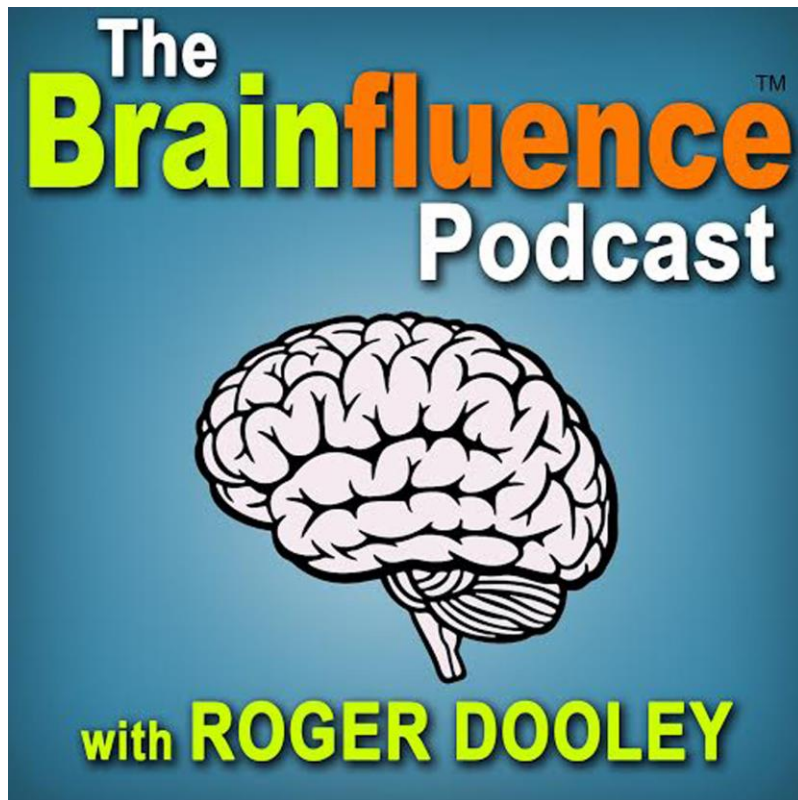


Ep #87: David Meerman Scott on The Newest Marketing Rules



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**Roger Dooley**

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## Ep #87: David Meerman Scott on The Newest Marketing Rules

Welcome to *The Brainfluence Podcast* with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger Dooley:

Welcome to *The Brainfluence Podcast*. I'm Roger Dooley. Our guest this week is a name familiar to many of you. He's one of the top experts in the field of marketing and public relations and he's a frequent keynote speaker on marketing topics.

He's a fellow Wiley author and has written many best-selling books on marketing with one unusual twist. His book, *Marketing the Moon*, is being turned into a feature film titled *The Men Who Sold the Moon*. I don't think even Malcolm Gladwell or my friend, Guy Kawasaki, can make that claim.

Our guest's latest book is the fifth edition of *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*. This is a series that has sold 350,000 copies and has been translated into 25 languages. Welcome to the show, David Meerman Scott.

David Meerman Scott:

Hey, thanks a lot, Roger. Since you got that bio, I just sold the Hungarian rights, so I'm up to 26 languages.

Roger Dooley:

Wow, that's amazing. I was going to ask you, I'm very impressed by that number of translations. What is the most surprising

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language that it's been translated into or you didn't really see that one coming?

David Meerman Scott: Gosh, you know, some of the small Baltic countries are interesting to me, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. I mean, they're tiny, tiny countries of like a million or a million and a half people. And, you know, there's enough of a market for somebody to go through the process of translating the book is remarkable to me.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, that's interesting. A few years ago, I spoke at a marketing conference, actually it was like sort of an advertising festival in Slovenia, which is a country of two million people. The work they were doing there was really amazing. It was ...

David Meerman Scott: Yeah, my book is out in that language too. I