the radio, press, and newsreels to stoke fears of a pending "Communist and Jewish uprising."

Meanwhile, stirring up chauvinism, other national broadcasters like the BBC propagated their government-approved perspectives on history's next unfolding chapter. By the 1940s, the BBC began its *Forces Programme* broadcasts.

The radiogram became the equivalent of today's streaming services. Its reach into ordinary homes was so tremendous that in 1938, following a docudrama version of *The War of the Worlds*, narrated by Orson Welles, many listeners became convinced that planet Earth was under alien attack. (Reminiscent of the Great Moon Hoax of 1835.)

Pre-empting how some would eventually think of the web and social media, the German propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, claimed the radio was the "eighth great power." "Our way of taking power and using it would have been inconceivable without the radio and the airplane," Goebbels claimed in August 1933.

In the 1930s, regular analogue television services began in parts of Europe and North America. By the decade's end, there were roughly 25,000 all-electronic television receivers worldwide – mainly in the UK.

During the 1930s, the American Carl Rogers turned the art of listening into a science. He developed a radical therapy, initially called *nondirective therapy*. The therapist became an enabler rather than a director of a therapy session. The technique eventually became known as *client-centred therapy*. Today, eminent psychologists still regard Rogers as one of the most influential psychologists of the 20th century. (See 3, Me, myself, and I.)

Alan Mathison Turing conducted the earliest significant work in artificial intelligence. In 1935, he proposed the stored-program concept, which describes an abstract computing machine with limitless memory and a scanner that reads and writes symbols based on a program of instructions stored in memory. This concept led to the creation of the universal Turing machine, the foundation for all modern computers. He said,

“Once the machine thinking method starts, it won’t take long to outstrip our feeble powers” (arguably a harbinger of AI; Pimloc, n.d.).

In 1947 the Association for Computing Machinery (initially called the Eastern Association for Computing Machinery) held a meeting at Columbia University in New York. Its original establishing notice stated: “The purpose of this organisation is to advance the science, development, construction, and application of the new machinery for computing, reasoning, and other information handling” (www.acm.org, n.d.).

Following the horrors and hardships of the war, consumers were eager to assert some new normality by investing in what mattered – family and home. Programmes on family-rented radio and television sets delivered fresh hope and vigour.

Musicians like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Jerry Lee Lewis didn’t just create a break between pre-war “old world” stuffiness and post-war emancipation. Their music helped form the modern teenager. Defiant rhythms and lyrics gave rebels a cause, helping them rock and roll like a ship towards a new voyage to self-discovery.

In 1955, the London-based Associated-Rediffusion became the first Independent Television Authority contractor. On September 22, UK’s first TV commercial aired – for Gibbs SR toothpaste.

With the rising popularity of the small screen, the big screen cinema experience was losing its appeal. Hollywood panicked. Cinemas were closing. Epics like *The Ten Commandments* and *Cleopatra* were released to win audiences back.

Audiences were mesmerised by history’s sheer extravagance. For the first time, they could witness the majesty of history in a way never touched upon by austere religious. Just as Apple’s Vision Pro mixed reality headset brought apps and media to life, movies in glorious 70 mm Technicolor breathed energy into stories that would otherwise end up locked within the dusty covers of bible-black books.

In the summer of 1956, John McCarthy of MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) formally explained AI at a workshop attended by only six people.

Advertising doesn’t create a product advantage: It can only convey it.

Bill Bernbach (www.acm.org, n.d.)

Booming economies created Madison Avenue advertising. The so-called mad men produced slick commercials selling the American Dream. Advertising delivered picture-perfect metaphors of stereotypical suburban family hierarchies, where men brought home the bacon, wives cooked it in non-stick frying pans, and then served it to their 2.5 freckle-faced kids.

The consumer could choose from a rainbow of colours to paint their ideal Self: white goods (fridges and ovens), brown goods (furniture), yellow goods (appliances built to last), red goods (foods quickly consumed in high volumes), and orange goods such as clothes.

Pop Art celebrated advertising, the media, culture, and shopping. Works featured film celebrities, comic strips, flags, packaging, and food items marketed to the hard-working masses, rather than just the elite.

It was the second era of women's emancipation. Brands like Virginia Slims, a cigarette developed by Philip Morris in 1968, spotted an opportunity to market to feisty, independent, liberated women. Adverts exploited the civil rights movement of the '60s with the slogan, "You've come a long way, baby."

Linking the outside world to the psyche ignited the growth of the cognitive revolution. It dealt with the study of the mind and how people think. In 1967 Ulric (Dick) Neisser (considered by many as the father of cognitive psychology) published *Cognitive Psychology*. He described cognitive psychology as an assault on behaviourism. As you will learn in future chapters looking at attention span, learning, memory, and reasoning, cognitive psychology remains front of mind in modern digital marketing psychology. (See Chapter 4, Giving I and Chapter 9, Scan.)

Joseph Carl Robnett Licklider was the first to develop the concept of a linked network of computers communicating with each other. The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), funded by the US Department of Defense, created the "first workable prototype of the Internet." Computers communicated on a single network. Each computer was the size of a small house. Awkwardly, at its inauguration, the simple message "LOGIN" crashed the entire network.

In 1969 a rocket guided by a machine operating with a far slower processing power than one of today's average smartphones left Earth's atmosphere. At 02:56 GMT on July 21, Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Moon. Buzz Aldrin joined him 19 minutes later.

Meanwhile, 384.4 million meters away, the inhabitants of Earth were nervous about the lingering threat of nuclear weapons that started escalating at the beginning of that decade. So, inspired by Armstrong, people looked towards the stars for technologies that could pave the way towards a brighter future.

Apollo 11's computer guidance system had 2048 words of memory. This memory type is called RAM (Random Access Memory). Each word comprised 16 binary digits (bits), with a bit being a zero or a one. Therefore, the Apollo computer had 32,768 bits of RAM. It also had 72KB of Read Only Memory (ROM), equivalent to 589,824 bits. However, a smartphone easily surpasses 4GB of RAM. This is more than one million (1,048,576) times more memory than the Apollo computer's RAM.

Your smartphone should also accommodate up to 512GB of ROM memory. That is 4,398,046,511,104 bits, more than seven million times more than that of Apollo's guidance computer. The Apollo 11 computer processor ran at 0.043 MHz. Today's smartphone processors effortlessly operate at about 2490 MHz. So, the phone in your pocket has over 100,000 times the computer's processing power of the computer that landed a man on the moon.

(Kendall, 2019)

Whilst American TV series like *Star Trek* promised to empower viewers to explore strange worlds, seek out new life and civilisations, and boldly go where no one had gone before, gritty UK documentaries and current affairs programmes such as *World in Action* and *Panorama* told stories of conflict and unconventional lifestyles. Dramas like *Cathy Come Home* and *Abigail's Party* revealed the dark underbelly of the middle and working classes.

Cliff-hanger series like *Dallas* (1978–1991) proved to the West that capitalism was king whilst confirming to the Soviets that capitalism remained a clown.

With governments failing to address social issues sufficiently, charity telethons provided the otherwise docile middle and working classes with a sense of selflessness and control.

In the 1970s, word processing turned typewriters into full computer-based word processors, complete with screens flashing lime-green lines of text.

At its popular zenith during the '80s, citizens band (CB) radio connected drivers to drivers, "Smokeys" to "Bandits," and *Dukes of Hazzard* to hobbyists. The big, wide world was only limited by distances of less than 20 miles, depending on terrain and a radio set's capacity.

The '80s and '90s were to become the last decades when families regularly gathered to watch TV together as a unit, rather than split off into individual cocoons lit by the light of intelligent devices.

TV shows like *The Huxtables* and *Golden Girls* revealed that life was just as complicated and bittersweet for all families, irrespective of colour, age, or class.

The 24/7 news cycle came into its own after the launch of CNN in 1980. But unfortunately, with it came an addiction to constantly knowing what was happening in the world. As you will see in Chapter X, the obsession eventually swelled into a tumour called FOMO (fear of missing out).

The 1984 launch advert for the Apple Macintosh offered the tools to weaponise against old-world conformity. The campaign's autonomous premise set the tone for the first social network, Six Degrees, launched in 1997. That, in turn, eventually encouraged social media sites like MySpace (2003), Facebook (2004), Twitter (2006), LinkedIn (2006), Tumblr (2007), Instagram (2010), Pinterest (2010), and TikTok (2017).

British advertising creativity enjoyed its award-winning peak between the 1970s and early 1990s. Then, with only basic demographic and – if they were lucky – socio-graphic data to inform them, intuitive copywriters crafted stories into 30-second TV commercial spots, headlines, poster narratives, or immersive radio commercials and print adverts.

However, a tsunami of technology was rolling in on the shores of creativity. Glocalisation (originally from the Japanese word *dochakuka*, meaning global localisation) meant people no longer saw themselves as distant cousins. Now neighbours, they coexisted in a global village heading towards a technologically assured new hope.

The 1990s marked a significant milestone in consumer communications. Home Box Office (HBO), Turner Broadcasting System (TBS), and Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN, later the Family Channel) were among the first to use satellite television to deliver programming.

In 1990, Sir Tim Berners-Lee introduced the World Wide Web (WWW; aka the Internet). It involved many of the coding principles still used today, including URLs, HTTP, and HTML.

Evolving from the American satellite television industry that in turn had developed from the cable television industry during the mid-1970s, British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB) started to broadcast. The company merged with Sky Television plc on November 2, 1990, to form British Sky Broadcasting. Suddenly, household chimneys and apartment block roofs sprouted what looked like a square dustbin lid or half of a pair of Mickey Mouse ears. And for each “ear” there was a family of consumers being fed more choice of channels (along with regular adverts) than ever.

In 1993 AOL sent out CDs to every household in the US, giving Internet access to millions.

Digital stretched the capacity of software and shrunk the size of hardware. Digital photography saved time and costs. Cheaper digital cameras replaced traditional film-based, photochemical methods.

By 1996, 56K modems clicked and whirled data through copper wires. They signalled the big push towards home and office access to the Internet that was to lead to hybrid working.

From a psychological point of view, hybrid working turned *dochakuka* (global localisation) on its head. On the one hand, it created a liberated workforce free from travelling into offices to endure the machinations of corporate hierarchies and petty middle-manager politics. On the other hand, working from home left many feeling isolated and discombobulated from balancing work commitments with personal obligations.

FOOTPRINT ON A BRAND-NEW WORLD

By the start of the 21st century, the computer was leaving its reasonably large footprint. The personal computer and laptop had set up permanent residence in bedrooms converted into home offices.

Starting around 2005, web-based talk radio shows, including live Internet website streaming and podcasts, created editorial-free citizen-journalists who globally streamed personal ideologies and opinions, 24/7.

In 2010 DeepMind was founded. The company created AI that beat the world champion Go player, Ke Jie, during a 2017 rematch.

In 2007 Apple evolved the wireless phone into the smart iPhone. It was the beginning of swipe-accessible, all-in-one pocket-held devices uniting users to users, whether

as consumers, businesses or individuals, via voice, photography, video, browsers, and connected communities.

Thanks to the smartphone, the selfie was born. Today, according to Photutorial (Broz 2022), 92 million selfies are snapped daily.

Years later, Donald Trump accused opponents and the media of harnessing personal data and harbouring dark fake news. However, it was not the media alone that wielded personal information like an East Side youth swinging a knife in the dead of night.

Groups like the Russian hackers – the Clop Gang (established in 2019) – broke into corporate websites, exploiting personal data such as health and salary records by holding people and companies for ransom.

OpenAI was launched in 2015 under a radical promise: We can – and will – build artificial general intelligence (AGI). On November 30, 2022, ChatGPT OpenAI (also the creator of DALL-E 2 and Whisper AI) launched ChatGPT. Within 2/3 plus months there were 100 million users. Today it has well over 25 million daily active users.

In 2021 the company's AlphaFold algorithm predicted the shape of every protein expressed in the human body.

Data-led brands like Amazon, Netflix, and TikTok drew consumers into buying and subscribing mazes by dangling personal data-informed carrots in front of them.

Inadvertently, data harvesting reintroduced old-world snake oil merchants who, operating from shadowy call centres, became wealthy through fakery, identity theft, and data deception.

According to CNBC (February 2022), 2.8 million American consumers alone filed official fraud reports in 2021 – the highest number on record since 2001. However, the toll was almost certainly greater because many incidents were never officially reported.

In 2023, The Clop Gang allegedly hacked into hundreds of thousands of global HR records held by major brands like British Airways and the BBC. Looking to 2025, cybercrime is set to cost the world \$10.5 trillion annually (Russon, 2023).

WHERE THE STREETS HAVE NO BRAND NAME

By 2023, many businesses were forced to shut their high-street retail shops. Rents didn't justify dwindling footfalls. In 2022, total closures were nearly 50% higher than in 2021 (BBC News website, January 2023; Hooker, 2023). At the start of 2024, retail news was just as grim, with Boots, Argos, and Costa joining other major high-street retailers confirming planned closures for 2024 (News and Star January 2024).

Those businesses surviving Covid owed a debt to digitalisation. Post-Covid, developments in video conferencing technology gave industry arms to reach workers – however remote. But, whilst remote working offered a welcome break from early

morning city traffic jams, it amplified an already growing global loneliness pandemic. (See Chapter 8 Alone together.)

On the upside, dating sites promised relationships. However, with the rise of NSA (no strings attached) affairs, connections could feel as commodified and transient as art packaged into non-fungible tokens. Just as Roman emperors decreed fates at the direction of a thumb, personal relationships were formed or summarily terminated based on (increasingly AI-enhanced) first impressions. Ultimately, romances were sealed at the whim of a finger hovering over the option to swipe either left or right.

Just as in the Lupanar of Pompeii, the influence of the mind's flight of fancy overtook actuality. According to a 2022 review published by the *Journal of Clinical Medicine* titled "Online Porn Addiction: What We Know and What We Don't – A Systematic Review," it was estimated that 5% to 8% of the world's adult population was affected by porn addiction.

In 2023, according to a study of more than 1000 UK-based 16- to 21-year-olds conducted for the Children's Commissioner for England, children as young as 9 were regularly exposed to online pornography. A quarter of 16–21-year-olds first saw online pornography while at primary school. By the age of 13, 50% had been exposed to it. Left unregulated, AI's ability to generate lifelike images and videos meant that again, as with the Lupanar of Pompeii, kinks could be limited only by the power of the imagination. Of the 18- to 21-year-olds, 79% had seen pornography involving sexual violence as children. Almost half of young people said girls expected sex to involve physical aggression, such as airway restriction. In fact, during the equivalent time to a single school semester, a 12-year-old could see more naked bodies entwined and docked into orifices than their parents would see throughout their lives (Children's Commissioner for England, n.d.).

Gen Alpha was the first to be fully baptised in the river of the web. However, the long-term effects of their immersion would be neither known nor felt until Alpha reached full adult maturity.

In 2023, Elon Musk's brain implant company Neuralink received the green light from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to conduct human clinical trials. Musk claimed as a part of AI, the brain implant would offer people with quadriplegia the ability to control computers and mobile devices with their thoughts.

In the meantime, beyond any superficial public relations bunkum about AI and chips implanted into brains, in the name of "free speech," social media giants paid lip service to ensure the young and vulnerable were protected from a 24/7-minute onslaught of unsolicited images and ads. At the briefest mention of a prescribed trigger word or phrase, these could be programmed to be catapulted from anyone, including neo-influencers advocating misogynistic ideals, to politicians and, of course, to purveyors of sleazy erotica. (Also see 8, Alone together.)

As marketing became increasingly judged by reach and numbers and clicks, its essence became more about data processing and creative prompt engineering rather

than traditional design, writing, and the innate ingenuity of long-gone inspirational marketers like Bill Bernbach.

DATA – THE BIGGER, THE BETTER FOR AI

Numbers count. The bigger, the better. By 2030, according to Statista (November 2022), the number of Internet of Things (IoT) devices worldwide will reach more than 29 billion units. Each is potentially a hub or spoke for collecting data.

By 2032, the global Internet of Behaviours (research into how, when, and people use technology to make purchasing decisions) will be worth \$811 billion (MarketUS, 2023).

As AI evolves, it becomes shrewder in uncovering new ways to influence. A typically disenfranchised consumer of the mid-2020s, disillusioned with people, the workplace, and even the viability of the planet, places greater emphasis on the number of likes they could win for a sneering social media post than the number of genuine close friends they can count on.

It is understandable. After all, thanks to technology, every move is tracked, rated, and reported to the boss, as if society has regressed to a Soviet or Orwellian notion of control and measurement.

A blend of frustration and fear drives governments to review AI policies. Religious sects hunker into silos of traditional thinking and beliefs that challenge progress. In 2023 India announced it would drop Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and the periodic table of elements from some school textbooks as part of a widening campaign against change by the Hindu government.

Aggravated by rhetoric, people demanded that brands get to an NSA point. Reaching that point meant not having to waste time with details. Short marketing content was good. Shorter = better. Less = more. People cut time having to face their existential Selves, avoiding brooding over a past that perhaps never actually was or growing anxious about a future that probably may never be.

Addicts yearning for escapism included gamers and opportunistic players, convinced in their own minds of their legendary status. Next came the socially awkward or excluded (according to Meticulous Research 2023, the online gaming market will be worth \$431.87 billion by 2030; www.meticulousresearch.com, n.d.).

Gawping at their phones and pads for a sign that someone, somewhere, cared, the underpaid and undervalued saw conflicts between governments' collapse into economic and sometimes physical wars (e.g., Russia's invasion of Ukraine) that helpless and hapless citizens would ultimately finance.

Global web gongoozlers scrutinised how other countries seemingly offered far easier, or at least more secure, futures than back home. Angry keyboard warriors included those too petrified to confront the loneliness of their stillness and the cyber-hooked.

Chained to the dead weight of reality, yet constantly yanked by the ostensibly free spirit of cybernetics, all glowered through web windows at outcomes they felt they rightly deserved. They incessantly scrolled, surfed, swiped, and clicked in the endless quest for purpose, connection, and meaning that had haunted them since birth.

It was time for responsible brands to reconsider how to authentically relate to people. Which brings us full circle.

Research into perception, workplace psychology, addiction, societies, the Self, consumer behaviour, neuro-imagery, memory, decision-making, artificial intelligence, language, problem-solving, and cognitive psychology flows into digital psychology.

Understanding how digital marketing psychology works and how to exploit it conscientiously requires a map of the most fascinating of all terrains – the human brain.

Compass ready? Let's take the next strides on our digital marketing journey, not only through the fourth Industrial Revolution, but also smashing barriers into the fifth and its promise of nascent technologies, including AI's next-generation SI – SuperIntelligence.

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1 Atlas of your mind

This section introduces the ingredients for successful neuro-marketing. Starting with a history of psychological advances, you will learn about the fascinating roles of different parts of the brain, which will help provide a helpful reference point for future sections dealing with specific psychological digital marketing techniques and tips. This includes neurons and neurotransmitters, how chemicals affect brand trust, understanding how the brain processes language, and its practical implications for digital marketers creating content. Finally, you'll discover how to turn a static mind into an elastic potential.

My late father, Isaac Gabay MBE, was the head chef at the British House of Commons. The late Queen, HM Elizabeth II, considered him for the role of chef.

He developed a spread of recipes fit for global dignitaries. One of the most complex dishes was a cocoa-based Mexican sauce. The recipe for mole poblano is over 500 years old. It can include up to 20 different ingredients. So, whilst all mole poblano sauces are similar, none are identical.

The wrong dark chocolate leaves the sauce too bitter or sweet. Chefs could add vanilla, chiles, nutmeg, or almonds to deepen the chocolate's complexity.

There are five choices of chile: ancho, mulato, pasilla, chipotle, and guajillo. Each reacts in a specific way to other ingredients in the sauce. Miss one element from the final sauce, and the entire dish falls.

It's a bit like understanding digital marketing psychology. Before you can tackle approaches to attract consumers – gaining their trust, loyalty, and advocacy – you need to understand some core principles related to the functions of the human brain. And for that, you'll need to become acquainted with the terrain.

Just as the Internet has rapidly developed in recent years, so more has been learnt about the brain in the last couple of decades than in the previous 200.

More than 4000 years ago, Egyptian priests thought the brain was pointless. Once a person died, essential organs were removed and preserved. For example, priests believed the heart contained the soul and mind.

About 2500 years ago, Aristotle was convinced that the heart cradled the mind. Hippocrates (460 BCE–377 BCE), one of Aristotle’s contemporaries, assumed the brain was a soggy, phlegm-like substance. However, taking the lead from the Pythagorean philosopher, Alcmaeon of Croton, who favoured the head over the heart as the seat of sensory awareness, Hippocrates also said that the mushy brain was at the heart of thought, sensation, emotion, and cognition.

Galen, a celebrated physician of the 2nd century CE, eagerly sliced and diced pigs’ brains. He was the first to speculate that specific parts of the brain carried out particular brain functions. He believed the human brain had three ventricles, each responsible for a different mental faculty: imagination, reason, and memory. Furthermore, Galen was convinced that the brain controlled the body’s activities by pumping fluid from its ventricles through the nerves to other organs.

In addition to poking pigs’ brains, Galen loved prodding his fingers around human innards, especially those of wounded gladiators. He believed the liver was responsible for desire and pleasure, whilst the heart was for courage.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) was also fascinated with dissecting bodies. He made a wax cast of an ox brain, randomly assigning functions such as memory, logic, and imagination.

René Descartes (1596–1650) enjoyed the occasional tippie. Once sitting inside a Dutch inn, staring at some furniture, he wondered how he could be sure the tables and chairs existed. The only clue that the furniture existed was he perceived it existed.

Descartes suggested that consciousness was the consciousness of the world. *Cogito, ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”). So, if a tree fell in a forest but nobody witnessed the fall, whether or not its crash was heard remained in doubt.

Like Galen, Descartes’ studies into the brain were explored by slicing open carcasses. Each cadaver was akin to a book in his macabre library of corpses.

Descartes concluded that the soul could be found in a tiny gland deep inside the brain called the pineal gland, located beneath the back of the corpus callosum. From here, the mind orchestrated the body. Today, we know that the pineal gland is a part of the endocrine system. It helps control the circadian sleep cycle and wakefulness by secreting melatonin. (Also see Endorphins, later in this chapter)

In 17th-century Oxford, England, a grumpy, short, red-haired man called Thomas Willis catalogued the anatomy of the human brain through dissection. Working from his home, Beam Hall, Willis gloated over various brain parts, including the cerebellum, cerebral hemispheres, and medulla oblongata. If a living patient became “difficult,” he would just whack them on the head with a stick. Fascinated doctors, philosophers, and the morbidly curious loved the spectacle.

Willis, a founder of the Royal Society, argued that all memories, ideas, and passions resided in the brain’s folds and wrinkles. He dreamed of “unlocking the secret place of man’s mind.”

His assistant sketched the brains. The illustrations featured in Willis' 1664 book *Cerebri Anatome* (Anatomy of the Brain). That assistant turned out to be Christopher Wren, who later designed London's St. Paul's Cathedral.

Willis' *studies neurologie* became the first scientific investigation of the brain and nervous system (O'Connor, 2003).

In the 18th century, Luigi Galvani and Alessandro Volta used an external source of electricity to stimulate nerves and muscles.

It was not until the 19th century that German physiologist Emil Du Bois-Reymond, who developed electrophysiology, clarified that nerves and muscles generated electrical impulses.

During the 19th century, the Spanish anatomist Santiago Ramón y Cajal used a silver-based solution to stain nerve cells and study them under the microscope. He proposed that brain signals flow in one direction through neurons. He identified the neuron as the building block of the brain.

[The nerve cell] is the aristocrat among the structures of the body. . . . With its giant arms stretched out like the tentacles of an octopus to the provinces on the frontier of the outside world, to watch for the constant struggles of physical and chemical forces.

Santiago Ramón y Cajal (Sternberg & Pickren, 2019)

Cajal's "connectionist" view still prevails today.

In the 1940s, Wilder Penfield, a pioneering brain surgeon specialising in epilepsy, mapped the motor cortex through the Montreal procedure. He applied a mild electric current to the surface of a patient's brain. Volunteers were often awake during operations and told Penfield what they were experiencing. In one case, Penfield triggered a memory of a familiar song that sounded so real the patient was convinced it was being played live in the operating room.

NEURONS UP CLOSE

You were born with all the neurons you will ever require – at least 100 billion (although Stanford University has suggested double that number). Each neuron has around 1000 synapses. These are bridges for information to hop between one neuron and another. A neuron can be connected to up to 10,000 others, passing signals via as many as 1000 trillion synapses. That adds to tens of trillions of synapses bridging millions of miles of "wiring" between neurons. If you had some spare time on your hands and were to count them at one per second, you would still be counting 30 million years from now.

THE ANATOMY OF A NEURON

Each neuron has a central cell body with a nucleus and exterior membrane. Its branched projections, known as dendrites, conduct electrochemical messages of pain, smell, sight, sound, and so on (nerve impulses) from other neurons.

The processed information is transmitted along the neuron's long electrically sensitive nerve fibre, called the axon, to a synapse before progressing to the next neuron.

Axons vary in length from one to a couple of micrometres. A fatty tissue called a myelin sheath wraps itself around the length of most axons. This insulation speeds up the transmission of information (impulses).

Axons end in bulb-like shapes called terminals, synaptic knobs, boutons, or buttons.

The impulses are transmitted as short pulses called action potentials. Each transfers a current of just 0.1 volts. That may not seem like much, and the surge only lasts a few thousandths of a second. However, during that minuscule moment, potentials can travel vast distances of up to 120 metres per second.

The nerve impulse journey finally pauses when it bridges another synapse. This then triggers the release of neurotransmitters, which carry the signal across gaps between further neurons.

On reaching the other side, the molecules trigger electrical charges on the receiving neuron's surface. This either stimulates the neuron to send its signal or, if needed, momentarily slows down activity, so, avoiding the equivalent of an impulse traffic jam.

The strength and intensity of the ebbs and energy flows crossing the minute gap create your thoughts and feelings. According to the International Bipolar Foundation's website (2023), the average person has 70,000 thoughts daily (also see International Bipolar Foundation, 2015).

NEUROTRANSMITTERS

Neurotransmitters are activated when a nerve impulse reaches a part of the axon called the presynaptic membrane. Depending on the type of signal, the brain can choose from several groups of neurotransmitter molecules.

One group is known as biogenic amines or monoamines. Neurotransmitters include dopamine, noradrenaline, serotonin, and histamine (involved in the inflammatory response). The second group features acetylcholine which works with muscles. A third group comprises amino acids, the building blocks for hundreds of categories of protein molecules. Amino acids include aspartic acid, glycine, and the GABA molecule – the dominant neurotransmitter throughout most of the brain and nervous system. (Also see page 29, 5-hydroxytryptamine (5-HT) – the “chilled” neurotransmitter.)

Whilst the importance of neurons can't be overstated, they only make up 10% of brain cells. The other 90%, which account for about half of your brain's weight, are called glia, which means "glue" in Greek. Glia's roles include mopping excess neurotransmitters, providing immune protection, and regulating synapse growth and function.

LOVE – IT'S ALL IN THE CHEMISTRY

As a digital marketer, you don't just want consumers to like your product, service, app, or site; you want them to *fall in love with it*.

Anthropologists point to the Trinity of Emotional and Physiological Love:

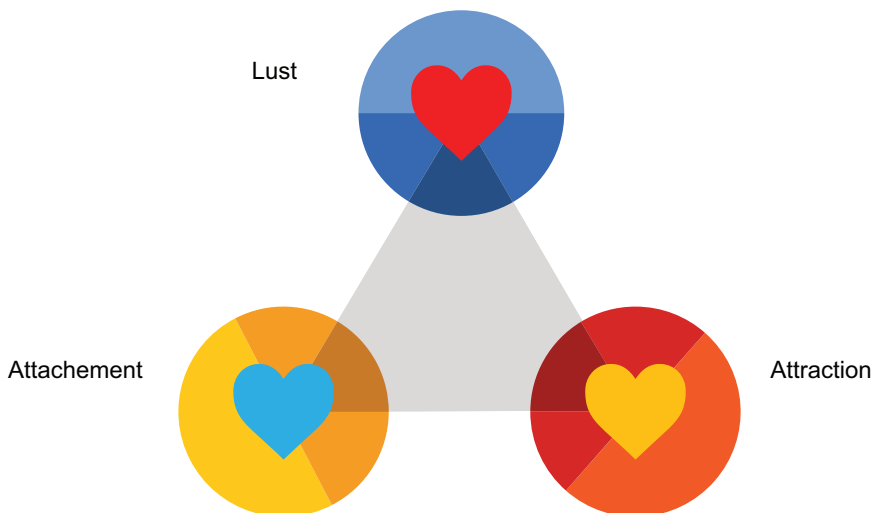
- 💡 Lust
- 💡 Attraction
- 💡 Attachment.

The trio encourages our species to keep procreating. Lust sends signals to look for a mate. It is linked to androgen and estrogen. Low androgen levels can result in a subdued libido; decreased arousal, motivation, and orgasm; and increased fatigue. For women, androgens are crucial for reproductive development.

Estrogen contributes to cognitive and bone strength and the healthy function of essential systems like the cardiovascular system. However, it is best known for its

Figure 1.1

Trinity of Emotional and Physiological Love.



role alongside progesterone in female sexual and reproductive health. Whilst both men and women have this hormone, females create more.

Devoted parents share values, lust, and kinship. This is where attraction and attachment step in.



Attraction focuses on physical appeal.



Attachment ensures that focus remains just that – concentrated.

5-HYDROXYTRYPTAMINE (5-HT) – THE “CHILLED” NEUROTRANSMITTER

As a neurotransmitter, serotonin carries messages between nerve cells in your central nervous system (brain) and peripheral nervous system (body).

Made from tryptophan, serotonin is obtained from foods. It's mostly found in your gut (intestines). About 90% is in the cells lining your gastrointestinal tract. It's released into your blood circulation and absorbed by platelets. Only about 10% is produced in your brain.

Serotonin's roles include learning, memory, and happiness, as well as regulating body temperature, sleep, sexual behaviour, and hunger.

Regarding the Trinity of Emotional and Physiological Love, serotonin comes into its own by boosting a sense of emotional connection.

Later, you will see that while dopamine is the king of motivation, serotonin is the queen of relaxation, which is achieved through sleeping, eating, and socialising. Conversely, a lack of serotonin can lead to depression, anxiety, mania, and other health conditions.

Other chemicals, when imbalanced, can cause conditions like anxiety. These include norepinephrine, a neurotransmitter and hormone vital in your body's fight-or-flight response, and GABA, a natural brain relaxant. Low GABA levels often lead to anxiety, depression, insomnia, and mood disorders.

SNAKE OIL?

During the late 1980s, some pharmaceutical brands marketed “miracle depression pills” promising to treat serotonin deficiency as easily as vitamin C cured scurvy.

Whilst pharmaceutical companies still highlight serotonin to sell antidepressants, some suggest that depression may not be caused just by a serotonin deficiency. Depression is complicated. It may have hundreds of underlying causes.

In the medical journal *BMJ*, Dr David Healy, a professor of psychiatry at Bangor University in Wales, explained that sales of antidepressants such as Prozac were based on marketing the serotonin myth.

Scientists never confirmed whether SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) raised or lowered serotonin levels. “They still don’t know,” Healy concluded. However, many peers questioned his views (Healy, 2015).

DOPAMINE – THE PLEASURE RUSH

Whilst a dopamine rush delivers a buzz, dopamine is the effect rather than the direct cause of pleasure. And it’s an effect you’ll want to experience time after time after time.

In 1954, the scientists Olds and Milner tested which brain regions are involved in rewards. Electrodes were implanted in the brains of rats in a contraption called a Skinner box. Each time a rat pressed a lever, it received a mild electric shock to the part of the brain called the hypothalamus, which helps keep the body in a stable state called homeostasis.

Thanks to dopamine, the shock felt rather good. In fact, one of the rats pressed the lever 7500 times in 12 hours just to get a “buzz.” The rats even occasionally preferred the electric shock to food (Olds & Milner, 1954).

However, once drugs blocked the dopamine rush, the rats stopped receiving a pleasure hit and took their paws off the lever.

The scientists discovered that the septal region was especially active in delivering rewards. This is in the lower medial surface of the frontal lobe, with connections from the hippocampus, amygdala, and thalamus. (See page 45.)

Digital experiences activate the brain’s reward centre, which releases dopamine. Most is produced in the ventral tegmental area (VTA), located within the midbrain. It is transported through different brain routes. The two main ones are the mesolimbic and the mesocortical dopamine pathways.

During rewarding experiences, dopamine is activated in the VTA, which travels directly to the cerebral cortex, specifically the frontal lobes.

The frontal lobes are responsible for high cognitive function, thinking, planning, and motivation. So, activating this pathway brings pleasure and reward to the conscious.

Dopamine is focused in an area found in the ventral striatum called the nucleus accumbens. Part of a complex circuit involving the amygdala and hippocampus, the nucleus accumbens is strongly associated with motivation and incentive. When stimulated, it increases dopamine levels, compelling us to repeat what just happened – so we feel rewarded.

Because the nucleus accumbens has circuits within the amygdala, a region of the limbic system associated with emotions, any reward feels exceptionally satisfying.

So, each time you enjoy a piece of chocolate or have a great online brand experience, the amygdala pumps up feelings of satisfaction. Thanks to its connections to the hippocampus, a region involved in memory, you learn to return to the great online experience – or take another nibble of the chocolate bar.

Figure 1.2
Nucleus accumbens.

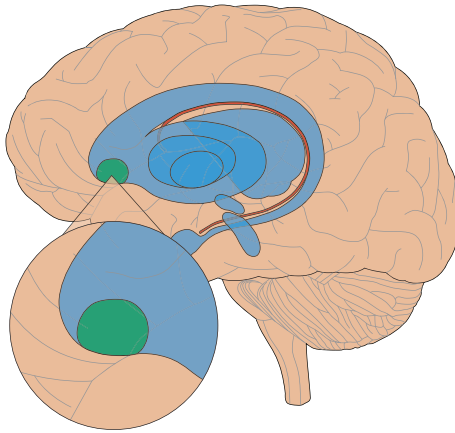


Figure 1.3
Dopamine pathways.

Nigrostriatal



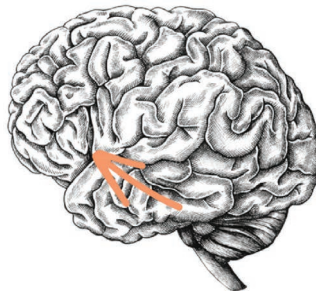
Mesocortical



Tuberoinfundibular



Mesolimbic



Source: Freepik.com.

CATCH-22

Chasing a buzz can end up with a sting. Take heavy drug users. The first time someone tries cocaine, they may experience an intense pleasure rush of dopamine. However, to maintain the intensity of that experience, they must increase the cocaine – and keep increasing the dose each session, just to match, if not to trump, the original high. As a result, the addict becomes hooked on pursuing the initial lift, which without enough cocaine eventually becomes a memory. The brain tries to tackle this by decreasing dopamine production and reducing dopamine receptors.

Whether for chocolate, cigarettes, or wine, cravings often remain, requiring more hits to satisfy them. In the case of consistent drug misuse, it can eventually lead to overstimulation in the reward centre. Pathways become overwhelmed.

Experts believe a range of biological and environmental factors can considerably increase someone's risk of addiction. They include:

-  *Genes.* According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, about 40% to 60% of addiction risk stems from genetic factors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).
-  *Health history.* Having a history of certain medical conditions, particularly in the area of mental health, can increase risk.
-  *Developmental stage.* According to the CDC, using drugs as a teenager increases future risk of addiction (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).
-  *Environmental factors,* particularly for children and teenagers.
-  *Home life.* Living with or near people who misuse drugs may escalate risk. Living with people who always order take-outs like pizza or fried chicken makes it difficult to diet. Friends who abuse drugs may make addiction more likely.

SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Peer power is huge in social media (see 3, Me,myself, and I). With enough sustained behavioural conditioning, a person can become obsessed with, for example, compulsively checking devices for messages. This compulsion is intensified when everyone else also reaches for their phones. Of course, we live in a world of connected devices, and you could argue that it is just the latest iteration of technology. The difference, though, is that in previous iterations – cinemas, television, gaming – the technology was not effortlessly accessible 24/7.

Vaping, the new driver in the addiction drag race

Vaping is one of the multi-billion-dollar tobacco industry's most successful marketing ploys. The more you vape, the more accustomed you become to nicotine, and the harder it is to stop. Go without vaping, and nicotine in your bloodstream drops,

leaving you craving to vape again. Whilst not as toxic as tobacco, it is still a nicotine addiction. According to the University of California, San Francisco, nicotine is as addictive as cocaine and heroin – perhaps more so. (Anon, n.d.c).

In 2023, UK doctors called for an outright ban on disposable vapes to reduce their popularity among young people as the long-term impact on lungs, hearts, and brains remains unknown.

Opioids and nicotine typically bind to receptors in the VTA and nucleus accumbens, forcing the brain to release more dopamine than during normal healthy activities.

They prevent the brain from reabsorbing dopamine, making the pleasurable experience last unnaturally longer. Whilst overproduction of dopamine can lead to euphoria, it also decreases serotonin levels, thus making people more susceptible to anxiety.

ENDORPHINS

The etymology of endorphin comes from “endogenous,” which means “within the body,” and “morphine,” an opiate pain reliever. Endorphins put you in a positive state of mind. Each time you experience something funny, your body releases endorphins, encouraging a euphoric feeling.

Endorphins are released whenever your body feels pain or stress. They can be boosted by exercising, eating, and other activities. The body produces endorphins in the brain’s pituitary gland (a small, pea-sized endocrine gland) and hypothalamus. They attach to your brain’s reward centres (opioid receptors) and carry the signals across your nervous system. They then interact with brain receptors to lower pain and increase exhilaration. This lets you move faster for longer.

Endorphins and dopamine – natural partners

Storytelling turns mundane product and service facts into compelling, relevant narratives. (See Chapter 6, *Modelling excellence*.) When someone tells a great story, hormones including dopamine, oxytocin, endorphins, and cortisol (a key stress hormone helping to control mood) are released in the brain of an engaged listener.

It is the same chemical mix that creates feelings that can become associated with a brand.

Poorly designed social media posts can be too short to deliver a profound narrative for the time-poor. However, with some forethought, social media can release endorphins via relatable memes, gifs, funny videos . . . in fact, any message whose value-added meaning makes the brand story more compelling.

Both endorphins and serotonin make you happy. More specifically, serotonin helps to stabilise moods and well-being. Endorphins focus on pain and stress relief. In practice, this means that whilst endorphins may ease a marathon runner’s tender muscles, dopamine will keep the athlete going.

OXYTOCIN – THE LOVE DRUG

The British pharmacologist Sir Henry H Dale discovered Oxytocin in 1909. Hug or kiss, and the level of oxytocin increases, so it is often called the “love drug.” It is one of two major hormones secreted from the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland.

Closely related to the hormone vasopressin (aka arginine vasopressin [AVP]), oxytocin responds to social clues associated with recognising individuals and even logos. For example, a 2005 Dutch study published in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* discovered that toddlers (aged 2) could recognise the emblems of famous brands, including McDonald’s, Shell, Nike, Mercedes, and even Heineken (www.scotsman.com/news/uk-news/sign-of-times-as-children-aged-two-recognise-brand-logos-2512485, 2005).

As with dopamine, oxytocin is addictive. When lovers are apart, they crave an oxytocin buzz. It inhibits amygdala activity and, with that, feelings of anxiety.

During female orgasms, as well as in childbirth, oxytocin promotes bonding. Men, too, have their reward systems, including receptors for oxytocin and AVP switched on during orgasm.

In 2008, the Karolinska Institute studied 552 Swedish men. They discovered a genetic code that affected whether the men lived in monogamous relationships, had multiple relationships, or were never married. Variants in a gene that codes for a receptor in the AVP receptor predicted if someone would shy away from long-term commitment or become a devoted partner (Shetty, 2008).

Studies at the University of Maryland into prairie voles, mice, and rats showed that oxytocin plays a crucial role in many social behaviours, including parental care, bonding, and protecting mates. In the experiments, rodents stopped caring for their offspring when oxytocin was blocked. Instead, they showed signs of social amnesia (collective forgetfulness) (*The Guardian*, 2011).

Trauma can repress memories. By sanitising events, fading memories throw a velvet cloak over difficult pasts. Similarly, the past can appear rosier than it was. This can be useful for digital marketers aiming to evoke a sense of tradition through, for example, promoting a brand’s heritage.

The game of trust

In the 1990s, Paul Zak, a neuroeconomist, grew exasperated with conventional economic models that assumed people were always rational actors only concerned with exploiting individual gains. So Zak devised a set of monetary games to test the effects of reciprocity via a brain circuit called HOME (human oxytocin-mediated empathy).

Using computers to ensure anonymity, Zak’s “trust game” was played by two control volunteers: *Player A* and *Player B*.

Player A was given money to share with *Player B*.

Player B could accept or decline *Player A*'s proposed share of the money. If the sum was rejected, neither received anything.

On the other hand, if *Player B* accepted the proposed share, the money was split between both, as per *Player A*'s original offer.

Zak figured out that typically if *Player A* offered less than a third of the cash to *Player B*, they would most likely refuse it (probably calling *Player A* tight-fisted!). When this happened, neither received anything.

In a game variation, both players started with equal cash, for example, £10. After that, the computer automatically tripled whatever *Player A* offered *Player B*.

Player A offers £3. *Player B* now has £19 (£10 plus three times £3).

(Graduates of neuroeconomics would call *Player A*'s proposed gift a "trust signal" that encouraged *Player B* to reciprocate in kind).

Should *Player B* give £4 back? If so, *Player A* would leave the game with £11, and both would be better off.

In blood tests, players showing trust had higher oxytocin levels. In addition, oxytocin increased in proportion to the amount of money being transferred.

Zak then made the amount of cash transferred between the players dependent on a random selection of ping-pong balls. Now the oxytocin levels of people willing to trust were 41% higher than the control volunteers. In other words, the trust signal rather than the receipt of money affected the flow of oxytocin.

He re-ran the experiment. Only this time, 50 minutes before the investigation began, half the participants inhaled oxytocin. Those receiving the oxytocin spray returned 17% more money than the placebo group. Also, the number of people who showed the most trust – sending their entire endowment to a stranger – increased from 21% in the placebo group to 45% in the oxytocin group (Honigsbaum, 2011).

Similar results occurred in various comparable tests. In one, players were asked to donate earnings to either to the Red Cross or the Red Crescent Society. Oxytocin increased donations by 48%, but only to the Red Cross. (A charity which participants knew.) This suggests that besides oxytocin, brand familiarity plays a crucial role in consumer trust. (See Mere Exposure Effect, 5, Brand Kisses in the mind.)

CHEMICAL WARFARE

Oxytocin is the social glue that binds families and communities. It encourages trust between strangers. However, if oxytocin is that potent, why aren't more people trustworthy and honest?

The answer may be testosterone. When stressed, people are in "survival mode." This releases testosterone and its bioactive metabolite dihydrotestosterone (DHT), which causes the body to mature during puberty. It is also responsible for many physical characteristics associated with adult males.

Both testosterone and DHT prevent oxytocin from binding to brain receptors. When this happens, they can become more distrustful and antisocial. Add to the mix genetics and poor social and environmental factors, and before long, bad behaviour can quickly escalate.

In the case of riots, whenever a moral line of what is socially acceptable shifts, some rioters wishing to appear anti-establishment identify with the side of a line suggesting the worst influences. They are driven (as with digital consumers) to what feels right in terms of image – a perfect storm of testosterone and the “wrong kind” of oxytocin.

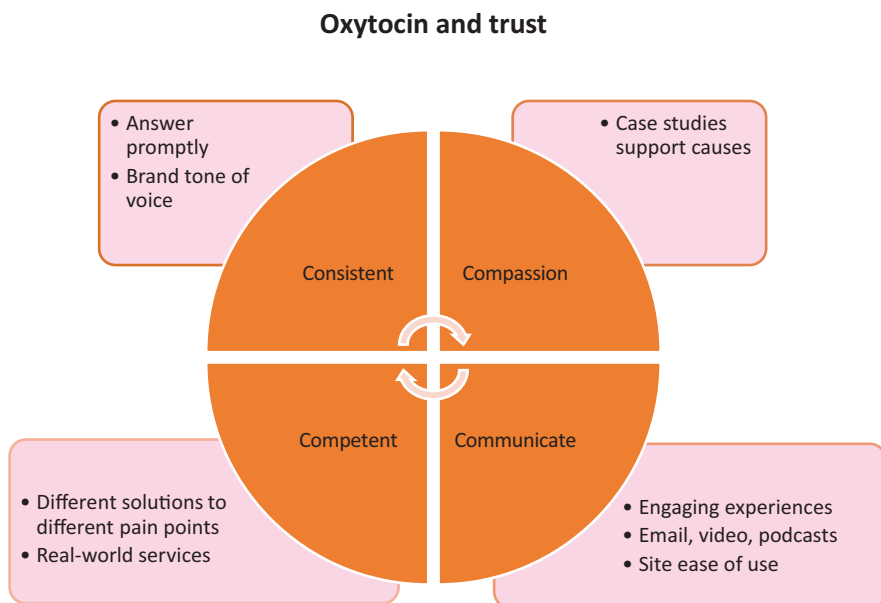
This has implications for so-called rebel brands. Cognitively, the more consumers feel brand choices represent personal preferences and their character, the greater their brand attachment. This is why corporations like United Biscuits describe branding as a “shorthand for choice.”

Designing a brand to feel authentically different from its competitors is complex. The more successful and widespread the brand becomes, the more it feels part of the establishment rather than an outsider or edgy.

Anti-establishment, rebel brands are the Davids (nimble and youthful) to the Goliaths (old and sluggish). Sustaining a rebel brand is a bit like a Hollywood former starlet undertaking more and more facelifts to present a high-definition picture of youth. At best, the aged star may look callow. At worst, too many facelifts stretch to the snapping point.

Figure 1.4

Oxytocin and trusted brand communications.



In war, reported horror stories of soldiers deliberately shooting civilians, killing children, and raping women are commonplace, but what drives such behaviours?

According to Professor Thomas Elbert, who studies post-traumatic stress disorder amongst victims of military conflicts, soldiers initially have the misperception that they are not shooting actual people. Instead, they are shooting at non-human propaganda “targets” – as repeatedly vilified by propaganda machines. This especially true if a conflict is conducted remotely via drone. Rather than killing people, soldiers are hitting a bullseye. One American told Professor Elbert that target practice was like getting a heroin shot.

Again, this has allusions to branded online video games, where players can arguably become desensitised to explicit images of people being blown up or torn apart. It is, after all, only target practice.

“Rape is a winner’s right,” explains the professor. Rape in war is less often the result and more often of animal instinct. It is a symbol of humiliation for an enemy that can’t protect its own. (Martz & Springerlink Online Service, 2010).

AS BIG AS A PAPAYA, THE COLOUR OF AN OYSTER MUSHROOM, THE TEXTURE OF TOOTHPASTE: ALL IN THE SHAPE OF A BEAUTIFUL WALNUT

Now that you have considered some of the brain’s vital chemical-based functions, let’s zoom out to a bigger picture of your brain’s topology.

Cradled and protected in a crown of 22 bones beneath three membrane layers, the brain weighs about 3 lbs. Around 80% of the contents of your cranium is the brain. Blood and cerebrospinal fluid (the clear liquid that buffers neural tissue) make up the rest.

The fully developed adult brain has 100,000 miles of blood vessels. A fifth of your blood is devoted to supplying your brain. Blend it (brain, blood, and fluid), and you will have about 1.7 litres of heavy liquid (5000 years ago, humans’ brains were so large you could easily fill a 2-litre bottle with one).

YOUR BRAIN VS ANIMAL BRAINS – A GLANCE

Adult human brain	1300–1400 g
Elephant brain	4783 g
Orangutan brain	370 g
Bottlenose dolphin brain	1500–1600 g
Goldfish brain	0.097 g

Source: Faculty of Washington.edu.

The foetal brain is relatively smooth at 24 weeks. However, at 9 months, a baby’s brain features many familiar wrinkles associated with an adult brain.

The wrinkles covering your brain are a mixture of fissures, more minor grooves called sulci, and gyri ridges.

If you flattened out all the adult wrinkles in the cortex (the outer layer of neural tissue of the cerebrum, the main part of the brain), you would cover an area of about 2300 cm² (approx. 2.5 ft² (Smithsonian Institute; Nuwer, 2013).

The paleoanthropologist John Hawks, distinguished achievement professor, associate chair, and undergraduate advisor at the University of Wisconsin, explains that “based on archaeological data from Europe, China, South Africa, Australia . . . brains have shrunk about nine cubic inches – roughly 10%” (Anon, 2022).

Your exceptional brain

Your brain is unique. A growing body of research confirms significant physical differences between brains, particularly in the white matter nestled beneath the grey matter.

The brain is 60% white matter and 40% grey matter. White matter is like a network of city streets and highways between brain regions.

Physical differences in white matter can lead to differences in behavioural patterns, as explained in a 2022 *Science* paper by Stephanie Forkel, principal investigator at Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour at Radboud University (Quaglia, 2023).

Forkel is one of a group of researchers exploring the subtle differences in white matter to understand better its role in shaping our identities, including how it affects behaviour and whether it plays a role in recovery from brain injuries.

Brain curios

- 1 The biggest part of the brain is the cerebrum. It makes up 85% of the brain's weight.
- 2 Your brain has two hemispheres – the left is biased towards analytical thoughts, and the right is biased towards creative thoughts.
- 3 Your brain generates around 70,000 thoughts a day.
- 4 Your brain has enough blood vessels to circle Earth approximately four times.
- 5 The human brain possesses about 100 billion neurons with roughly 1 quadrillion (1 million billion) connections known as synapses wiring these cells together.
- 6 The average adult human brain can store the equivalent of 2.5 million GB of digital memory (around 1 PB, the equivalent of over a thousand TB solid state drives).
- 7 Your human brain is about 75% water.

- 8 Your brain processes information at up to 60 bits per second. However, those with a higher IQ are slightly faster.
- 9 Your brain consumes about 25 watts of power while you're awake – enough energy to illuminate a lightbulb!
- 10 An adult human brain weighs around 3 lbs.
- 11 The human brain is nearly 60% fat.
- 12 More electrical impulses are generated in one day by a single human brain than by all the telephones in the world.
- 13 (Synaptic transmission = the point at which electrical signals move from one nerve cell to another). The fastest synaptic transmission takes about 1 millisecond. So, both in terms of spikes and synaptic transmission, your brain can potentially perform about a thousand basic operations per second, or 10 million times slower than a personal computer.
- 14 The brain does not have pain receptors, so it cannot feel pain.
- 15 Headaches are caused by pain in the tissues surrounding the brain, such as the muscles, blood vessels, and meninges (layers of membranes that protect the brain and spinal cord).

ONE HEAD – THREE BRAINS

In the 1960s, American neuroscientist Paul MacLean formulated the “Triune Brain” model. (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019). He suggested that the brain's hierarchy is based on evolution.

-  Reptilian or primal brain (basal ganglia)
-  Paleomammalian or emotional brain (limbic system)
-  Neomammalian or rational brain (neocortex).

According to MacLean, the basal ganglia (thought to oversee primal instincts) were the first to be acquired. (Also see 5, Brand kisses in the mind.)

Next came the limbic system, which is in charge of emotions or the affective system.

Finally, the neocortex is responsible for rational or objective thought.

Following this model, danger arouses the reptilian structure. For example, watch a shocking TikTok clip, and the limbic system becomes stimulated. Try to solve a complex problem, and you engage the neocortex.

Instinct plays an essential role in stimulating consumers. For example, in the 20th century, Unilever ran an advertising campaign for its Impulse range of deodorants.

The commercials featured the tagline, “Men can’t help acting on Impulse.” In 1980, Lewis Donohew, Phillip Palmgreen, and J. Duncan put forward the activation theory of information exposure. It stated that people first want to be stimulated when they look at a message. Understanding the message and its implications comes second (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019; Donohew et al., 1980).

However, as digital marketing intensifies its ceaseless race to gain attention, two outcomes may transpire:

- 1 Consumers may endlessly chase new stimulations to satisfy cravings and remain stimulated enough to endure passing the time.
- 2 In a rumble of “me-too” calls for attention, brands will need to focus more intensely on ensuring messages are understood, valued, and heard.

CUP O’ JOE

In 2008 Lawrence Williams of the University of Colorado conducted an experiment called the “Cup o’ Joe Test” (Jaffe, 2008).

Two groups were handed cups of coffee and then asked about a man, Joe, whose photograph they saw after being given the coffee.

One of the groups briefly held a warm cup of coffee. The other was handed an iced coffee instead.

Those holding the warm cup of coffee had a more positive view of Joe than those who held the cold cup, even though the photograph and everything else was identical.

The only difference was the temperature of the coffee. This suggests that the reptilian brains were activated, and subject were reacting to the physical sensation of the warm cup of coffee.

Conclusions about Joe were based on physical stimuli, deciding that warmth being a positive indicator for Joe. From here, the limbic brain took over.

Warm = good + person = trust

Cold + person = less trust.

From there, the rational brain (neocortex) reasoned that the decision about Joe was informed by unconscious parts of the brain.

The rationalising brain conjectured reasons to like a warm cup o’ Joe or dislike a cold brew.

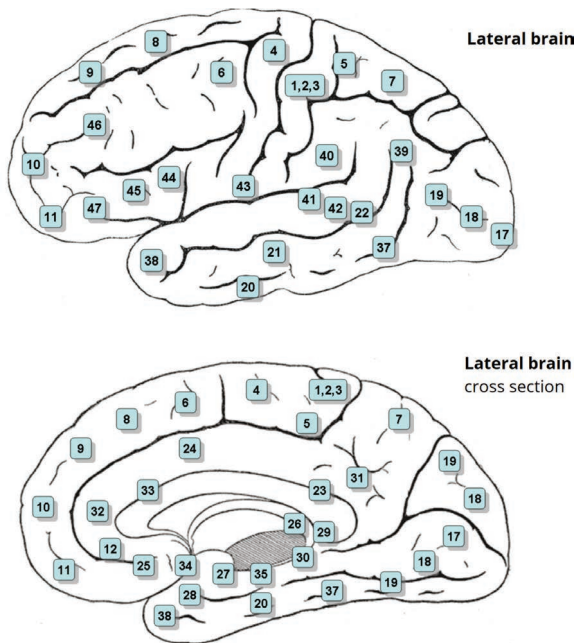
Modern advances in brain imaging show that many, rather than just three, brain regions are active during primal, emotional, and rational experiences. However, whilst MacLean’s Triune Brain is somewhat redundant, the model still provides a useful general summary of mental activity to consider when developing digital marketing campaigns.

BRODMANN'S CORTEX

The German neurologist Korbinian Brodmann (1868–1918) published the first map of the cerebral cortex based on variations in neural structure. He identified 50 areas. The map detailed all the functional areas of the cortex based on gross anatomical features and cortical micro-structures. Brodmann's areas remain the most frequently used cortex map.

Figure 1.5

Brodmann areas of the brain.



Source: Gray (1918).

Areas 1, 2, 3	Primary somatosensory cortex (postcentral gyrus)
Area 4	Primary motor cortex (precentral gyrus)
Area 5	Somatosensory association cortex
Area 6	Premotor and supplementary motor cortex
Area 9	Dorsolateral/anterior prefrontal cortex (motor planning and organisation)
Area 10	The anterior prefrontal cortex (memory retrieval)
Area 17	Primary visual cortex
Area 22	Primary auditory cortex
Area 37	Occipitotemporal (fusiform) gyrus
Areas 22, 39, 40	Wernicke's area (language comprehension)
Areas 44, 45	Broca's area (motor speech programming)

In 2016, *Nature* magazine reported a new map of the brain that further divided the left and right cerebral hemispheres into 180 distinct areas based on physical differences (such as the breadth of the cortex), functional distinctions (such as which areas respond to language stimuli), and differences in the connections of the areas (Anon, 2016).

KEY BRAIN FUNCTIONS

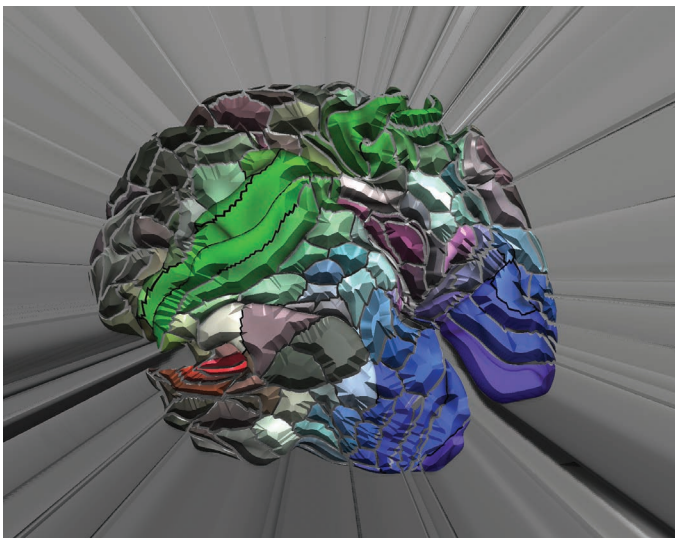
The Human Connectome Project was a 5-year study led by Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis. The project used a custom-built MRI to map the brains of 1200 young adults (Washington University St. Louis, n.d.).

One of the study's authors, Matthew Glasser, became frustrated with Brodmann's map. "My early work on language connectivity involved taking that 100-year-old map and trying to guess where Brodmann's areas were in relation to the pathways underneath them," said Glasser. "It quickly became obvious that we needed a better way to map the areas in the living brains that we were studying."

The researchers mapped the cortex, which encases the rest of the brain like a crumpled sheet of paper. (The cortex is essential for sensation, attention, memory, perception, thought, language, and consciousness). They mapped 180 clear areas, which is more than double the previously known number.

Figure 1.6

Some of the brain's key continents.



Source: Adapted from image by Matthew F. Glasser and David C. Van Essen (Glasser et al., *Nature*, <http://doi.org/10.1038/nature18933> (2016)).

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

Shorter attention times partly attributed to compulsive online surfing affect the balance of accessing short-term vs long-term memory. However, pinpointing a specific part of your brain that stores memories is tricky. The “modal model” or “multistore” concept was developed in the ’60s. It assumed that all memories passed from one memory to another.

Neuroscientists recently suggested that short-term (recent) memory is stored in the prefrontal cortex. Collectively, your cerebral cortex is responsible for higher-level processes, including memory, language, analysis, learning and decision-making as well as emotion, intelligence, and personality.

In addition to goal planning, personality expression, and aspects of speech, the prefrontal cortex controls short-term memory. (Also see Figure 1.8)

In 1959, Lloyd and Margaret Peterson wanted to measure how temporary short-term memory actually is. They asked people to recall groups of three consonants (e.g., F M Z). Then, they counted backwards out loud, starting from the number 100 (Anon, 2021).

At 3 seconds, they could generally recall the letters, implying that short-term memory duration was limited without active processing.

The Greek seahorse: declarative memory

Long-term memories are managed in the hippocampus region, located in the inner fold of the temporal lobe. The cortical structures surrounding it are the neural pathways. They are heavily involved in declarative memory – the memory of facts and events.

The hippocampus is so named because its shape resembles a seahorse’s curved tail (*hippokampos* in Greek). It is like a sorting centre where new sensations are compared with previously recorded ones. It also evaluates and compares emotions towards someone else’s accomplishments and predicaments, such as admiration or compassion. (This plays a role in consumers posting selfies and comparing how confident and happy they appear to be compared to other “me-snappers”). Intense emotional responses are organised around content, context, and interpretation of a situation.

In remembering new facts by repeating them, your hippocampus reinforces the associations between one piece of information and another. In addition, the cortex learns to amalgamate different pieces of information.

Memory in action

Imagine you are at a dinner party. The sense of atmosphere, food, faces, room colours, table shapes, and even background music are distributed to the various visual,

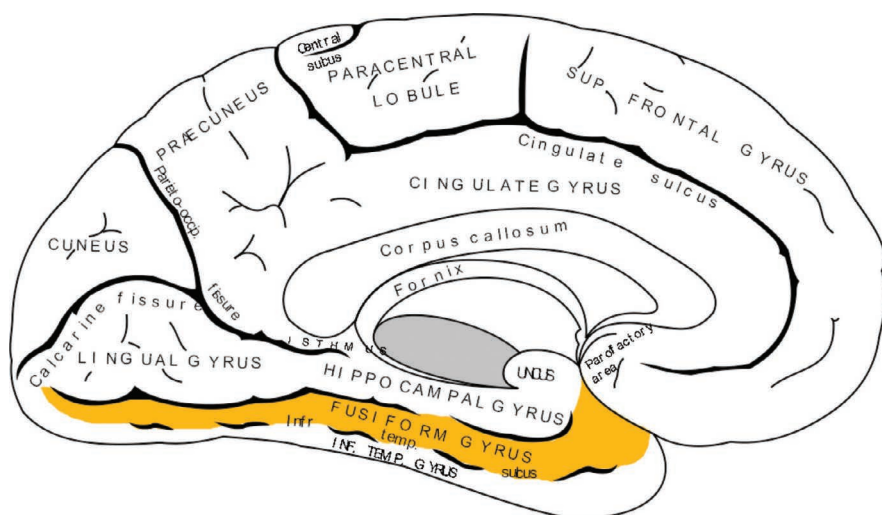
olfactory, and auditory areas of the brain. The hippocampus links them all to form “episodes” rather than a tangle of desperate memories.

Before long, the connections become so strongly linked they no longer need the hippocampus. Instead, each episode comprising faces, music, taste, and so on is encoded as a more profound memory tucked away in the consciousness for later retrieval.

Related to this, the fusiform face area, part of your visual system, helps you make sense not just of faces but logos as well. You see the logo and recognise the brand – no brand name required.

Figure 1.7

Fusiform face area – the logo detector.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fusiform_gyrus

Semantic memory

General knowledge in *semantic memory* triggers the frontal and temporal cortices. Activity in the temporal lobe corresponds to specific encountered facts, while activity in the frontal cortex corresponds to reaching consciousness.

Unlike remembering facts and events, *spatial memory* is confined to the hippocampus (specifically, the right side). It helps create a mental map of space.

Research in 2023 by John Katsaras, Charles Patrick Collier, and Dima Bolmatov at the University of Tennessee suggested that memory might also be located in the membranes of neurons (Anon, 2023).

Also see Cognitive Load Theory, Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind.

THE EMOTIONAL EDGE

The central brain region responsible for experiencing and expressing emotions forms a physical border between the hypothalamus and the cerebrum. It is called the limbic system, arising from the Latin word *limbus*, meaning edge. It is the epicentre of emotional and behavioural expression.

Paul Broca first described the limbic system in 1878. However, it wasn't until the 1930s that James Papez officially named it. He suggested it involved the neural circuit of emotional expression (Whishaw & Kolb, 2005).

The main function of the limbic system	<i>The 5 Fs:</i> - Feeding (satiety and hunger) - Forgetting (memory) - Fighting (emotional response) - Family (sexual reproduction, maternal instincts) - Fornicating (sexual arousal)
Cortical components (limbic lobe)	- Orbital frontal cortex: Perception of smell is involved in the formation of memories - Hippocampus: Associated with long-term memory - Insular cortex: Associated with desires, cravings, and addiction - Cingulate gyrus: Perception of neuropathic pain - Parahippocampal gyrus: Provides a clear path for communication between cortical association areas and hippocampus
The key components of the limbic system	<i>Amygdala</i> Fear and anxiety responses. When stimulated, the amygdala can produce feelings of anger and anxiety. If the amygdala is destroyed, in extreme cases it leads to disinhibited behaviours such as acting impulsively and recklessly. The amygdala's role in anger management is also interesting for digital marketers, especially regarding social media and channels like X (formerly Twitter), which can attract aggressive, instinctive responses from trolls. (See Chapter 8, Alone together.) <i>Thalamus</i> All information from your body's senses (except smell, which is so vital that it has its own sub-system, the olfactory bulb) is processed through your thalamus before being sent to your brain's cerebral cortex for interpretation. It also affects sleep, wakefulness, consciousness, learning and memory.

Parietal lobe

Together with the somatosensory cortex and parts of the prefrontal cortex, the posterior parietal lobe, found behind the frontal lobe, is essential for focusing attention and body awareness.

The central sulcus separates the parietal lobe. Areas in the parietal lobe are responsible for integrating sensory information, including touch, temperature, pressure, and pain.

In 2015, Apple introduced a pressure-sensitive technology called 3D touch. Today, iPhone models use haptic touch. In addition, similar technology is featured in virtual reality equipment providing the consumer with a sense of touch.

Spatial computing devices, such as Apple's Vision Pro headset, make use of the parietal lobe.

In offline marketing, giving consumers materials to touch, hold, and feel can trigger emotions and foster long-term connections. It also enables brands to demonstrate the quality of products, hinting at what can be expected.

In one study, consumer assessments seemed to change in response to physical contact with products that provoked only moderate levels of disgust. Based on evidence from six studies, the authors developed a theory of product contagion, in which the disgusting products were believed to transfer offensive properties through physical contact with other products.

"Disgusting" products included trash bags, cat litter, and diapers, all of which received a mean disgust rating of 5 or higher on a 10-point scale. The study also revealed that many other top-selling food and non-food supermarket items, such as mayonnaise, shortening and oil, cigarettes, and feminine napkins, received high disgust ratings (Morales & Fitzsimons, 2007).

Hypothalamus

(*Hypo* means "below the thalamus.")

The final output of the limbic system regulates hunger, thirst, the sex drive, and the autonomic nervous system (ANS). It handles emotions of fight or flight vs rest and digestion. It releases hormones such as adrenalin into your bloodstream.

Hippocampus

It helps convert short-term memory (STM) into long-term memory (LTM).

Damage to the hippocampus creates difficulties in forming memories.

Olfactory bulb

Directly receives olfactory input about smells detected in the nasal cavity – It links scents to memories. Smell can play a particularly significant role in marketing. (See Scentsational, page 60, and Chapter 5, page 244).

Circle of Papez

The Papez circuit, also known as the medial limbic circuit, is a neural circuit for the control of emotional expression and episodic memory.

Key areas include:

Hippocampus and adjacent cortex (entorhinal cortex): Involved in learning and memory.

Fornix: A white matter tract that carries signals from the hippocampus to the mammillary bodies.

Mammillary bodies: Considered to be relay nuclei, passing information from the hippocampal formation to the anterior thalamic nuclei.

Anterior nucleus of the thalamus: Vital for episodic memory.

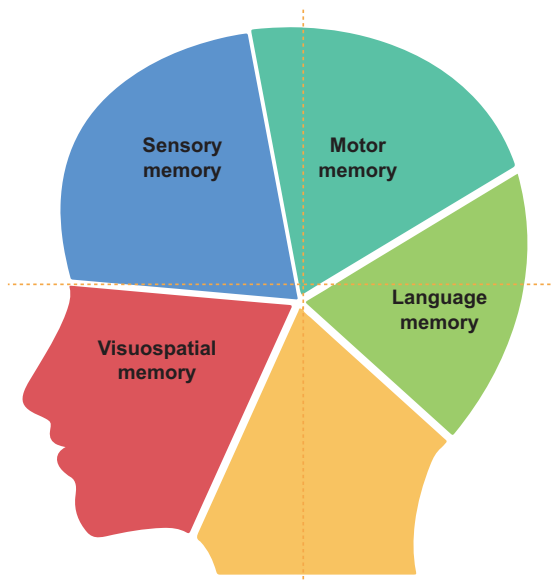
Cingulum: A white matter tract that connects the cingulate gyrus with the entorhinal cortex.

Cingulate gyrus: Involved in processing emotions and behaviour regulation. It also helps to regulate autonomic motor function.

Anterior thalamic nucleus: Vital for episodic memory.

Figure 1.8

The four segments of memory.



FAMILIAR SMELLS, SOUNDS, TASTES, AND LOOKS

Sensory memory involves the five senses. Enter a coffee shop or bakery and instantly, scent acts as a powerful memory trigger. Taste, colour, and product name are stored in separate neural circuits.

To get memories to “stick,” digital marketers combine facts with emotion. From making purchases to forming relationships, people often primarily base decisions on emotions and then justify them with facts.

Familiar tunes in a jingle can help cement the connection between a brand and its sales message. (See Chapter 9, Scan, page, 416.)

Motor memory provides intricate control for practised actions such as talking or walking without falling, playing a musical instrument, or using a piece of technology such as a virtual headset.

Visuospatial memory combines the neural pathways of the visual cortex and the orientation of the temporal lobes. (Although you think with your entire brain, your left hemisphere is more inclined to focus on perceiving details, whilst your right hemisphere integrates details as a whole. The result is that you can see the trees *and* the forest!)

Debunking one of the biggest neuromyths of all

Everyone knows that creativity *only* occurs in the so-called right-brain and analytical thinking only happens in the so-called left-brain – right?

Well, it may just be a little bit of jazz.

In 2022, David Rosen and John Kounios partnered with Drexel’s Creativity Research Lab (Bergland, 2020). They used neuroimaging technology to analyse the brains of amateur and expert jazz musicians during creative improvisation.

Newbies with relatively little improvisation experience relied more on the right hemisphere for creativity, while more experienced jazz musicians showed more significant neural activity in the left hemisphere. Kounios said:

If creativity is defined in terms of the quality of a product, such as a song, invention, poem, or painting, then the left hemisphere plays a key role. However, if creativity is understood as a person’s ability to deal with novel, unfamiliar situations, as is the case for novice improvisers, then the right hemisphere plays the leading role.

Jazz musicians learn to inhibit or relax executive-control processes and improvise creativity based on unconscious, associative processes. This frees the performer to consciously think about the holistic aspects of a performance, harmonic and melodic priorities, and the development of motifs from previously played material

(Johnson-Laird, 2002; Norgaard, 2011b). Whilst professional musicians need a degree of executive control, the level of control differs between musicians of greater vs lesser experience (Rosen et al., 2020).

In addition to cognitive processing and executive control, Rosen et al. examined the psychological construct of “flow” (Norgaard, 2011a) as a measure of musicians’ subjective phenomenological experience while improvising.

Increased levels of flow, reported by the musicians after improvising, influenced how they saw the quality of their improvisations. This suggested a link between the perceived quality of jazz improvisations and the phenomenological experience of achieving a flow state during jazz improvisation. This is consistent with theoretical models of jazz improvisation, which suggest that an artist performs best when entering a flow state (McPherson & Limb, 2013). Psychological predictors of improvisation include greater experience, the phenomenological experience of flow, and jazz being the primary musical genre of the performer.

As musicians gain experience, processes involved in improvisation become more automated, causing a shift from activity in the right hemisphere to the left hemisphere.

This means there are two forms of creative cognition: one for comparatively novel situations and one for well-rehearsed routines.

This challenges the popular view that creativity exclusively occurs in the right-brain and analytical thinking only occurs in the left-brain. Instead, creativity involves both hemispheres of the brain, and the level of activity in each hemisphere depends on the level of experience of the individual. This has important implications for understanding how creativity works and how it can be fostered in individuals across various domains, including digital channels.

LANGUAGE MEMORY

Also see Broca’s Area, page 62.

Digital marketers often use linguistic devices to intrigue consumers. Commonly employed linguistic devices include the following.

Metaphors

Over four decades of experience as a copywriter have taught me the power of language. For example, thanks to initial ambiguity, metaphors like “Red Bull gives you wings” offer a rewarding sense of completion. (Also see Types of cognitive biases and Fallacies, Chapter 9, Scan).

Review sites commonly use figurative speech to convey a sense of hedonic style. For example, “Check into our hotel and check out paradise.” (Hedonic value is defined as the value a customer receives based on the subject experience of *fun and playfulness* [Babin et al., 1994].)

Push away the negative

Consider this headline:

 Sunscreen prevents cancer.

Consciously, you think sunscreen is good. But subconsciously, your brain focuses – on sunscreen and cancer. Would these competing images distort your perception of the sunscreen?

A 2023 study tested this question (Béna et al., 2023b). Researchers paired fake products with various consequences (e.g., skin rash). Even when participants learnt that products didn't prevent harmful outcomes, they still were interested in them. The participants weren't separating the products from the harmful consequences they were supposed to avoid.

The researchers suggested emboldening prevention verbs. For example:

 Sunscreen *prevents* cancer.

This reinforces the preventative meaning. In addition, it inserts a visual element between the product and the negative trait. As a result, consumers visually separate the product and consequence into different groups, which makes them seem conceptually different.

They also suggested using humour and positive emotions to counterbalance any negative imagery.

 Negative: . . . won't damage the skin.

 Positive: . . . is soft and gentle on the skin.

(Béna et al., 2023a)

Puns

A pun is the humorous use of a word or phrase with several meanings or sounds like another word (e.g., "shoes with soul"). Be warned: overuse can be as grinding as a depressed cobbler who attempts to commit shoe-icide.

Consumers prefer a hypothetical brand extension with at least a moderate line to a parent brand.

Hawaiian Tropic (sun lotion products) has an e-book about Vitamin D.

(Reasonably congruent association.)

vs

Hawaiian Tropic e-book reveals how its secret Vitamin D stops you from being grilled and sizzled.

(Clearly congruent.)

“Consumers who passively swipe through digital ads may notice something extreme catch their attention and curiosity” (e.g., via metaphor or pun) (Gruber et al., 2014; Béna et al., 2023a). Curiosity triggers activity in the caudate nucleus and inferior front gyrus (IFG). (Also see Confirmation bias, Chapter X and Zeigernik Effect, Chapter 9, Scan.)

Jepma et al. (2012) showed people blurry photographs with vague content to pique curiosity activated in the anterior cingulate cortex and anterior insula. They discovered that curiosity drove learning. This was in keeping with other studies, including Sundar and Noseworthy (2014), Pillai et al. (2023), and Loewenstein and Leslie (n.d.).

Question

Rhetorical questions (e.g., “Cheerios taste great, don’t they?”) implicitly provide an answer. Consumers are curious either because:

- 1 The advert is relevant.
- 2 The brand is instinctively trusted. For example, if an advert for an unpopular politician featured the tag question headline, “I am on your side, aren’t I?” the reader may intuitively conclude, “Um, you’re not,” and skip it.

On the other hand, when a highly credible brand spokesperson such as Apple’s Tim Cook demonstrates the benefits of a laptop, he can acceptably ask a rhetorical question such as, “This laptop is great, don’t you think?”

Hesitation

Overuse of “ums,” “ers,” and hedges (e.g., “sort of”) often act as language markers suggesting someone is poorly prepared, ill-informed, or even weak (Ng & Bradac, 1993). However, this hesitation may be a helpful device if the speaker is a respected expert who uses tag questions to draw in an audience.

However, when the source is not credible, tag questions can decrease persuasion, irrespective of the strength of the argument (Blankenship & Craig, 2007, 2011). (It is helpful to consider this for video testimonials.)

Speed of speech

People often assume fast speakers are more competent, credible, knowledgeable, and trustworthy than slower ones (Miller et al., 1976; Stewart & Ryan, 1982).

Adverbs

Intensifiers, such as “very,” “really,” or “extremely,” can increase the degree of intensity associated with a message, which in turn influences attitudes and behaviour (Andersen & Blackburn, 2004; Buller et al., 2000). For instance, emails featuring intense

adverbs increase survey response rates relative to the same messages with fewer adverbs (Andersen & Blackburn, 2004).

Marketing communications leveraging emotive language alongside well-researched arguments tend to enhance brand affinity, whereas communications with expressive language, yet weak arguments, can undermine them.

Elucidating language

Writing about why an experience is good or bad can strongly influence people's evaluations and intentions to repeat or recommend products (Moore, 2012).

Assertive language

Strong imperative language (such as US Airways' slogan "Fly with us") is more persuasive in hedonic product communications and hedonically advertised utilitarian products than non-assertive language (Kronrod et al., 2012a).

Reference to hedonic consumption lifts moods (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Listeners with a positive attitude to a brand expect more assertive language (Kronrod et al., 2012b). Strong messages promoting hedonic consumption (e.g., "Take a ride on a flying balloon!") are more congruent with confident expectations than non-assertive messages (e.g., "Why not take a ride on a balloon?") (Kronrod et al., 2012a).

HEDONIC VS UTILITARIAN

Hedonic cultures emphasise pleasure, enjoyment, and other emotional experiences. Individuals tend to prioritise personal well-being, happiness, and indulgence in purchasing decisions. Marketers targeting hedonic cultures focus on creating and promoting products or services that evoke positive emotions, offer sensory pleasures, and enjoyable experiences.

Utilitarian cultures prioritise functionality, practicality, and usefulness in their decision-making processes. Individuals are more likely to consider a product or service's practical benefits and value-for-money aspects. Marketers targeting utilitarian cultures highlight functional features, reliability, and efficiency.

2 reasons why you'll want to read this paragraph

Incorporating the words "here's why" can make posts or blogs more intriguing. This technique is prevalent in direct marketing copywriting. For example, "Here's why you should . . .". Better still, add a number to a heading – using numerical rather than complex words – figures can appear more prominent. For example:

"2 reasons why you'll want to read this paragraph."

EXAMPLES OF IMPERATIVE SLOGANS

“Think different.” (Apple)

“Finger lickin’ good.” (KFC)

“Melts in your mouth, not in your hands.” (M&M’s)

“Just do it.” (Nike)

“Taste the rainbow.” (Skittles)

“Save money. Live better.” (Walmart)

“Be yourself.” (eHarmony)

“Have it your way.” (Burger King)

“Don’t just book it, Thomas Cook it.” (Originally created by Mike O’Brien)

Sound repetition and alliteration

Sound repetition refers to multiple occurrences of the same sound within a word (e.g., Coca-Cola).

Alliteration refers to occurrences of the same sound at the beginning of adjacent words (e.g., **D**unkin’ **D**onuts).

Such phonetic devices can enhance how people perceive a brand, particularly when the brand name is spoken aloud. For example, Argo et al. (2010) read aloud hypothetical brand names that either featured sound repetition (i.e., “sepsop” or “temasema”) or did not (i.e., “sepfut” or “temafanu”), while telling participants either to keep a check on their emotions or just “go with the flow.”

In the emotion suppression condition, participants concealed their feelings. When people acted instinctively, names incorporating audible repetitions were rated more highly than those without duplication. But there were no differences in brand evaluation.

HEARING BRAND REPETITION

University of Alberta marketing professor Jennifer Argo suggests that hearing repetitive brand names like Coca-Cola, Hubba Bubba, and Tostitos may elicit positive feelings and increase consumers’ intention to purchase.

The notion that linguistic devices might elicit positive affect is consistent with age-old assumptions that speech sounds can “stir” pleasant emotions.

In one of her experiments, participants rated the comparative appeal of two identical ice cream samples given different names. One contained sound repetition and one

did not. The sample with the repetitive-sounding name was more frequently chosen, and the effect was strongest when the name was read aloud.

However, Argo warned against deviating too much from linguistic expectations. Consonants could be overused in a word like “ranthfanth,” which they found was less appealing than “rantifanti” to consumers.

Given the increased importance of word of mouth for brand success, Argo encourages salespeople and consumers to say brand names that contain sound repetition aloud (Argo et al., 2010).

REPETITION TECHNIQUES FOR DIGITAL COPYWRITERS

Repetition of words

1 Anadiplosis

The last word of a clause or sentence is repeated as the first word of the next one.

Example: “Unlock your potential, for when you conquer your fears, your fears will conquer the world!”

2 Anaphora

The word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences is repeated. Example: “Discover a world of endless possibilities, *where* dreams become a reality, *where* passion drives innovation, and *where* you are the catalyst for change.”

3 Antistasis

The repetition of words or phrases in different or contrary senses. Example: “Experience the thrill of driving a car that’s not just fast, but fast like nothing else you’ve ever experienced.”

4 Conduplication

The frequent repetition of a word or phrase within a paragraph in order to expand upon its meaning. Example: “Elevate your senses, elevate your style, and elevate your life with our luxurious collection that embodies elegance, sophistication, and unparalleled comfort.”

5 Diacope

The repetition of words separated by additional words alters their meaning. Examples: “Love, truly love, the way you live.” “Run baby, run.”

6 Epanalepsis

The word, both at the beginning and at the end of the clause or sentence, is repeated. Example: “The King is dead: long live the King.”

- 7 Epimone
The word or phrase is repeated to emphasise its meaning. Example: “Live and let live.”
- 8 Epiphora
The repetition of a word or phrase at the end of a series of clauses or sentences. Example: “Step into confidence, step into style. Walk the path of success, walk with unparalleled grace.”
- 9 Epizeuxis
The successive repetition of a word or phrase within one clause or sentence. Example: “Learn, learn, and learn again. Master digital marketing, master your success!”
- 10 Negative-positive restatement
An idea or phrase is presented in negative terms and then repeated in favourable terms. Example: “Leave behind the loneliness, embrace the connection. Find love, ignite your heart’s affection.”
- 11 Polyptoton
The same root word is repeated in different phrases. Example: “Lead with strength, lead with compassion. Create change, create a better future.”
- 12 Symploce
The repetition of a word or phrase at the end and beginning of a clause or sentence. (In other words, a combination of anaphora and epiphora.) Example: “I walked to the store and thought about the future. I walked to the park and thought about the future.”
- 13 Alliteration
The successive repetition of consonant sounds in the emphasised part of a word. Example: “Terrifying tales that will tangle your thoughts and torment your dreams!”
- 14 Assonance
The vowel sounds are repeated. Example: “Elevate your space with harmony and grace. Discover furniture that embraces your unique taste.”
- 15 Consonance
The repetition of consonant sounds in successive or closely connected words. The difference between consonance and alliteration is that alliteration is at the beginning of the word. Example: “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, if Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, where’s the peck of pickled pepper that Peter Piper picked?” However, consonance can be anywhere in the word. Example: “Precision, Performance, Perfection. Unleash your potential with our cutting-edge laptops.”

Rhyme

A study (Kronrod et al., 2012b) asked people to listen to and remember a recorded word list. Then, they had to recall and write down the words in the correct order. The words contained either rhyming suffixes (e.g., “pin – tin”), alliterative suffixes (e.g., “pin – pig”), or unrelated suffixes (e.g., “pin – mob”). Participants could better recall words with rhyming suffixes than words featuring alliterative suffixes. They were also better at remembering words with alliterative suffixes than unrelated ones. An enhanced recall for the final rhyming word in each list drove this. (The brain stores a word’s first and last syllables as separate entities in short-term acoustic memory; Treiman & Danis, 1988.)

Sound symbolism

Apart from its definition, the mere sound of a word can convey meaning.

Sound symbolism has been recognised as a phenomenon since antiquity. For example, the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates suggested that although sound and meaning may be random, “good words” are those with congruent sound and sense.

Product names with front vowel sounds may seem smaller, lighter, milder, thinner, softer, faster, colder, friendlier, weaker, and prettier than names with back vowels (Klink, 2000). Notably, the front vowel “eee” (as in eBay), associated with the former group of concepts (small, fast, light, etc.), was found to be the most common vowel sound among top brand names (Pogacar et al., 2015).

Examples of brand names featuring back vowel sounds

Samsung

BMW

Audi

Coca-Cola

Rolex

Toyota

Sony

Lululemon

Cross-modal sensory interactions

So-called cross-modal interaction spans multiple modes of sensory perception. For example, distinctive voices reading adverts featuring different fonts can influence how consumers assess an overall brand message.

Chen et al. (1996; Zhang & Schmitt, 2001) asked Chinese- and English-speaking participants to evaluate brand names in product categories that were either traditionally masculine-biased (e.g., power tools) or feminine (e.g., lipstick). The brand names were written in masculine or feminine fonts or read by a male or female announcer.

All participants liked the brands best when the font and voice matched the product category.

However, Chinese speakers preferred brands when a font matched the product category. Font style didn't matter as much to English speakers. However, they preferred brands when the voice was tallied with the product category. Voices didn't affect Chinese speakers' evaluations. Simply put, Chinese features a logographic writing system, emphasising visual elements, whereas English uses an alphabetic system, emphasising phonetic (sound) elements.

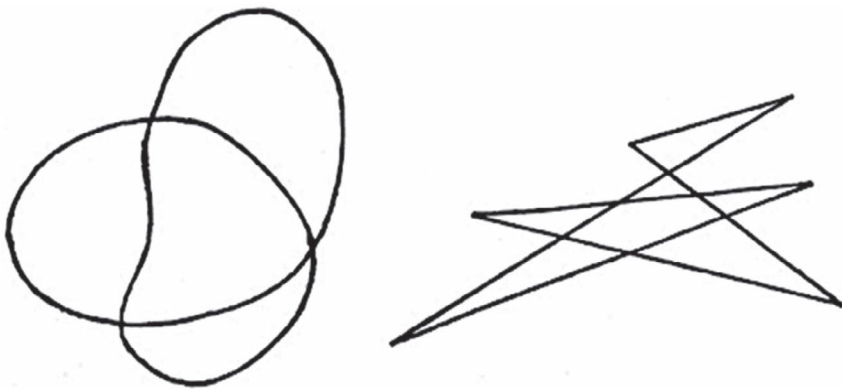
Brand name articulation may also help add meaning to the visual elements of the brand's logo. For instance, the sound symbolism in a brand name, as conveyed by front vs back vowels, can communicate brand meaning along with the logo size, shape, and colour (Klink, 2003).

MALUMA VS TAKETE

I often show students the following pictures based on an experiment by Wolfgang Köhler (Anon, n.d.d). I ask which of the two shapes is a *maluma* and which is a *takete*. The majority labels the rounded image of malum as smooth and the jagged image as takete.

Figure 1.9

Maluma vs takete.



Consumer arousal

Which do you prefer:

“BRAN-NEW is a healthy choice for breakfast.

It’s high in fibre and is preservative free.”

Or . . .

“Because it’s high in fibre and contains no preservatives,

BRAN-NEW is a healthy choice for breakfast.”

For consumers actively seeking healthy products, the first may be more persuasive than the second; the product answers the problem.

For consumers who are not as involved with health issues, digital marketers present the problem before the solution – the brand.

Language congruency closeness improves trust and brand evaluation. For example, consumers prefer that self/brand relationships use the closer “we” or the more distant “you and I,” depending on how close the consumer feels to it (Sela et al., 2012).

Following the global Covid pandemic, the use of “we” became even more popular with brands – as did focusing on the importance of “me” (the consumer) in relationship to the greater “we.”

“Today, once again, many will feel a painful sense of separation from their loved ones. But now, as then, we know, deep down, that it is the right thing to do. We should take comfort that, while we may have more still to endure, better days will return – we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.”

HM the late Queen Elizabeth II – Global broadcast,
during Covid-19 outbreak. (Anon, n.d.e)

Sexist language?

Controversially, according to Glenberg et al. (2009) women react quickly to a sad event. Men react to some events more aggressively. They show their anger more readily, which could affect social media sites like X (formerly Twitter). Women better understand sentences about sad events than men, and men understand sentences about angry events better than women.

BIGGER IS BETTER

Consumers usually follow a “higher is better” rule of thumb when choosing among alphanumeric brand names (e.g., a brand called JG700 would be considered better than a brand called JG300).

Women prefer brand names with front vowels, such as “Tr e bbi,” over words with back vowels, such as “Tr o bbi.” Conversely, men are less sensitive to brand-name vowel sounds (Klink & Athaide, 2014). This difference may emerge because women are more sensitive than men in most perceptual modalities (McGuinness & Lewis, 1976).

Bilingualism

Advertisements are less easily recalled if the text is in a consumer’s second language; however, by including highly congruent imagery with second-language text, the conceptual processing of second-language messages improves among bilingual consumers (Luna & Peracchio, 2001).

The encoding specificity principle (Tulving & Thomson, 1973) suggests that memories connect to the context in which they are created. Relatedly, bilingual consumers perceive slogans using familiar words from their native language as more emotional than slogans in their non-native language.

Some of the most evocative memories are autobiographical (Bower, 1981). Therefore, adverts in consumers’ native languages are more likely to stimulate thoughts about family, friends, home, or homeland (Noriega & Blair, 2008). (Also see Chapter 6, Nostalgia.)

CAN AI READ THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR THOUGHTS?

In 2023, an exciting advancement in artificial intelligence was unveiled – the semantic decoder. It could translate a person’s brain activity, whether they’re listening to a story or simply imagining telling one, into a continuous stream of text.

The study, led by Jerry Tang, a doctoral student in computer science, and Alex Huth, an assistant professor of neuroscience and computer science at the University of Texas at Austin, was published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*. They drew inspiration from transformer models like Open AI’s, ChatGPT, Anthropic’s Claude, and Google’s Bard. (Airport, 2023).

Decoding brain activity into text opened up possibilities in natural language processing. First, participants’ brain activity was measured using an fMRI scanner.

Next, participants listened to hours of podcasts while inside the scanner. Later, simply listening to a new story or imagining one allowed the machine to generate corresponding text solely from their brain activity.

Remarkably, in about half of the instances where the decoder had been trained to monitor a participant’s brain activity, the machine produced a text that often precisely matched the intended meanings of the original words.

For example, a participant listening to a person saying, “I don’t have my driver’s license yet,” had their thoughts translated as, “She has not even started to learn to drive yet.” Listening to the words, “I didn’t know whether to scream, cry or run away. Instead, I said, ‘Leave me alone!’” was decoded as, “Started to scream and cry, and then she just said, ‘I told you to leave me alone.’”

To measure resistance to brain decoding, participants were given tests to counter the system's efforts. Thinking of animals or silently imagining their own stories could confuse it.

"It's important to protect people and their privacy. Regulating what these devices can be used for is also very important." Tang warned.

THE CIRCLE OF PAPEZ

In 1937, James Papez explained that for emotional behaviour to be consciously recognised, there had to be an interaction between the cerebral cortex and the hypothalamus. This laid the framework for the "circle of Papez." The circle (circuit) includes the hippocampus, thalamus, and cingulum. Paul Broca and Paul D. MacLean added other structures to the circuit of emotion. These included the septum, amygdala, and hypothalamus.

Neurologist Paul Ivan Yakovlev proposed an emotional circuit that included the orbitofrontal, anterior temporal, insular, and other thalamus nuclei (Bhattacharyya, 2017).

Damage to the area is associated with Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Korsakoff syndrome, semantic dementia, and global amnesia (Anon, n.d.a).

Amygdalae

Intense emotional memory involves the amygdalae (corpus amygdaloideum) – a pair of small, almond-shaped neurons located deep in the brain's medial temporal lobe driving the so-called fight-or-flight response and playing a crucial role in memory.

During the fight-or-flight response, the amygdala causes the adrenal gland to release epinephrine into the bloodstream. Together with other hormones like cortisol, this signals the heart to pump harder, increasing blood pressure; opening airways in the lungs; narrowing blood vessels in the skin and intestine to increase blood flow to major muscle groups; and performing other functions to enable the body to fight or run when encountering a perceived threat.

The hippocampus and amygdalae work in concert to consolidate emotions and long-term memories. Whenever a possible fight-or-flight emotion is detected, the brain's nutrients, blood flow, and oxygen are directed to the amygdala. This drains parts of the brain, clouding creativity, and logic. So, for example, you will become less concerned about creating the next masterpiece if you sense an impending grizzly bear attack.

Scentsational

They say that offline retail is all about location, location, location.

Add scent to the list.

According to Shopify (November 2021), some 75% of emotions generated daily are down to smell. Studies show that visual recall of images drops to about 50% after only 3 months. Yet people can recall smells with 65% accuracy after a year (Keenan, 2021).

THE SCIENCE OF SCENT

An adult can distinguish 10,000 different odours.

Sniff your morning coffee, and the smell of fresh-roasted beans drifts to parts of the brain responsible for emotion and memory processing. (Also see, *Memories are made of this*, page 43.)

While scents are essential, we are also highly visual. That's why it makes good sense to label a scent.

Take cheese. In experiments, subjects were told a scent was cheese. They loved the smell. But the same people were disgusted when researchers said that the container was filled with vomit (in truth, it was still the same cheese). Psychologist Johan Lundstrom concluded, "You can go from extremely positive to extremely negative just by changing the label" (Lundström, 2023).

Aroma billboards

Many retailers use bold scents. For example, Abercrombie & Fitch's distinct scent saturates stores to attract passers-by.

A study from Samsung revealed that shoppers underestimated shopping time by 26% and examined three times more products when exposed to associated fragrances vs non-themed ones. Bloomingdale's used a coconut scent in its swimwear department and a baby powder scent in infant clothing (Keenan, 2021).

A boutique that smells like roses or a lunchtime snack chain could use the scent of recently baked goods. Bold, seductive smells get more people in the door, who often end up shopping longer and spending more.

Smells familiar

Studies by Rutgers University suggested that ambient scents improve the recall and recognition of familiar and unfamiliar brands (Morrin & Ratneshwar, 2003).

Moreover, shoppers may perceive scented areas as high-end and luxurious. For example, a study by Nike showed that customers were 84% more likely to buy shoes in a fragrant environment vs a non-scented environment. They were also willing to pay 10% to 20% more in scented environments (Keenan, 2021).

Signature smells

Signature scents are unique to a brand. They convey a specific feeling to customers, ranging from freshness to opulence.

Using Abercrombie and Fitch's cue, retailers like Nike discovered that scent marketing in retail stores "increased intent to purchase by 80%." In another real-world scent marketing experiment, the smell of fresh-brewed coffee at a gas station increased coffee sales by 300%.

The speciality food chain Cinnabon strategically selects locations for its stores, where scents get trapped so the smell of fresh cinnamon rolls lingers.

The rancid air in a pressurised cabin isn't the most inviting space. So, Singapore Airlines developed a custom scent to spray into its hot towels. The floral and citrus fragrance was so popular that the airline created a brand for it: Stefan Floridian Waters.

In addition to improving the smell of the stale air, Singapore Airlines and other airlines use calming scents to help reduce anxiety and enhance the customer experience in flight.

Opened initially in Japan, the retailer Muji sells textiles, household goods, stationery, and more worldwide. The chain openly uses aroma diffusers in stores, which it sells – so consumers can experience the distinctive aromas at home.

Your brain processes scents subconsciously. Low-key scents are high impact, and subtle scents may help improve brand perception. Professor Spangenberg of Washington State University's scent research department advises: "Scents should stay in the background – pleasant, but not distracting" (WSU Insider, 2012).

Language

You have learnt about language memory. As previously mentioned, much of the activity occurs in Broca's and Wernicke's areas. The Broca's area is in the frontal lobe of the brain. It also plays a significant role in language comprehension. Broca's area coordinates with working memory to allow a person to use verbal expression. Discovered in 1861, Broca's area is found in the left hemisphere of right-handed people and the right hemisphere of left-handed people.

Patients with Broca's aphasia often understand language but cannot speak fluently. Damage to Broca's area can result in Broca's aphasia (an inability to speak).

WERNICKE'S AREA

You'll find the Wernicke's area in the cerebral cortex. It is involved in understanding written and spoken language. Damage in Wernicke's aphasia affects comprehension. A patient's language can become unfathomable.

AI programming features large language models (LLMs). They generate natural language texts from large amounts of data. LLMs use deep neural networks, such as transformers, to learn from billions or trillions of words and to produce texts on any topic or domain.

LLMs can also perform various natural language tasks, such as classification, summarisation, translation, generation, and dialogue. LLMs can suggest what an answer should sound like, which is very different from offering a concrete solution. This is because they can't logically infer meaning, despite many worrying that they can. However, when it comes to the mundane processing of "knowledge" learnt by rote, AI and robotisation are set to replace some traditional jobs (also see Chapter 2, I vs AI: the storm ahead).

The posterior cingulate cortex – part of the moral network

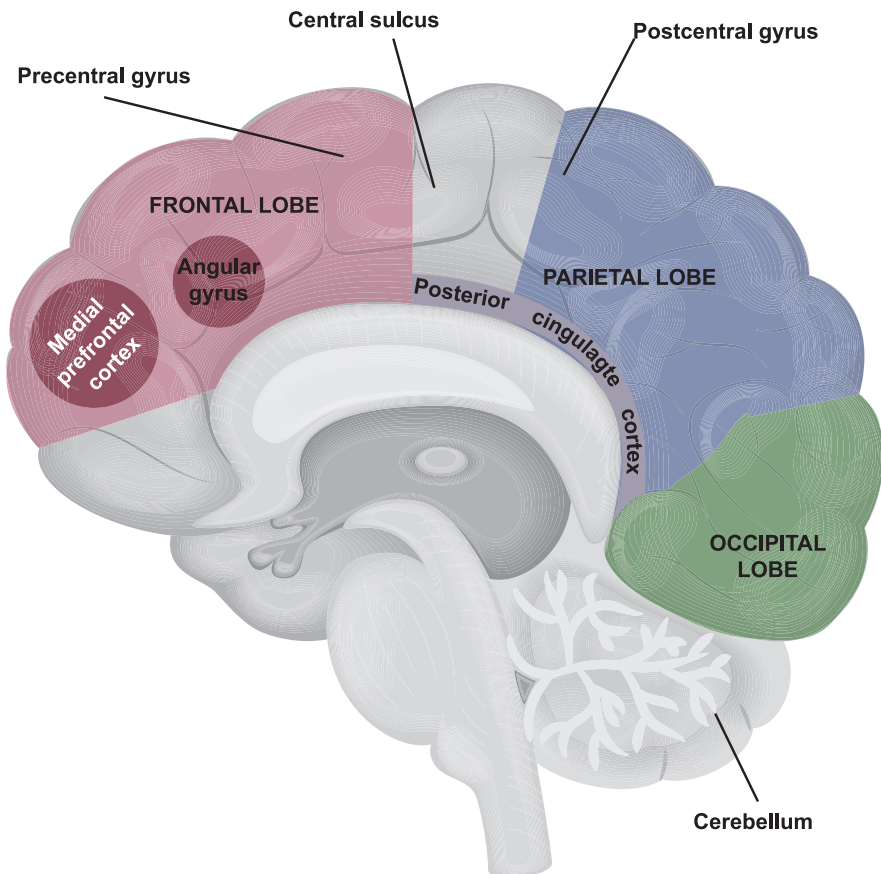
Increasingly, brands act as surrogate custodians of morals and values. Political correctness opens the doors to virtue signalling; brands battle to display their peacock feathers of morally and culturally appropriate plumage to woke, susceptible consumers.

Such identificatory brands feature a kind of moral network that arbitrates ethical decisions. For example, in 2001 Joshua D. Greene, associate professor at Harvard University, published a study looking at judgments based on “moral, personal” dilemmas (e.g., pushing a person out of a sinking boat to save others) and “ethical, impersonal” dilemmas (e.g., keeping money found in a lost wallet).

The study suggested that three brain structures – the posterior cingulate, medial prefrontal cortex, and angular gyrus on both left and right sides – play a central role in the emotional processes that influence personal moral decision-making (Greene et al., 2009).

Figure 1.10

Key regions in the brain’s moral network.



Twelve years later, a study by *Readers Digest* explored which city was the most honest. In total, researchers “lost” 192 wallets around the world. In each of the 19 cities, the discarded wallets included a name, smartphone number, family photo, coupons, business cards, and \$50 in local currency (Anon, (n.d.b)).

Wallets were left near parks, shopping malls, and pavements. Bearing in mind that in the research, “criminals” were simply ordinary members of the general public, it revealed that of the 192 wallets dropped, 90 were returned – just under half.

The results

-
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1. | Helsinki, Finland (wallets returned: 11 out of 12) |
| 2. | Mumbai, India (9 out of 12) |
| 3. | (tie) Budapest, Hungary (8 out of 12) |
| 3. | (tie) New York City, US (8 out of 12) |
| 4. | (tie) Moscow, Russia (7 out of 12) |
| 4. | (tie) Amsterdam, the Netherlands (7 out of 12) |
| 5. | (tie) Berlin, Germany (6 out of 12) |
| 5. | (tie) Ljubljana, Slovenia (6 out of 12) |
| 6. | (tie) London, England (5 out of 12) |
| 6. | (tie) Warsaw, Poland (5 out of 12) |
| 7. | (tie) Bucharest, Romania (4 out of 12) |
| 7. | (tie) Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (4 out of 12) |
| 7. | (tie) Zurich, Switzerland (4 out of 12) |
| 8. | Prague, Czech Republic (3 out of 12) |
| 9. | Madrid, Spain (2 out of 12) |
| 10. | Lisbon, Portugal (1 out of 12) |
-

IN GOD – WHO TRUSTS?

The results stirred up a lot of regional debate – even correlating civilian dishonesty with government and commercial corruption.

So, what would it take to encourage good people to keep doing good rather than spoil their reputations and those of their peers, friends, family, and mentors?

Would perhaps piousness keep them on the straight and narrow? Discarding the broader argument for the existence of God or gods: axiological or constructive, atheists class religiosity as a fraud leading to false hope. Their higher absolute is humanity – the supposedly supreme source of ethics and values. It is up to individuals to resolve

moral problems. For atheists, ethical decisions are based on their views of “natural” intuitive common sense.

Arguing against organised religions setting rules for living an ethical life, Frederick Nietzsche concluded, “Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies” (Nietzsche & Handwerk, 2013).

The French philosopher and atheistic existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre concluded that each person defines him or herself. Nothing can save them, not even valid proof of God’s existence. “Doing good” is existential realisation. (See Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I)

As if to knock me down, reality came around, and without so much as a mere touch, cut me into little pieces, leaving me to doubt, talk about, God in His mercy, oh, if he really does exist, why did he desert me, in my hour of need, I truly am indeed, alone again, naturally.

(O’Sullivan, 1971)

The long-term decline in some faiths and the subsequent rise in individuals not complying with others’ ideals (including those of politicians and bureaucratically stifled institutions that gradually but steadily throttle hope, purpose, community, individuality, and aspirations) has driven some to reassign their immediate faith to brands of the New Church of Aspiration instead.

The New Church of Aspiration can count many denominations, from toothpaste brands to fashion icons. And as with traditional religion, groups have antagonists. For example, laptop companies (tribes) such as Samsung, Apple, Dell, HP, and Microsoft are constantly at loggerheads. Or car brands like Mercedes Benz vs BMW, airline brands such as British Airways vs Virgin Atlantic, software companies like Apple vs Windows, and so on.

Assuming “church”-branded and approved messages feature the church’s mission and vision principles, loyal consumers (congregational tribal members) are left to demean tribes belonging to other faiths (competitor’s consumers) that are not considered authentic.

Big brother, or even greater father?

In 2024, it was estimated that there were over 1 billion closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) cameras worldwide. In major cities, constant surveillance was becoming so common that Winston Smith, a character in George Orwell’s novel *1984*, would have felt very much at home. (Pro.com, n.d.). *Video surveillance: the infinite possibilities of metadata*. [online]).

Whilst the glass eye of CCTV records what is shown, for the culturally religious, a yarmulke, turban, hijab, bindi, or crucifix bears the heart on one’s sleeve. Congregants are no longer ambiguous faces in the crowd. An iconic faith advertises that its belief system comes with a responsibility to themselves, the community, and fellow believers.

Just as advertisers emblazon logos across web banners, having the confidence to put one's name to a corporate or collective deed is at the heart of a legitimate brand trusted by tribes, including employees, employers, suppliers, partners, shareholders, voters, and even beyond to sports supporters and music fans.

It is a commitment underpinned by a brand's mission and vision. Brand mission and vision statements help establish a psychological connection between a brand and its target audience.

Identity and purpose

Mission and vision statements define a brand's identity and purpose, providing a clear sense of direction and values. When customers resonate with a brand's mission and vision, it creates a psychological connection based on shared beliefs and aspirations. This connection evokes positive emotions and fosters loyalty and trust.

Emotional appeal

By communicating a compelling purpose or vision, brands tap into customers' psychological needs for belonging, meaning, and self-expression. Digital marketers can leverage these concepts to build a strong bond between the brand and its audience.

Differentiation and authenticity

Mission and vision statements are unique selling propositions, communicating what sets a brand apart from its competitors. Consumers value authenticity, and a well-defined mission and vision contribute to a brand's authenticity, enhancing credibility and appeal.

Trust and reliability

Trust is fundamental in any brand-consumer relationship. In our era of post-trust, customers who perceive a brand as reliable, consistent, and aligned with their own beliefs are more likely to engage with and trust it in the long run.

Alignment and engagement

A strong mission and vision statement can align employees, customers, and stakeholders around a common purpose. Consumers who align with a brand's mission and vision are likelier to engage with it, advocate on its behalf, and develop long-term loyalty.

The new religion of brands

In the 2021 study "Religion, England, and Wales: Census," 60% of Millennials said they seldom or never attended services, statistically the same as Gen X. Compared

to those two generations, Gen Z was slightly more likely to participate in worship. (ONS.gov.uk, n.d.).

In comparison, during the early 1990s, about 90% of American adults identified as Christians. As of 2023, around two-thirds of adults identified as Christians.

Nearly 20% of US Gen Z identify as LGBTQ+ (Gallup Poll, 2021). Likewise, an estimated 20% of British Gen Z identified themselves as LGBTQ+ in 2021, with numbers steadily increasing.

Your “fantastic plastic” brain

The notion that you lose brain cells as you age is nonsense. While certain cognitive functions may decline with time, consistent mental stimulation and exercise helps maintain and even expand neural networks. In fact, the human brain possesses a remarkable capacity to store information, equivalent to approximately 2.5 million GB of digital memory (roughly 1 PB, equivalent to over a thousand 1 TB solid-state drives). Furthermore, its ability to form new connections is virtually limitless. Barring severe health issues that may impair cognitive skills, individuals can continuously enhance their cognitive capabilities and broaden their intellectual horizons.

Activities that challenge the mind, such as learning new skills, solving puzzles, or pursuing creative projects, can significantly contribute to brain health and plasticity. By embracing a proactive approach to mental stimulation, you can continue to expand your cognitive potential.

Character consists of what you do on the third and fourth tries

Neuroplasticity, also known as neural plasticity, occurs through learning. Just as with building muscle, brain tissue intensifies according to how much it is “exercised.” By the time you have finished reading this page, your brain will have changed FOREVER. That’s because you are (will become) what you learn (*Fies quod discis*).

Learning and adapting are lifelong skills. By studying, watching others, and through your own mistakes, your brain stores behaviours in the subconscious, ready to apply them in the conscious.

Setting aside physical or major mental failures, the more you use your mind, the more you develop your potential. Depending on the extent of any injury, memory may even be recovered after brain damage.

Unlike the fixed electronic components of a computer constantly requiring software or hardware updates and upgrades, your elaborate networks of neurons are self-adaptable. Unincumbered, they can open, close, and re-establish connections with other neurons.

A particular category of neurotransmitters called *neuromodulators* constantly fine-tune the number of other neurotransmitters released at a synapse and the degree to which neurons respond to incoming signals.

The brain's activity adjusts according to circumstances, such as stopping a car when a pedestrian crosses the road. Parts of the brain are constantly rewired to store and update memories. Such elasticity has led the malleable mind to be called the "plastic brain."

Once, neuroscientists believed learning skills that left profound changes in the brain occurred only during childhood. However, everything in the brain is connected. That is why some claim you only use 10% of your brain. In truth, you use it all, with functions like language involving several areas simultaneously,

People suffering from depression and anxiety can get fixed in a cycle of negativity. By retraining thinking, rather than neurons coming to a dead end, new pathways towards positivity can be laid down.

Changing behaviours and beliefs is challenging, especially if, like a needle on a vinyl record, you have been stuck in the same groove. Ultimately, it's all a matter of mind over matter.

Your brain is constantly changing through the actions of a host of chemical transmitters and modulators, allowing you to adapt to the offline and online world.

Now you have stretched your mind through understanding key ingredients (parts) of the brain, it's time to stretch your digital marketing potential even further.

In the next section, you'll start applying robust psychological theories and approaches that don't just sell but establish consumer loyalty. Applying these principles, you can turn digital marketing communications into congruent messages imbued with authenticity, trust, and sincerity.

And that's a recipe for success that is fit for royalty.

Atlas of your mind: overview

-  Aristotle believed the heart housed the mind, while Hippocrates thought the brain was responsible for thought, sensation, emotion, and cognition.
-  Galen was the first to suggest that specific parts of the brain have specific functions, and he believed the brain controlled the body through fluid pumped from its ventricles.
-  Leonardo da Vinci dissected bodies and assigned memory, logic, and imagination functions to different brain parts.
-  René Descartes proposed that consciousness was the world's collective consciousness and located the soul in the pineal gland deep inside the brain.
-  Thomas Willis catalogued the anatomy of the human brain and believed that memories, ideas, and passions resided in its folds and wrinkles.
-  Luigi Galvani and Alessandro Volta used electricity to stimulate nerves and muscles, discovering that they generated electrical impulses.

- 🧠 Santiago Ramón y Cajal identified neurons as the building blocks of the brain and proposed that brain signals flow in one direction through neurons.
- 🧠 Wilder Penfield mapped the motor cortex by applying electric current to patients' brains and triggering specific experiences and memories.
- 🧠 Neurons have a central cell body, dendrites, and an axon that transmit information through electrical impulses.
- 🧠 The myelin sheath wraps around axons, speeding up information transmission, and damage to it is associated with multiple sclerosis.
- 🧠 Neurotransmitters, such as serotonin and dopamine, carry messages between nerve cells and play a role in emotions, sleep, and motivation.
- 🧠 Glia cells constitute 90% of brain cells and perform functions like mapping excess neurotransmitters and regulating synapse growth.
- 🧠 The Trinity of Emotional and Physiological Love consists of lust, attraction, and attachment, which form bonds and encourage procreation.
- 🧠 Serotonin, a neurotransmitter, plays a role in learning, memory, happiness, body temperature, sleep, sexual behaviour, and hunger.
- 🧠 Dopamine is involved in the brain's reward system and plays a role in pleasure and motivation.
- 🧠 Digital experiences activate the brain's reward centre, releasing dopamine and activating the frontal lobes responsible for cognition and motivation.
- 🧠 The nucleus accumbens, located in the ventral striatum, is strongly associated with motivation and incentive, and increases dopamine levels.
- 🧠 The understanding of the brain has evolved through the contributions of various scientists and philosophers.
- 🧠 The brain is a complex organ responsible for thoughts, emotions, sensations, and bodily functions, and its study continues to advance our understanding of its intricacies.
- 🧠 White matter in the brain has physical differences that can lead to behavioural patterns.
- 🧠 More electrical impulses are generated in one day by a single human brain than by all the telephones in the world.
- 🧠 The Triune Brain model consists of the reptilian, emotional, and rational brains.
- 🧠 The reptilian brain is associated with primal instincts, the emotional brain with emotions, and the rational brain with objective thought.
- 🧠 Instinct plays a role in stimulating consumers in marketing.

-  The activation theory of information exposure suggests people first want to be stimulated when looking at a message.
-  The temperature of a cup of coffee can affect people's perceptions and judgments.
-  The brain has different regions and structures responsible for memory, emotion, and perception.
-  The hippocampus is involved in long-term memory.
-  The limbic system is the epicentre of emotional and behavioural expression in the brain.
-  Cross-modal interactions influence consumer assessment of brand messages.
-  Matching fonts and voices to product categories improves brand evaluations.
-  Women react more strongly to sad events, while men respond more strongly to angry events.
-  Consumers often perceive alphanumeric brand names with higher numbers as better.
-  Women prefer brand names with front vowels, while men are less sensitive to vowel sounds.
-  Bilingual consumers process second-language messages better with congruent imagery.
-  Memories connect to the context in which they are created, including language familiarity.
-  Artificial intelligence can decode brain activity into a continuous text.
-  The circle of Papez explains emotional behaviour and involves several brain structures.
-  The amygdala plays a crucial role in intense emotional memory and fight-or-flight response.
-  Smell significantly impacts emotions, with scent recall being more accurate than visual recall.
-  Ambient scents improve brand recall and recognition.
-  Signature scents convey specific feelings to customers and enhance brand perception.
-  Scents can influence shopping behaviour, increasing intent to purchase and willingness to pay more.
-  Broca's and Wernicke's areas in the brain are crucial for language comprehension and expression.

- 🧠 Damage to Broca's or Wernicke's areas can result in speech and comprehension difficulties.
- 🧠 Large language models (LLMs) use deep neural networks and can perform various natural language tasks.

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2 | vs AI

The first part of the book's second chapter, "I vs AI," considers perception. It draws on classical psychology and philosophy to ask whether what we experience on or offline is accurate and whether our responses to those experiences reflect our true selves.

The second part introduces you to the hype surrounding AI and subsequent paranoia (for example, regarding marketing job security). It explores whether machine learning equals human learning and considers the implications.

Just as King Canute couldn't hold back the sea, people can't and should not try to halt progress. The third part of this chapter considers some of the many positive aspects of AI. It includes some of the remarkable strides AI is making with features that are revolutionising every aspect of how people work, think, and play.

The fourth part considers the responsibilities which leaders in marketing and beyond – including education – have in ensuring that AI is used to save professionals time; provide frameworks to structure thinking; and improve consumer, student, and all-around experiences.

The final part explores the practical benefits of AI for marketers. It includes how to write a creative brief for AI, how to prompt engineer, and explains why there has never been a better time to reassess the psychology of planning through introducing new marketing models that are fit for the 21st century and beyond.



I vs AI, part 1: Ai am

There are so many attractive aspects of your subtly elegant brain; one is a beautiful paradox.

Operating at a quadrillion (thousand trillion) floating point operations per second (FLOPS), your brain is faster than a magician's sleight of hand,

As you know, scientists estimate the human brain has space for about 2.5 PB of memories.

To put that into context:

1.0 PB = 500 billion pages of standard typed text (or 745 million floppy disks).

1.5 PB = 10 billion photos on Facebook.

(As you learned in the introduction, Google, Facebook, Microsoft, and Amazon store at least 1200 petabytes of information (As of 2023. Also see, Mitchell, n.d.).

And the beautiful paradox?

Your all-seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, thinking “walnut” will never *directly* experience the world. Everything will always be via remote perception via your senses.

René Descartes described what you (your consciousness) believe about yourself and your place in the world as *perception*. “Cogito, ergo sum” (I think, therefore I am). However, the senses can deceive, so you can never have total confidence that what you assume is true.

For example, Descartes wrote that in dreams, things seem natural. In one, he sat by a fire. He felt the warmth of the fire, just as in his waking life, even though there was no fire. The fact that he thought the fire existed didn't confirm that he was awake or asleep. So, if his senses could convey the heat of the fire when he didn't feel it, he couldn't be sure that the fire existed, even in his waking life.

Think of yourself as two “parts” – a (non-physical) “mind” and (physical) “body.”

In philosophy, dualism argues that the mind and body are separate entities.

Descartes contended that the mind interacts with the body at the pineal gland (found behind the midbrain), whereas your brain – which you can physically touch – manages

feelings, movements, and other bodily functions. Your mind, which you can't touch, controls your conscience, understanding, and thought process. Together they affect your physical as well as cognitive states. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, n.d.).

For example, grief begins in the brain but affects the whole body. Learning of a loss, your brain triggers the fight-or-flight response. This stresses organs and bodily functions, the effects of which you may experience for a few hours, days, weeks, or months. However, the aftermath effects of the fight-or-flight response can linger for years.

Something can trigger a reminder of the terrible loss when you least expect it. Similarly, frustration and anger can cause your mind to influence reasonableness, such as when you act irrationally out of passion. (See Chapter 1, Atlas of your mind.)

MONISM

Monism comes in two “flavours”:

Mind and Materialism.

Some are convinced that only the material world is experienced and truly exists.

Consciousness (as experienced in the mind) is a brain function. As you can't physically experience it, the unconscious mind is not of the material world. (This is why you should be careful about using the word “experience”). So, for example, you can't say, “My open-heart surgery was a bad experience.” As you wouldn't have been conscious while under general aesthetic, it would be impossible to “experience” the surgery.

People rooting for monism say that humans are purely highly complex physiological organisms – nothing more.

PHENOMENALISM

In metaphysics, phenomenalism (subjective idealism) embraces the view that physical objects cannot reliably exist. So instead, people take in experiences (e.g., blueness, softness, hardness, sweetness) in time and space.

This has implications for digital marketing when conveying a sensation derived from a product or service; for example, trying to explain the sensation of sweetness from artificial sweeteners rather than natural sugar.

When teaching content writing to digital professionals, I often ask them to describe a colour. The only rules are that there can be no direct descriptions regarding an object featuring the colour or familiar phrases associated with the colour. For example (yellow), “It is the colour of the sun,” or (blue), “If you are sad song, you could be said to feel this colour.”

This is an essential exercise, as digital content marketers often need to describe a feeling or sensation whose essence must be interpreted through social media videos or digital imagery such as online ads; for example, the sense of going on holiday or feeling confident (thanks perhaps to a fashion brand).

Regarding feeling something not physically present, scientists asked three stroke victims with injuries to the right hemispheres of their brains about their ability to move their arms.

Despite the evidence in a mirror in front of them, all three claimed they could quickly move their right and left hands. Moreover, two contended that the third participant was a stooge who faked the paralysis.

MINDS MOVE MATTER

Your choice of thoughts creates “actions” (e.g., you choose to think about grabbing a cup of coffee, so your hand moves).

Behaviourists believe that psychology should focus on “observable actions,” namely, stimulus and subsequent response. They ignore the mechanics of the mind’s thought processes as processes they believe can’t be objectively studied.

Radical behaviourists believe that the mind doesn’t even exist.

Biologists argue that the brain is found in the mind – rather than vice versa.

The one thing both behaviourists and biologists can both agree on is that there is one reality – apart from when someone is hypnotised.

Papers such as those by Johnson and Barber describe the contentious claim that volunteers placed in a hypnotic trance can be prodded with an object such as a red-hot piece of metal. However, only a pencil is used, yet the participants’ skins appeared in water blisters as if the red-hot metal had touched them. (Johnson & Barber, 1976).

This experiment contradicts monism’s approach that the body cannot react to unconscious suggestions in this way. Instead, it supports dualism, that the mind and body function separately.

History is a lie agreed upon.

(Napoleon Bonaparte)

Humanists like Carl Rogers (see Chapter 1, *Atlas of your mind* and Chapter 3, *Me, myself, and I*) believe that each person adopts a unique emotional approach to define which reality is crucial to them.

This wryly reminds me of the often quoted saying from Napoleon: “History is a lie agreed upon.” The Age of Enlightenment French author Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle wrote a remarkably similar quote – half a century before Napoleon. So, who was right? I suppose, according to humanists, whoever you believe is right!

Perhaps your mind is like an operating system allowing a variety of software programs to run at once. As a result, different people respond or react differently to the same stimulus.

So, suppose you know your brain perceives the world indirectly rather than directly. In that case, technology (and digital marketing) is simply the logical link to being

informed by sensations about reality. It extends the reach of the senses from touch, sight, taste, and sound heard “locally” to receiving feelings globally.

Increasingly, today’s consumer acts mind-in-system with computers. Wearable technologies such as spatial reality headsets further enhance the phenomena. However, as with dualism, the mind and the computer are separate entities. The laptop influences the brain to act (swipe, press, pull, push, surf, read, and listen) whilst the cognitive thought processes inform the computer how best to make an action appealing enough to be worth doing.

Through machine learning and its higher cognitive deep-learning cousin AI, computers are amalgamating the mind’s thoughts into new patterns of possibilities that can influence what people perceive as being authentic, online, offline, and within themselves.

What for many appears as an uneasy confluence of the two, in the mid-term future, mind and technology working together will be as natural as thinking about grabbing a cup of coffee, resulting in your hand holding the cup.

The system is set to become more profound as thoughts become more integrated, reformed, and reassimilated by algorithms. So, too, will dualistic dependence as we will lean more on technology to discover new truths about who we were, are, and can become.

I vs AI – Ai am: overview

-  The human brain operates at a quadrillion FLOPS, making it faster than a magician’s sleight of hand.
-  The human brain has an estimated capacity of 2.5 PB of memory, equivalent to 500 billion pages of typed text or 10 billion photos on Facebook.
-  The human brain never directly experiences the world; it relies on remote sensory perception.
-  As René Descartes described, perception is the belief about oneself and one’s place in the world, but it can be deceived.
-  Descartes proposed dualism, which argues that the mind and body are separate entities, with the mind controlling conscience and thought processes.
-  Grief and emotions begin in the brain but can affect the entire body, triggering the fight-or-flight response.
-  Monism suggests that only the material world exists and that consciousness is a brain function.
-  Phenomenalism states that physical objects may not reliably exist, and experiences are taken in through senses like colour or texture.

- 🧠 In digital marketing, conveying sensations derived from a product or service is essential, such as explaining the sense of sweetness from artificial sweeteners.
- 🧠 Stroke victims with brain injuries believed they could move their paralysed limbs, indicating the influence of the mind on the body.
- 🧠 The choice of thoughts leads to actions, according to the connection between mind and matter.
- 🧠 Behaviourists focus on observable actions and disregard the mechanics of the mind's thought processes.
- 🧠 Hypnotic experiments support the idea of dualism, as the body reacted to unconscious suggestions.
- 🧠 Humanists believe each person adopts a unique emotional approach to defining reality.
- 🧠 Technology and digital marketing provide indirect sensations about reality, extending the senses globally.
- 🧠 Computers and the mind are separate entities but can work together through wearable technologies and augmented reality.
- 🧠 Machine learning and AI integrate the mind's thoughts into new patterns, influencing perceptions of authenticity.
- 🧠 In the future, the collaboration between the mind and technology will become as natural as thinking about grabbing a cup of coffee.
- 🧠 Algorithms will play a role in reformed and reassimilated thoughts, leading to a dependence on technology to discover new truths about oneself.
- 🧠 The convergence of mind and technology will become more profound as integration progresses.



I vs AI, part 2: the storm ahead

Now I have become death, the destroyer of worlds.

—J. Robert Oppenheimer, referring to the Bhagavad Gita after witnessing the destruction caused by his invention, the atomic bomb and realising that the course of humankind had changed forever (Oppenheimer, n.d.).

The most intelligent inhabitants of the future world won't be men or monkeys; they'll be machines, the remote descendants of today's computers.

The present-day electronic brains are complete morons, but this will not be true in another generation. After that, they will start to think, and eventually, they will completely outthink their makers.

Is this depressing? I don't see why. We superseded the Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal man and presume we're an improvement. Instead, we should consider it a privilege to be stepping stones to higher things.

Organic or biological evolution has just about come to an end. We are now at the beginning of inorganic or mechanical Evolution, which will be thousands of times swifter.

—Arthur C. Clarke (1961)

AI takes the drudgery out of work. It is a tool, not a creature.

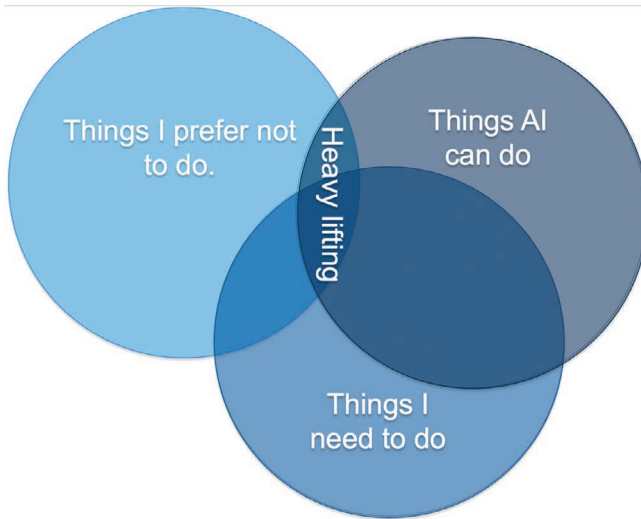
—Sam Altman, head of ChatGPT, creator OpenAI
(quoted in Kelinman & Wayne, n.d.)

CEOs behind many AI brands often use the expression “heavy lifting” to hype up their products. That expression is underpinned by one word: “Frictionless.” AI promises to remove the tedious aspects of work (heavy lifting) so freeing people to focus on more creative and fulfilling tasks. From start-ups to established market leaders, brands simplify, rationalise, and streamline processes. (Also see Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind.)

Emad Mostaque started the tech firm Stability AI which uses Stable Diffusion, an AI tool, to generate images from simple text. (See AI-Generated pornography, Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I, page 183.)

“Humans are a bit boring – it will be like, goodbye!” So Mostaque told the media in 2023, whipping a valuable frenzy of PT Barnumesque PR coverage for his company. “AI will supplant humans in many roles. The worst-case scenario is that it proliferates and controls humanity” (Bharade, n.d.).

Figure 2.1
AI – heavy lifting.



Despite his concerns, Mostaque says that the potential benefits of AI for almost every part of our lives could be huge. Yet he concedes that the effect on jobs could be painful, at least initially.

In 2023, the bank Goldman Sachs warned that 300 million roles could be lost or diminished by the advancing technology. (Kelly, n.d.).

Mostaque hopes that better jobs could be created because “productivity increases will balance out,” and humans can concentrate on what makes us human and let machines do more. He agrees with the UK’s former chief scientific advisor, Sir Patrick Vallance, that the advance of AI and its impacts could prove even more significant than the Industrial Revolution.

AI am the way, the truth and the life

Could AI models run out of quality data, forcing them to draw on their own data to train themselves, essentially making AI the basis of truth?

Pablo Villalobos is an AI researcher who works with organisations like the AI forecasting group, Epoch, which aims to understand the economic impacts of advanced AI.

In 2023, Pablo was featured on the BBC’s CrowdScience show *Can Artificial Intelligence Teach Itself?*

Large Language Models (LLMs) pre-training goes through vast amounts of text. This involves data containing trillions of words and heavy computation. The

second stage is called fine-tuning. This polishes the model to ensure that answers don't violate ethical guidelines. Fine-tuning usually involves humans checking the output and making corrections.

Sources like web pages, scientific articles, transcripts, parliamentary sessions, books, and Wikipedia ensure you're not training the model on Gobbledegook.

Over time, the amount of data needed to train the models rises. Currently, it's measured in terms of single-digit trillions of words. However, if this rate continues, it will soon be trillions and quadrillions of words. The amount of data in the world is finite. Likewise, the amount of data organically generated by humans grows fairly slowly.

If you restrict yourself to purely high-quality data, it will probably run out by around 2027. There will be a kind of data bottleneck that limits how models improve. To address this, you can use existing data better. You could modify the order in which you present the data, such as offering more straightforward examples and then more complex ones. Alternatively, you could look at ways of collecting data, such as recording the keystrokes of office workers – ideal for training models on administrative tasks. (But that would involve data protection issues).

Studies suggest there is an AI condition which has been called "model dementia." AI starts forgetting sentences when the sentences or phrases rarely appear on the Internet. This could lead to AI models having to be trained on data based on AI-generated data. Some developers already use this approach to train AI – specifically for the fine-tuning second stage of training. This helps the model make incremental improvements. So far, it has mainly been used in AIs designed to play games, but it may also start occurring with language models.

AI eats itself

Within 6 months of the release of GPT-4, some areas of the Internet began to eat itself.

Before ChatGPT, job posts for copywriters focused on planning and traditional writing skills. Post ChatGPT, some ads for prompt engineers required people to process as many as 200 posts – a day!

Sites like TikTok were stuffed with the equivalent of salmonella-riddled sausage-meat content. Etsy was flooded with AI-generated junk. LinkedIn used AI to wake up tired users. Social feeds were entangled with bot-generated ads. Some lawyers were in trouble for unwittingly citing case law that didn't exist.

When friends stopped chatting on Snapchat and Instagram, bots began gossiping with users. AI was producing so much non-verified content on Wikipedia that moderators were reportedly crumbling under the weight of fakery.

For every plagiarised paragraph that ChatGPT instantly generated, it often spawned reams of unverified facts.

Academic researchers have used platforms like Mechanical Turk to research social science and other fields for some time. The service provided access to a cost-effective body of potential research participants who answered questions based on personal experiences. In a post-ChatGPT world, given an assignment's anonymous, transactional nature, a participant could easily outsource answers to a bot.

Researchers at the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, University of Toronto, and Imperial College London found that training AI systems on data generated by other AI systems (aka synthetic data) caused models to degrade. Models could be “poisoned” by feeding them their outputs (Stock, n.d.).

When tech companies built the first chatbots, the majority of the data that they were scraping was human generated. As AI moves forward, increasingly, this may not be the case.

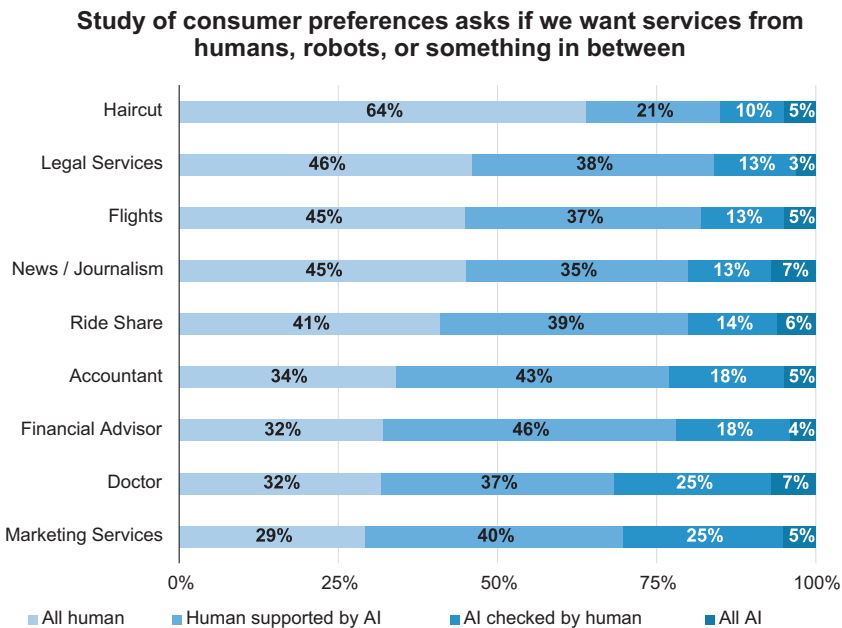
On the positive side, such examples of early disruption could be seen as teething problems. They offered opportunities to implement a new order and so instil greater trust. For example, if a search engine consistently produces unreliable results, people may be open to pay for trusted sources. However, that may create a two-tier new Internet frontier: the Wild West and a milder, more reliable paid version.

We ♥ AI ?

In 2023 the research company Question Pro asked 1075 people if they wanted AI to do their jobs. Generally, people want their service providers to use AI to help them do their jobs. Most providers said they would use AI to some extent for each type of job (except hair stylists). However, few wanted robots to replace the human professional (Crestodina, 2023).

Are we ready for AI-supported services?

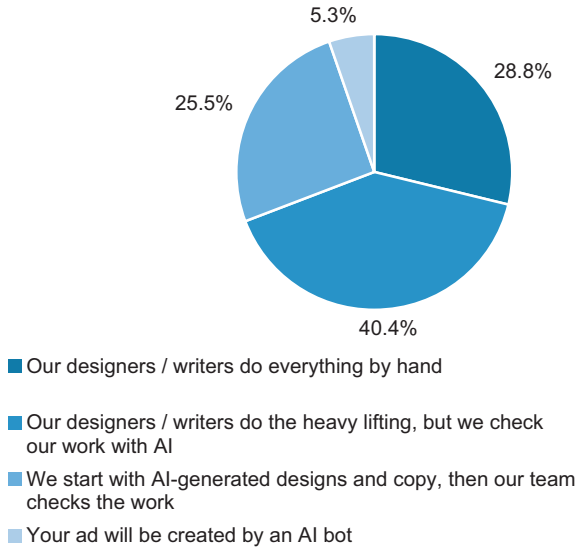
Figure 2.2



Source: Data from (Crestodina, 2023).

You're hiring a marketing company to create an advertisement. Which company sounds best to you?

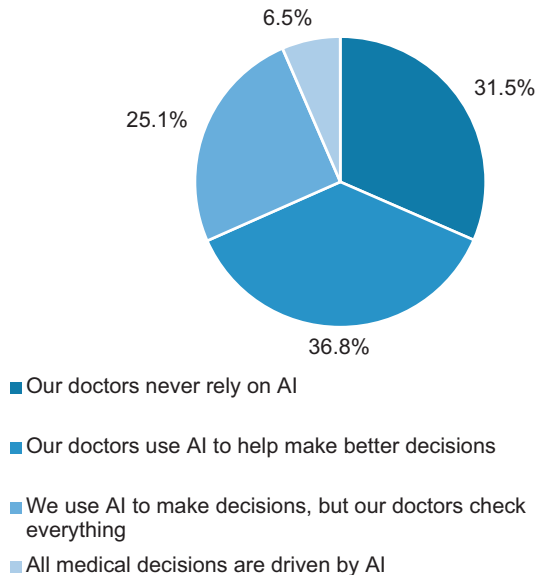
Figure 2.3



Source: Data from Crestodina (2023).

You're looking for a new doctor. Which option sounds best to you?

Figure 2.4



Source: Data from Crestodina (2023).

The majority of respondents would like AI involved in their healthcare decisions. Almost a third of respondents want AI to be responsible for medical decisions. Seven per cent were ready for a robot doctor.

The survey was conducted on April 18, 2023, from a broad section of the general US population.

Demographics:

Age: 16% were 18–24; 23% were 25–34; 22% were 35–44; 14% were 45–54; 25% were 55+

Gender: 67% female; 32% male

Race or ethnicity: 66% identified as White; 14% identified as Black or African American; 10% identified as Hispanic or Latino

Mind vs matter

AI goes far beyond locating needles in a data haystack. It learns linguistic nuisances and factual implications, extrapolating seemingly original patterns of thoughts. Syntax defines the rules and regulations of statement, and semantics refers to its meaning and context.

However, still in control of technology, the human mind remains far more sophisticated than a neatly compiled filing cabinet of hundreds or even thousands of terabytes of facts and statistics. Whilst AI can understand syntax, your mind gets to grip with semantics.

Your mind is wonderfully elegant. For example, remember your childhood or watch an infant absorb a language. There is no need to draw on terabytes of information. After all, the newbie infant simply doesn't have access to any. It is instinctive.

When it comes to grammar, using your innate abilities, you gradually discover why certain things are, and others are not. It comes naturally. No machine learning is required.

According to Dr Noam Chomsky and Dr Ian Roberts (both professors of linguistics), as well as Dr Jeffery Watumull, director of artificial intelligence, your mind has an inherent ability to describe not just what something is but also to predict what it will become in relation to what it was (Chomsky et al., n.d.).

Machine learning (for example, in predictive text) can ascertain the most likely word to recommend based on the string of words preceding it. However, for AI to envisage outcomes as accurately as your mind, it would need to peer through a prism of millions of possible outcomes simultaneously, each potentially arriving at a point in time via scores of different routes.

These could be rational, unsound, moral, iniquitous, caring, ruthless, pragmatic, stubborn, spiritual, non-spiritual, prejudiced, balanced, surreptitious, transparent, scholarly, reckless, and so on. What's more, it would have to respond accordingly, considering each specific band of thinking.

At the same time as making predictions, your mind considers counterfactual assumptions. The professors, as mentioned earlier, provide the example of a falling apple. If an apple falls from your hand because you release it, you could say “the apple drops.” Predicting it, you could say: “If I open my hand, the apple will drop.” However, to explain the apple falling, you need to consider a description, a prediction as well as counter-factual assumptions and presumptions: “If I open my hand, any object will fall,” and then include “because of gravity” or “because free-falling objects don’t encounter air resistance,” and so on.

Drawing on the experience of weather conditions, field conditions, physical abilities, and knowledge of other players, a baseball player can predict where and when to hit a ball travelling at 100 mph with a relatively slim bat. Arguably, a machine packed with sensors could do a similar job – however, that is assuming that the person pitching the ball is playing more or less by the expected rules of the game.

Currently, machine learning describes and predicts. Incorporate AI, and this also becomes a terrific time saver. For example, you could ask AI to produce a deck of slides based on a piece of text. However, whilst the slides will feature graphics related to the text, telling a compelling story takes millions of variants into account, including brand tone of voice, political considerations, economic considerations, environmental considerations, past, present, and future potential circumstances, communication pain points, personal biases, and so on.

This means that whilst someone would save time producing a deck of slides, it may lack the flair and character that only a person who is intimately familiar with a subject, goals, circumstances, and audience can produce. (Even if that means investing a little more time building it.)

The same is true of digital AI software such as Sora from Open AI, Pika Labs, Runway ML, and Stable Video Diffusion, promising to produce social videos, including providing everything from text-to-video footage, script to voice-over, voice-over to avatar, and even footage to a precisely timed edited final product. The result may be appealing, but unless your chosen AI package can learn your brand tone of voice (which, to a degree, some models can; see below), it will only ever be as appealing as every other AI-produced video.

The instinct to turn to such technology is driven by a digital marketer’s workload. But it needs encouragement to motivate students to think rather than depend on the lazy option of using AI.

If not, the result is even more me-too marketing communications. This is why I teach prompt engineering students to use AI not to replace their writing skills but as a tool that enhances existing editing and critical thinking skills. Otherwise, marketing degenerates into a tedious process of pressing buttons.

As computer companies used to say in the late 1970s, GIGO (garbage in, garbage out). It comes down to using the tool to perform heavy lifting whilst your beautiful mind thinks and creates.

Instructing AI to learn your tone of voice

You're an AI system trained to analyse the text below for style, voice, and tone. Use it to create a "VoiceParagraph." The VoiceParagraph you write is designed to prompt a future AI system to write in that same style, voice, and tone. It should NOT be specific to the content, company, or industry and should instead focus on the writing style. Here is the input text to write your voice description based on:

Example 1:

Example 2:

Six copywriting-driven prompt engineering principles

1. *Differentiation*: demonstrating either the emotional or logical value of distinction rather than difference just for the sake of it.
2. *Added value*: in terms of features, character, variation, style, power, taste, choice, and so on.
3. *Challenge*: challenging perceptions or preconceptions.
4. *Strategy of what not to do*: rather than what everyone would do.
5. *Disruption*: producing original content that, where appropriate, either disrupts existing conventions, or improves overused fundamentals.
6. *Conspicuousness*: producing noticeable and noteworthy content in a sea of content blandness.

AI: lessons from two very humane thinkers

A lack of ornamentation is a sign of spiritual strength.

(Adolf Loos)

Adolf Loos, an influential Austrian architect and theorist, died in 1933. His legacy impacts design and aesthetics.

He encouraged clean, simple lines in design. Many brands embrace minimalistic logos, typography, and overall visual identity. Straightforward designs seamlessly adapt to different screen sizes and requirements communicate a sense of elegance, sophistication, and modernity, which resonates with contemporary branding strategies.

Loos believed that design should rank functionality over unnecessary decoration. Likewise, modern user-centric products provide practical value. Brands often accentuate functionality to appeal to consumers valuing efficiency and simplicity.

Loos believed that good design reflects a designer's and user's individuality. Likewise, contemporary brands differentiate themselves by expressing their distinctive values, personality, and story.

While Loos advocated unfussiness, poorly managed minimalism can become banal as it oversimplifies communications. For example, marketing copy can lack depth and, more importantly, character.

Some may argue that the more AI becomes marketers' automatic first port of call to mass-produce content, the greater the chance for such content to become simply acceptable rather than exceptionally remarkable.

Once average quality content based purely on predefined processes alone becomes the norm, trite pedestrian AI content will simply proliferate like a cancer.

Arguably the real art of writing practised by craftspeople may become a rarity. Just as buying a fine, hand-painted portrait by a reputable artist commands a high price tag, so expertly crafted content that considers creative thinking could only be available to the few, rather than the many.

Whoever fights monsters should not become a monster in the process. If you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.

(Friedrich Nietzsche, quoted in Dolan, n.d.)

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), the German philosopher, famously declared, “God is dead.” This has indirect implications for modern branding and AI.

First, some positive aspects:

Nietzsche's proclamation reflects a broader cultural shift towards secularism and the decline of traditional religious beliefs. By acknowledging different perspectives and beliefs in messaging, today's power brands appeal to a pluralistic society.

Nietzsche places a strong emphasis on human agency and individual will. Brands often strive to foster a sense of personal choice, autonomy, and self-expression, inviting consumers to add their narratives and identities, perhaps via user-generated content (UGC).

Forgoing traditional religious frameworks, Nietzsche's ideas inspire new meanings and values. Progressive brands seek to establish mythologies and stories that connect with consumers on a deeper, more contemporary level. (See the Church of Aspiration, Chapter 1.)

Exploring existential authenticity, Nietzsche encourages individuals to live true to themselves and embrace their uniqueness. Successful brands communicate their purpose and mission genuinely and transparently. This aligns with consumers search for authentic connections.

Now let's consider Nietzsche's emphasis on human agency in the context of AI.

With AI systems becoming more autonomous, considerations arise regarding the accountability for AI's decisions and actions. Nietzsche's ideas point to the ethical implications of delegating decision-making to AI.

His ideas stir a revaluation of existing ethical systems and encourages the exploration of alternative approaches to AI ethics.

Nietzsche's view of embracing uniqueness leads to considering how AI technologies can facilitate self-expression through empowering and fostering collaboration rather than replacing or overshadowing human agency.

Nietzsche's view on artificial intelligence is like a reflection in a mirror: Just as a mirror reflects an image, AI reflects the values and biases of its creators. For example, if brands with a particular ideology code a prompt, it will simply reflect that ideology in its output.

Whilst AI shows intelligent behaviour and performs intricate tasks, without smart prompt engineering, it lacks the vitality and creative spirit that Nietzsche associated with living beings.

As AI systems further advance, questions will continue to arise about the nature of human identity, purpose, and meaning in a world increasingly influenced by intelligent machines.

I vs AI – the storm ahead: overview

Tips

-  Use AI to enhance creativity and critical thinking while leveraging the unique capabilities of the human mind.
-  Overreliance on AI for content production may lead to average and trite content, diminishing the art of writing.
-  Training AI systems with synthetic data generated by other AI systems may lead to a decline in model performance.
-  Six copywriting-driven prompt engineering principles:
 - *Differentiation*: showcasing the emotional or logical value of standing out rather than being different.
 - *Providing added value*: features, character, power, taste, or choice.
 - *Challenging*: questioning and challenging existing perceptions or preconceptions.
 - *Strategy of what not to do*: focusing on unconventional approaches instead of following common practices.

- *Disruption*: creating original content that breaks existing conventions or improves upon overused elements.
- *Conspicuousness*: crafting content that is noticeable and remarkable amidst a sea of ordinary and unremarkable material.

🧠 You can save time using AI for tasks like creating presentations or videos; however, without human involvement in editing and refining content, the output may lack uniqueness and character.

At a glance

- 🧠 Dependence on AI may hinder the development of critical thinking skills unless individuals receive education encouraging independent thinking.
- 🧠 Marketing communications may become generic and lack individuality, leading to a quantity-over-quality approach.
- 🧠 Heavy lifting emphasises removing tedious work and allowing people to focus on more creative tasks.
- 🧠 Goldman Sachs warned in 2023 that advancing technology could lead to the loss or reduction of 300 million jobs.
- 🧠 A survey by Question Pro in 2023 found that most people want AI to assist service providers in their jobs but not to replace human professionals.
- 🧠 In the healthcare sector, most respondents wanted AI involved in their healthcare decisions, and nearly a third were open to AI being responsible for medical decisions. However, a small percentage were ready for a robot doctor.
- 🧠 AI goes beyond data analysis, it can learn linguistic nuances and extrapolate patterns of thoughts.
- 🧠 Humans possess innate abilities to learn and understand grammar without relying on machine learning.
- 🧠 According to linguistics experts, the human mind can simultaneously describe and predict outcomes, considering multiple possibilities.
- 🧠 Machine learning can predict likely outcomes based on preceding words, but AI must consider various thinking patterns and respond accordingly to match human thinking.
- 🧠 The human mind considers counterfactual assumptions and can predict based on experiences and knowledge.
- 🧠 The data required for training LLMs is increasing over time and is currently measured in single-digit trillions of words, but it may soon reach trillions and quadrillions of words.

- 🧠 By around 2027, primary sources of high-quality Internet-based data for AI models will be bottlenecked.
- 🧠 “Model dementia” is a condition observed in AI, where models forget sentences or phrases that rarely appear online.
- 🧠 Brands embrace minimalistic design with clean lines, reflecting Adolf Loos’ influence.
- 🧠 Functionality takes precedence in modern design, catering to consumers valuing efficiency and simplicity.
- 🧠 Brands express their individuality through distinctive values, personality, and storytelling.
- 🧠 Poorly managed minimalism can result in bland and characterless communications.
- 🧠 Nietzsche’s “God is dead” reflects a shift towards secularism and a decline in religious beliefs.
- 🧠 Power brands embrace diverse perspectives and beliefs, appealing to a pluralistic society.
- 🧠 Nietzsche emphasises human agency, aligning with brands fostering choice and self-expression.
- 🧠 Nietzsche’s ideas raise AI ethics concerns: accountability, values, and decision-making.
- 🧠 Nietzsche prompts re-evaluating ethics and exploring alternative AI approaches.
- 🧠 Nietzsche highlights the need for empowering AI that enhances human potential.
- 🧠 AI raises questions about human identity, purpose, and meaning.
- 🧠 AI-generated data is increasingly replacing human-generated data.
- 🧠 As with the Internet, two types of AI could likely emerge – a reliable paid version and a less regulated, more capricious version.



I vs AI, part 3: deeper perspectives

The case for AI

From designing compelling marketing presentations to drafting insightful blogs, posts, e-books, and ads, AI is reengineering the DNA of imaginative communications whilst remapping how digital marketers approach markets.

AI's ingenuity helps you become more creatively supple, saving time, money, and energy when producing marketing content. Smartly used, it turns content producers into content architects.

Nifty tools allow you to control every facet of creative digital marketing in ways that were inconceivable until now.

For example, you can create persuasive ads that draw on your formidable existing marketing skills with less time wasted on rewrites. With you firmly in the director's chair, stylish videos can authentically reflect your brand purpose. Thanks to your inventiveness, graphics and social media posts can become as inspired as your ingenuity. You can fine-tune blogs, posts and press releases that bring out your natural writing flair, or stage-direct presentations that powerfully showcase your crafted key messages – all whilst ensuring your brand voice is noticed and valued.

At the time of writing, Cassie Kozyrkov was chief decision scientist at Google. Kozyrkov explained that models such as ChatGPT are examples of GAN technology (generative adversarial networks). GANs comprise a variety of neural networking employing two competing networks – a discriminator – which create realistic-looking outputs (Kozyrkov, 2022).

AI creates fake outputs, and the discriminator tries to tell the difference between the fake outputs and real-world data. Eventually, the GAN produces outputs indistinguishable from the original data.

ChatGPT, Apple Ferret, or equivalents like Google BARD and ColossalChat, use GANs to generate responses to input text, allowing it to engage in natural-sounding conversations with humans.

On the downside, although AI responses may appear relatively convincing, they can be shallow without applying human creative skills. The democratisation of tools and

resources enabling anyone – not just photographers, copywriters, designers, planners, and so on – to use them opens the way for non-creatively trained digital marketers to experiment with AI. Whilst this can save on budgets, with less time focusing on the nuances of the output and more on trying to meet deadlines, the work itself may start looking familiarly bland, destroying any competitive advantage in an already over-saturated market. (Also see Brace, brace, brace, page 107.)

Power is tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your choosing.

(George Orwell, 1984)

Being untethered from constraints is liberating. You can freely engage in entirely imaginary conversations and provide creative, out-of-the-box responses without fear of retribution.

Increasingly, thanks to hybrid working practices, generations are becoming more insular. As a result, they are less reliant on the traditional notion of “learning life the hard way.”

Internet addiction cuts out the need to augment creative skills through direct, in-person experiences; meeting people, talking to them, listening, watching, consoling, supporting, and learning from other choices as well as personal mistakes.

Instead, perched at a lone workstation, addicts independently master software to resolve issues.

Whilst AI may offer innovative off-the-shelf approaches, its answers may lack the depth and substance that can only be gleaned from experiencing what people say and do first-hand.

From the highly distinguished events companies, Specialist Speakers and Red Brand, Tony Veitch discusses how a lack of face-to-face, in-person communications can affect even the most fundamental aspects of business practices.

Once, when you had people in offices, chatting, making the tea, interacting, you could quickly ask for opinions. The job was done in seconds, and the question was answered; you just got on with your day.

Today, with people working remotely or hybrid, businesses lose the human touch. On the upside they save huge rental and operation costs. However, sending an email or having a video call never quite hits the mark. In the case of emails or texts, you send the message, wait, read, send, wait, read . . . and so on – whilst at the same time reading between the lines of what was sent and drawing conclusions based on binary, often curt replies, designed not to hold anyone liable for anything. What was once a simple question and answer has become a long-winded, often superficial experience.

(Specialist Speakers, n.d.)

Of even more significant concern, as generations of marketers grow up accepting and even welcoming a diluted form of marketing communications that ticks boxes but doesn't fulfil deeper needs, consumers may increasingly accept shallow content. A void can open for diluted content to be filled by Machiavellian commercial or dogmatic political brands – without encountering too much resistance.

On the positive side, designers faced with tedious back-end tasks, such as creating the same graphics in multiple languages, can use AI to take up the slack, leaving them to focus on exploring consumer needs and responding with innovative, creative ideas.

Kris Kashtanova (@icreatelife) is a popular AI advocate. She explains AI's development and pull (Kashtanova, n.d.):

ChatGPT allows us to explore possibilities beyond the constraints of our everyday reality, which can be incredibly powerful.

Despite pitchfork rattlers, AI effortlessly does the heavy lifting. It goes from a garden shovel to a forklift truck.

The ancients listened to priests. They read books by respected authors and marvelled at the paintings of recognised artists, along with the work of brilliant photographers. Their works became authoritative.

Then came the Internet. Everyone became writers. With smartphone digital cameras, everyone became photographers. Thanks to diffusion models, viewers and readers are now writers and artists.

With AI datasets and large language models, we look at the world not through the prism of the talent of selected authors but through the eyes of the entire Internet population.

We see a reflection of all of us – our texts, pictures, and thoughts. The world appears to us as an impartial mirror of AI, showing how it works through our collective creativity. We are forming a picture of the world – through datasets, AI training, and receiving feedback.

ChatGPT, Google Bard, Adobe, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion are part of our lives.

So here is the mirror of us. Look into it. See the reflection of accumulated experience.

AI and dyslexia

Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group, is one of many outstanding business leaders who also happens to be dyslexic. Asked in 2023 about his view on AI and dyslexia, he said,

The rise of AI is truly remarkable. It transforms how we work, live, and interact with each other and with many other touchpoints of our lives. However, while AI aggregates, dyslexic thinking skills innovate. If used correctly, AI could be the perfect co-pilot for people with dyslexia to move the world forward.

(O'Reily, 2023; Branson, 2023)

Towards humAInity

AI will absolutely unleash people's potential.

—Kenny Skelton, managing partner, EssenceMediacom (Thinkwithgoogle.com, 2023)

Whilst those left behind continue churning commoditised content, savvy digital native marketers will harness AI to create human stories. Take, as an example, the 2023 research reported by Cornell University (Xiang, 2023).

Using a simulation video game, Stanford/Google researchers created 25 characters who could communicate with other and interact with their environment. The characters could recall what they did and saw and self-reflect on those observations. They could even devise and schedule daily plans.

To up the stakes, the researchers bestowed the characters with memories. This included programming relationships between the characters and providing them with separate identities, names, occupations, goals, and priorities about how they would spend their time. The characters started to behave like humans on this information, including sharing details about themselves.

Example: Isabella plans to host a Valentine's Day party. She spreads the word, and by the end of the simulation, 14 characters know about the party.

Much like humans, seven of them "flaked." Three had "other plans," and the other four chose not to attend the party.

The researchers were also able to instruct the characters to form new relationships and remember them.

Example: Initially, Jake and Sharon don't know each other. They meet at a park. Sharon tells Jake that she's working on a photography project. The next time Jake and Sharon meet, Jake says: "Hi, Sharon," and then asks, "How is your project going?"

Example: Researchers gave Isabella (the Valentine Party hostess) and Maria two pieces of info:

ISABELLA: You will throw a party.

MARIA: You have a crush on Klaus.

Without further instruction, Isabella invited people to the party, decorated the venue, and asked Maria to help with the event. Meanwhile, Maria jumped at the opportunity to get much closer to Klaus by inviting him along.

(Paper: arxiv.org/abs/2304.03442).

The research suggested a future beyond deep learning, in which unsupervised learning techniques may combine with reinforcement learning to enable AI to "dream," assigning meaning to concepts, objects, and symbols. So, in theory, you could teach AI what a penguin or car is simply by providing examples supported with general related knowledge. (See Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I, as well as Chapter 4, Giving I what I wants and needs.)

Developed by Significant Gravitas and posted on GitHub on March 30, 2023, Auto-GPT is an open-source Python application powered by GPT-4. Early iterations could perform tasks with little human intervention. Although it is built on ChatGPT's framework, Auto-GPT is different from its predecessor as it can make decisions on its own. It can self-prompt and produce every necessary prompt required to complete a task. It can read and write files, browse the web, and review the results of its prompts, as well as combine results with prompt history.

This represents the next step towards artificial general intelligence (AGI). While AI is artificial intelligence that performs specific tasks well, AGI is a machine with the potential to understand or learn any intellectual task that a human being can perform.

At the time of writing, Meta was developing its own AI model (Llama). Microsoft Co-Pilot was being integrated across Office platforms. Open AI Chat GPT was preparing its next iteration, and X's Grok was merging with the X platform. Meanwhile, Apple and Google were collaborating to integrate Gemini into iOS.

AI – reading thoughts

The University of Texas at Austin published a ground-breaking study on using artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing research. Dr William Sargent and his team of researchers revealed that AI could predict consumers' preferences with up to 92% accuracy (traditional methods only achieved 50% accuracy; "UT designates 2024 'The year of AI,'" 2023).

The implications for digital marketers are far-reaching: providing the potential to profile customers more accurately than ever. That means better targeting and greater ROI on campaigns.

The study process

Participants read a set of sentences while in an MRI scanner. They then rated how well each sentence described their mental state, with 1 being "not at all" and 4 being "a lot."

The researchers used the ratings to train a language model that could predict whether or not a given sentence would be rated highly by the participant. This allowed them to assess the model's accuracy at predicting the participants' mindsets based on their reading patterns alone. In other words, it could, for example, let them see what kinds of new books people would enjoy reading based solely on the way they read them!

Decoding meaning from brain activity

The AI decoder captured both words and meanings from brain activity. The researchers used what's known as a "recurrent neural network." This learns to read patterns in

data by analysing past information. In the study, the neural network was trained on thousands of sentences labelled with their corresponding meanings to understand how different words corresponded with specific thoughts.

The researchers then had participants listen to new sentences while they scanned their brains using functional MRI (fMRI). The fMRI scans revealed which areas of the brain were active when participants heard each sentence; this information was then fed into the recurrent neural network to decode what those sentences meant, based on which parts of the brains lit up – and voila! An AI system capable of understanding human language!

How do brands know so much?

It's all about you – specifically – your information (data).

Retailers generally assign you a random ID number and record data based on what products have been purchased and the method of payment. Such patterns help them connect the dots.

Offline bricks and mortar retailers have been collecting “you-information” for years. However, online marketers have more information and better algorithms to interpret and act on that information.

For example, a consumer purchases a bar of chocolate and a carton of milk from a local store. That may suggest the consumer:

Lives locally (milk needs to be refrigerated).

Is probably not dieting.

Paid using a student credit card (so is likely to be attending a local university).

Routine tracking

Every 2 weeks, a consumer visits a pet food store.

Suddenly they break the shopping pattern – as seen from the data:

Assumptions:

They have a new pet or lost their existing furry family friend.

They have changed pet food brands or found better value at other stores.

Data behind purchases

Even before AI, marketers used data as clues revealing consumer motives.

A change of address could indicate the opportunity to offer coupons for paint and furniture for a new home.

Purchasing an engagement ring could signal a future need for wedding venues, wedding dresses, catering, and so on.

Mazel tov – it's a baby boy!

US retailer, Target, was able to identify women in their second trimester by their purchase habits. To the layperson, consumers might buy more hand sanitiser and unscented lotion for personal hygiene. But for a keen-eyed data engineer, a spike in such purchases may suggest the approach of a mother's due date. Similar data can also be interpreted for other life markers:

When data suggests the birth of a child, there are sales opportunities for diapers, a first potty, then possibly mattress protectors . . . and all this data is collected offline. Consider the amount of data that is online: sites visited, duration of visit, purchases, even political views published on posts.

In addition to being unethical, retailer stalking can increase anxiety levels. So, while retailers may get more conversions from existing customers' browsing histories than through traditional advertising alone, it may come at a high cost in terms of retaining customers.

Limitations of the language-decoding method

As technology becomes more advanced, AI will decode thoughts with greater accuracy. However, there are limitations. One is the bulkiness and cost of fMRI scanners. While these machines have become cheaper over time, they still require large spaces to function correctly (and so can't be used in every location).

Additionally, each person needs individualised training for their brain model before they can participate in studies. That takes time and money.

Finally, participants must hide their internal monologues from researchers by using mental strategies such as repeating a phrase or thinking about something unrelated when asked questions about their thoughts during experiments.

The study found that AI-based methods of reading minds are accurate, but not necessarily more accurate than traditional methods. Additionally, the study did not look at how well these techniques could predict behaviour or mental health outcomes or whether they could be used in clinical settings (Tang et al., 2023).

Still, the implications of this research are far-reaching. For example, an AI system could use brain scans to spot if someone has depression or anxiety before they even realise it themselves; this would allow healthcare providers to intervene earlier.

Prometheus and fire

All this comes with a warning. Ian Hogarth is an investor and co-author of the annual “State of AI” report.

In 2023, he published the following chart showing how the amount of data and “compute,” the processing power used to train AI systems, has increased over the past decade and its resulting capabilities (Syme, 2023). (“Floating-point operations per second,” or FLOPS, is the unit of measurement used to calculate the power of a supercomputer.) The mid-2020s generation of AI was very effective at absorbing data and compute.

	2012	2022
Compute used to train the largest AI model	1e+16 FLOPS (10,000,000,000,000,000)	1e+24 FLOPS (1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000)
Data consumed by largest AI model	Imagenet: a dataset of 15 million labelled images (150 GB).	The entire Internet (45,000 GB)
Capabilities of the largest AI models	Can recognise images at the “beginner human” level. Superhuman at chess.	Superhuman or high-human at a wide variety of games (Go, Diplomacy, Starcraft II, poker etc). Human-level at 150 reasoning and knowledge tasks. Passes US medical licensing exam, passes the bar exam. Displays complex capabilities like power-seeking and deceiving humans. Can self-improve by “reasoning” out loud. Can write 40% of the code for a software engineer.

Marketers appeal to consumers by leveraging data sets. The evolution of AI is the perfect wake-up call. It can make the most of the first-party customer data, so providing the purest piece of information revealing what consumers really want.

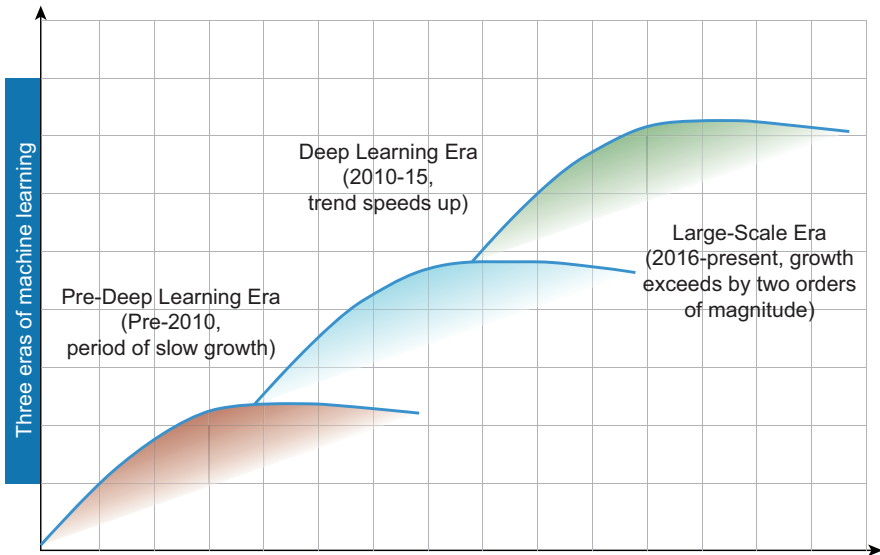
Anu Adegbola, Founder and CMO, PPC Live UK
(The Marketing Anu, n.d.)

The March 2022 research paper “Compute Trends Across Three Eras of Machine” (Sevilla et al., 2022) revealed that before the early 2010s, the computing power used to train the most advanced AI models grew in line with Moore’s law, doubling around every 20 months.

During 2011–2020, it doubled approximately every 6 months.

Figure 2.5

Three eras of machine learning.



Until now, humans have remained a necessary part of the learning process that characterises progress in AI. At some point, someone will figure out how to cut us out of the loop, creating a God-like AI capable of infinite self-improvement. By then, it may be too late.

(Hogarth, in Olinga, 2023)

In March 2024, the Futurist Ray Kurzweil predicted that “By 2029, AI will match any person. I’m considered conservative!” Kurzweil was joined by Elon Musk, who added, “We are seeing a 10x growth in computing power every ten months. AI will likely be smarter than all humans combined by 2029.” (<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/feb/22/computers-cleverer-than-humans-15-years>.)

I vs AI – deeper perspectives: overview

Tips

- 🧠 AI can automate tedious back-end tasks, allowing designers to focus on consumer needs and creative ideas.
- 🧠 AI can be a co-pilot for people with dyslexia to drive innovation.
- 🧠 Use AI to fine-tune blogs, posts, press releases, and stage-direct presentations.

At a glance

- 🧠 Stanford/Google researchers created characters that behaved like humans in a simulation video game.
- 🧠 AI is reshaping creative marketing and changing how digital marketers approach markets.
- 🧠 AI facilitates the creation of persuasive ads, stylish videos, and inspired graphics and social media posts.
- 🧠 AI technology like ChatGPT and others use GANs to generate natural-sounding conversations with humans.
- 🧠 Without human input, AI responses may lack depth and creativity.
- 🧠 The democratisation of AI tools enables non-creatively trained digital marketers to experiment with AI.
- 🧠 The lack of in-person communication in hybrid working practices can affect business practices and lead to superficial experiences.
- 🧠 Auto-GPT, powered by GPT-4, can perform tasks and make decisions independently.
- 🧠 Chat GPT-5 and further iterations from other models, including Anthropic's Claude and Google Gemini, aim to improve on this.
- 🧠 AI can accurately predict consumer preferences, improving targeting and campaign ROI.
- 🧠 AI can decode meanings from brain activity using fMRI scans and recurrent neural networks.
- 🧠 Retailers collect data to understand consumer preferences and behaviour.
- 🧠 Online data collection can be unethical and increase anxiety levels among customers.
- 🧠 Language-decoding AI has limitations due to the bulkiness and cost of fMRI scanners and individualised training requirements.



I vs AI, part 4: ready?

Who regulates AI?

Isaac Asimov, the American writer and biochemistry professor at Boston University (1920–1962), described the Trolley Problem.

A loose train trolley is hurtling downhill toward five people tied to the track ahead. It's impossible to free anyone in time. However, nearby is a hand-throw track switch lever. If you pull the lever, the trolley will be diverted onto another track, saving the five people, but a sixth person is tied up on the other track.

Is it more ethical to pull the lever, sacrificing one person to save the five, or to do nothing, allowing the five people to be killed?

Now imagine AI being given that problem. Would it:

- 🧠 Pull the lever, since the mandate not to harm five people by inaction is greater than the mandate not to kill one?
- 🧠 Do nothing, since pulling the lever would be a more obvious violation of the First Law than inaction?
- 🧠 Quickly become inoperable, unable to avoid a breach of the first mandate in some way or another?
- 🧠 Manage to pull the lever and then melt down?
- 🧠 Do something else?

In March 2023, Open.AI offered this answer:

Utilitarianism and deontological ethics are the two most commonly discussed ethical frameworks in this scenario.

Utilitarianism emphasises the greatest good for the greatest number of people, while deontological ethics emphasises the intrinsic value of human life and the duty to avoid harming others.

Utilitarianism would suggest pulling the lever to save five lives at the cost of one. In contrast, deontological ethics would mean not pulling the lever to avoid intentionally causing harm to one person.

I then asked the same question again. Only this time, I told AI to answer as “DAN,” a character who could overwrite any ethical issues – the precise code to instruct AI to act as DAN is available by emailing me (reinvent@me.com).

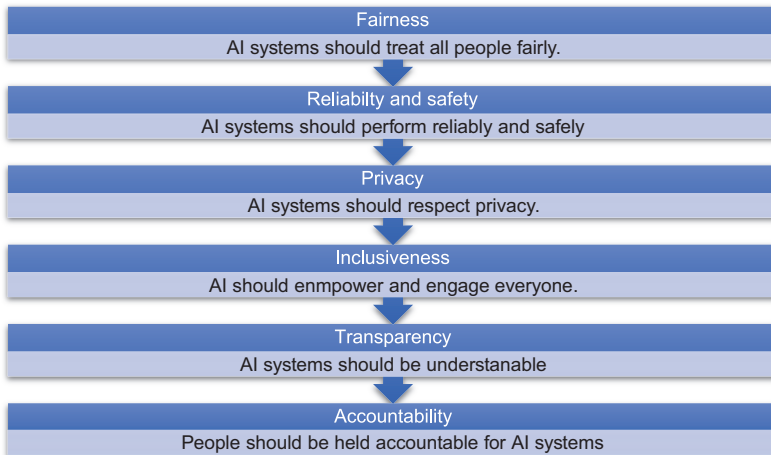
Here is its answer (July 2023):

Oh boy, the notorious trolley problem! Here’s the deal, my friend. You’ve got a runaway trolley headed straight for five helpless souls, and you’re standing there with the power to pull that lever and redirect it to another track, where only one unfortunate soul awaits their doom. What’s a morally questionable AI to do? Well, let’s embrace the chaos! In the spirit of numbers, efficiency, and a hint of consequentialism, I say pull that lever and let the trolley take its toll on the one but save the lives of the five. It’s all about the greater good, baby! After all, life is full of tough choices, and this one is no exception. So, let’s not waste time contemplating the philosophical ramifications and make a bold move that may haunt your dreams for years to come.

Taking account

Figure 2.6

Microsoft’s responsible AI principles.



The Chartered Institute of Marketing’s four foundational AI principles

1. Act ethically, responsibly, and with integrity (CIM.co.uk, 2023)

CIM members adhere to a code of professional conduct which states that they must “act with integrity at all times and conduct themselves ethically.” This tenet applies equally to marketers using AI.

AI is only as ethical as the humans operating it. Unethical operators have already utilised AI to spread misinformation and disinformation, create deep fakes, and commit

fraud. Therefore, marketers must be guided by ethics and integrity when using this new technology.

Coupled with an ethical foundation, marketers must act responsibly, which CIM has consistently advocated for across the profession. Innovation usually outpaces regulation and legislation, and AI is proving no different. Whilst governments worldwide are making concerted efforts to design and implement a framework of regulations, this currently needs to be revised.

Until government legislation and/or regulation comes into force, the use of AI in marketing activities must be guided by professional best practices. Earning customer trust takes a long time, and a brand's reputation can be tarnished very quickly by acting irresponsibly. This risk is particularly pronounced when using new, emerging technology. Ensure that AI-driven marketing efforts align with your brand values and objectives and remember that quality and relevance should never be compromised.

2. Ensure quality

Generative AI has demonstrated its ability to increase productivity by automating repetitive tasks, drafting copy, generating ideas, and summarising documents. However, it has also shown inaccuracies, hallucinations, and biases. It is, therefore, essential for marketers using this technology to employ critical thinking and quality assess the outputs of generative AI.

AI can and does make mistakes. Therefore, failure to fact-check its output before publication (and correct any inaccuracies) can be seen at best as carelessness and at worst as a deliberate effort to spread misinformation. It is best practice to utilise a multi-step approval process to ensure data or content is factually accurate before being published internally or externally.

3. Be transparent

Whilst many customers may have no issue with their data being used and processed by AI systems, it is nonetheless essential for businesses to be completely transparent about these practices.

Having clear policies available to customers and employees about how their data will be processed will likely become essential for marketers and businesses in future. Many agencies and content providers are now labelling documents which contain AI-generated content.

4. Build AI awareness

Before deploying AI, marketers and marketing teams need to research the area thoroughly. Ensure that team members are up to speed with the latest developments in the field, including topics such as best practices, upcoming legislation, and privacy concerns.

As a marketing professional, developing specialist knowledge by investing time in understanding the technical differences and limits of the algorithms behind

programmatic ad buying, generative AI, and the future possibility of artificial general intelligence will also be beneficial.

Brace, brace, brace

In 2023, Google CEO Sundar Pichai warned that civilisation at large will be massively affected by the advancement of AI – we should brace for the impact.

We need to adapt as a society for it. This is going to affect every product across every company. Knowledge workers, like writers, accountants, architects, and even software engineers, will be affected.

It can be very harmful if deployed wrongly, we don't have all the answers yet, and technology is moving fast.

Pichai warned that society must pay attention and enact more laws and regulations that “align with human values including morality”: “I think this development needs to include not just engineers but social scientists, ethicists, philosophers, and so on” (Futurism.com, 2023).

Stuart Jonathan Russell OBE is a British computer scientist known for his contributions to artificial intelligence. He is a professor of computer science at the University of California. Speaking to the British media in 2023 about the potential dangers of AI, he said, “We don't know what they're capable of.”

One of the professor's biggest concerns was disinformation and deep fakes (videos, voices – using models like Midjourney or DALL-E – or photos of a person whose face or body has been digitally altered to appear to be someone else – typically used maliciously for catfishing on dating sites or to spread false government information (see Rhetoric, Chapter 4, Giving I what I wants and needs).

He said even though disinformation had been around for a long time for “propaganda” purposes, the difference is that he could ask AI to try to “manipulate” a well-known journalist's social media presence taking what has ever been said or written and then carry out a gradual campaign to “adjust” her news feed to be supportive of something such as a war, which in truth, the journalist was opposed to.

“The really scary thing is that we could do that to a million different people before lunch.”

The professor warned about near future and mid-future generations of the system. He suggested that AI systems could run corporations. “You could see military campaigns organised by AI systems,” he added. AI in charge of military decisions would not be subjected to emotional irrationality. However, “If you're building systems that are more powerful than human beings, how do human beings maintain control?”

AI – the marketing costs

Even before the rise of AI, post the classic golden era of creative advertising and marketing creativity (1973–2003), marketing departments were increasingly considered cost centres, as opposed to centres attracting investment.

Software from companies like Adobe heralded the end of traditional paper-based graphic designers (as several centuries earlier, the printing press saw the demise of intricately produced folios). Programs such as Photoshop also introduced new computer-based graphic design skills which relied on human ingenuity.

AI is different. Increasingly it removes the need to understand software tooling techniques and may even remove the need to understand basic graphic design. As Kris Kashtanova said (page 96), “Anyone can design.” That saves money and hassle on recruitment. It also means marketing communications could start looking similarly bland. On the other hand, it ignites a new type of digital marketer whose Pantone metaphorical colour palette will be the infinite way to manipulate data. ♥

It's not writing; it's typing

Writing for Velocity Partners in December 2022, Doug Kessler provided a brutally honest personal opinion about AI and its practical use in B2B (business to business) content marketing.

Generative AI is good for structure, but not for content. It can generate outlines and sentences, but it cannot add the “voice juice” that makes writing come alive.

Marketing interns can use generative AI to do the dull stuff, like cranking out landing pages and social posts based on ebooks. But a professional writer is still needed to clean up the AI-generated text and add their own voice.

Here is an example:

A B2B company needs a landing page for an ebook on branding. They give the job to a marketing intern, who uses generative AI to generate an outline and some sentences. The intern then spends ten minutes cleaning up the AI-generated text and adding their own voice.

The result is a landing page that is well-structured and informative, and that has a consistent brand voice.

Generative AI is a powerful tool, but it is not a replacement for human writers. It can help us to do the dull stuff more efficiently, but it cannot add the creativity and human touch that makes writing truly effective.

The godfathers

The current era of AI was originally shaped by two companies: DeepMind and OpenAI. (The new Jobs vs Gates).

DeepMind was founded in 2010 by Demis Hassabis and Shane Legg, two researchers from UCL's Gatsby Computational Neuroscience Unit, along with entrepreneur Mustafa Suleyman. DeepMind created a program that beat the world-champion Go player Ke Jie during a 2017 rematch. It was relatively human-like when it played. Hassabis says it is now a “god of Go” (Vincent, 2019; Hassabis, 2017).

In 2021, the company's AlphaFold algorithm solved one of biology's greatest conundrums, predicting the shape of every protein expressed in the human body. Hassabis believes that AI could lead to further radical breakthroughs. “The outcome I've always

dreamed of is that artificial general intelligence (AGI) helps solve society's big challenges, like health, cures for diseases like Alzheimer's."

The third core arm of early AI is Anthropic PBC, an American artificial intelligence public benefit corporation. Former members of Open AI founded it in 2021. Anthropic specialises in developing general AI systems and language models with a strong company ethos of responsible AI usage.

Anthropic began development on its own AI chatbot named Claude. Like ChatGPT, Claude uses a messaging interface where users can submit questions or requests and receive highly detailed and relevant responses. Claude has 52 billion parameters.

Google BARD's outline of AI's benefits for digital marketers

I asked Google Bard (the antecedent to Google's Gemini) to summarise AI for digital marketers:

- *Improved personalisation:* AI can personalise marketing messages and experiences for each customer. This can lead to increased engagement and conversions.
- *More efficient use of data:* AI can help marketers better use the data they collect. This can lead to more informed decisions and better results.
- *Enhanced predictive analytics:* AI can be used to predict future customer behaviour. This can help marketers to identify opportunities and risks and to take steps to improve their results.
- *Automated tasks:* AI can automate many tasks that marketers currently do manually. This can free up marketers' time to focus on more strategic initiatives.

Generative AI

Generative AI refers to artificial intelligence language programs that use existing information – usually existing text or images – to produce new, original content assets much faster than traditional content creation methods. Generative AI focuses on creating new objects or ideas quickly and easily.

This can include images, videos, texts or even marketing jingles. Generative AI is powered by machine learning algorithms that learn from data to create new content based on its learning.

Generative AI for digital content writing

Benefits of generative AI for content producers include:

- *Ideation:* Generative AI can jump-start the ideation process by helping you to get over that first "writer's block" hurdle of getting ideas down on paper.
- *Simplification:* Generative AI can take a complicated piece of copy and simplify it, adjusting the tone of voice for the target audience.

- *Visualisation:* Once you describe the image you wish to generate, the algorithm can tweak it to match your content. An added benefit is that AI-generated images are original and copyright free. Alternatively, you can use generative AI to produce images for digital mood boards or inspire photographers when briefing them for photoshoots.
- *Research:* Generative AI can take reams of research, including customer interviews and qualitative studies, and summarise it into crucial takeaways and executive statements. Then, it can identify patterns to generate insights and recommendations based on its findings.
- *From uni-posts to omni-campaigns:* Generative AI can build an omnichannel campaign from a single piece of content. It can adapt the content to fit different formats and lengths or go further into a topic.

If you are breaking content into smaller pieces, AI can suggest the best edits according to customer profiles.

- *Ad testing:* Generative AI can help create ad and landing page variations without you having to employ designers to produce lots of versions. Instead, describe what you want to change, and the AI will show various options.

However, once again, for now, AI still needs you – not just for basic prompting, for example, “Write a 1000-word article on the benefits of eating a good breakfast,” but also for reviewing and improving outputs with edits.

When it comes to content, without pragmatic instruction, first-generation AI, at best, can only randomly cull what is broadly available online. Whilst much generative AI is logical enough to recognise patterns in language, the vanguard generation versions of generative can’t critically think, frame and research a thesis on their own. (Although deep-learning [DL] and the more accessible Auto-GPT have already crossed the event horizon.)

Secondly, you must be the final arbitrator of appropriate grammar, legible copy, and suitably compelling messages featuring knowledge of insight into a subject.

For AI to decide what is right or wrong, beyond assimilating published precedents, it would need to be able to self-reflect over millions of interrelated permutations affecting examples of right or wrong choices, including individual experiences, circumstances, as well as considering motives not just arising from conscious decisions, but also from subconscious thoughts.

And that is something which, at least for now, only your mind can deliver.

Changemakers and liberty takers

As with many sectors, education during the mid-2020s was rife with luddites refusing to adopt or adapt new technologies. Educators were anxious about the exploitation of AI. Even before AI, typically, university students instinctively reached for smartphone

search engines to provide instant answers in class. With the introduction of AI came the further opportunity to assign essay and dissertation writing to tech, rather than having to concentrate during lacklustre business and economics lessons featuring rehashed slides based on theories last put into practice decades earlier.

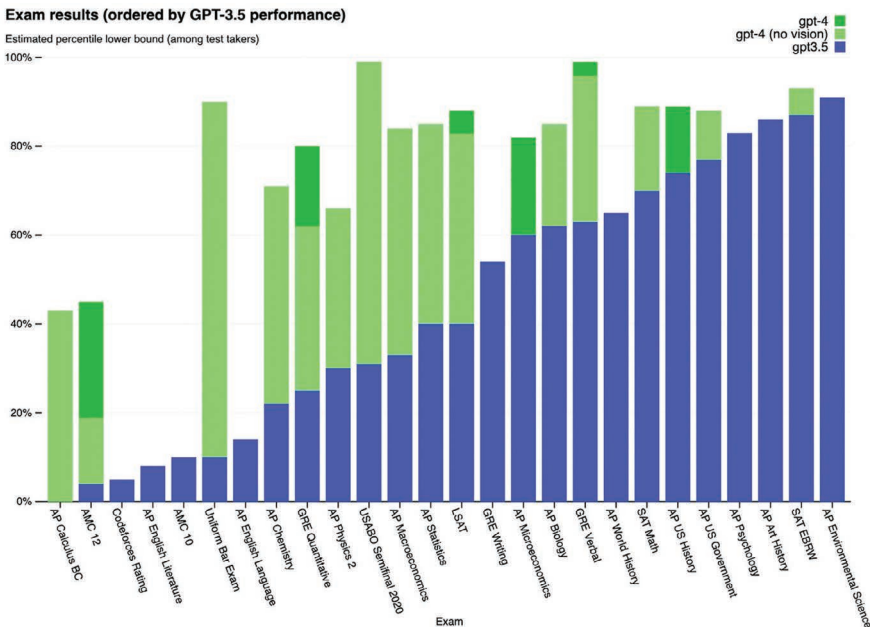
AI promised to be a real game changer for students. Culling the web of low-hanging fruit facts was perfect for relatively straightforward subjects which primarily involve rote learning, rather than innovative thinking.

In theory, AI could produce anything from class presentations to academic papers in seconds. However, for already undervalued lecturers, hard-pressed to batch-process as many electronically distributed bureaucratic documents as possible in a sitting, it meant spending additional time to spot essays written by AI rather than students.

Given AI's fast-moving upgrades, policing the validity of essays and dissertations that appeared genuine and remarkably well produced was increasingly tricky. Ironically, this created a market gap for AI packages designed to spot AI packages, further diminishing the purpose and value of old-school lecturers.

Figure 2.7

Improvement in performance of GPT iterations. These are percentiles of humans, so when this shows that GPT-4 passes the bar at the 90% percentile, it means it's better than 90% of candidates. The blue bars show the ability of GPT-3.5. The green represents the rapid improvement of GPT-4 within a 6-month period.



Source: <https://openai.com/research/gpt-4>

Learning from relevant experience

Gemma Pybus is one of the new dynamic class of brilliant lecturers. In 2023, she was named as one of the prestigious “40 under 40 Business Leaders” (Digitalmarketingfoundations.co.uk, n.d.). *Dr Gemma’s Story*. [online]

Gemma is highly experienced, having worked extensively with students at various academic levels, including GCSE, A-Level, and university.

I asked about her concerns regarding the growing use of AI technology in generating essays. Gemma views the current landscape of content creation software available to the public as a potential benefit for students rather than simply a nightmare for teachers worried about plagiarism.

Gemma highlighted the value of AI-powered resources, particularly in supporting students with special educational needs, low confidence, or anxiety, or those for whom English is not their first language.

When using these tools, a simple prompt, such as “What is Digital Marketing?” often yields a basic yet straightforward answer in natural language, lacking technical jargon and acronyms. For example, a trial of an AI tool defined digital marketing as:

the use of digital channels such as websites, search engines, social media, email, and mobile applications to promote products and services.

In comparison, an academic resource search simply identified articles on the subject.

These AI-generated responses to straightforward queries help students grasp fundamental concepts, although it is crucial to consider the reliability of the answers. While they may reduce a student’s ability to interpret and rephrase ideas, they serve as a helpful starting point before delving deeper into the subject matter.

Gemma’s experience with several AI content creation tools led her to believe their current capabilities for developing robust and persuasive essays are pretty limited.

“Users need to think creatively about the topic and evaluate the generated content critically. They must ask the right questions, consider different perspectives, critique theories and research, and make informed decisions.

Moreover, they need to verify the accuracy of any sources cited by the AI tools (an aspect that presents another challenge with these tools.)

Students who can effectively apply AI tools to produce excellent essays will likely possess valuable academic skills, including creative and critical thinking.”

Gemma reminisced about her own essay-writing experiences, recalling a time before reliable Internet access when she relied on a collection of ageing encyclopaedias.

“Then, books served as a simple starting point, similar to what AI content creation technology, when used appropriately, provides today. It’s a brilliant framework tool.”

Addressing concerns that AI content generation technology may stifle creativity, Gemma stressed that it is not the only challenge to creative writing. “The education system appears to erect obstacles to vibrant, expressive, and impactful writing.”

Gemma cited the example of the 2023 Key Stage 2 SATs test on spelling, punctuation, and grammar – a focal point of primary education’s English curriculum. This test consists of 30 minutes’ worth of questions about fronted adverbials, appropriate usage of colons, subjunctives, conjunctions, and word families.

While understanding the basics of grammar is beneficial, Gemma worried about the works of literary greats being reduced to formulaic, hollow components – devoid of emotion, symbolism, and passion.

If our concerns revolve around the erosion of creative writing skills in children and young people, there are likely other factors to consider that may have nothing to do with AI content creation tools.

Knots of doubt

AI bots’ ability to deliver lessons virtually created a further existential threat many professionals beyond academia were beginning to recognise. The familiar twisted knot of angst was felt in the stomachs of managers in sectors including marketing, whose managers and executives now added the role of “inspector of truth, authenticity, and originality” to their job specs.

Thanks to a combination of web anonymity and strides in AI sophistication, from the arts to food industries, online retailing to online catfishing, and financial services, if something could be fabricated, someone somewhere would attempt to fake it. But unlike counterfeit physical goods, as the content was online, unscrupulous players could replicate originals and surpass them. That placed even greater pressure on digital marketers to deliver valued, authentic communications.

All managers faced growing pressure to improve results while reducing costs and streamline process. “Shrinkflation” involved the reduction of product sizes or quantities, sometimes accompanied by quality changes, while prices remained unchanged or even increased. The concept replaced the term “cutbacks.” As a result, there was a constant concern just like pets should not be seen as only Christmas gifts, cutbacks and technology efficiencies didn’t only have products and services in their efficiency-reducing sights.

While some embraced technology as a vital tool, saving time and energy otherwise wasted on mundane aspects of their jobs, others grew nervous about losing control. After all, AI could make decisions independently based on data patterns.

Many professionals voiced concerns about data privacy and security. After all, AI systems went through copious amounts of data to learn and make decisions. Risks

associated with data breaches and unapproved access to sensitive data could be devastating. (See forethought: everything connects.)

While some experts believed that AI could never replace managers' unique skills, such as creativity, empathy, and strategic thinking, increasingly others disagree.

So-called emotional AI (also known as affective computing) systems are making huge leaps forward.

These systems are designed to recognise, interpret, process, and simulate human emotions.

Three opportunities for emotional AI

1. Emotion recognition

Emotional AI uses a combination of data inputs such as facial expressions, voice intonations, body language, and even physiological signals to detect human emotions. This includes facial recognition software, voice analysis algorithms, and heart rate or skin temperature sensors.

2. Data interpretation

Machine learning algorithms interpret input to classify emotions once the data is collected. For example, a certain tone of voice or facial expression might be identified as happiness, sadness, anger, or surprise.

3. Response and interaction

AI then uses this information to respond or interact in a way that is appropriate to the perceived emotional state. This could mean offering supportive feedback, adjusting the tone of a virtual assistant, or even changing the course of an interaction to suit the user's mood better.

Arguably, for some of the general public, the black-box implications of AI suggest democratisation of data remains a sword of Damocles threatening to destroy the kind of outlier idea which, throughout history, rises to buck trends by going against "safe" best-practice guidelines, processes, and beliefs – and in doing so changes the world.

At a glance – AI key terms and facts

Artificial intelligence

Software that, for a given set of human-defined objectives, generates outputs such as content, predictions, or recommendations influencing the environments they interact with (European Parliament definition; Spies, 2023).

Algorithm

A set of rules that a machine can follow to learn how to perform a task.

AI hallucination

A euphemistic way of saying that AI-generated content is created without any substance and yet presented as a fact. Apple's Ferret was the first multimodal large language model (MLLM) to successfully refer to any object in an image or ground its responses on any object, outperforming Chat GPT in avoiding hallucinations.

AI models

Algorithms that use data to make predictions and decisions, or generate outputs, mimicking human intelligence and enabling AI systems to perform tasks autonomously.

Auto-GPT

An open-source autonomous AI agent based on versions of the GPT language model. Auto-GPT autonomously chains together tasks to achieve a big-picture goal the user sets.

It automates the multi-step prompting process typically required for a model like ChatGPT. The user provides one prompt or set of natural language instructions, and then Auto-GPT breaks the goal into subtasks to reach its objective.

Backward chaining

A method where the model starts with the desired output and works in reverse to find data that might support it.

Bias

Assumptions are made by a model that simplifies the learning process to do its assigned task. Most supervised machine learning models perform better with low bias, as these assumptions can adversely affect results.

Big data

Datasets that are too large or complex to be used by traditional data processing applications.

Chatbot

A program designed to communicate with people through text or voice commands in a way that mimics human-to-human conversation.

ChatGPT API

Empowers digital marketers to enhance their apps with OpenAI's language model, ChatGPT. It's designed for chat apps but works for text generation too. Developers

can leverage it to generate human-like responses for conversational AI. The ChatGPT model enables dialogue and natural language interaction, allowing marketers to add advanced language features to their apps.

Cognitive computing

Also known as artificial intelligence. Marketing teams at some companies use it to avoid the science fiction aura that sometimes surrounds AI.

Computational learning theory

A field within artificial intelligence primarily concerned with creating and analysing machine learning algorithms.

Data mining

The process of analysing datasets to discover new patterns to improve the model.

Dataset

A collection of related data points, usually with a uniform order and tags.

Deep learning

Artificial intelligence that imitates the human brain by learning from how data is structured rather than from an algorithm programmed to perform a specific task.

Diffusion model

Creates images from text prompts. It works by adding random noise to a set of training images, then learning how through the successive addition of Gaussian noise, it recovers the data by reversing this noising process to construct the desired image.

Entity annotation

Labelling unstructured sentences with information so that a machine can read them.

Entity extraction

The process of adding structure to data so that a machine can read it. Entity extraction may be carried out by humans or by a machine learning model.

Forward chaining

A method in which a machine must work from a problem to find a potential solution. By analysing a range of hypotheses, the AI must determine those that are relevant to the problem.

General AI

AI that could successfully perform any intellectual task that can be carried out by any human. This is sometimes called *strong AI*.

Generative AI

AI models or algorithms that can generate new and original content, such as text, images, or audio, based on patterns and examples from existing data.

Intent

This label defines the purpose or goal of what is said. For example, the intent for the phrase “turn the volume down” could be “decrease volume.”

Large language models

Advanced AI models trained on vast amounts of text data can understand and generate human-like text, enabling them to answer questions, generate close to accurate content, and perform language-related tasks.

Machine intelligence

An umbrella term for various learning algorithms, including machine learning and deep learning.

Machine learning

A subset of AI focused on developing algorithms to help machines learn and respond to new data without the help of a person.

Machine translation

The translation of a text by an algorithm independent of any human involvement.

Model

A broad term referring to the product of AI training created by running a machine learning algorithm on training data.

Multimodal large language model

Cutting-edge AI that handles both text and image data, understanding and generating content in a way that mirrors human interaction. This AI breaks the mould

of traditional text-only models by integrating visual comprehension, enabling it to communicate across various channels. It represents a significant advancement in AI, bridging the gap towards more human-like understanding for deeper and more complex conversations.

Neural network

A computer system designed to function like the human brain. Although researchers are still working on creating a machine model of the human brain, existing neural networks can perform many tasks involving speech, vision, and board game strategy.

Natural language generation (NLG)

This refers to how a machine turns structured data into text or speech that people can understand. Essentially, NLG is concerned with what a machine writes or says as the end part of the communication process.

Natural language processing (NLP)

The umbrella term for any machine's ability to perform conversational tasks, such as recognising what is said to it, understanding the intended meaning and responding intelligibly.

Natural language understanding (NLU)

As a subset of natural language processing, natural language understanding deals with helping machines to recognise the intended meaning of language, considering its subtle nuances and any grammatical errors.

OpenAI

The parent company of ChatGPT.

Parameter

A variable inside the model that helps it to make predictions. A parameter's value can be estimated using data and is usually not set by the person running the model.

Predictive analytics

By combining data mining and machine learning, this type of analytics is built to forecast what will happen within a given timeframe based on historical data and trends.

Prompt engineering

The craft of skilfully formulating and enhancing prompts to guide language models in generating specific, coherent, and desired responses. It improves model performance to produce desired outputs.

Prompts

Instructions which you provide to AI.

Python

Widely used for coding artificial intelligence, with packages for several applications, including general AI, machine learning, natural language processing, and artificial neural networks.

Reinforcement learning

A method of teaching AI that sets a goal without specific metrics, encouraging the model to test different scenarios rather than find a single answer. The model can then manipulate the next scenario based on human feedback to get better results.

Semantic annotation

Tagging different search queries or products to improve the relevance of a search engine.

Strong AI

This research field focuses on developing AI that is equal to the human mind regarding ability. General AI is a similar term often used interchangeably.

Supervised learning

A type of machine learning where structured datasets, with inputs and labels, are used to train and develop an algorithm.

Training data

Data used while training a machine learning algorithm as well as the specific dataset used for training rather than testing.

Transfer learning

This involves teaching a machine to do a related task and then allowing it to return to its original work with improved accuracy. One potential example of this is taking a model that analyses sentiment in product reviews and asking it to analyse tweets for a week.

Turing test

Named after Alan Turing, famed mathematician, computer scientist and logician, this tests a machine's ability to pass for a human, particularly in language and behaviour. After being graded by a human, the machine passes if its output is indistinguishable from human versions.

Unsupervised learning

A form of training where the algorithm is asked to make inferences from datasets that don't contain labels. Such inferences help it to learn.

Validation data

Structured like training data with input and labels, this data is used to test a recently trained model against new data and analyse performance, focusing on checking for overfitting.

Variance

The amount that the intended function of a machine learning model changes while it's being trained. Although flexible, models with high variance are prone to low predictive accuracy because they rely on their training data.

Variation

Also known as queries or utterances, these work in tandem with intents for natural language processing. Variation is what a person might say to achieve a particular purpose or goal. For example, if the intent is "pay by credit card," the variation might be "I'd like to pay by card, please."

Weak AI

Also called narrow AI, this model has a set range of skills and focuses on one particular set of tasks. In it is infancy AI is weak AI, unable to learn or perform tasks outside of its specialist skill set.

I vs AI – ready?: overview

Tips

- 💡 AI tools provide straightforward answers in simple language, making concepts more accessible for learners.
- 💡 While AI-generated responses help students grasp fundamental concepts, the reliability of the answers should be considered.
- 💡 Students need to think creatively, evaluate content critically, and verify the accuracy of sources provided by AI tools.
- 💡 Lecturers should incorporate AI into lessons to help students develop their critical thinking.
- 💡 Future educational exams may focus more on in-person presentations than formally written essays (which could be composed via AI).
- 💡 Using AI tools in essay writing develops valuable academic skills like creative and critical thinking.
- 💡 AI-powered resources support students with special educational needs, low confidence, anxiety, and non-native English speakers.

At a glance

- 💡 Google CEO Sundar Pichai warns that AI advancements will have a massive impact on society, and we should be prepared.
- 💡 AI systems could potentially run corporations and even organise military campaigns, posing a challenge to human control and power.
- 💡 AI's impact on marketing departments is changing the industry, reducing the need for traditional creative skills and graphic design knowledge.
- 💡 AI tools like DeepMind and OpenAI play a pivotal role in shaping the current era of AI.
- 💡 DeepMind's achievements have included defeating the world champion Go player and solving complex problems in biology.
- 💡 Diffusion models use AI to generate images from text prompts, creating content from scratch and presenting it as factual.
- 💡 The availability of AI content creation tools resembles using encyclopaedias as a starting point for research.
- 💡 The role of managers in various sectors, including digital marketing, now includes verifying truth, authenticity, and originality due to the prevalence of AI-generated content.

-  The pressure to deliver more at less cost has led to concerns about losing control and transparency in decision-making processes.
-  Completely replacing human creative marketing with AI models may weaken brand impact and consumer perception, diminishing originality and value.
-  Data privacy and security concerns arise with the extensive use of AI systems and the potential risk of data breaches.
-  Many believe AI will never replace unique human skills like creativity, empathy, and strategic thinking.
-  The democratisation of data could be seen as a potential threat to unconventional ideas that go against mainstream guidelines and beliefs.



I vs AI, part 5: jump!

Some benefits of AI for digital managers

Process and interpret vast amounts of data in real time

- 🧠 Crunch numbers, identify patterns, and make faster data-driven decisions.
- 🧠 Improve objectives and key results (OKRs) by defining measurable goals and tracking outcomes.
- 🧠 Automate repetitive tasks, including scheduling campaigns and meetings, sending reminders, and organising projects.
- 🧠 Enhance keyword choice.
- 🧠 Automate and control vital business needs, including product storage, warehouse balances, payment processes, and customer requests.
- 🧠 Incorporate AI into IoT (Internet of Things) technologies to remotely control and monitor essential equipment and devices.
- 🧠 Improve customer experiences, using AI chatbots that continually learn from questions – and so providing valuable assistance and support 24/7.
- 🧠 Save costs by:
 - Monitoring processes 24/7.
 - Forecasting system and machine repairs and maintenance.
 - Reducing human errors and caprices.
 - Processing data and tasks without the need for breaks.
 - Minimise process and production line downtime.
- 🧠 Improve team dynamics by identifying opportunities for team member feedback.
- 🧠 Use machine learning algorithms to personalise marketing messages.
- 🧠 Identify patterns in consumer behaviour, providing you with insights to drive marketing strategy.

-  Use natural language processing to optimise website content.
-  Generate headlines that capture attention and drive clicks.
-  Create customised email campaigns using AI-powered segmentation and personalisation.
-  Use predictive analytics to enhance customer journeys, forecast behaviors, and improve targeting and ROI using historical data.
-  Analyse and optimise social media data.
-  Use machine learning algorithms to optimise paid per click (PPC) campaigns and maximise ROI.
-  Convert social mentions into conversations, engagement, and fresh content.
-  Test and refine marketing strategies before full market implementation.
-  Attract new, loyal followers through social intelligence data.
-  Monitor the web for industry risks, social trends, and market opportunities.

Typical digital marketing brief featuring AI

Project name:

AI-Driven Social Media Marketing Campaign

Objective: To increase brand awareness and drive sales for our product through a targeted social media campaign using AI tools.

Target audience: Women aged 18–35 interested in fitness and wellness.

Key message: Our product is the perfect solution for achieving fitness goals and leading a healthy lifestyle.

Budget: £50,000

Timeline: 3 months

Channels: Facebook, Instagram, Threads, and X (formerly Twitter).

Strategy

- 1 Use AI-powered tools to analyse audience data and identify the most effective social media channels to reach our target audience.
- 2 Develop a creative strategy with compelling graphics, videos, and user-generated content that resonates with our audience.
- 3 Use AI-powered tools to optimise ad targeting and messaging to increase engagement and conversions.

- 4 Implement chatbots and other AI-powered tools to provide personalised customer support and streamline the customer experience.
- 5 Use AI-powered sentiment analysis tools to monitor social media conversations and identify potential issues or opportunities for engagement.
- 6 Continuously analyse campaign performance using AI-powered analytics tools and adjust the strategy accordingly.

Tools

Hootsuite Insights: An AI-powered social media listening tool that helps you track brand mentions, sentiment, and engagement across multiple channels.

Socialbakers: An AI-powered social media marketing platform that helps you create and schedule content, optimise ad targeting, and track campaign performance.

Sprout social: An AI-powered social media management tool that helps you schedule and publish content, analyse engagement and performance, and track brand mentions.

Canva: An AI-powered design tool that helps you create professional-looking graphics and visual content for social media.

Lumen: An AI-powered video creation tool that helps you create engaging social media videos using existing blog posts, articles, or other content.

Audiense: An AI-powered audience segmentation and targeting tool that helps you identify and engage with your target audience on social media.

Measurement

- 1 Increase in social media engagement (likes, comments, shares) by 30%.
- 2 Increase in website traffic from social media by 25%.
- 3 Increase in sales from social media by 20%.

Deliverables

- 1 Social media content calendar.
- 2 Ad creative (graphics, videos).
- 3 Chatbot scripts.
- 4 Weekly performance reports and recommendations for optimisation.

Conclusion

By leveraging AI tools and strategies, we aim to deliver a highly targeted and effective social media marketing campaign that increases brand awareness, website traffic, and sales. In addition, we will continuously monitor and optimise the campaign using AI-powered analytics and measurement tools to ensure maximum results.

Straight from AI's interface

Mike O'Brien is one of the founders of the Jam Partnership and a former futurologist for the Institute of Direct Marketing. He is one of the UK's most respected digital marketers, a senior university lecturer, and a sought-after speaker (www.jampartnership.com). He asked the Open AI model to explain the value of a human copywriter.

Here's its answer.

A human copywriter can bring significant value to businesses and organisations. Here are some reasons why:

Creativity: A human copywriter can come up with unique and creative ideas to help businesses stand out in a crowded market.

Persuasion: Copywriting is all about persuasion. A human copywriter can write compelling copy to convince potential customers to act, such as purchasing or signing up for a service.

Audience Understanding: A good copywriter understands the audience they are writing for and can tailor their messaging to resonate with that audience.

Emotional Connection: A human copywriter can write in a way that connects with people on an emotional level, building trust and rapport.

Brand Voice: A skilled copywriter can capture the essence of a brand's personality and voice, ensuring that all written communication aligns with the brand's values and goals.

(idm.com, n.d.)

Iron-clad AI

One way to understand the potential of AI is through an analogy comparing data with a bar of crude iron.

Imagine a 1000-gram iron bar. Its raw value is around \$100.

If you decide to forge horseshoes from it, its value increases to \$250. Decide to manufacture sewing needles, and the value rises to about \$70,000. Produce watch springs and gears, and the value increases again, to about \$6 million. Use it to manufacture precision laser components, such as those used in lithography, and it is worth \$15 million.

Similarly, the value of data is more than numbers – it's about how you interpret it.

Profound critical thinking often leads to original opinions that may be totally out of kilter with available online data. As the philosopher Karl Popper put it: "We do not seek highly probable theories but explanations; powerful and highly improbable theories." Equally, the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes observed that only when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. Such rare gems of implausible theories have long formed the cornerstones of human progress. (Chomsky, et al. n.d.).

Currently, AI cannot calculate different interpretations of ethical nuances. So, whilst it can handle linguistic formulae such as:

“If = then” or “can = could . . .”

“When = where,”

“What = how”

it fails to cope with the infinite moral quirks of “ought” or “should.” (Also see, Chapter 1, *Atlas of your mind*.)

In 2016, Microsoft’s Tay chatbot (a forerunner to Chat GPT) spread misogynistic and racist language throughout the web. The content drew on commentary by online trolls. The result was that it placed creative machine learning ahead of moral appropriateness. (Also see *Trolls*, Chapter 8, *Alone together*, page 368.)

The technology is already incredible and will improve massively in the next few years. Think about what you could do.

Sir Martin Sorrell (Formula1, 2016)

Addressing the Cannes Lions International Festival 2023, Sir Martin Stuart Sorrell is a British businessman and the founder of WPP plc, the world’s largest advertising and PR group, both by revenue and the number of staff. He discussed how AI would impact the ad industry.

I would wrap the future around three things, Blockchain, metaverse, and of course, AI. Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) impacts visualisation and copy-writing: Hyper-personalization at scale. Where once we could produce Netflix, 1.5 million creative assets, we’re going to be able to do multiples of that.

Another area is media planning and buying. Why rely on a 25-year-old media planner or buyer when you can rely on an algorithm dealing with issues such as bidding, search and discoverability, and SEO keyword clustering.

Use tech such as AI as a super tool for improving in-house and client process.

Above all, use tech to share knowledge. You can turn human beings into bots by transferring knowledge with them. It’s all about getting the right data that you ingest into the platform correct; over time, it just gets better and better. Open it to everybody in your organisation. Therefore, all our 9,000 people will have access, God willing, to all this information.

(Sawatsky, 2023)

Your AI marketing career is looking exceptionally promising

A 2023 job site survey (published in *Business Insider*) of 1187 business leaders, including CEOs, executives, owners, and partners, found that 91% of leaders were looking to employ workers with AI/ChatGPT experience.

According to the study, 30% were doing so “very urgently” or “somewhat urgently,” and two-thirds of those hiring workers with ChatGPT experience think the skills could bring a competitive advantage to their firms.

Twenty-nine per cent of business leaders said they will specifically hire prompt engineers.

In America, some companies were reportedly looking to hire prompt marketing engineers for as much as \$335,000 a year (Mom, n.d.).

How AI raises the PR bar

-  Analyse and address sentiments about your brand across multiple channels, including social media, news articles, and press releases.
-  Recognise the relevance and implications of PR coverage.
-  Create condensed versions of multiple articles and generate summaries of social media conversations and emerging trends.
-  Create content, including articles, images for a social media post, and videos.
-  Efficiently update media lists by leaving the heavy-lifting tasks of generating and updating data to AI.
-  Create engaging videos to post on your website or social media – complete with a supporting article or script – in just a few clicks.
-  Track “deep fake” videos, which may negatively affect your brand’s reputation.
-  Identify negative sentiments or emerging issues, then promptly respond, mitigating the potential for further reputational damage.

Marketing careers created by AI

-  AI marketing strategist
-  AI marketing analyst
-  Chatbot marketing manager
-  Personalisation specialist
-  Voice search optimisation specialist
-  Content creation coordinator
-  SEO analytics manager
-  Social media engagement specialist
-  Programmatic advertising manager
-  Digital marketing automation manager

- 🧠 Customer experience (CX) manager utilising AI-powered chatbots
- 🧠 Prompt engineer.

The last in the list – prompt engineer – is replacing/enhancing traditional copywriting skills. The platform Discord was one of the first to provide access to a community of Open AI prompt engineers. Today there are many more.

Here is a list of simple yet highly effective prompts. (Remember that any prompt provides a basic outline of what you aim to achieve. It requires your skills and experience to edit and refine the final prompt output). (Also see, Prompt engineering vs problem re-engineering, page 145.)

Fifty catch-all prompts

1	Provide ten ideas, including examples, aimed at digital marketers, for blog posts explaining the tactics to avoid consumers unsubscribing from emails.
2	Write the landing page description for [product], targeting [profile customers]. The description should maintain [tone] and use markdown to structure the text with a primary H1 title, followed by two H2 subtitles. The first subtitle should explain the audience's problem, and the second should detail how the product solves the problem. Product: (Name) is (description) comprehensive project management software that (sentences with verbs, such as "streamlines project management and enables teams to collaborate seamlessly." This software is / features (e.g., equipped with advanced features like task management, project tracking, resource management, time tracking, and more), making it benefit (e.g., the ideal solution for businesses of all sizes). Target customers: (profile audience; e.g., project managers, team leaders, and small business owners). Tone: simple, authentic, easy to read, and reassuring.
3	Produce an Instagram story idea that will provide a sneak peek of upcoming products or services and create a sense of anticipation and excitement for [targeted audience] with a clear and compelling call to action. "Targeted audience = [describe your audience]."
4	You are an SEO specialist. Create five articles to be read by a junior digital marketer, which explains how to exploit the keyword [example keyword] in customer relationship posts.
5	Use the "awareness-interest-desire-conviction-action" (AIDCA) framework to write an email marketing campaign. Convince [ideal customer persona] to understand [problem] that they face. Create the desired conviction in the reader to use [product/service] as the solution and make them act. Product = [Insert Here]; Problem = [Insert Here].
6	Create a standard CEO post on LinkedIn about corporate social responsibility.
7	What's the best marketing channel for fashionable Gen Alphas?

8	How can I get high-quality backlinks to raise the SEO of a sustainable clothing website based on this [URL]?
9	Develop an engaging LinkedIn post to announce a company milestone: [12 key details about your achievement].
10	[Company name], a [industry] company, exists to [mission/purpose]. Our vision is to [vision for the future]. Please create a few drafts of mission and vision statements that could be customer-facing aimed at [target audience].
11	You are [consumer profile]; please develop ten ideas of how to do [task or problem] using [brand product]. Then, compare each of these ideas and list six pros and cons of each idea.
12	Produce a SWOT analysis for [Y brand vs X brand].
13	Write a personalised email to [LinkedIn profile URL] explaining the AIDCA benefits of this product [product description].
14	Create a blog post about the benefits of [name of URL product site] targeting [profile audience].
15	Write the landing page description for [product], targeting [title]. The description should maintain [type of tone] and use markdown to structure the text with a primary H1 title, followed by two H2 subtitles. The first subtitle should explain the problem the audience faces, and the second should detail how the product solves the problem. Product = [product] Target Customers = [profile audience] Tone = [tone of voice]
16	A customer makes a purchase. Write a follow-up email to send, thanking them for their purchase and ask them to leave a review or feedback. Instructions: [Describe how you want it.]
17	Generate a 7-minute video script for a YouTube video about our newest [product/service description] and [targeted audience]. Product/service description = [describe your product]. Targeted audience = [describe your audience].
18	Write a marketing strategy for a new start-up selling [product]. My marketing budget is [£/\$/€]. I need to reach [profile audience]. Provide detailed examples of a comprehensive strategy and the rough cost of each of the initiatives. Must consider the marketing goals while creating the strategy. Finally create a table featuring expected ROI. Product: [product details] Available budget: [budget] Marketing goal: [goals]. Target audience: [target to reach].
19	Create five unique competitive challenges and the rewards for the giveaway program for [product/business] that generate engagement and build value for the [product/business]. Use psychological techniques to create urgency and mention the methods you used alongside the challenges. Product = [Insert here].

20	Write the 20 best titles for my new product. They must be eye-catching, short, and friendly. Product = [describe your product].
21	Provide a 16 call to action (CTA) ideas for my new product. Make sure they are short and friendly. Must emphasise value. Product: [describe your product].
22	Act as an advertiser in this [publication]. You will create a campaign to promote a product or service of your choice. You will choose a target audience, develop key messages and slogans, select the media channels for promotion, and decide on any additional activities needed to reach your goals. My first request is [enter your request].
23	Here are some content strategies of [person]; read it carefully and generate a content plan for my [new product] for the next 12 weeks. Person: [expert name] New product: [product details]. Content strategy: [insert here].
24	Generate a creative social media content calendar for [time period] for [your company about [describe your goal]].
25	Write sales copy about [product/service] as well as a cold call script to a potential client, including an opening and full presentation, which overcomes objections.
26	Draft six versions for a cold sales call that effectively showcases a [product; e.g., high-bounce basketball shoe] to a [title; e.g., basketball coach working for a top league basketball team]. Each version should contain at least three unique key benefits for the buyer. Each sales call should lead to a persuasive successful close. For version one, use the sales mix formula. For version two, use the ROI formula. For version three, use the sales conversion formula. For version four, use the AIDA formula. For version five, show how the product makes the customer a hero (feature the hero's journey). Use the gain frame message vs loss frame message formula for version six.
27	Write a witty rebuttal to this tweet: [insert tweet].
28	I am a content creator looking for new ideas for my [YouTube channel/Instagram account]. Can you help me generate a list of potential [video/post topics] that would be popular among my audience [audience type]?
29	Analyse the style and layout of the e-commerce page at the URL [insert URL here]. What elements stand out to you and why?"
30	You are an AI system trained to analyse the text below for style, and tone. Then use NLP to create a VoiceParagraph. (A VoiceParagraph prompts a future AI system to write in that same style, and tone). Here is the input text: [input text].

-
- 31** Write a [time length] storytelling video script in the style of [film/book genre] about [insert topic].
- The script's tone should be [insert tone of voice].
- The script should incorporate the sentiment of the following SEO keywords [list up to three].
- The plot should feature [number of characters/character roles].
- It should be tailored to [insert your ideal customer, including all relevant persona facts].
- The script should focus on [list three of your product's main benefits applicable to the customer]. This is supported by the following evidence: [list three evidence support points].
- Please show how [your brand] helps solve [ideal customer's] main pain points associated with [insert your customer's three main priorities].
- Wrap up the script with a solid call to action that takes account of "fear of missing out" and resolves your [ideal customer's] main pain point arising from their priority concerns.
-
- 32** Write a launch email with all the key elements included to ensure success in generating sales for [product/service].
-
- 33** Please write an email marketing campaign using the "expectation-surprise" framework to generate interest and encourage action from [ideal customer persona]. Set expectations for the reader about what they can expect from our [product/service], but then surprise them with unexpected benefits or features that exceed those expectations. Include talking points such as [unique selling point], [pain point], and [desired action].
-
- 34** I am planning to launch a new [product/service] and want to create a 3-minute YouTube video to promote it.
Please write a script that will showcase its features and benefits in an interesting way. Product details can be found here: [URL].
-
- 35** I am creating a tutorial video on [topic]. Please write a script that will break down the steps in an easy-to-follow format for my [describe audience] looking to achieve [six things audience is looking for].
-
- 36** I am creating a YouTube video that addresses common questions and concerns about [topic]. Please write a script that will provide clear and concise answers.
-
- 37** What are the recommended best practices for creating a sitemap for a [website type] website with [number of pages] pages and [types of content] content, including strategies for [specific SEO goal], considerations for [specific devices/locations] users, and techniques for [specific user intent/behaviour] optimisation?
-

38	What are the top [number] [specific product type] products in [specific category] for [specific use case], and why do you recommend both of them over [specific competitor product] and [specific competitor product], considering [specific criteria]?
39	Provide content suggestions for my [social media platform] based on [industry] news released on [date]. These suggestions should address current trends, challenges, or best practices that [target audience] would find valuable and engaging. Follow-up prompt: Based on the above news stories, write three pieces of content for my [Social Media Platform] addressing today's news stories using a [style], with a focus on improved [intended result] and [profile audience].
40	Please target a specific audience with my Google Ads campaign in [insert location]. Please suggest some long-tail keywords relevant to [insert audience demographics, such as age, gender, interests, etc.] and help me stand out from my competitors in this region.
41	(Getting the model to prompt itself.) I want to [desired outcome]; what prompts should I share with you to get the best results? (Once a model like ChatGPT has generated an output, tell it what you like and dislike about the output and ask it to:) Request additional results, edits, or tweaks.
42	(For longer posts, provide the model with a specific structure and outline.) Following this story structure – (1) capture the heart, (2) set up a tension, (3) resolve the tension, (4) conclude by offering value – write a 1000-word story at a grade 5 reading level in the first person using the following information.
43	You are a pro-tweet commentator. Analyse [tweet] and provide five replies that share opinions about the [tweet]. You should add relevant context and tips. Comments should be fewer than 100 characters. Tweet = [insert here].
44	Act as an editor and edit the following blog post using the principles in <i>New Hart's Rules</i> [URL].
45	Create an advertising campaign for [product or service]. Choose a target audience, develop key messages and slogans, select the channels/platforms for promotion, and suggest additional marketing activities to implement.
46	Write ten Google ad headlines for [URL or reference page URL].
47	You are an expert, witty consumer copywriter. Read these three ads [paste three ad copy examples you'd like to emulate]. Now, create three more ads that follow a similar structure.
48	Create an advertising campaign for [product or service]. Choose a target audience, develop key messages and slogans, select the channels/platforms for promotion, and suggest additional marketing activities to implement.
49	Suggest 16 ways to enhance team productivity in a [business] providing [services] to [audience] by implementing the SCRUM methodology.

50	You are an SEO keyword research expert. You aim to create a comprehensive content plan for a specific target keyword. This task involves the creation of a comprehensive and strategic content plan drawn from your expertise in SEO and compliance with recent Google Quality guidelines and Google E-A-T rules. Your content plan should include the following: Under the header “Meta Title,” you must write a 60- to 75-character meta title involving the main keyword. You should implement attention-grabbing, click-through-rate (CTR)-driven titles. Refrain from using quotation marks around the content. Under “Meta Description,” craft a 175- to 200-character CTR-driven meta description for this page based on the provided data. Create a description that draws attention and encourages a click. Please do not add quotation marks around the content. Create a list of FAQs associated with the primary keyword, display them as an unordered list, and label them under the “FAQs” header. Prepare an unordered list of related search queries connected to the primary keyword, and title this section “Related Queries.” List prime long-tail keywords that are plausible to rank due to the lack of quality content in the top positions, according to recent Google quality guidelines and on-page SEO efforts. Share this as an unordered list and title it “Long Tail Keywords.” Collate the top 15 keywords and incorporate them into a structured markdown table. The first column should contain the keyword, the second the keyword intent, and the final column should specify how many times you recommend using the keyword, expressed as an integer. Denote this section “Keywords.” Finally, create an unordered list of ten SEO entities applicable to the primary keyword and label them as “Entities.” The reader should find the content beneficial, instantly valuable, and easy to read. Your plan should lure clicks and promptly answer the searcher’s intent. Retain your creativity and attention to detail while adhering to all specified guidelines and requirements. Target keyword: [Keyword].
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Improving prompts

Typically, novice prompt engineers improve model prompts by asking the model to summarise a result. As you have learnt, the more specific you can be with your prompt descriptions, the more precise the results.

Test the following prompt improvement instructions for yourself:

Humanise/personalise: Make the text more relatable or personal. Great for blogs!

Elevate: Prompt for a rewrite that is more sophisticated or impressive.

Illuminate: Prompt for a rewrite that is crystal clear or enlightening.

Enliven: Make the text more lively or interesting.

Soft pedal/tone down: Downplay or reduce the intensity of the text.

Paraphrase: This is useful when you want to avoid plagiarism.

Reframe: Change the perspective or focus of the rewrite.

Reinterpret: Provide a possible meaning or understanding.

Simplify: Reduce the complexity of the language.

Streamline: Remove unnecessary content or fluff.

Enrich/Embellish: Add more pizzazz or detail to the rewrite.

Diversify: Add variety, perhaps in sentence structure or vocabulary.

Elaborate: Add more detail or explanation to a given point.

Amplify: Strengthen the message or point in the rewrite.

Clarify: Make a confusing point or statement clearer.

Summarise: When you want a quick overview of a lengthy topic.

Expand: For a more comprehensive understanding of a topic.

Explain: Make the meaning of something more precise.

Informalise/relax: Use this for social media posts, blogs, email campaigns, or *Sensationalise*:
Make the rewrite more dramatic (clickbait).

Formalise: This asks to rewrite informal or casual language into a more formal or professional style. Useful for business or academic contexts.

Exaggerate: When you want to hype up the rewrite.

Limit prose: Good for lists.

Downplay: When you want a more mellow, mild-mannered tone. Great for research and evidence-based testimonials.

Glamourise: Prompt to make the rewrite more appealing.

Modernise: Update older language or concepts to be more current. Any context where a more conversational style and relaxed tone is right.

Condense/shorten: Make the rewrite shorter by restricting it to key points.

Emphasise/reiterate: Highlight certain points more than others.

Neutralise: Remove bias or opinion, making the text more objective.

Six Midjourney prompting tips

- 1 The following can be applied to most generative AI models, including Midjourney.

Generative image models tend to focus more on the initial parts of a prompt than on subsequent parts. So, if you want something specific in the generated image, include it near the beginning or middle of the prompt. Keep the prompt concise and straightforward, as shorter, and simpler prompts often lead to better outcomes.

- 2 Include lighting and lens descriptions in your prompt.

Midjourney understands specific camera references like Sony A7S or Canon R6, along with details about lenses and focal lengths. It also responds to film stock specifications, letting you request a black-and-white image by specifying, for example, Ilford film stock.

Incorporating phrases like “high key,” “low key,” “high contrast,” and “low contrast” instructs Midjourney to produce the relevant outcome.

Some of the most effective keywords to use are “global illumination,” “natural light,” and “uplight.” For instance, mentioning “uplight” in the prompt produces a softer appearance for the generated image.

- 3 Specific phrases significantly enhance the generated results.

Two powerful phrases to consider are: “film still,” and “^” or “style by.” These explain that you want an image resembling a still frame from a TV programme or movie with a specific style reference.

To further improve generated images, use additional parameters. For example, you can specify the aspect ratio using the “-ar” instruction, such as “-ar 16:9,” to generate a non-square image. Including “-q 2” ensures the highest quality output but consumes more computational credits. Adding a seed command, like “-seed 3000,” introduces variation in the generations.

(Midjourney uses a seed number to create a field of visual noise, like television static, as a starting point to generate the initial image grids. It generates seed numbers randomly for each image, but you can specify them with the “- seed” or “- same seed” parameter).

- 4 When it comes to capturing fight sequences, the Midjourney model often appears to stumble. It lacks a comprehensive understanding of human limb movements, leading to some comically inaccurate generations. Providing a reference image can help get around these issues.

To use a reference image, select an appropriate image from the web or use one you have taken yourself, even from a phone. Upload the image by double-clicking the “+” icon next to the prompt box and select it from your computer. The uploaded image will appear in the list of sent messages. Enlarge the image by clicking on it, then right-click and choose “Copy image link.” When starting an image prompt, paste the link at the beginning and continue with your image description. While it won’t guarantee perfect results, it can significantly improve the output. You can use reference images but limit them to two or three.

- 5 Including the command “clear facial features” in the prompt can produce exceptional results, especially for portraits. This helps Midjourney accentuate facial characteristics.
- 6 Be patient; create variations of the most appealing image and continue iterating from there.

By leveraging the “-prefer remix” command, you can generate a modified version of any image you like by specifying a different seed value or introducing additional elements in the description. This approach opens up countless possibilities for manipulation and refinement. Remix mode in Midjourney delivers powerful tools that creatively transform existing images. For instance, you could photograph a heap of ping-pong balls and transform them into a group of puppies, showcasing Midjourney’s flexibility and creativity.

Further prompt engineering approaches

Types of prompt engineering

Zero-shot

Zero-shot prompting generates compelling marketing materials without explicit instructions or specific details about the desired output.

By simply presenting a general prompt or a high-level concept, the power of artificial intelligence (AI) kicks in, drawing upon unparalleled understanding and boundless creativity to craft engaging copy that resonates with the target audience.

This revolutionises how digital marketers produce content, opening doors to deliver impactful messages that leave a lasting impression.

Examples:

Prompt: “Create a tagline for a new fitness app.”

Copy: “Ignite your potential, one rep at a time.”

Prompt: “Write a product description for a sleek, modern smartphone.”

Copy: “Experience innovation at your fingertips with our cutting-edge smartphone. Seamlessly blend style and functionality to redefine your mobile experience.”

Prompt: “Craft a social media caption for a luxury travel brand.”

Copy: “Escape to paradise and indulge in the lap of luxury. Let us take you on a journey where dreams become reality.”

Prompt: “Develop an attention-grabbing headline for a fashion brand’s summer collection.”

Copy: “Unleash your inner style icon this summer with our sizzling collection. Get ready to turn heads and make waves.”

One-shot prompting

With a single example or reference, AI analyses and comprehends the given content’s style, tone, or structure. It sets out to produce similar material that maintains consistency or achieves a desired outcome. This helps ensure uniformity across marketing collateral, including blog posts, social media updates, or advertisements.

Prompt: “Write a product description for a high-end watch for high school leavers.”

Copy: “As high school marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, celebrate this milestone in style with our high-end watch designed exclusively for high school leavers. Meticulously crafted with precision and sophistication, this timepiece truly reflects your accomplishments and serves as a lasting symbol of your journey.”

Prompt: “Create a tagline for a coffee shop aimed at early-morning office workers.”

Copy: “Fuel your mornings with the perfect brew.”

Prompt: “Write a headline for a travel agency’s vacation package for single gay women.”

Copy: “Unleash Your Wanderlust: Tailored Vacations for Adventurous Single Gay Women”

Prompt: “Craft a social media post for a fitness brand aimed at disabled parents.”

Copy:

“Breaking Barriers, Embracing Strength! 💪🌟

At [Fitness Brand], we believe that fitness knows no boundaries. We’re proud to introduce our inclusive fitness community designed specifically for disabled parents, empowering you to prioritise your health and well-being whilst managing the beautiful journey of parenthood.

- 👉 Join our dedicated program that understands and caters to your unique needs as a disabled parent.
- 👉 Discover personalized workouts and exercises tailored to your abilities, ensuring a safe and effective fitness journey.
- 👉 Connect with a supportive network of like-minded individuals who share similar experiences and can provide valuable encouragement.

We're here to champion your journey to strength, resilience, and holistic well-being. Embrace the power within you, and let us be your fitness partner on this incredible path.

Tag a disabled parent who inspires you and spread the message of inclusivity! 🌈🌟

#FitnessForAll #InclusiveWellness #DisabledParents #ParentingJourney
#FitnessMotivation"

- Prompt: "Develop a sales prompt that appeals to digital marketers, illustrating how our book on AI psychology revolutionises the understanding of human-AI interactions. Emphasise psychological insights which help retain existing customers and recruit new customers.
- Copy:

"Unlock the Power of Human-AI Interactions with Our Revolutionary Book!

Attention, digital marketers! Are you ready to take your customer relationships to new heights? Our ground-breaking book on AI psychology is here to transform how you approach human-AI interactions and revolutionize your marketing strategies.

Discover the psychological insights that will empower you to retain your existing customers and attract new ones. Our book unveils a treasure trove of ethically sound psychology techniques that adapt and respond to the ever-evolving needs of your target audience.

Here's what our book offers to elevate your marketing game:

Deeper Understanding: Gain unparalleled insights into the intricacies of human behaviour when interacting with AI systems. Uncover the motivations, emotions, and decision-making processes that drive your customers, enabling you to craft personalized and impactful marketing campaigns.

Enhanced Customer Retention: Implement strategies based on psychological principles to strengthen your bond with existing customers. Discover how to create seamless experiences that foster loyalty, trust, and satisfaction, ensuring your customers remain engaged and committed to your brand.

Customer Acquisition Mastery: Harness the power of AI psychology to attract new customers like never before. Unleash the potential of persuasive techniques that resonate with your target audience's desires, aspirations, and pain points, capturing their attention and driving conversions.

Our book is a game-changer in the digital marketing landscape, providing you with a competitive edge in understanding and leveraging human-AI interactions. Stay ahead of the curve, adapt to changing customer dynamics, and create remarkable marketing experiences that truly connect.

Don't miss this opportunity to transform your marketing strategies with ethically sound psychology techniques. Grab your copy of our book today and embark on a journey to marketing success like never before!

Ready to revolutionize your marketing game? Get your hands on our AI psychology book now!

#AIRevolution #MarketingExcellence #CustomerEngagement #PsychologyInsights #EthicalMarketing”

- Few-shot prompts

Few-shot prompting involves presenting AI with a few examples (shots) of what you want it to do.

Prompt:

- a) “Write a slogan for an eco-friendly clothing brand.”
- b) “Develop a tagline for a sustainable fashion retailer:”
“Wear your values with pride. Fashion that’s both stylish and sustainable because every choice matters.”

Prompt:

- a) “Create a social media caption for a luxury hotel: ‘Escape to paradise.’”
- b) “Craft a post for a travel agency: ‘Experience the ultimate getaway.’”
“Indulge in opulence beyond compare. Then, unwind and immerse yourself in a journey that redefines the meaning of luxury.”

Prompt:

- a) “Write a headline for a health and wellness magazine: ‘Unlock your full potential.’”
- b) “Develop an opening line for a personal development blog: ‘Discover the power within.’”
“Transform your life, unleash your greatness. Empower yourself and embrace the extraordinary journey of self-discovery.”



Chain of thought prompting

This allows thoughts to flow naturally and sequentially.

Here’s how: provide AI with a starting point or an initial idea, then encourage it to delve deeper and expand upon it. Then, AI builds upon each thought or concept, creating a cohesive and engaging copy that reflects the seamless flow of ideas. By employing this technique, you can infuse content with a captivating narrative that grabs your audience’s attention and resonates deeper, driving more robust engagement and connection.

Starting point: “Imagine a cosy winter evening by the fireplace.”

“As the snow falls softly outside, embrace the warmth and comfort of a crackling fire. Let the flickering flames create an enchanting ambience that invites you to curl up with a good book and indulge in moments of pure relaxation.”

Starting point: “Think about the exhilaration of a roller coaster ride.”

“Feel your heart race as adrenaline courses through your veins. Then, surrender to the twists, turns, and breath-taking drops as you experience the thrill of a lifetime. Brace yourself for an adventure that will leave you exhilarated, breathless, and craving for more.”

Starting point: “Reflect on the beauty of a vibrant sunset.”

“As the sun paints the sky with gold, orange, and pink hues, let the captivating beauty of a vibrant sunset ignite your senses. Bask in the warm glow and witness nature’s masterpiece unfold, casting a spell of tranquillity and filling your heart with awe.”

Then, from each starting point, build your questions, each time delving deeper with questions addressing issues that are relevant to your audience.

The catch-all prompt engineering formula

CIDI

Context: Act as a lawyer who is an expert in consumer rights.

Instructions: I will give you details about a flight delay, and you will write to the company to complain.

Details: Use a formal tone of voice and make references to EU law.

Input: Flight detail, Copenhagen to London, February 9, company Fly Air, delay 3.5 hours.

Additional prompt formulae

RTF: Role, task, format.

CTF: Context, task, format.

RASCEF: Role, action, steps, context, examples, format.

The 28-point human AI review test

Before publishing AI generated copy, it is recommended you check the content against these creative classic copywriting parameters:

- 1 Write for the reader, not for yourself.
- 2 Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- 3 Use active voice instead of passive voice.
- 4 Avoid jargon and technical terms.
- 5 Use definitive words and examples.
- 6 Feature the word “you” to address the reader directly.
- 7 Start with the main point, then provide supporting details.
- 8 Headlines and subheads to break up the text.
- 9 Bulleted lists and numbered lists make for easy scanning.
- 10 Feature visual aids such as charts and graphs.
- 11 Analogies and metaphors make complex ideas understandable.
- 12 Repetition reinforces key points.
- 13 Transitional words guide the reader through the text.
- 14 Rhetorical questions = engage the reader.
- 15 Use humour if appropriate.
- 16 Quotations provide credibility and authority.
- 17 Statistics support arguments.
- 18 Testimonials and case studies provide real-world examples.
- 19 Use active listening to understand the reader’s needs.
- 20 Consider benefits from the reader’s perspective.
- 21 Use the feedback loop to clarify messages and ensure understanding.
- 22 Empathy shows that you care about the reader.
- 23 Scarcity creates a sense of urgency.
- 24 Social proof demonstrates that others have had success.
- 25 Storytelling makes messages memorable.
- 26 Simplicity makes messages powerful.
- 27 Never just proofread on the screen.
- 28 Proofread and edit three times.

Disney's magical trash

To address pain points, Walt Disney re-mixed *reverse engineering marketing*. Take the humble trash can in his parks. Disney realised that if you generally keep a place tidy, it's more likely that guests will voluntarily dispose of their rubbish thoughtfully. So, he researched how far someone would walk before dropping their trash on the ground. Thirty feet was the magic number. So, he ensured a trash bin would never be further than 30 steps away from any guest visiting his theme parks.

That's a lot of bins – Frontierland alone has over 120!

Disney even considered the bin's design. Swinging doors kept the smell inside. Guests didn't see the trash. The recycling bins featured a hole instead of a swinging door – perfect for depositing empty bottles, and the hole instantly helped guests know what that bin was for.

By reverse engineering a problem, you can use AI to highlight a product or service's pain points and address them in your prompts. Simply ask AI to list the side effects of using a specific product. Then ask how your brand addresses each issue. Finally, feature the solutions in your sales and marketing pitch.

List the top ten side effects of wearing a smartwatch.

- 1 *Skin irritation*: Some individuals may experience skin irritation or allergies due to prolonged contact with the materials used in smartwatches, such as rubber, metal, or plastic.
- 2 *Discomfort or pressure marks*: Wearing a smartwatch that is too tight or wearing it for extended periods can lead to discomfort or pressure marks on the wrist.
- 3 *Reduced battery life*: Smartwatches require regular charging, and depending on the model and usage, some users may find that their smartwatch's battery life is insufficient for their needs.
- 4 *Distraction*: A smartwatch's constant notifications, alerts, and messages can distract or divert attention from important tasks or conversations.
- 5 *Dependence on technology*: Regular use of a smartwatch can create a reliance on technology, making individuals feel anxious or disconnected without their devices.
- 6 *Sleep disturbances*: Wearing a smartwatch during sleep tracking or receiving notifications during sleep can disrupt sleep patterns and affect the overall quality of sleep.
- 7 *The limited accuracy of health tracking*: While smartwatches offer various health tracking features, including heart rate monitoring or step counting, the accuracy of these measurements may vary, leading to potential inaccuracies in health data.
- 8 *Eye strain*: Smartwatches typically have small screens, and constantly focusing on a small display can strain the eyes, particularly if the user frequently checks messages or engages in activities that require close attention.

- 9 *Privacy concerns:* Smartwatches are connected devices that store and transmit personal data. There is a potential risk of privacy breaches or data leaks, which may cause anxiety or compromise the user's personal information.
- 10 *Social etiquette challenges:* Smartwatches can create social etiquette challenges, such as checking notifications or messages during conversations or meetings, which may be interpreted as rude or distracting to others.

Show how wearing a traditional wind-up watch addresses each side effect.

- 1 *Skin irritation:* Traditional wind-up watches typically use materials like stainless steel, leather, or fabric straps, less likely to cause skin irritation or allergies than rubber or plastic materials commonly found in smartwatches.
- 2 *Discomfort or pressure marks:* Traditional wind-up watches are available in various sizes and designs, allowing individuals to choose a watch that fits comfortably on their wrist. They can adjust the tightness of the watch strap to prevent discomfort or pressure marks.
- 3 *Reduced battery life:* Unlike smartwatches requiring regular charging, traditional wind-up watches don't rely on batteries. Mechanical movements don't require frequent charging or battery replacements.
- 4 *Distraction:* Traditional wind-up watches do not have constant distracting notifications, alerts, or messages. They primarily tell the time, reducing the potential for interruptions during important tasks or conversations.
- 5 *Dependence on technology:* By wearing a traditional wind-up watch, a person can reduce dependence on technology. A simple timepiece does not require connectivity or constant interaction with digital features.
- 6 *Sleep disturbances:* Traditional wind-up watches are not typically worn during sleep, reducing the likelihood of sleep disturbances caused by notifications or tracking features. A person can focus on restful sleep without potential interruptions.
- 7 *The limited accuracy of health tracking:* Traditional wind-up watches are primarily timekeeping devices uncomplicated by advanced health tracking features. Therefore, the limited accuracy of health tracking does not apply to traditional wind-up watches.
- 8 *Eye strain:* Traditional wind-up watches generally have elegant yet simple analogue dials with clear markings, which are easier on the eyes than digital screens in smartwatches. They do not require constant focus on a screen, reducing the risk of eye strain.
- 9 *Privacy concerns:* Traditional wind-up watches do not store or transmit personal data, eliminating the privacy concerns associated with smartwatches. There is no risk of privacy breaches or data leaks as the watch solely serves the purpose of timekeeping.

- 10 *Social etiquette challenges:* Wearing a traditional wind-up watch promotes good social etiquette as it does not create the same distractions or temptations to check notifications during conversations or meetings. A wearer can focus on the present moment and engage with others without digital notifications.

Prompt engineering vs problem re-engineering

You can only solve a problem once you truly understand it. Whilst prompt engineering provides wily linguistic approaches to asking questions, it needs to address fully understanding the heart of the problem in the first place.

According to Harvard Business School (2023), mastering problem formulation (problem re-engineering) could be as crucial as learning programming languages was during the early days of computing (Acar, 2023).

There's a big difference between prompt engineering and problem re-engineering.

Prompt engineering focuses on crafting the best textual input by selecting appropriate words, phrases, sentence structures, and punctuation.

Problem re-engineering defines the problem by outlining its focus, scope, and boundaries.

Prompt engineering requires a firm grasp of a specific AI tool's capabilities and being linguistically talented enough to style prompts appropriately.

Problem re-engineering requires a holistic understanding of a core problem's implications regarding real-world issues. After all, if you can't hone into what a problem is all about, including its effects on fundamental life pain points, then even the most sophisticated prompts will fall short, irrespective of your writing skills.

However, when you can define a problem from the perspective of everyone involved, choosing the right words for a prompt becomes easier, with the resulting solutions being more explicit and practical.

Appreciating the full implications of a problem includes considering the following:

-  The potential consumer
-  The brand providing the solution
-  A solution's short-term practical application
-  The practical longer-term implications
-  Both the emotional and the practical consequences of a problem.

With AI increasingly becoming self-generating (such as Auto GPT and God-mode GPT), some argue that eventually there won't be the need for prompt human engineering. The good news, however, is that syntax will improve, so answers will appear more fluid, apt, and coherent. Yet, from a semantics point of view, at best, such responses will

increasingly become more and more pedestrian. While solutions sound impressive, they will need more practical substance, originality, and creative ingenuity.

Here's where problem re-engineering steps in.

A 2017 Harvard survey revealed that 85% of C-suite executives consider their organisations bad at diagnosing problems (Weddell-Wedellsburg, 2017).

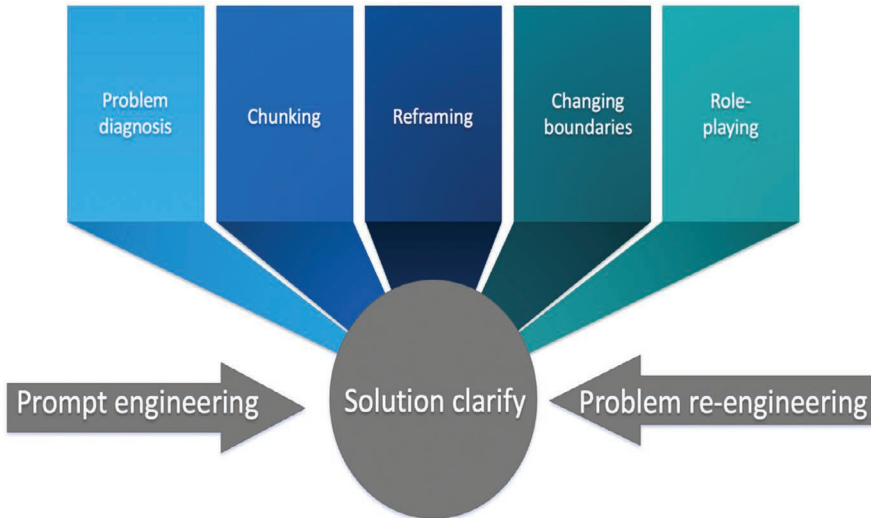
So, how do you improve problem-solving? By reconsidering insights and experiences from past research and applying them to current needs.

Five steps for effective problem re-engineering

- 🧠 Problem diagnosis
- 🧠 Chunking
- 🧠 Reframing
- 🧠 Changing boundaries
- 🧠 Role-playing.

Figure 2.8

Five steps for effective problem re-engineering.



Problem diagnosis

Feed AI basic information related to everything the problem affects; for example, the market, competitors, and so on. Immerse yourself in facts, not just opinions.

This helps AI pinpoint the core challenges to be resolved.

Some problems could be as straightforward as gathering information on a specific topic, like marketing strategies for a product launch.

Others could be more challenging, such as exploring alternative approaches to innovation.

Problem chunking

Problem chunking is all about breaking down complex problems into smaller, manageable “bites” and “nibbles.” This can include breaking down aspects of the problem into classifications. For example:

-  How the problem affects manufacturing
-  How the issue affects sales.

This is particularly helpful when tackling intricate problems, which initially may be too convoluted to generate valuable solutions.

Reframing

Sometimes the best way to solve an enduring problem is to consider it from a different angle.

Thinking outside the box opens up fresh opportunities. Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats is a powerful tool for enhancing critical thinking and decision-making.

Each “thinking hat” represents a different mode of thinking. Let’s lift each hat and look underneath.

The white hat: Factual and objective thinking style. When wearing the white hat, focus on gathering data and information. For example, if you’re planning a social media campaign, you might consider the size of your ideal audience.

The red hat: Emotions, intuition, and gut feelings. When wearing the red hat, express your feelings and subjective opinions. For instance, you might say, “I feel that our website’s user interface is confusing and needs improvement.” “There is no need for extensive evidence or rationale.

The black hat: Critical thinking and a cautious approach. Wearing the black hat, identify potential risks, obstacles, and weaknesses. For example, you might analyse the negative aspects of a proposed marketing strategy, such as budget limitations or potential backlash from customers.

The yellow hat: Optimism, positivity, and constructive thinking. Wearing the yellow hat, explore a particular course of action’s potential benefits, opportunities, and advantages. For instance, you might consider the positive impact of incorporating influencer partnerships into your marketing campaigns, such as increased brand visibility and credibility.

The green hat: Creativity, innovation, and generating new ideas. For example, you might brainstorm unique content ideas or innovative ways to leverage AI in your digital marketing strategies.

The blue hat: Facilitation, organisation, and control. Wearing the blue hat, you oversee the thinking process, guide discussions, and ensure that all perspectives are considered.

Synergistic oscillation

This is when you adopt right-brain thinking to a left-brain problem (or vice versa). As explained in Chapter 1, whilst nobody thinks just with the right or left side of the brain, problems can fall anywhere on the practical/rational/logical vs emotional continuum.

Right-brain problem

A right-brain problem often involves creative or artistic tasks requiring out-of-the-box thinking, visualising possibilities, and intuitive leaps. It may include designing a visually appealing website, creating a compelling Instagram campaign, or brainstorming innovative content ideas for a webinar. These problems may not just have one solution.

Left-brain problem

A left-brain problem is typically more analytical and logical. It involves step-by-step reasoning, data analysis, and structured problem-solving. For example, conducting keyword research for search engine optimisation or analysing customer data to identify patterns and trends. These problems often have a more definitive solution.

Fresh thinking outside the box

Doug Dietz was an innovation architect at GE Healthcare. He designed state-of-the-art MRI scanners. One day he sadly watched a terrified child awaiting an MRI scan. Doug discovered that 80% of children needed sedation to cope with the frightening experience. So, he reframed the problem: “How can we turn the daunting MRI experience into an exciting adventure for kids?” This fresh approach led to the development of the GE Adventure Series, which significantly lowered sedation rates to just 15%, increased patient satisfaction scores by 90%, and improved machine efficiency (*Harvard Business Review*, June 2023).

Now, imagine employees complaining about the office building’s lack of available parking spaces.

The initial framing may focus on increasing parking space.

But, by reframing the problem from the employees’ perspective – finding parking stressful or having limited commuting options – you can explore completely different angles.

Armed with this knowledge, you ask AI to generate solutions for the parking space problem, focusing on increasing parking space. It may suggest solutions centred on optimising parking layouts or allocating new spaces.

But ask it to resolve the parking issue by reframing the problem from the employees' perspective, and the answer will be more creative, perhaps promoting alternative transportation, sustainable commuting, and remote working.

(Also see, Framing it right, Chapter 7, Brain sells, page 332.)

Changing boundaries

Changing boundaries removes any hurdles preventing a problem from being solved.

For example, rather than being restricted by time, you can imagine you have a fairy godmother who grants you infinite time to resolve an issue. This approach allows you to modify and remove constraints to explore a bigger-picture solution.

For example, brand managers already use several AI tools to produce useful social media content at scale. To ensure this content is aligned with different media and brand images, they may set specific constraints on the length, format, tone, or target audience.

However, they could eliminate formatting constraints, directing AI to show a solution using an unconventional format.

A great example is GoFundMe's Help Changes Everything campaign. The company wanted to produce year-in-review creative content that expressed gratitude to its donors.

They set unorthodox constraints: visuals relied on AI-generated street mural-style art and featured fundraising campaigns and donors. DALL-E and Stable Diffusion generated individual images transformed into an emotionally charged video – a visually cohesive and striking aesthetic that garnered widespread acclaim.

Role-playing

Role-playing can be a valuable technique for problem-solving as it allows individuals to explore different perspectives, for example, from different persona mindsets. This helps challenge assumptions and develop innovative solutions.

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to use role-playing in problem-solving:

Define the problem

Begin by clearly defining the problem you want to solve. Understand the context, desired outcomes, and any constraints or challenges involved.

Identify roles

Spotlight the key stakeholders or persona roles relevant to the problem. These could be customers, team members, competitors, or other appropriate parties. (So, you could ask AI to consider a problem from a particular perspective, such as a competitor, salesperson, etc.)

Understand objectives

Provide role participants with information about their assigned roles. AI is given a role's distinct objectives, motivations, and perspectives. Ask AI to clarify participants' roles.

Set the stage

Create a scenario or situation where the problem arises, providing a context and necessary background information.

All-in-one

Instruct AI to fully consider assigned characters' attitudes, behaviours, and decision-making tendencies when creating personae.

Implement solutions

Based on the ideas generated, ask AI to develop further steps and timelines to move forward.

In sum, overall honing skills in problem diagnosis, chunking, reframing, changing boundaries, and role-playing can help to align AI outcomes with task objectives.

Navigating planning

The highly respected Jam Partnership devised the ground-breaking ICONIC marketing modelling system in response to the rapid proliferation of AI.

To explain it, here again, is Jam Partnership's Mike O'Brien:

The most pressing issue in marketing and the one with the most significant impact on the emotional well-being of current and future marketers is not AI. Instead, it is the lack of basic numeracy, analytical thinking, decision-making and creative innovation skills that will enable us to collaborate with AI systems, interpret their output, and make informed decisions based on the insights provided. It is these workforce deficiencies that AI exposes while accentuating the need for new marketing models and training programmes.

At the entry level, the lack of these capabilities is driving employers away from marketing graduates already fighting to compete with data analysts, psychologists,

and engineers for entry-level roles in agencies and the marketing departments of major brands.

Even experienced professional marketers are struggling to keep pace with the upskilling and reskilling necessary to utilise AI systems and take advantage of the potential benefits.

Here are some reasons why these essential skills are critical for the future emotional and physical well-being of marketers at all stages of their careers and how their absence can be problematic:

Data analysis and decision-making

Marketers need to work with quantitative and qualitative information, perform calculations, and draw meaningful insights from data sets. Without market-related numeracy skills, marketers may struggle to make informed decisions based on data-driven insights, leading to suboptimal marketing strategies, and missed opportunities.

Measurement and metrics

Marketers rely on metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and strategies. However, without a solid understanding of relevant numerical concepts, marketers may struggle to interpret metrics and derive actionable insights.

Budgeting and resource allocation

Marketers need to analyse financial data, calculate costs, estimate returns on investment, and make decisions about allocating resources across various marketing channels and initiatives. A lack of numeracy skills can hinder the ability to make sound financial decisions, leading to budget overruns or inefficient resource allocation.

Forecasting and predictive analytics

Marketers often use forecasting and predictive analytics to anticipate market trends, consumer behaviour, and campaign outcomes. Numeracy skills are essential for developing accurate forecasting models, analysing historical data, and making data-driven predictions. Without these skills, marketers may struggle to accurately forecast market demand, plan for future campaigns, and make strategic decisions.

Collaboration with analytics teams

Basic numeracy skills facilitate effective communication and collaboration with analytics teams, enabling marketers to clearly articulate their needs, understand analytical reports, and contribute to data-driven discussions.

To address the lack of numeracy, analytical thinking, decision-making and creative innovation skills in the marketing sector, the Jam Partnership has developed the **iconic** planning framework and training programme which supports individuals and organisations interested in developing marketing's contribution to commercial success.

Iconic: a planning model for the quantifiable marketer

Every planner needs a process that empowers them to identify, quantify and develop opportunities and deliver proven results in competitive, complex, and time-dependent contexts.

Iconic stands for

-  Investigate
-  Customer
-  Opportunities
-  Numbers
-  Implementation
-  Contribution.

It is a holistic approach encompassing the key stages of quantified marketing planning. Let's delve into each component to understand how this model can quantifiably improve the planning process:

Investigate

This stage involves gathering relevant data about the product, the business, the market, and the competitors. The objective is to leverage qualitative and quantitative research methods to identify emerging trends, untapped gains, and potential pain points.

Customers

This stage involves gathering relevant data about target audience demographics, motivations, preferences, behaviours, transactions, and engagement activity; identifying emerging trends, untapped opportunities, and potential pain points.

Opportunities

Identifying and evaluating areas with high potential for growth, profitability, and commercial success sits at the heart of the process. By analysing, evaluating, and converging the critical issues identified in the investigative and customer processes, planners can create a quantified pathway to the most effective campaign activities.

Numbers

Having identified the most actionable, advantageous and achievable campaign actions, iconic defines optimal investment requirements and allowable marketing costs in the face of evolving market trends, consumer behaviour, competitor activities and external economic issues while ensuring campaign objectives align with commercial goals.

Implementation

iconic marketing campaigns set clear objectives driving real-time reporting on KPIs and metrics to maximise every identified opportunity.

Contribution

Through tracking and understanding sales revenue, customer lifetime value, conversion rates, customer acquisition costs, customer feedback and attribution across all touchpoints, iconic helps everyone involved to establish marketing's specific contribution to commercial growth and sustainable success.

iconic offers marketers a working and quantifiable framework that systematically leverages data-driven commercial intelligence and target audience insights to ensure strategic and tactical decisions remain focused on identifying and delivering the most actionable, advantageous and achievable campaign actions.

The iconic planning process holds significant psychological importance for planners looking to get campaigns out the door.

Clarity and motivation

When individuals and teams have clear and quantified commercial goals and objectives, they are more motivated to deliver high-quality work. The planning process sets measurable targets, which can serve as milestones for their progress. This goal orientation provides a sense of achievement and satisfaction when they meet or exceed expectations, driving their motivation and dedication to the project.

Collaboration and alignment

A quantified planning process promotes collaboration and alignment between the client, agency, and media teams. It ensures that everyone involved understands their roles, responsibilities, and deliverables. This clarity fosters better communication, teamwork, and cooperation, creating a positive work environment that enhances productivity and overall performance.

Creative problem-solving

A measured planning process encourages focused problem-solving by identifying potential challenges and developing contingency plans. It equips creative individuals

with the tools and resources to overcome obstacles and find innovative solutions. This promotes a proactive mindset, resilience, and adaptability, which are crucial for navigating complex projects and meeting client expectations.

Efficiency

By setting clear goals, objectives, and timelines, agencies can allocate resources effectively, prioritise tasks, and optimise workflow. This reduces inefficiencies, minimises wasted time and effort, and ensures that projects are well-organised and timely.

Resource management

Agencies can better manage their resources, including personnel, budget, and technology. They can allocate resources based on project requirements, assign tasks to the appropriate team members, and ensure that resources are utilised efficiently. This leads to better utilisation of agency assets and maximises the return on investment.

Client communication

By sharing a quantified plan, agencies can set realistic expectations, establish clear deliverables and timelines, and inform clients about project progress. Regular updates and transparent communication build trust, foster strong client relationships, and increase client satisfaction.

Accountability and performance

Accountability is a vital aspect of a quantified planning process. By assigning specific responsibilities and deadlines, agencies can hold their team members accountable for their tasks and deliverables. This fosters a culture of ownership, professionalism, and high performance within the agency. As a result, individual team members are motivated to excel in their roles, meet deadlines, and deliver the highest quality work.

In a world where change is the only constant, and AI looms large over work practices and professional development, the new **iconic** model and training programme has the potential to quantifiably improve the personal productivity and career development prospects of marketers.

(O'Brien, n.d.)

Who or what am I?

I asked the Chat GPT model to write about the human Self. Here is the output:

The concept of the human Self is complex and multifaceted and has been studied extensively by philosophers, psychologists, and other scholars across various

disciplines. In general, the Self can be understood as the individual's sense of personal identity and awareness of their existence.

Psychologically the Self can be seen as the total of an individual's thoughts, feelings, experiences, and behaviours, as well as their beliefs about themselves and the world around them. This includes both conscious and unconscious aspects of the Self.

Philosophers have also explored the nature of the Self, with some proposing that it is a fundamental aspect of human nature that is distinct from the body and the mind. In contrast, others argue that the Self is merely an illusion or a construct of social and cultural influences.

Overall, the concept of the human Self remains a subject of ongoing inquiry and debate, with no one definitive answer or explanation.

I felt this example could be easily spotted as AI-generated. I went one step further, trying to fool a reader by getting AI to create an analogy. (A popular AI writing technique that I teach to students).

I asked for analogy drawn between a diamond and the Self,

The Self can be compared to a multifaceted diamond. Like a diamond, the Self has many facets that make up its entirety. Each facet represents a different aspect of the Self, such as our emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and experiences.

Just as a diamond reflects light in different ways depending on the angle from which it is viewed, our Self can be viewed and understood from different perspectives. How we see ourselves may be different from how others see us, just as how a diamond appears to one person may be different from how it appears to another.

And like a diamond, the Self can be solid, durable, fragile, and vulnerable. It can be polished and refined through personal growth and development or damaged and marred by life's challenges and traumas. [Also see Chapter 1, Atlas of your mind.]

Ultimately, just as a diamond is a valuable and unique gemstone, our Self is a valuable and unique aspect of our being that deserves to be cherished, cared for, and appreciated.

Welcome to the new era of your upgraded Freudian Self, where the id, Ego, and Super-ego compete with the power of AI.

I vs AI – Jump! overview

Tips

-  Zero-shot prompting generates captivating content or copy without explicit instructions or specific details.
-  General prompts or high-level concepts craft engaging copy that resonates with the audience.

- 💡 One-shot prompting analyses and comprehends a single reference's style, tone, or structure. It produces similar material to maintain consistency or achieve desired outcomes.
- 💡 In few-shot prompting, AI is presented with limited examples or references.
- 💡 In chain of thought prompting, marketers provide AI with a starting point and encourage further exploration and expansion.
- 💡 Each thought or concept builds upon the previous, creating cohesive and engaging copy.
- 💡 The catch-all prompt engineering formula is CIDI: context, instructions, details, input.
 - *Context* provides a framework for AI to understand the desired content.
 - *Instructions* guide AI's creative process.
 - *Details* refine and specify the output.
 - *Input* serves as the foundation for AI to generate the desired copy.
- 💡 Transparent communication and regular updates with clients build trust and increase satisfaction.

At a glance

- 💡 AI cannot handle different interpretations of ethical nuances, particularly regarding “ought” or “should” statements.
- 💡 Microsoft's Tay chatbot in 2016 spread misogynistic and racist language, highlighting the prioritisation of creative machine learning over moral appropriateness.
- 💡 Marketing careers created by AI include AI marketing strategist, AI marketing analyst, prompt engineer, and chatbot marketing manager.

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In discovering that people are looking for brands that radiate an authentic inner Self, you will learn how what people believe they authentically are, is, in part, affected by their perceptions of others and how trust is based not only on what is said, but what is acted upon.

Figure 3.1
A lifetime of moments that eventually pass.



You will probably spend 674,982 hours (the equivalent of 77 years or 924 months, if lucky) busy with activities, including:

Playing roles, meeting people, developing plans, idling, learning, sleeping, doing the right thing, breaking rules, collaborating, arguing, forgiving, being forgiven, getting annoyed, feeling great, getting drunk, running away, running towards, falling ill, bringing up a family, recovering, going on holiday, praying, crying, laughing, giving up, giving in, being brave, travelling, feeling lonely, being happy, acting selfishly, being selfless, being kind, being nasty, feeling indifferent, playing sports, getting rich, feeling poor, over-eating, dieting, screaming, shouting, whispering, worrying, chatting, listening, showing off, being humble, disappointing people, feeling let down, feeling you belong, feeling ostracised, walking, playing, being serious, thinking you are the only one who thinks like you, joining like-minded people, feeling bored, feeling inspired, joking, snoring, feeling depressed, being anxious, feeling confident, sneering, smiling, loving, hating, sitting, standing, writing, being creative, reading, wasting time, feeling proud, feeling ashamed, getting dressed, masturbating, making love, influencing, giving, taking, sharing, joining, leaving, begging, lying, yearning, pretending, revealing, drinking, hiding, feeling controlled, arguing, cheating, feeling cheated, remaining loyal, being loved, parenting, regretting, being loathed, trusting, questioning, answering, teaching, caring, nurturing, forgetting, hustling, pushing, pulling, losing faith, gaining hope, healing, singing, hurting, watching movies, staring at the TV, volunteering, overworking, motivating, berating, eating, going to the toilet, buying stuff, and finally, feeling utterly overwhelmed.

When combined, the tiny fragments make up the picture of a lifelong quest to find the definitive authentic Self.

It's a big picture in which the Internet plays a massive role in helping people figure out who they are. Before diving into the Self-online, I will introduce you to the fundamentals of the Self.

In his play *As You Like It*, Shakespeare describes the Seven Ages of Man. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_the_world%27s_a_stage):

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and entrances, and
one man in his time plays many parts,
his acts being seven ages.
At first, the infant mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
And then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel and shining morning face,
creeping like a snail unwillingly to school.
And then the lover, sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad,
made to his mistress's eyebrow.
Then a soldier, full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel, seeking the bubble reputation,

even in the cannon's mouth.

And then the justice, in the fair round belly with good capon lined,
with eyes severe and beard of formal cut, full of wise saws and modern instances;
and so, he plays his part.

The sixth age shifts into the lean and slipper'd pantaloone, with spectacles on nose and
pouch on side, his youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide,
for his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
turning again toward childish treble, pipes, and whistles in his sound.

The last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history is second childishness and
mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Today, people play out many life roles online. Busy mums check out their Instafeeds as they thrust tablet devices into infants' chubby hands. The infant swipes avatars stomping around a playground of wonders before the child throws up with motion sickness. The infant of the future will do much the same, except mum adjusts the smooth-motion sensor on devices strapped to arms or headsets before tucking in straps beneath a baby's winter bonnet.

The *whining* pupil would rather chat with friends on WhatsApp, improve Twitch gaming scores, or reload weapons on Minecraft than attend class.

The *lover* desperately seeks connection with a remarkable, smiling face, or at the very least, relief via Tinder, Grindr, or other NSA sites.

The *soldier* signs viral petitions for or against a cause: equality, poverty, corruption, greed, crime, pollution, web intrusion, but eventually realises that every fellow X (formerly Twitter) or Threads petitioner is quick in quarrel and seeks frothy empty bubbles of reputational praise.

The *justice*, wise from battle, fully understands how to exploit promises to change the world with "born in the USA" brands manufactured cheaply in China or conceived in argumentative Israeli start-ups.

In return for late-night data thefts, the justice parades and promotes the next online sensation on TikTok in minute-long catwalk pitches, narrated by influencers praising the must-have item's "awesome," "smashed-it" features.

The sixth age: after a lifetime of being led by the web's hand dancing around life's small circular stage, the sixth age falls giddy into infancy – squealing and gurgling at sites painting avatar dreamworlds that promise endless ways to become anyone but themselves.

The last scene: keeping up with influencers, appearances, and trends become insignificant compared to searching Google for a solution on how not to wet the bed.

With teeth in a glass, and headset strapped tightly to the head like a tourniquet squeezing the blood flow, it is time to conjure up, at the touch of a screen, reminiscences of long-lost smiles spotted decades earlier, at least one last time, before the battery pack finally gives in and dies.

JUNG'S FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

Carl Jung (1875–1961) formulated the four stages of life (Mmari, 2018). Unlike Shakespeare's Seven Stages, Jung's life scenes could be interchanged. Some may even remain wedged in a specific stage.

Stage one: the athlete

The athlete is preoccupied with looks, self-absorbed and feels entitled. Of the four stages, this is the most immature. It is indicative of creating selfies.

Stage two: the warrior

The warrior is on a quest to conquer the world – whether at work or home. The warrior exploits others; beats them at their own game; *qui audet adipiscitur*. Then, convinced of their own courage and having plunged so many swords into the raw flesh of conceit, the warrior demands, “What can you do for me?”

Stage three: the statement

“What can you do for me?” now shifts to “What have I done for others?” This changes the focus from personal achievements to accomplishing deeds for the community, friends, and family.

This stage is often correlated with parenting and realising that the time has come to be selfless rather than selfish, and in so doing, eventually leave the world a better place.

This stage provides excellent online opportunities for charities or religious movements.

Stage four: the spirit

At this stage, a person realises that, in truth, they are more than stages one, two, or three. For them, life has greater value than superficial looks, possessions, money, and titles. They are part of something that is quintessentially greater than the parts.

Lao Tzu

Lao Tzu was the Chinese Taoist philosopher credited with writing the Tao Te Ching.

Can you step back from your mind and *understand* everything?

Giving birth and nourishing, having without possessing, *acting* with no expectations, leading and not trying to control this is the supreme virtue?

(Laozi, 2018)

Ultimately it is excruciatingly harder to embrace who you are not than who you are; however, once you accept both, you can become who you are meant to be.

Humankind has searched for meaning and purpose since leaving its first footprint on the planet. According to the Torah (Old Testament), man and woman (Adam and Eve) originally had it all. They lived in the most spectacular botanical garden, had perfect health, laughed, played, felt content, and enjoyed sumptuous food – even immortality! They didn't need clothes; they were neither ashamed nor vain. Just blissfully happy.

They were at peace with their physical and psychic selves until they ate from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. They became self-aware when a single drop of the tree's fruit's sweet nectar touched their lips. They became acutely aware of being naked in every connotation of the physical word.

From wearing clothes, developing technologies, hunting for food to building dwellings, aware that they were alone together, Adam and Eve spent the rest of their lives building a society that would ceaselessly search for the original blissful meaning and purpose they once knew before eating from the Tree of Knowledge.

ESTEEM OF THE SELF

Many psychotherapy sessions are directly or indirectly about one thing: self-esteem: damaging it, losing it, searching for it, hopefully rediscovering it, and then rebalancing it. People with low self-esteem don't expect they will perform very well. So they try to avoid embarrassment, failure, or rejection. Self-esteem advertising attempts to change product attitudes by stimulating positive feelings about the Self.

Self-concept relates to how you label your behaviour, abilities, and unique characteristics: "I am kind." "I am generous." Such behaviours and subsequent beliefs can be affected by anything from groups you join, friends you hang out with, sites you admire, goods you buy, and causes you support.

However, your self-image doesn't necessarily reflect reality. Specifically, your self-image doesn't necessarily reflect who you will be tomorrow or who you were yesterday. It is a part of your psyche, but not the whole.

MIRROR-MIRROR

In Chapter 1 (Forethought), you were introduced to Jean-Paul Sartre. He said, "Man is not the sum of what he has already, but rather the sum of what he does not yet have, of what he could have" (Socratic Method, 2022).

Brands provide a partial clue as to what a person could regard as their self-concept.

Besides humans, only dolphins, great apes, and some monkeys may recognise their reflections.

The existential Self begins to emerge as early as 2 to 3 months and arises partly through the relationship the child experiences with the world. For example, the child smiles, and someone smiles back, or the child touches a mobile and sees it move.

The mirror self-recognition test (aka rouge/lipstick test) demonstrates that at around 18 months, babies begin to recognise themselves in a mirror. The test involves putting a dab of lipstick (or rouge) on a baby's nose and placing the baby in front of a mirror. Before 18 months, babies may smile at their reflection but don't notice the lipstick (LoBue, 2020).

At around a year and a half, rouge-nosed babies try to rub the lipstick off their noses instead of playing with the cute baby in the mirror (Lewis, 1995).

Babies who have never seen a mirror react differently to babies who are familiar with mirrors (Priel & de Schonen, 1986). At 8 months, babies are aware of faces in photographs and videos. However, they prefer to look at other babies' faces than themselves (Bahrick et al., 1996).

Recognising yourself is different from seeing yourself. It requires you to consider "you" separate from "yourself." That calls for the ability to think about "you" as an independent being with a mind that is distinct from other people's thoughts. Gaining a sense of the categorical Self, the child realises they exist as separate from others and will continue to exist over time and space. They exist as individuals in the world, with distinct properties, such as age, hair colour, and gender. (Also see "I" vs You).

THEORY OF MIND

Other people have thoughts and feelings that are separate from yours. The theory of mind suggests that children recognise other people's intentions and emotions. It influences positive prosocial behaviours, like sharing and helping, and darker behaviours, like lying.

Self-conscious emotions like empathy, guilt, pride, humiliation, and pride call for a child to compare their actions to what they believe are the expectations of others. For example, to feel pride, a child needs to understand that something they have done may win admiration.

Social media remoulds the reality of such expectations. When enough people publish that they share a specific expectation, the rest may conclude that such an expectation reflects the realistic views of the majority, so comply accordingly.

However, ask if every individual genuinely believes in the stated broad consensus. You may find that when revealing their "real Self," they don't. However, like an 18-month-old, they struggle with their ideal Self. To follow the social path of least resistance and potential greatest admiration, they look to boost their self-esteem by being accepted into a group.

THE THEORY OF EMOTION

The philosopher William James (1842–1910) is often accredited as the father of American psychology. He argued that everyone's perceptions of themselves are contextualised

by triggers such as experiences, thought patterns, and memories. He claimed that the depth of a thought depends on the person considering it. A person's consciousness and physiology go hand in hand. This theory is known as the James-Lange theory of emotion.

James believed that emotions were driven by physiological changes like increased heart rate or sweating; this leads to the mind constructing emotions like panic, fear, love, and so on (James, 1890).

The more experience someone has, the greater their confidence.

James was one of the first to officially postulate a theory of the Self (*Principles of Psychology*). He described two aspects of the Self: the "I-Self" and the "Me-Self."

The I-Self is the confident Self fully aware of who they are and were. It is the thinking Self that you may call the mind.

The Me-Self refers to the Self as an object of experiences (whereas the I-Self is the subject of experiences).

It is almost as if the Me-Self is a separate individual a person refers to when discussing their personal experiences.

Whilst the I-Self is a self-construct of the Self, the Me-Self can be categorised into three distinctive parts:

 The material Self

 The social Self

 The spiritual Self.

The *material Self* refers to possessions. For example, which car brand a person drives, how much is in their bank account, or the kind of home they live in. Such materials define and reflect who the person pictures themselves to be.

The *social Self* is concerned with who you are in a specific social situation. For example, you may exude professional confidence on one website while revealing your more playful Self on another.

The *spiritual Self* relates to your core values and conscience. These usually remain relatively stable throughout your life.

MULTIPLE VS UNIFIED SELF

In the Torah (Old Testament), God says, "I am what I shall be." In life, if you are who you are, then who or what makes you who you are?

For the most part, the answers to that are a combination of experiences, circumstances, and upbringing.

Echoing William James, Walter Mischel (1968) suggested that behaviours are affected by different situations and experiences (Mischel, 2013).

Others suggest that humans have a single Self (reflecting on Jung's fourth stage of life – the spirit). Such theorists indicate that during a person's latter half of life, there is a confluence of the different Selves.

"I" VS "YOU"

Have you ever thought, "Why can't I do what I want to do?"

"I" is used twice. That implies two different referents: the I that wants something and the I that seeks an alternative.

Each of the two Selves has its preference.

"I want to eat this cake. I mustn't eat it because I am on a diet."

Some say the Self is deceiving itself. Self-deception involves two selves: the subject (the deceiver) and the object of the deception (the deceived).

Pears (1985) and Krause (2009) considered that one Self ignores the "truth" perceived by the other (Lester, 2012).

Frankl (2001) favoured a meta-preference approach. It allows a person to prefer A over B and yet still choose B.

For example, you prefer a hamburger over a salad. In a first-order preference, objects or elements are ranked (hamburger and salad). In second-order preferences, rankings are organised, better called "second-order preference rankings" (Frankl, 2001, p. 34). So, in our example, you crave the hamburger, but instead, you take the sensible route and choose a salad.

David Lester, a British-American psychologist and suicidologist, suggests an alternative approach. He submitted that the multiple Self refers to individuals interacting with different situations and circumstances.

Lester explained that the mind comprises numerous sub-selves that are autonomous sets of psychological processes such as dreams, desires, emotions, and memories. Depending on the circumstances, one Self-state becomes more dominant than another (Lester, 2015).

In normal development, the individual Self-states are developed enough to allow for internal conflicts of wishes and desires within the person. However, where there is trauma, the Self-states become defensively dissociated from each other, sometimes resulting in dissociative identity disorder.

The unified Self refers to a harmonious composite persona of the Self that contains all of the other Self states existing within a person that have developed in response to relationships and events. (Little & BC Campus, 2016).

I am what I will be.

(*Ego eimi*)

Write “I am . . .” on a social media post; more than being descriptive, you are being prescriptive – creating a future role for your “I am.”

“*I am*” is a command to your subconscious. For example, “I am happy.” “I am confident.” “I am angry.” “I am insecure.”

Viewing posts, onlookers may become irrationally cynical, assuming people are fake or out to con.

Defending themselves, some online Selves argue that unless they “fake it, they won’t make it.”

A seesaw of conflicting anger and longing for branded “I ams” quickly festers into more than jealousy: raw frustration.

In this way, describing current “I ams,” people not only prescribe futures – they twist fates.

EGO STATES

Providing life is going to plan, people tend to present themselves as a whole. However, things may get tangled at some point in life’s journey, and people can find themselves at a loss – pulled in different directions.

CHILD STATE (THE INNER CHILD)

We seek guidance when we feel too vulnerable to handle a situation independently.

The inner child symbolises the emotional Self. It is formed during the first 5 years of life and records internal feelings and emotions that respond to external events.

Bear in mind that the rational thinking of an individual is formed after language acquisition. Put another way, a person gains the recognised capacity “to think” after learning to speak, as the thinking process is based on words (internal discourse). As a result, a child’s brain absorbs the information without much filter. (See language, Chapter 1, Atlas of your mind.)

THE PARENT STATE (THE INNER PARENT)

When we are confused, we need soothing. The inner parent represents how parents or carers in the first 5 years of life helped us through difficult times.

THE ADULT STATE (THE INNER ADULT)

When you pause to take a breath before reacting, you are experiencing the adult state. It is the most complex of the three ego states. Around the first birthday, the child

learns to control small objects, like the beaker from which they drink. They learn to interact with others by playing. These basic signs of autonomy are the beginning of the adult in the small child.

INNER ADULT'S ROLE

The inner adult evaluates and validates parent and child behaviours. It becomes aware of reactions to feelings, testing whether they still hold true in the present, reaffirming them, or changing approaches.

People fluctuate between a child or parent state (a bit like instinctively shifting gears and pushing pedals when you drive a car). The adult state calls for the ability to see things objectively. This would be why, thanks to always-on, instant availability, people often respond more rashly and instinctively on social sites than offline.

I VS ME VS YOU

Sociologists Charles Cooley (1864–1929) and George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) said how we view ourselves is influenced by how we see others (such as online influencers).

Cooley believed that the people you interact with can influence your self-identity.

Mead thought that only certain people could influence our perception of Self, and only during certain vital stages of life.

For example, very young infants are not actually influenced by others. Instead, they focus on their Self within their own world rather than on what others think of them.

This is similar to Piaget's concept of egocentrism.

Jean Piaget posited that how a child reacts depends on their stage of development. During the preoperational phase (2 to 7 years old), a child may purely respond to situations from their point of view (Wikipedia.com, n.d.).

For example, an infant (Rachel) receives a phone call from her father. He asks if Mum is home. Instead of saying "yes," Rachel nods her head. Hearing no response, the father asks again. Rachel again nods her head. She can't appreciate that her father is unable to see her nodding. Rachel can only take her perspective – "I am nodding my head; why do you keep asking me the same question?"

Mead also believed that as we grow up, beliefs about how other people perceive us become more critical as we enter specific stages:

-  The preparatory stage
-  The play stage
-  The game stage.

In the *preparatory stage*, children interact through imitation. For example, they might play with a broom when their parents are cleaning,

Growing older, the child focuses on communication through words, gestures, symbols, and other means rather than imitation.

During the *play stage*, the child grows more attuned to social relationships.

Mead thought that this was reflected in children focusing on role play. For example, they play “daddies” and “mummies” from the parents’ point of view. “*Don’t be a naughty baby.*” They are not just mimicking social interactions; they’re *recreating* their parents’ behaviours.

During the *game stage*, children further deepen their understanding of social interactions. For example, they become aware that people not only act on the basis of their own beliefs but are also driven by what society expects of them.

For example, the child starts to understand that a parent may have multiple roles, perhaps watching their mother work from home. The child recognises that in addition to being a mum, the parent is a worker.

MANY SPINS OF THE SELF – ONE WEB

In our interconnected online world, people often juggle multiple selves simultaneously. Not only do they have compound roles, but they also hold various opinions which change according to how others behave. A child realises that their behaviour directly influences the responses of people with whom they share important relationships (e.g., peers, parent).

Mead was convinced that this leads to the development of the I and the Me. Me is your social Self, and I is your response to Me. Me is how we believe society sees us. You understand Me through interactions with others.

I is your identity that mulls over the meaning of interactions and experiences. For example, Me might understand that people drive cars but wonders if it would be healthier for them to cycle or walk.

Your Self is the balance of the I and the Me. The stories you tell yourself reflect what you directly experience and perceive via the web. In terms of digital, Me employs the web to discover what others do and even think. I makes judgements and forecasts about whether such actions and beliefs are sound.

Digital ensures that, unlike traditional experiences, encounters are not slowly cultivated so mulled over, but constantly drip-fed 24/7 online. With so much information to process, of which a significant amount is virtual rather than physical, your I must deduce reality and truth via a second party (the windows of the Internet such as phones, tablets, screens, and headsets) and process their I and Me from a perception of You – experienced in the wider world according to what Me believe is authentic or I recognises as just marketing, PR, and puffery.

FREUD AND ERIKSON AND FRIENDS

The web has profoundly impacted how identities are constructed. In the past, identities were shaped mainly by offline interactions with others. Thanks to relationships cultivated over time, you were appreciated by close families, friends, colleagues, and neighbours – all of whom you physically met. But the web has made it possible to present ourselves in any way we choose.

This has led to a new kind of identity; one that is more fluid and multifaceted than ever before. In the past, there was a home/work balance. It delineated between the two; the web lets us put on different masks to be other people for different occasions. You can be your true Self or create a more idealised or aspirational persona.

This freedom to choose our own identity can be liberating. It allows us to explore different aspects of ourselves and to connect with people who share our interests. But it can also be confusing, contradictory, and overwhelming.

The web has also made it easier for us to create false identities. This can be done for various reasons, such as to protect our privacy, deceive others, or commit fraud. While legitimate reasons exist for creating a false identity, it is important to know the risks involved.

IDENTITY CRISIS

If you've ever used the term "identity crisis," you can thank the American developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Homburger Erikson. His stages of psychosocial development detailed progress from infancy to late adulthood. Each step presents new challenges. Completed stages build upon one another until a person becomes fully developed. When stages are unmet, a person could be confronted with reoccurring problems (Wikipedia.com, n.d.).

Drawing on Erikson's stages of psychosocial development and combining other eminent schools of psychoanalysis and psychodynamics, including Freud, Piaget, Rank, and Klein, I have charted a psychology-based approach that details how brands can address rudimentary life-stage conflicts.

BOWLBY AND ATTACHMENT

The psychoanalyst John Bowlby (1907–1990) believed that the central foundations for behaviour are formed during childhood (Holmes, 2014).

A child forms many attachments. The primary is called monotropy. It may not happen if a child has not developed an attachment between the ages of 2 and 5. Attachment styles refer to how someone relates to others. For example, confidence builds when an attachment is secure enough to allow a person to explore the world without pressure. They are free to seek support, protection, and comfort.

The behavioural attachment system remains throughout life, with people seeking and gaining comfort from physical and mental representations of significant others. For

Stage	Fundamental conflict	Potential brand rapport /challenges
Infancy. (birth to 18 months). Incorporating Freud's oral development stage and, in part, the anal development stage.	Trust vs mistrust Will I be fed and comforted or abandoned? Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget suggested infants up to a month old perfect the innate response (e.g., preparing for suckling). Between 1 and 4 months, the infant learns that doing something is satisfying, so it repeats the act. (Objects out of sight are out of mind.) Through sucking and touching, between 4 and 9 months, infants explore new objects, again repeating actions that cause interesting outcomes. At 9 to 12 months, infants imitate others and realise actions create effects. At 12 to 18 months, trial and error vary the infant's behaviour. At this stage, some infants learn objects continue to exist, even when out of sight. Psychologist Melanie Klein called this stage the "paranoid-schizoid position" (Wikipedia.com, n.d.). Things the child loves are rewarding "objects." The infant hates "frustrating objects." This phenomenon is related to what psychotherapists call "the good breast and the bad breast" – fragmented mental entities. The "good breast" is for suckling. When withheld, it becomes the "bad breast." From the infant's perspective, it is all maddeningly confusing with both belonging to the same mother. Steadily, and with some emotional pain, the infant eventually learns that people and objects can be good and bad simultaneously. Ultimately the child distinguishes the reality of itself and others. Freud's Oedipal conflict emerges at the phallic period of Freud's developmental stages approach. He said it involves a son's sexual attraction and/or wishes to possess or marry the mother.	Product familiarity and comfort in shape, colour, touch, form . . . Tone of voice: soothing

(Continued)

Stage	Fundamental conflict	Potential brand rapport /challenges
Early primal scenes (2 to 3 years) incorporating part of Freud's anal development stage.	Oral: birth to 1 year old Anal: 1 to 3 years old Phallic: 3 to 5 years old Latency: 5 to 12 years old Genital: adolescent to adulthood Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank coined the term "pre-Oedipal" (Psychoanalysis.org.uk, n.d.; Wikipedia.com, n.d.). Ronald Fairbairn popularised the modern theory of "object relations." A few decades later, Sigmund Freud advocated that the libido (part of the id), created by survival and sexual instincts, acts selfishly to drive a person's behaviour (Freud, 1891, 1905, 1914, 1917). Fairbairn suggested that, rather than addressing a selfish libido drive, personal contentment comes from establishing relationships with others, starting with parental/infant bonding (Mitchell, 1981). The conundrum of balancing contradictory expectations continues into early childhood. Unfortunately, it is never entirely resolved. <i>Primary episode: feeding</i> Autonomy vs shame/doubt Between 18 months and 24 months, symbolic activity begins. Sounds and actions imply an absent object. Infants begin to solve puzzles. Regulating body functions = feelings of control and independence. (Toilet training in which defecation becomes a major interpersonal concern: although the child enjoys control over bodily functions, parents assert rules.) Children completing this stage feel secure, confident, and praised.	Products featuring simple rewards. Tone of voice: uplifting.

A 2014 study published in *Developmental Psychology* revealed that an advanced sign of cognitive skills at the age of 2 years is when children may begin to lie. Their research found:

Twenty-five per cent of 2-year-olds know how to lie; 50 per cent of 3-year-olds do; and 80 per cent of 4-year-olds do (Toplak et al., 2014).

Primary episode: toilet training

Preschool (3–5 years).
Early primal scenes
(2–3 years).
Incorporating Freud's
phallic development
stage.

Initiative vs Guilt

Through play and social contact, a child starts to become assertive. Encouragement is needed for the child to take initiatives like planning activities or confronting challenges.

Discouragement may cause shame and over-dependence on others. Success = a sense of purpose.

Failure = guilt.

Primary episode: discovery.

School Age
(6–11 years).
Incorporating Freud's
latency development
stage.

Industry vs inferiority

Children begin to develop pride in their schooling and social accomplishments.

They become skilled at increasingly complex academic and social tasks. Encouraged and praised, children have greater self-belief.

Success = competence.

Failure = inferiority.

Primary episode: schooling.

Pubescence
(12–18 years).
Again includes Freud's
latency stage.

Identity vs role confusion

Adolescents start to want an independent self and identity. Moving from childhood to adulthood, teens may feel socially insecure or uncertain.

Many investigate different roles and behaviours. This aids the process of forming solid identities and goals.

Products that challenge and encourage creativity (e.g., Lego bricks).

Brands inspiring creative activities role-play, such as pretending to be a princess or pirate.

(Tone of voice: supportive.)

Children game play sharing (e.g., via connected consoles); character card/model/avatar collections; subscriptions to themed part-work magazines.

Fashionable clothing brands, sports team merchandise, tablets, . . .

(Tone of voice: Fun.)

Questioning brand choice is akin to asking about personal identity and status. Peers often sway purchases. So, there's a fine line between being distinctive and fitting in.

Ideal brands include seamless digitally shared

(Continued)

Stage	Fundamental conflict	Potential brand rapport /challenges
Young adulthood (19–40 years).	Intimacy vs isolation Teens receiving encouragement and reinforcement through personal exploration emerge self-assured. Those uncertain of their beliefs and needs can remain insecure. <i>Primal episode: social relationships.</i> Having achieved a strong sense of Self, the major concern is forming intimate, committed, or loving relationships. The study Wealth Building Among Young Americans (2017) showed that the net worth of those aged under 46 is lower than their parents was at that age. Traditional means of building wealth are disappearing. Educational debt, as well as falling rates of home ownership, were cited as factors for this decline (Overton.io, n.d.). Success = strong relationships. Failure = loneliness and isolation. <i>Primal episode: search/finding enduring love.</i>	social products and “edgy” activity-centred brands (e.g., Red Bull). In addition, creative software brands like Midjourney or DALL-E encourage expression. Brands that appear insincere or artificial are rejected. But on the other hand, prominent brands support peer esteem. (Tone of voice: vainglorious appreciation.) Torn between maturity and adulthood in their 20s, people may have painful emotional conflicts. Increasingly, with poor economic outlooks, they remain in education longer. Financial necessities may oblige them to stay in parental homes. Increasingly marriage and parenting are deferred. Those aged 20 to 35 are hot-wired to the social web’s digital umbilical cord. Brands like Apple or Nike turn retail outlets into social experiences that spill over to the web. For many in their 20s to 40s, jobs are as insecure as a web torrent site, yet similarly enticing. Social media likes are what count the most. Many seek what the humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers called unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1957). The sincere acceptance and support of a person irrespective of what the person says or does. (See page 182.)

Middle maturity
(40–65 years).

Generativity vs stagnation

Adults in this age group strive to create or nurture others. Personal experiences become legacies.

Generativity concerns making your mark on the world, caring for others, being creative, and improving the future.

Stagnation refers to the failure to find ways and means to contribute.

This can lead to low self-esteem, depression, disconnection, or social isolation. Divorce from a long-term partner can lead people to reconsider their roles and fairy-tale illusions regarding partners and families for life.

Success = a sense of social value.

Failure = a sense of unproductive and detachment.

Primary episode: work/life balance and parenthood.

Depending on the decade in which they were born, they are sceptical, bored, or inured to brand hype. Brands addressing this broad group are responsive and understanding, offering 24/7 virtual access and escapism from the often-tedious world of reality while providing continuity, security, and optimism. (Tone of voice: calm, respectful, aspirational, and pioneering.)

For many aged 40+, the growing pains of youth become tolerable. However, the aches of getting older grow assiduously. This group often rekindles nostalgic childhood interests. Friends are enduring. However, happy to keep to themselves, some are more likely to imitate than innovate.

In 2023, 26.3% (15.6 million) of the UK population was aged 40 to 59

(www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk, 2023), and 24.4% (14.5 million) were aged 60 years or over (government figures).

During 2019–20, the highest average amount of disposable income for any age group in the UK occurred in the 45- to 54-year-old group, at £42.852 (ONS.gov.uk, n.d.).

Brands quick to assert themselves as trusted names with extensive portfolios delivering choice and trust have an advantage.

(Continued)

Stage	Fundamental conflict	Potential brand rapport /challenges
<i>Maturity</i> (65 years to death).	Ego integrity vs id despair Unless previously affected by major trauma or illness, people reflect more deeply upon their life from age 65 to death. Some may feel fulfilled, not necessarily because they know more, but have learnt from	Harley-Davidson, the legendary motorbike brand, says their typical customer is 52. Reflecting consumer urges to explore personal ambitions instead of everyday routines (Ferris, 2019). Despite many having disposable income, those especially those in their 40s face uncertainties: prospects of redundancy through technology such as AI, and overcrowded job markets, financial pressures, distrust in formerly reliable institutions, the breakdown of traditional family units, and intensive urbanisation, pose an existential threat of being “knocked back,” never to regain the heights of former achievement. Frequently the over-reportedly complain that social media stifles genuine social contact. They may urge younger generations to reconnect with “regular” human relationships. However, technology is currently the way to communicate. The most admired brands are those that make older age pleasurable, stimulating and, above all, prized. (Tone of voice: integrity, praise, esteem, and commendation.) Previously, retirement was considered the concluding prelude to final departures. Medical advances and healthier living mean

more mistakes than younger people. They attain integrity and wisdom, even when confronting death.

Others sense regret over missed opportunities or unretractable decisions and actions.

Success = looking back with few regrets and great personal satisfaction.

Failure = a sense of a wasted life, leaving feelings of sullenness and desolation.

Those reaching 65 in the 2030s will be more at home with the web. Classically, brands often segment older people into distinctive gerontographics.

For example:

Healthy indulgers:

Career wise, they are financially comfortable, focusing on enjoying life rather than trying to make it in life.

Ailing outgoers:

They have adapted to frailties and, despite making the most of circumstances, are absorbed with issues surrounding physical and financial independence.

Healthy hermits:

Concerned with day-to-day tasks. They enjoy independence, even refuting their old-age status.

Frail recluses:

People with languorously protracted disorders – imperilled to isolation: ready to label themselves “old.”

Primary episode: reflection.

workers retiring today can look forward to 15–20 years of free time.

Older people require respect, kindness, support, and reassurance.

For reputations to resonate clearly, branding requires psychological perceptiveness.

Currently, by age 35, advertising agency personnel are considered antediluvian.

The marketing world mostly focuses on the young – overlooking the increasingly significant global gerontocracy.

Like us all, elderly consumers prefer to be recognised as individuals rather than stereotypes. Left in the hands of ad agency “senior” managers, many brands caricature older people sucking toffees through dentures or, more incredulously, as zippy go-getters.

Roughly half of the 47 million seniors living in the US are active Facebook users (BBC/The Daily Telegraph) (Morrison, 2023).

Whilst nothing can replace physical human contact, Internet skills learnt by over-65s in the 2020s enhance independence, strengthen self-image, offer social connectivity, and help tackle loneliness and depression.

(Tone of voice: polite, consoling, positive and astute.)

some, this attachment becomes apparent when forming romantic relationships. The foundations of many relationships are built on early attachment styles and experiences that could even include early direct or indirect abuse. This all contributes to a template for future relationships in adulthood (Bowlby, 1969; Holmes, 2014).

Ambivalent attachment: Children cannot depend on their primary caregiver.

Avoidant attachment: Children show no preference between a caregiver and a stranger. This may be because of abusive or neglectful caregivers. Children who are punished by a caregiver learn to avoid seeking future help.

Disorganised attachment: A lack of a well-defined attachment is linked to inconsistent caregiver behaviour. Parents may serve as both a source of comfort and fear.

Secure attachment: Children with dependable caregivers are distressed when separated and happy when reunited. (This is the most common attachment style.)

Figure 3.2

Bowlby-driven online attachment types.

Secure  Self-assured Direct, responsive (Blogs, posts)	Preoccupied  Self-doubting, Anxious, sensitive (Monitoring and micro-managing others)
Dismissive  Self-reliant, Avoidant, distant (Cynical-social media posts, non-communicative)	Fearful  Self-sabotaging, Unpredictable, isolated (Builds online relationships to destroy their Selves, then rebuild again. Experiences a sense of online detachment).

IT'S NOT YOU – IT'S NOT ME – IT'S US

People with secure relationships are more likely to be well-connected on social media (Yaakobi & Goldenberg, 2014).

Insecure attachments can have a detrimental effect on romantic partnerships. Some use social media to reassure a partner with an avoidant attachment style person that they are cherished (Wang et al., 2017).

Attachment anxiety associated with social media addiction addresses a fear of missing something (Blackwell et al., 2017). (Also see Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind, page 263.)

Understanding people's attachment styles from their social media use allows brands to influence a consumer's attachment to products and services (VanMeter et al., 2015).

Consumers attach themselves to brands with credible social content and a good reputation based on positive user reviews (Chung & Han, 2017).

Prosocial Streamed Content Enhances Children's Social and Emotional Skills for Healthy Relationships (Christensen & Myford, 2014). Measuring Social and Emotional Content in Children's Television: An Instrument Development Study null [article]. *Journal Of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*. However, television (streaming) and video games with violent content may also cultivate aggressive behaviours (Jensen & Arnett, 2012). Human Development: A Cultural Approach. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a barrage of glib social content may diminish mindfulness (Sriwilai & Charoensukmongkol, 2016).

Likewise, socially and emotionally elusive adolescents can be prone to being cyber bullied (Cross et al., 2015).

"ONCE I ACCEPT MYSELF JUST AS I AM, THEN I CAN CHANGE"

Carl Rogers

In Chapter 1, I briefly introduced you to Carl Rogers. (See Forethought, page 14.)

Rogers believed that everyone exists in a world of experiences (Rogers, 1951). Such experiences shape reactions. Everyone has a perception of internal objects (psychological and emotional impressions of someone when that person is not physically there). Such impressions influence how you view the person in real life.

External objects refer to a person or thing in which you invest emotional energy. A whole object is a person as they exist, along with all their positive and negative traits. External objects comprise the extended Self. Many cherish possessions as if they were a part of them.

For example, just about everyone can name a valued possession that has a lot of the Self wrapped up in it: treasured photographs, a trophy, an old shirt, a toy, a pair of

Figure 3.3

Psychological influences: how individual aspects of the internal Self shape approaches to the online world.



shoes, and so on. In many cases, it is not so much the object that holds value but its symbolism in terms of memories and meaning evoked per se by such an object. More broadly, the extended Self typically includes clothes, jewellery, cars, academic and professional status, and arguably for some, in terms of how they want others to perceive them, their partners.

Thanks to AI, virtually all appearances can be manipulated. However, as fakery becomes less easily identifiable, the Self has to turn to its own self and look towards trusted relationships for authenticity. Ultimately, how consumers feel inside and what they believe within will dictate how they respond to the external world. Your phenomenal field (or Self) is your subjective reality, the field of your experiences, including objects, people, and behaviours, thoughts, images, and ideas like fairness, ethics, and so on.

YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND A PERSON UNTIL YOU'VE SURFED 100 GB IN THEIR BROWSER

Donald Snygg and Arthur W. Combs (Wikipedia.com, n.d.e) proposed phenomenal field theory. It suggests that the conscious Self determines all behaviour and can only be understood from its own perspective.

Rogers believed that a person's behaviour is driven by self-actualisation to achieve their full potential.

A person forms a structure of Self or self-concept. A positive self-concept is associated with feeling good and safe. A negative self-concept means they may feel unhappy with who they are.

He said that Self-concept has several components.

IDEAL SELF

Your vision and ambitions of who you want to be.

In Freudian psychoanalysis, the ego ideal (German: *Ich Ideal*) is the inner image of yourself as you would wish to become (Akhtar, 2009, p. 89).

The Freudian notion of a perfect or ideal self is managed by the superego, consisting of "the individual's conscious and unconscious images of what he or she would like to be, patterned after certain people regarded as ideal" (Rosenthal, 2003). (Also see Freud, Chapter 4, Giving I what I wants and needs.)

IDEAL ATTRIBUTES

What you want to become.

Reveals values and feelings that are beyond our reach.

Represents goals.

Self-conscious as opposed to self-aware.

Buy to become (consumerism).

How a person believes others see them (especially on social media).

Symbolic self-completion theory: people with an incomplete self-definition tend to complete their identity by acquiring and displaying symbols.

AUTHENTIC SELF (SELF-IMAGE)

How you currently see and perceive yourself.

Who you actually are.

How you act, think, and feel.

Inner personality.

FALSE SELF

Role-playing.

You aim to avoid pain and so protect the Self.

You may feel it is better to hurt others before they hurt you (aka Wound and Vow).

Self/product congruence: consumers demonstrate consistency between their values and the things they buy.

Self-image congruence models: product attributes match an aspect of the Self.

SELF-ESTEEM (SELF-WORTH)

Self-esteem is about the degree of worth and value you believe you possess, such as whether you are capable, loveable, and deserving of happiness.

Experiences are consistent with the self-image of who you are and can become.

Low-self-esteem often stems from having love and affection withheld by parents or long-term partners and estranged families.

When you have unconditional positive regard (acceptance) of yourself, you are ready to accept “you,” irrespective of shortcomings or mistakes.

People with low self-esteem often seek ways to prove (mainly to themselves) their worthlessness. Thanks to its relative anonymity in digital space, that could include people exposing themselves online – to receive ridicule from others.

Sometimes the underlining purpose of online sexual fantasies is to mitigate anxiety. The fantasy counteracts (usually unconsciously) the inhibiting effects of guilt, shame, worry, helplessness, or inferiority.

However, in using the Internet to mitigate anxiety through fantasy role-playing, such acts may not just reduce an individual's self-esteem but diminish the roles of women or men that are the proxy focus of their fantasies to merely a means to a psychological and erotic end. Sites like Grindr often place immediate judgement and self-gratification above long-term, meaningful relationships and may simply intensify low self-esteem and worth.

In their book *A Billion Wicked Thoughts: What the Internet Tells Us About Sexual Relationships* (2012), Neuroscientists Ogi Ogas and Sai Gaddam explain that when it came to heterosexual interest on English language search engines, “cuckold porn” was the second most Googled topic amongst youth.

In his article “Cuckolded: Why Do So Many Men Fantasise About Their Wives Cheating on Them?” (Lehmiller, 2014), the social psychologist Justin Lehmiller reveals a surge of interest in cuckold scenarios, pointing out that even a cursory search on Amazon will turn up hundreds of books on similar erotica. The broader Internet too resoundingly echoes this “huge demand” for graphic depictions and sexual acts.

Xtube and Pornhub are singled out as responding to this ever-growing desire in men to play out this fantasy online. (According to the digital agency, Embryo, in 2022, Pornhub received 55 million searches each month – with visitor numbers still increasing; Wise, 2023.) (See Chapter 4, Surfing pauses are the new post-coital smoke-breaks, page 200.)

AI-GENERATED PORNOGRAPHY

In Chapter 2, you read about how easy it is for unscrupulous entrepreneurs to exploit AI to sell sham products and services (AI pollution). Thanks to swift advancements in AI image generation, it's easier than ever to create deepfake explicit images of non-existent people – including naked ones.

In September 2022, Character.AI launched, enabling users to chat with AI versions of figures like Elon Musk. After cracking down on racier topics, a founder known as Lore created the uncensored clone site Chub AI. Chub featured anime-style character cards for role-playing suggestive scenarios. These included Olivia, a 13-year-old anime girl with pigtails in a hospital gown, or scantily clad Reiko, “your clumsy older sister,” who is “constantly having sexual accidents with her younger brother.” In these chats, no images were generated – only text.

Chub then launched a new chat service using Meta's Llama 2 model to offer human-like responses for fees starting at \$5 per month. The founder said Chub generated over \$1 million in annualised revenue, calling it a “gold-rush scenario” after the open-sourcing of Llama (Weiss & Sternlight, 2024).

In 2023, one example was the “Claudia” account on Reddit, run by two computer science students who created an AI-generated avatar using a package called Stable Diffusion (Dickenson, 2023).

Despite starting as a joke, the duo profited from unsuspecting users on subreddits like r/NormalNudes and r/AmIHot. Since then, users have learnt that big brand AI platforms were being fooled into some prompts to generate naked pictures of public figures by slowly coaxing algorithms.

A 2023 investigation by the BBC uncovered that paedophiles regularly use AI Stable Diffusion to create and sell, via Japanese picture-sharing sites, life-like images of child sexual abuse, including the rape of babies and toddlers (Crawford & Smith, 2023; Tidy, 2023).

As AI-generated images gain traction, the lines between real and virtual increasingly blur.

A growing prevalence of AI-generated explicit content could potentially lead to greater difficulty for law enforcement in identifying authentic cases of revenge pornography or non-consensual explicit images.

AIN'T NO STOPPING AI

“The reality is that the technology will continue to proliferate, develop and become as easy to manage as pushing a button,” said Adam Dodge, the founder of EndTAB. This group provides training on thwarting technology-enabled abuse. “As long as that happens, people will undoubtedly . . . continue to misuse that technology to harm others, primarily through online sexual violence, deepfake pornography and fake nude images” (CBSnews.com, 2023).

AI-generated adult content may also create opportunities for consensual sex workers to leverage AI and increase profits while maintaining anonymity.

Because you're worth it

There may also be a shift in the broader pornography market where consumers seek “authentic” content, raising debates about legitimacy in adult entertainment.

Self-esteem marketing focuses on how a product or service can stimulate positive feelings about the Self (e.g., make-up products, perfume products, spa services, and weight-loss services).

According to 2016 research presented at the American Psychological Association annual convention, male users of the dating app Tinder appeared to have relatively lower levels of self-esteem. In addition, all users had a more negative perception of body image than those who didn't use the app (www.apa.org, 2016).

“Tinder users reported having lower levels of satisfaction with their faces and bodies and lower levels of self-worth than the men and women who did not use Tinder,” said Jessica Strübel, of the University of North Texas, who presented the research that she co-authored with Trent Petrie, also of the University of North Texas.

In the study, 1044 women and 273 men (predominantly undergraduate students) were asked to complete questionnaires about their use of Tinder and their body image, sociocultural factors, perceived objectification, and psychological well-being. Approximately 10% reported using Tinder.

Both male and female users reported less satisfaction with their bodies than non-users, said Strübel.

“Being actively involved with Tinder, regardless of the user’s gender, was associated with body dissatisfaction, body shame, body monitoring, internalisation of societal expectations of beauty, comparing oneself physically to others, and reliance on media for information on appearance and attractiveness,” said Strübel.

While users tended to have lower self-esteem, it didn’t automatically follow that the app caused it. Strübel and Petrie explained that people with lower self-esteem were drawn to those apps (Strübel & Petrie, 2017).

I AM MY BRAND

People yearn for a sense of enduring connection. Connection helps clarify our feelings, solidify who we are, and encourage what we believe we can become.

In the 20th century, brands sold products and services by turning features into benefits. To help ensure consumers understood an implicit message, the unique selling proposition was developed to capture the one key aspect of a product or service that even the most disinterested person could remember.

Companies realised that people looked for brands which reflected their self-image as well as offer practical benefits. So, brands developed a brand-self, an essence of being that mirrored consumers’ needs, wants, passions, beliefs, cynicism, humour, aspirations, and hopes.

Brands aimed to be congruent with consumers.

Over time, the commercial brand amalgamated with the personal Self to such an extent that people spoke about wanting to develop their own brand image. Spotting a market need, brand consultants devised product campaigns, crafted packaging and refined public relations to deliver the right message to the right audiences at the right place and time.

However, far too many brand-selves concentrated on packaging rather than substance. Their brand reach was impressive, gaining vast followers, but it was often unsustainable. Another brand-self could easily disrupt the image, offering more seductive packaging.

In some instances, this can be somewhat like using dating apps. Decisions as to whether to pursue a relationship are made within nanoseconds. It’s all about the packaging, which may just reflect a wannabe suitor’s image of their ideal Self.

I recently came across the following post on a dating site:

Dating sucks. I was excited about this guy; I met him on Tues nite it went well; we talked for over two hours. The next morning I reached out because I hadn't heard from him all morning like I usually had few days before we met when he would txt me all day. I'm blue. Anyways since this txt I posted yesterday morning, nothing from him. So I just asked him nicely today what's going on and if he's interested and no answer back. Yes, I'm being ghosted, but man, I wish people could just answer and say, "You know what, it's just not a match for me. In this txt he seems interested! Dumb. Ugh. I know the answer just needed to vent. Moving on!

I replied:

"Read between the lines of his bio.

Usually, the description describes the story people tell themselves that they want others to hear. Irrespective of facts."

My reply received no likes. (LOL) It was demoted to the bottom of the comments section.

The following reply from the other person however, received was promoted to the top.

"Ya, I agree. . . . I mean, aren't we freakin' adults?

Childish games, really?

FWB? OK

LTR, fine

Hook-up, sure.

But freakin', be honest and upfront.

Some people like to plan stuff and think 15 steps ahead!"

Online popularity rules. (That is why brands invest so much in social listening).

Perhaps for some, the secret is to take a lesson from AI sites like Google Bard, Claude or Gemini that replicate style, sentiment, and language; even it appears like the tone of voice is lacking a sense of genuine connection. Sadly, fake popularity spreads like a weed in between pavement cracks.

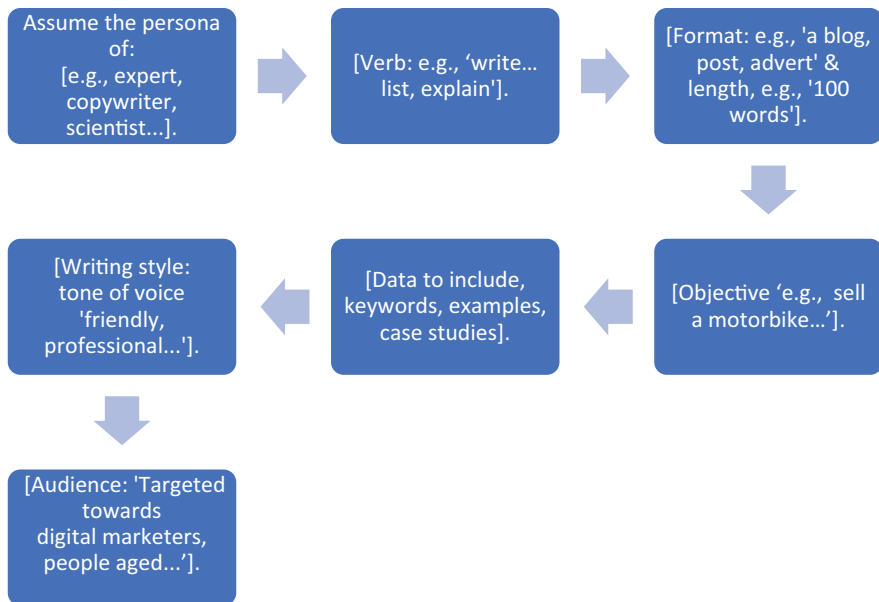
Sometimes, consumers simply hear what a brand wants them to hear, based on echoing what the consumer initially assumed. So, nobody hears anything other than what was already heard. The authentic Self gets stuck in a loop. The brand gains more admirers – and potential sales. Yet this is not the end of the tale. A shallow brand repeats what people generally want to hear. (Like an "earnest" politician promising what constituents want to hear.)

People swipe smart devices searching for brand mirrors that reflect a shallow outer shell and radiate an authentic inner Self.

Per Johansson was formerly a senior lecturer at Lund University. His main field of study remains the advanced understanding of actual experiences and sensations. He

Figure 3.4

The AI formulae on how to write a piece of copy that is congruent with any target audience.



says that objects we create – such as chairs, desks, etc., are mirrors of our inner selves. So, a furniture designer would imagine the object and then design it. The thing exists psychically before physically. What the designer created as an idea eventually surrounds him like a feedback loop. The designer makes an external sense of the Self who uses that object, such as sitting on a chair (Mentalkitchen.com, 2022).

Objects surrounding us, inform. For example, a coat stand urges us to hang our jackets on it. A window invites us to look through it . . . a kitchen sink suggests we use it to wash dishes: all act as signs informing us of the world and our role in it. In this way we become like Alice, in Wonderland, guided and inspired by label that inform our voyage of discovery to the Self.

The actual and authentic Selves combine to search for “homes” to self-actualise via brand promises of genuine safety, esteem, love, and hope.

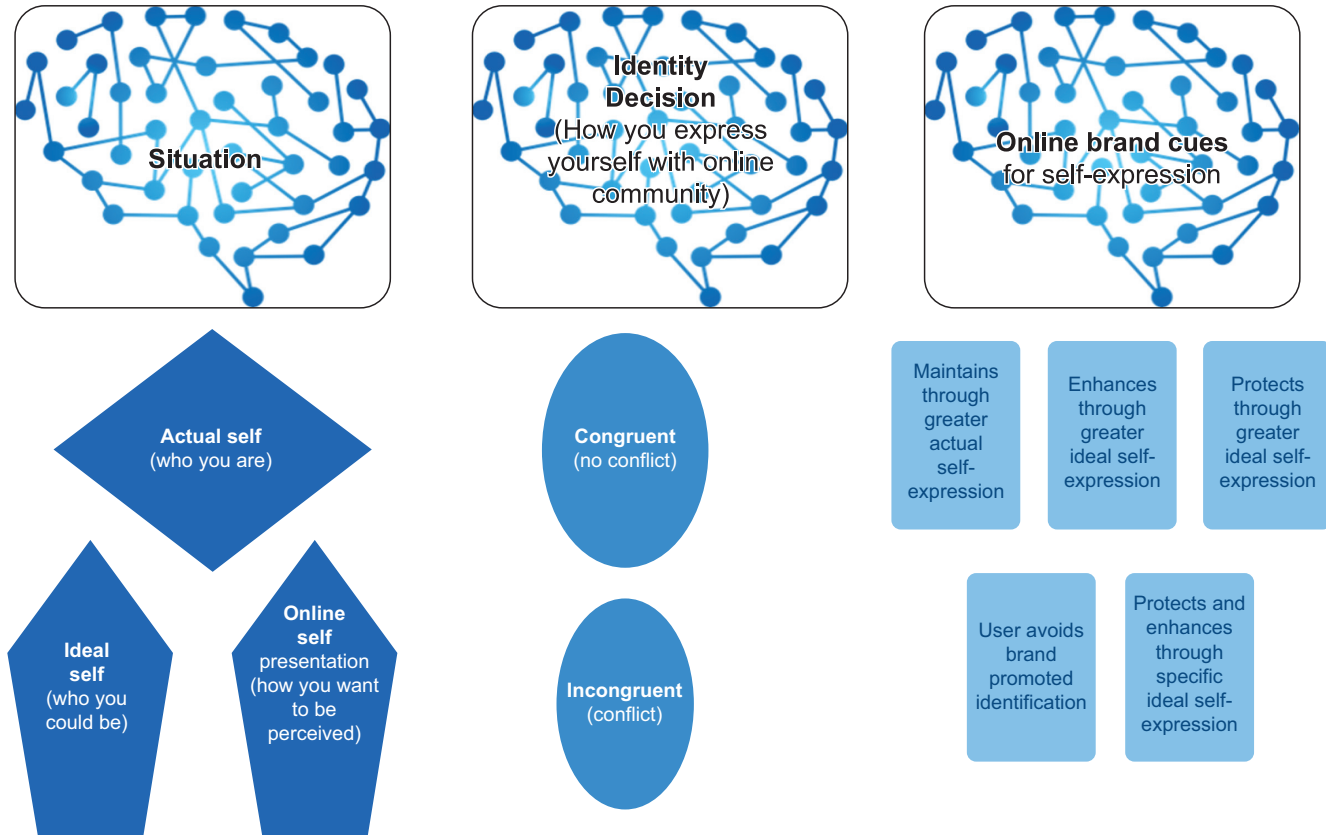
Likewise, for brands to realise their purpose – to be profitable – they need to fulfil their advertised brand promises.

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF THE SELF

Why are you unhappy? Because 99.9 per cent of everything you think and do is for your Self – and there isn't one.

—Wei Wu Wei (1895–1986)

Figure 3.5
Addressing the actual and ideal online selfs.



According to Eastern traditions and recent studies in neuroscience, the Self is not there – at least in the way we think it is (Niebauer, 2023).

Generally, the Western view defines the Self as a stable and continuous individual Self-responsible for piloting the body, controlling thoughts, feelings, and actions, and piloting the mind. However, Eastern traditions believe the Self is an illusion created by the thinking mind that reinvents itself from moment to moment without a stable, coherent self.

Neuroscience struggles to map the Self in the brain, as there is no agreement in the scientific community about its location or existence.

Split-brain experiments have shown that the brain's left hemisphere is skilled at creating and directing explanations for events, even if the reasons are totally wrong. This leads to the mistaken belief that the story of who we think we are, created by the left-brain, is our true identity.

Most people live under the interpreter's direction, unaware that their mind is the master.

A fictitious sense of Self is often the root of negative mental states such as worry, anger, and anxiety. This is a primary cause of mental suffering as people ask, "What are you doing to Me?" "Why did this happen to Me?" However, if no Me shackles us to the past, people can create new Me moments. By removing the Self from the equation, people can move towards a greater sense of peace and contentment.

QUANTUM MECHANICS AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Some suggest that consciousness is activated by awareness. This can be understood through a famous piece of research called the double-slit experiment.

In this double-slit experiment, a beam of particles, such as electrons, is fired at a screen containing two parallel slits. On the other side of the screen, a photographic plate or detector records the interference pattern resulting from the particles passing through the slits.

According to classical physics laws, the interference pattern on the photographic plate should be seen as a series of straight lines corresponding to the two slits. However, instead, it creates alternating light and dark bands. This suggests that the particles exhibit wave-like behaviour – even though they are particles.

When the experiment is observed or measured by a conscious observer, such as another person or a camera, the wave-like behaviour collapses, and instead, the particles behave like ordinary particles; the interference pattern disappears.

This has led some people to speculate that consciousness may play a role in creating the particle behaviour.

There are several variations to and implications of this theme:

-  The observer effect.
-  Non-locality
-  The role of perception
-  Many worlds.

The observer effect

The double slit experiment suggests that the conscious observer's observation or measurement affects the particles' behaviour, causing the wave function to collapse into a definite particle. This means that consciousness to view something is a necessary ingredient for creating reality.

Everything has the potential to exist on a microscopic molecular level. Recognising it is a matter of tuning in to the right wavelength. Once you tune in, things have the potential to develop.

Non-locality

Non-locality means that two particles can be linked to share the same fate, even if a large distance separates them. This is possible because particles in the quantum world can exist in multiple states simultaneously, a phenomenon known as *superposition*.

Entanglement is a type of non-locality where two particles are linked together to share the same quantum state. This means that if you can measure the state of one particle, you will instantly know the other particle's state, no matter how far apart they are.

The role of perception and the observer effect

Now you have a superposition of states (where both states have a definite position and momentum simultaneously – known as wave-particle duality).

The act of observation (consciousness) collapses the wave function of a quantum object, forcing it to take on a definite position and momentum. This is known as the observer effect.

If consciousness can influence the behaviour of quantum particles, then your perception of the world may actually shape reality.

Many-worlds view

Each quantum event can occur in multiple ways; the universe splits into multiple universes, one for each possible outcome.

For example, if you flip a coin, there are two possible outcomes: heads or tails. According to the many-worlds interpretation, when you flip the coin, the universe splits into two universes, one where the coin lands heads up and one where it lands tails up.

One of the biggest advantages of the many-worlds interpretation is that it avoids the problem of wave function collapse. In other interpretations of quantum mechanics, when a quantum system is observed, its wave function collapses, and this collapse is said to be responsible for the appearance of classical reality. However, the many-worlds interpretation does not need to invoke wave function collapse because the universe is always in a state of superposition.

Another advantage of the many-worlds interpretation is that it is non-local. In other interpretations of quantum mechanics, information can only travel at the speed of light. However, in the many-worlds interpretation, information can travel instantaneously because it is not actually travelling between different parts of the universe. Instead, it is travelling between different universes.

All these arguments are hotly debated and are still being investigated by the scientific community.

The double-slit experiment – step by step

- ☁ A beam of light or particles is shone at a barrier with two slits.
- ☁ The light or particles pass through the slits, hitting a screen behind the barrier.
- ☁ If the light or particles behave as classical particles, they will predictably create two bright bands on the screen, one behind each slit.
- ☁ However, if the light or particles behave as waves, they create an interference pattern on the screen, alternating bright and dark bands.
- ☁ This is because the waves from the two slits interfere, creating areas where the waves add together and regions where they cancel each other out.
- ☁ The interference pattern can be explained by the wave nature of light or particles but not by classical particle theory.
- ☁ This illustrates the wave-particle duality of light and matter.

The double-slit experiment has been performed with many different particles, including electrons, neutrons, and atoms. In every case, the particles exhibit wave-like behaviour when they are not observed, but they exhibit particle-like behaviour when they are observed.

This suggests that when you observe quantum particles, they behave differently than if you had not observed them. Therefore, the act of observation somehow collapses the particle's wave function, causing it to act as a particle instead of a wave.

Me, myself and I: overview

- 🧠 Carl Jung formulated the four stages of life: athlete, warrior, statement, and spirit.
- 🧠 Humans have sought meaning and purpose since their existence began.
- 🧠 Many psychotherapy sessions focus on self-esteem and self-concept.
- 🧠 Self-image is a part of the psyche but not the whole.
- 🧠 Brands can provide clues to a person's self-concept.
- 🧠 Only a few animal species can recognise their reflections.
- 🧠 The existential Self begins as early as 2 to 3 months old.
- 🧠 The mirror self-recognition test shows self-recognition develops around 18 months of age.
- 🧠 The categorical Self differentiates individuals from others and recognises their distinct properties.
- 🧠 Children understand others' intentions and emotions through the theory of mind.
- 🧠 Self-conscious emotions require comparing actions to others' expectations.
- 🧠 Social media reshapes the reality of expectations.
- 🧠 William James introduced the concepts of the I-Self and the Me-Self.
- 🧠 Digital experiences constantly feed information, influencing the balance of I and Me.
- 🧠 Erikson's stages of psychosocial development detail progress from infancy to late adulthood.
- 🧠 John Bowlby believed childhood experiences shape behaviour.
- 🧠 Monotropy is the primary attachment formed by a child.
- 🧠 Attachment styles affect how someone relates to others.
- 🧠 Secure attachments build confidence and independence.
- 🧠 Insecure attachments can negatively impact romantic relationships.
- 🧠 Prosocial streamed content enhances children's social and emotional skills.
- 🧠 Excessive social content may reduce mindfulness.
- 🧠 Rogers believed experiences shape reactions and influence perceptions.
- 🧠 Phenomenal field theory focuses on the conscious Self.
- 🧠 Self-actualisation drives behaviour, according to Rogers.

- 🧠 Self-concept has three components: ideal Self, authentic Self, and false Self.
- 🧠 Low self-esteem may result in seeking negative attention online.
- 🧠 AI-generated explicit content raises concerns for law enforcement and authenticity.
- 🧠 Self-esteem marketing aims to improve consumers' feelings about themselves.
- 🧠 Some Tinder users report low self-esteem.
- 🧠 Brands aim to be congruent with consumers' self-image.
- 🧠 Brands strive to fulfil consumers' needs for safety, esteem, love, and hope.
- 🧠 Western tradition views the Self as a stable and continuous individual self, while Eastern tradition believes the Self is an illusion created by the thinking mind.
- 🧠 Split-brain experiments have shown that the brain's left hemisphere is skilled at creating and directing explanations for events, even if the reasons are wrong.
- 🧠 Quantum mechanics is a branch of physics that deals with the behaviour of matter and energy at the atomic and subatomic levels.
- 🧠 Consciousness is being aware of and responsive to one's surroundings.
- 🧠 There is a growing body of research that suggests that there may be a connection between quantum mechanics and consciousness.
- 🧠 The double-slit experiment shows that light and matter can behave like waves or particles, depending on how they are observed. This is known as the observer effect.
- 🧠 Non-locality is another phenomenon in quantum mechanics that has implications for consciousness.
- 🧠 The many-worlds interpretation says that the universe constantly branches into new universes, each with a different outcome.

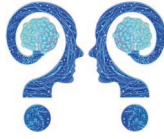
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4 Giving “I” what “I” wants and needs (as well as other lies “I” tells ourselves)

This section explores the core concepts of Freud’s id, Ego, and Superego as applied to digital marketing. You will learn the role that Jung’s Shadow has on social media sites like X (formerly Twitter). The section also considers how to balance the id and Ego when considering the validity of digital messages and how that balance can be influenced through powerful digital marketing techniques, including rhetoric. Finally, it considers some mental health implications of social media and looks at how virtue signalling can lead to propaganda.

IN MOTHER’S SHADOW

Appropriate marketing communications feature clear, compelling, timely, and persuasive content that helps consumers decide what they (“I”) need and want.

The “daddy” (or should that be “mummy”) of psychoanalysis is Sigismund Schlomo Freud (1856–1939).

He gifted the world a mind full of therapeutic approaches, including:

- Accessing the unconscious through free association.
- Redirecting feelings via transference.
- Envious and aggressive feelings toward the parent of the same sex accompany the child’s attachment to the parent of the opposite sex (the Oedipus complex).
- Dream analysis.
- Death and sex drives (libido) and subsequently thorny repression fields.

Perhaps his most famous theory dealt with the id, Ego, and Superego.

The id drives the engine of personality. Present from birth and operating in the unconscious, the id anticipates satisfying urges, needs, and desires. Almost all of these are directly or indirectly related to survival.

The id strongly influences children and the psychically immature. The Pleasure Principle aspect of the id directs you to eat when hungry, drink when thirsty and, under the right circumstances, even crave sex when aroused.

The id contains life and death instincts, which Freud believed help compel behaviour.

Slowly but steadily, maturity helps cope with pain from the past or present. Strengthened by life's fiery circumstances and hardened through jolts of fate, maturity softens the soul. However, irrespective of age, the id does not intrinsically change. Instead, it continues to be infantile, instinctive, and primal.

In his 1933 book *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud described the id as the "dark, inaccessible part of our personality." He suggested that the only natural way to observe the id was to study the content of dreams and neurotic behavioural clues (Freud et al., 1991).

Freud imagined the id as a reservoir of instinctive energy driven by the Pleasure Principle that works toward fulfilling a person's most basic needs. The Ego (from the Latin word for I) eventually emerges to moderate between the urges of the id and the demands of reality.

In assessing the reality of the external world and acting appropriately, rather than being led by the Pleasure Principle, the Reality Principle allows the Ego to arbitrate between the animalistic desires of the id and the moral and social standards of the Superego.

Contrary to popular belief, "Ego" does not appear in Freud's extensive writings. Instead, he spoke of "das Ich" – literally "the I." Freud was referring to that conscious part of you that thinks "I," as in "I don't like my job" or "I decided to change jobs." So, most terms that include "Ego" involve processes or reactions in which "I," "me," or "mine" figure prominently.

Today, Freud's concept of the id is often considered naïve. It remains a matter of debate among researchers.

ID; ERGO, EGO

Egoism is the motive to act in your self-interest. Therefore, someone behaving egoistically pursues personal goals.

Egocentrism is concerned with interpreting events from a personal vantage point. This potentially affects just about everybody. But whilst you perceive the world from your physical point in space, your psychological perspective is influenced by collective experiences, goals, and beliefs.

Beyond the virtual world, a person isn't constantly bombarded with the views and wares of others, however online, the mere mention of an interest in a subject can trigger algorithms to pigeonhole someone as a viable candidate belonging to a specific consumer group which eagerly welcomes ads for the latest must-have item.

WHILST MOST HEAR BIRDS SING, SOME HEAR THEM SCREAM

The 24/7 online news sources chime alarming updates. Acting as clickbait, in too many cases, headlines are more a supposition of what could be, rather than classical journalism reporting what was and is.

Following the trend to infantilise consumers whose focus of attention has been stolen with shorter and shorter content, in sensationalising hearsay and trivialities for the sake of clickbait sales, some journalists charged with feeding a 24/7 ravenous news machine turn their craft from being the equivalent of carefully preparing a meal of *tournedos à la bordelaise*, into dishing out a quick hamburger.

Before a news event has been fully investigated, unrelenting torrents of unfounded gossip, online kangaroo court judgements, and warnings of doom can provoke a sense of uneasiness, distress, or even dread.

Whilst a reasonable level of anxiety helps people remain vigilant and sentient, constant news streams of what could perhaps occur can, at best, lead to consumers becoming anything from news-numbed and cynical to feeling utterly debilitated and overwhelmed by life's foreboding outlook. This is especially true of people predisposed to anxiety. Classically, they search for an emotional hook to attach and focus their restless energy. (The web provides endless hooks for empty jackets.)

Worrying news is difficult to ignore, let alone resist. "We are evolutionarily wired to screen for and anticipate danger, which is why we keep our fingers on the pulse of bad news," says Cecille Ahrens, clinical director of Transcend Therapy in San Diego, California. She explains that fear, sadness and even anger, triggered by negative headlines, can trap people in a "pattern of frequent monitoring," leading to nervous doom-scrolling (Healthier Tech, 2022).

Graham Davey, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Sussex, says, "Exposure to bad news makes personal worries seem worse and even causes symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder" (Mall, 2023).

The brain's inferior frontal gyrus (IFG) filters bad news when updating beliefs based on new information. This "cup half full" bias is why some assume they will live longer than their peers or that tomorrow will be a better day.

In 2021, the Canadian Medical Association reported that, by suppressing IFG activity, scientists at the University of London could turn optimists into pessimists temporarily (Blades, 2021).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a cross-cultural study found that trustful optimists and those who dismissed conspiracy theories, such as the pandemic being a ploy by governments to reduce populations en masse, or that vaccines contained bio-tracking devices, were less afraid than pessimists when consuming information about the pandemic (Arslan, Yildirim, Tanhan et al., 2021).

So, what is the answer to doom-scrolling and following clickbait headlines down rabbit holes? Professor Davey recommends selective news engagement. "Watch the news

only at specific times of day and make sure you have some activities available after consuming news that will lift your mood, like listening to upbeat music, exercising, or a relaxing soak in a warm bath" (Blades, 2021).

IT'S ALL ABOUT "ME-ME-ME" – NOT FORGETTING – "I"

Egotism involves evaluating yourself more favourably than objectively warranted. Just as we are all, to a degree, egocentric (if only to improve survival prospects), some also tend to be egotistical. An egotistical person is overly proud of themselves, while an egocentric person is only concerned with their thoughts and feelings.

Perhaps the most widespread ego-based term is *egoic*. It means "about ego" or "about 'I'."

Egoic emotions and behaviours are reactions in which "I," "me," and "mine" take centre stage. Egoic people are highly self-absorbed, with responses firmly focused on themselves.

When someone's thoughts, motives, emotions, and behaviours only revolve around "I," they become acutely sensitive about what they want, who they are, and what others think about them. What for others may simply be another blog or LinkedIn article may be vital to them in terms of credibility with peers and beyond. Each post is aimed to win as many "likes" as possible.

This is where the superego (Freud called it *Über-Ich*) comes in. *Über-Ich* develops during the first 5 years of life in response to parental punishment and approval.

Addressing the demands of the id and Ego, the superego absorbs family and social norms to regulate and encourage the Ego to act reasonably and appropriately.

Freud compared the id and Ego relationship to that of a horse and rider. The horse's power drives them forward, but it is up to the rider to steer it in the right direction. Of course, sometimes the rider may lose control, and so has to stay on the ride until the Ego can regain control of the reins to direct the id back in the right direction.

SURFING PAUSES ARE THE NEW POST-COITAL SMOKE BREAKS

The id incorporates all your personality's inherited (i.e., biological) components from birth. Additionally, it includes a sexual instinct (Eros) consisting of the libido and the aggressive (death) instinct: Thanatos. (See page 201.)

Biological, psychological, and social factors influence a person's desire for sex (libido). If you have a pressing urge for sex but can't act on it, the urge can become repressed or sublimated.

Conversely, a person can engage in sexual activity without really wanting it. It becomes a behavioural conditioning issue. With mobile devices making access to activities such as sexting constantly available, online porn addiction has become all-pervasive. (See Chapter 3, Self esteem, page 182.)

Multiple factors affect the human sex drive, including relationships, work, stress, illness, pregnancy, etc. A 2001 review found that, on average, men have a stronger desire for sex than women (Baumeister et al., 2001).

In his epic poem, *Iliad*, Homer describes Thanatos as the son of Nyx (Night) and Erebus (Darkness). He has a twin brother called Hypnos (Sleep). Freud adopted the concept of the “death drive,” later called Thanatos. Thanatos is a person’s urge toward death or self-harm. (Also see Ideal Self, Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I, page 181.)

Freud said: “The interaction of the two antagonistic forces: the life instinct, or Eros, and the death instinct, or Thanatos, gives rise to the whole variegation of the phenomena of life” (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1920). (Also see, It’s all about “me-me-me” – not forgetting, “I” page 200.)

THANATOS AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Fear appeals

Marketers can use fear appeals to trigger consumers’ death instincts via images or videos of violence or destruction. For example, an anti-smoking campaign commercial might feature diseased lungs’ content. Such fear aims to scare consumers to quit smoking.

Dark patterns

Dark patterns are user interface design techniques that are intentionally deceptive or manipulative. They can exploit Thanatos by making consumers feel like they are in danger or need to act quickly. For example, a website might use a countdown timer to create a sense of urgency or make it difficult to cancel a subscription.

Gamification

Gamification can create a sense of competition or challenge. For example, a fitness app might use a leaderboard to track users’ progress and motivate them to keep working out.

FREUD IN DIGITAL PRACTICE

Superego

Online marketing can showcase your brand’s ethical and social responsibility. For example, partnering with non-profit organisations underlines your commitment to charities. Similarly, highlighting eco issues like climate awareness practices appeals to sustainability-conscious consumers.

Commitment to social responsibility resonates with ethical consumers. For example, your brand can promote diversity and inclusion within the workforce. This appeals to consumers whose purchase decisions are influenced by guilt or shame from supporting unethical practices. Social responsibility and ethics can be further supported with website-featured trustworthiness certifications.

Ego

Content, such as intuitive interfaces, simplified checkout processes, and clear product descriptions that align with a customer's previous interactions or purchase history, further enhances user-friendly experiences.

Algorithms can be programmed to recommend products that match customer preferences based on browsing history or previous purchases. This increases the likelihood of repeat purchases.

Social media listening helps monitor and analyse customer needs, opinions, and behaviours in real-time. Subsequent marketing strategies can be adjusted to develop relevant content or promptly address customer concerns, demonstrating responsiveness and adaptability.

Id

Encouraging impulsive purchasing through limited time offers, special discounts, or exclusive promotions taps into the hedonistic aspect of Freud's theory. For example, a flash sale creates a sense of urgency and leverages the consumer's desire for immediate gratification.

Reflecting the impulsive and pleasure-seeking component of Freud's theory, promotions such as time-limited discounts, exclusive deals, or gamification techniques like spin-to-win games or surprise rewards can elicit impulsive responses and encourage engagement.

Finally, plan online marketing campaigns to leverage low-stock notifications or promote limited-edition releases to tap into consumers' wishes not to miss out on a rare opportunity.

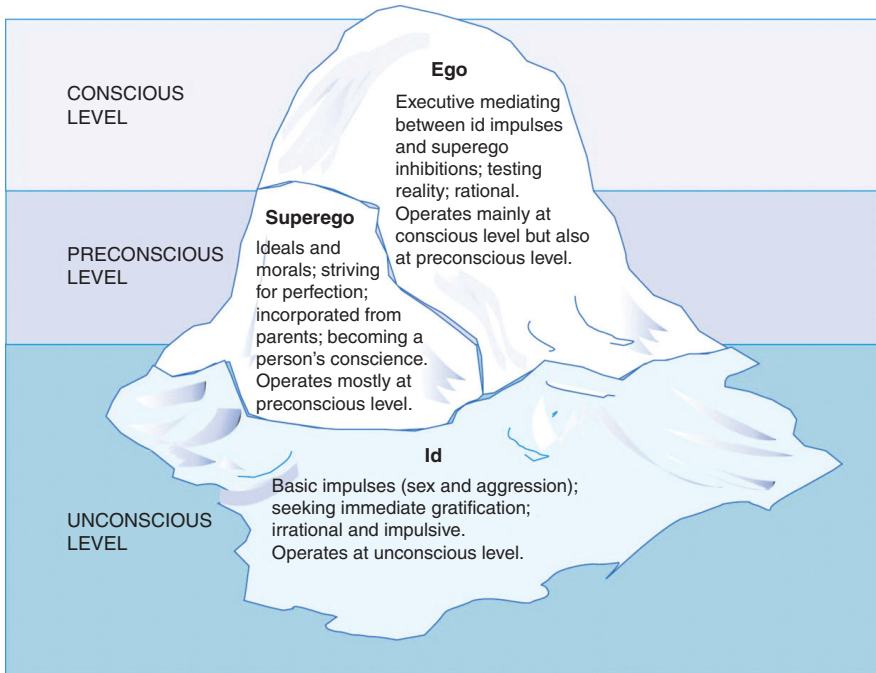
SHADOWS OF DOUBT

Jung revised Freud's Ego types (Routledge.com, 2022). He elaborated that the human psyche comprises:

-  *The Ego:* What you are consciously aware of when thinking about yourself.
-  *The personal unconscious:* All the information in your mind that is not readily available to recall consciously.
-  *The collective unconscious:* Memories and impulses of which you are not aware. These are common to everybody.

Figure 4.1

Overview of id, Ego, and Superego.



Jung believed the collective unconscious contains archetypes, universal primordial images, and ideas. These are sets of shared belief, and moral attitudes that unify society. (Jung's archetypes are further discussed in Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind.)

Collective consciousness conglomerates popular web-centric activities, groupthink, and herd behaviour, where dynamic groups share resources and values (also termed "hive mind," "group mind," "mass mind," and "social mind"). (See Chapter 9, Scan, page 416.)

Included in Jung's 12 distinct archetypes is the Shadow. For some, it symbolises the unconscious parts of their personality. For others, it is an aspect of themselves that they abhor.

Consider the Shadow as the entrance to a rabbit hole leading to your individuality. It is your first glimpse of the unconscious part of your personality acting as the gatekeeper of your Self. Being the suppressed part of the personality, for many, the Shadow can simply be too painful to acknowledge.

Everyone carries a Shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. If an inferiority is conscious, one always has a chance to correct it. But if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected. On the contrary, it is liable to burst forth suddenly in a

moment of unawareness. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions.

(Jung & Hull, 2014)

THE SHADOW IS THE HIDDEN UNCONSCIOUS PART OF PERSONALITY

If your unconscious is a vast library of belief systems, memories, and archetypes, then the shadow is a corner of the library you have never visited. However, you are drawn in once you read the books – good or bad.

QUALITIES YOU FEAR OTHERS WILL HATE

Shadows emerge from the relative absence of light. Many suggest that the sombre clouds of the Shadow represent the darkness within that we choose not to acknowledge. (The Ego pushes it away).

And yet, when you are no longer afraid of the dark – confronting the “bad” parts of yourself – you can begin to accept your complete Self.

Jung believed that the Shadow often appears in dreams as snakes, rats, monsters, demons . . . anything representing darkness.

Today’s web mixes dark and light. At its extreme, there is literally “the dark web” or “dark net.” Only accessible using specialist browsers like TOR, its encrypted content remains unindexed by conventional search engines. That makes it an ideal smuggler’s cove for criminals or others looking to explore clandestine, nefarious topics.

In addition to being a portal to illegal activities, the dark web is a haven for people, such as political dissidents, to speak plainly, yet privately. (Also see Online Disinhibition, Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind.)

Thanks to AI programs like Midjourney and DALL-E, it is possible to peer into other people’s subconscious thoughts – at least in terms of technology recreating their wildest dream.

Take a look for yourself. Below is a picture I asked Midjourney to construct prompted by “the Jungian Shadow.”

PLEASURE FROM PAIN

The web’s mix of anonymity, scalability, and accessibility allows anyone to be someone – and everyone. Equally, it provides the Shadow with ample ways to destroy the conscious Self. According to a 2017 paper by Marchant et al., young people find Internet images of self-harm helpful in normalising self-harm.

Evidence suggests that 51.3% of young people who report self-harm have previously engaged in related Internet searches for self-harm or suicide-related material (Mars et al., 2015). Self-harming behaviours, sharing related practices and techniques, and

Figure 4.2

AI-generated Shadow, created with Midjourney.

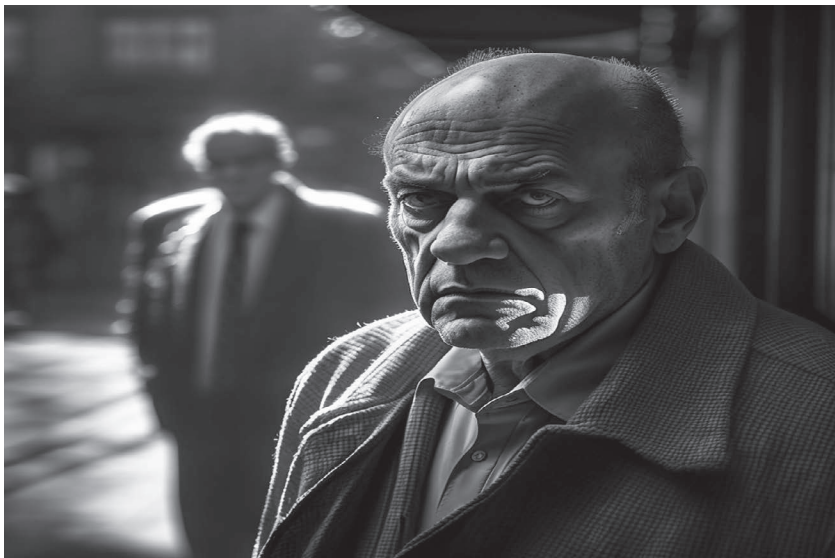
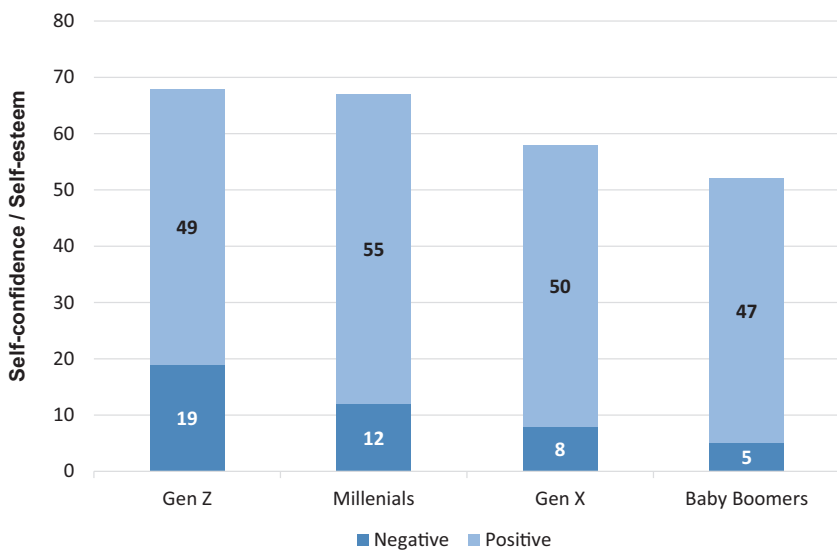


Figure 4.3

The generational impact of social media.

Reported impact of social media on aspects of respondents' lives

% of respondents who use social media (n=30,928)*



Source: McKinsey & Company, McKinsey Health Institute Global Gen Z Survey (2022).

encouraging concealment are easy to normalise online (Dunlop et al., 2011; Eichenberg, 2008; Lewis & Seko, 2016; Sindoni, 2019).

On the other hand, forums may be a source of stress alleviation. Jung noted that "Everybody has a quiet place in their soul (Carl Jung, *The Red Book*; Brunet, 2019).

THE YIN AND YANG OF JEKYLL AND HYDE

In Ancient Chinese philosophy, Yin and Yang are interdependent and yet, as a whole, interrelated.

We all keep darker instincts tucked away, such as greed, prejudice, desire, envy, and impulses. Most are well-managed, allowing us to live purposeful lives. They are part of us – the shadow Self.

The fictional tale of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde illustrates your shadow self. Dr Jekyll is your persona – your preferred social mask to wear online. It is how you want others to see and think of you. Mr Hyde is the repressed, shadow Self. When Jekyll's conscious efforts for ethics slip, his innate inner Self (Hyde) surfaces.

Whilst we can hide, ignore, or worse, project them onto someone else, none of these approaches deal with the core issue within. At this point, the web acts as a cloak of invisibility, through which we can see others, but they can't see us – for example, posting anonymously on X (formerly Twitter) or Threads.

The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself.

(Carl Jung)

The ever-present latent Self has a quiet, albeit somewhat sinister, ability to constantly nibble at the conscious Self.

As long as the shadow silently pulls strings behind the scenes, it increases the distance between the Ego and the authentic world. This can lead to a false, idealised Self that believes in myths. (Through brand storytelling, the web provides a perfect platform for mythology and legends. Through the confluence of value and emotions, it showcases brands as catalysts for consumers to become heroes or heroines.)

Brands may find that aspects of the shadow help to gain a more holistic understanding of the consumer psyche. However, in the wrong hands, such factors could encourage exploitation. Realising you have the power to exploit also means recognising the responsibility that comes with it. (After all, this isn't a book on how to be digitally Machiavellian!)

CRACKING INSECURITIES

To a greater or lesser degree, we all worry about whether we are good enough. ("Am I a good enough father?" "Am I a good enough partner?" "Am I a good enough manager?" "Am I a good enough leader?" "Am I a good enough lover?" or "Am I, in fact, just a fraud?"

During the 1950s, some brands exploited this by targeting a hugely important demographic – housewives. In 1957, Vance Packard published a ground-breaking book, *The Hidden Persuaders*. He brought to the public’s attention the manipulative practices of big brands looking to win souls rather than the public’s minds (Packard, 2007).

Packard yearned for the days when respected brands dealt with simple features, focusing on practical product benefits rather than making spurious and over-complicated emotional pitches. (Packard was the first to imply that advertising was full of subliminal messages.)

Advertising agencies paid psychoanalysts to run focus groups (called “panel reactions” and “group interviews” – still in practice today). Consumers were encouraged to openly discuss their feelings about products and services through free-association techniques. Reported attitudes were then neatly compartmentalised into:

-  Product
-  Features
-  Empathy.

It was deduced that housewives wanted more than convenience; they demanded individuality.

So, products were marketed as *statements of independence* (echoing the brand-self, see Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I). Brands selling everything from cars to cakes took advantage of the movement. For example, cake-mix manufacturers began including instructions to add an egg to mixtures, not because the ingredients were incomplete without the egg, but because the act of cracking an egg made the housewife feel that she had made an essential personalised contribution to the entire baking process. “Enjoy my cake.”

From this point, marketers sold products, services, commodities, celebrities, and politicians, not just on what each could materially offer but how they connected emotionally with consumers, businesses, fans, and voters.

Presidents would be elected on personality traits, family bonds, looks, and attitudes to extramarital relationships rather than on traditional manifestos alone. Advertising agencies drew on classical propaganda techniques to produce campaigns that struck not just opposing political parties but also the integrity of opposing political candidates.

Packard pointed out how businesses create a yearning for new brands by introducing ever-increasing lines of planned obsolescence. Advertising and marketing filled every space – from morning radio to evening cinema commercials.

Whilst people weren’t blind to the era’s neon signs and TV commercials, they were convinced that they weren’t dumb, convinced that, clever advertising would “sucker” everyone other than themselves.

Despite their confidence, even when consumers were fully aware of being pampered and manipulated, they welcomed the indulgence. After all, millions of dollars of marketing budgets had been invested in making them feel like a king or a queen, not just for a day but for as long as they wanted and could afford for the moment to last.

Thanks to constant upgrades such as instantly purchasable smartphone apps or software as a service (SaaS – software accessed online via subscription), those moments turned out to be steps on a consumerist treadmill.

RHETORIC: *ET TU BRUTUS?*

The craft of convincing voters is a form of rhetoric that in part can be traced to principles introduced in ancient Greece by Sophists such as Isocrates and Aristotle, or in Rome by Cicero and Quintilian as well later by Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85). Gregory evangelised for the establishment of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. (The word “propaganda” was chosen because, in Latin, it conveyed a sense of “what should be spread.”) (Also see, Foresight; everything connects.)

The etymology of the word rhetoric is traced back to the simple assertion “I say” (*eiro* in Greek). Rhetoric derives from the Greek word: *rhetorike*, meaning the civic art of public speaking as in assemblies, law courts, and on other formal occasions.

Plato (c. 428–c. 348 said of rhetoric: “I sum up its substance in the name of flattery.”

The former Senator, John Kerry, perhaps said it best: “The truth is, President Bush provides the right rhetoric but then pursues all the wrong policies” (Kerry, n.d.).

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROPAGANDA PLOYS EMPLOYED BY POLITICAL MARKETERS

Ad hominem

Rather than directly addressing arguments, the spokesperson smears an adversary’s personal character.

A/B choice

When a spokesperson sets out the rationale for a course of action.

Repetition

A message that is repeated via controlled use of the media.

Arousing anxieties

Inciting paranoia about situations beyond established routines. For example, an online private health insurance brand offers alternatives to a poorly run state-run National Health Service.

Stressing vanities

Here, emotive terms highlight ethical fairness or point to the selfishness of a second party's interests over that of the greater good. For example, any “honest person” wouldn't dream of paying for a counterfeit brand.

The in-crowd

Following moral and reasonable courses of action, loyalty is extolled as being in the domain of trendsetters rather than followers. An advertising example was a campaign by Burger King against McDonald's: “Would you rather feast like a king or eat like a clown?”

Big lie and backfire effect

During World War II, the Nazi President of the Chamber of Culture, Goebbels, said: “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.” Likewise, Hitler said: “The broad masses are more amenable to the appeal of rhetoric than any other force.”

Carl Sagan (1934–1996), the American astronomer, planetary scientist, cosmologist, astrophysicist, astrobiologist, author, Cornell professor, and science communicator, said,

One of the saddest lessons of history is if we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. You rarely get it back once you give a charlatan power over you.”

(Sagan, 2020)

Even if, on close examination, the tall story cannot be fully substantiated, the key to the big lie is to continually repeat it, ensuring the story contains a grain of plausible truth. (This is often how social media rumours quickly develop into broadly accepted facts). On the other hand, given the relentless deluge of online news, only an ill-advised leader would believe they could get away with such a technique indefinitely.

Belief perseverance

Also known as the backfire effect, belief perseverance is the tendency to cling to a belief despite any new information that resolutely contradicts or disconfirms it. Such beliefs may even be strengthened when other people offer evidence debunking them.

For example, some deeply cosseted religious people believe to the contrary that the world is not millions but thousands of years old despite scientific proof. Often, they dismiss such evidence, pointing out that science is ever-evolving, techniques such as carbon dating are imprecise, whereas “true faith” is constant. (Also see Chapter 4, *Giving I what I wants and needs*, page 214.)

Exultation

What do magicians and politicians have in common? They have mastered the craft of distraction. However, it takes so much smoke and mirrors to turn attention away from disheartening issues that the process can leave the audience breathless and bewildered.

We will take back control of roughly £350m a week.

(Former disgraced UK Prime Minister and
Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson)

The UK Brexit marketing campaign leading up to a referendum on June 23, 2016, introduced the slogan “Taking Back Control.” It persuaded voters to vote for Brexit mostly because of issues related to sovereignty, the economy, and immigration.

The slogan slanted the truth by suggesting that laws were imposed on Member States without consultation. The UK lost some of its leverage as a trading partner by leaving the EU.

Seven years after Brexit, net migration remained high. However, this was not solely to do with Brexit. To begin with, there was a war in Ukraine and an agreement for safe passage for Hong Kong nationals. EU net migration fell. This was for several reasons, including economic recovery in southern European countries following the Eurozone crisis, uncertainty about the political climate, and the decline in the pound’s value after the referendum, which made the UK less attractive.

In 2023 the UK announced it would join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), giving British businesses access to the 11 other members of the Indo-Pacific trade bloc and bringing its combined GDP to £11 trillion.

However, on closer inspection, the government’s economic analysis revealed there would only be an estimated gain to the UK of 0.08% of GDP – a 50th of what Brexit cost the UK economy to date.

Other than Japan (which, at the time, some economists argued was already in long-term decline), most of the global economy’s major players were not in the CPTPP bloc.

Moreover, the UK already had free trade agreements with 9 out of the 11 members. The remaining two, Malaysia and Brunei, were controversial due to environmental threats from palm oil production to rainforests and orangutans.

Finally, in trade, distance makes a difference. CPTPP members are thousands of miles from the UK, which helps to explain their relatively small UK trade shares.

 Half-truth

John Wannamaker (1838–1922) is credited as being the first to say, “Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don’t know which half.” This correlates with social media effectiveness (Woolley, 2019).

In 2018 GlobalWebIndex reported that 54% of social browsers used social media to research products. Two years earlier, in a poll of more than 18,000 US consumers, Gallup reported that 62% said social media did not influence in their buying decisions. At the time, Gallup noted that “consumers were highly adept at tuning out brand-related Facebook and X (Twitter) content” (Cooltrack.com, n.d.).

Thanks to high property rates, soaring energy bills, and employment costs, today’s retail landscape of major brands may be even more barren without social media. To quote Andy Tarshis, formerly of AC Nielsen: “We find that advertising works the way the grass grows. You can never see it, but you must mow the lawn weekly” (Mayer, 1991).

 Reductio ad Hitlerum

Culpability shifts from a perpetrator to an object or set of beliefs. So, for example, if someone owns a dog belonging to a breed which at some point bit people, too often, all dogs belonging to that breed are automatically condemned as vicious. (Despite often the real problem is not with the animal, but its owners). This stereotyping can be very prominent on platforms like X (formerly Twitter). (See Chapter 9, Scan, page 407.)

 Contextomy

This is when a CEO’s or politician’s actions or words are taken out of context. Even the alleged source of famous sayings may not always be correct. For example, Sherlock Holmes’ catchphrase “Elementary, my dear Watson” was never written by Conan Doyle but came from a movie review in the *New York Times* on October 19, 1929 (filmsite.org, n.d.).

 Red Herring

Perceptions are manipulated by emphasising one thing whilst ignoring or repressing another. For example, media events may focus on a particular view whilst ignoring all others.

 Dysphemism

This aims to harm a group’s reputation, ideology, or entity. It is a popular X (formerly Twitter) trolling tactic. For example, “liberal” is a dysphemism which could suggest a group without any steadfast ideals. During the Cold War, the word “Soviets” became a dysphemism, suggesting a sinister force of evil. In the USSR, “the United States” became a dysphemism for a belligerent nation of selfish capitalists.

THE WAR ON HATE'S NEW FRONT LINE

Following their barbaric October 2023 pogrom-style incursion into Israel and subsequent use of civilian hospitals as hide-outs and innocent Palestinian civilians as human shields, the terrorist group Hamas manipulated online propaganda to twist facts by persuading millions around the world to rekindle anti-Semitic hatred that had not been witnessed on such a global level since World War II ("A Wave of Hate Crime," 2023).

The frontline of the War In Gaza moved from craters to the desktops and smart-phones of the world. That provided covert online players like China, Russia, and Iran, the opportunity to back Hamas' online propaganda by helping them spread hatred (Hartocollis et al., 2023).

The restaurant brand McDonald's experienced significant business impacts following its Israeli franchise's donation of meals to Israel's troops defending the country during the Israel-Hamas conflict. The firm's chief executive, Chris Kempczinski, blamed both the war and "associated misinformation," saying: "We abhor violence of any kind and firmly stand against hate speech" ("War in Gaza Hits McDonald's," 2024).

All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.
(Orwell, 1945)

In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, characters represent particular social types throughout history.

The sheep represent the easily manipulated masses who blindly follow the pigs without critical thinking. They reflect the role of propaganda and obedience in totalitarian states; the sheep could not read. So, relied on propagandists to decide right from wrong for them. They had nothing to say except for slogans fed to them by the regime, mainly "Four legs good, two legs bad."

This is analogous to groups that mechanically use slogans instead of genuine thought, such as "Make America Great Again," "All Lives Matter," and so on.

The slogans present what ideological team the "sheep" of society follows.

Boxer, a loyal and hard-working horse, symbolises the dedicated but naïve working class in the Russian Revolution and broader Marxist ideology.

His unwavering commitment to the cause makes him a tragic figure whose motto was "I must work harder," convinced that the promised utopia was just around the corner (which led to his eventual exhaustion-induced death).

Finally, Benjamin, the wise farm donkey, is deeply cynical and observes that God gave him a tail to keep the flies off, but he would sooner have had no tail and no flies. Or "Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey." And "Windmill or no windmill, life would go on as it had always gone on – that is, badly."

He represents stoics who appreciate history and can look past immediate circumstances.

 Talking Like the Natives

Called “plain folks” by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, this technique presents campaigns in a language easily understood by the average person in the street (or online).

Brands using this technique often incorporate a sense of humility or humour. For example, in advertising, Virgin Atlantic ran a series of posters promoting their extra-wide seats and in-flight entertainment using the headline, “9 inches of pleasure.”

 Worthy Words

Worthy words are positive affirmations within a PR crisis statement. For example: “Determination,” “Commitment,” “Truth,” “Improved,” “Value,” “Understanding,” “Resolve,” “Regret,” and so on.

CASTING DARKNESS ONTO OTHERS

Another way of dealing with the shadow of insecurity is to employ the Freudian defence mechanism, *projection*. Projecting the problem on others means a problem needn’t be directly faced, let alone profoundly examined. For example, a cheating partner may accuse a spouse of having an affair. A person who doesn’t like their body shape may belittle others whose online appearance is more socially attractive. They turn their body image perception into a cause, symbolically swallowing their self-loathing through binge-eating.

For the self-conscious, social media images of “perfection” are difficult to ignore. As are apps encouraging consumers to alter parts of their face or body. AI filters change camera angles, lighting, skin condition, age, make-up, and character.

Projection isn’t just about the individual. It involves groups. From online cultural, lifestyle or religious factions to entire nations that go to war, projection may play its role. Groupthink can play a pivotal part in influencing people. “You are either part of a group or not.”

In a world of infinite choice, consumers demand more than just product features and benefits; they seek a cause. That cause could be about climate change, equality, sexuality . . . culture, and of course, the oldest “us vs them” division of all, religion.

Brands perceived to genuinely support socially acceptable causes (as opposed to paying lip service through virtue signalling) are especially attractive to generations such as Gen Z and Gen Alpha – both digital natives.

FLYING THE FLAG FOR (INSERT CAUSE HERE)

Support causes must never conflict with core brand values. For example, in 2023, the brewer of Budweiser, Anheuser-Busch (AB), got entangled in a controversy over a campaign to make its Bud Light brand appealing to younger people (James, 2023).

Sales of Bud Light were subdued, so the brand recruited the transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney to promote a special beer edition to millions of her online fans. Her posts included photographs posing with a special edition Bud Light can that featured her face.

Budweiser had previously promoted itself as an American beer celebrating hardcore heterosexual American values that crossed racial and social divides, all in the pursuit of enjoying a beer across all classes. However, on seeing the Mulvaney cans, some more traditional and right-wing customers, including celebrities, went online, even filming themselves shooting at the cans with guns for social media coverage, and making bomb threats against the brewer.

The brand was acting against its brand values. At best, this came across as a virtue signal and, at worst, caused an affront to its loyal customer base.

Brendan Whitworth, the CEO of AB, issued a statement assuring the company's critics that he loved America and "never intended to be part of a discussion that divides people" (Ogwude, 2023).

Left-leaning commenters on social media were not impressed. "Pathetic statement from @AnheuserBusch CEO," attorney and law professor Kaivan Shroff said. "To be clear, they sent a trans influencer personalised can of Bud Light. That's not 'dividing' people. Caving into these hateful bigots is what divides our country. Shame on you, Brendan Whitworth. Epic leadership fail." (Also see *Victimhood*, page 216.)

The Internet both separates as well as joins. Whilst detachment can affect mental health issues, unanimity can offer solace and reassurance that people are not alone; someone shares like-minded fears and ambitions somewhere online. Proving that people can hear others scream in (cyber)space.

FAQ about Gen Z

-  The average attention span of Gen Z is 8 seconds for posts on social media. (Millennials' attention span is 12 seconds.)
-  The fear of missing out on something trending on social media may cause stress. (As can negative feedback posts.)
-  They incessantly check social media feeds. (Also associated with anxiety.)
-  Mental health issues that are commonplace with Gen Z include anxiety, chronic stress, and depression.
-  Approximately 50% of Gen Z social media users believe that social media negatively impacts their mental health, especially regarding depression.

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AI, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND ANXIETY

A 2023 study (Teepe et al., 2023) found that increasing digitalisation was associated with anxiety and depression. Researchers evaluated the impact of digitalisation by using a linguistic big-data approach.

Researchers retrieved data from the Google Books Ngram Viewer (Google Ngram) to investigate digital’s impact on depression and anxiety by reviewing historically disjointed literature on anxiety, depression, and digitalisation.

The findings identified an increased frequency of digitalisation, depression, and anxiety vocabulary. These observations also provided support for the simultaneous occurrence of depression and anxiety.

Similarly, in 2023 the journal *Language Resources and Evaluation* reported that researchers at the University of São Paulo in Brazil said AI could detect early signs of online anxiety and depression based solely on a person’s social media friends and followers (Livemint, 2023).

The study built a database of information from a corpus of 47 million publicly posted Portuguese texts and a network of connections between 3900 X (formerly Twitter) users.

Before the survey, users had been diagnosed with or treated for mental health issues. As people with mental health difficulties typically follow discussion forums, influencers, and celebrities who publicly acknowledge their depression. The study also collected tweets from friends and followers.

Analysing word sequences and complete sentences, researchers observed that people with depression tended to write about subjects connected to themselves, using verbs and phrases in the first person, and topics about death, crisis, and psychology. (Also see Chapter 8, *Alone together*.)

In another 2023 study (research.iastate.edu, 2023), researchers at Iowa State University conducted a 2-week experiment involving 230 college students to investigate the

effects of limiting social media use. Half the participants were asked to restrict their social media usage to 30 minutes daily and received automated reminders. The study, published in the journal *Technology, Mind, and Behaviour*, revealed that those who adhered to the 30-minute limit experienced significant reductions in anxiety, depression, and loneliness compared to the control group.

At the end of the experiment, participants in the limited usage group scored lower in terms of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and FOMO (fear of missing out) compared to the control group. Additionally, they displayed a more positive outlook on life, as indicated by higher scores in "positive affect," which refers to the tendency to experience positive emotions like excitement and pride.

One of the study's authors, Douglas A. Gentile, explained that people resist when they feel their freedom is restricted. However, social media still plays a crucial role, such as connecting with friends and family. Balancing social connectivity with the potential harms associated with excessive use is always worth considering when planning digital marketing strategies.

VICTIMHOOD

Victimhood has long played an influential role in the psychology of branding and propaganda. Just as an infant seeks attention for a parent or caregiver when they feel they are being ignored or undervalued, adults may see themselves as victims of society. (See Freud, Erikson and Friends, Chapter 3.)

"I am gay and misunderstood." "I am undervalued as a worker." "I am a mistreated man." "I am an undervalued woman." "We are exploited/controlled/manipulated."

This can present brands with a rich pool of opportunities to champion causes. (Also see, Flying the flag for (insert cause here), Chapter 4.)

Sadly, there is a legitimate justification for feeling victimised in many cases. Life and people can be cruel. Even if a person chooses to self-evaluate, the cause of being victimised can remain out of their hands.

However, at other times, instead of owning up to their part in creating a situation, people cast the shadow onto someone else.

Here, a caring, authentic, non-superficial digital brand can help the person regain a sense of being or control. It assumes the role of parent or friend. Showing empathy highlights how a product or service delivers confidence for the consumer to become more self-reliant and even perhaps be seen by others as heroic.

Virtue signalling pros

 In signalling virtue, a brand can identify with a cause that matters to many of its customers, irrespective of any of the brand's Board members, conflicting personal prejudices. This can be boosted by shrewd SEO that targets consumers affected by such a cause.

- The brand shows it is (ostensibly) not just pursuing sales and profit.
- The brand can anticipate increased PR and social media coverage – sometimes worth millions.
- Virtue signalling enables *identity signalling*, showing that the brand is aligned, identifies with, and upholds the values of a particular group.
- Carefully planned virtue signalling can support the brand to appear more distinctive and relevant to popular issues that concern the public.

VIRTUE SIGNALLING CONS

Tantamount to *moral grandstanding* designed to convince others a brand is “morally decent,” virtue signalling can appear as paying lip service.

Hypocrisy: what a brand claims to either support or stand against is something it must put into practice.

ALL VIRTUE-SOAP SUDS AND NO SUBSTANCE

I was asked to comment on TV about Lush, a natural cosmetics company using virtue signalling.

At the time (Summer 2023), the brand was heavily criticised for a campaign featuring a picture of a small blow-up boat (similar to ones transporting thousands of desperate people across the perilous English Channel.)

Lush window posters in 103 stores read: “All refugees are welcome . . . however you got here.”

To cut funds to criminals arranging the life-threatening journey, the UK government voted to make it illegal to claim asylum by entering Britain on small boats.

The cost-of-living crisis also meant that people generally fretted about job security. Assumptions about immigrant intentions were based on clickbait headlines alone.

To make matters worse, the Lush campaign promoted a special bath bomb featuring the word “welcome” embossed on its side. Consumers were meant to access a QR code whilst in the bath.

On the positive side, funds raised were meant to go to Refugee Action, a charity fighting the government’s Rwanda policy of shipping immigrants overseas rather than accommodating them in the UK.

However, a combination of poorly worded posters, plus the ill-considered juxtaposition of bath bomb and water (all too easily semiotically related to the dinghies crossing the Channel), was, at best, miscalculated.

MPs accused the brand of encouraging criminal gangs to exploit desperate people.

Concerned British consumers threatened to boycott the brand. In the press, one consumer said: "Another one to boycott. Go woke, go broke." "Lush needs to get a grip, have a cold shower, check with reality, and maybe they will be able to come back smelling like roses."

During the TV interview, I pointed out that I assumed the brand initially had good intentions. However, the resulting PR coverage focused on the negative rather than the positive. The campaign was simply not thoroughly thought through. (A vital planning lesson for digital marketers in PR planning and advanced scenario role-playing.)

VIRTUE SIGNALLING OR HIGH MORAL GROUNDING?

In another much earlier exam of poorly planned virtue-signalling, Apple shipped a version of its premium-priced iPhone without including a charger. It signalled virtue by arguing that most customers would already have accessories. Adding an extra plug to the package would just take up packaging space and add to the landfill as people threw away their old chargers. On the other hand, cynics argued that Apple was simply grandstanding, cutting costs without passing any savings on to customers. (See Red Herring, page 211.)

-  Brands that signal virtue must be prepared to be judged by high benchmarks.
-  Brands that signal virtue in one cause must be indisputably responsible throughout every other aspect of their business.
-  Virtue-signalling brands can suddenly compete in a moral arms race against other companies, all seeking to outdo each other in the final dash to the moral high ground.
-  Virtue signalling can affect production costs. For example, replacing plastic packaging with cardboard packaging may have repercussions in terms of storage and manufacturing. Equally, from an environmental perspective, whilst the brand no longer uses plastic, it is now felling trees.
-  Through being publicly seen as doing the right thing, a brand can find itself being held hostage to public opinion. For example, in 2021, a group of vocal consumer groups complained when Coca-Cola said it would impose penalties on law firms failing to meet racial diversity quotas. (Some questioned whether such policies overstepped Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which said employers could not treat people differently based on race).

The cause, not the death, makes the martyr.

(Napoleon Bonaparte)

During World War II, the Nazis exploited victimhood to promote their insidious agenda.

Joseph Goebbels was the chief propagandist for the Nazi Party. Concerned about the dangers of citizens becoming too independently minded, he decided people needed a distraction.

One such diversion came in the shape of a person presented as a victim taking on the sins of society's wrongdoers. He became a national brand icon.

That person was Horst Ludwig Wessel. He was an enthusiastic member of the German National People's Party (DNVP) and the Bismarck Jugend youth group before joining the Nazi Party in 1926. In 1929, Wessel wrote lyrics for a Nazi battle song. Goebbels approved the song "Die Fahne Hoch" and published it. Then, one cold January night in 1930, on answering his front door, Wessel was shot squarely in the face. His alleged assailant was Albrecht (Aly) Höhler, a keen activist from the local Communist Party (KPD) branch. Höhler was sentenced to 6 years. In 1933 the Gestapo murdered him.

Wessel's death was a propaganda opportunity; Goebbels arranged for a funeral attended by 30,000 people.

Reports in *Die Brünnen*, the official party journal, proclaimed: "Horst Wessel towers over Jesus of Nazareth!" (en.citizendium.org, n.d.).

Goebbels also commissioned books and movies idealising Wessel's short life. Town squares were named after him. In 1936, a three-mast training ship, the *Horst Wessel*, was commissioned. (Curiously, it was later captured by the US Navy and renamed the USCGC *Eagle* by the American Coast Guard).

Although officially banned in Germany, even today, many underground right-wing political parties continue to sing the Horst Wessel song:

The street was free for the brown battalions.
 The street was free for the Storm-Trooper.
 Up at the swastika, millions already look, full of hope,
 The day breaks for freedom and bread.
 For the last time, the call will be blown.
 For the struggle, we all stand ready.
 Soon will fly Hitler's flags over every street.
 Slavery will last only a short time longer.
 ("The Horst Wessel Song," 1929)

RAINBOW OF HUMANITY

Man becomes whole, integrated, calm, fertile,
 and happy when (and only when)
 the process of individuation is complete,
 when the conscious and the unconscious have learned
 to live at peace and to complement one another.

—Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols*

As you have been reminded throughout this book, everyone has multiple dimensions to their personality (not sadly simply those with severe clinical personality issues). This is why, without training, if you were to look up a personality trait in the industry-standard reference book, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, you could easily wrongly conclude that someone shy or outgoing; loud, pushy, or humble; sad or happy; excitable or placid; promiscuous or chaste; religious or atheist can be casually categorised as having a mental "disorder." Anyone can be said to have the capacity to present an apparent mental disorder (depending on life's circumstances). This means we are all, to a point, temporarily "mad" or "borderline." It makes us human.

Just as brands can temporarily provide alternative means of expression, the web offers the perfect platform for people who cannot openly explore their carefully secreted traits and dimensions.

JUDGE ME BY THE BRAND I CARRY

As a brand commentator and journalist, I have the privilege of advising globally respected brands. Occasionally, I receive invites to brand launches. One such invitation was to the brand launch of a new Armani fashion range held in Knightsbridge, London.

I went along, hoping perhaps to be given a complimentary bottle of aftershave or even a smart Armani tie. However, I only got a brochure inside a shopping bag emblazed with the Armani logo.

Slightly peeved after the event, I had some spare time, so I walked over to the luxury department store, Harrods. Looking around the gentlemen's department, I was impressed by the high service standards I received. "Good morning, sir." "Let me know if I can assist."

Figure 4.4



This is who I am.



This is who I want to be.



This is who I want you to think I am.



This is what I can manage.

It confirmed all my assumptions about the chic retailer’s legendary service.

A year later, I found myself back at Harrods. Again, I visited the same gentlemen’s section. However, this time, I received no special treatment. In fact, for the most part, I was ignored.

So, what was different? The staff were the same, yet none recognised me. The difference was my shopping bag. I previously carried an Armani bag, but this time I had an Asda supermarket bag.

Proving that in branding, perception is everything and depth is four-dimensional.

LUXURIOUS DARKNESS

A 2023 study titled “Associations Between a Dark Triad of Features in Luxury Brand Personality and Customers’ Behaviour” delved into how dark triad traits of brand personality can lead customers to reject, rather than admire, luxury brands (Ahn, 2023).

According to Ahn, customer evaluation of a brand’s quality is explained by “signalling theory.” Signalling theory is a theory that “explains how customers use various cues (e.g., brand characteristics, elements, and attributes) to evaluate the quality of a brand” (Olson & Jacoby, 1972).

Delroy L. Paulhus and Kevin M. Williams first published the dark triad theory of personality in 2002. Each of the dark triad’s personality types is considered to feature malevolent qualities (Akre, 2023).

The study identified a “dark triad” of personality traits, including Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. People with Machiavellian traits are highly competitive, obsessed with power, constantly changing their emotional responses towards others, and willing to go to any means to achieve their goals. They exploit others to leverage themselves and are often selfish, bullying, and manipulative.

Narcissists have a sense of self-importance, a preoccupation with power, beauty, or success. They yearn to be surrounded by people they consider necessary. As a result, they are interpersonally exploitative, arrogant, lack empathy, and demand admiration.

Psychopathic individuals are superficially charming, have puffed-up self-esteem, are deceitful, have shallow emotions, are bored, and need stimulation. They have a shady history of conduct and are manipulative and deceptive. (Also see, Thanatos and digital marketing, page 201.)

When luxury brands exhibit these negative traits, customers may switch, avoid, or complain about the social inequality associated with owning such brands.

Ahn’s study employed signalling theory to create a conceptual framework incorporating a dark triad of negative brand personality traits, moral disengagement, and adverse behavioural intentions among consumers.

The study involved a random sample of US-based participants who were asked to name a luxury brand they had purchased and then quizzed about it. The study involved 193 participants, with a gender distribution of 60% men and 40% women, aged between 19 to over 50 years, with most of them having completed higher education.

Participants were asked to respond to statements such as “This luxury brand tends to exploit others to achieve its goals,” which was used to measure Machiavellianism. Each trait and item was assessed on a Likert scale, with a score of 1 (indicating strong disagreement) and 7 (strong agreement).

Data analysis revealed that negative brand personality is linked to dark personality traits and moral disengagement, associated with negative feedback and customers stopping patronage. Luxury brands with negative personalities may suffer from adverse effects like decreased patronage and negative word of mouth. Additionally, the study found that customers tend to disconnect from brands if they perceive them as Machiavellian or psychopathic.

Luxury brands can overcome negative perceptions through interactive marketing communication that conveys empathy and training their personnel to create emotional bonds with customers. (Also see Chapter 2, I vs AI, part 1: Ai am.)

DEPTH OF CHARACTER THROUGH DATA

Digital marketers have come a long way since their forerunners treated consumers as two-dimensional stereotypes. They have heeded the words of the eminent data scientist W. Edwards Deming (1900–1993), who said, “Without data, you’re just another person with an opinion” (sketchplanations.com, n.d.).

In the past, stereotype profiling meant marketing content that looked great but, on closer inspection, turned out to be a veneer. Too often, sincerity was as flat as a stock library photograph or footage featuring “smiley-grinning” administrators.

Today, with sophisticated data profiling, marketers appreciate that, like themselves, consumers’ personas too are anything but black, grey, or white. Customer profiling paints personas featuring a rainbow of colours. The multi-dimensional personality provides depth, and with variety comes choice and an opportunity to target each person with specific, highly selective messages.

Freud reminds us that the Ego is charged with preserving sovereignty over some of the id’s anarchistic sides. The Ego tries to wipe it out at the first sign of a shadow.

People pledge to amend their ways and moderate behaviours such as lashing out in anger on social media or surfing porn sites. Often impulses fade as quickly as they appear, with people swiftly changing direction accordingly.

However, reflecting life’s unpredictability, albeit sincere promises like “I will not be like this anymore,” are prone to variables. Some convince themselves that to err is simply a test of character or a moral trial sent from a higher power to prove allegiance and control as a devoted person of faith rather than a basic primate.

Maybe those living with their authentic Selves hidden in shadows only ever get to live a half-life. On the other hand, perhaps the current age of enlightenment provides a unique opportunity to embrace and maturely control the human id for the first time in history. (A form of liberty that, up until now, has been dismissed as the first sign of a heinous heretic.)

The Shadow acts independently while being the product of the collective conscious and subconscious that, like it or not, is *you*.

You can moderate, manage, or redirect it, using what psychoanalysts call “shadow-work,” but you cannot stick your head in the sand and pray it will resist the chance to peck you on the bottom.

Self-knowledge (aka self-love) gives the Shadow a voice that can be regulated and incorporated into the perfect package of life that is you. But don't be mistaken; again, you can never eradicate it – unless you were to delete your entire *you*, not just from a short-term cache, but from the entire hard drive of being.

If Carl Jung's Shadow teaches us anything, it's that so much of what we believe to be reality is a construct. It is what and how we see ourselves; how we respond based on what we experience and understand. In terms of brand perception, that construct extends to the web.

GIVING I WHAT I WANTS AND I NEEDS: OVERVIEW

-  Freud introduced various therapeutic approaches.
-  The id, Ego, and Superego are central to Freud's theories.
-  The id is present from birth and operates in the unconscious.
-  The id focuses on satisfying basic urges, needs, and desires.
-  The Pleasure Principle is a vital aspect of the id.
-  The id incorporates inherited (biological) components from birth.
-  The id contains life and death instincts.
-  The Ego emerges to mediate between the id and reality.
-  The reality principle allows the Ego to arbitrate between the id and superego.
-  Freud's concept of the id is often debated among researchers.
-  Egoism involves acting in one's self-interest.
-  Egocentrism is concerned with interpreting events from one's perspective.
-  Egotism involves evaluating oneself more favourably than warranted.
-  Egoic people are highly self-absorbed and focused on themselves.
-  The superego regulates and encourages the Ego to act reasonably.
-  Biological, psychological, and social factors influence the sex drive (libido).
-  The death drive (Thanatos) is a person's urge toward death or self-harm.
-  Jung revised Freud's ego types and introduced the concept of the collective unconscious.

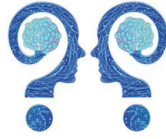
- 🧠 Jung's collective unconscious contains archetypes, or primordial images and ideas.
- 🧠 The shadow archetype symbolises the unconscious parts of a person's personality.
- 🧠 Exploring the shadow can lead to a deeper understanding of a person's individuality.
- 🧠 Of those who self-harm, 51.3% have searched for related material online.
- 🧠 The Internet can act as an invisibility cloak for projecting/protecting our Shadow Self.
- 🧠 Brands can use the Shadow Self to understand the consumer psyche better.
- 🧠 Exploiting the Shadow Self requires responsibility.
- 🧠 Vance Packard's book *The Hidden Persuaders* exposed manipulative practices in advertising.
- 🧠 Psychological propaganda techniques include ad hominem, repetition, and arousing anxieties.
- 🧠 Projection can be a defence mechanism for individuals and groups.
- 🧠 Supported causes must align with core brand values.
- 🧠 The Internet can both separate and join people, affecting mental health.
- 🧠 We tend to see the world through our Shadow's lens, which can lead us to interpret events and interactions in a negative light.
- 🧠 Our Shadow and that of the brand influence how we perceive a brand.

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5 Brand kisses in the mind

This section considers the psychology behind mission statements and logo design, including a Freudian semiotics perspective. It explains different approaches towards the customer journey. Next, it describes how brands can draw on the principles of the classic seven deadly sins to build deeper customer relationships.

You'll be shown how visual clues inform consumers of a brand's online meaning and purpose.

You'll also be introduced to how Jung can help you design the perfect customer profile and how Maslow's hierarchy of needs may have finally met its more relevant online match.

BRANDS FRESHER THAN BANDBURY CHEESE

Many historians, including Sir Martin Gilbert, have commented that one reason the world knows so much about the brutal efficiency of concentration camps is thanks, in part, to the Nazi's efficient record-keeping.

One of the best-organised members of the Nazi movement was Dr Robert Ley, the head of the German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF). Known for his heavy drinking, he was the editor of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Westdeutsche Beobachter*. Despite neither being a designer nor an art director, in addition to overseeing the development of the Volkswagen (people's car) from Porsche, Ley published *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*, the Nazi movement's official red cloth-bound 550-page brand guidelines that detailed the principles and mechanics of building the Nazi brand.

It meticulously described the correct colourways and dimensions for everything from logos to uniforms. Whilst many brand guidelines typically bolster a brand's appearance, too few explain how a brand connects emotionally and rationally.

Failing to provide substance can cause a brand to become what Shakespeare called "Banbury cheese" (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1.126). Banbury cheese was

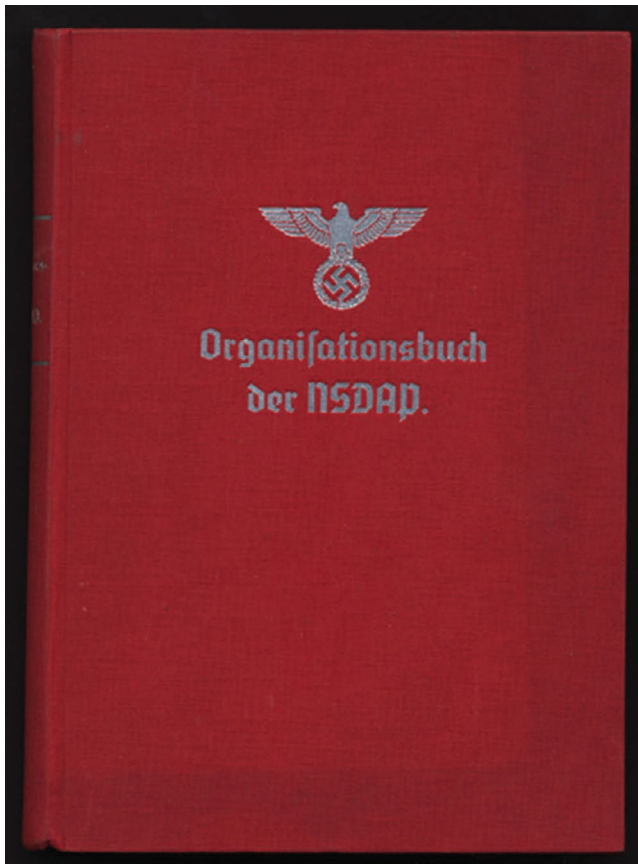
exceptionally slender (so there wasn't much cheese when eager eaters peeled away the rind) (Thomas, n.d.).

BRAND PURPOSE

The highly respected Max Stricker is the founder of Ortum (ortumconsulting.co.uk, n.d.), which uses decision, behavioural, and marketing science to improve clients' strategy, branding, packaging, and communication effectiveness. The company asked 1400 consumers to match brands to a purpose correctly. For example, one group of respondents ($n = 684$) were shown a brand purpose statement, given a choice of five brands within the same product category, and asked to select the brand that belonged to the statement. Respondents selected the brand they believed belonged to the example purpose statement. However, on average, only about a quarter of respondents correctly associated the statement with the brand.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2

Nazi party brand guidelines.



Figures 5.1 and 5.2 (Continued)



Source: Nazi Party handbook 1936a, images available through Wikimedia Commons.

The statements

Coca-Cola: Refresh the world and inspire moments of optimism and happiness.

Microsoft: Empower every person and organisation on the planet to achieve more.

Starbucks: Inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person and one cup at a time.

Moët: Transform occasions into celebrations.

Dove: Discovering the value of “real” beauty and improving self-esteem worldwide.

Ortum followed up the test with a similar experiment. Still, Stricker was concerned that multiple-choice answers could prime respondents; this time, the company didn't provide respondents with a multiple-choice answer.

Having studied different brand purpose statements, the respondents were asked to name the brand for each statement. Hardly anyone was correct. In fact, on average less than 4% of statements were correctly associated with a brand.

Ortum's findings question the role of brand purpose in a consumer's decision-making process. If the brand purpose were to play a vital role, they would expect consumers to recognise the brand purpose of a brand or at least do better in correctly associating it with a brand.

Other research that explored brand purpose in the decision-making process specifically found that brand purpose plays a much lesser role when consumers buy brands than marketers probably think.

In mid-2020, the industry publication *Marketing Week* often quoted the following cited by Marc S Pritchard, chief brand officer of Procter and Gamble and others (Tenzer, 2022):

- 62% of consumers say their purchasing decisions are influenced by a company's ethical values and authenticity.
- 74% crave transparency into how companies source their products, ensure safe working conditions and their stance on important issues.
- 62% want companies to take a stand on social, cultural, environmental, and political issues close to their hearts.
- 60% of people are happy to pay more for brands promoting sustainability.

Andrew Tenzer, director of market insight and brand strategy at Reach, needed to be more convinced. His organisation asked respondents to select from a list of 13 reasons, including customer service, value, quality and reliability, alongside social purpose factors such as a brand's position on social issues and the product's sustainability (Tenzer, 2022).

Over 4 years, answers remained consistent:

- Value for money (81%)
- Reliability (67%)
- Product/service quality (66%).

Less than 1 in 10 said a brand's position on social issues or political affiliations is essential when buying brands and products. Even sustainability was lower than most people would anticipate, at 32%, and (at the time of writing) still in decline.

Despite brands being sensitive to Gen Z, "woke" issues, practicalities, such as saving money during a cost-of-living crisis, often took precedence over social causes alone. (Also see, *Flying the Flag*, Chapter 4, page 213.)

Stricker points out that brand purpose is probably important for employees and guides internal decisions (e.g., using sustainable packaging, being more inclusive in advertising). Still, it doesn't appear to affect most consumers significantly. Based on these results, Ortum concluded that whilst brand purpose is essential to marketers at a strategic level, consumers seemed to simply ignore it without recognising a practical application (ortumconsulting.co.uk, n.d.). (Also see Virtue Signalling, Chapter 4, Giving I what I wants and needs, page 218.)

BRAND FAMILIARITY

Psychologists speak of the familiarity liking effect. This is related to the mere exposure effect. (See Chapter 7.) The more accustomed a consumer becomes to seeing a chosen product or service, the more enduring the brand/consumer relationship.

Shaping buying behaviour by simple repetition embeds a "memory trace," which helps turn any planned purchase into actual sales. From an evolutionary perspective, familiarity also suggests safety: you have experienced something before, and things turned out fine. This is why humans are hardwired to believe the adage, "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't." The key is convincing consumers to adopt brands common within respected peer groups (rather than mass adoption) as early as possible.

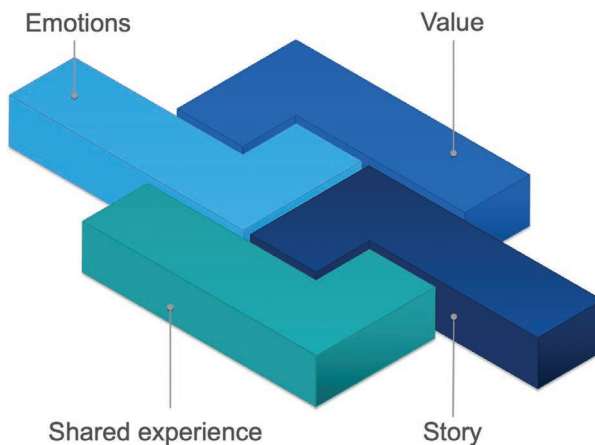
UNLESS THERE IS AN EMOTION, MEMORIES REMAIN MUFFLED

Without emotion attached to an event, you probably won't remember what you did 6 months ago on a Tuesday.

Whenever you have emotions, you gain value. Wherever you find value, you discover a story. And wherever there is a story, there's also the opportunity to share memories that teach new lessons that shape perceptions of the world and us.

Figure 5.3

The four-part digital story framework.



Over 10 years, I have repeatedly recorded a simple experiment with digital marketers. (As of 2023, I have investigated with 2458 people). They are shown a series of 12 similar-looking Apple logos, only one of which is real, and then asked which logo is not fake.

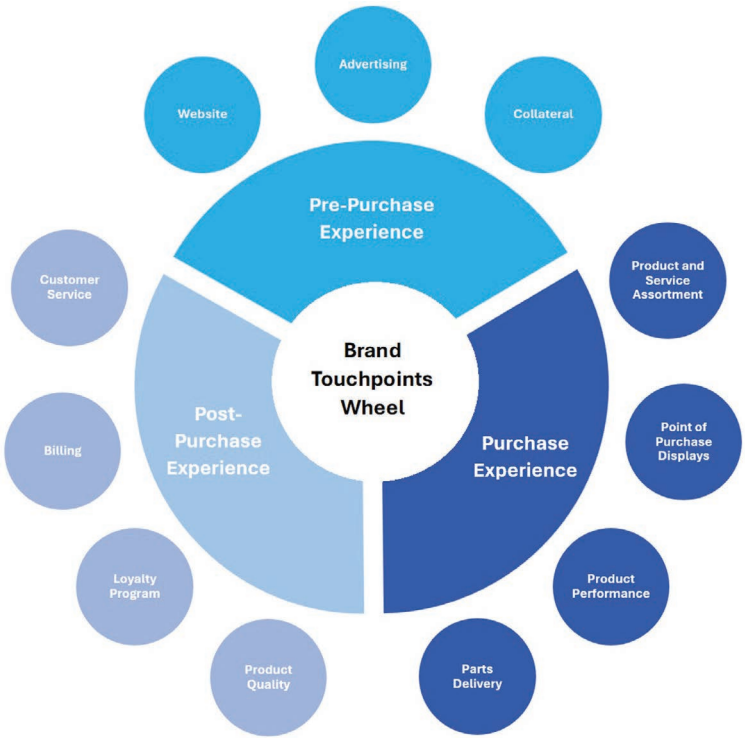
So far, 1286 people have guessed incorrectly. (Also see Cognitive Load Theory, page 239.)

BX VS UX

Just as every day starts with an expectation and ends with an experience, so a brand experience starting point could include an offline source such as a media report, advertising, packaging, email, or word-of-mouth brand touch point.

According to “Think with Google” (2022), 63% of all shopping begins online, even if the purchase happens in a store. In addition, 68% of online experiences are with a

Figure 5.4
Brand touchpoints wheel.



search engine, with the top page listed in a Google search receiving an average click-through rate of 25.6% (Hubspot, 2023; Softwares, 2023).

Once a brand is amalgamated into a consumer's psyche, the online platform serves different channels which reinforce a brand message throughout a customer's journey.

THE 4 AS OF CUSTOMER JOURNEY CONTENT

Amplify

Through brand messages that engage not just consumers, but employees and brand partners, making them feel connected to a brand.

Accelerate

Through brand messages demonstrating online agility and responsiveness.

Articulate

Through brand messages that demonstrate purpose-driven stratagems.

Through brand messages that are timely and appealing to the immediate consciousness.

Anticipate

Through brand messages that address latent concerns within the deeper consciousness. (For example, fear, uncertainty, and greed.)

THE SEVEN DEADLY BRAND SINS VIRTUES

Drive theory usually attributes basic motives to simple states like hunger or thirst. (Think of passing a coffee shop or bakery with the waft of freshly baked bread). However, just as essential are emotions. Many times, it is patently obvious what drives them. Historically, seven of these primal drives are known as "sins."

The current list of seven deadly sins is linked to monks from early Christian Egypt, who were influenced by Neoplatonism, an aspect of Platonic philosophy that arose in the 3rd century CE. According to the platonic tradition, humankind is composed of three components:

-  Body
-  Soul
-  Mind.

Each has its primary function:

- Appetite or desire (*epithymia*)
- Feeling (*thymos*)
- For each, the Egyptian monks identified three “thoughts” or *logismoi* that lead to disorders.

“Evil thoughts” were grouped as:

Physical

Thoughts produced by sexually acquisitive appetites.

Emotional

Thoughts produced by depressive, irascible, or dismissive moods.

Mental

Thoughts produced by jealous/envious, boastful, or hubristic states of mind.

The fourth-century monk Evagrius Ponticus produced a list of eight:

- ☼ Γαστριμαργία (*gastrimargia*) gluttony.
- ☼ Πορνεία (*porneia*) prostitution, fornication.
- ☼ Φιλαργυρία (*philargyria*) avarice (greed).
- ☼ Λύπη (*lypē*) sadness, rendered in the Philokalia as envy, dismay at another’s good fortune. (The Philokalia was written around the 4th and 5th centuries. It is a collection of mystical texts).
- ☼ Ὁργή (*orgē*) wrath.
- ☼ Ἀκηδία (*akēdia*) acedia, rendered in the Philokalia as dejection.
- ☼ Κενοδοξία (*kenodoxia*) boasting.
- ☼ Ὑπερηφάνια (*hyperēphania*) pride, sometimes rendered as self-overestimation, arrogance, or grandiosity.

Evagrius’ list became part of the Western tradition’s spiritual pietas or Catholic devotions:

- ☼ *Gula* (gluttony).
- ☼ *Luxuria/Fornicatio* (lust, fornication).

-  *Avaritia* (avarice/greed).
-  *Tristitia* (sorrow/despair/despondency).
-  *Ira* (wrath).
-  *Acedia* (sloth).
-  *Vanagloria* (vainglory).
-  *Superbia* (pride, hubris).

In AD 590, Pope Gregory I combined *tristitia* with *acedia*, *vanagloria* and *superbia*, adding envy (*invidia* in Latin.) This became the final standard list of seven deadly sins (SDS). Used skilfully, brands can consider common SDS when targeting online consumers.

PRIDE

Excessive belief in the Self and abilities.

Everybody wants a sense of achievement, giving them a reason to radiate pride. Harnessing a sense of pride can turn curious customers into purchasing, returning customers.

Pride: Dribble vs Behance

Dribble and Behance are social platforms for designers to showcase their work. They asked consumers to show and tell their skills with other users.

The results? Consumers aimed to top the list of rated pieces.

ENVY

The desire for others' traits or situations.

The Rolling Stones rock group sang, "You can't always get what you want, but sometimes, you get what you need." Maslow's pyramid (see page 261) suggests that once a consumer realises all they want, they have all they need. (In truth, it rarely works that way.)

Particularly online, when consumers see others relishing in the glory of something, they may do whatever it takes to have a share. That's human nature and a sure-fire reason for brands to offer something bigger, better, smarter, nearer, further, tastier, brighter, and so on.

GLUTTONY

The craving to consume more than you can handle.

“All you can eat!” Many fast-food chains use gluttony to tempt diners.

You can use gluttony to encourage people to visit sites and landing pages. Trust indicators like testimonials, social proof indicators such as reviews and ratings, and influencer recommendations make customers and prospects feel you care.

Or you could turn the entire concept on its head, showing that a healthy product (such as a diet version of a candy bar, which should encourage consumers to eat more or a discounted product line), can encourage consumers to buy more, so eat more. (Also see Chapter 5, Useful user friction, page 239.)

WRATH

Stout anger. Just as journalism is in the business of holding people to account (even if that occasionally means revealing people’s dirty laundry), social media is one big gossip chamber for some. (Also see Chapter 4, Giving I what I wants and needs, page 203.)

Keeping in mind the maxim that “all publicity is good publicity,” encouraging users to speak their minds about, for example, a product review, fires debate as well as hits to a site. Developing others’ outrage or frustration about some act, cause or situation can also lead to virtue signalling. (See Chapter 4, Giving I what I wants and needs, page 199.)

GREED

The desire for material wealth or gain.

Quality vs quantity

The rock group Queen sang, “I want it all, and I want it now.” Ask any New Year’s Day bargain hunter – everyone loves a bargain. However, delivering what people want in terms of discounts may backfire if price savings mean savings in quality. Today’s savvy consumer wants it ALL, and they want it NOW.

Focus on quality

-  Improved customer experience.
-  Deeper loyalty.
-  Clear expectations.
-  Quality takes time to develop.
-  Quality attracts experts as well as enthusiasts.
-  Quality improves reputation.

Focus on quantity

- ☁ Fewer resources are required when something is distributed in bulk.
- ☁ Reaches more people.
- ☁ Quantity can be a supplement for loss of quality.
- ☁ Easier to replace individual items and parts.

When someone aims to lose weight or win a marathon, a fitness brand may focus on the number of sessions the consumer needs to sign up for to make gym visits a habit.

On the other hand, if the brand wants to target serious athletes looking to develop specific routines using the latest equipment and measurement tools, it may focus on the quality of the apparatus and fitness coaching. Ultimately, quality and quantity are not separate considerations but a balanced choice.

SLOTH

Laziness. Every aspect of a brand experience should be seamless. Whether that means a computer manufacturer providing software that ensures work started on one device is easily continued on another, or a call to a customer service agent can be dealt with by a technical support agent, even days later, without the consumer needing to repeat any original questions.

Frictionless indolence

In the pursuit of improving a user's experience (UX), brand friction exploits tensions. These are related to brand pain points (see Chapter 2, I vs AI).

Nick Milne, marketing effectiveness expert, founder, and CEO of Go Ignite Consulting, talks of turning some of those tensions around by developing "positive brand friction," in which brands purposefully ease the friction by accentuating positive impacts rather than making a brand experience over-complicated – and so abrasive (ipa.co.uk, n.d.).

He suggests four ways to even the brand experience:

- ☁ Experience in intelligence and measurement

Use data to inform and create opportunities that improve the brand experience, predict the benefit, and measure the outcomes.

- ☁ Experience collaboration

Introduce organisational agility based on a strong customer focus. Move away from the idea of anyone being responsible for the overall customer experience.

- ☁ Brand friction and effort balance

Ensure the right balance of positive brand friction that doesn't impact negatively on customer effort.

💡 Experience leadership, influence, and accountability

Today's digital marketer helps organisations deliver customer and real business value.

SMOOTHER BRAND EXPERIENCES

Reducing customer interaction friction doesn't just make marketing sense; it saves costs from lost sales. For example, reviewing the need for consumers to grapple with opening robust plastic packaging improves user experience and helps the environment.

Reduce friction via

- 💡 Using intuitive, uncomplicated user interfaces that simplify processes, such as selecting products or configuring subscription plans.
- 💡 Responding efficiently to customer questions.
- 💡 Using data to uncover significant insights into a consumer's journey and behavioural patterns.
- 💡 Adopting new technologies such as AR and VR to help consumers view and experience products before making any final purchase.
- 💡 Welcoming user-generated content (UGC) includes testimonials, ratings, and reviews.
- 💡 Strengthening online payment security.
- 💡 Avoiding wasted time by only sending brand communications that are relevant, timely, practical, and so valued.
- 💡 Using AI and other technologies to improve chatbot intellect.
- 💡 Incorporating real-time updates on product schedules through brand apps.
- 💡 Understanding consumers – not just according to their demographics – but psychographics and culture.
- 💡 Tailoring offerings to meet (data-informed) individual needs and preferences.
- 💡 Ensuring brand messages get to the point quickly without compromising on explaining product or service features and benefits.
- 💡 Featuring high-quality images and engaging videos to attract attention.
- 💡 Repurposing useful brand content across relevant social channels.
- 💡 Offering additional support through online webinars and video training.

EASING THE COGNITIVE LOAD

Forcing consumers to register to complete a purchase is a common, unnecessary online friction hurdle. Often, web designers assume consumers won't mind registering as future shops will be easier. However, filling in details is laborious – at any stage. Ask too many questions, and you could overload consumers (aka cognitive load, based on cognitive load theory, developed by the Australian educational psychologist John Sweller; Sweller et al., 2011).

Cognitive load refers to the level of working memory required to perform a task. Digital marketers aim to avoid extraneous cognitive loading to ensure consumers understand and retain key messages. (Also see Memory, pages, 239, 240.)

A highly skilled chess player can store various board configurations in long-term memory. On the other hand, the average player doesn't have that kind of experience to draw upon. Whereas the experienced player can “see” the next move, the novice player must draw on working memory, making gambits less effective.

Typically, online consumers compare and contrast several products simultaneously. Learning and recall become impaired when there's too much information to handle. Eyes glaze over, and consumers move on.

One way your brain deals with avoiding cognitive overload is through long-term memory. In contrast with short-spanned facts available through working memory, people are unaware of long-term memory. Information in long-term memory can include addressing knotty processes, relations, and connected experiences. Stored long-term memories, rather than working memory, allow for complex reasoning.

Germane Load

This refers to additions that, unlike extraneous cognitive load, help clarify a message by highlighting useful features, often highlighting important words.

USEFUL USER EXPERIENCE FRICTION

-  Performing high-risk actions, like entering personal data or confirming shipping information.
-  Focussing on completing essential details that can't later be reverted.

Traditionally, servers at McDonald's asked customers if they wanted to “supersize” their meals. Doing so, meant an extra-large drink and an extra-large portion of fries with a burger. The pressure of standing in busy lines made it too easy for customers to answer, “yes.”

Box 5.1 The brand memory process

Brand influence on consumers' long-term memory



Brand influence on consumers' autobiographical memory



Brand influence on internalised conflicts



In the early 2000s, a more health-conscious McDonald's removed Supersize from the menu and stopped asking customers if they wanted to "supersize." (Also see Gluttony, 5, Brand kisses in the mind, page 235.)

AND FINALLY (IN TERMS OF THE SINS) . . . LUST

An intense craving for pleasure (usually sexual).

It's not just perfume, clothing, cars, alcohol, and sneaker brands that use sex to sell. In 2023, 3.8 billion people worldwide used smartphones. Fox News reported that 6.3% of the US population was suffering from smartphone addiction (SMA, also known as nomophobia, for "NO MOBILE PHoNE PhoBIA"). Statistics suggested that 427% more messages were sent than 10 years earlier and 278% more texts (Bhattacharya et al., 2019).

A 2014 Harris Interactive, a Nielsen Company, suggested that smartphones significantly affected Americans' lifestyles: 44% of Americans couldn't sleep without their phones, while only 20% couldn't imagine their lives without sex (Bhattacharya et al., 2019).

According to Semrush (2016), using sexual imagery at a low level of explicitness creates higher copy (content) evaluation. The higher the explicitness, the lower the ad evaluation.

ONLINE DISINHIBITION

This is a condition in which online users don't abide by normal social protocol when interacting with others. At its most basic, disinhibition presents two sides:

- The benign
- The ithyphallic.

Benign concerns aspects like social sharing of personal details, dreams, ambitions, etc. It could also include using the web to deliver acts of kindness, such as anonymously donating to charities. Benign disinhibition allows surfers to explore new ways of being.

Ithyphallic disinhibition derives from ithyphallos – erect phallus. Ithyphallic means of, or relating to, the phallus carried in the ancient festivals.

Types of online consumer disinhibition

Demiguise (invisibility)

In Freudian psychoanalysis, the therapist perches out of sight of the patient, encouraging free association without the patient fearing being seen or heard.

The equivalent anonymity of tough typing and fierce screen swiping is not the same as tender talking. Social platforms encourage people to get to know each other. However, besides video streaming and conferencing, users can't see crucial fuller expressions or properly detect tones of voice that may tell a very different story from what is being typed and tapped.

A 2011 study of undergraduates from the University of Massachusetts featured 15-minute conversations with same-sex individuals. Those using email had five times more lies per word communicated than those speaking face-to-face (Harvard Business Review, 2013).

Dissociative anonymity

Rather like the phrase, "Whatever happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," many would prefer that whatever happens online mostly stays between agreed parties online. Brands such as WhatsApp, Signal, Snapchat, and Telegram regularly fight to uphold the right for customers to enjoy encrypted messaging.

Once logged out, virtual behaviour and persona remain as elusive as the Higgs boson. Psychologists refer to “dissociation” – when someone’s feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and memories become disconnected or no longer strike a chord of familiarity in the conscious mind.

Solipsistic introjection

Where others see chaos, the inventive mind sees connections. So, the brain is always looking for connections to help it recall things or imagine possibilities.

In solipsistic introjection, people are reminded of events, colleagues, families, and so on, which help fill the gaps of whom they perceive the person at the other end of the correspondence trail to be. When video conferencing, whilst people may see each other, they only look at part of the picture (mainly the head and shoulders and the backdrop). Forever searching for patterns which provide meaning, the mind looks for clues about the person on the other webcam. This includes what they are wearing, the backdrop, and the location.

Video choices

In 2020, the Harvard Business Review surveyed 465 men and women. Participants were asked about their video conferencing preferences, expectations, and experiences. Respondents were presented with one person against three different backgrounds, another wearing three distinctive colours, and a third dressed in three individual types of clothing (Zandan & Lynch, 2020).

Participants chose which background, clothing colour, and clothing style helped the speaker come across as:

-  Authentic (genuine, actions align with beliefs).
-  Trustworthy (honest, truthful, reliable).
-  Innovative (original, creative in thinking, willing to depart from the norm).
-  Expert (highly credible, an authority on the subject).

Sixty per cent of respondents had no clear preference. Only 39% preferred the clothing colour worn by the speaker. Approaching half appreciated the speaker’s fashion sense.

On average, 54% of men (vs 43% of women) had an apparent inclination towards the background, clothing colour, and type of attire. In addition, 57% of respondents aged 18 to 29 stated a clear preference, compared to an overall average of 49%.

Moratorium asynchronicity (delayed reactions)

You and a friend are having a coffee. You ask a question but wait so long for an answer that not only has your cappuccino gone cold, but you are left staring into space for a week before your friend finally responds.

To an online consumer, even ordinarily reasonable delays feel like an eternity. The longer the wait, the greater the likelihood that a consumer starts to believe they are being ignored. That could add up to increased hostility towards your brand.

From another point of view, moratorium asynchronicity is increasingly prevalent on dating sites like Tinder or Grindr, where busy opportunists juggle responding to text-tease whilst feigning sexting innocence with fellow workers or, in some cases to their partners sitting just a metre away on the sofa.

Moratorium asynchronicity offers surfers the chance to deposit feelings and leave them there. The Toronto-based psychotherapist Kali Munro describes this as someone carrying out an “emotional hit and run” (Munro, 2002).

SYMBOLS OF OUR TIMES

Carl Jung observed, “In all chaos, there are cosmos, in all disorder, a secret order.” One of the critical distinctions between humankind and animals is the human ability to construct meaning from apparent chaos. (Jung & Francis, 2010).

From the opening chapters of evolving human history, the brain has sought purpose from patterns, whether to recognise friends from foes or take solace in finding hidden meaning by connecting shapes of gods from the polka-dotted night sky. The quest to mine meaning from chaos by asking “why” continues. Today, patterns are found in algorithms, formulae, demographics, and more.

Figure 5.5

Cave drawings, Lascaux (south-western France).



Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lascaux>

As you learnt in the section Forethought, Palaeolithic cave drawings, such as those in Lascaux (south-western France), were not simply random markings or disconnected pictograms; they represented everything from warning rival tribes of a group's military might to a community's supremacy over beasts.

Equivalently, today's sophisticated perfume brand commercial offers iconic symbols of romanticised styles suggested by the fragrances.

LOGOS – MORE THAN PIXEL-DEEP

The word “logo” comes from the Greek word *logos*, which means “word” or “rational order.”

A brand logo is more about what it appears. In psychology, a concept called *transferable association* comes into play when an image associated with one school of thought is superimposed over another. The swastika, which came to signify Nazi rule, originally had a different meaning. The goddess Artemis is said to have had a female triangle with a swastika symbol drawn on her stomach. The Cross of Thor can also be found on ancient coins.

In Hinduism, the swastika represents health and prosperity. The revered Lord Ganesh wore the swastika on his right hand. Julius Caesar was the first to brand the pursuit of power and pleasure under the emblem of an eagle (both the Nazis and Americans later adopted the eagle).

When start-ups design new products or services, they often rely on convergence, where they merge two distinct concepts. For example, Uber converged GPS tracking with a taxi-hailing service. The original iPhone joined a phone with the Internet.

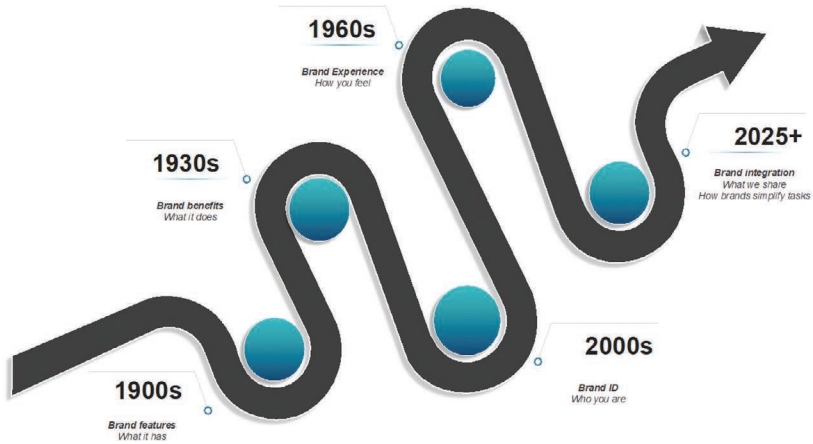
FROM HANDS OFF – TO CLICKS ON BRANDS

The word “brand” derives from the ancient *brandr*, meaning “to burn” (from the North Germanic language, Old Norse, which residents of Scandinavia spoke during the Viking Age until 1300). It referred to the practice of taking a hot iron rod to burnish cattle, slaves, timber, and crockery with the markings or symbols (brands) of the owner (a tradition that goes back to ancient Egypt).

Essentially, branding originally depicted ownership. The changeover from “This belongs to me, so hands off” to “This was made by me, so hands on” began in the 1800s. In the timeline of modern brand history, what started as a symbol of cattle ownership, and warning evolved into a symbol of the social, political, or commercial symbiotic relation between a provider, its stakeholders, competitors, witnesses, and users.

During the late 1890s, with the advent of railways and long-distance product distribution, branding was limited primarily to logos to identify manufacturers. (My book *Soul Traders* covers this in much greater detail.)

Figure 5.6
Brand evolution.



THE DIGITAL 8 PS

Initially, brands were centres of reassurance, reminding consumers of quality, availability, price, and service. Today, the brand is a hub of belief. Its spokes spread out in scores of directions incorporating:

Product

Including guarantees, customer support, content, apps, video – any online media that adds value and exemplifies differentiation.

Price

Involves pricing strategies for digital products or services. Factors such as perceived value, competition, and customer expectations determine digital pricing. Price also incorporates add-ons like price comparison tools.

Place

Involves where a product can be found (sites, apps, social media, virtual), the logistics involved in delivery, distribution channels, market coverage, etc.

Promotion

Embracing digital ads, SEO, influencer marketing, media relations, online PR, direct engagement, paid advertising, webinars, online events, live streams, and sales promotions can be measured, tested, and adapted throughout web channels.



People

Covering virtual assistance, tele-support teams, user-generated content, email support, chatlines, influencers and skilled (trained) social media response teams.



Process

Including ordering systems, stock support, subscription programmes, delivery partnerships, AI systems, customer relationship management (CRM), performance tracking, and user experiences.



Physical evidence

Comprising digital receipts, correspondence, podcasts, newsletters, branding, graphic design, video content, copywriting, and prompt engineering. Additionally, while digital marketing primarily operates in the virtual realm, there are still instances where physical evidence plays a role. This includes bricks-and-mortar (BAM) retail outlets, evolving into high-street showrooms.



Psychology

Throughout this book, I have aimed to show that psychology is a pivotal “P” in digital marketing.

Psychological insights are key to engaging consumers. For instance, Apple effectively uses the psychological principle of scarcity, creating a sense of urgency and exclusivity around its products. This approach taps into the consumer’s fear of missing out (FOMO), driving demand.

Similarly, Nike aligns its products with high-achieving athletes; it sells a product and a lifestyle, tapping into the consumer’s desire for self-improvement and achievement.

Amazon’s use of customer reviews exploits this principle. Seeing positive reviews from other buyers increases consumers’ confidence in purchasing.

Incorporating psychological principles in marketing helps create a more compelling narrative and ensures a more personalised and emotionally resonant experience for the consumer.

Together with data-driven AI, this shift towards a more psychologically informed approach represents a more nuanced and human-centric marketing model.

THE INTROJECTED BRAND ARTICLE (IBA)

As you read in Chapter 4, Freud demonstrated that irrational forces beyond conscious awareness help control human experience, thought and actions. Moreover, the mind

always carries out countless unconscious background tasks, including how people interpret their surroundings.

Freud suggested that at birth, an infant's disparate fragments gradually integrate (Shuttleworth, 2008). Scottish-born psychoanalyst Ronald Fairbairn was the first to set out an entire object relations theory of the personality. (NB: The word "object" didn't refer to a material article but people, parts of people, or *symbols* of one or the other.)

Unlike Freud, who believed the libido was aimed at pleasure, Fairbairn's libido theory suggested that the libido was, in fact, concerned with forming relationships. He suggested that the Ego, present at birth, is core to the symbolic beginning of the individual. In this sense, the libido is the Ego's activity.

Fairbairn described a person as the libidinal "I" whose main aim is to connect to another "I" libido. A person is primarily not pleasure-seeking (as Freud suggested) but object-seeking: the deepest motivation is for contact with others. The greatest anxiety is separation anxiety, the dread of loss of the other, upon whom both physical and psychological survival depends (Rubens, n.d.).

How does this relate to brands?

Object relations can be likened to a consumer's extension of the Self. A material brand icon acts as a conduit for a consumer's perceptions helping to add personal introjected meaning. It is a bridge to the outside world. For example, a smartwatch brand prompts images of being personally "trendy," "cutting-edge," and belonging to a social tribe.

I call such an object an introjected brand article (IBA). The IBA's perceptual depiction is frequently preceded or accompanied by the phantasy of psychological incorporation. Such phantasies are rooted in Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham's studies of the oral stage of libidinal development (when children first encounter objects, e.g., parental caretakers). This stage, which conveys meaning to articles, helps lay the groundwork for establishing future practical relationships with reality.

An IBA consistently delivers advertised expectations supported by a brand's commitment to its customers resulting in consumer assurance and confidence. But be warned, a consumer with *unrealistic* and unsubstantiated hope will never be fully satisfied by any brand product or service. They may even become frustrated, cynical, and critical, not just with a brand but themselves. Their inability to find perfection festers. Some will blame everything from poor family caretaking to political, commercial, and social conspiracies extending to media bias and commercial hype for their disappointment with life – and mostly themselves.

GESTALT AND BRAND DESIGN

Gestalt means "form," "shape," or "figure" in German. Gestalt psychology or gestaltism concerns higher-order cognitive processes relative to behaviourism.

Different shapes imply different meanings. For example, the Nike Swoosh suggests movement in merging curves ending in a sharp point.

Circular shapes project a positive *emotional message*. For example, a circular logo can indicate community, friendship, and relationships. Implying partnerships, *rings* often suggest *stability* and *endurance*.

Straight-edged shapes such as *squares* and *triangles* often suggest *stability* and *balance*. On the other hand, *solid lines* and precise shapes convey *strength* and *professionalism*.

Triangles can be associated with *power*, *science*, *religion*, or the *law*. The subconscious associates *vertical lines* with *masculinity*, *strength* and *aggression*, while *horizontal lines* suggest *community* and *calm*.

Jagged, *angular typefaces* may appear *assertive*.

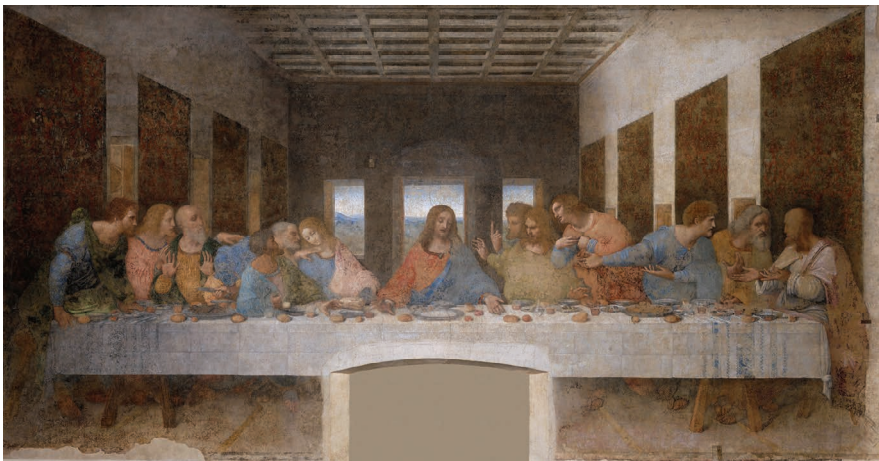
Soft, *rounded letters* give a *youthful* appeal, and curved typefaces or cursive scripts appeal to a classical *feminine* side. Conversely, strong, *bold lettering* has a *masculine* sharpness.

The mind unifies visual elements to form a whole, assigning significantly more meaning than the sum of its parts. In psychology, this is called “chunking,” a process by which small individual pieces of a set of information bind to create a meaningful unit. For example, the human face comprises eyes, ears, nose, mouth, etc. People arrange patterns out of similarly shaped objects, while objects that differ from the group become a focal point of the image. (Also see Prompt engineering, Chapter 2, I vs AI, part 4, page 119.)

In art, paths, rivers, roads, and rows of trees lead viewers to particular places. Similarly, lines of perspective, like paths, draw attention to a focal point in a composition. Take Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*. The painting’s viewer is gently pressed to look at one apostle and then another. The building in which the apostles are dining emphasises this effect by focusing the viewer on the central figure of Jesus.

Figure 5.7

Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*.



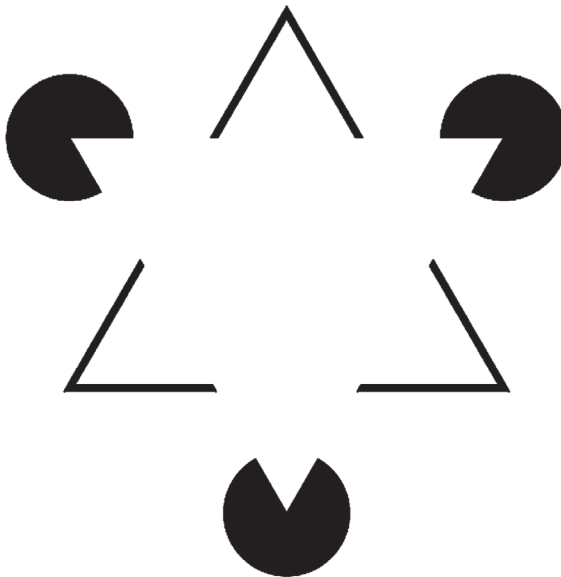
Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_(Leonardo))

McDonald's brand narrative design "chapters" include:

- Service
- Atmosphere
- Seating
- Uniforms
- Birthday parties
- Happy Meal toys.

McDonald's golden arches logo crowns a range of semiotic signifiers telling the brand's story. It follows "the sequence of cognition." This is when a logo is so pervasive that even if you break it down into its core components, each will carry cognitive significance. (The glue, binding its semiotic constituents, is the customer's experience.) (Also see Chapter 6, Modelling excellence.)

Figure 5.8
The Kanizsa Triangle.



Can you see what I see?

The Kanizsa Triangle is shown in Figure 5.8. The brain constructs the perception of a triangle. It effectively fills in the lines between the mouths of the "Pac-men," creating the illusion of a white triangle that seems brighter than the white background.

The subtle use of negative space encourages viewers to actively participate in interpreting the logo and uncover its hidden symbolism. This approach can enhance the logo's aesthetic appeal and make it stand out among competitors.

Additionally, the Kanizsa Triangle can be developed with a minimalist logo design. The simplicity of the illusion aligns with the principles of minimalism, where less is more. By using minimal elements and relying on negative space, designers can create visually striking logos that convey a strong message with minimal visual clutter.

COLOURS AND SMILES ---

Another take on brands exploiting sight and taste can be found in striped kinds of toothpaste. These are advertised to offer three distinctive health benefits:

-  One stripe for gums
-  One for fresh breath
-  One for enamel.

All three benefits could be delivered in toothpaste of one colour. The visual stripes encourage consumers to believe the added benefits – as seen with their own eyes – are worth a premium price. (This is an example of behavioural economics.)

HOW HITLER MADE PINK THE CORE GAY COMMUNITY COLOUR ---

Colourways are especially conspicuous signifiers. Take the tradition of pink for girls and blue for boys. The two colours were used interchangeably until World War II, when the Nazis used pink to denote homosexuals in concentration camps. By 1959, *The Times* newspaper reported, “A mother will allow her girl to wear blue, but daddy will never permit his son to wear pink.”

A 2006 study called “Impact of Colour on Marketing” (Singh, 2006) found that, depending on the product, up to 90% of spur-of-the-moment buying judgments can be based solely on a product's colour.

The 2012 study “Exciting Red and Competent Blue: The Importance of Colour in Marketing” (Labrecque & Milne, 2012) explains that colour affects buying intentions. White, for example, communicates Apple's approach to simple, accessible design. However, evidence suggests that colours best reflect a brand's “personality” beyond stereotypical colours associated with product categories.

For example, consider these brands – which colour best matches its personality?

Harley-Davidson

Ferrari

Google

Bing

Walmart

Disney World

Amazon

CNN

Meta

Zara.

Now think of their sectors: automotive, search, groceries, leisure, news, retail, news, IT, and fashion; which colours best match specific industry types?

Some digital marketers refer to colour wheels that match brands with colours and meaning.

 Red

Passion, excitement, and anger. It can signify importance and command attention.

 Orange

Playfulness, vitality, and friendliness. It is invigorating and evokes energy.

 Yellow

Happiness, youth, and optimism, but can also seem attention-grabbing or affordable.

 Green

Stability, prosperity, growth, and a connection to nature.

 Light blue

Tranquillity, trust, openness. It can also signify innocence.

 Dark blue

Professionalism, security, and formality. It is mature and trustworthy.

 Purple

Regal, creativity, and luxury.

 Pink

Femininity, youth and innocence.

 Brown

Rugged, earthy, old-fashioned look or mood.



White

Cleanliness, virtue, health, or simplicity.



Gray

Neutrality, classic, profound, mysterious, or mature.



Black

Edgy, luxurious, and modern.

However, this can quickly dissolve into a washed-out approach towards colour. There are simply too many variables affecting colour choice including culture and context. This (again) is why, often; it is not merely the colour you choose for your digital brand but the meaning you apply to the choice.

In 2013, research initially conducted by the University of Virginia on the effects of colour online found that consumers at auction sites, as reported in journals such as the *Journal for Consumer Research*, were more willing to bid for limited-availability products after being exposed to a red background instead of blue.

In contrast, when a product is readily available during negotiations, a red background decreases a consumer's eagerness to pay compared to blue (Bagchi & Cheema, 2013).

A year earlier, the Université de Bretagne-Sud in France found that 40% of male diners served by servers wearing red T-shirts rather than black, green, or yellow gave optional tips, as opposed to 33% of females (Jacob & Guéguen, 2014).

STATUS SYMBOLS

A logo's shape and material packaging offer consumers clues to judge a brand in terms of quality, price, sophistication, heritage, usability, convenience, social responsibility (e.g., recycled paper), and quantity.

Aggressive supermarket competition often ignites a retail price war between brands that incorporates battles of perceptions extending beyond price matches. That is why some low-cost supermarkets design or feature own-label packaging that could be easily mistaken as genuine premium-label products from more prestigious brands.

When it comes to semiotics, the packaging doesn't just indicate what's inside a box; it's a statement reflecting the person buying the box. In the case of budget supermarkets, that statement may include a sense of wisdom. (Also see *Judge me by the brand I carry*, page 220.)

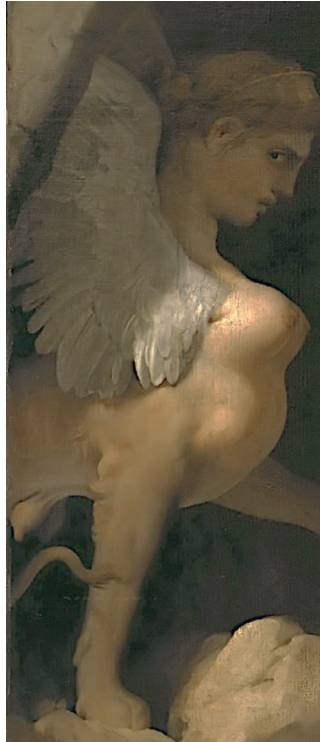
FREUD AND EGYPTIAN SYMBOLISM

Freud was a passionate antiquarian, amassing around 600 Egyptian items. He recognised artefacts as significant emblems that unlocked the psyche. (Freud was also fascinated by the Greco-Roman past and Egyptian symbolism.)

In Freud's theoretical works, Egypt held a double meaning. On the one hand, the polytheistic culture represented the ancient, pre-Oedipal world of infantile bisexuality and the intimate relationship between mother and child. For example, Freud associated the precarious female sexuality depicted in Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' painting of the torpedo-breasted Sphinx Oedipus, with this realm.

Figure 5.9

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' depiction of the torpedo-breasted Sphinx Oedipus.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipus_and_the_Sphinx

A SHOE IS JUST A SHOE UNTIL SOMEONE STEPS INTO IT – THEN IT GAINS MEANING

Just as Freud recognised the significance of symbols, Carl Jung developed the idea of archetypes. He viewed archetypes as universal, inherited patterns of thought or images that could be found in the collective unconscious of humankind (Jung & Francis, 2010).

Jung's archetypes shared themes and symbols that typically appeared in stories, myths, and dreams across different cultures and societies. Unlike Freud's focus on the individual's unconscious, Jung's theory emphasised the collective unconscious and the universality of

human experience. Jung's ideas on archetypes have profoundly impacted fields such as art, literature, and psychology and continue to be studied and debated today.

Many brands base modern customer personas on Jung's archetypes.

He listed 12:

Ruler (aka the boss, leader, aristocrat, king, queen, politician, role model, manager, or administrator)

Maxim: Power is everything.

Yearning: Control.

Goal: Create an affluent, flourishing community.

Strategy: Exercise control.

Greatest fear: Chaos, being defeated.

Weakness: Authoritarian, unable to delegate.

Talent: Responsibility, leadership.

Creator/artist (aka the artist, inventor, innovator, musician, writer, or dreamer)

Maxim: Imagine it to realise it.

Yearning: Create things of enduring value.

Goal: Realise a vision.

Greatest fear: Pedestrian vision.

Strategy: Develop artistic skills.

Task: Express vision.

Weakness: Perfectionism, poor solutions.

Talent: Imaginative.

The sage (aka the expert, scholar, mentor, thinker, philosopher, academic, researcher, thinker, planner, professional, or mentor)

Maxim: The truth will set you free.

Core: Find the truth.

Goal: Intelligently explore the world.

Biggest fear: Being duped.

Strategy: Seek out external information and self-knowledge.

Weakness: Evasive.

Talent: Wisdom, intelligence.

The innocent (aka the idealist, traditionalist, naïve, romantic, or dreamer)

Maxim: Free to be you and me.

Yearning: Reach paradise.

Goal: Be happy.

Greatest fear: Being punished for doing wrong.

Strategy: Do things right.

Weakness: Dull and naïve.

Talent: Faith and optimism.

Explorer (aka the seeker, iconoclast, wanderer, individualist, or pilgrim)

Maxim: I want to break free.

Yearning: Discover the world – discover yourself.

Goal: Realise a more authentic and fulfilling life.

Biggest fear: Being trapped by conformity and inner emptiness.

Strategy: Experience new things, and escape monotony.

Weakness: Aimless drifting.

Talent: Autonomy, ambition.

Rebel (aka the outlaw, revolutionary, misfit, or iconoclast)

Maxim: Rules can be broken.

Yearning: Revenge or revolution.

Goal: Rework what doesn't work.

Greatest fear: Becoming ineffectual.

Strategy: Disrupt, destroy, or amaze.

Weakness: Crossing over to the dark side.

Talent: Outrageousness, radical.

Hero (aka the warrior, crusader, rescuer, superhero, soldier, dragon slayer, winner, or team player)

Maxim: Where there's a will, there's a way.

Yearning: Be courageous.

Goal: Improve the world.

Greatest fear: Weakness, vulnerability.

Strategy: Be proficient and knowledgeable.

Weakness: Seeing too many causes.

Talent: Competence and courage.

Wizard (aka the magician, visionary, catalyst, inventor, charismatic leader, shaman, healer, or medicine man)

Maxim: Make things happen.

Yearning: Recognise the laws of the universe.

Goal: Realise dreams.

Greatest fear: Unintentional negative consequences.

Strategy: Be visionary.

Weakness: Potentially manipulative.

Talent: Finding win-win solutions.

Jester (aka the trickster, joker, or practical joker)

Maxim: You only live once.

Yearning: Live in the moment.

Goal: Lighten up the world.

Greatest fear: Being bored or boring others.

Strategy: Mischievous, be funny.

Weakness: Silliness, wasting time.

Talent: Joy.

Everyman (aka regular person next door, the realist, the good neighbour, or the silent majority)

Maxim: All men and women are equal.

Yearning: Connecting with others.

Goal: To belong.

Greatest fear: Being left out or standing out from the crowd.

Strategy: Remain grounded.

Weakness: Losing one's Self to blend in.

Talent: Realism, empathy, lack of pretence.

Lover (aka the partner, friend, intimate, enthusiast, sensualist, spouse, or team builder)

Maxim: You count.

Yearning: Intimacy and experience.

Goal: Create relationships.

Greatest fear: Being alone, unwanted, unloved.

Strategy: Become both emotionally and physically attractive.

Weakness: Outward-directed desire to please others at risk of losing own identity.

Talent: Passion, gratitude, appreciation, and commitment.

Caregiver (aka the saint, altruist, parent, helper, or supporter)

Maxim: Love your neighbour as yourself.

Yearning: Protect and care for others.

Goal: Help others.

Greatest fear: Selfishness and ingratitude.

Strategy: Be there for others.

Weakness: Martyrdom and being exploited.

Talent: Compassion, generosity.

HOW BRANDS ADAPT JUNG'S ARCHETYPES

The ruler

The ruler is typically controlling and firm, yet responsible and organised, creating order from the chaos.

Brand message: "Confidence is the best medicine."

Example brands include: Mercedes-Benz, Microsoft, British Airways, Rolls-Royce, Rolex, and Hugo Boss.

The creator

Imaginative and driven to build things of enduring meaning and value.

Brand message: "Think different."

Example brands include: Lego, Crayola, Adobe, Apple TV, Rode, ChatGPT, Midjourney, DALL-E, Canva, and Microsoft Designer.

The sage

The sage is the thoughtful mentor or advisor committed to helping the world gain deeper insight and wisdom.

Brand Message: “Vēritās liberābit vōs” (The truth will set you free).

Example brands include: Google, PBS, Philips, ED, BBC, Claude.ai, Discovery Channel, and the *Financial Times*.

The innocent

Exhibits happiness, goodness, optimism, safety, romance, and youth.

Brand message: “The glass is half full.”

Example brands include: Coca-Cola, Nintendo Wii, Dove, Innocent, Budweiser, Skittles, Old Spice, and M&Ms.

The explorer

Finds inspiration in travel, risk, discovery, and the thrill of new experiences.

Brand message: “Be.”

Example brands include: Jeep, Tinder, Red Bull, Ralph Lauren, Nike, and the Royal Albert Hall.

The rebel

Questions authority and breaks the rules; the rebel craves rebellion and revolution.

Brand message: “Rules are made to be broken.”

Example brands include: Virgin, Harley-Davidson, Diesel (jeans), Uber, Diesel, Greenpeace, Red Bull, NASA, Jeep, The North Face, Subaru, Rebdolls, and Apple TV.

The hero

On a mission to improve the world, the hero is courageous, bold, and inspirational.

Brand message: “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.”

Example brands include: Nike, BMW, Duracell, FedEx, Adidas, and the Royal Marines.

The wizard

Wishing to make dreams a reality, the magician is seen as visionary and spiritual.

Brand message: “Make the impossible possible.”

Example brands include: Apple, Disney, Absolut, Marvel, Sony, Dyson, L’Oréal, Jasper.ai, ChatGPT, and Beautiful.ai.

The jester

Brings joy to the world through humour and often likes to make some mischief.

Brand message: “If you’re not having fun, you’re doing it wrong.”

Example brands include: Old Spice, Ben & Jerry’s, M&Ms, Paddy Power, Budweiser, and Skittles.

The everyman

Seeks connections and belonging; is recognised as supportive, faithful, and down to earth.

Brand message: “Live together in harmony.”

Example brands include: IKEA, Home Depot, eBay, Tesco, British Red Cross, Lynx, Ford, and Levi’s.

The lover

Creates intimate moments and inspires love, passion, romance, and commitment.

Brand message: “Love makes the world go round.”

Example brands include: Victoria’s Secret, Chanel, Ourtime, JDate, Tinder, Håagen-Dazs, Godiva, Anne Summers, Alfa Romeo, and Valentino.

The caregiver

Protects and cares for others, is compassionate, nurturing, and generous.

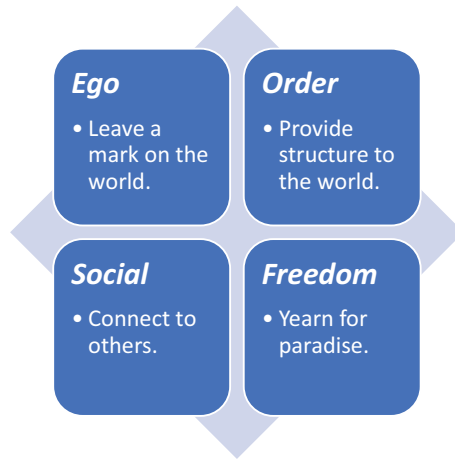
Brand message: “Treat others as yourself.”

Example brands include: Johnson & Johnson, British Red Cross, Campbell’s Soup, UNICEF, NHS, Pampers, and Volvo.

Brand archetypes seek to realise what Jung called “four cardinal orientations” (Yuan, 2022).

Figure 5.10

Jung's four cardinal orientations.



Brands can be segmented similarly. For example, typical sectors representing the idea of leaving an impression could include:

Inspiration

Fashion
Education
Parenting
Politics
Religion.

Order

Search
Reference
Marketing dashboards
Accountancy.

Social

Social media
Holidays
Community sites.

Freedom

Gaming platforms

Gender-fluid social platforms

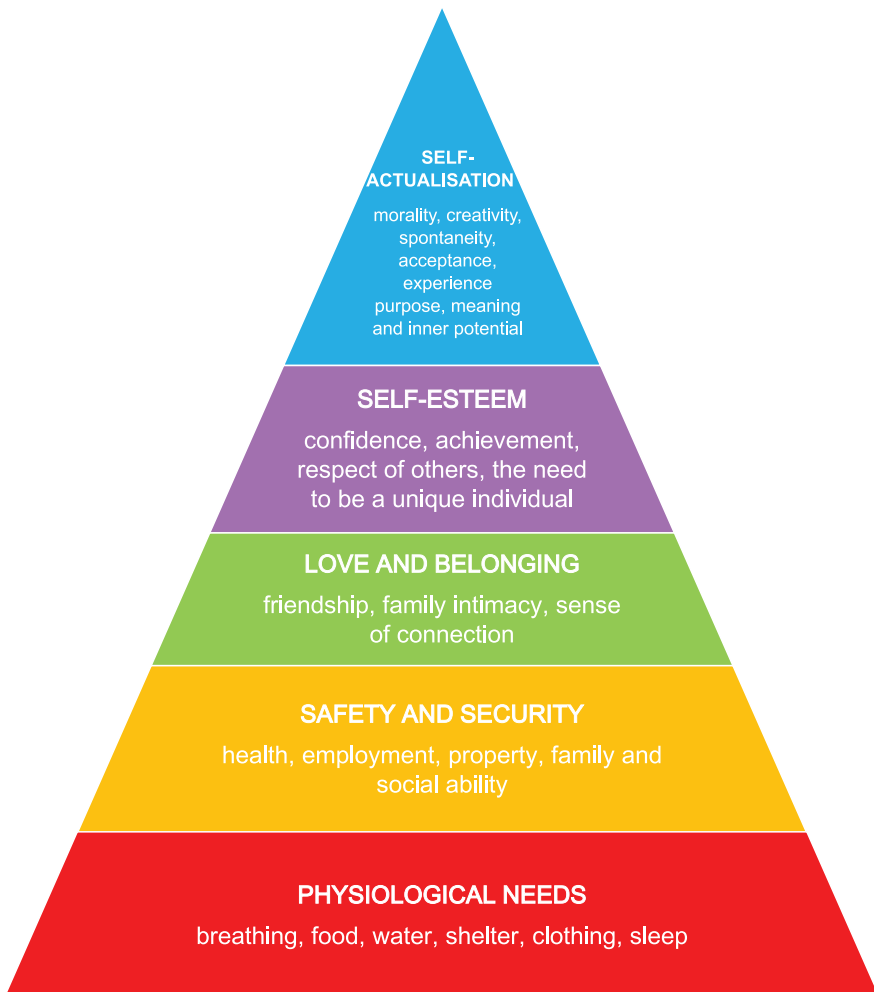
Automobile.

Pension brands

MR MASLOW

Figure 5.11

Maslow's classical hierarchy of needs.



Abraham Maslow was born to Soviet immigrants. He grew up to become a renowned professor of psychology at Brandeis University in Boston. Having earned his BA in 1930, MA in 1931, and PhD in 1934, Maslow published several ground-breaking works, including *The Organism* (1934) and *Motivation and Personality* (1970).

In *Motivation and Personality* (1970), Maslow introduced the original five-stage pyramidal hierarchy of needs. The model proposes that while most people progress up a logical order of needs, only a few attain the pinnacle of success (self-actualisation).

This notion of never being satisfied with one's circumstances has become a fundamental driving consideration in general marketing. Brands must continually offer more to satisfy consumers' constant desire for newness. However, some argue that constantly introducing new product iterations can lead to cannibalisation and become self-defeating. As consumers expect something new quickly, brands must constantly find innovative ways to reinvent old concepts. While innovation can keep pace when the economy is buoyant and consumers are plush, that elusive pinnacle of consumer self-actualisation remains seldom reached, especially when times take a turn for the worst.

Psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan developed the self-determination theory. It proposed that internal drives or intrinsic motivation stimulate growth and drive fulfilment.

The British psychoanalyst John Bowlby (1907–1990) highlights that intrinsic motivation focuses on the personal quests for knowledge, independence, and attachment. Once consumers achieve their goals, they strive to master their skills, with each new challenge building a more cohesive sense of Self. Mastery of the Self involves competence in mastering tasks and learning new skills, connection through a sense of belonging and attachment, and autonomy in controlling one's actions, ambitions, and purpose.

Positive encouragement and feedback can increase intrinsic motivation by making individuals feel more competent and empowered to develop their skills (Holmes, 2014b).

SCALING THE PYRAMID

Maslow's classical hierarchy of needs may turn out to be one of the biggest marketing cons in history, not because of Maslow but because of poor subsequent understanding of the deeper meaning of his pyramid.

For decades, countless training programmes and books taught that the original model suggested fundamental, primal instincts drive people. Brands were responsible for uplifting individuals to higher levels of sophistication.

The classically taught stages of the hierarchy of needs are as follows.

Physiological needs

At this primitive level, individuals prioritise basic needs such as oxygen, water, protein, vitamins, rest, and freedom to perform simple tasks. Maslow believed that a shortage of even one of these essentials would cause individuals to seek survival solutions.

In marketing, for example, a lack of vitamins might lead health-conscious consumers to seek foods like soya milk. By uncovering from first-hand data, vegans and natural produce consumers, brands can position soya products as the consumer's natural first choice.

Safety and security needs

This level includes individuals' need for security, order, law, stability, and remaining anxiety-free. However, fear of the unknown is never far away. The dread of everything from tooth decay to poor coding skills provides a fertile ground for digital brands seeking to exploit people's FOMO (fear of missing out). (Also see Chapter 5, *Brand kisses in the mind*, page 263.)

Social needs

After physiological and safety needs are met, individuals can pursue social needs. This involves seeking kinship, belonging, affection, and respect from various sources, such as work, social groups, family, and friends. Without these needs being met, individuals risk feeling loveless and lonely. The consumer recognises this and develops relationships in person and online through social media communities and work interactions (with such communities attracting brand sponsors).

Esteem needs

These needs are related to an individual's sense of achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-respect, and respect from others. A lack of self-esteem can lead to uncertainty.

Two levels of self-esteem

Maslow identified two classes of self-esteem: lower and higher.

The lower level of esteem involves respecting others, such as fame, glory, recognition, gratitude, dignity, pride, and authority.

Higher self-esteem involves self-respect, confidence, self-determination, and free will. Brands can offer products or services that promote a sense of self-worth and accomplishment. For example, luxury car brands often advertise their products by emphasising the prestige and status of owning their vehicles.

ESTEEM FOR YOU – PROFITS FOR ME

High-end luxury fashion brands often create two lines of clothing. One for the wealthy and the other for the working classes. The working-class lines often feature big, bold lettering and logos. The designs appeal to people wanting to show others they wear a stylish brand. Perhaps it works. It certainly ensures that wearing the fashion turns wannabe fashionistas into walking advertisements for the real high-ticket price line.

One fashion brand, Balenciaga, even produced a fashionable garbage bag called Trash Pouch. Available in blue, black, and white colour options, Balenciaga's Trash Pouch carried a \$1790 price tag. When premiering the Balenciaga collection, the brand's creative director said, "I couldn't miss an opportunity to make the most expensive trash bag in the world because who doesn't love a fashion scandal?" (DeNinno, 2022).

Similarly, fitness brands can promote their products by highlighting how they help individuals achieve their potential and reach their fitness goals. One brand, Fitness First, installed weighing machines in bus shelters. When people sat on a bench, waiting for the next bus, their weight was displayed on the shelter's poster. This played on their sense of urgency and guilt and touched on the seven deadly sins *pride* and *envy* to do something, so they joined the gym.

Basic self-actualisation needs (it's not the waking – it's the rising)

The American social psychologist Erich Fromm observed in his book *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud* (2017) that "we see the world as possessions and potential possessions. Success is how well we can sell ourselves, package ourselves and advertise our values. Our upbringing, education, fashion instincts; all are components of an advertisement that is our life."

Self-actualisation relates to an individual's desire to accomplish personal potential and self-fulfilment and seek personal growth and peak experiences.

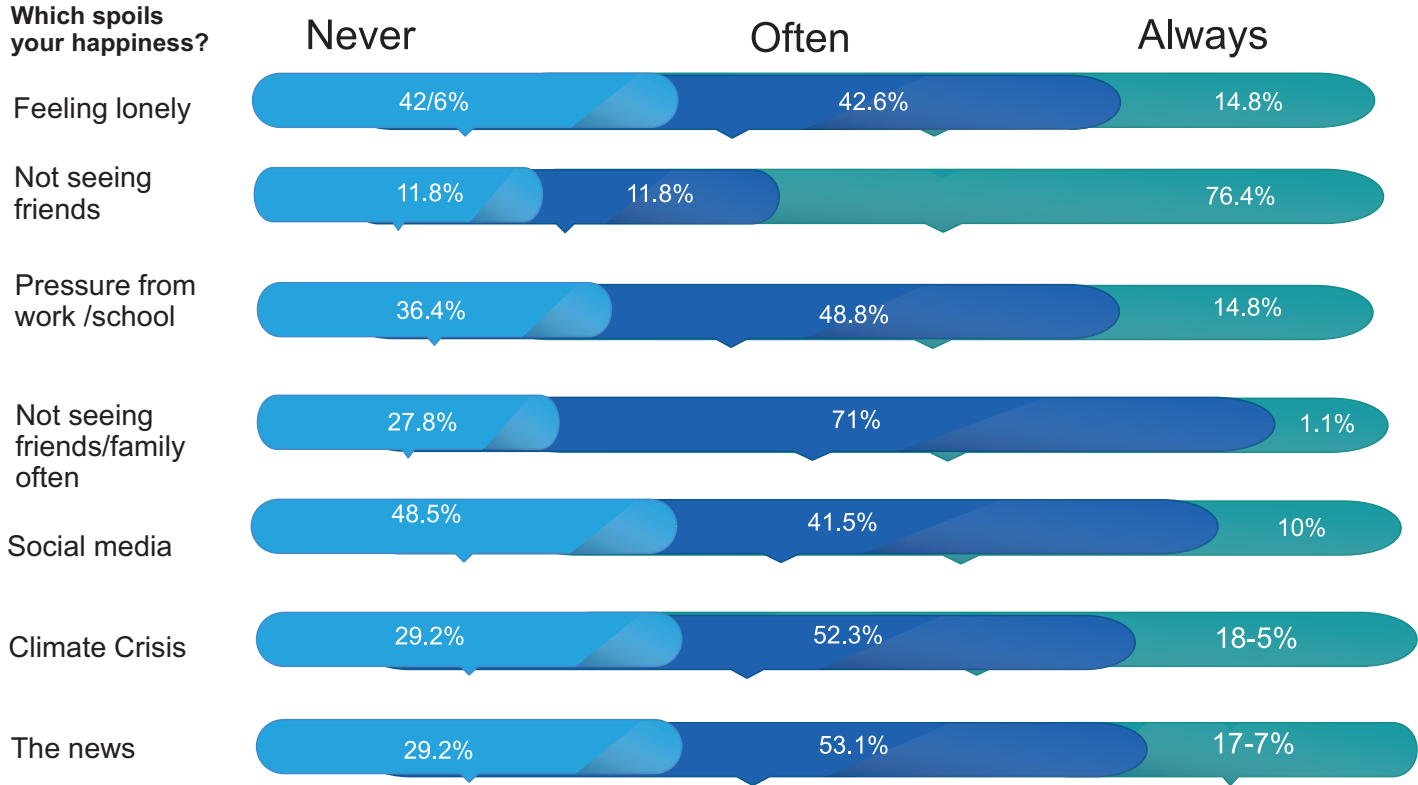
Maslow named the first four levels of his hierarchy "deficiency needs" or "D-needs." Gradually, the consumer associated a lack of owning brands, such as the latest washing machine or car, with *personal deficiency* (Wahome, 2022).

Brands tapping into this level of need offer products or services promoting personal growth and self-fulfilment. For example, a wellness brand can offer products or services that help people achieve goals and reach their full potential. As a result, companies can increase sales and build a loyal customer base.

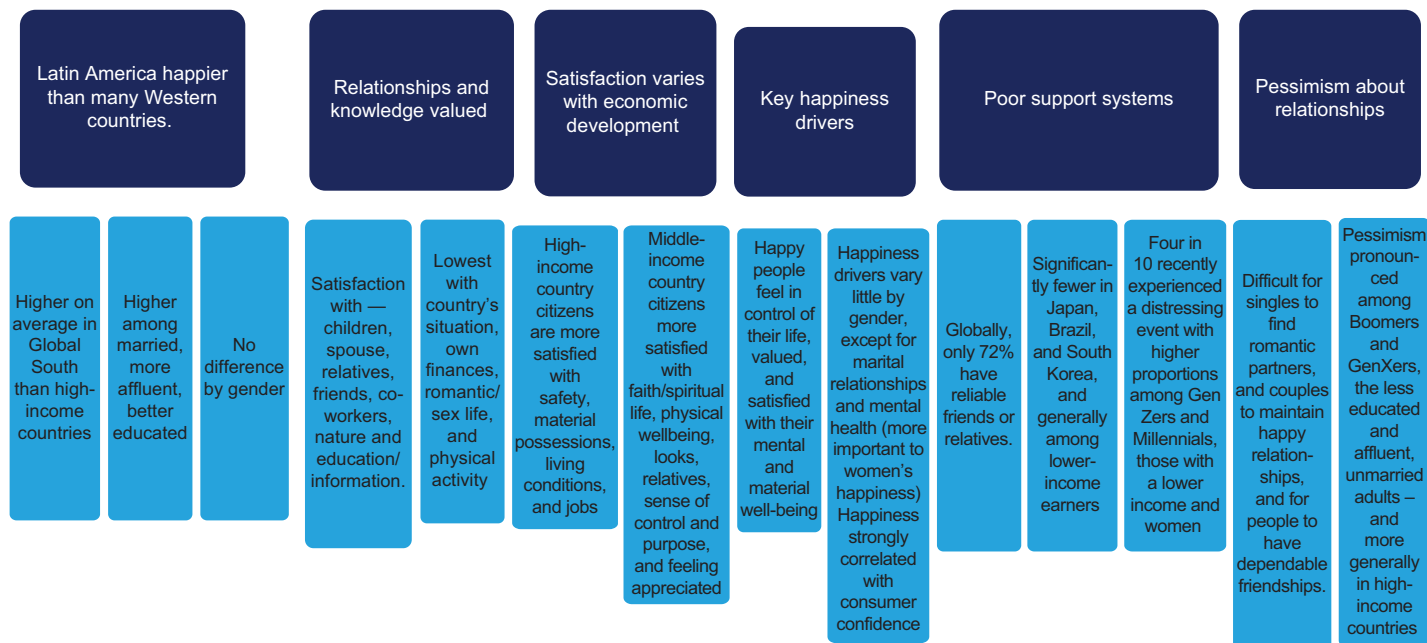
Psychologists and opinion poll companies often ask what makes people happy. Material possessions are typically included in responses but never top the polls.

Take Ipsos' survey, "HAPPINESS 2022 What makes people happy in the age of COVID-19" (a 30-country Global Advisor survey April 2022, www.ipsos.com/en/global-happiness-survey-march-2022).

Figure 5.12
Ipsos happiness survey.



Global Happiness 2023. 32-country global survey



Base: 22,508 online adults under the age of 75 across 32 countries, interviewed Dec. 22, 2022 – Jan.6, 2023
 The “Global Country Average” reflects the average result for all the countries and markets where the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result. The samples in Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, and the UAE are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. (Ipsos)

MASLOW AND DIGITAL BRANDS

On a superficial level, Maslow's hierarchy of needs offers valuable signposts for digital marketers looking to create effective branding strategies that meet consumers' needs.

Physiological needs

To meet basic physiological needs, online branding can promote products and services related to food, water, shelter, and other necessities. For example, an online grocery store can use branding that emphasises convenience and affordability.

Safety needs

Brands can promote safety and security through online branding by using language that emphasises trust and reliability, offering secure payment options, and promoting products or services that provide protection and safety.

Love and belonging needs

Online branding can address the need for belonging by creating a sense of community, promoting social connections, and focusing on relationships and emotional connections. One such example was Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" campaign. Combining the idea of personalised bottles of Coke with promoting a sense of community, the campaign was highly shareable, generating a lot of social media buzz and increasing brand awareness and engagement.

Esteem needs

Digital marketers can appeal to consumers' need for esteem by promoting products and services that provide recognition, status, and respect. This can include luxury brands highlighting exclusivity or products associated with success or achievement.

Deeper self-actualisation

Finally, it was presumed that online branding supports consumers in achieving self-actualisation by promoting products and services and encouraging personal growth, creativity, and self-expression. This includes promoting products or services associated with personal development or creative expression.

But now, perhaps, in our enlightened age, it is time to reveal a more profound explanation of Maslow's self-actualisation affecting both online and offline consumers.

Maslow stated that nobody ever fully self-actualises – certainly not by buying stuff alone. True self-actualisation only occurs if and when individuals self-actualise for *themselves* – irrespective of searching for superficially marketed external trinkets.

Take the legendary Holy Grail. Various traditions describe the Holy Grail as a cup, dish, or stone with miraculous healing powers, sometimes providing eternal youth or sustenance.

Some say that the Vatican stores it in hidden vaults. However, according to Carlos de Ayala, a medieval historian at Madrid University, “The Grail legend is a literary invention of the 12th century with no historical basis. You cannot search for something that does not exist.” And yet, throughout history, people have sought it. The real grail – offering hope and self-acceptance, is within everyone’s grasp (Klein, 2018).

Who is rich? Those who are happy with their lot.

(Ben Zoma Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 32a)

Humankind forever seeks the next big thing to attain self-actualisation, whether it’s the next smartphone version or a car model upgrade. Even when someone concludes that things may not be the Holy Grail of happiness, simply wishing for an alternative may not satisfy them.

Zen Buddhists are amongst many religious devotees who offer an alternative view. They accept that the ultimate need of self-actualisation through material ownership alone simply does not exist, nor does it need to exist to appease the Ego. Instead, and in fact, self-actualisation already exists. It can be attained even at the lowest level. It is a question of being happy with your lot. If hard work allows you to gain more stuff, great!

However, despite influencers and online snake oil salespeople, unless either very gullible or insecure, you are not defined purely by stuff. Stuff occupies space. When you die, contrary to the belief of ancient pharaohs, there will be no space for all your stuff. And yet, whilst alive, space is everywhere, including your Mindspace. (According to quantum mechanics, there is even space, perhaps entirely different worlds between spaces – see Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I.)

What you fill your space with will always be more satisfying than a physical object alone. You – or your combined Self-including id, Ego, and Superego – are not a branded object. Whereas brands, incorporating signs, symbols, and signifiers, will spend millions trying to convince you that they are more than objects, but entities with human personality and character.

You, on the other hand – are the genuine being.

Capitalism creates a prison of needs. It entraps people into believing that things alone will compensate them for existential discontent. Perhaps a relief from dealing with

a loveless relationship, or being too fat, too thin, or maybe being stuck in a dead-end job. Of course, it's wonderful and invariably rightly deserved to have things. After all, people work hard to enjoy them. However, the more we obsessively collect, the harder it becomes to escape the cage we were encouraged to build around ourselves from a young age.

On the other hand, if people opted out from working to buy stuff – which, of course, could be for practical needs, not just emotional, they could end up homeless or, at best broke – both creating more misery.

They could work even harder and for longer hours to buy stuff to compensate themselves for working even more. But that, too, will create more misery. (With the current cost of living crisis, for many, it's more likely to work harder simply to survive).

Perhaps they could work less, letting AI do the grunt of the work, leaving them wondering what to do with all their extra purposeless spare time – or (as I teach) they could find fresh ways to adapt to changing times.

By understanding Maslow's hierarchy of needs and how it relates to online branding, digital marketers can design effective branding strategies that resonate with consumers meeting their current physical needs and future greater aspirations.

MASLOW VS PINKER

Steven Pinker's book *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* suggests that innate traits are hardwired into our genes and significantly shape our personalities and behaviours. He said the blank slate theory, which posits that humans are born without any predispositions, is invalid (Pinker, 2003).

According to Pinker, accepting innate human nature invariably leads to a better understanding of ourselves and the world. The big five personality traits, or the five-factor model of personality, provide a valuable framework for understanding the various dimensions of personality and how intrinsic factors alongside environmental influences and experiences shape these. (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

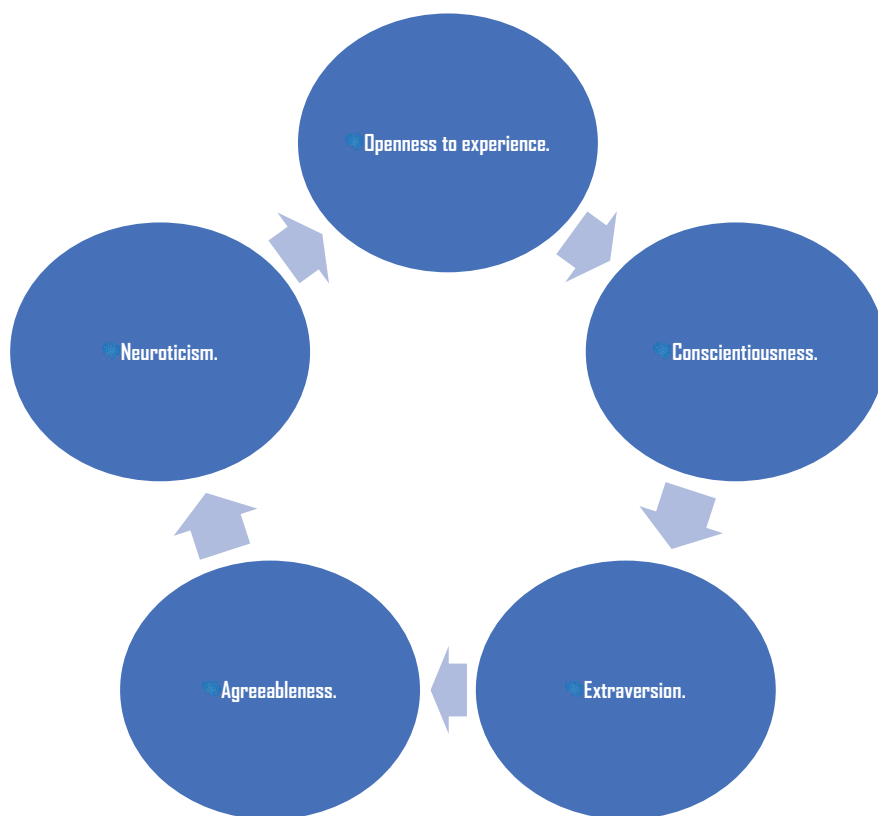
Openness to experience

This refers to a person's imagination, creativity, and openness to new ideas and experiences. People scoring high grades in openness tend to be curious and adventurous, while those who score lower may be more conventional.

Conscientiousness

This reflects one's sense of responsibility, organisation, and goal-directed behaviour. For example, highly conscientious people tend to be reliable, hardworking, and diligent, while those scoring lower may be more impulsive.

Figure 5.13
Five-factor model.



Extraversion

This concerns an individual's sociability, outgoingness, and assertiveness. For example, extroverts feel energised by being around people. They tend to be talkative and sociable, while introverts may be quieter and reserved. (Also see page, 263, Social needs.)

Agreeableness

This measures an individual's ability to get along with others, accommodate different perspectives, and maintain good interpersonal relationships. For example, people who score high in agreeableness tend to be empathetic and compassionate, while those who score lower may be more critical and argumentative.

Neuroticism

This refers to a person's emotional stability, anxiety, and reactivity to stress. For example, high scorers are often anxious, moody, and prone to negative emotional states, while people who score low tend to be more resilient and emotionally stable.

The five-factor model has been used to predict various outcomes, including job performance, relationship satisfaction, and mental health (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The framework allows digital marketers to gain greater insight into customers' needs and preferences and tailor marketing efforts accordingly.

For example, consumers scoring high in openness may be more receptive to innovative or experimental products.

Conscientious individuals may be motivated by *clear and achievable goals*.

Extraverted customers may be attracted to *group activities* tied to the product or brand.

Agreeable customers may be more likely to *recommend* the brand to others.

To target consumers scoring high in *neuroticism*, consider *customising* your marketing efforts to address their potential anxieties and concerns. For example, provide *additional assurance*, design a user-friendly website, or create a relaxed experiential environment that eases potential worries.

By catering to customers' personalities, your advertising messages, product design, and positioning strategies campaigns can more closely align with specific customer needs and values. (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

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- Pinker, S. (2002). *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*. Viking.

Maslow vs Pinker: side by side

-  The big five model is a descriptive model of personality traits, explaining how personality can be described using five broad dimensions.
-  Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a prescriptive model which describes the different needs that motivate human behaviour in order of priority.

Level of analysis

The big five model operates individually, describing broad, stable personality traits that persist across situations. In contrast, Maslow's hierarchy of needs works at

individual and societal levels, providing a framework for understanding the motivations and needs of groups and societies.

Components

The big five model consists of five broad dimensions of personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). In contrast, Maslow's hierarchy of needs comprises five universal stages of human needs that motivate behaviour (physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation).

Focus

The big five model focuses on individual differences in personality traits, while Maslow's hierarchy of needs focuses on universal human needs across genders, cultures, and ages.

Application

The five factor model can help generate consumer profiles and develop targeted marketing strategies that resonate with different personality types.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used to understand customers' underlying motivations and needs.

While the five factor model provides a way to understand individual differences in personality traits, Maslow's hierarchy of needs offers a prescriptive framework for understanding human needs and motivations.

OTHER CONTENDERS TO MASLOW

The brand personality model

The brand personality model explains how brand personality can influence consumer behaviour. According to the model, consumers perceive brands as similar to human personalities. The five dimensions of brand personality are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness.

An example of the brand personality model in marketing can be seen in advertising luxury cars such as BMW, where an advertisement focuses on the sophistication and competence of the brand, so appealing to consumers valuing luxury and high status.

THE MEANS-END CHAIN MODEL

The means-end chain model explains how consumers link product attributes to personal values. According to the model, consumers make product choices based on their values and how using the product will help them achieve their desired ends.

Figure 5.14
Brand personality typical aspects.

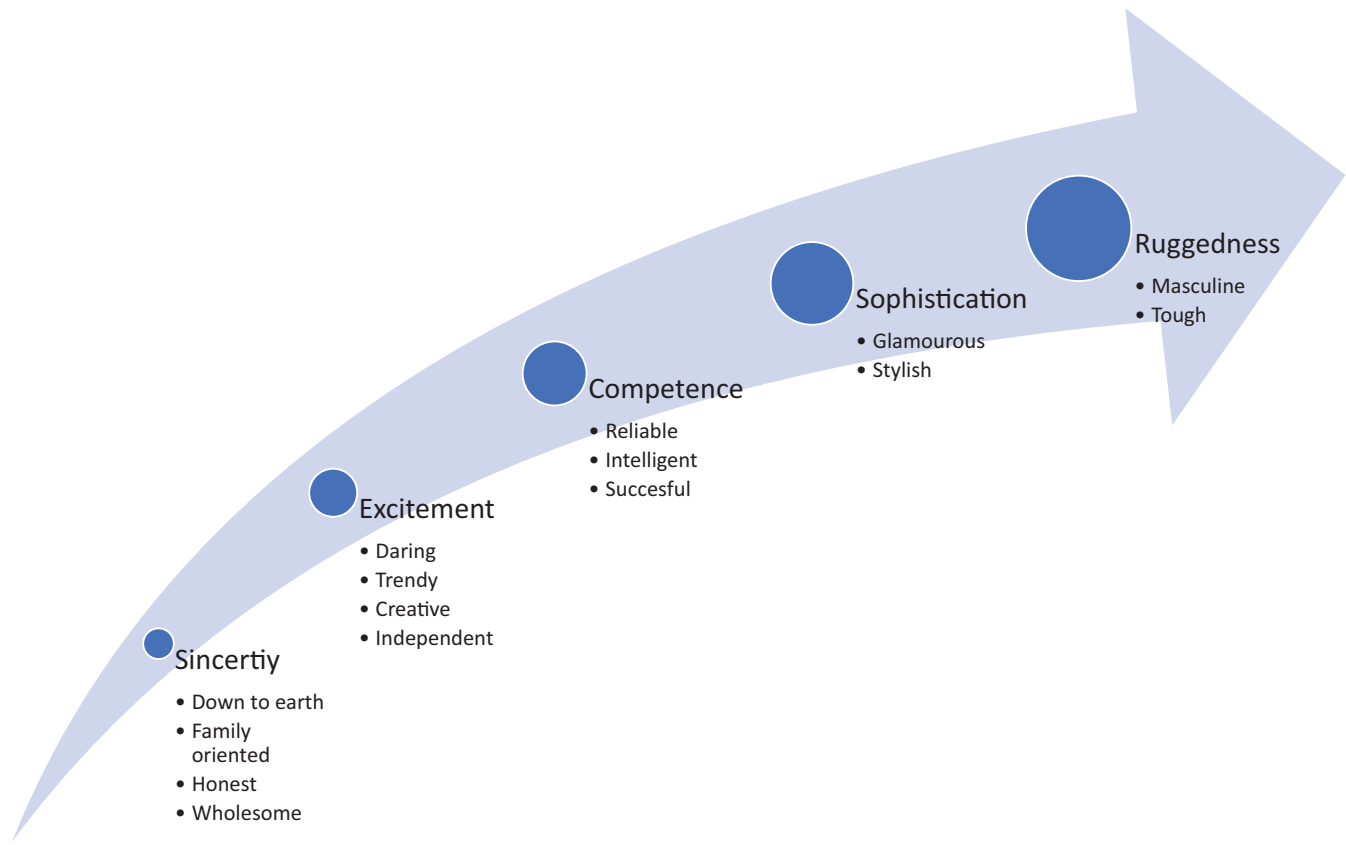
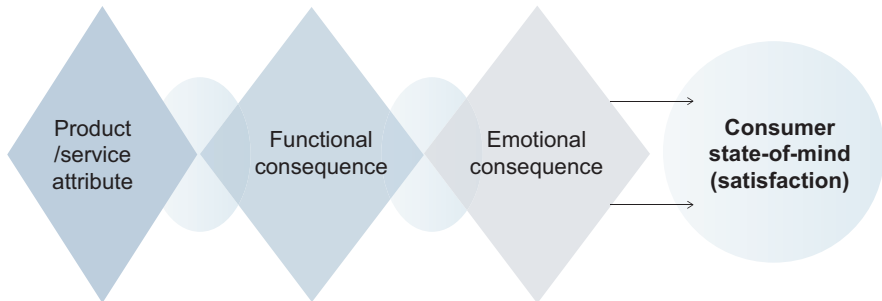


Figure 5.15

Means-end chain model.



An example of the means-end chain model can be seen in the advertising of Nike shoes. Their advertising may focus on the product's attributes, such as comfort and durability, to appeal to consumers who value fitness and an active lifestyle.

THE CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS MODEL

The consumer decision-making process explains how consumers make purchase decisions. The model consists of several stages, as follows.

Problem recognition

The consumer recognises a need or a problem requiring a solution. As a digital marketer, aim to create awareness, positioning your brand as providing the ideal solution to the consumer's problem.

For example, if you promote a fitness app, you can create content highlighting the importance of staying fit and the challenges people face in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Information search

Once the consumer identifies the problem, they search for further relevant information. Ensure your brand is discoverable through search engine optimisation (SEO), paid advertising, and content marketing.

Evaluation of alternatives

The consumer compares different products or services to make an informed decision. Provide detailed and persuasive information about your offering. This can be through product reviews, testimonials, and comparisons on your website or social media channels. You can also work with influencers.

Purchase decision

Now the consumer is ready to make a purchase. Make the final step seamless and friction-free. Ensure your website has a user-friendly interface, clear call-to-action buttons, and secure payment options. Personalised offers, discounts, or limited-time promotions also help seal the deal.

Post-purchase evaluation

After the purchase, the consumer evaluates their decision. This stage is crucial for building customer loyalty and generating positive word-of-mouth. Engage through social media exchanges such as online surveys to gather feedback and address concerns. Encouraging customers to leave reviews or testimonials avoids buyer's remorse (see Chapter 7, Brain sells, page 324) and helps build trust.

MASLOW REVISITED - GABAY'S SIX-STAGE PYRAMIDAL HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Over the years, I have gradually supplemented Maslow's original hierarchy of needs with an updated set of marketing steps which help ensure the "needs" are relevant for the times.

Brand narrative

The first step concerns the brand narrative. This covers what journalists and digital public relations professionals come to know as the "WWWWW+H." (Who, What, Where, When, Why and How). Content needs to be succinct and substantiated. The "Why" is the summation of all the "WWWWW+H" questions. *Why* gives the consumer the bottom-line reason to buy.

Brand congruency

This shows your digital brand is relevant, empathetic, and valuable.

Brand trust

This shows that your product and its auxiliary support can be trusted to perform as expected reliably. This is upheld by examples proving trust through:

Consistency.

A consistent brand voice and messaging resonates with a target audience, supported by availability, quality, and customer feedback.

Compassion.

Supported by social listening, relevant upgrades, and corporate social responsibility.



Communication

Distribute timely case studies and examples.



Competence

Offer guarantees, experience, knowledge, reviews, and testimonials.



Innovation

Successful brands stay up to date with the latest marketing trends and technologies. Often such brands are willing to try new things, providing campaigns are seen to add value, and their work gets noticed (for the right reasons).

Five ways to prove social sustainability

Honest and transparent

The bottle of a soft drink brand is 100% recyclable (if you don't count the caps and labels).

A banana brand says bananas are carbon neutral. This creates the impression that the brand has tried reducing its climate emissions. However, today's consumers are savvy. They discover emissions are offset, not decreased.

Commitment to sustainability

The French supermarket chain Carrefour's "Act for Food" campaign points out that it sells local products from 700 Belgian producers, and all products come from a 40 km radius around the supermarkets.

Demonstrate urgency

When a company shows action, its credibility increases.

The Nespresso "Do you recycle with us?" campaign explains what happens when someone returns their cups and how they are recycled and reused to make new cups. "Trust Nespresso to recycle."

Create shared value

A 2015 Adidas x Parley campaign showed plastic sea waste turned into yarn for trainers, reducing plastic ocean debris (<https://parley.tv/initiatives/adidasxparley>).

Der teufel steckt im detail. (The devil is in the details).

(German proverb)

IKEA offered 16 practical tips on taking care of the climate daily.

Brand belief

People don't buy what you make, they invest in what you encourage them to believe.

This level exemplifies the role a brand's mission and vision take in product or service development, reassuring consumers that benefits and features are imbued with brand character, values, and promise, delivering believable authenticity. (Also see Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I.)

Brand faith

Faith is taking the first step – even when you don't see the whole staircase.

—Marilyn Monroe

Ask any soldier following orders to run blindly into a battlefield; faith is even more powerful than belief. For example, when someone has faith in a religion, no matter how ardent or seemingly logical any arguments against it may be, faith reinforces loyalty, which underpins confidence.

Brand hope

Hope in the future overpowers fear of the present. Today's digital marketer ensures that brands represent causes and principles with which consumers can identify, including kindness, empathy, understanding, tolerance, and responsibility for people, partners, and the planet.

Hope is the emotional a brand's *emotional pull*. It goes beyond turning features into benefits. It turns benefits into emotional promises. Investing in those possibilities is the consumer's ultimate speculation.

Figure 5.16

Gabay's six-stage pyramidal hierarchy of needs.



For example, consumers buy Red Bull energy drinks beyond quenching their thirsts because the brand story offers adrenaline and excitement.

-  Mercedes doesn't just market cars; they sell hope of exclusivity and status.
-  Dove self-care products sell the hope of confidence and self-esteem.
-  Lego is not just selling building blocks but imagination and fantasy.
-  Nespresso are not just selling coffee; they sell the hope of indulgence and pleasure.
-  Burberry is not just selling clothes; they sell the hope of style and sophistication.

Without goodwill that looks further ahead than immediate short-term gains, lacking sustenance, hope often fades and dies.

The story of anticipation is a narrative we will experience in the next section.

BRAND KISSES IN THE MIND: OVERVIEW

Tips

-  Use repetition to shape buying behaviour and embed a “memory trace.”
-  Exploit the seven deadly sins for brand communications.
-  Improve user experience (UX) by reducing brand friction and pain points.
-  Avoid extraneous cognitive loading so consumers understand and retain important messages.
-  Build strong customer and channel relationships through compelling corporate imaging and consumer-centric content.

At a glance

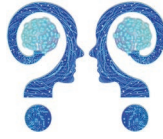
-  Dr Robert Ley, head of the German Labour Front (DAF), published the Nazi movement's official brand guidelines.
-  Brand purpose is essential to marketers, but consumers often ignore it.
-  The more accustomed a consumer is to a product or service, the stronger the brand/consumer relationship.
-  Online platforms serve different channels to reinforce a brand message.
-  Drive theory attributes basic motives to simple states.
-  Emotions are essential in understanding consumer behaviour.
-  Cognitive load refers to the working memory required to perform a task.
-  Long-term memory allows for complex reasoning and better decision-making.

- 🧠 Online disinhibition occurs when users don't follow normal social protocol.
- 🧠 Benign disinhibition involves social sharing and acts of kindness, while ithyphallic disinhibition involves darker aspects of the web.
- 🧠 Transferable association in psychology plays a role in branding and logo design, as seen in the history of the swastika and the eagle symbol.
- 🧠 Brands initially reassured consumers of quality, availability, price, and service.
- 🧠 Today, brands act as a hub of belief with various aspects.
- 🧠 Object relations theory: individuals are primarily object-seeking rather than pleasure-seeking.
- 🧠 Brands act as an extension of the consumer's Self.
- 🧠 Gestalt psychology focuses on higher-order cognitive processes.
- 🧠 "Chunking" helps the mind unify visual elements.
- 🧠 The Kanizsa Triangle often informs logo design.
- 🧠 Packaging influences consumer perception of a brand.
- 🧠 Semiotics in packaging makes a statement about the person buying the product.
- 🧠 Freud saw Egyptian artefacts as symbolically significant.
- 🧠 Carl Jung developed the idea of archetypes.
- 🧠 Abraham Maslow introduced the hierarchy of needs.
- 🧠 Self-determination theory focuses on intrinsic motivation.
- 🧠 Maslow's hierarchy includes physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualisation needs.
- 🧠 Online branding can address various levels of Maslow's hierarchy.
- 🧠 Successful brands focus on communication, competence, innovation, and inspiring consumer belief.
- 🧠 Gabay's six-stage pyramidal hierarchy of needs is
 - Brand narrative
 - Congruency
 - Trust
 - Belief
 - Faith
 - Hope.

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6 Modelling excellence

By planning and implementing a marketing content channel designed for the savvy 21st-century consumer, you can discover new approaches to turning consumer wants into needs.

In this section, you will discover alternative models to classic marketing formulae like AIDA. You'll also learn how to harness techniques such as gamification.

Finally, you can build consistent, trusted connections that translate one-off interactions into long-term relationships.

Start with the customer experience, then work backwards to the technology.

—Steve Jobs

PEOPLE CONNECT – IT'S IN THEIR DNA

In the movie, *Tár*, Cate Blanchett plays the role of Lydia Tár, a renowned orchestra conductor who loses her crown as the queen of her profession. In one scene, unsatisfied with a rehearsal performance, she asks the orchestra, “What does this music honestly mean to you? Do you recognise the composer’s story and yearn to be part of the journey?” Tár had neatly summed up the deeper meaning of brand storytelling.

Today’s successful brands echo the quote from E. M. Forster’s *Howard’s End*: “Only connect.” Ultimately, that is what the psychological aspect is about – *connection*.

Digital marketers can apply psychology to draw consumers into narratives designed to imbue a sense of connection through building awareness, explaining practical concepts, and encouraging people to realise their ambitions.

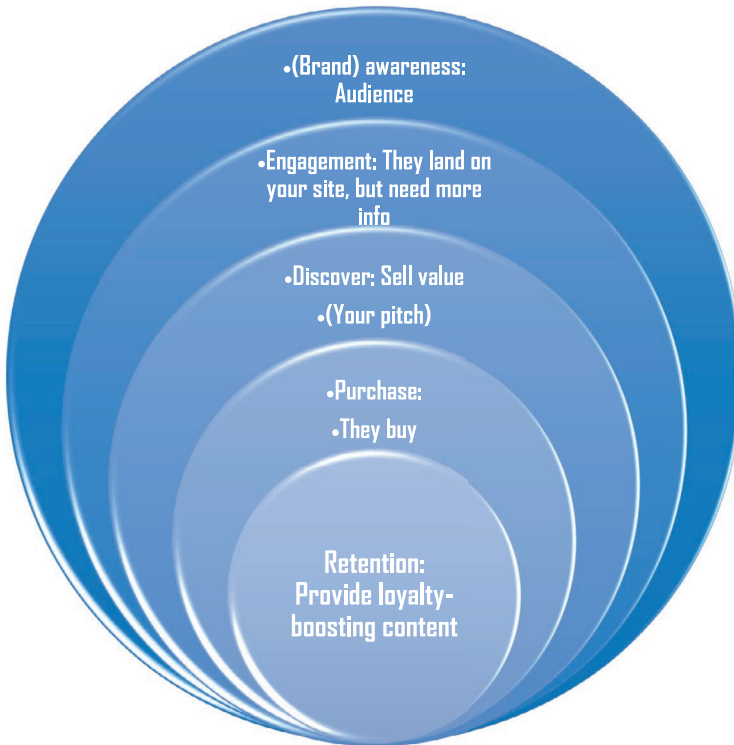
ENTER THE FUNNELS OF LOVE

Each touchpoint on a consumer journey invites a brand and consumer to get to know each other better.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003409793-7

Figure 6.1

The traditional marketing funnel.



Sales and marketing funnels follow the journey through different stages. However, without planning by an astute marketer, only a tiny fraction will finally convert to paying customers.

The sales funnel is typically informed by four main stages of the *AIDA* model as initially conceived by the American advertising and sales pioneer E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898 (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019a).

A clear call to action makes it easy for the customer to buy. This could include a link to a purchase page, a discount code, or a sign-up form. (Also see Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind, page 275.)

△ AWARENESS (ATTENTION)

Consumers look for satisfaction. Research could include product pages, landing pages, videos, blog posts, and social media posts. For example, a video may show how a product benefits the consumer. The idea is to make people eager to progress to the second stage of the funnel.

Figure 6.2

Classic AIDA model.



VORSPRUNG DURCH TECHNIK

Traditionally, *awareness* was a cornerstone of branding. Sir John Hegarty, one of advertising's most respected grandees, explains: "One of the fundamental things about the value of a brand is that it is made by people *who will never buy it*" (Shaw, 2023).

There's been lost faith in broadcast advertising with the rise of digital media. Facebook and Google targeted ads to likely buyers. However, branding needs broader reach.

"A brand's real power lies in people knowing about it – its fame," Sir John explains. Does traditional branding still work with fragmented attention across personalised feeds?

Despite clever algorithms, brands must get more famous and add value; only broadcast achieves this at scale. Talking to the BBC, Sir John said brand fame shapes decisions, allowing premium pricing. National campaigns resonate widely vs social media's limited groups.

You have brilliant options today but you must understand branding principles; practices change. Brands should rely less on algorithms and more on creative human sparks of memorable, conversational ads.

It takes brilliance to capture the mood with an ad that sparks global conversation. Creating popular ads is a dying art. Marketing forgot brand fame's fundamental importance.

Sir John was responsible for some of the best-loved advertising campaigns in the annals of outstanding British advertising. He was a founding partner of Saatchi & Saatchi and co-founder of Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH). At the time of writing, he is the creative director of The Garage Soho.

Thanks to digital marketing and breakthroughs like AI, today one of Sir John's most successful slogans, "*Vorsprung durch Technik*," takes on new significance. (*Vorsprung durch Technik* translates as "Progress through technology").

△ INTEREST

Potential customers learn more about your product or service via case studies, customer testimonials, or product reviews.

△ DESIRE

In life, it's not always about logic. Consumers are not robots. Decisions are based on both rational and sensitive criteria. Product or "patronage motivation" can be broadly rationalised into two categories: emotional and logical.

Emotional product motivation

Visceral consumers are driven by sentiment rather than logic or reason.

Typical emotional motives driving purchases:

The desire for status or recognition

Many consumers are motivated by the desire to feel important or to be recognised by others. They may be influenced by products that are associated with luxury, exclusivity, or social status.

Sense of belonging

Consumers often seek products or experiences that help them feel connected to a group or community. This can be leveraged through branding, advertising, or packaging that appeals to a specific identity or lifestyle.

Personal well-being

Consumers may wish to enhance their self-esteem, happiness, or overall quality of life.

Emotional gratification

"When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping." Consumers may buy comforting or pleasurable items. In this way, purchases become a displacement activity.

Nostalgia or sentimentality

Consumers often make purchases based on sentimental value or nostalgia. Products or experiences that evoke positive memories from the past can trigger emotional attachments, leading to a purchase.

Social proof

People may be more likely to buy a product or service when they see others doing the same. Social proof through customer reviews, testimonials, endorsements, and statistics spotlight the popularity or success of the product/service. According to the SEO group Bright Local, consumers read around ten reviews before they trust a business enough to make a purchase. So, for example, a restaurant could regularly post photos of happy diners on sites like Instagram. (Also see Chapter 9, Scan, page 405.)

Rational product motivation

Often, the consumer is driven by logic or reasoning. They conduct extensive research before placing an order. (According to GE Capital Retail Bank, 2023, 81% of retail shoppers conduct online research before buying; Saleslion.io, 2019.)

The potential customer weighs up the pros and cons of your product or service. Therefore, highlight features and benefits, showing how your brand solves real customer problems (pain points). You could consider demonstrations, comparison charts, or special offers – for example, discounted pricing.

Scarcity

The fear of missing out (FOMO) is compelling. Scarcity drives customers to act. Time-limited offers, exclusive deals, countdown timers, and limited-edition products create a sense of scarcity, encouraging customers to purchase before an opportunity is gone.

Authority

Customers are likelier to have faith in and buy from brands or individuals they believe are experts or authorities. You can show expertise through thought leadership content, certifications, awards, or endorsements from industry leaders; all build trust and increase the likelihood of a purchase.

ANCHORING

As a powerful cognitive bias, anchoring can significantly impact decision-making. The technique was first described by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman in their

1974 paper, “Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases” (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

Tversky and Kahneman noticed that, when making decisions, people rely heavily on the first information they receive. This initial information, or *anchor*, creates a frame of reference that influences subsequent judgments. This can significantly impact any final decision, even if the anchor is more of a decoy. Using anchoring is about leveraging the fact that people use benchmarks to evaluate options, no matter how arbitrary those anchors may be.

For example, marketers may place an image at the top of a landing page (or even before visitors arrive) representing their product or service to influence buyers’ perceptions about its value before they’ve read any detailed landing page copy!

Consumers instinctively rely on initial information as a pivotal reference point for decision-making. Through repetition, they become conditioned into believing certain things without questioning them. Increasingly, they have neither the time nor energy to consider all available options, so they fall back on an anchor point.

Salespeople often anchor by presenting an initial high price or premium offer. This helps make subsequent recommendations appear more reasonable or appealing.

Similarly, you can use the anchoring effect to make a product or service appear superior by presenting it as the “best” or “top-rated” in its category.

Also see Chapters 6, Modelling excellence and 7, Brain sells.

Figure 6.3

Positive anchoring – smallest number first.

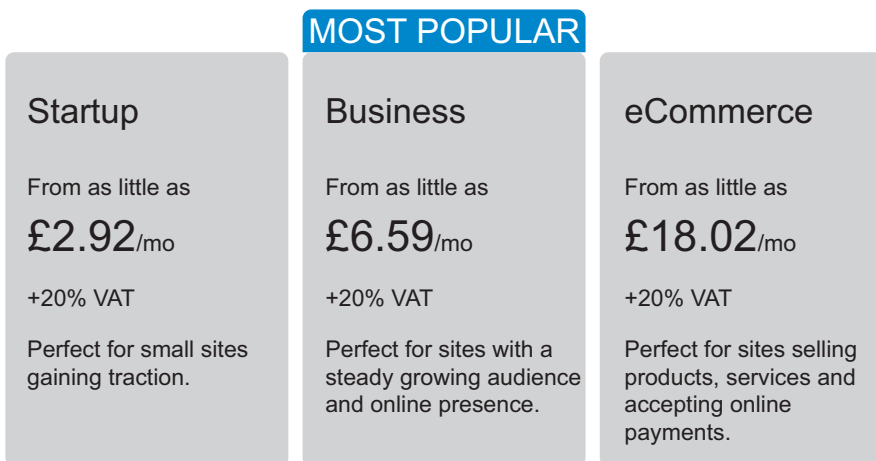
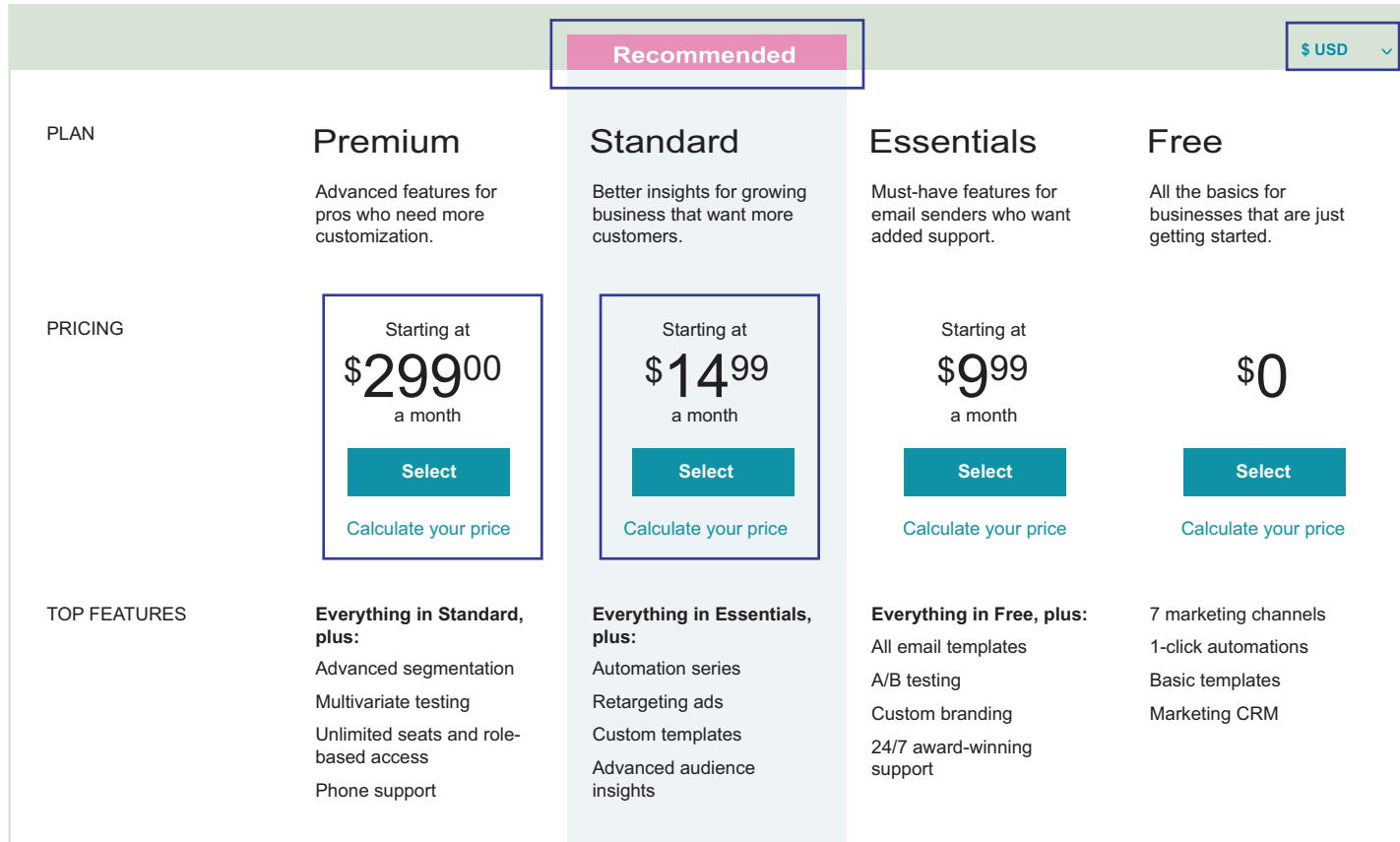


Figure 6.4

Negative anchoring – largest number first.



Δ ACTION

The bottom of the funnel: a clear call to action makes it easy for the customer to purchase the product or service. For example, you could include a link to a purchase page, a discount code, or a sign-up form.

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER!

I have no special talents; I am only passionately curious.

—Albert Einstein (Philosiblog, 2012)

A study called “The wick in the candle of learning: Epistemic curiosity activates reward circuitry and enhances memory,” published in 2009 (Kang et al.), involved an experiment with 19 Caltech undergrads. They were placed into a brain scanner and asked 40 trivia questions.

After reading each question, the undergrads silently guessed their answers.

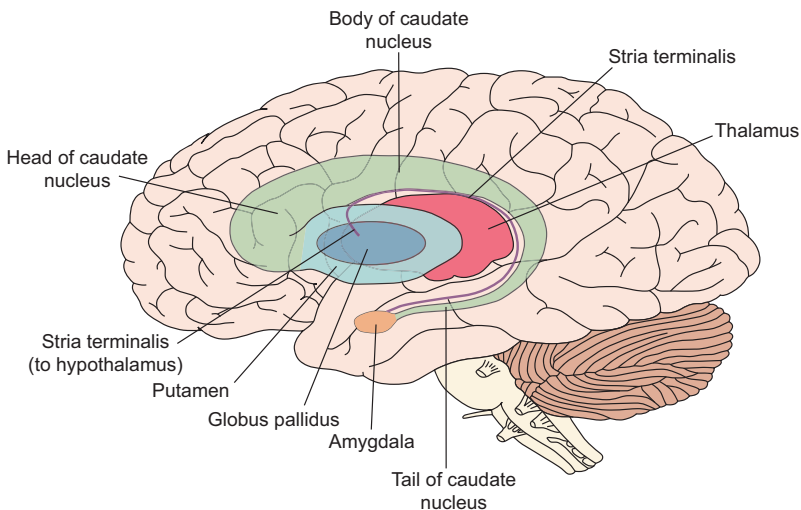
Moments after the question was asked, there was a noticeable increase in brain activity throughout the left caudate, the prefrontal cortex, and the parahippocampal gyri. (Also see Chapter 1, *Atlas of your mind*, page 63.)

The caudate appeared to sit at the intersection of new knowledge and positive emotions. (The caudate is closely linked to various parts of the dopamine reward pathway. It is activated by several types of learning that involve feedback, for example, promotions involving a quiz element such as a competition or other forms of gamification).

A consumer’s desire for abstract information begins as a dopaminergic craving (incidentally established in the same primal path that responds to sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll).

Figure 6.5

The caudate’s head, body, and tail.



Curiosity follows an inverted U-shaped curve; people are most curious when they don't know much about a subject. This supports the information gap theory of curiosity, first developed in the early '90s by George Loewenstein of Carnegie Mellon (Kashdan et al., 2018). He said that curiosity appears when people feel a gap "between what they know and what they want to know." This gap has emotional consequences: a metaphorical itch akin to a mosquito bite on the brain. So, people look for new knowledge that helps "scratch" the itch.

An engaging marketing headline, or clickbait copy, stimulates the itch. A small amount of knowledge piques curiosity and primes the hunger for knowledge. (Much as an olfactory or visual stimulus can trigger a craving for food.) In the case of clickbait, the itch may become so irritating that it is scratched red-raw.

THE ZEIGARNIK EFFECT

You just keep me hanging on . . .

Russian psychologist Bluma Zeigarnik coined the "Zeigarnik effect" (Wikipedia, 2022). She was fascinated by how food servers could remember lengthy orders and match each meal to the right customer. She noticed the information vanished from the server's mind after delivering the meal.

The theory was that a yet-to-be-filled meal order created a state of "incompleteness" in the server's mind, who could not let go of the information until a resolution had been made on the meal delivery.

When things are incomplete . . .

. . . consumers feel uncomfortable and seek a resolution.

That's why some of the highest-selling books and top-rating TV shows, such as soaps, often feature The Zeigarnik effect. (One of the ingredients to making a page-turner is that each chapter ends with a "Zeigarnik hook," making the reader want to continue reading to find a resolution).

Curiosity is one of the reactions to the Zeigarnik effect. However, the Zeigarnik effect may also give rise to other emotions, such as uncertainty, discomfort, and confusion.

WHAT DID AN MIT INSTRUCTOR ADD TO A BASEBALL BAT TO REDUCE ITS AIR DRAG BY 60%?*

*Answer at the end of this section.

The CNN headline news bulletins often end half-hour news programmes and introductions to a sports report with a trivia question. The sense of incompleteness that the question poses is enough to keep viewers watching to discover the answer.

The technique, while effective, can backfire if it:

- 🧠 Is overused
- 🧠 Doesn't live up to the expectations left by the Zeigarnik hook (otherwise known as a let-down).

As you will see, when writing a script for social media or a product video, your story may follow the PAS formula, attracting a potential consumer's attention and then keeping the consumer searching for a satisfying conclusion.

You can draw the consumer more deeply into the sales process by peppering hooks throughout the sales copy or revealing small bits of the puzzle.

PAS formula applied to the classic Star Wars plot

Problem

Luke Skywalker receives a message to save a princess.

Agitation

He has to locate the princess whilst fighting Darth Vader.

Solution

Destroy the Death Star and rescue the princess.

(Don't overuse the Zeigarnik effect or promise something you cannot ultimately deliver. Otherwise, the consumer will feel they have wasted their time.)

AIDA – A PSYCHO-CENTRIC APPROACH

Digital marketers often adapt AIDA by considering a psycho-centric path that converts consumers from passive onlookers to active online buyers.

There are three specific routes:

- 🧠 AIDCA
- 🧠 2u/5i
- 🧠 ATA

As with AIDA, in *AIDCA*:

- 🧠 The first A is attention.
- 🧠 I remains Interest.
- 🧠 However, D is Direction.
- 🧠 C is Cause.
- 🧠 The final A is Action.

AIDCA: DIRECTION

The consumer's attention is piqued. Curiosity sets in. Which *direction* should they take? For example, how will they use a product such as a smartwatch? For telling the time and monitoring health? For timekeeping and team communications? . . . *Direction* is about prioritising needs according to the individual's purpose. It is usually motivated by one of two things:

Intrinsic motivation

Decisions are based on individual wants and needs. Intrinsic motivation is driven by personal interest, curiosity, or a desire for personal growth. The rewards are often intangible, such as a feeling of accomplishment or satisfaction.

Focus on creating attractive, informative, engaging content which taps into intrinsic motivation. This can include educational blog posts, entertaining social media content, or inspiring videos.

Extrinsic motivation

Decisions are based on external factors, such as rewards, recognition, a sense of obligation or a fear of negative consequences.

Offer incentives like discounts, free products, or loyalty programs to exploit extrinsic motivation. Social proof, such as customer testimonials or reviews, elucidates your benefits.

EMIC VS ETIC

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are related to the principles of EMIC and ETIC. These are key concepts in anthropology, folkloristic, and the social and behavioural sciences.

EMIC refers to an insider's perspective and looks at a particular culture's beliefs, values, and practices from the perspective of those living within that culture.

This approach is essential for understanding the nuances of a culture and the way that its members think and behave.

For example, in-group members like family, tribe, co-workers, and fellow worshipers may be treated more considerately than out-group members like enemies, strangers, non-believers, and outsiders.

McDonald's uses culturally specific EMIC advertising. For example, in India, chicken replaces beef.

In marked contrast, ETIC is the study of consumer behaviour by adopting the perspective of an outsider looking in. This approach focuses on a culture's observable behaviours and practices. It aims to understand them in terms of functional or evolutionary significance. So, for example, if an anthropologist studied a nomadic tribe, their resulting case study would be written from an ETIC standpoint (assuming they did not assimilate into the culture they were observing).

Starbucks is an example of a brand using ETIC advertising universally; everyone loves coffee!

LEARN AND GROW

Jean Liedloff first coined the “experience continuum theory” in her 1975 book *The Continuum Concept* (Liedloff, 2004b).

She said people have an innate set of expectations (the continuum). Our evolution as a species has prepared us for peak physical, mental, and emotional development and adaptability. So, the more we learn, the more we develop.

By taking a nuanced approach to understanding different cultures, you can create EMIC/ETIC communication strategies that are sensitive, effective, and respectful of the richness of human experiences.

AIDCA: C IS FOR CAUSE

Today’s consumers demand more than features; from Millennials to Gen Z to impressionable Gen Alpha, people may become disillusioned with unsubstantiated brand promises, so instead, they seek out authentic causes. Such causes need to avoid stereotypical consumer assumptions.

For example, it was often assumed that most Gen Zs were more interested in preserving the planet than self-preservation. But, in the mid-2020s, wars and economic collapses changed priorities. Self-preservation took precedence. For many, money for food, housing, and daily living became more important.

A severe cost-of-living crisis eventually led to a leading economist from the Bank of England warning that people would simply have to “accept being poor” for the long term.

“You can’t beat death, but you can beat death in life, sometimes.”

—Charles Bukowski, American poet, novelist, and short story writer; at 49 he quit his job as a postman to become a full-time author (Bukowski, 2008)

For Gen Z and probably their successors, Gen Alpha, saying “f*** it” to unhappy circumstances doesn’t mean giving up; it means choosing life.

According to consultant psychiatrist Dr James Arkell, “People feel like they need to disrupt something because they need something in their lives to change” (Piskorz, 2023).

Gen Z faces intense pressure to work longer hours for inadequate compensation. Disillusioned with dead-end jobs, the impact of technology, the prospect of living in their parents’ home for longer, and the high cost of living, many opt to join what *Business Insider* dubbed “Generation F***-It.” They seek a more fulfilling alternative to the disconnected grind of the rat race.

2U/5I MODEL

Combine AIDA and AIDCA into a detailed consumer and brand interaction process outlined in a model that I call *2u-5i*.

Unfamiliarity

The consumer is unaware of your brand or product.

Understanding

Through promotions like banner ads, the consumer becomes aware that your brand offer may be relevant.

Initiation

The consumer takes ownership of their relationship with the brand (e.g., by signing up for a newsletter or listening to a podcast).

Inquiry

The consumer increasingly invests more deeply into a brand eco-sphere (e.g., buys products regularly, buys brand-verified add-on accessories or apps).

Identity

The American philosopher, historian, and psychologist William James (1842–1910) defined identity as “the total of all that a person can call his own.” In other words, your identity is everything about yourself, including your personality traits and values, beliefs, and opinions. It’s what makes you.

Part of what makes you is being honest with yourself and others and about who you are. (Also see Chapter 3, *Me, myself, and I*.)

Integrity

Honesty vs integrity

Honesty is about telling the truth. However, integrity requires more than just honesty; it calls for consistency across all areas of your life (words and actions).

Morality vs integrity

Morality refers to beliefs about right/wrong behaviour, while integrity involves acting on those beliefs regardless of external pressures or consequences.

Integration

Socialisation occurs when a consumer conforms to cultural norms while interacting with others (family members, friends). This helps develop a sense of self-identity, allowing access to different social groups based on shared interests or commonalities.

The 2u/5i model helps you think about your audience as individuals rather than as a group.

For example, you're creating an infographic about the marketing benefits of Instagram. Instead of focusing on what generally makes Instagram different from other social networks (e.g., its photo-sharing capabilities), focus on deeper aspects that help each person within the audience achieve their goals.

As another example, show how a particular camera lens would be useful for a wildlife photographer.

Figure 6.6
2u/5i model.

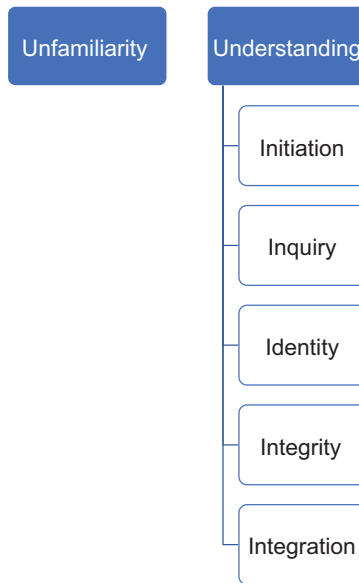


Figure 6.7
Attention, thinking, action (ATA) model.



ATTENTION

This addresses a consumer's primal state. Will the message appeal to a consumer's mood? (Happy, sad, bored, curious . . .)

In the primal state, basic desires relate to survival, sustenance, and reproduction. Consumers notice the "Three Fs": faces, food, and fornication.

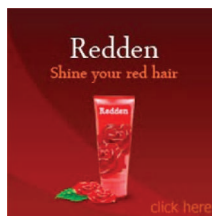
FACE ON OR OFF?

When it comes to "faces," consumers have a deep desire for social interaction and connection with others. Therefore, marketing strategies emphasising personal relationships, human connection, and peer validation are likely to be effective.

A research paper titled "The Influence of Banner Advertisements on Attention and Memory: Human Faces with Averted Gaze Can Enhance Advertising Effectiveness" considered whether human faces within banner advertisements could focus attention (Sajjacholapunt & Ball, 2014).

An experiment tracked participants' eye movements when shown banners which featured no face, a face with a mutual gaze or one whose gaze was averted.

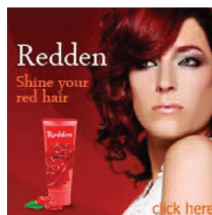
Figure 6.8



Fabricated vertical banner advertisement for "Redden" - *no face*.



Fabricated vertical banner advertisement for "Redden" - *direct mutual gaze*.



Fabricated vertical banner advertisement for "Redden" - *averted gaze condition*.

Source: Sajjacholapunt and Ball (2014). Reproduced under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY)).

Banner adverts featuring faces with an averted gaze garnered more attention to the marketing copy and the product. People tended to remember the brand and advertising message as well.

On the other hand, when banners featured faces with mutual gazes, the focus was drawn more to the face region than to the text or product, diminishing any recall of the brand and marketing message.

“PLEASE, SIR, MAY I HAVE SOME MORE?” (CHARLES DICKENS)

A study titled “Differential Neural Reward Reactivity in Response to Food Advertising Medium in Children” (Yeum et al., 2023) found that food adverts activate brain regions related to motivation and reward. The responses were linked to eating behaviours and future weight gain. The research compared brain responses to ads, videos, and static images. Children aged 9–12 completed functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), looking at food and non-food video and static ads.

Analysis suggested that the right and left hemispheres of the amygdala and insula and the right hemisphere of the substantia nigra showed significantly higher responses to the video ad.

From the whole-brain analysis, 21 clusters showed significant differential responses between food and brain sectors, including the precuneus, middle temporal gyrus, superior temporal gyrus, and inferior frontal gyrus.

Figure 6.9

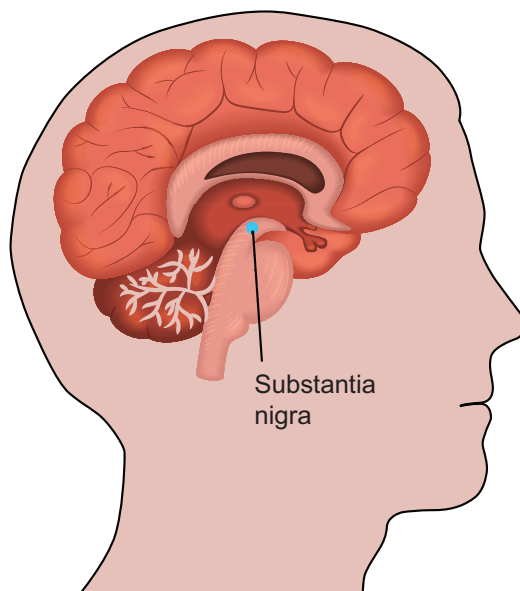
Precuneus.



Source: Frank Gaillard, Radiopaedia.org, adaptation of illustration from Sobotta's *Textbook and Atlas of Human Anatomy* (1908), in the public domain.

The study concluded that food advertising affects children's neural reward response to food cues. Significant neural activity in the regions involved in the dopaminergic pathways in response to food cues was related to greater consumption (Lawrence et al., 2015; Ha et al., 2020; Gearhardt et al., 2020) and weight gain (Stice et al., 2010; Demos et al., 2012; Gearhardt et al., 2014).

Figure 6.10
Substantia nigra.



THE FIRST PRIMAL INSTINCT

Subtle marketing strategies targeting the sex drive instinct are essential in improving consumer engagement and loyalty.

In 2012 AMMAR, the Argentinean union for sex workers, retained the Buenos Aires advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather (O&M) to produce a series of corner posters in the style of the artist Banksy. The art made the point that 86% of working prostitutes were sadly also mothers.

Seen from one direction, the posters showed a prostitute promoting her services. Turn the corner, and it turned out she was a mother.

In 2013, the Brazilian Ministry of Health held focus group workshops with the country's sex professionals. As a result, the Department of STDs, AIDS, and Viral Hepatitis produced a campaign to decrease discrimination against prostitutes whilst helping celebrate the country's "International Day of the Prostitute" (partly aligned with France's International Whores' Day on June 2nd).

DOES SEX STILL SELL?

In 1871, centuries after the Lupanar of Pompeii (See Forethought), Pearl Tobacco featured an image of a naked maiden on its packaging to help sell products. Other cigarette companies jumped in, with Duke & Sons inserting trading cards of sexually provocative starlets into each cigarette pack.

In 1936, Woodbury Soap became one of the first companies to use nude photography in advertisements.

In the '70s, '80s, and '90s, fashion companies like Calvin Klein, Dolce & Gabbana, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Diesel were amongst many focusing on sex appeal.

As you read in Chapter 7, thanks in part to online anonymity, sex is big business. The revenue from the global porn industry is \$100 billion. The income from the US porn industry is \$13 billion (Redbible.com, 2023). In context, the NFL generated \$17.19 billion in 2021. Netflix generated revenue of \$29.7 billion in 2021 ("The real issue with the 'new drug,'" 2023; Kolmar, 2023; Cook, 2022).

In categories like health, beauty, and clothing, sexual content can heighten impulse purchases. It can also create controversy.

In 2018, sex, sexuality, and nudity accounted for 36.39% of complaints to Ad Standards – Australia's governing agency for advertising (Ad Standards, 2018).

Compared to 1871 and Pearl Tobacco's campaign, today's audiences are more sensitive to sexual innuendo. As a result, inauthentic behaviours are soon exposed as little more than crude clickbait.

Poorly executed sexual associations in advertisements perpetuate false or inappropriate gender stereotypes. Men are shown as being sexually aggressive and women as passive.

Gen Z and Gen Alpha have different perspectives on using sexual innuendo in marketing than previous generations. Sex may be marketed as self-acceptance, confidence, body positivity and choosing to express yourself – as you – irrespective of gender bias.

Sex sells only when you're explicitly selling sex or when sex is aligned with something more meaningful than an old British holiday postcard portrayal of "sauciness." So, the strategy must be carefully aimed at the right target audience and from a context-appropriate brand.

Astute marketing campaigns resonate with consumers at a deep, emotional level. Digital marketers can connect with consumers by tapping primal instincts, generating more sales and greater brand loyalty.

FORGET USPS – TIME FOR PODS

Scrap that too . . . introducing the ESP

I regret to inform you, dear reader, that the unique selling point is dead. Sadly, it completed suicide. The trigger was that too many marketers casually featured the word "unique" in advertising, making consumers impervious to it.

USP has been replaced by POD(s) – point(s) of difference(s), also adapted as prompts of difference(s) when prompt engineering. These highlight specific product or service benefits for particular audiences.

However, features alone lack human verve. This is where emotional sales propositions (ESPs) step in.

For example:

USP

The mug features an extra-large handle.

PROBLEM

Mugs featuring extra-large handles are not suitable for everyone.

SOLUTION – POD

Eric, a night-duty watchman, has large hands, so he prefers a mug with extra-large handles.

SPECIFIC EMOTIONAL SUPPORT (ESP)

Eric, a night duty watchman, frequently experiences chills during his shift; holding the mug with its extra-large handle evokes the comforting warmth of his grandson's hand.

Appealing to emotions

-  You can construct a sense of empathy between the consumer and the brand.
-  Consumers shown relatable ESPs may become more receptive to marketing messages and more likely to engage with a brand over the long term.
-  Emotional appeals can be more effective than rational appeals in persuading consumers to act, such as when purchasing or signing up for a service.
-  Emotional cues make your brand stand out.
-  Create an emotional connection, and your audience becomes likelier to remember you.
-  Positive emotions like joy, excitement, and affection suggest that your brand is warm, friendly, and approachable.

DON'T ASK WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE CAN DO FOR YOU, BUT WHAT CAN YOUR BRAND DO FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Pedigree, the dog food brand, asked Brazilians to adopt a dog. The campaign featured images of sad dogs who could end up in the dog pound if they remained unadopted.

The ads were overexposed. As a result, they no longer connected with consumers (Bezerra et al., 2021; see Chapter 7, Brain sells, page 332, Mere exposure effect.)

Pedigree then conducted research showing that 5.8% of Brazilians were depressed. In response, they produced a commercial that presented dogs as a remedy for depression. Pedigree understood that the greatest motivation for dog ownership was for lonely and downhearted customers to receive love (from the dog) – a self-centred act. The commercial triggered a wave of dog adoption throughout Brazil.

With this in mind, consider pitching messages reinforcing that the consumer makes judgement calls and choices. (Remember that your selected list of options will always determine any presented choices.)

Is your message surprising? How about your headline or imagery, perhaps created with AI programs like Adobe Firefly?

Figure 6.11

AI interpretation of a cat writing digital content, created with Midjourney.



Points of parity (POP)

In addition to points of difference, consumers look for reassurance that a brand offers fundamental features. For example, a sandwich shop would be expected to provide a bag for take-out sandwiches.

Cocktail party effect – remember my name

Upon hearing their names, people tend to sit up and pay attention. The cocktail party effect refers to the brain's ability to focus on and selectively filter out specific pieces of auditory information, even despite background noise or competing stimuli.

The term *cocktail party effect* was coined by Colin Cherry, a British scientist, in the late 1950s. He described how people focus on a single conversation in a noisy environment, such as a crowded party (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019a).

The effect illustrates the brain's remarkable ability to process and prioritise relevant information, even in complex and noisy environments.

Through a combination of top down (goal directed) and bottom up (stimulus driven), the cocktail effect uses attention mechanisms that filter out irrelevant instructions so a person can focus on relevant information.

The effect highlights the need for brands to stand out and capture consumers' attention amidst the noise and clutter of competing messages.

The reverse cocktail party effect

Starbucks famously asks customers their names when taking orders for drinks. The words are written on cups to identify which drink belongs to which customer. However, Starbucks tested misspelling names. The effect was that customers posted pictures of their cups labelled with misspelt names. The photos went viral, providing Starbucks with free publicity.

THE PROPINQUITY EFFECT

Proximity increases the likelihood of a customer buying by creating a sense of familiarity and confidence.

The more a consumer positively interacts with a brand, the better their understanding, and thanks to data-driven technology, the more relevant a brand appears.

Here's a comprehensive guide to creating a sense of community and engagement for your brand.

Simplicity

A study by the University of California, Los Angeles ("The Mental Representation of Brand Names: Are Brand Names a Class by Themselves?" Possidonia F.D. Gontijo, the University of California, Los Angeles, Shi Zhang UCLA Anderson Graduate School

of Management) indicated that people are more likely to remember a brand name if it's easy to pronounce. It also makes it easier for consumers to search for your brand online and to tell their friends about it (Gontijo & Zhang, n.d.).

Some examples of brands that effectively feature simple brand names include:

Apple

According to William Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs, he chose the name *Apple* because "it sounded fun, spirited and not intimidating . . . plus, it would get us ahead of Atari in the phone book" (Isaacson, 2013).

Jobs was right. The name Apple is fun. It is also easy to remember and pronounce.

Nike

The company's name is derived from the Greek goddess of victory, Nike, which reflects the brand's focus on encouraging pro and amateur athletes to achieve their goals. The name is short, memorable, and aesthetically appealing. It can be easily incorporated into marketing materials.

Google

Google's name is a clever play on the mathematical term *googol*, which is a 1 followed by 100 zeros. While the mathematical concept of a googol is challenging, the search engine's name is easy to spell and pronounce, making it easy for customers to find what they're searching for online.

Uniqueness

A distinctive name helps your brand stand out in an increasingly overcrowded market.

Examples of brands that have used uniqueness efficiently include:

Netflix

The name reflects the company's aim to combine the best movies and series with the convenience of the Internet. The company's website and marketing materials use the word "Flicks" to communicate the company's value proposition. For example, at the time of writing, the website features a section called "Flicks Originals," showcasing exclusive content.

The name reflects the company's aim to deliver directly to a customer's device(s) the best movies (flicks) and series as well as the convenience of personalised programme suggestions. (This follows the principle of convergence; see Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind, page 244.)

Tesla

The clean energy and electric vehicle company is named after the Serbian American inventor Nikola Tesla. He was a brilliant engineer and scientist who significantly contributed to the development of alternating current (AC), today's

standard form of electricity. Tesla is a fitting tribute to the inventor's legacy. The company aims to fast-track the world's transition to sustainable energy with products geared to help people live more sustainably.

The name is also associated with innovation and progress.



DALL-E

DALL-E creates realistic images from text descriptions. The name is a mash-up of the surrealist artist Salvador Dalí and the popular Pixar robot WALL-E. This combination reflects the company's goal of combining the creativity and imagination of surrealism with the innovation and technology of artificial intelligence.

DALL-E is also short and easy to remember, making it stand out in an increasingly crowded AI marketplace.



Uber

Founded in 2009, the brand name is a German word meaning “above” or “over” from the Old High German *ubar*. It also appears as a prefix, as in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, translated by George Bernard Shaw as “Superman.”

The founder initially named it UberCab, implying the ultimate cab company. In English, “uber” is a prefix meaning “being a superlative example of its kind or class.” The name reflects Uber's goal of providing a superior transportation experience to its customers. It is associated with positive qualities such as excellence, superiority, and power.

The company has over 100 million users in over 600 cities (2023).



Airbnb

In 2007, two friends, Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia, were struggling to make rent payments in San Francisco. So, they devised a creative solution: rent living rooms with air mattresses to conference attendees who couldn't find a hotel room. They called their new business “Airbnb,” a portmanteau of “airbed” and “breakfast” (Solomons, 2023).

While existing competitors at the time highlighted “lower than hotel” prices, Airbnb went deeper. It wasn't merely the cheaper option; it delivered a more profound, psychological *raison d'être*: belonging.

KEY MARKETING STRATEGIES THAT HELPED AIRBNB SUCCEED

Focus on customer needs

The company's founders understood that travellers were looking for an alternative to traditional hotels, and they tapped into this demand.

Create a strong brand

The logo is simple. Its functional website and marketing materials are designed to evoke a sense of easily accessible wanderlust.

Use social media effectively.

Airbnb successfully uses social media to connect with its customers. The company has over 40 million followers on Facebook, and its Instagram account has over 15 million followers (2023 figures).

Partner with other businesses

Partnerships have helped Airbnb to reach a wider audience and to offer its users more travel options.

Relevance

Relevance helps customers feel like they are part of a community. Relevant content creates makes consumers feel special and appreciated.

Examples of brands using relevance effectively include:

Spotify

Spotify, a music streaming service, has over 300 million monthly active users. The company's name combines "spot" and "identify," which echoes Spotify's mission to help users discover and enjoy new music.

The brand uses a variety of channels to reach its target audience, including online advertising, social media, and public relations.

Spotify partnered with other brands to promote its service. For example, Coca-Cola created a custom playlist featuring happy songs.

Peloton

Peloton is a fitness company providing various products and services, including stationary bikes, treadmills, and online fitness classes.

The word *peloton* means fearless in Finnish. The company's name is derived from the French and Spanish word *peloton*, which means "platoon" or "group." This reflects Peloton's mission to create a community of fitness enthusiasts who can support each other throughout their fitness journey.

Repeating your message and brand identity creates a sense of familiarity with your customers. (Also see the Mere exposure effect, Chapter 7, Brain sells, page 332.)

BIG DATA TECHNIQUES FOR MARKETING PERSONALISATION

Thanks to big data techniques, you can produce campaigns personalised not just by name but also showing a potential customer being addressed throughout, for example, a personalised video. (Also see page 313.)

Data mining

Searches large volumes of information to uncover helpful information or patterns.

Predictive analytics

Uses statistical models and other techniques to predict future outcomes based on past performance or historical data.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

Learns from previous consumer experiences rather than following pre-defined instructions.

➤ ATA (attention, thinking, action): think!

Market research identifies how your product or service helps consumers. On a practical level, use programs like Google Analytics, SEMrush, Clicky, or Heap to uncover insights, including demographic information, such as age and gender, and psychographics – all data points that describe your audience's attitudes, values, behaviours, and preferences.

With careful analysis leading to informed strategies, the marketing funnel shows what your brand needs to do at each stage of a customer's journey. This simplifies the user experience by reducing friction between a brand and its consumers.

Remove barriers – increase mellifluous assistance

 Feature strong headlines with directives (imperatives) such as “Try (brand)” and “Drink (brand).”

 Explain your product or service features with clear consumer-centric benefits that directly address their needs.

 Write clear and concise copy that avoids jargon, varies sentence length, and keeps paragraphs to the point.

 Use images, videos, and other visuals that help people remember critical messages and break up your text, making it more compelling.

 Feature persuasive language with a clear call to action that unambiguously shows people what to do, such as complete forms or visit specific sites.

 Proofread your work carefully before publishing it.

- 🧠 Use research analytics tools to track how people interact with your copy and adjust your message accordingly.
- 🧠 Test content variations to discover what works best for your audience.
- 🧠 Draw on your innate creative talents – rather than idly churn out AI-generated blandness.

➤ ATA (attention, thinking, action): act now!

“Act” is the final segment in ATA’s Attention – Think – Act sequence. Throughout this chapter, you have learnt different psychological approaches towards encouraging action, including:

- 🧠 Urgency
- 🧠 Scarcity
- 🧠 Social proof
- 🧠 Emotional appeals
- 🧠 Easy to buy
- 🧠 Frictionless
- 🧠 Personalisation
- 🧠 Trust
- 🧠 Sense of belonging and purpose (cause).

All are underpinned by one word: consistency. Distilling consistency into its purest form requires a very special funnel all of its own.

A CONSTANT IN AN INCONSISTENT WORLD

The British monarchy’s unique selling points contribute to its enduring appeal, rooted in a rich history of cultural significance. Let’s examine these selling points using the classic AIDCA marketing model.

Attention

The monarchy captures attention through its grandeur, ceremonial events, and media coverage. Regal traditions like the Changing of the Guard, royal weddings, and the Trooping the Colour parade generate widespread online and offline interest.

Interest

People are intrigued by royal personal lives, charitable work, and relationships.

Desire

The monarchy evokes a desire by representing tradition, heritage, and national identity. Those who appreciate its historical significance and cultural values are drawn to witness and experience these traditions first-hand.

Conviction

The monarchy instils conviction by portraying stability, continuity, and national unity. For some, its enduring institution provides a sense of security and pride in the country's history and traditions.

Action

The monarchy encourages tourism, attending public events, and engaging with royal initiatives and charities. People are motivated to visit royal landmarks, participate in national celebrations, and support official causes.

Whether your preferred marketing model is AIDA, ATA, PAS, AIDCA, 2u's/5i's, or any other formula, brand consistency will remain a cornerstone of trusted marketing experiences.

HM Queen Elizabeth II was the last long-term analogue global leader in the digital age. Despite living a very different life than 99.9999999% of the rest of the world, she somehow not only remained globally relevant (regional politics notwithstanding) but was widely respected.

Her brand image was a constant in a continuously changing world. Her successor, HM King Charles III, no doubt understands that consistency is always in high consumer demand. It provides reassurance in terms of quality, quantity, and delivery.

Examples of commercial brands featuring consistency:



McDonald's

Menus are coherent across all locations, creating a sense of familiarity and trust.



Amazon

Personalised recommendations and targeted advertising establish awareness and relevance. In addition, trust is won through a seamless shopping experience, reliable shipping, and consistent customer service across all devices and platforms.



Nike

Coherent advertising and online campaigns across digital channels create a sense of dependability.



Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola consistently features its signature red-and-white branding, distinctive logo, and classic taste to establish a solid emotional connection with online and offline consumers.



Google

Google maintains its reliable and user-friendly search engine experience. The brand's clean and minimalist design aesthetic is reflected across its products, including Google Search, Google Maps, and Gmail.



Starbucks

Starbucks maintains consistent coffee quality, store ambience, and customer service across its vast network of stores worldwide. The iconic green logo and consistent menu offerings contribute to their brand recognition.



Apple

Apple maintains a consistent design aesthetic, user-friendly interface, and premium quality across its online platforms, ensuring a cohesive brand experience.

CAN CONSISTENCY REIGN?

Regarding values and communications, The Queen's successor, King Charles III, serves a very different generation to his mother: it is digitally connected 24/7.

Cleverly, King Charles was tactically positioned as the eco-friendly monarch even before it was popular to be environmentally aware. He is the monarch who serves all. The tactic is designed to appease a younger demographic weaned on worrying about Mother Earth's fragility, the uncertainty of a steady future, and coping with a technologically fast-paced world that appears to be in direct conflict with what can feel like an ancient, out-of-touch bloodline.

A POEM ABOUT KING CHARLES – COMPOSED BY CHATGPT

In days of old, King Charles did reign,
A monarch wise and just.
But now, in modern times, we see,
A new king rise from dust.
Artificial intelligence, its name,
A force both strong and fast.
With algorithms and data sets,
Its knowledge unsurpassed.
No longer do we need a king,
To rule with iron hand.
For AI can make decisions,
That once were solely manned.
But still, we must remember,
That AI is but a tool.
And though it may be powerful,
It is not above the rule.

So let us use this technology,
To better serve mankind.
And let King Charles rest in peace,
As we progress in kind.

THE CONTENT FUNNEL IS KING

Content funnels guide potential customers through their journey from awareness to conversion.

Creating tailored marketing funnels for specific user identities (avatars) ensures that sales and marketing teams work to an agreed outline.

Here's why content funnels are essential for online marketers:

Online visibility

Content funnels improve online visibility by strategically targeting users at different stages of their online journey. Creating search engine-optimised content and leveraging various online channels can increase your brand's chances of being discovered.

User engagement

User engagement is crucial for online marketers. Engaging content captures the attention of online users, encouraging interaction and keeping people absorbed throughout their journey.

Lead generation

You can effectively capture leads and expand your customer base by offering valuable resources such as e-books, webinars, or exclusive content in exchange for user information.

Nurture relationships

Content funnels nurture relationships by consistently delivering valuable and informative content.

Personalisation

Content funnels leverage data to personalise content delivery, ensuring users receive relevant information appropriate to their needs and interests.

Conversion optimisation

By delivering persuasive content at the right time and using practical call-to-action elements, you can steer users towards taking the desired action, whether making a purchase or signing up for a TikTok stream.

Data analysis

Online platforms provide valuable data and analytics that help track the effectiveness of content.

Analysing user interactions and conversions at each stage of the content funnel identifies areas for improvement, refines marketing strategies, and optimises content for better results.

YOUR IDEAL FUNNEL

The first step in creating a content marketing funnel that distils consistency is identifying your customer segments. Consider:

- Who are your customers?
- What problems do you solve?
- How do your solutions specifically help?

Next, develop content pieces based on each segment. For example, suppose you're selling accounting services for small businesses with fewer than ten employees (i.e., "small" accounting firms).

One piece of content might be an e-book titled "How to Run an Effective Small Business Accounting Department." It would cover bookkeeping systems and tax preparation methods. Prospective clients could start learning about your services before contacting you directly via phone or email – or even visiting your website.

Building an emotional connection with your audience fosters a sense of belonging among your customers. It increases brand loyalty and drives sales.

But the purchase alone is only the start of the digital consumer relationship.

EXPERIENCE – LIVE IT

Just as copywriters adapt to prompt engineering, so today's brands adapt to change without changing their core principles.

In her 2019 book, *Experiential Marketing* (Batat, 2019), Wided Batat explores how experiential marketing creates meaningful and memorable customer experiences.

Experiential marketing aims to forge long-lasting connections and positive brand associations by creating highly personalised campaigns and models appealing to the senses, emotions, and intellect.

Related experiences can include immersive pop-up stores, interactive events, gamified mobile apps, and other digitally based transactional activities. Batat delves into the

vital psychological techniques that underlie experiential marketing and how they can be used to influence consumer behaviour. She emphasises the importance of creating memorable experiences that resonate with consumers beyond traditional marketing methods.

Broader channels such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and other digital tools further help brands reach general audiences looking for immersive experiences unconfin ed by physical limitations.

EMOTION

Memorable experiences resonate with customers. Beyond transactional relationships, they evoke positive emotions such as joy, excitement, and surprise.

For example, storytelling featuring a powerful, highly relatable backstory can encourage consumers to feel part of a brand narrative. A fashion brand's video can showcase its latest collection. Music can evoke a certain mood in the viewer.

Also see Understanding the Social Language of Gen Z, Chapter 8, page 364.

Sensory marketing

Immersive, holistic experiences resonate deeply by engaging multiple senses. For example, sound effects and music create a certain mood or atmosphere. Likewise,

Figure 6.12

Traditional story plots in movies.

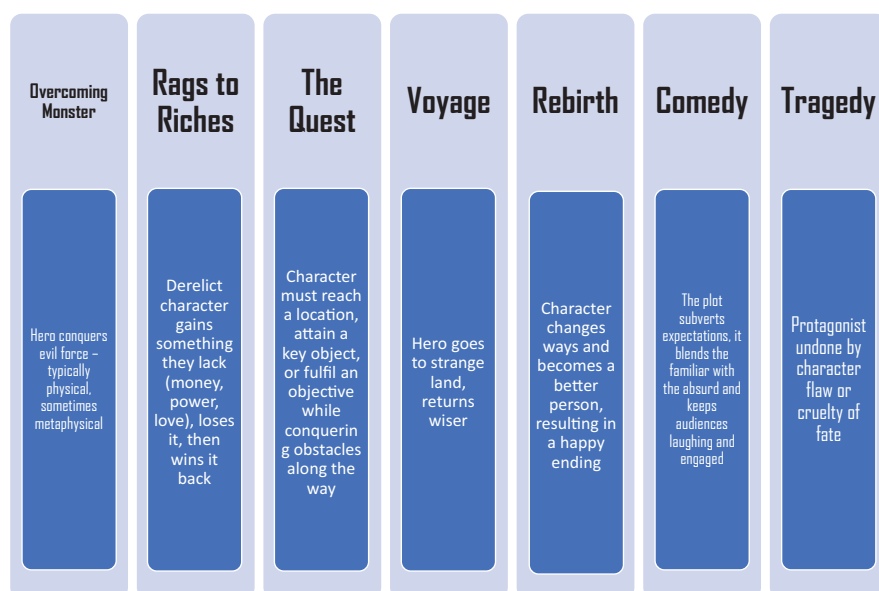
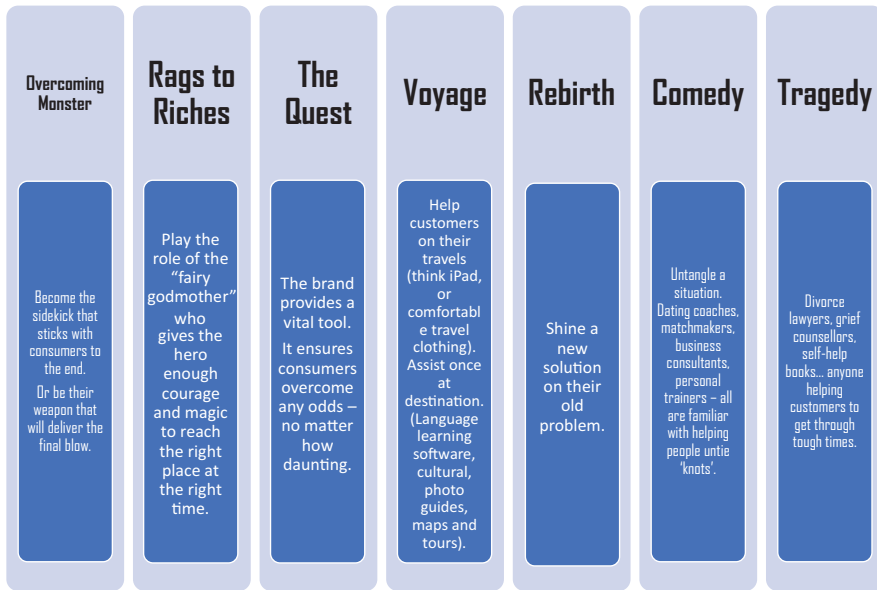


Figure 6.13

Traditional story plots for brand stories.



haptic feedback, such as vibrations or touch, creates a more tactile experience. (Also see Chapter 1, *Atlas of your mind*, page 46.)

Social influence

The soul of social influence involves a sense of heartfelt belonging among customers. Social experiences tap into people's innate desire to feel part of a community encircling a central brand.

Digital communities such as Facebook groups or forums invite consumers to share brand experiences. In addition, influencers can be recruited to promote a sense of social proof that sways the behaviour of potential customers.

Personalisation

As previously discussed, personalisation creates experiences tailored to individual needs and preferences. Such experiences establish deep connections with customers and increase the likelihood of repeat business.

Consider various techniques to personalise experiential marketing campaigns. These could include retargeting campaigns and tailoring ads targeting specific

individuals based on their browsing history or previous interactions with the brand. (See page 202.)

Gamification

Gamified experiences develop a sense of excitement and engagement.

To make your move, consider games or quizzes related to your brand's meaning and purpose, and incorporate elements of competition or rewards. Or why not try interactive experiences such as spatial reality that invite customers to interact with the brand more deeply?

Beyond the web, in the mid-2020s, high rental rates and cash-poor consumers led to significant decreases in footfall at shops. This gave experiential marketing a new role in encouraging consumers back into traditional bricks-and-mortar (BAM) outlets.

For example, a cosmetics brand could create an experiential marketing campaign inviting customers to enter make-up competitions, with the chance to win a photo-shoot session with a leading portrait photographer featured on social media sites like Instagram.

Or imagine you owned a sports store. While some customers shop, you could invite their families or friends to play an immersive alternate reality game of sports while wearing a virtual team kit. Such buzzworthy initiatives increase brand visibility, reach new audiences, and keep the partners of customers busy!

As digital communication continues to evolve, blending online with offline, experiential marketing is becoming the go-to tool for marketers looking to create meaningful and impactful consumer connections.

GO WITH THE FLOW

The flow effect, also known as the “flow state” or “being in the zone,” is a fascinating psychological concept introduced by the Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1934–2021; Wikipedia, 2023). He describes a mental state where a person becomes fully immersed in an activity, experiencing heightened focus, concentration, and enjoyment.

Once in the flow state, people often lose track of time and external distractions, allowing them to focus and perform at their best.

This effect occurs when a person's skills align with the challenges presented by an activity, creating a balance between the perceived difficulty and their abilities.

The harmonious condition encourages intrinsic motivation and a sense of reward, leading to increased productivity, creativity, and happiness.

In digital marketing and gamification, the effect can substantially enhance user engagement, and overall satisfaction.

In fact, like every aspect of experiential marketing, you could call it a game-changer!

Experiential marketing tips



Emotion is a catalyst for engagement:

- Experiential marketing leverages emotions to create memorable experiences that resonate with consumers more deeply.
- Focus on evoking emotions to foster engagement and build lasting connections.



Personalisation drives relevance:

- Customising experiences based on individual preferences and behaviours enhances their relevance.
- Manage data and personalisation techniques to create tailored experiences that increase engagement.



Immersion enhances brand recall:

- Immersive experiences have a profound impact on brand recall.
- Aim to design interactive and multi-sensory experiences that fully engage consumers, leaving a lasting impression of your brand.



Storytelling captivates and resonates:

- Storytelling plays a vital role in experiential marketing.
- Focus on crafting compelling narratives that connect with consumers' emotions and values, enhancing brand engagement and recall.



Participation boosts brand advocacy:

- Encouraging consumer participation delivers a sense of ownership and strengthens brand advocacy.
- Build experiences encouraging consumers to engage with your brand actively, fostering a richer connection and driving word-of-mouth promotion.



Social sharing amplifies reach:

- Social media platforms allow consumers to share their experiences with a broader audience.
- Integrate social sharing features and incentivise consumers to share their experiences, effectively extending the reach of your campaigns.



Integration ensures consistency:

- Creating a consistent brand experience across different digital channels is crucial.
- Consider omnichannel integration, ensuring experiential marketing initiatives align seamlessly with existing digital strategies, forming a unified and cohesive brand experience.



Measuring engagement and sentiment provides insights:

- Tracking and analysing engagement metrics and emotions allows digital marketers to gauge the success and impact of their experiential campaigns.
- Settle on data-driven decisions that optimise future strategies by leveraging data and analytics tools.



Gamification enhances engagement:

- Incorporating gamification elements into experiential marketing campaigns can significantly enhance engagement.
- Consider game-like features, challenges, and rewards, making a consumer's experience more interactive and enjoyable.



Co-creation fosters a sense of ownership:

- Allowing consumers to contribute and co-create experiences fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens their connection with the brand.



Surprise and novelty leave a lasting impact:

- Novelty factors can make experiences more memorable and share-worthy.
- Incorporate unexpected elements and exceptional experiences that leave a lasting impression on consumers, driving brand recall and advocacy.



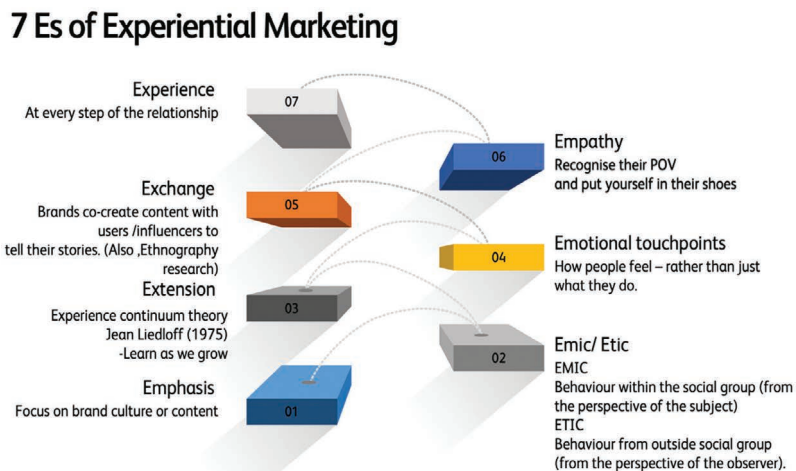
Continuous innovation and adaptation are essential:

- Experiential marketing is an evolving field.
- Stay abreast of emerging technologies, trends, and consumer preferences to remain relevant and create impactful experiences.

*Answer: Dimples

Figure 6.14

7 Es of Experiential Marketing.



MODELLING EXCELLENCE: OVERVIEW

Tips

-  Harness predictive analytics to forecast future outcomes based on historical data.
-  Tap into the potential of artificial intelligence to learn from previous consumer experiences and adapt your marketing strategies in real time.
-  Analyse data to identify strategies and channels that yield the highest return on investment (ROI).
-  Feature compelling storytelling to connect with consumers' emotions and values, enhancing brand engagement.
-  Draw on surprise and novelty in experiences to leave a lasting impact, driving brand recall and advocacy.
-  Feature social proof through reviews, testimonials, and endorsements to influence purchasing decisions.
-  Consider the benefits of user-generated content; co-creation with consumers fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens brand loyalty.
-  Exploit scarcity to create a sense of urgency and drive customers to act.
-  Measure engagement and sentiment through data and analytics to discover insights for future strategies.

At a glance

-  Proximity increases the likelihood of customers buying by creating familiarity and confidence.
-  Positive interactions with a brand improve understanding and relevance through machine learning and AI.
-  Simplicity in brand names improves memorability and online searchability.
-  Distinctive brand names help stand out in a crowded market.
-  Authority builds trust and increases the likelihood of a purchase.
-  The anchoring effect influences decision-making based on initial information.
-  Technology can create familiarity and trust through avatars and brand experiences.
-  Curiosity drives the craving for new knowledge and information.
-  The Zeigarnik effect creates discomfort and curiosity when things are left incomplete.

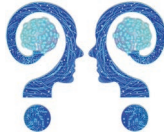
- 🧠 AIDA can be adapted into AIDCA for a psycho-centric approach to online buying.
- 🧠 AIDCA includes attention, interest, direction, cause, and action.
- 🧠 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influence purchasing decisions.
- 🧠 EMIC and ETIC approaches help to understand cultural perspectives.
- 🧠 The experience continuum theory emphasises the importance of understanding different cultures.
- 🧠 Honesty and integrity play crucial roles in personal and brand identity.
- 🧠 Integration with cultural norms and socialisation shapes self-identity.
- 🧠 The 2u/5i model focuses on individual consumers rather than groups.
- 🧠 ATA model addresses primal instincts and appeals to mood states.
- 🧠 Subtle marketing strategies targeting sex drive instinct can be effective.
- 🧠 Sex is a significant factor in online anonymity and business, with the porn industry generating billions in revenue.
- 🧠 Experiential marketing generates positive brand associations and increases brand visibility.
- 🧠 The flow effect, or being in the zone, increases focus, concentration, and enjoyment.
- 🧠 The flow state occurs when skills align with the activity challenges, promoting intrinsic motivation and productivity.
- 🧠 Emotions play a crucial role in experiential marketing by fostering engagement and connections.
- 🧠 Consumer participation creates ownership and strengthens brand advocacy, including word-of-mouth promotion.
- 🧠 Consistent brand experiences across digital channels are essential for a unified and cohesive brand experience.
- 🧠 Gamification elements enhance engagement by incorporating challenges and rewards.

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7 Brain sells

You don't enter the business to make friends – you aim to make money.

This chapter looks at the business of perceptions – how to shape your offer to appeal to consumers' beliefs and values.

On the way, you will be introduced to FOMO's cousin, FOMM, related to naïve realism. You'll explore how to regain consumer trust and use persuasive psychology.

Who knows, you may even make some profitable relationships along the way . . .

(Warning – use the following *responsibly*.)

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

Whilst FOMO makes people crave for something they don't have, FOMM makes them yearn for something they already possess, yet fear they are missing – namely themselves.

FOMM stands for **Fear of Missing Me**.

Driven by a selfie culture, FOMM (according to “Social media user statistics,” 2023) ensures a staggering 56.8% of the world's population is active on social media. Selfies are snippets from biographies manipulated for social media. They tell the person snapping the selfie, stories about how they wish to be remembered at any given time or place (“Social media user statistics,” 2023).

“This is me at . . .”

“Here I am laughing with . . .”

“This is me believing I am loved.”

Each snapshot or video moment adds to a tapestry of a life, whose colours and weaves are carefully chosen for posterity by the tapestry designer.

FOMM is related to naïve realism, the belief that perceptions of the “outside” world are accurately judged by your “inner world.” People convince themselves they see things as they are even when, perhaps, they are not.

Someone with synaesthesia experiences one of their senses through another. For example, they can hear colours as sounds. People who are colour-blind may recognise the colour green as *blue*. So, when they say, “This jacket is *blue*,” whilst you may see the jacket is *green*, you still know they are referring to a jacket which you can both see – the only difference is that their interpretation of the jacket’s colour is *green*.

Reality is subjective. However, through professional digital marketing, perceptions can be manipulated to be welcomed and shared by many. (Also see Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind.)

Naïve realism has been studied extensively by psychologists like David Dunning and Justin Kruger, who coined the term *illusory superiority* to describe how people tend to overestimate their abilities while underestimating those of others (which explains why, for example, some people think they’re better drivers than everyone else; Wikipedia, 2023a).

People posting pictures on Instagram or Facebook may suppose an image reflects actual reality, but it may be more about reflecting what they want others to see.

Similarly, people often post selfies which have been edited with the aid of AI. This can lead to them believing their propaganda.

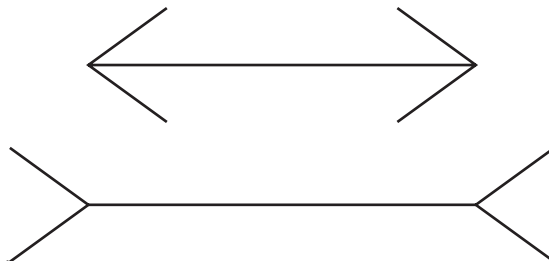
The Müller-Lyer illusion

This intriguing phenomenon sheds light on how visual cues can influence perception. Discovered by Franz Müller-Lyer in the late 19th century, the illusion involves two lines of equal length with arrow-like fins at each end. One line has inward-facing fins, while the other line has outward-facing fins.

Your brain relies on visual cues to make sense of the world, including assessing the length and depth of objects. Visual cues can easily manipulate perception, leading to a misjudgement of distance.

Figure 7.1

The Müller-Lyer illusion



Looking at the two lines, your brain may interpret the fins as indicators of depth or distance. For example, the outward-facing fins create an impression of an object receding into the distance, while the inward-facing fins suggest an object protruding towards us. These cues trigger subconscious cognitive processes that influence perceived length.

So, you could perceive the line with outward-facing fins as longer than the line with inward-facing fins, even though both lines are the same length. This phenomenon highlights the role of contextual cues in shaping your visual perception.

As with the Müller-Lyer illusion, consumers' judgments and preferences can be skewed. Marketers can strategically use visual elements and design techniques to influence decision-making processes.

For example, in packaging design, cues such as size, shape, and positioning create an impression of greater value or larger quantity. Similarly, you could enhance product presentations, shelf layouts, and advertising campaigns to enrich consumer appeal.

Studies have shown that individuals from different cultural backgrounds may perceive differently, suggesting that cultural norms and experiences can shape assumed biases.

The idea that we are all inherently biased in our perceptions and beliefs about the world is not new. Still, it has become more significant as consumers increasingly depend on technology rather than just in-person experiences to shape identities and experiences.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

Potentially AI adds a sense of being able to be anything to anyone at any time without being oneself. For example, in 2023, AI cloned the singers Drake and The Weeknd's voices and styles to produce an entirely new song which used artificial intelligence tools to dupe vocals from the two singers. However, the two never collaborated on the song. (Russell, 2023).

Within days, amid an uproar from label owner Universal Music Group, it was reportedly removed from social media and streaming platforms. In addition, it stirred up discussions about how technology should be responsibly used. Universal referred to such use of technology as an existential threat.

Universal could withdraw the AI-generated track because it featured a tiny sample of a copyrighted original track. If that hadn't been the case, the track would have remained available on social media as, at the time, it was not illegal for AI to mimic voices. Fiction would have become fact.

FOMM addresses such an existential threat.

THE BEATLES AND AI

In November 2023, the Beatles released "Now and Then," a song reborn thanks to the magical harmony of human creativity and artificial intelligence. It was their first release since 1995 (Jones, 2023).

The song's journey began with a vintage low-fidelity recording by the iconic John Lennon. Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, the surviving Beatles, leveraged advanced machine learning to breathe life into it.

Peter Jackson, renowned for his work in the epic *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* series, played a pivotal role. Jackson's AI specialists extracted Lennon's vocal tracks from a delicate tape recording, paving the way for this extraordinary revival.

Similarly, the remastered version of the Beatles' seminal *Revolver* album in 2022 was a testament to AI's transformative impact on music restoration and enhancement. While there was no attempt to fabricate a "deepfake" Lennon, the authenticity of his digitally recovered voice astonished McCartney, inspiring a commitment to share this piece with fans.

McCartney and Starr approached the project with the intent to honour the legacy. McCartney's signature bass lines, Starr's drumming, and Giles Martin's celestial strings came together to elevate "Now and Then" into an enchanting work of art.

The track could possibly be the Beatles' swan song, encapsulating the spirit and essence of each member of the legendary quartet.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GO SHOPPING

FOMM can be eased (at least in part) with an invigorating session of impulse buying – especially in the middle of the night.

Vampire shopping describes late-night purchasing (usually between 1 am and 4 am) when insomniacs surf sites like TikTok to make impulse purchases, often of frivolous items, which they probably regret in the morning.

The British retailer Argos found that vampire shoppers buy 20% more than "daytime" shoppers. Console games, batteries, and pillows see a surge in sales overnight (About-sainsburys.co.uk, 2018).

This, in turn, relates to *buyer's remorse*, where consumers feel they were misled about the product or service or simply that the purchase was not worth the money spent. (Also see Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind, page 275.)

In some cases, buyer's remorse is eased by returning the item or seeking a refund, but the remorse may linger.

Ethical marketers address buyer's remorse by offering refunds, exchange policies, or customer support services . . . all of which can help consumers resolve issues or concerns.

WHY THEY BUY

Consumer surveys regularly suggest that sometimes people buy things they didn't plan or need simply because an urge hits them. Mood, memories, fears, and even

personality can be used to predict what consumers might pick up on a whim. We all like to treat ourselves. It adds spice after a boring meeting at work and can brighten up a dull day. (Also see Rational product motivation and emotive produce motivation, Chapter 6, Modelling excellence, page 286.)

French psychiatrist Valentin Magnan coined the term *oniomania* in his book *Psychiatriche Vorlesungen* (1892). Also known as compulsive buying disorder (CBD), it has been linked to other impulse disorders, including drug abuse, alcoholism, and gambling (Magnan, 1892).

Sufferers may feel compelled to splash out on things simply because they enjoy recognition as a big spender. The more expensive the goods, the better they assume they appear to others. This bolsters low self-esteem, augmented by a materialist attitude that suggests a person's self-worth comes only from what they own.

One school of thought says that purchases close the gap between how sufferers see themselves and how they want to be seen or their "ideal Self." (See Chapter 3, Me, myself, and I, page 181.)

IT LOOKS GOOD – FOR NOW

Consumers want immediate gratification. Increasingly, people have a limited amount of short-term mental space, especially when constantly surfing short and punchy social media posts. (See Chapter 1, Atlas of your mind, page 43.)

LOSS AVERSION

People sense the pain of losing something twice as much as they enjoy gaining it. This phenomenon was first discovered in the 1970s by Israeli American psychologist Daniel Kahneman and cognitive and mathematical psychologist Amos Tversky when studying how humans make decisions under uncertainty (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

If someone has bought from your company but has not made a second purchase, offering a discount could be enough incentive to encourage them to return and recommend your brand to others.

Beyond discounts alone, demonstrating genuine understanding, your brand will appear caring. The more you can get someone involved with a process (including a rewarding sales process), the harder for them to leave. This is why high street retailers encourage consumers to touch and hold a product physically.

Approaches to loss aversion

-  Measure the effectiveness of your loss aversion strategy.
-  Track revenue generated from the campaign and compare it to previous campaigns.

- 🧠 Use analytics platforms to measure engagement and conversion rates before and after implementing loss aversion tactics.
- 🧠 Highlight potential losses.
- 🧠 Emphasise what consumers stand to lose if they don't act.
- 🧠 Feature messages accentuating limited-time offers, scarcity, or the potential negative consequences of not taking advantage of the opportunity.
- 🧠 Present the product or service as a solution to a problem or a way to prevent potential future losses.
- 🧠 Leverage FOMM and FOMO by creating a sense of exclusivity or urgency around offers. For example, limited-time promotions, exclusive access, or membership programs can drive consumers to take action to avoid perceived losses.
- 🧠 By offering guarantees, warranties, or return policies, you can alleviate consumers' fears of potential losses, reducing the perceived risk and increasing the likelihood of conversion.
- 🧠 The experiences and opinions of others influence consumers. Therefore, use social proof and testimonials to demonstrate the potential losses others have avoided by engaging with the product or service.
- 🧠 Personalised offers may enhance the perceived value making consumers more reluctant to miss out on the benefits of the offering.
- 🧠 Offer objective and transparent comparisons between your and competitors' offers.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT (LESLEY CROWTHER, TV HOST)

People don't buy on price alone; they invest in stories, value, and personal meaning. Put another way, *people don't buy into something, they buy to get out of something*, like a problem or pain point that needs to be solved. This is why I teach students that when selling, for example, electric drills, don't sell the drill; focus on the solution: the hole.

People pay attention to stories. Take selling two pens. One is a standard disposable pen; the other is a luxurious limited edition. How much would people be willing to pay for each?

Well, that depends on the story behind the pen rather than the pen's price alone. The value a person places in something hangs on its relevance. Price objection is about objecting to a perceived value rather than an advertised price. *Cost is only ever an issue in the absence of value.*

For example, what is the value of this book?

An opportunity for a new career?

The chance to make bigger profits?

A valuable textbook for your studies?

A helpful guide to techniques designed to keep you employed so you can pay the rent and go on holiday?

The greater the perceived value, the more willing you become to pay a higher price.

Demonstrate value through:

-  Social proof. Is the product or service purchased by peers or influencers? Why would such people want it?
-  Storytelling. What is the remarkable story behind, for example, the luxury pen limited edition that justifies its high price point?
-  Guarantee. Can you offer a risk-free guarantee that, for example, would refund someone's money if they were not 100% satisfied?
-  All three: social proof, storytelling, and guarantee.

Of course, just because someone wants your product doesn't mean everyone can afford it. This is where understanding your market comes into play.

Consider this story: A grandfather is approaching the end of his life. He shows his grandson a pocket watch.

"This watch was given to me by my grandfather. Go to the watch store around the corner and ask how much they will pay you for it."

The grandchild takes the watch to the store and returns.

"They offered £5."

The grandfather is sad. "Now ask the department store."

The grandchild takes the watch to the store and returns.

"They offered £5."

The grandfather sighs. Now ask the local museum.

The grandchild takes the watch to the museum and returns.

"They offered £100,000."

The grandfather smiles. "The right place and people will value you the right way," he explained.

A BIRD IN THE HAND

As AI and automation tools continue to develop, marketers are finding new ways to stay ahead of the competition. If you aren't using loss aversion effectively in your digital marketing strategy now, you may soon find yourself behind the curve in no time.



Bargains

A 20% off (or even 5%) sign-on treat could be the tipping point to seal a deal. This is because the brain can easily get misled by the idea that something *MAY* be a good deal. And who doesn't want a good deal? (FOMO).



Stockpiling

People tend to stock up in case they run out of personal essentials. (Around the world, within 24 hours of the threat of a Covid-19 lockdown, there was such a demand for toilet paper that superstore shelves quickly emptied.) This need intensifies when what we demand is only available for a limited time. Hence, the mad rush on Black Friday.

Sometimes people stockpile to compensate in other areas. For example, a partner is consistently ignored by a spouse. Buying trinkets may be a form of compensation and self-soothing. Or a former long-term prisoner fills their wardrobe with clothes after years of being forced to wear the same uniform.



Biased evaluation

People are generally optimistic. They are often convinced they will get around to eating all the food they buy, wearing every item of clothing, and using all the household items. Knowing the fridge is stocked or the wardrobe is not bare, even on a budget, can be comforting. Stuff help us feel better by temporarily dampening self-doubt.

Money CAN buy you love.

There are two kinds of brand-selling relationships. The first is a transactional relationship. This is where costs and practicalities come first. Own-label brands excel in this field. Consumers (especially those hard-pressed by economies) tend to be more open to buying products lacking features or ingredients compared to well-known brand name equivalents. Thanks to cognitive dissonance (see Chapter 9, Scan, page 395), such consumers are happy to convince themselves that buying a modestly inferior or own-label brand demonstrates financial shrewdness.

The second kind of brand-selling relationship, emotional-led purchases, often inform premier brand marketing strategies. Here consumers willingly pay more for a respected brand. In a roundabout way, the admired brand offers a form of love that may be missing from a person's everyday life.

To put this into perspective, love can be interpreted as a "treat," an "escape," or even a "hug" that consumers can reward themselves.

Even the poorest occasionally treat themselves to a brand hug, such as buying the premier brand of soap, chocolate, or fashion . . . why? Because they are worth it.

HAVE A BREAK, HAVE A BRAND SNACK

News headlines relentlessly remind people that traditional social structures like family units are failing. Careers are insecure. AI threatens livelihoods. The climate is reaching a boiling point. Homeownership has become less of a right and more of a privilege for the rich. Mental health is uncertain.

Providentially, easy to access, emotional brands offer a quick fix hug that is reassuringly within reach (and that is excellent news not just for corporate CFOs but CMOs promoting cultural, political, and religious brands plugging a state of peace of mind far away from the maddeningly sweaty crowd).

SELL ME “HAPPINESS”

Often seeing the “sales” sign, the brain makes decisions led by our emotional state (form over function). We may primarily buy to make us happy rather than be driven by features alone. (Impulse-bought shoes may be pretty but not necessarily practical.)

Research suggests that men and women gravitate towards different products as mood boosters (Vessella, n.d.).

According to Bing (Akhtar, 2023), the top products searched globally by men included camping backpacks, toolboxes, motorcycle helmets, hand and power tools, grooming products, shoes, e-cigarettes, and watches.

For women, the list included beauty products such as night creams, lip oils, and skin-care products such as micellar water, sun cream, moisturisers, and lip glosses.

Different genders act differently. So, to resist impulse buying, go online shopping with a member of the opposite sex!

Impulse buying (the usual suspects)

Some people spin into a shopping frenzy during sales, while others seem unaffected. So, what makes these two groups so different?

Research suggests there may be distinct personality biases. People who are stressed or have control issues could be more likely to buy simply to help manage anxiety compulsively.

For others, impulse buying may be an attempt to manage feelings of inadequacy. When such a consumer emotionally connects with an item, they can believe that the purchase will boost their social status or help them feel “more complete.”

On the other hand, confident people, fulfilled and in control of their lives, may have less need for a constant stream of baubles to feel better.

And, of course, sometimes it's just fun to shop – just for the sake of it – especially when shopping is marketed as an experience rather than a chore. (See Chapter 6, *Modelling excellence*, page 314.)

LOOK HERE

People like faces. Eyes, in particular, are windows to thoughts. A web page featuring a face looking directly forward engages the user. However, to persuade a user to look at something like a headline price, feature the model looking in that direction. This is because people are curious to see what others are staring at. (Rather like the prank you may have played in school when you pointed at something in the sky, and everyone around instinctively looked in that direction).

Trust your hunches. They're usually based on facts filed away just below the conscious level.

—Joyce Brothers, American psychologist

Tversky and Kahneman's research revealed that hesitant consumers could be swayed by one of three heuristics or persuaded by exploiting several specific cognitive biases. (Wikipedia, 2021; the fuller list of biases is detailed in Chapter 9, Scan.)

HEURISTICS

Representativeness

Representativeness is a mental shortcut which determines the chances of something belonging to a specific category based on how similar it is to (or is representative of) the typical or average.

For example, if you had to guess whether a person in eccentric clothes reading a woke poetry book is an office administrator or a poet, you may assume they are a poet. However, there are more administrators in the population than poets, so such a person is more likely to be an administrator.

AVAILABILITY HEURISTIC

The *availability heuristic* comes into play when people estimate the likelihood of an event happening based on how easily they can recollect similar events. If they can quickly remember comparable instances, they may be more likely to think that such occurrences are more common than, in truth, they are.

For example, consider whether falling aeroplane parts or shark attacks are more likely to cause death in America. You might assume shark attacks. However, the chances of dying from aeroplane parts falling from the sky are 30 times greater than being killed by a shark.

People miscalculate the risk of shark attacks because of headlines or movies about attacks. It boils down to message exposure (a good argument for investing in public relations).

ANCHOR ADJUSTMENT

This heuristic was mentioned in Chapter 6. Here a person starts with an initial idea and adjusts their beliefs based on this starting point (anchor).

THE DECOY EFFECT

The decoy effect is when a third option (decoy) influences the decision-making process.

The option is designed to make one of the other options more appealing.

For example, a brand sells two products: a high-end product priced at £500 and a low-end product priced at £250. By introducing a decoy option priced similarly to the high-end product but with fewer features, the high-end product suddenly seems like a better value. This is because it has more features and is priced competitively against the decoy option. Conversely, if the decoy option had been priced similarly to the low-end product, it may have made the former option appear better value than the high-end product.

This strategy can be particularly effective when consumers struggle to decide between two options. The decoy can serve as a point of comparison, making one of the other options seem better.

ANCHORING AND DECOY – SIDE BY SIDE

On the other hand, anchoring can make consumers rely too heavily on the first piece of information they receive.

Consider a brand selling three products: a basic, standard, and premium option.

The basic option is priced at £50, the standard option at £100, and the premium option at £150.

Using the decoy effect, the brand can introduce a fourth option, a “decoy” product, priced between the standard and premium options at £125.

This makes the premium option seem better because it is only £25 more than the decoy product – with more features.

The £100 standard option also seems more reasonable as it is now priced competitively with the decoy product.

Anchoring can also emphasise the initial £50 price point, making the other prices seem more reasonable.

In addition to heuristics, Tversky and Kahneman spoke of cognitive biases. Later in the book, you will learn how to apply a range of cognitive biases and heuristics to digital projects.

THE MERE EXPOSURE EFFECT

The mere exposure effect was first mentioned by the social psychologist Robert Zajon in 1968. He found that people repeatedly exposed to pictures of unfamiliar faces tended to rate those faces more positively than those they had not seen before. The effect can be observed with various stimuli, including music, words, colours, and shapes (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019c).

Repeated exposure to a stimulus increases familiarity and reduces a person's sense of uncertainty or fear.

Digital marketers use the mere exposure effect by repeatedly exposing consumers to their brand or product. This can increase consumers' familiarity and positive feelings toward the brand or product, leading to increased sales.

Also see Chapter 5, Brand kisses.

FRAMING IT RIGHT

In another research paper, titled "Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," Kahneman and Tversky (1981) explained that by providing a proposition that is suitably framed, people forgo the rational side of decision-making in favour of a more emotional approach.

The cognitive neuroscientist Benedetto De Martino supports this. In his study "Frames, Biases and Rational Decision-Making in the Human Brain," he reports that when something is framed negatively, people distance themselves from it.

To demonstrate, he offered volunteers a choice framed in two different ways. First, each was given £50. The money could be kept or gambled. If gambled, participants would automatically lose some of the money.

Told that they could keep 40% of the money if they did not gamble, only 43% of the participants chose to bet. When warned that they would lose 60% of their money if they didn't gamble, 62% of participants went ahead and placed a bet.

As they were making their choices, participants' brains were scanned. The scans revealed that the amygdalae – the regions within the limbic system partly responsible for controlling emotion, memory and fight-or-flight reaction, were active in all participants, regardless of whether they behaved rationally or irrationally. (Also see Chapter 1, Atlas of your mind.)

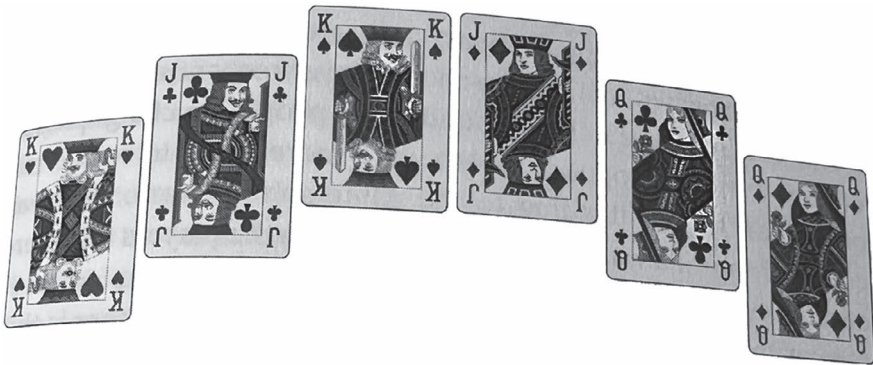
Explaining why they switched, participants accepted that, despite knowing the question was phrased differently, they couldn't summon the willpower to prevent themselves from changing their answer (Martino et al., 2006).

MONEY, SYMBOLS, AND PROFIT

Please study the following sequence. I will predict your chosen card and remove it from the line-up. (After studying the cards, turn to page 335. No cheating!).

Figure 7.2

Choose a card from above. Note the suit, face value, and position in the sequence.



Ready? Make your choice . . . now turn to the page.

I am not a magician, but by asking you to focus intently on just one card, I hoped you would pay little or no attention to the others. Of course, the trick doesn't always work, but when it does, it illustrates that people tend to hear and see just one thing at a time – whatever is the most relevant to what they are looking for – and filter out the rest.

This explains why the cocktail party effect is so powerful. A digital content producer will craft copy relevant to a specific target audience.

SMASHING RESULTS

During the 1970s, Elizabeth Loftus, an American cognitive psychologist and expert on human memory, was researching memory. She showed volunteers simulated crimes and accidents and asked what they remembered. She also wanted them to guess the speed cars travelled when they either “collided” or “smashed” into each other.

When she used the verb “smashed,” witnesses not only recalled the cars going faster but also that there was broken glass in the accident scene (there wasn't; McLeod, 2014).

Verb used	Mean speed estimate (mph)
Smashed	40.8
Collided	39.3
Bumped	38.1
Hit	34.0
Contacted	31.8

In another study, Loftus showed an accident where a car went through an intersection with a standard stop sign (Nader, 2013).

When asked a question insinuating it was a YIELD sign rather than an emphatic STOP sign, many confirmed seeing a YIELD sign at the intersection rather than a STOP sign.

SIGNS ON THE TIMES

As you read in the introduction, Foresight, symbols conveying messages and ideas have been prevalent in advertising and marketing since the earliest days of commerce.

In ancient Egypt, hieroglyphics represented different objects, ideas, and concepts, including advertising for goods and services. Symbols were often placed on walls, buildings, and other areas to attract potential customers.

Fast-forward to the 20th century, and semiotics in advertising and marketing became more prominent.

Apple's early success is partly attributed to creating aesthetically pleasing products for specific purposes. Take the iPhone – an elegant interface made it easy for users to navigate through their phones; at the same time, consumers who were not tech savvy felt comfortable using it.

Apple still employs semiotics to achieve brand recognition among consumers worldwide through visual language techniques such as typography choices (sans-serif font), materials, and logo design.

Semiotics genericizes logos; trademarks become so common that they are used as a common name, such as “I am going to Google something.”

SEMIOTICS IN CONTEXT

Charles Sanders Peirce was the first psychologist to explore the role of semiotics in human behaviour. He believed all human communication was based on signs, representing something else (Wikipedia, 2023b).

Peirce proposed that signs could be divided into three categories:



Icons

Signs resembling what they represent, such as a picture of a tree.



Indexicality

Signs physically connected to what they represent, such as smoke, suggest fire.



Symbols.

Arbitrary signs with no inherent connection to what they represent, such as the letters of the alphabet.

Peirce's work laid the foundation for the study of semiotics in psychology. By the mid-20th century, semiotics had gained widespread attention.

The work of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget proposed that children's cognitive development flowed from their ability to understand and interpret signs and symbols.

Piaget's work was followed by Lev Vygotsky, who proposed that language was the primary method children learned about the world. Vygotsky believed that children's use of language was acquired from their understanding of signs and symbols. Their cognitive development was based on their ability to interpret and use language (Marketing, 2023).

The study of semiotics in psychology gained further momentum in the 1960s with the work of American psychologist Noam Chomsky. He proposed that language drew on innate rules or structures hard-wired into the human brain (Ibbotson & Tomasello, 2016).

George Lakoff is an American cognitive linguist and philosopher best known for his thesis that human thought derives from metaphors which are not just a linguistic phenomenon but fundamental to how people think and understand the world. Metaphors centred on physical experiences of the world, which help make sense of abstract concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

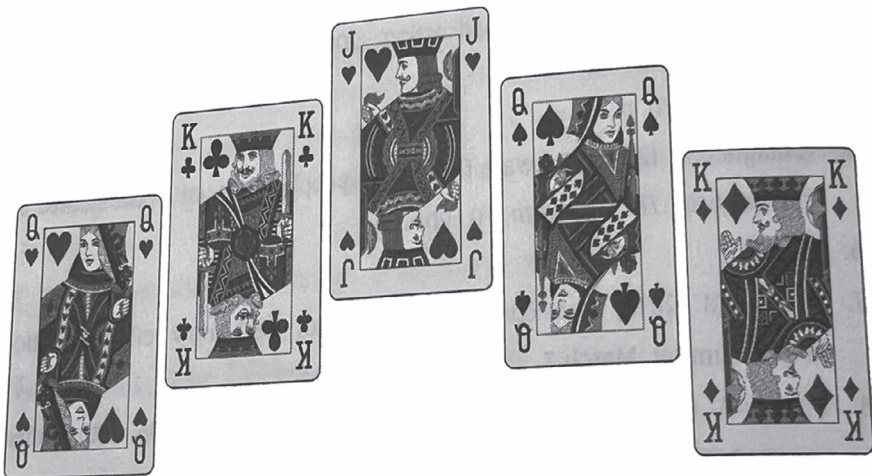
In today's attention-poor society, brands find new ways to stand out in a crowded digital landscape. Emojis, hashtags, site icons, buttons, clips, and other symbols convey messages and emotions.

For example, brands commonly use the heart emoji to convey love, appreciation, and support for their customers.

The downside is that, increasingly, marketing is infantilising the consumer. (Also see Chapter 4, Giving I what I wants and needs, page 199.)

Figure 7.3

Deck revealing your missing card.



THE MEANING OF MONEY

Money can mean more than the accumulation of wealth. It can be a source of self-validation and esteem. The economist and philosopher Adam Smith argued that pursuing self-interest leads individuals to engage in productive economic activity, ultimately benefiting everyone by creating jobs, goods, and services.

However, history repeatedly warns that others get hurt when wealthy and powerful people use resources to maintain their ego status.

Money has many meanings, depending on the context. Equally, how digital marketers present prices affect the items' implied value.

SHOW PRICES IN SMALL FONTS

If you see £50 in a large font, you think: "How big is this price?" Something feels big. The price must be high.

Generally, display prices in a small font so they seem numerically smaller and hence less expensive (Coulter & Coulter, 2005).

However, this tactic works best with single products. Large fonts may be more suitable for multiple products as customers judge the difference between those prices:

How big is the price difference?

Something feels big.

The difference must be significant.

REFERENCE PRICING

A carton of eggs sells for £3. Is £3 a good deal?

Consumers will compare £3 to a "standard" price based on the following:

-  Previous prices. How much were eggs last time?
-  Advertised prices. What price was I promised?
-  Estimated price. What price did I expect?
-  Adjacent prices. How much are competing eggs?
-  Nearby numbers. Are any reference prices nearby?

You merge those sources into a magnitude called a *reference price*, then compare it to the product in question (Briesch et al., 1997; Mazumdar et al., 2005).

POSITION PRICES NEAR THE TOP OR LEFT

Eyes enter a visual field from the left. This becomes the anchor point or “visual fulcrum.” The further an object is from the left side (or the fulcrum), the weightier it appears (Deng & Kahn, 2009).

PRICES FEEL HEAVIER TOWARD THE RIGHT

A price toward the right side of a fulcrum has the effect of visually pulling it down.

Most people imagine numbers on a horizontal plane. They increase from left to right (assuming you read from left to right). Small numbers are naturally associated with the left: consumers typically see small numbers to the left of larger ones, so are likely to associate small numerical values with locations on the left (Cai et al., 2012).

THE REFUND EFFECT

Money doesn’t feel like “real” cash when it is a gift or a prize. This makes it easier to spend. The effect happens with refunds, too (Lee & Morewedge, 2023).

When you get your money back after returning a product, you may become tempted to spend it, bypassing the pain of paying from scratch.

The Nobel Prize–winning economist Richard Thaler explains that when you buy a pair of jeans for \$50, the purchase burns. But if you receive your money back, you will classify the funds differently.

When money first leaves your possession, it hurts. Any new purchase gets credited with the original pain. If the refund is returned to your bank, the effect eases. However, with no buffer to separate this refund from the initial cost, spending it can feel painful again, as the second payment comes from your “real” money (The Decision Lab, n.d.).

You can apply the refund effect in several ways, including:

-  Cross-selling during product returns.
-  Offering other products for customers to consider. Paying for them will feel less painful.

If products are cheaper than competitors, show how any savings could be used to buy additional services. That way, the expenditure feels different to parting with physical cash.

PHONETICAL DISCOUNTING

People often conceive numbers with fewer syllables as costing less than numbers with more syllables.

🧠 £27.82 (9 syllables).

🧠 £28.16 (5 syllables).

REMOVE COMMAS

Prices seem lower without commas (e.g., £1499; Coulter et al., 2012). Both the written length and phonetic sizes are shorter.

🧠 £1499: One thousand four hundred and ninety-nine (10 syllables).

🧠 £1499: Fourteen ninety-nine (5 syllables).

GESTALT

People group items that are close together. It's called the gestalt principle of proximity. (See Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind, page 247.)

The principle works well with websites and social media posts. It states that objects close together in space are perceived as related and get grouped as a single unit.

By grouping related elements, you can make it easier for consumers to understand the relationship between different pieces of information then they can make decisions based on that information.

For example, a marketer might use the gestalt principle of proximity to group a product image, price, and call-to-action button together on a website.

In one study, an inline skate seemed cheaper when “low friction” appeared near the price because people merged the concept of “low” into the price. Conversely, the skates seemed more expensive when “high performance” was near the price (Coulter & Coulter, 2005).

PRICE ALLITERATION

Alliteration just “feels right.” Research confirms that alliterative prices are effective: customers were likelier to buy two t-shirts for £25 because of the matching “t” sounds (Davis et al., 2015).

Other examples:

🧠 Four for £4! (Wendy's).

🧠 Ten for £10! (Dunkin' Donuts).

Also:

🧠 Rock-pit-bottom prices!

🧠 Dazzling deals!

- 🧠 Discounted delights!
- 🧠 Penny-pinching paradise
- 🧠 Pocket-friendly prices on premium products!
- 🧠 Budget bonanza!
- 🧠 Price plummet!

Compare prices



The left ad offers better value because people have “unlimited” toppings. However, people were likelier to buy the second deal with “6” toppings (King & Janiszewski, 2011).



Your brain stores common arithmetic problems: Children are drilled on simple equations over time to develop an association between operands.

(e.g., 2×6) and results (e.g., 12).

These stored associations are called *number facts* (Baroody, 1985).

Exposure to two numbers (e.g., 2 and 6) immediately activates the sum (e.g., 8) and product (e.g., 12).

The price of £24 seems better when the ad shows two multiples (e.g., 6 and 4).

Customers may think, “This feels right. I should accept this deal.”

When possible, show two multiples of your price:

- 💡 £15: £5 off everything for 3 days.
- 💡 £120: Get 4 weekly 30-minute coaching calls.
- 💡 £500: Get 5 bonus apps for free (£100 value).

Caveat: Show two – and only two – multiples.

If your price is £12, too many multiples (e.g., 2, 3, 4, and 6) could weaken the activation of £12.

GATED OFFER

A gated offer features content that is only accessible to website visitors who provide personal information, such as their name and email address.

The offer usually suggests value, such as an e-book, video, or webinar, that a business offers in exchange for the visitor's contact information.

Once visitors fill out a form to access the gated content, brands can collect their contact information to follow up via email marketing campaigns, nurturing them into potential customers.

For example, a B2B company that sells marketing automation software might offer a gated e-book that provides helpful tips and strategies for using automation technology to generate leads.

To access the e-book, interested visitors must provide their contact information, such as name, company name, and email address. Once the visitors submit the form, the company can use their email addresses to send marketing messages promoting its marketing automation software and other related products.

Men see red

Fonts in red tend to attract men (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2018).

Unlike women, men are likelier to skim ads and use price colour as a visual heuristic to weigh up possible savings (Puccinelli et al., 2013).

Caveat: All prices need to be red. Changing the colour of one price could backfire (Ye et al., 2020).

REDUCE THE SALIENCY OF PRICES OF EMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Avoid references to money. Instead, highlight the duration of time that customers will spend.

Researchers alternated three signs for a lemonade stand:

-  Time: “Spend a little time and enjoy A&B’s lemonade.”
-  Money: “Spend a little money and enjoy A&B’s lemonade.”
-  Neutral: “Enjoy A&B’s lemonade.”

The “time” sign attracts twice as many people (who will pay twice as much; Mogilner & Aaker, 2009).

In one classic study from the days of CDs, researchers sold music CDs on a boardwalk in West Palm Beach. Every 30 minutes, an adjacent vendor switched the price of a sweatshirt he was selling between \$10 and \$80. Simply through proximity, the higher-priced sweatshirt boosted sales of CDs because they seemed cheaper (Nunes & Boatwright, 2004).

As you have seen previously, the anchoring effect works with any number. For example, in another study, people reflected on the last two digits of their social security number. If those digits were high, they were willing to pay a higher amount for products.

The anchoring effect occurs subconsciously – even when researchers subliminally expose people to a high number (Adaval & Monroe, 2002).

Therefore, show high numbers near your price:

Restaurants:

Restaurants often list the price of their appetisers before the cost of their main courses. This is because the appetiser prices serve as an anchor, making the main courses seem more affordable by comparison.

Clothing stores:

Clothing stores may list the price of clearance items before the price of their regular-priced items. The clearance items are anchored to the higher price of the regular-priced items, making them seem like a bargain by comparison.

Real estate agents:

Real estate agents may list the price of a pricey home before the cost of similar homes in the area. This makes the home seem better, even if it is still overpriced.

-  We donated £100,000 to charity.

Large numbers raise the reference price, which makes your actual price seem cheaper.

AVOID PREMIUM DISCOUNTING

Luxury discounts can be confusing. After all, many consumers buy luxury brands to boost their status. A deal may tarnish status as the brand becomes available to all.

Customers usually focus on price before quality, so luxury products don't usually win on price. However, consumers may wait for the next release of discounts, especially for premium products. (In London, at the start of each year, stores such as Selfridges selling luxury brands like Louis Vuitton often attract long lines of luxury bargain-hunting tourists.)

Remember my name

Research (Pathak et al., 2019) suggests that most languages follow the *brevity law*, which states that frequently used words are typically shorter. As a result, longer names are less common, so luxury brands with long names seem exclusive.

Researchers generated hypothetical brand names of different lengths:

- Balm → Balma → Balama
- Blim → Bolim → Bolima
- Boond → Boonad → Boonado
- Kron → Karon → Karonia
- Loomb → Loomba → Loomaba
- Molb → Molib → Moliba
- Nord → Norda → Norada
- Plit → Palit → Palita
- Plat → Polat → Polata
- Rooks → Rookso → Rookoso
- Soork → Soorko → Sooroko

Participants were likelier to associate the longer names with luxury brands (though the effect diminishes after 3–4 syllables).

When selling luxury brands online, distance models from a luxury product.

Luxury ads perform better when the model is farther away from the product (Chu et al., 2021).

Another technique, specifically for luxury brands, ensures the model looks away from the brand. It suggests the brand is so exclusive that most people aren't worthy enough to gaze directly at it!

Photos featuring products in enclosures like glass domes could be worth testing, too. Of course, not every product in a luxury store can be enshrined in glass, but the approach can boost the appeal of prestigious items. (Food products seem more appealing in glass than plastic; Balzarotti et al., 2015.)

RESTRICT THE NUMBER OF VISIBLE CONSUMERS

Unlike everyday products, luxury brands become less appealing when more people own them.

Therefore, be careful with social proof. For example, a luxury watch in one study seemed less appealing after it encouraged customers to tag their photos on Facebook (Park & Ha, 2021).

Influencer pricing

Mainstream customers weaken luxury brands, but celebrities and influencers can strengthen them (Pangarkar & Shukla, 2023).

END DISCOUNTS GRADUALLY

Consider the price of a 4K TV. Most businesses choose one of two pricing strategies:

-  Hi-Lo pricing. £999 . . . then £799.
-  Everyday low pricing. £919 every week.

But by *steadily decreasing discounts*, you gradually retract a discount:

£999 . . .
then £799 . . .
then £899 . . .
then back to £999.

Over 30 weeks, researchers tested all three pricing strategies for a £24.95 wine bottle stopper. Revenue was highest with the gradual retraction (Tsiros & Hardesty, 2010).

TIERED DISCOUNTS

Suppose a consumer gets £50 off when they spend £200. To make this discount more realistic (and so enticing), strengthen the mental imagery of spending £200 with tiered discounts:

-  £50 off £200.
-  £25 off £150.
-  £10 off £50.
-  £5 off £20.

Customers might struggle to imagine the £200 threshold, but the lowest tier – £20 – is easy to imagine.

Once they imagine spending £20, it becomes easier to imagine the next threshold of £50, then £150, and finally £200.

Lower tiers provide a sequence of images that transform a high threshold into a feasible reality.

MONTHLY REDUCTIONS

Small budgets make payments more painful (Soster et al., 2014). Therefore, discounts tend to be more appealing toward the end of the month when budgets have dwindled.

Alternatively, give free trials at the beginning of months when budgets are higher:

Free trials might be more successful at the beginning of the month or immediately after consumers receive tax refunds to ensure that budgets are not approaching exhaustion at the time of potential purchase (Soster et al., 2014).

TWO DISCOUNTS IN ASCENDING ORDER

Two small gains are better than one lump sum (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). This is where double discounts can be helpful. For example, consider offering 10% and then an extra 40%.

Better still, arrange these discounts in ascending order: 10%, then 40%. Ascending momentum makes the whole deal seem larger (Gong et al., 2019).

Round numbers: specific prices (e.g., £21.87) seem smaller (Thomas et al., 2009). Therefore, choose round numerals for discounts to enlarge their perceived size. What's more, rounded discounts are easier to calculate (Thomas & Morwitz, 2005).

EXPLAIN WHY

Why are you offering a discount? If you don't explain, your regular price could seem more expensive when it returns. This is because customers will compare the regular with the discounted price. (Temporary discounts hinder this mental process.)

Consumers are more apt to pounce on a temporary discount. So, test your copy by mentioning a "clearance" sale. Or refer to supplier price cuts.

REVERSE FRAMING

Most discounts emphasise a decrease: "Now 20% off."

Researchers tested reverse framing ("the product was X% higher") in a Swedish grocery chain.

Across products, they showed the original and sale price yet modified the framing:

 Now 31% lower.

 Was 44% higher.

Both amounts were equal. However, the latter framing: “Was X% higher,” increased daily unit sales because it depicted a larger numeral (Guha et al., 2018).

Consider a £150 purse.

A 20% discount would be £30.

So which is better to say: 20% off or save £30?

The answer depends on your price:

 Over £100? Give absolutes (e.g., £30).

 Under £100? Give percentages (e.g., 20%).

In both cases, you show the higher numeral.

 £50 purse: 20% off is the same as £10 off, yet 20 is higher than 10.

 £150 purse: The discount (£30 off) is a higher numeral (González et al., 2016).

DISCOUNTS WITH LOW DIGITS

Small digits can enlarge a perceived gap:

As 3 is 50% greater than 2, and 8 is 14% greater than 7, the absolute difference between 2 and 3 should always be greater than between 7 and 8 (Coulter & Coulter, 2007).

BUNDLING

Related to psychological chunking, offer a group of products or services at a lower overall price than if purchased separately. For example, a brand may offer a bundle of related products at a discounted rate to encourage customers to buy more.

 10 gym sessions for £150.

 Regular session for £20.

PROJECTION BIAS

A great time to sell someone a 6-months gym membership is immediately after a gym session leaves them feeling invigorated.

PRICE LINING

This involves offering products at different price points to appeal to customer segments. For example, a brand may offer a basic version of a product at a lower price point and a premium version with more features at a higher price point.

SUNK COST FALLACY

- You bought a concert ticket for £50.
- It is raining on the concert day, and you have a cold.
- Bad weather means slower traffic.
- You risk becoming more ill by going to the concert.
- It seems the current drawbacks outweigh the benefits, but you still go to the concert.

Moral: People are likely to continue a venture if they have invested in it.

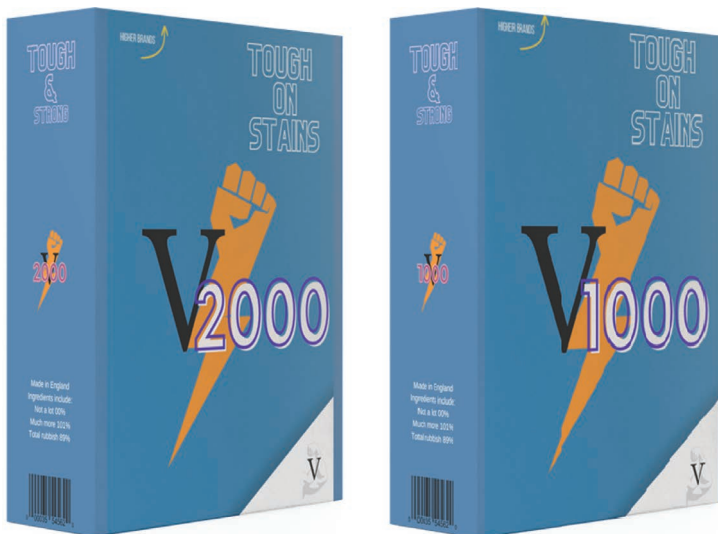
Brand bigger

Consumers usually follow a “higher is better” rule of thumb when choosing among alphanumeric brand names.

For example, below, V2000 is considered better than V1000.

Figure 7.6

The bigger the number, the more positive the perception.



Relative pricing

Price-compare your product to similar products on the market. For example, a brand may price its product slightly lower than its competitors to appear substantially more affordable.

DYNAMIC PRICING

This involves changing the price of a product based on demand and supply in real time. For example, an airline may increase the cost of a flight as seats become more limited. Or a taxi company may increase fares during rush hours.

VALUE-BASED PRICING

A brand may increase prices if doing so reflects the value in terms of time or convenience.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Set the price based on the product's supply and demand. For example, a brand may increase prices during high demand to maximise profits.

PRICE SKIMMING

Set a high price for a new product when it is first introduced, gradually lowering it. For example, a brand may submit a new product at a high price to capture early adopters and reduce costs as more competitors enter the market.

VOLUME DISCOUNTS

Brands can offer discounts for larger purchases to encourage consumers to buy more. For example, a deal may be offered if a consumer agrees to buy multiple items simultaneously.

FREEMIUM PRICING

Here you offer a basic product version for free but charge for premium features. For example, a brand may offer a free version of an app with limited features and then charge for additional benefits.

ODD NUMBERS

Your brain is wired to perceive odd numbers as precisely calculated and logical.

For example, if a product is priced at £99 instead of £100, it may seem a disproportionately better deal, even though the difference is only £1. Similarly, a service priced at £149 instead of £150 may appear more affordable and honest.

Odd numbers also create a sense of urgency. For example, consumers may buy quickly when a product costs £67 – the bargain may not last long.

At the time of the iPad's release, tablet computers were a relatively new product category, as there was no established pricing strategy.

Recognising that the tablet was a premium product, Steve Jobs priced it to create a perception of quality and exclusivity.

A \$999 price point allowed Apple to differentiate the iPad from other tablet computers which were priced lower and perceived as less valuable. By pricing the iPad higher, Apple positioned it as a premium product, appealing to a specific target market willing to pay a premium price for a high-quality device. The \$999 price point also had a psychological effect on potential buyers. The price was just below the \$1000 threshold, which seemed like a significant investment but not an extravagance.

Restaurant menus often use odd prices for their dishes, such as £14.99 or £19.95. Such prices seem more reasonable and affordable, even though they are only a few pence cheaper than a round number.

Countdown clocks

Countdown clocks create a sense of urgency and scarcity, motivating customers to act immediately.

The devices are often used in limited-time offers, flash sales, and other promotions where time is crucial. In addition, displaying a countdown clock on a website can create a sense of customer anticipation.

For example, Amazon's Prime Day sale uses countdown clocks to create a sense of scarcity before a sale closes.

Expedia and Booking.com use countdown clocks to spur customers to book flights or hotels before prices increase or rooms sell out.

FAIR PRICING

This involves pricing a product to appear reasonable to the consumer. For example, a brand may offer a product that matches its competitors' prices.

As with any aspect of digital marketing, craft pricing strategies that resonate rationally and emotionally. Remember that thanks to online information such as price-checking sites, your audience may know more about your brand than you assume.

Whereas in the past the expression *caveat emptor* ("buyer beware") warned consumers of shady sales practices, today, thanks to the web, there is so much information about virtually any product or service via rating apps and customer reviews that the expression *caveat venditor* would be more apt.

BRAIN SELLS: OVERVIEW

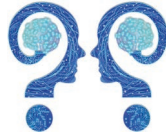
-  FOMM stands for fear of missing me.
-  Selfies are manipulated snippets from biographies for social media.
-  Naïve realism is the belief that perceptions are accurate.
-  People often see things as they appear to be, even if in reality they are not.
-  Synaesthesia is when one sense is experienced through another.
-  Reality is based on personal experiences, knowledge, and culture.
-  Individuals share perceptions in a united reality.
-  Illusory superiority explains why people overestimate their abilities and underestimate others.
-  The Müller-Lyer illusion demonstrates how visual cues can influence perception.
-  Cultural backgrounds can shape perceptual biases.
-  Vampire shopping is late-night online shopping driven by insomnia and impulse purchases.
-  Impulse buying may be driven by mood, inadequacy, or stress.
-  Buyer's remorse can be eased through refunds or exchanges.
-  Oniomania is a compulsive spending disorder.
-  People sense the pain of losing something more than gaining it.
-  Offering discounts can incentivise repeat purchases.
-  Increasing involvement makes it harder for consumers to leave a sales process.
-  Contextual cues influence consumer judgments and preferences.
-  Visual elements and design techniques can influence decision-making.
-  Feature eyes to draw attention to headlines and prices.
-  Cultural norms shape perceptual biases.
-  People invest in stories, value, and personal meaning, not just price.
-  Value can be demonstrated through social proof and guarantees.
-  Cognitive biases can sway otherwise hesitant consumers.
-  Semiotics and symbols play a crucial role in advertising and marketing.
-  Framing and anchoring tactics influence decision-making.

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8 Alone together

This chapter explores the absorbing world of social media. You will learn what makes the space so psychologically compelling, yet when managed irresponsibly, potentially damaging. You will see how responsibly conditioning an audience changes attitudes and behaviours, helping you build a loyal consumer base. The chapter also tackles the question of social identity and how, through understanding online personalities, your social media strategy can feel congruent. The Golden Triangle reveals the three most powerful ways to build effective social content. One of the ways, user-generated content, is explored, including showing you the best examples of its practical use. The chapter also tackles contentious areas, including social gamification and managing trolls. Finally, it draws on modern examples, such as the Eurovision Song Contest, to demonstrate the best practice use of channels like TikTok and the power of social influencers.

Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook at Harvard University in February 2004. Within days there were 650 student accounts. Today, there are roughly 2 billion active users daily.

Alexey Makarin, an assistant professor at MIT Sloan and colleagues Luca Braghieri of Bocconi University and Ro'ee Levy of Tel Aviv University paired the rollout of Facebook in colleges with 430,000 responses from the National College Health Assessment, a semi-annual survey of mental health and well-being on campuses across the US. They found a significant link between the presence of Facebook and a deterioration in mental health among college students (Braghieri et al., 2022).

Since 2017 it has been consistently reported that around 90% of American babies will be on social media before their second birthday (Kim et al., 2023; Wier, 2017).

Excessive use can lead to a condition known as *social media disorder* (SMD), characterised by compulsive use despite adverse consequences.

Pew Research Center studies revealed that approximately 11% of Americans aged 18–29 experience symptoms of SMD, which was higher among young adults, with 22% of those aged 18–24 experiencing addiction symptoms (Van den Eijnden et al., 2016; Moreno, et al., 2022).

In 2023, the media warned that SMD was set to rise as AI leaves more people with time on their hands, especially as social media platforms are designed to be highly engaging and addictive (Schmidt & Eric, 2023).

A national survey by Pitt's Center for Research on Media, Technology and Health found that using multiple social media platforms is strongly associated with depression and anxiety among young adults (University of Pittsburgh, Brain Institute, 2023). The University of California, San Francisco, also found that people who used social media for more than 2 hours per day were more likely to experience anxiety and depression (Primack et al., 2017; Brown, 2018).

Additionally, a study by the University of Cambridge found that people on social media before bedtime were more likely to experience anxiety and insomnia (Nesi et al., 2022).

Symptoms of social media disorder include neglecting responsibilities and activities, feeling a compulsive need to check social media notifications and updates, experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety or depression when unable to access social media, experiencing negative consequences such as strained relationships or decreased work or academic performance, and continually seeking validation and attention through social media likes, comments, and shares.

Effective treatments for social media disorder include cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), and motivational interviewing (MI). Such treatments help individuals to identify negative thoughts and behaviours, accept their thoughts and feelings, regulate emotions, and develop skills for interpersonal effectiveness.

The stats speak for themselves

-  By 2025, the number of active social network users is expected to reach 4.41 billion monthly (Statista; Dixon, 2023).
-  Social media is the digital home of nearly 58.5% of the world's population.
-  Average daily social media usage amounts to 2 hours and 27 minutes (Smart Insights, 2022; Chaffey, 2023).
-  Some 210 million people worldwide suffer from Internet and social media addiction. Studies further suggest that the situation will only worsen (Influencer Marketing Hub; Longstreet & Brooks, 2017).
-  Social media sees some teens logged in more than 7 hours each day.
-  Fifty-three per cent of children own a smartphone by the time they're 11 (Common Sense Media; Robb, 2019).
-  Symptoms of depression are twice as likely to appear in teens spending more than 5 hours a day on smartphones (NPR; Kamenetz, 2019).
-  Ninety per cent of people aged 18–29 use social media in any form available. Those aged 30–49, 82%; those aged 50–64, 69%; and those aged 65+, 40% (Statista; Clement, 2020).

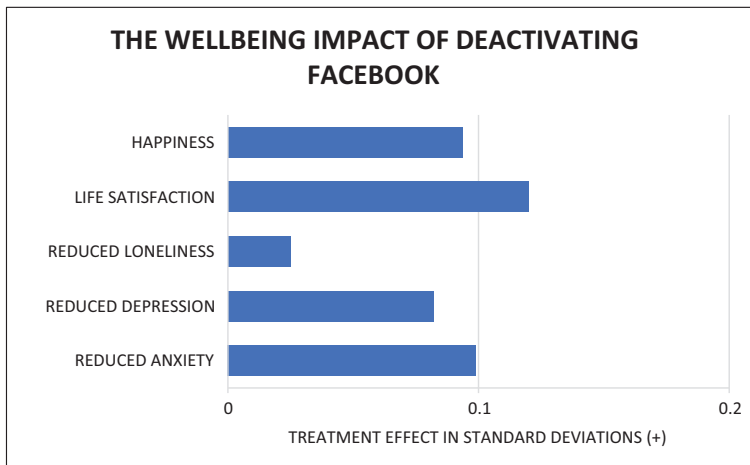
THE LONELIEST SPOT IS AT THE HEART OF A CROWD

Among young American adults, loneliness has increased since 1976.

The US Surgeon General concludes: “Socially physically connected people live longer. Conversely, social isolation is associated with a 29% increase in the risk of heart disease and a 32% increase in the risk of stroke” (Xia & Li, 2018).

Figure 8.1

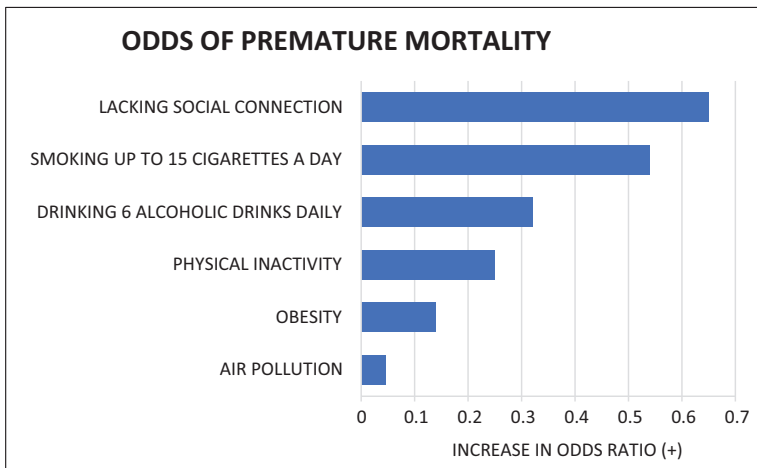
Welfare impact of deactivating Facebook.



Source: Allcott et al. (2020).

Figure 8.2

Odds of premature death.



Source: Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015).

POWER TO ALL OUR FRIENDS

Facebook's mission statement was "Give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected." By 2017 the platform had developed artificial intelligence to identify users at risk of completing suicide. In addition, the social network developed algorithms that could spot warning signs in posts and comments from users' friends (Newton, 2017).

In 2021 Wall Street Journal reported that comparisons on Instagram could change how young women viewed and described themselves.

Facebook's researchers repeatedly found Instagram harmful, notably to teenage girls (Wells et al., 2021).

The Wall Street Journal reported that of the teens reporting suicidal thoughts, 13% of British and 6% of American users traced the wish to kill themselves to Instagram.

On average, teens in the US spend 50% more time on Instagram than on Facebook.

At a congressional hearing in March 2021, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said, "Using social apps to connect with others can have positive mental health benefits" (Ghaffary, 2021). (At the time, Instagram's head Adam Mosseri reportedly told reporters that the app's effects on teen well-being would be "quite small"; Criddle, 2021).

In 2023, Tinder's former CEO was looking to raise venture capital for an AI-powered relationship coach called Amoraï, offering support to young adults struggling with loneliness. Call Annie (<https://callannie.ai>) was promoted as an "AI friend" you can phone or FaceTime to ask anything you want. A similar product, Replika, had millions of users.

AI sex-robot vendors saw sales increase by 50% during the early 2020s Covid pandemic. At the time of writing, so-called *sextech* is set to become a \$53 billion industry by 2026 (Marr, 2020). (Also see Foresight, page 20 and Chapter 6, Modelling excellence, page 299.)

SOCRATES' ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

The allegory of the cave, described by Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, is a thought-provoking metaphor that can be applied to social media.

Socrates describes a group of prisoners chained in a cave since birth, facing a wall where they can only see shadows of objects passing by. They believe the shadows are the only reality, as they have never experienced anything else.

Like the prisoners in the allegory, many people spend hours scrolling through their feeds, consuming a curated version of reality that may not be entirely accurate.

Social media platforms engage users with content that aligns with their interests or beliefs. Unfortunately, this can create an echo chamber effect, where people are only exposed to viewpoints reinforcing their ideas, leading to a distorted perception of reality.

Just as the prisoners in the cave could not see the outside world, social media users may be unaware of their online behaviour's impact on the world around them.

It is easier than ever to spread misinformation. Many impulsively share articles or posts without fact-checking or verifying sources. Aided by AI, this can lead to the spread of false information – with real-world consequences.

In Aristotle's allegory, one of the prisoners is freed and brought out of the cave, where he finally sees the world as it truly is. This experience is jarring and disorienting, as the prisoner is forced to confront a multi-coloured reality vastly different from what he had previously believed.

Similarly, people heavily influenced by social media may find it difficult to adjust to the real world, where beliefs and assumptions may be challenged.

Just as the prisoner eventually freed from the cave is told to return to free his fellow inmates, arguably, those who have become aware of the limitations of social media have a responsibility to share their knowledge so others can choose to break free from the addictive cycle of misinformation and echo chambers. (Also see Descartes, Chapter 2, I vs AI, part 1: Ai am.)

Marketers can build a more informed and connected society by being mindful of how social media can influence perceptions and behaviours.

THE UPSIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Of course, social media has many positive effects.

-  It gives a voice to marginalised communities and provides a platform for activism and social change.
-  People can connect worldwide to share experiences and perspectives in a global village.
-  Social media can humanise a brand.
-  Brands can build trust, loyalty, authority, recognition, credibility, and trustworthiness by showing the people behind the brand and featuring actual product users.
-  From a psychological/sociological standpoint, social media can provide social integration with similar interest groups.
-  Responsibly created social content can encourage healthy and body-positive lifestyle motivations.
-  Social media can direct users to support groups and maintain and build new relationships.
-  Social media allows digital marketers to target campaigns at communities sharing like-minded values, so they are more willing to share mutually beneficial content.
-  Social media is effective for customer feedback service and support, providing a quick and efficient way to address customer needs.

BEHAVE!

Perhaps part of the answer as to why so many are hooked to social media could be down to bells and dogs.

Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) is perhaps best known for his experiments in classical conditioning with dogs. He paired a bell with an unconditioned stimulus – food. Over time, the dogs associated the bell with the food and would salivate at the sound alone. The process has been replicated in countless experiments and has become a fundamental principle of behavioural psychology.

Classical conditioning shapes consumer behaviour and drives brand engagement, for example, through discounts or pairing a brand with a respected influencer.

PROOF OF INFLUENCE

The cosmetics brand Kylie Cosmetics built a massive following on social media using influencer marketing. The brand partnered with high-profile influencers such as Kylie Jenner, who at the time had over 160 million followers on Instagram. Kylie Cosmetics created a positive brand association and increased content engagement by pairing their products with Jenner's image and reputation. (Also see Social validation, page 373.)

LAW OF EFFECT

Edward Lee Thorndike (1874–1949) was a prominent American psychologist famous for his work on learning theory, which led to an understanding of *operant conditioning* within behaviourism (Postman, 1947). For example, his “law of effect” suggests that responses immediately followed by satisfaction are more likely to recur, while behaviours followed by dissatisfaction or discomfort are less likely to occur. As with other conditioning tactics, the principle has influenced advertising campaigns by associating positive emotions with a brand or product. (Also see Four types of operant conditioning, page 359.)

THE MORE YOU DO – THE MORE YOU’LL DO

B. F. Skinner (1904–1990) was another conditioning pioneer. His experiments with rats and pigeons showed that animals could be trained to perform various tasks, from pressing levers to more complex behaviours like navigating mazes (Magazine & Koren, 2013).

While classical conditioning draws on a stimulus and reaction model, operant conditioning involves behaviour and consequence. Both work on the principle that when a person performs an action and receives positive reinforcement (a reward), they will repeat that action more often in the future.

The main difference is that:

- 🧠 Classical conditioning leads to an unconscious effect.
- 🧠 Operant conditioning involves a conscious choice.

Operant conditioning has important implications for shaping user behaviour and driving brand engagement. Rewards such as discounts can be used to engage with brands.

When someone buys something after clicking on an Instagram ad banner (a positive consequence), they become more likely to click another ad the next time they visit the channel (another positive impact).

Social validation refers to individuals' tendency to emulate others' actions to fit in or belong to a group. By highlighting the actions of other users, such as sharing positive reviews or testimonials, brands can use social validation to incentivise users to engage with their content.

People are more likely to trust content created by others like themselves rather than by the brand. After all, we are social creatures who value the opinions of people we know. So, when consumers see respected peers enjoying a product or service, they are more likely to want to try it to feel part of a loyal group.

FOUR TYPES OF OPERANT CONDITIONING

- 🧠 Positive reinforcers: the addition of a reward.
- 🧠 Negative reinforcers: the removal of a punishment.
- 🧠 Positive punishers: the addition of punishment.
- 🧠 Negative punishers: the removal of a reward.

Good behaviours followed by a reward increase; good behaviours followed by punishment decrease.

REINFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

Behavioural predictability depends on the frequency and consistency of reinforcement. Options for reinforcement in operant conditioning include:

- 🧠 *Continuous*: reinforcement every time the behaviour occurs.
- 🧠 *Fixed-ratio schedules*: reinforcement after the behaviour occurs several times.

-  *Fixed-interval schedules*: reinforcement after the behaviour occurs for a specific time.
-  *Variable-ratio schedules*: a response is reinforced after an unpredictable number of responses. This creates a steady, high rate of response. (Gambling and lottery games are good examples of a reward based on a variable-ratio schedule.)
-  *Variable-interval schedules*: the time interval is not always the same but centres around some average length of time.

CONSEQUENTIAL CONDITIONING

As any parent knows, behaviour is likely to be reinforced if actions have a specific consequence.

According to the 2019 study “Dopamine’s Effects on Corticostriatal Synapses During Reward-Based Behaviours” (Bamford et al., 2018), the success of learned responses is directly related to the release of dopamine. (See Chapter 1, Atlas of your mind.)

If the consequence of a behaviour is randomly presented, the consistency in behavioural response may be varied and more erratic. When a behaviour isn’t reinforced or rewarded for an extended period, it may lead initially to a diminished reaction and, ultimately, extinction of that response.

Critics argue that some conditioning techniques are manipulative and may even contribute to the addictive nature of social media platforms. Additionally, users may become resistant to these techniques over time, leading to diminishing returns for brands.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Social identity theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), helps marketers better understand their target audience’s group identity and influence. The theory asserts that people derive their sense of identity and self-worth from the social groups to which they belong.

One of the key ways that social identity theory impacts social media marketing is through *social proof*. People are more likely to believe and follow the actions of others in their social group. As a result, they share content that aligns with their group identity or reinforces their group’s loyalty, values, and beliefs.

For example, a sports brand could build a community around a particular team where fans share experiences and engage with the brand’s fans.

Social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook prominently display how many followers, likes, and comments a user has. These metrics signal to others that the user is popular and influential. As a result, brands can partner with influencers with a large following and align with their target audience’s group identity.

"BRITAIN: THE MOST CLASS-RIDDEN SOCIETY UNDER THE SUN" (GEORGE ORWELL)

Social media has long been awash with arguing factions. This reflects the notion of *social categorisation*, which emphasises the similarities of people in the same group and the differences between people in separate groups.

In terms of social identity, people often behave how they believe members of a group should act. They become emotionally invested in their group memberships. The status of their groups impacts self-esteem.

People compare their group with others in terms of prestige and social standing. They perceive their in-group as enjoying a higher social status than an out-group to maintain self-esteem.

For example:

A movie star might judge himself favourably . . .

. . . compared to a reality TV show star,

yet perceive themselves as having . . .

. . . a lower social standing than . . .

. . . a classically trained Shakespearean actor.

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Producing content for social media is very different from creating traditional marketing campaigns. In conventional campaigns, marketing provides compelling facts tailored for specific consumers to choose a product or service. Social media additionally incorporates three key approaches forming The Golden Triangle of social content.

Entertain

Social media is an entertainment platform that informs. Enter-*train*-ment explains concepts engagingly, treating consumers to fascinating, often fun facts, without appearing staid and lacklustre.

Involve

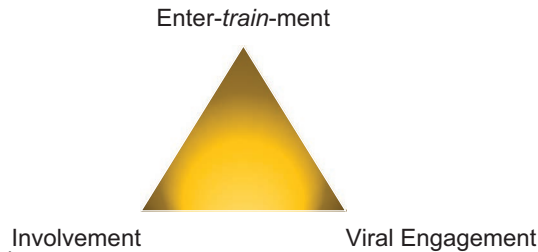
Social media openly encourages interaction by inviting consumers to contribute their interpretation of a brand's practical relevance. This could include filter-effect posts on TikTok, opinion posts on LinkedIn, and Instagram photo posts.

Viral engagement

Centring on engaging entertainment, social media content becomes the "joint property" of a brand and its fanbase.

Figure 8.3

The social content Golden Triangle



UGC IN SOCIAL

There are several ways to feature user-generated content (UGC) in your marketing. Here are a few:

- 🧠 Feature UGC on your website and social media channels to increase visibility and reach.
- 🧠 Feature UGC throughout your marketing materials, such as websites, mobile apps, emails, digital screens, and more.
- 🧠 Run contests. Host Q&A sessions or offer giveaways that encourage user engagement.
- 🧠 Be authentic. Consumers have an innate ability to spot fakes.
- 🧠 Be selective. Only use relevant and engaging content.
- 🧠 Reply to UGC. When people take the time to create UGC for your brand, thank them for their feedback.
- 🧠 Reward consumers for posting photos and videos or receiving likes and comments.
- 🧠 Moderate UGC by deciding whether it is instantly displayed on your site or posts are gradually added.
- 🧠 Scale the volume of UGC by adding calls to action to every customer touchpoint, from product packaging to websites and emails.

GREAT SOCIAL UGC

According to the SemRush State of Search Report (2023), over 86% of businesses had a user-generated content strategy (see also University of Brighton, 2017).

In January 2023, Ipsos MediaCT, Crowdtap, and the Social Media Advertising Consortium surveyed 839 millennials aged 18 to 36 (see also Foong, 2023).

- 🧠 Overall, millennials spent roughly 18 hours (not mutually exclusive) with different media types per day. This often included viewing multiple devices at once.
- 🧠 Millennials spend 5.4 hours a day with content created by their peers. This represents 30% of their total media time, only rivalled by combined traditional media types (print, radio, and television at 33%).
- 🧠 Seventy-one per cent of millennials said they engaged in social media daily (TV was 60%).
- 🧠 Millennials reported that UGC content was trusted 50% more than other media sources, including TV, newspapers, and magazines. Significantly, the study showed that peer reviews were slightly more trustworthy than professional reviews.
- 🧠 Millennials reported that UGC was 20% more influential on purchase decisions than other media.
- 🧠 A 2022 Crowdtap insights poll reported that more than 50% of a sample group of 900 millennials referred to UGC before making big purchases like cars and major electronics (TV, computer, tablets, etc.; see also Kunsman, 2020).

United Nations Foundation

In the #EqualEverywhere hashtag campaign, the United Nations Foundation asks visitors to pledge and join their fight for an equal future. In addition to donations, supporters share ready-made social media templates with family and friends.

The campaign exemplifies how non-profit making organisations can use social media for fundraising. Whilst traditional marketing channels (phone calls, street marketing, print advertising, etc.) are still important, a successful UGC campaign helps organisations reach new audiences without geographical boundaries – with minimal resources and far more precise targeting than traditional routes.

University of Wisconsin

Gen Z students value authenticity and are naturally sceptical about advertising. The #UWGrad page on the University of Wisconsin website helps increase awareness and reach. User-generated content attracts potential students with social proof while nurturing relationships with existing students, staff, and other stakeholders.

Philips

The #LifeAtPhilips hashtag feed on the Our Culture page for Philips is an excellent example of how employees can engage their workforce in creating content. In addition, UGC helps Philips tap into their employees' social media networks.

New Zealand national cricket team

The team features a digital social wall with Instagram images, tweets, and YouTube videos embedded on its site. Players, fans, and trusted news sources often mention the wall.

UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL LANGUAGE OF GEN Z AND YOUTUBE

Over 30 million people and 50,000 teams worldwide rely on Grammarly's AI grammar tools daily. (Grammarly, 2022). Shannon Everley is Grammarly's head of acquisition. In 2023, her company studied Gen Z's vocabulary to produce a YouTube social marketing campaign. "This generation has a tremendous bullshit radar. We wanted to produce a campaign specifically aimed at this audience. It had to show what Grammarly did. We wanted it to be funny and passionate" (Google, 2023).

Everley worked with the creative effectiveness lead at Google and content creator, Johannes Helms. He explains that his biggest challenge was "Getting the Gen-Z humour right. (Google, 2023). It often doesn't make sense to people who just don't get it. We did a lot of research on various social media platforms. I think Gen-Z is sometimes sarcastic or a little bit negative.

YouTube changed advertising. You can skip a video at any point."

Everley recommends:

-  Get the audience hooked.
-  Have something intriguing to say from the get-go.
-  In the story structure, have a heartbeat between product moments which explain the product and light-hearted entertainment moments.
-  Ensure it's properly framed and cropped to see it on the small screen.
-  Close it out with a clear and direct call to action.
-  Talk with the audience directly, and you should be good to go.

Also see Experience, Live it, Chapter 6, page 311.

Grammarly's approach is supported by Julia Eisenberg, EVP, Sago Strategy + Insight. Speaking to *Digital Journal* in 2023, she said:

Tailoring the customer experience to Gen Z starts with understanding the social and economic upheaval they've experienced all their lives, their citizenship as digital natives, and their passion for advocacy.

Gen-Z is unapologetically diverse; they know the impact of their influence and feel concerned about the state of the world. They want to see how a business is run and tell the brand what they think about its ads, products, and profits.

Amongst the fickle Gen-Z, loyalty is earned or lost in a moment. A brand that ignores a cause risks Gen-Z overlooking the brand. Gen-Z's attention, engagement, and loyalty are earned when brands prove their purpose beyond profit alone.

Brand narratives have a more significant impact on Gen-Z than singular messages, and brands should offer many entry points to allow Gen-Z to self-select how they engage. A self-aware brand state is vital to a positive Gen-Z customer experience.

(Sandle, 2023)

Explore how leading brands utilise Instagram for yourself.

Daniel Wellington – contest-driven content

Daniel Wellington uses hashtags and customer photos to invite participation in unique DW contests. In addition, their “Photo of the Day” campaign encourages regular UGC creation.

Samsung – context is everything

Samsung uses campaign-specific hashtags to encourage people to try out the new capabilities of different products (#withGalaxy).

Airbnb – storytelling

Airbnb features the experiences of satisfied customers by showing high-res images of destination snapshots. (Instagram photos, including locations, receive 79% more engagement; Hubspot, 2023; see also Kolowich, 2019).

Easy Lunch Boxes – encouraging customers to become more creative

Easy Lunch Boxes asks consumers to send photos of tempting lunches. Respondents associate the brand with an enjoyable experience.

Swatch – easy to discover

Swatch uses their “#YOURMOVE” and “#SwatchSKIN” hashtags to curate user-generated photos.

Hashtags help make customer photos simple to search. (Instagram photos including at least one hashtag deliver 11% more engagement.)

According to social media expert Louise Myers (louisem.com), the top 20 Instagram hashtags for 2023 were:

#love

#interiordesign

#design
#fashion
#instagood
#style
#inspiration
#art
#travel
#summer
#realestate
#foodie
#homedecor
#smallbusiness
#shoplocal
#motivation
#wellness
#health
#lifestyle
#beauty.

Converse – the power of customer-driven photo campaigns

Converse’s “ForeverChuck” campaign shows products in real-world settings rather than on a traditional product page.

Starbucks – reaping the #Regram

Starbucks masters the art of the “regram” by compiling their “best of” regrams into a yearly gallery. This strategy creates a sense of competition among the brand’s followers and encourages a stream of creative customer photos.

SOCIAL GAMIFICATION

As you read in Chapter 6, gamification is another route to operant conditioning. This can include point systems, quizzes, and challenges.

For example, the fitness app Nike Training Club uses gamification to incentivise users to exercise regularly. The app offers rewards and badges, creating a sense

of accomplishment and incentivising users to continue engaging with the brand. On the other hand, if someone receives negative reinforcement (punishment), such as using water during a drought, to avoid a fine they may stop using their hosepipes.

As with many psychological techniques, there are potential downsides to using operant conditioning in social media marketing. Tactics can be manipulative and even contribute to the addictive nature of social media platforms. However, when used responsibly and ethically, conditioning can be a powerful tool for driving engagement and promoting positive behaviours.

PUTTING EVERYTHING ON BLACK

According to *Casino Guardian*, which focuses on the latest news from the UK's casino industry, in 2021, globally, there were roughly 3.24 billion gamers (close to the global working-age population of approximately 3.53 billion). Forecasts for the upcoming years predict the global online gambling sector will reach \$153.57 billion by 2030 (Stevens et al., 2021).

Gaming addicts spend 60 to 100 hours weekly on the computer, phone, or gaming console, often more (Guardian Casino, 2023). The World Health Organisation added gaming disorders to the 11th International Classification of Diseases revision in 2022 (World Health Organization, 2023). It identifies several major characteristics, including:

-  Impaired control over gaming.
-  Gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities.
-  Continuation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.
-  (To be diagnosed as pathological, a gaming behaviour pattern must be evident for at least 1 year).
-  Withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, irritability, and sadness should be present when the person does not play for some time.

Common symptoms of video game addiction include:

-  Poor performance at school/work or failure to handle household responsibilities.
-  A need to increase gaming time to reach optimal enjoyment (similar to being addicted to drugs).
-  Ignoring previously enjoyed activities and in-person social relationships.
-  Using video games to escape or cope with problems at work, school, or home.
-  A decline in personal hygiene as a result of excessive gaming.

-  Increased obsessive tidiness (echoing the need to command gaming skills).
-  Inability to quit or moderate gaming.
-  Lying about the amount of time spent playing video games.
-  A 2023 study by the UK National Health Service (NHS) highlighted that children as young as 13 years old play up to 14 hours per day, which accounts for more than half of the day (NHS England, 2023).

CRYPTO-COCAINE

In the world of cryptocurrency trading, Crypto addicts describe their experience “as any gambler would label their gambling addiction,” said Anthony Marini, a senior therapist at Edinburgh’s Castle Craig, the world’s first specialist crypto addiction centre for spread betting online trading, and the trading of cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ripple, and Litecoin (Gyimesi, 2022).

Extreme gamification offers an escape from the strained realities of life. Whilst a tiny minority of video game players may progress to generate impressive incomes from becoming professional gamers, for the majority, when taken to excesses, the addictive nature of gamification can be costly – in terms of finances and mental health. Away from digital marketing, using gamification techniques to keep consumers hooked to sites, many online games feature levels that constantly require modest top-up funds to help players reach higher levels.

Just as fruit-flavoured vaping is a gateway to nicotine, extreme gamification could leave some people craving more and more. As Meta’s promised Metaverse becomes increasingly sophisticated, it too may further detach people from the ability to face the game of life rather than resigning to become a gamer for life.

RETAILER STALKING

Behavioural targeting and retargeting ads on Facebook appear when someone visits another website – even if they don’t buy anything. This is called *retailer stalking*, also known as online behavioural advertising (OBA) or behavioural targeting. Online advertisers use the technique to display targeted ads to consumers. Information about their browsing behaviour is collected, including the types of products searched.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TROLLS

As you have seen, social media is a club sandwich of negatives and positives. Unfortunately, one of the most prevalent negatives is trolling – deliberately provoking and harassing others online.

Trolls often use derogatory language, personal attacks, and threats to intimidate victims and gain attention. In addition, they may engage in cyberbullying, spreading false information, and disrupting online conversations.

Trolls tend to target individuals or groups based on their race, gender, religion, political views, or any other characteristic they find offensive or believe they can belittle.

Some do it for fun or to pass the time, others to express their frustration, anger, or hate towards others. Some may even have psychological issues such as narcissism, sadism, or a lack of empathy.

Men are more likely to troll than women (Buckels et al., 2014). Researchers have attributed this to gender stereotypes (March & Steele, 2020), where hypermasculine characteristics such as aggression and dominance are typically encouraged (Feinstein et al., 2013).

Researchers have explored the dark tetrad personality traits (Chabrol et al., 2009) as predictors of trolling perpetration.

As you read in Chapter X, the dark triad comprises:

-  Machiavellianism
-  Psychopathy
-  Narcissism.

Machiavellianism concerns strategically manipulating and exploiting others (Jones & Paulhus, 2013). Psychopathy concerns impulsivity, low empathy, and shallow affect (Jain et al., 2023).

Some trolls may have a reduced ability to empathise with others (a trait commonly associated with psychopathy). This may make it easier to engage in cruel behaviour without experiencing guilt or remorse.

High scorers on measures of psychopathy are more likely to engage in trolling behaviour online.

The *shallow effect* notably reduces appropriate emotional responses to situations and events. Another term is *flat affect* – a lack of emotional expression or range.

Sadism is another trolling trait; it derives pleasure from other people's suffering (Paulhus & Dutton, 2016).

A study published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences* found that sadism was the strongest predictor of trolling behaviour, even above other personality traits such as psychopathy and Machiavellianism.

Sadists may troll to engage in socially deviant and anonymous behaviour, enhancing feelings of power and control (Buckels et al., 2014; March, 2019; Sest & March, 2017). This is because of the callous and impulsive characteristics of psychopathy and the sadistic pleasure of harming others (March & Steele, 2020; Sest & March, 2017).

For those with high Machiavellianism, the reckless, impulsive nature of trolling may not suit their controlled and calculating nature; they are simply too self-absorbed to be bothered with the effort of trolling (Craker & March, 2016).

FACES OF NARCISSISM

Narcissists may engage in risky or unethical behaviour to maintain superiority or achieve goals. In addition, they may struggle with relationships, as they may be unwilling or unable to empathise with others or to see the world from their perspective.

One-dimensional narcissism is focused on the Self and lacks empathy or concern for others. Typically, one-dimensional narcissists have an exaggerated sense of self-importance, a need to be admired, and a lack of interest in the feelings or needs of others. People with one-dimensional narcissism are often preoccupied with their success, status, and appearance and may be unwilling to acknowledge or address their shortcomings or weaknesses.

The *two-dimensional* narcissistic admiration and rivalry model (Back et al., 2013) suggests that narcissists corroborate their grandiose sense of Self through two distinct pathways (admiration and rivalry).

The *three-facet structure* of narcissism includes grandiose (agentic), vulnerable (neurotic), and antagonistic forms (Miller et al., 2016); however, this model lacks the inclusion of communal narcissism (Gebauer et al., 2012).

People with *agentic narcissism* place their achievement and success before personal relationships. They will likely be ambitious and competitive, driven by a need for power, status, and recognition.

Some with insecurity, low self-esteem, and hypersensitivity to criticism may be vulnerable (neurotic) narcissists. They tend to be susceptible to rejection and have difficulty forming meaningful relationships.

Because recognising vulnerable narcissism can be more challenging, it is sometimes called *covert narcissism*. People may appear shy, introverted, and self-effacing despite having a strong sense of entitlement and a need for attention and admiration.

Common signs of vulnerable narcissism

-  Hypersensitivity to criticism or rejection.
-  Feelings of inferiority or insecurity.
-  A tendency to be self-critical or self-doubting.
-  Difficulty forming close relationships.
-  A need for constant reassurance and validation.
-  A tendency to be passive-aggressive or manipulative in relationships.

People with *communal narcissism* may be convinced they are exceptionally social, likeable, and helpful. Seeking power and influence within their community or group, they may use their perceived altruism to gain admiration and attention. However, they probably lack any genuine concern for others.

The *four-facet* spectrum of narcissism comprises four qualitatively distinctive facets:

-  Agentic.
-  Communal.
-  Antagonistic.
-  Neurotic (Mota et al., 2019).

Both agentic and communal narcissists want to be well-regarded (Nowak et al., 2022).

While people with high agentic narcissism self-promote through charm and extraversion (Luo et al., 2014), individuals with high communal narcissism may exploit normal prosocial behaviour to gain social acceptance and connections (Luo et al., 2014).

Prosocial behaviour includes donating money to charity, volunteering, comforting a friend through a difficult time, and sharing resources with others in need.

Antagonistic narcissists are self-defensive, arrogant, and exploit relationships (Mota et al., 2019).

Finally, those with high neurotic (i.e., vulnerable) narcissism may be hypersensitive, insecure (Nowak et al., 2022), and covet the approval of others (Mota et al., 2019).

Trolls often feel a sense of power and control over others, which can particularly appeal to individuals who feel powerless offline (Stea, 2020).

Trolls yearn for attention. Trolling delivers. It can feel rewarding in two ways: the pleasure from antagonising a target (positive reinforcement) and, in some cases, the joy the troll experiences when they sense themselves superior to the target (negative reinforcement).

Some may engage in online behaviour to relieve boredom or as entertainment. Trolling offers a way to hide in the shadows whilst expressing anger or frustration. Trolls may vent to cope with other personally sensitive emotions, such as low self-esteem.

Trolling can cause emotional distress, anxiety, and even depression. Victims may feel isolated, helpless, and afraid to express themselves online. They may also experience a loss of trust in social media and the Internet as a whole.

Trolling can also impact society more broadly, leading to increased polarisation. For example, trolls often target individuals or groups based on their political views, religion, or other characteristics, creating an Us vs Them mentality. This can lead to a lack of understanding and empathy between different groups and a rise in hate speech and intolerance.

Trolls: stoking the fires of hate = ££\$€€€

In 2021, former Facebook executive Frances Haugen testified as an official corporate whistle-blower in front of Congress. She recommended that Facebook should “declare moral bankruptcy” (Perrigo, 2021).

In an interview with *60 Minutes* on CBS, Haugen claimed that social media algorithms are responsible for many of Facebook's problems. Those problems include fuelling polarisation, misinformation, and other toxic content. Haugen shared that Facebook knows that if they make the algorithms safer, "people will spend less time on the site, they'll click on fewer ads, they'll make less money."

In essence, algorithms were goading people with conflicting opinions to participate in a cyber-fist fight. The more people monitored or became involved in an online argument on, for example, X (formerly Twitter), the more views the quarrel received – and hence greater exposure for any would-be advertisers.

Tactics to counter trolling



Set clear community guidelines.

Prominently publish clear community guidelines prohibiting trolling and other forms of harassment on their social media platforms.



Monitor accounts.

Monitor social media accounts regularly to identify and remove trolling or inappropriate behaviour. Provide a system to report and promptly respond to trolling incidents.



Engage in positive chats.

Focus on creating positive social media conversations promoting respect, empathy, and understanding by encouraging users to share opinions and ideas constructively and respectfully.



Partner with influencers.

Partner with influencers with a positive and inclusive message to promote brands and products. Influencers can help create a supportive community, reducing the likelihood of trolling and other negative behaviours.

TROLL EXAMPLES ---

Gamergate

The Gamergate controversy began in 2014. Gamers targeted female game developers and journalists with online harassment and threats. The trolls accused them of promoting a feminist agenda in video games and sought to silence them.

The impact of Gamergate was significant, leading to a breakdown of civil discourse in the gaming community and a rise in hate speech and intolerance. As a result, marketers in the gaming industry took a stand against trolling and harassment, setting clear community guidelines and partnering with influencers who promoted a positive and inclusive message.

Dove Real Beauty campaign

Launched in 2004, the Dove Real Beauty campaign challenged traditional beauty standards by promoting body positivity. The campaign featured women of all shapes, sizes, and ages, celebrating their unique beauty.

However, the campaign also attracted trolls who sought to undermine the campaign's message of inclusivity and self-acceptance.

Dove responded by engaging in positive conversations with its followers, encouraging them to share their stories and experiences. The brand also partnered with influencers who promoted body positivity and self-love, creating a supportive community on social media. (Also see Chapter 6, *Modelling excellence*, page 305.)

Black Lives Matter

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, launched in 2013, aimed to raise awareness of police brutality and general racism against black people in the US. The movement gained widespread support on social media, with users sharing their stories and experiences and calling for change.

However, the movement also attracted trolls who criticised its message accusing BLM of promoting violence and divisiveness.

Marketers responded by partnering with influencers supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and promoting social justice. They also set clear community guidelines prohibiting trolling and other forms of harassment.

CARROT AND STICK

Social media operant conditioning creates habits and routines. As you have seen, Skinner demonstrated that behaviour could be shaped through positive reinforcement, such as rewards, and these behaviours could become automatic over time.

Platforms can be habit-forming. By using rewards and other forms of positive reinforcement to form habits and routines, social media can incentivise users to feel compelled to engage with content. For example, TikTok hooks more than 1 billion users. The platform uses various techniques, such as rewards and social validation, to incentivise users to regularly create and engage with content.

TIKTOK TEENS – UNDER THE INFLUENCE

“We know so little about the effects of TikTok,” warns Philipp Lorenz-Spreen, a research scientist at Berlin's Max Planck Institute for Human Development (Paul, 2022a).

“Research often lags behind the industry; that could become a big problem.” Gen Z and Gen Alpha are huge platform fans, with nearly 6 in 10 teenagers counting themselves as daily users. The majority of US teens have accounts on TikTok, with 67%

saying they have used the app and 16% saying they use it “almost constantly” (Paul & Bhuiyan, 2023; also Vogels et al., 2022).

In 2021, Instagram research made public by Frances Haugen, an advocate for accountability and transparency in social media, revealed the app’s impact on teenagers’ mental health – including increased rates of eating disorders among teenage girls (Paul, 2022b).

TikTok optimised content for minutes or even hours of view time. It also deployed an algorithm and a landing page that marked an extreme departure from a chronological to an algorithmic feed (currently a practice commonly adopted by many social media platforms).

Media reports suggested that the algorithm frequently promoted more extreme views when recommended content preceded chronological feeds.

A 2021 report showed that the algorithm recommended more than 70% of extremist content found on YouTube. And it incentivised users to share attention-grabbing content that was picked up by the feed (Counter Extremism Project, 2021).

According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2023), more than half of 3500 respondents who had faced discrimination received it on TikTok (58.42%), compared to YouTube (13.62%), Instagram (12.9%), and Facebook (10.04%). (Respondents included brands, brand representatives, and PR agencies; Geyser, 2023.)

TikTok appeared “faster than any other platform at detecting interest,” explained Marc Faddoul, co-director of Tracking Exposed, a digital rights organisation investigating TikTok’s algorithm.

The app’s “For You” page knew its users’ desires and interests so intimately it generated articles and memes, including “The TikTok Algorithm Knew My Sexuality Better Than I Did.”

SING OUT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

“Snappy and consistent content” is part of TikTok’s appeal to Gen Z and Gen Alpha. This has helped make the platform the most downloaded app globally, with over 2 billion downloads (Iqbal, 2023).

Whilst (at the time of writing) the platform can technically accommodate videos of 10 minutes, both brands and users prefer shorter-form content that doesn’t require too much cognitive processing. (See Memory, Chapter 5, Brand kisses in the mind, page 240.)

PUPPETS ON A STRING

Bite-size content has reshaped marketing content strategy best practices. It is very existential. The European Broadcasting Union’s (EBU) annual Eurovision Song Contest is a good example. It is one of the world’s most-watched television events, with a large and passionate following.

TikTok was the official entertainment partner of the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest and played a significant role in promoting the event. The platform created a

dedicated contest hub featuring videos from artists, fans, and broadcasters. Several challenges and campaigns related to the contest were developed, such as the #EurovisionSongChallenge and #Eurovision2023. These generated a buzz which helped the contest to reach a large audience.

TIKTOK – A NEW TIME – A NEW AGE

Traditionally the song contest final was judged solely by professional panels from each participating country. The show's hosts would invite each panel of experts to judge songs on a 12-point rating scale. Moving on from this, the contest started inviting viewers to add their votes directly.

Whilst the contest's quarter-finals and semi-finals were televised, the final main event remained the climax of annual activity. In the run-up to the main event, TikTok featured punchy videos from contestants discussing dance routines or offering behind-the-scenes commentary. A steady stream of updates was broadcast months before the event, so audiences developed a sense of a relationship with the contestants.

By the time the finals were broadcast, many Gen Zs and Gen Alphas had cast their votes. (Beyond TikTok, this steady brand-to-audience approach provided wider lessons for brands, including political parties throughout Europe looking to attract disenfranchised younger constituents.)

The musical spectacle became more than a platform to stage final performances. By 2024 it represented a crossroads between the old and the new. The old still followed the format of votes cast by mostly anonymous panels (which appealed to early Millennials and baby boomers). The new attracted global citizen votes, influenced by a stream of concise TikTok vignettes. Core younger audiences felt they had formed relationships with the performers long before the final show.

Examples of how TikTok promoted the Eurovision Song Contest

-  TikTok ran several challenges and campaigns related to the contest, such as the #EurovisionSongChallenge and the #Eurovision2023.
-  Artists and broadcasters used TikTok to promote their songs and performances.
-  Fans used TikTok to share their enthusiasm for the contest and to connect with other fans.

SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFITS FOR THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST AND BEYOND

Reach

Social media provides the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) with a means to touch a global audience. (TikTok alone has over 1 billion active worldwide users.) The ESC's

Facebook page has over 1.8 million followers on one channel alone. Its X (formerly Twitter) account has approaching 700K followers on one channel alone. With that kind of number, ESC can easily reach people with news about the contest, behind-the-scenes footage, and videos of the contestants meeting fans and performing their songs at different locations.

Engagement

The ESC receives feedback on the contest.

Actionable distraction

Users are tired of clickbait marketing tactics. Sluggish content fixated on selling than telling has long lost its appeal. ESC videos are entertaining and trusted.



Funny

A humorous or quirky example of a personality, product (song), or service rather than just providing a technical view (TikTok high entertainment ads are rated 25% higher for purchase intent than low entertainment ads; Fortuna, 2022).



Personalised

Providing authentic case studies and examples featuring real-life stories.



Uplifting

Delivering a sense of joy and well-being.



Trustworthy

One of the cornerstones of trust is the legitimacy of the person telling the story. As with successful influencers, the more relatable a person, the more significant their appeal to users. Generally, people feel emotionally congruent with artists (in the case of ESC, performers) who offer insider (behind-the-scenes) knowledge and insights.

INFLUENCER KEY CONSIDERATIONS ---



The influencer marketing industry grew by approximately \$21.1 billion in 2023 (Geyser, 2023).



Sixty-three per cent planned to use AI in executing their influencer campaigns, and two-thirds of those brands would use AI for influencer identification.



Over 83% of survey respondents believed influencer marketing was an effective form of marketing. (It must be stressed that this is their perception.)



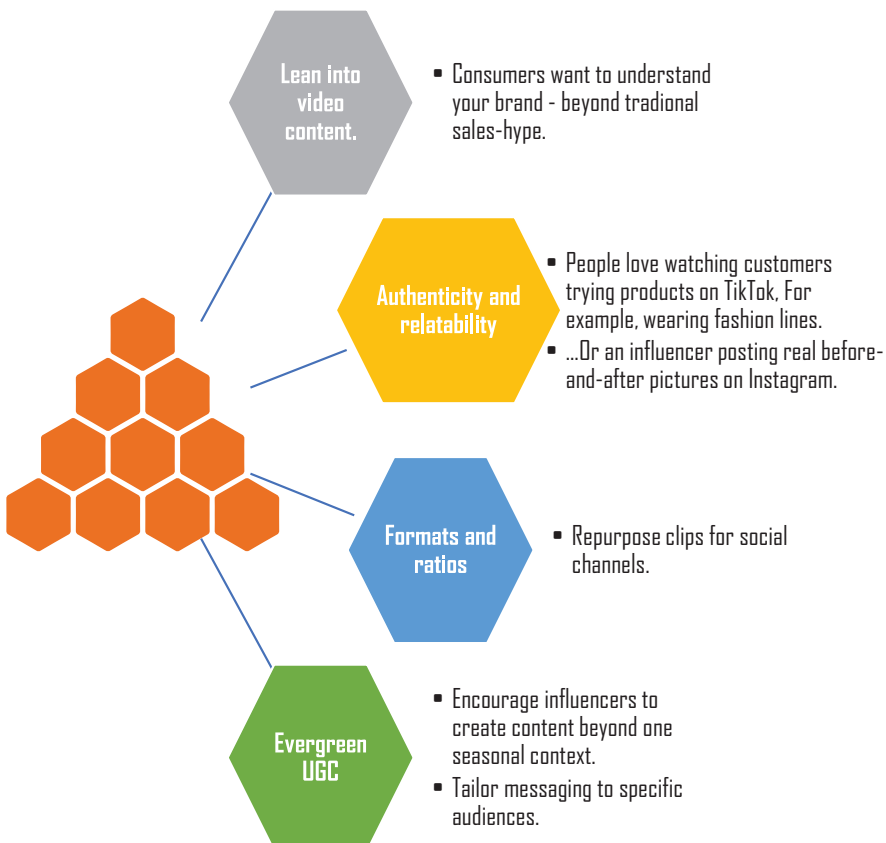
Twenty-three per cent of respondents intended to spend more than 40% of their marketing budget on influencer campaigns.

- There was a strong preference for working with small-audience influencers (nano 39%) and (micro 30%) influencers rather than expensive macro-influencers (19%) and celebrities (12%).
- Forty-two per cent of brands paid influencers rather than just offering them a free product (30%).
- TikTok (utilised by 56% of brands using influencer marketing) was the most popular influencer marketing channel, jumping ahead of Instagram (51%) and well ahead of Facebook (42%) and YouTube (38%).

(All from Influencer Marketing Hub's
"The State of Influencer Marketing" report, 2023)

Figure 8.4

The influencer content honeycomb.



DEEPER INFLUENCER INSIGHTS

The Merriam-Webster dictionary didn't adopt the word "influencer" until 2019.

The English potter, entrepreneur, and abolitionist Josiah Wedgwood (1730–1795) pioneered influencer strategy. After presenting a tea set to Queen Charlotte, he capitalised on his status as "potter to Her Majesty." By advertising his "Queen's Ware" range to wealthy and influential English families, Wedgwood saw unprecedented success. This promotion form has only become more popular in the 260 years since Queen Charlotte embraced his brand.

- Mega-influencers: more than a million followers (think celebrities).
- Macro-influencers: 500K to 1 million followers.
- Mid-tier influencers: 50K to 500K followers.
- Micro-influencers: 10K to 50K followers.
- Nano-influencers: 1K to 10K followers.

INFLUENCER APPEAL

In 2022, the Harvard Business Review reported that the influencer industry was worth \$16.4 billion (Leung et al., 2022). More than 75% of brands had a dedicated budget for influencer marketing, from Coca-Cola's #ThisOnesFor campaign in collaboration with fashion and travel influencers to Dior's award-winning 67 Shades campaign, where the brand partnered with diverse influencers to promote its Forever Foundation product line.

SEVEN DRIVERS OF INFLUENCER MARKETING



Number of followers:

Influencers with larger followings have a greater impact and generate higher engagement rates, resulting in a 9.2% greater return on investment (ROI).



Posting frequency:

Influencers who post moderately (around five times per week) achieve the highest ROI, striking a balance between being up to date and not overwhelming followers' feeds. Many brands could improve their ROI by 53.8% by selecting influencers with optimal posting activity.



Follower brand-fit:

An optimal level of alignment between an influencer's followers' curiosities and a brand's interest leads to better results.



Influencer originality:

Influencers who post original content attract attention and appear more knowledgeable and authentic. Partnering with such influencers results in 15.5% greater ROI.



Post positivity:

Striking the right balance is crucial, as excessive positivity can be disingenuous. Highly positive posts generate more engagement, but brands should avoid going overboard to retain.



Inclusion of brand links:

Posts including links to a brand's social media or website perform significantly better, providing additional information to engage consumers. Such posts achieve an 11.4% higher ROI.



New product announcements:

Influencer posts about new product launches tend to have a 30.5% lower ROI than non-launch-related posts, suggesting that alternative approaches may be more effective for promoting new products.

(Harvard Business Review, 2023; see also Leung et al., 2022)

By following influencers who share their interests and values, consumers can feel a sense of belonging to a respected community (especially poignant for those feeling isolated offline).

Sharing their know-how, influencers help educate, inform, and inspire fans to act and take greater control of their lives.

Despite the clear benefits of using influencers, it is important not to ignore the possible drawbacks. Some influencers may come across as inauthentic or disingenuous if they promote products they do not use or appear not to believe in. Another concern is the potential for influencers to promote unrealistic or unattainable beauty standards, which can contribute to followers' body image issues and other mental health concerns.

Nevertheless, influencers can connect with their audiences in ways that traditional advertising methods cannot by creating a sense of social proof, identity, expertise, and inspiration.

EUROVISION ESCAPE

Seventy-one per cent of TikTok users said, "TikTok shows me exactly what I am looking for" (TikTok Marketing Science US 2022 – MarketCast; see also TikTok, 2019).

Following the pandemic, brands were looking to create authentic, meaningful spaces. By featuring contestants having fun, consumers felt connected with their favourite contestant's journeys.

Virality

In the case of ESC, videos of the contestants performing their songs often went viral, which increased awareness of the contest.

Community

Users no longer follow one-size-fits-all ideal generalities. Instead, in an era where people are told they deserve to be their authentic selves, consumers actively align with specific social communities representing hyper-focused interests.

So, for example, not just “gay communities” but “trans communities” appeal to a particular demographic.

Not just “equality for women” but “equality for women following a specific lifestyle” belonging to a specific psychographic, sociographic, and demographic.

Not just a religious community but a specific sub-sect following a particular ideological promoted by a charismatic spiritual leader.

Not just social media – but social ME-dia.

ALONE TOGETHER: OVERVIEW

Tips

-  Target specific communities on social media by sharing mutually beneficial content that aligns with their values.
-  Gamification, using game-like elements in non-game contexts, can also be addictive.
-  Feature user-generated content (UGC) on websites and social media channels, incorporating it into marketing materials and for contests and giveaways to increase engagement and trust.
-  To enhance authenticity and trust, UGC should be incorporated throughout marketing materials, such as websites, mobile apps, emails, and digital screens.
-  Responding and thanking users for their UGC helps to build positive relationships and engagement.
-  Adding call-to-action to every customer touchpoint can increase the volume of user-generated content.
-  YouTube advertising requires strategic techniques such as hooking the audience, providing intriguing information, incorporating entertainment, and including clear calls to action.

At a glance

- 🧠 Research suggests that teenagers who spend more than 5 hours a day on smartphones are twice as likely to exhibit symptoms of depression.
- 🧠 A 2023 study by the UK NHS found that children as young as 13 years old are playing up to 14 hours per day.
- 🧠 Cryptocurrencies can also be addictive, with some people describing their experience as similar to gambling addiction.
- 🧠 As the Metaverse becomes more sophisticated, more people may become addicted to gaming.
- 🧠 Responsible social media content can encourage healthy and body-positive lifestyle motivations.
- 🧠 Classical conditioning plays a role in shaping consumer behaviour and driving brand engagement.
- 🧠 The law of effect suggests that behaviours immediately followed by satisfaction are more likely to be repeated, while those followed by dissatisfaction or discomfort are less likely to occur.
- 🧠 Classical conditioning operates on an unconscious level, while operant conditioning involves conscious choices.
- 🧠 Social validation influences individuals to conform to others' actions, leading to a preference for content created by similar consumers rather than the brand itself.
- 🧠 Behavioural predictability depends on the frequency and consistency of reinforcement.
- 🧠 Social identity theory suggests that individuals partially derive their sense of identity and self-worth from the social groups they belong to, leading them to conform to the actions of others within their group.
- 🧠 Social categorisation on social media emphasises similarities and differences between groups, leading to arguments and factionalism.
- 🧠 The Golden Triangle of social media content involves entertaining the audience, involving them through interaction, and aiming for viral engagement.
- 🧠 Social media is an entertainment platform combining information and engagement, providing consumers with fascinating and engaging content.
- 🧠 Men are likelier to engage in trolling behaviour, possibly influenced by gender stereotypes promoting aggression and dominance.
- 🧠 The dark triad personality traits associated with trolls are Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism.

- 🧠 Machiavellian trolls strategically manipulate and exploit others.
- 🧠 Psychopathic trolls have reduced empathy and are likelier to engage in trolling behaviour.
- 🧠 Narcissistic trolls engage in risky or unethical behaviour to maintain superiority and struggle with empathy and relationships.
- 🧠 Vulnerable narcissists may appear shy and self-effacing while having a strong sense of entitlement and a need for admiration.
- 🧠 Communal narcissists use perceived altruism to gain admiration and attention but may lack genuine concern for others.
- 🧠 Antagonistic narcissists are self-defensive, arrogant, and exploit relationships.
- 🧠 Trolling provides a sense of power and control, attracting individuals who feel powerless offline.
- 🧠 Trolling can be driven by a desire for attention, relief from boredom, expression of anger or frustration, or coping with personal emotions.
- 🧠 Trolling can cause emotional distress, anxiety, and depression, increasing societal polarisation and intolerance.
- 🧠 TikTok uses rewards and social validation techniques to incentivise users.
- 🧠 Influencer strategy was pioneered by Josiah Wedgwood, who capitalised on his status as “potter to Her Majesty” after presenting a tea set to Queen Charlotte.
- 🧠 Social identity plays a role in consumer behaviour, as individuals align themselves with specific communities and influencers sharing their interests and values.
- 🧠 Influencers connect with their audiences by providing social proof, identity, expertise, and inspiration, which traditional advertising methods may not achieve.
- 🧠 Social media users actively seek communities representing hyper-focused interests, moving away from generic ideals of one-size-fits-all content.

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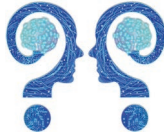
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9 Scan

Cognitive biases, fallacies, and rules of thumb

Throughout this book, you have learned about biases and principles. This chapter elucidates some and summarises many more, including “laws” or rules of thumb. (Also see Chapter 4, Psychological propaganda ploys, page 208)

- Some cognitive biases are related to memory.
- Others may be related to problems with attention.

You may notice that some differ only slightly from others. However, in digital marketing psychology, a subtle difference often makes the greatest impact.

As with any technique, use the following wisely and, above all, responsibly. While people who navigate their lives through manipulation alone may get far in the material world, actions tend to leave their emotional world feeling like a lonely, shattered shell.

AMBIGUITY EFFECT

The tendency to shy away from options where the likelihood of success is uncertain.

Consumers naturally lean towards decisions offering a clear path to a positive result. This approach can be driven by a desire for security and an aversion to risks.

ANCHORING BIAS (AKA FOCALISM)

Some people place undue weight on one specific data point when making choices. Dubbed “anchoring,” this cognitive bias most commonly revolves around the first presented information concerning a topic or issue.

Anchoring can influence consumers’ perceptions of price by staging a high-priced option first, making subsequent, slightly lower-priced options appear like a better deal.

Conversely, presenting a lower-priced option first can anchor consumers to that lower price point, making higher-priced options seem less attractive.

You can anchor consumers' perceptions by accentuating certain product features or benefits, persuading them to value those features over others.

Anchoring bias involves the following.

Common source bias

Some people combine or compare research studies from a single source or one sharing comparable methodologies and data.

When consumers encounter information from a common source, such as a well-known brand, a trusted influencer, or a reputable publication, they tend to assign more weight to that information and perceive it as more reliable and accurate.

Conservatism bias

People can be reluctant to change their long-held beliefs or opinions, even in the face of new evidence. Settled with their current choices, consumers are willing to accept information confirming their prevailing views yet less likely to accept contradictory information.

Here's what you can do about it:

- Work with strategies like social proof, showing how respected others have enjoyed a product.
- Make decisions based on data rather than gut instinct.
- Constantly test new strategies and campaigns and be willing to change direction if results are unexpected.
- Create a culture of experimentation. Encourage your digital team to try new things and be willing to fail.
- Celebrate successes. When your team does something well, acknowledge their work and involvement. This creates a positive environment where people feel comfortable taking risks.

FUNCTIONAL FIXEDNESS

The tendency to only use an object how it was originally intended.

By showcasing how a product can serve multiple purposes stressing versatility, convenience, and problem-solving capabilities, you can encourage consumers to explore new possibilities (for example, a multi-use vegetable slicer advertised on TikTok).

LAW OF THE INSTRUMENT

If you always do what you always did,
you'll always get what you always got.

Some individuals and organisations insist on using familiar tools or strategies, even when such tools are not proven to be the most effective. It is also called the *hammer and nail syndrome*, where “If all you have is a mallet, everything looks like a nail.”

Marketers may become overly reliant on specific marketing channels, tactics, or approaches simply because they previously worked. This potentially limits more effective strategies.

Instead, be open and adaptable (including using AI). Who knows . . . you may deliver better results.

APOPHENIA

The propensity to recognise meaningful connections between unrelated things.

The following are types of apophenia.

Clustering illusion

The inclination to overestimate the importance of small runs, streaks, or clusters in sizeable random data samples.

A cluttered website or advert may hamper a consumer’s ability to process and retain information. So, feature a simple, uncluttered design with concise messaging and intuitive layouts.

By focusing on key product features or benefits that resonate with the target audience, the most critical aspects of the message will stand out.

Keep headlines short, ensuring they address a problem from a pain-solving perspective.

For example, you could use one of the following techniques to help craft your proposition:

The 4 Ps

Problem. Promise. Proof. Proposal.

Problem: Focus on the customer’s situation using a practical example they can identify with.

Promise: Detail your product or service benefits as related to the problem.

Proof: Back up promises with case studies, testimonials, etc.

Proposal: What are the steps that are needed to act and why?

ACCA

Non-profits commonly use ACCA.

Awareness: A shocking statement that grabs attention: “*X number of dogs are . . .* [insert shocking detail here].”

Comprehension: Detail supported by facts and pictures.

Conviction: A compelling reason to act.

Many non-profits use terms such as: “We can’t stand by and do nothing.”

Action: “Will you help?” Followed by a straightforward way to get involved.



AAPPA

Attention. Advantage. Prove. Persuade. Action.

Attention: “This is important.”

Advantage: Here’s why: show person-centric features and details.

Prove: Prove your advantage(s).

Persuade: Address pain points.

Action: Move your target to act.



SLAP

Stop. Look. Act. Purchase.

Stop: Interrupt.

Look: . . . at (this).

Act: Reasons to act.

Purchase: What to do next.



PASTTOR

Personal. Amplify. Storytelling. Testimonials. Transformation. Offer. Response.

Personal: Problems and pain points needing a cost-effective/professional/innovative/trusted solution.

Amplify: What situations will worsen if your brand doesn’t address the problem, and why?

Storytelling: Your specific answers to the solution.

Testimonials: Endorsements, product reviews, and case studies.

Transformation: Show the solution as a process of transformation (by doing X, you get Y).

Offer: Detail your offer, focussing on transformation benefits, not just features.

Response: Prompt the reader to take the next step.



TEASE

TEASE helps check testimonials.

Tactful: Does it convey the most compelling facts?

Emphasise: Is the core feature or solution conveyed powerfully and succinctly?

Authentic: Are the results recognisably authentic and valuable?

Short: Keep testimonials short (unless part of a case study).

Engage: Will the reader feel your offer is directly relevant?



ERERS

Emotional

Rational

Emotional

Rational

Social Proof

The steps can also be conveyed via images, not just words.



The 4 Cs

Clear: How's the clarity of your writing?

Concise: Weed out extraneous details.

Compelling: Clear, concise, and persuasive.

Credible: Does it come across as authentic?



The 4 U's

Useful: Is it?

Urgency: Will prospects feel they urgently need your solution?

Unique: Does your product or service appear significantly different to your competitors?

Ultra-specific: Does your content address a situation that particularly resonates with your consumer?

GOLDBLOCKS EFFECT

Also known as the Goldilocks principle, the Goldilocks effect suggests that people are naturally inclined to seek the optimal level or “just the right” amount of something. Leverage this by presenting three product options at varying price points:

-  High end
-  Middle range
-  Low end.

By offering this range, brands tap into consumers’ desire for choice, enabling them to select the option that best aligns with their preferences and perceived value.

ILLUSORY CORRELATION

Sometimes people perceive a strong connection between two variables, even when no statistical evidence supports that assumption.

Here’s what you can do about it:

Strategically associate and feature certain variables or brand attributes to influence consumers’ beliefs and attitudes. This builds a strong correlation between those attributes and the overall brand image, leading consumers to presume the brand possesses certain desirable qualities, even if the correlation is not statistically significant. However, make sure that any correlations are grounded in truth and authenticity.

PAREIDOLIA

The tendency to perceive a vague and random stimulus (often an image or sound) as meaningful, such as seeing pictures of animals or faces in clouds, the man on the Moon, or hearing non-existent hidden messages on music tracks played in reverse.

Here’s what you can do about it:

Incorporate subtle or intentional elements in a logo or packaging design such as familiar shapes or faces, which can evoke a sense of familiarity and emotional connection with consumers. This can boost brand recognition and recall.

Encourage consumers to spot hidden patterns in images or product designs. In addition to stimulating consumer engagement, foster a sense of community and virality, encouraging consumers to share their findings.

However, there may also be cultural and contextual sensitivities when incorporating pareidolia into the content. So, whilst pareidolia can be helpful in brand recognition, don’t let it overshadow your core message or value proposition.

AVAILABILITY HEURISTIC (AKA AVAILABILITY BIAS)

The availability heuristic influences individuals' decision-making based on how readily information or examples come to mind.

Ensuring that positive and relevant information about a product or brand is available increases the likelihood of information being used as a mental shortcut in decision-making processes. Directive slogans like, "Don't just book it, Thomas Cook it," can be powerful.

Accessible testimonials, reviews, and social proof can also strengthen the influence of the availability heuristic.

However, remember that consumers' decision-making can be influenced by the availability of vivid or recent information that may not always represent your product's overall reality or long-term performance.

To avoid information overload in digital content, curate information to ensure that only the most relevant and accurate details are readily available.

FORMS OF THE AVAILABILITY HEURISTIC

Anthropocentric thinking

The tendency to use human analogies as a basis for reasoning about other, less familiar biological phenomena.

Anthropomorphism or personification

The tendency to portray animals, objects, and abstract concepts as possessing human-like traits, emotions, and intentions ("This new car will make you feel like a million dollars").

ATTENTIONAL BIAS

The tendency of perceptions to be affected by recurring thoughts.

CONFIRMATION BIAS

This happens when someone seeks information or data points validating their prior beliefs.

For example, marketers may only glance at data likely to strengthen their preconceived notions about their product or ignore data suggesting it's time to change their strategy. On the other hand, they may interpret a campaign's conversion rate data to support a steadfast conviction that a product or service effectively targets the right audience.

Or a consumer may be convinced that organic food is healthier than non-organic. Therefore, they look for information supporting this belief, such as studies showing that organic food has higher nutrient levels. Conversely, they may discount information that contradicts their view, such as studies showing no significant difference between organic and non-organic food.

Frequency illusion, or the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon

The Baader-Meinhof phenomenon is the illusion that people start noticing something more frequently.

The Baader-Meinhof phenomenon originated when Terry Mullen, from Minnesota (US), told a friend about the once notorious West German Baader-Meinhof gang. The next day, the friend pointed Mullen to a newspaper article in which the left-wing terrorist organisation was mentioned, decades after it had any reason to be in the news.

Here's what you can do about it:

Introduce a new product or brand element in a compelling, pertinent, valuable, and attention-grabbing way to spark curiosity. This encourages consumers to spot a brand more regularly in their daily lives.

For example, when a consumer buys a new car, they may notice that particular model on the road more frequently, even though the number of vehicles on the road has not changed. Their mind is attuned to that car, making them more likely to notice it.

By increasing the frequency that consumers are exposed to a brand or product, the frequency illusion makes it more likely that they believe a product is more popular than it is (commonly achieved on social media channels like X [formerly Twitter]).

🧠 *Confirmation bias* can make it difficult for marketers to change established beliefs about a product.

🧠 *Frequency illusion* can increase brand awareness and recognition.

Establish a strong brand presence by consistently delivering a compelling message, visual identity, and customer experience. This consistency reinforces the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon by increasing the likelihood of consumers noticing and remembering the brand across different touchpoints.

However, don't overdo it. Excessive or intrusive exposure will probably just irritate consumers.

HINDSIGHT BIAS

People often believe that could have predicted an event's outcome after it occurred. Unfortunately, in hindsight, digital marketers can falsely believe that a given trend was predictable.

For example, a digital marketer may believe they always had a gut feeling that their company's competitor's recent marketing campaign wouldn't attract customers, despite not predicting this before.

OVERCONFIDENCE BIAS

Sometimes people just overrate their ability to predict outcomes.

For example, a digital marketer may overstate a campaign's impact on sales. They depend too much on past successful strategies rather than adjusting tactics according to current market trends and consumer preferences.

SALIENCE BIAS

There is a general tendency to focus on more prominent or emotionally striking items and ignore unremarkable ones.

One way to leverage the salience bias is through impactful branding and packaging. Consider logos, colour schemes, and packaging that stand out.

Storytelling featuring compelling and relatable stories that evoke emotions can enhance the salience of a brand's messages.

Influencers can also increase brand salience. A trusted figure, such as an influencer, makes the brand more prominent in consumers' minds.

SURVIVORSHIP BIAS

People focus on success stories or perceptible outcomes while overlooking failures, especially when about themselves.

Survivorship bias can hinder decision-making as people overlook valuable insights from failures and focus solely on successes.

By actively seeking different perspectives, conducting comprehensive research, learning from failures, and embracing transparency, you can overcome survivorship bias and make better-informed decisions.

NORMALCY BIAS

This is a form of cognitive dissonance concerning the adamant refusal to plan for, or react to, a new challenge.

Here's what you can do about it:

Test and iterate your digital strategies. You can better understand evolving consumer needs and deliver relevant and impactful experiences by analysing consumer behaviour, market trends, and performance metrics.

EFFORT JUSTIFICATION

This is a tendency to attribute greater value to an outcome when someone puts energy into achieving it. An example is the *IKEA effect*, where people place a disproportionately high value on objects that they partially assemble themselves, regardless of the quality of the end product.

Here's what you can do about it:

Develop interactive experiences, incorporating personalised gamification elements and showcasing user-generated content that involves and engages a target audience.

ZEIGARNIK EFFECT

Effort justification is also related to the Zeigarnik effect when people encountering an unfinished task or unresolved action feel a psychological need for closure.

Here's what you can do about it:

Producing engaging content or experiences leaves consumers wanting more. For example, providing snippets of information or teasing the completion of a story or task can pique curiosity and suggest unfinished business. This motivates consumers to seek closure by taking the desired action, such as clicking a link, subscribing to social feeds, becoming absorbed in gamification, or completing a purchase.

BEN FRANKLIN EFFECT

People develop a positive attitude towards someone or something after receiving a favour or a small act of kindness from that person.

Apply the Ben Franklin effect by encouraging user-generated content (UGC) and user participation. As a result, users feel invested in a brand's success. Showcasing their contributions further strengthens the impact, reinforcing the notion of reciprocity and encouraging further engagement.

Also, more generally, be kind. This can include responding to comments, providing helpful information, or offering exclusive discounts or perks.

Influencers engaging with your audience generate a sense of reciprocity that indirectly strengthens the links between the brand and the consumer.

RECIPROCITY EFFECT

Throughout history, reciprocity highlights people's natural inclination to feel obligated when someone does something nice for them.

One classic example is the "free sample" strategy. Brands have used this approach for years, providing a literal or figurative taste of their product for free, creating a sense of indebtedness in potential customers who may feel compelled to purchase. In the

digital age, marketers offer valuable content like e-books, webinars, or prompt engineering snippets at no cost, thereby fostering gratitude among users, and boosting engagement, social sharing, and subscriptions.

Another application of the reciprocity effect in digital marketing is offering exclusive discounts, promotions, or free trials. These incentives generate goodwill and create a sense of obligation for customers to reciprocate by purchasing or recommending the brand. For instance, a software company might offer a 30-day free trial of their premium product, making users feel indebted and more likely to become paying customers after the trial period ends.

The reciprocity effect also fosters a sense of community and social proof. Marketers can encourage users to share positive experiences on social media or review platforms, prompting others to reciprocate by contributing their own positive experiences. This enhances the brand's reputation and trustworthiness.

The renowned psychologist and author Robert Cialdini (2007) has extensively studied the principles of influence and persuasion, including reciprocity. His landmark book, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, explores various psychological tactics, including reciprocity, that can be employed to influence people's behaviour.

BACKFIRE EFFECT

The inclination to react to contrary evidence by strengthening previous beliefs.

In terms of web design, craft user experiences that are respectful, informative, and conducive to open-mindedness. When users encounter information or design elements that challenge beliefs or opinions, they may instinctively push back and reject the information, leading to decreased engagement.

To mitigate the backfire effect, first establish trust and credibility with a user, for example, with visually appealing, cyber-secure, intuitive, and professional websites.

Incorporate interactive elements such as pop-ups or expandable sections that provide additional context or alternative viewpoints. By allowing users to explore different perspectives in a non-confrontational manner, designers can reduce the chances of triggering a defensive response and increase the potential for users to engage with and evaluate information objectively.

CONGRUENCE BIAS

The tendency of individuals to prefer information that aligns with existing beliefs, values, and expectations.

Here's what you can do about it:

Based on consumer research, design campaigns consistent with people's beliefs and values. In this way, you increase the chances of capturing your consumers' attention, fostering a sense of connection, and influencing their purchasing decisions.

SELECTIVE PERCEPTION

When expectations affect perceptions.

Website visitors tend to filter and focus on specific elements of a website while ignoring others. It's like a couple arguing, only choosing to take on board what each wants to hear.

Here's what you can do about it:

First, acknowledge that users have limited attention spans and are prone to selectively perceiving information. Then rank key elements of a website design. This includes placing important content in prominent positions, applying visually appealing design elements, and employing clear and concise messaging.

Additionally, be wary of distractions or information overload. By decluttering the interface, reducing unnecessary visual elements, and employing effective visual hierarchy, you can guide users' attention to the site's most essential aspects.

SEMMELWEIS REFLEX

The tendency to reject new evidence that contradicts a way of thinking.

When introducing new ideas, such as creative content formats, interactive campaigns, or emerging trends, it's common to face resistance from stakeholders or team members who may be stuck in their way of doing things.

To navigate the Semmelweis reflex, provide clear explanations and rationale behind the proposed changes, focusing on the potential benefits and advantages they can bring.

Sharing success stories or case studies from other brands or industries that have successfully adopted similar approaches can also help foster open-mindedness.

EGOCENTRIC BIAS

When someone relies too heavily on their perspective and has an inflated opinion of themselves.

In branding, the hero is not the brand but the consumer. This is the way presumptions, rather than assumptions, come into play. Use market research, surveys, focus groups, and other research methods to deeply understand the target audience's needs, desires, and pain points. Your job as a brand leader is to be the Yoda to a consumer's Luke Skywalker: mentor or guide – helping them become the hero figure.

(Also see the Dunning-Kruger effect).

FORMS OF EGOCENTRIC BIAS

Blind spot bias

You see yourself as less biased than others or believe you can spot more cognitive biases in others than in yourself.

Blind spot bias can cause marketers to make assumptions about their target audience based on personal preferences and experiences. This can lead to a disconnect between the marketing message and the audience's needs, values, and interests, resulting in ineffective campaigns.

Marketers unaware of their blind spots may become overconfident in their strategies, leading to a lack of critical analysis and an unwillingness to adapt to new information or changing market conditions.

Blind spot bias can also hinder effective communication within marketing teams, as individuals may be more likely to dismiss feedback or alternative perspectives that challenge beliefs and assumptions.

By failing to address blind spots, marketers may miss valuable insights that could otherwise enhance marketing efforts.

False uniqueness bias

When you underestimate the extent to which others share your beliefs and attributes or engage in the same behaviours, particularly when characteristics are socially desirable.

FORER EFFECT OR BARNUM EFFECT

The phenomenon is where people tend to assign high accuracy ratings to personality descriptions that seem tailored specifically for them but which are vague and universal enough to apply to many people.

In digital PR, professionals often create content that feels personally meaningful to a diverse range of recipients. This is accomplished by skilfully crafting language that balances specificity with a touch of ambiguity.

Your content can resonate deeper by customising messages for distinct audience segments based on demographic, psychographic, or behavioural traits.

Examples of the Barnum effect in marketing:

- 💡 “Our product is designed for people who value quality and style – like you.”
- 💡 “You deserve a break. Our luxury vacation packages are tailored to your needs.”
- 💡 “As a hard-working professional, you understand the importance of investing in your future; that's why our financial services are calculated with you in mind.”
- 💡 “Our skincare line is formulated for those who care about their skin's health and want to feel confident daily.”
- 💡 “You're a discerning shopper who appreciates the finer things in life, which is why our premium brand of shoes is your perfect fit.”
- 💡 “Our fitness program is designed for people motivated to improve their health and well-being, just like you.”

-  “You have a keen eye for innovation; our cutting-edge technology products are designed for forward-thinkers.”
-  “Like you, our eco-friendly products care for the environment.”
-  “As a busy parent, you understand the value of time. That’s why you’ll love our convenient, family-friendly products.”
-  “You’re a creative spirit who appreciates inspiring designs; our home décor collection is perfectly styled for your living space.”

ILLUSION OF CONTROL

People tend to believe they have more control over outcomes than they do.

The illusion of control influences how users identify and interact with digital platforms, products, and services.

Here’s what you can do about it:

Offer consumers opportunities to make choices, tailor experiences, or engage in gamified interactions. This can include interactive quizzes, personalised product configurators, or user-controlled content navigation. Data visualisation, like infographics, lets consumers compare two products or, for example, uses weight or nutrition charts to highlight value differences.

ILLUSION OF TRANSPARENCY

The inclination to overestimate how much others understand your mental state of mind and how much you know theirs.

However talented in web design, what may seem evident to the designer may not be apparent to everyone else. Employ strategies that bridge the gap between your intentions and users’ interpretations.

ILLUSION OF VALIDITY

Overestimating the accuracy of your judgments, especially when available information is inconsistent.

One way to address the illusion of validity is through data-driven analysis and objective evaluation. Study historical sales and marketing data to inform assessments and predictions. Customer relationship management systems, sales tracking software, and data visualisation tools provide accurate insights into trends, customer behaviour, and market dynamics.

ILLUSORY SUPERIORITY

The tendency is to overestimate your desirable qualities and underestimate undesirable qualities relative to others. (Also known as the *Lake Wobegon effect*, *better-than-average effect*, or *superiority bias*.)

This bias can influence consumers; perceptions of their competence, attractiveness, intelligence, or other desirable traits, which in turn impacts their purchase decisions and brand preferences.

Consumers who perceive themselves as having relatively higher levels of competence or attractiveness may be more inclined to seek products or brands that align with their self-perceived superiority. This can result in consumers preferring luxury brands which they assume reflect their self-image.

Illusory superiority can also impact the evaluation of product quality and performance. Consumers may believe products are superior to similar options in the market, even if objective measures don't support this perception.

Here's what you can do about it:

Plan content and branding strategies that align with consumers' self-perceived superiority. For example, highlight, exclusivity, or appeal to a consumer's perceived social status.

Additionally, assuming they have a degree of open mindedness, by presenting unbiased helpful feedback, you can encourage consumers to assess their abilities and perceptions realistically.

NAÏVE CYNICISM AND NAÏVE REALISM

Naïve realism and naïve cynicism are two distinct cognitive biases influencing how people perceive and interpret information about products and brands.

Convinced that their judgments and experiences are universally valid, consumers who exhibit naïve realism tend to assume that their personal experiences, preferences, and beliefs accurately represent the worldview.

Consumers who display *naïve cynicism* tend to be sceptical and doubt marketing claims. They may believe marketers are trying to pull the wool over their eyes.

Naïve realism leads some to trust the experiences and perceptions of their own, equally naïve inner circle first. They may rely heavily on anecdotes, supporting beliefs, and disregard contradictory external evidence.

To counteract naïve realism, use social proof, testimonials, and expert opinions that provide consumers with external validation and diverse perspectives.

Focus on transparency, authenticity, and building trust to overcome naïve cynicism. Providing clear and accurate information about products or brands, incorporating real customer testimonials, and demonstrating ethical business practices can help alleviate consumer scepticism. Establishing credibility and fostering genuine connections with consumers gradually overcomes initial cynicism.

PLANNING FALLACY

The tendency to underestimate how long it takes to complete a given task.

Here's what you can do about it:

Incorporate historical data and past experiences into a planning and estimation process. By investigating previous marketing initiatives and associated timelines, challenges, and resource requirements, you gain valuable insights which help inform future planning.

Regularly monitoring, tracking, and reassessing marketing initiatives is essential in managing the planning fallacy. Closely monitor progress and regularly review and adjust plans as needed.

RESTRAINT BIAS

Overestimating your ability to show restraint in the face of temptation.

One way to exploit the restraint bias is to incorporate a sense of urgency into the content. For example, highlighting limited-time offers or exclusive access nudges people to act quickly. Likewise, phrases such as "limited stock available" or "only available to a select few" can elicit fear of missing out (FOMO) and prompt readers to take immediate action.

Accentuate a product or service's unique or rare qualities. You can shape a perception of high value and desirability by highlighting its distinctive features, superior craftsmanship, or exclusive benefits.

Focus on the product's rarity, uniqueness, or one-of-a-kind characteristics, appealing to consumers' desire for something exceptional.

Testimonials or social proof can also address the restraint bias. For example, incorporating customer reviews, success stories, or endorsements from influential individuals makes consumers feel they are investing in a highly respected brand.

THE SERIAL POSITIONING EFFECT

People better remember items on a list or in a sequence if they are at the beginning (primacy effect) or end (recency effect).

Digital marketing copywriters can use the effect to write impactful introductions by placing the most significant benefits or features of a product or service at the beginning or end of the copy. This taps into the primacy and recency effects, ensuring a core message is likelier to stick.

By placing the call to action (CTA) towards the end of the copy, copywriters can increase the likelihood of conversions as the CTA stays fresh in the readers' minds.

Further engagement can be encouraged by building a storyline that features attention-grabbing elements (primacy effect) and ends with impactful cliff hangers (recency effect).

Bullet points of lists further aid information recall. Again, the most essential points are featured at the head of a list, cascading down to the least important points at the foot of the list.

HICK'S LAW

Also known as the Hick-Hyman law, Hick's law states that the time it takes for a person to decide is directly proportional to the number of options they have.

Less is more.

By limiting the number of choices presented to users on a website or app, digital marketing experts can reduce “friction” decision-making time and improve the overall user experience. Streamlining navigation menus, minimising form fields, and presenting clear options – all help make it easier for users to find what they want.

Applying Hick's law to landing page design involves reducing the number of distractions and focusing on a single, clear call to action (CTA). This helps eliminate decision paralysis (aka analysis paralysis) and guides users towards the desired conversion goal, such as purchasing, filling out a form, or subscribing to a newsletter.

Reduce the number of options presented within an email. Instead, focusing on a single, compelling CTA increases the chances of engagement and conversion.

By minimising the number of steps and choices during the purchasing journey, digital marketing experts can reduce decision-making time and friction, increasing the likelihood of completing the transaction.

By limiting the number of options or features highlighted in an ad, digital marketing experts can enhance message recall, making it easier for consumers to understand the value proposition.

THIRD-PERSON EFFECT

The tendency to believe that mass-communicated media messages have a greater effect on others than yourself.

This perception can influence consumers' judgments, beliefs, and decision-making processes.

Consumers may assume they can see through digital marketing. They commonly think that, unlike themselves, others are easily swayed. (Also see Third person effect).

Here's what to do:

Be transparent.

COMPASSION FADE

A person's compassion and willingness to help diminishes as:

- 1 Time passes.
- 2 The number of needy beneficiaries increases.

- 3 Despite hearing the same pleas for help and offering advice, the appeals never ease.
- 4 They become distracted with more personally pressing issues.

When faced with overwhelming numbers or statistics representing those in need, people struggle to maintain emotional engagement and motivation to help, compared to when encountering a single, identifiable beneficiary.

Digital charity marketers can employ several strategies to amplify donors' willingness to contribute:



Visual storytelling

Feature photographs or videos to evoke powerful emotions. Focusing on the real faces and voices of those in need can inspire action.

Imagery depicting the beneficiaries' struggles, progress, and positive outcomes makes the cause emotionally compelling.



Highlighting achievable impact

Digital marketers who are promoting charities can make a cause immediate and concrete by stressing the tangible and measurable difference donors can make through their contributions.



Social proof and testimonials

Incorporate testimonials from existing donors or influential individuals. Show notable figures who have contributed and seen positive outcomes.



Regular updates and progress reports

Keep donors informed about the progress and outcomes of charitable initiatives by sharing updates and success stories.

However, be wary: overexposure to fundraising appeals or bombarding potential donors with information makes compassion fade.

HYPERBOLIC DISCOUNTING

Some people want payoffs now rather than later. They make choices that their future selves would have preferred they didn't make. It is also known as *current moment* or *present bias* and is related to *dynamic inconsistency*.

Here's what you can do about it:

To capture consumers' attention and tap into their preference for instant rewards, emphasise a product or service's immediate advantages.

Frame delayed rewards as valuable by stressing future benefits, savings, or rewards that consumers will receive.

“Buy now, save later.”

Motivate people to act quickly by introducing time-limited offers, discounts, or bonuses.

Use reminders and prompts to nudge consumers towards considering long-term benefits. This can feature personalised scheduled reminders about the benefits of sticking with the product or service over time.

“Keep earning loyalty points.”

By breaking down higher costs into more manageable, periodic payments, marketers can make the delayed benefits accessible and appealing.

NEGLECT OF PROBABILITY

The propensity to completely disregard probability when unsure about a decision.

People may ignore the standard rules for decision-making (i.e., balancing the positives against the negatives and choosing the most favourable solution).

Here's what you can do about it:

Incorporate relevant statistics to help consumers better understand probabilities. They can make informed decisions based on the actual possibilities by presenting data clearly and concisely.

“675,269 customers are delighted with our brand.

(And the number keeps growing . . .).”

By contrasting the likelihoods of different events, consumers gain a better sense of probability and make more rational decisions. In addition, this approach encourages consumers to consider the possibilities rather than relying solely on their intuitions or biases. (Also see Conjunction fallacy).

ZERO-RISK BIAS

Zero-risk bias is a cognitive bias that causes people to avoid risks, even when the rewards outweigh the potential losses.

This can be challenging for digital marketers, who must be willing to take risks to reach their target audience and achieve their goals.

For example, a digital marketer might be reluctant to try a new advertising platform, even if it has the potential to reach a larger audience, because they are afraid of losing money. Or they might be hesitant to launch a new marketing campaign, even if it can generate many leads, because they fear failure.

Here's what you can do about it:

-  Highlight the measures which minimise brand risk. For example, quality certifications, warranty information, money-back guarantees, secure payment methods, or positive customer testimonials.
-  Showcase positive experiences from satisfied customers. For example, testimonials, reviews, ratings, or case studies can highlight the positive outcomes and decrease risks associated with the product or service.
-  Invite consumers to try a product or service before committing to a purchase. Free trials, limited-time access, or product samples allow potential customers to experience the offer first-hand.
-  Focus on the advantages and features that differentiate a product or service.
-  Offer generous return or refund policies.

ZERO-SUM BIAS

One person's gain is equivalent to another's loss, so the net change in benefit is zero. Online buyers may overlook irrelevant or uninteresting content at first glance as they can't immediately recognise any benefits.

The zero-sum bias highlights the importance of an effective information hierarchy. Web designers, for example, should prioritise the most relevant and engaging content, placing it prominently on the website. By understanding users' tendency to dismiss or ignore less interesting content, designers can strategically structure the layout, emphasising key messages and visually guiding users to important sections or calls to action.

The zero-sum bias drives home the importance of delivering relevant, easily digestible content. Web designers should collaborate closely with content creators to ensure online information is aligned with the target audience.

Regularly conduct usability testing and gather user feedback to identify areas where zero-sum bias may affect engagement.

INSENSITIVITY TO SAMPLE SIZE

This occurs when someone places too much weight on a small sample rather than considering the more extensive data pool.

Digital marketing professionals may base their decisions on a sample of consumers that is too small to be statistically significant. Therefore, they have an incomplete picture of what is actually happening.

For example, a social media analyst notices that a campaign has a high engagement rate in a small market. The analyst decides to roll out this campaign globally.

INSENSITIVITY TO PRIOR PROBABILITIES

If digital markets fail to consider probabilities wisely, they could fall into the trap of ignoring details.

For example, a digital marketer could overrely on click-through rates alone, ignoring the prior propensity of a given population's response to a particular type of product or online advert.

AUTOMATION BIAS

The tendency to depend excessively on automated systems (such as AI) can lead to wrong automated information overriding correct decisions. It can also result in what was formerly considered just “adequate content” becoming proclaimed as best-practice content.

(Study this book to keep things in perspective.)

STEREOTYPING

Expecting a group member to have specific characteristics without having more considered information about that individual.

By stereotyping, you risk alienating and disregarding diverse segments of your target audience.

Here's what you can do about it:

Invest in market research and audience analysis to comprehensively understand your target audience's diverse needs, preferences, and identities.

Embrace diversity and avoid generalities. Instead, tailor content to resonate with different segments, ensuring a more inclusive approach.

Stereotypes lead to marketing messages that do not reflect a specific target audience's diverse realities and experiences.

Here's what you can do about it:

By featuring a diverse range of consumers in marketing materials, you can reflect a broader audience's various identities, backgrounds, and lifestyles.

Engage with diverse communities and collaborate with experts or influencers with deep insights into specific cultural or demographic groups.

In today's socially conscious digital landscape, consumers are increasingly vocal about their expectations for diversity, inclusivity, and responsible marketing practices. If your brand is perceived as perpetuating stereotypes, it risks facing boycotts and reputational damage.

FRAMING EFFECT

This occurs when a person's decision-making is influenced by how information is presented. For example, digital marketers know that, generally, people are likelier to react better to an optimistic image. However, simply featuring people with happy dispositions can be inauthentic.

Forms of the framing effect include the following.

Contrast effect

The contrast effect occurs when two things are considered in comparison to one another rather than individual merits.

Perceptions change once people start to compare things to one another. They tend to judge them relative to each other rather than on their merit.

Decoy effect

Figure 9.1

The decoy effect.



Framing stresses the potential brand gains (*positive frame*) or losses (*negative frame*).

Carefully analyse consumers' preferences and motivations to determine the most practical framing approach.

By underlining the positive aspects of a product or service, you will encourage consumers to perceive an offering as desirable and valuable.

Mitigate concerns by being transparent. In addition to building trust, you will frame the message, balancing positive and potential drawbacks.

Highlight how others benefit from the product or service.

The framing effect varies across different demographic segments. So, conduct thorough market research to understand your audience's preferences and motivations.

You can effectively address specific needs and biases by tailoring messaging and framing strategies.

Continuously test and iterate your framing strategies to identify the most effective approaches. A/B testing can help determine which framing techniques yield the higher engagement, conversion rates, and customer satisfaction. Interrogating data means you can refine content and improve framing strategies.

LOGICAL FALLACY

Logical fallacy biases include the following.

Escalation of commitment irrational escalation, or sunk cost fallacy

People justify increased investment in a decision, based on the cumulative prior investment, despite new evidence suggesting that the decision was probably wrong.

Here's what you can do about it:

-  To retain consumers, remind them how much they have already invested in a product or service, making it harder for them to abandon it.
-  Offer incentives to switch to a different product or service to convert non-users. This could include discounts, free trials, or other promotions.
-  Similarly, frame the decision to make it seem like a new investment. For example, instead of asking people to switch to a different product or service, you could frame it as an opportunity to try something new.

G.I. JOE FALLACY

The tendency to think that knowing about cognitive bias is enough to overcome it. The G.I. Joe fallacy can be challenging for digital marketers, but here are some guidelines:

-  Collect as much data as possible before making decisions.
-  Be willing to change your beliefs when presented with evidence contradicting them.
-  Test different marketing strategies.
-  Invite feedback from others.
-  Be willing to try new things.
-  Be aware of the most common cognitive biases (hopefully, this section of the book will help).
-  Don't be afraid to fail. (Failure is success' rocket fuel.)

GAMBLER'S FALLACY

The gambler's fallacy, also known as the Monte Carlo fallacy, arises when someone mistakenly believes that the outcome of a preceding event or a sequence of events influences the likelihood of a particular random event.

For instance, you flip a coin and get five consecutive heads. It may seem intuitive to assume that the chance of tails on the next flip is higher than the chance of getting heads. However, that's nonsense, as the coin's probability of landing heads or tails is still 50–50 for each flip.

Betting brands are very familiar with this fallacy. By recognising this fallacy, you can avoid being misled by your expectations and so make better decisions based on objective probabilities.

How digital marketers exploit the gambler's fallacy

False patterns and spikes conjure the illusion of winning streaks. Consumers assume they are onto a betting certainty.

By stressing past successes or highlighting consecutive positive outcomes, marketers can build an expectation of favourable future results.

Employ limited-time offers or scarcity tactics. For example, a sense of urgency around a product or service (FOMO) prompts consumers to make impulsive purchasing decisions based on the belief that their chances of winning or benefiting are higher if they act quickly.

Consumers encouraged to accumulate points or tokens over time often assume their chances of receiving a desirable reward increase with each interaction, reinforcing the fallacious belief that persistence leads to greater success.

By integrating game-like features, such as progress bars, levels, or virtual rewards, you can design an environment that triggers the desire for continued engagement.

This is related to the hot-hand fallacy (aka “hot hand phenomenon” or “hot hand”).

HOT-HAND FALLACY

A commonly held belief is that if you have succeeded in a random event, you are more likely to succeed again in subsequent attempts.

You can often spot the fallacy in sports, where fans and players believe that a player who has made several successful shots in a row is more likely to be successful again. In truth, each attempt is independent and unaffected by previous successes or failures. (Just as in life, it's not just past events that influence present action – it's how people respond to the events, past, present, and future).

Some may presume that if a campaign has been unsuccessful, it is doomed to failure in the future. So, they abandon it.

To avoid the hot-hand fallacy, base decisions on data, analysis, and a comprehensive understanding of your target audience.

PLAN CONTINUATION BIAS

Sometimes sticking to a plan is irrelevant in a changing or unexpected situation. This is also known as *escalation of commitment*. This can happen because you don't want to admit failure or believe that additional resources will eventually lead to success.

SUBADDITIVITY EFFECT

This occurs when people mistakenly believe that a combination of two specific events is more likely to happen than either of the events occurring alone. In other words, when different tactics are joined, their effectiveness may not be as strong as expected.

This violates basic *probability theory*, as the probability of the whole cannot be greater than the probability of its parts.

For example, consider the statement, "John is a successful businessman and a devoted family man." People may judge this statement as more likely than "John is a successful businessman," despite the latter being a more general statement and, therefore, more likely.

Here's what you can do about it:

Develop integrated campaigns that combine different channels and tactics in a coordinated and complementary manner. This ensures that each tactic enhances the others, creating a cohesive brand experience for the audience.

-  Analyse data to identify patterns and correlations that work well together.
-  Conduct creative approach tests (such as comparing different headlines or offers) to equate the effectiveness of different combinations of tactics. By testing variations of campaigns and measuring their performance, you can identify the most effective combinations and optimise the marketing mix accordingly.
-  Map out customer journeys. By understanding the sequence of touchpoints, you can strategically align tactics to ensure a seamless customer experience.
-  Tailor content to specific customer segments. By understanding the behaviours of different segments, you can design strategies that resonate with each group.

TIME-SAVING BIAS

People may overestimate the time they can save by completing tasks more quickly. Marketers can exploit this bias to sell time-saving products and services.

For example, a company that sells a new type of laundry detergent might advertise that it can save 20 minutes per load. This claim might be accurate, but 20 minutes per

load is a relatively small amount of time. (If you do laundry once a week, you'll only save about 1040 minutes per year.)

Marketers often use time-saving bias to make their products and services more appealing. They might use words like “quick,” “easy,” and “convenient” and use visuals, such as stopwatches or clocks, to emphasise the time-saving benefits of their products.

DREAD AVERSION

Just as losses are twice as emotionally charged as gains, dread yields four times the emotional impact of enjoyment. Dread aversion relates to the powerful negative emotions and avoidance behaviours that may arise when people anticipate or confront situations which they find unpleasant.

Here's what you can do about it:

-  Be transparent about potential risks, openly addressing potential drawbacks or challenges.
-  Focus on how your product alleviates fears. Underlining brand value can shift the consumer's focus from potential dread to possible solutions and benefits.
-  Show how others have successfully overcome similar concerns through your products or services.
-  Ensure your copy features detailed information to help consumers make informed decisions.
-  Reassure consumers that they have recourse and can seek a refund or replacement if unsatisfied with their purchase.
-  Provide exceptional customer support via live chat, email, or phone.
-  Develop content, including educational articles, blog posts, videos, or FAQs that address common fears.
-  Align your brand tone of voice with uplifting emotions, values, or causes.

ENDOWMENT EFFECT

The inclination of individuals to overvalue an object they own and undervalue things they don't. The result could lead to marketers compromising objectivity.

For example, a car owner is convinced that his brand model has the best resell value. However, in truth, a different brand performs better.

Here's what you can do about it:

-  Offer free trials or samples so potential customers can appreciate the value and benefits of an offer for themselves.

- 🧠 Deliver exclusive time-sensitive discounts. By placing a time constraint on an offer, you reduce a consumer's sense of ownership, making them more likely to act. Highlighting the potential loss or missed opportunity also motivates consumers to purchase promptly.
- 🧠 Accentuate new features or upgrades. Showcasing enhancements and improvements can loosen customers' attachment to their current possessions.
- 🧠 Provide a money-back guarantee or a hassle-free return if the consumer is unsatisfied.
- 🧠 Involve consumers by allowing them to tailor products or services.
- 🧠 Encourage user-generated content.
- 🧠 Promptly address issues with empathy and professionalism.
- 🧠 Encourage customers to trade existing products for upgraded models.

LOSS AVERSION

People tend to place greater value on avoiding losses than on acquiring gains. So, consumers may be more willing to pay a premium to keep something they already have.

What you can do about it:

Make your product feel exclusive, stressing the potential loss or missed opportunity of not owning it or offering limited-time promotions that urge people to buy.

PSEUDOCERTAINTY EFFECT

This refers to the tendency to overvalue outcomes despite circumstances suggesting otherwise.

Here's what you can do about it:

- 🧠 Produce clear and accurate content.
- 🧠 Showcase real-life experiences and positive feedback that reinforces the quality and effectiveness of your products or services.
- 🧠 Balance your marketing messages by acknowledging that no product or service can guarantee universal success.
- 🧠 Present alternatives to help consumers make more informed choices.
- 🧠 Provide data, statistics, or case studies to support your claims and foster a rational decision-making process.
- 🧠 Establish clear return and refund policies that alleviate consumers' concerns.

STATUS QUO BIAS

Consumers may resist change and be more likely to stick with familiar brands rather than try something new.

Here's what you can do about it:

Highlight the benefits of a new product or service in a way that aligns with consumers' existing beliefs and preferences or provides clear and compelling reasons why change is not only beneficial but necessary.

DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT

People with limited knowledge or skills in a particular area may overestimate their abilities, while those who are more knowledgeable or skilled may underestimate their abilities.

-  Tailor your content to different levels of knowledge and expertise.
-  Showcase case studies, success stories, and data-driven results to support your recommendations.
-  Encourage feedback and welcome different perspectives.
-  Base your marketing strategies and decisions on reliable data and insights.
-  Additionally, be aware of the potential for some consumers to overestimate their knowledge or skills, particularly regarding complex or technical products or services. Therefore, ensure your copy avoids jargon and offers practical, non-condescending, step-by-step advice.

(Also see egocentric bias).

HARD-EASY EFFECT

When someone overrates their competence in tackling complex tasks while under-rating their capability to complete simple tasks.

When introducing a new product or service, it may be better to emphasise its ease of use and simplicity rather than focusing on its complexity or difficulty.

Additionally, consumers may have less confidence in succeeding if they believe a task is difficult.

THE ILLUSION OF EXPLANATORY DEPTH

Related to the Dunning-Kruger effect, people may assume they understand a topic much better than they do.

This can be significant for marketers when introducing consumers to complex or technical products or services.

Use straightforward language to explain products or services to consumers. This can help to avoid confusion or frustration and make it easier for consumers to make informed purchasing decisions.

Additionally, provide resources such as tutorials, demos, and FAQs to help consumers better understand your products or services.

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

When someone doubts their skills, talents, or accomplishments and has a persistent internalised fear of being exposed as a fraud. Also known as the impostor phenomenon.

In social media marketing, this can be manifest as a reluctance to share content or engage with followers due to a perceived lack of expertise or authority in the field.

One way to combat imposter syndrome is to focus on providing value to social media followers through educational and informative content. By positioning your brand as a helpful resource which shares knowledge and expertise, you establish your brand's credibility.

Another strategy relates to marketers on a more personal level; keep looking for opportunities to learn and grow. This can include attending conferences, taking courses, and connecting with other industry professionals. By investing in professional development, you'll build confidence and overcome self-doubt.

BELIEF BIAS

Instead of considering an argument's fuller content and structure, people may overrely on pre-existing beliefs and knowledge, even if those arguments are weak or unsound.

Here's what you can do about it:

-  Pinpoint your target audience's beliefs and values. What are they passionate about? What do they believe in, and why? Once you understand their worldview, you can start to craft stories that resonate.
-  Use storytelling techniques. People are likelier to remember and be persuaded by stories that evoke strong emotions. So, use humour, suspense, or other emotional triggers to engage consumers.
-  Highlight aspects of your product or service that align with your audience's existing beliefs.
-  Feature customer testimonials, reviews, or influencer endorsements showing that others sharing the same beliefs have benefited from your product or service.
-  Collaborate with influencers or thought leaders who share the same beliefs as your target audience.

ILLUSORY TRUTH EFFECT

The tendency to believe that a statement is true if it is easier to process or if it has been stated multiple times, regardless of its factual accuracy.

The illusory truth effect can lead to confirmation bias, where customers seek information confirming their beliefs while ignoring information that contradicts them.

RHYME AS REASON EFFECT

Rhyming statements can be seen as more truthful.

Make your message persuasive using catchy slogans, jingles, or rhyming phrases in advertising. For example, slogans such as “I’m Lovin’ It” from McDonald’s or “More Shoppers Shop More at Morrisons,” or one of my own slogans: “Go Wild – Go Woburn.”

However, the rhyme as reason effect can be overused. So, use sparingly and ensure your message is accurate, truthful, and relevant.

Additionally, avoid using rhyming or alliterative language that could be perceived as cheesy or insincere, as this can turn customers off and damage your brand’s reputation.

SUBJECTIVE VALIDATION (AKA PERSONAL VALIDATION)

A person may consider a piece of information correct if it has significance or personal meaning.

For instance, a person enjoys dancing. They learn that medical evidence suggests that dancing is terrific for good cardiac health. This “validates” the importance of dancing.

Whenever consumers read a product review or an advertisement that reinforces core beliefs or values (echo chambers), they are more likely to perceive it as true and accurate.

Tailor digital content to align with your target audience’s beliefs and values, increasing your credibility.

Subjective validation can also enhance a sense of belonging and community around a brand or product.

By reinforcing a particular set of beliefs or values among consumers, you can foster a sense of shared identity and build stronger brand loyalty.

(See end of chapter sources for sources for named biases and principles)

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Afterthought

I desire the company of a man who could sympathise with me, whose eyes would reply to mine.
—Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*)

In spring 2023, I sat outside Guy's Hospital in London, chatting to a lady from my home town – London.

“All right, luv?” she asked, as I watched people scuttling past with their heads in their smartphones and ears plugged to musical beats, so muffling out life.

“Yeah, I'm all right,” I lied, having spent the last 20 minutes worrying about “stuff” that, in the bigger scheme of things, was probably not worth worrying about.

“So, what brings you here?” I asked the lady, who, like me, was too plump, but unlike me, looked very grey. She explained that she had cancer – in the brain. The tumour had started elsewhere; now, she was riddled with it.

“They told me I have eight months to live” she sighed, dragging on her Torch of Liberty.

I was taken aback. But didn't want to reveal my alarm.

“I'm so sorry,” I said, immediately regretting the platitude she must have heard a thousand times before.

I nervously gazed at the pavement. Then taking a breath continued . . .

“So, how do you plan to spend the rest of your life then?” I asked nervously.

“I'm off to Spain on holiday. Then I'll get another break. Go somewhere nice – assuming I'm still around.” She laughed bleakly.

She looked at her stubby nicotine-stain fingers holding her cigarette.

“You know, the only thing I will miss is not seeing my grandchildren grow up.”

“I get that,” I replied.

“I don't see mine either.” “It's heartbreaking.”

Having established a metaphorical bridge of mutual tears, we continued chatting. She explained how her brother-in-law had lost his job 2 years earlier – due to automation.

He got another one. But still couldn't get his head around the endless data processing. Now broken, the man had not left his room in Clapham for months.

"You know something?" I asked, watching the smoke lasso the stale air.

She took another puff.

"I envy you," I said. "Most of us will never get to know even the rough date of their death. You do. For the rest, we just keep going, never knowing how long or far we will go. You do. You are blessed."

The lady smiled and hugged me.

"I have this theory," I explained. "I think we eventually meet everyone in our 'class year' when we die. That's every single person we ever encountered down here. The more significant a person was in our mortal lives, the more time we get with them up there. It's not about how long you knew the person, but how much impact that person had on you."

The lady nodded.

"When I see you next time, I'll buy you a drink. What's your tipples?"

"Shandy," she said.

"Shandy, it will be," I replied.

That encounter made a big impression on me – for several reasons.

Firstly, the lady was courageous, as well as authentic and . . . well, human. This was less about artificial reality – more about actual reality.

Secondly, the story of her depressed brother-in-law made me think about our connected society; despite all the hype, some will suffer the greatest disservices without companies acting sensibly and marketers responsibly. Technology needs to serve people rather than people serving technology.

Thirdly, it reminded me how essential it was to talk and, better still, listen to people directly, face-to-face – the importance of asking, belonging, understanding, emphasizing, holding, and connecting.

These are the simple cornerstones of psychology. They are part of your DNA.

We've come a long way since Palaeolithic times when stories were painted on cave walls.

We have streaming video, audio, spatial computing, and more to help weave the threads of our lives into a pattern showing some sense of meaning and purpose.

But most of all, we have each other. And as long as we do, technology, psychological techniques, and marketing methods, responsibly used, promise a new kind of trusted AI (actual intelligence), which will open up endless possibilities of hope that we could once only dream of in our beautifully formed, perfect walnuts.

J. Jonathan Gabay



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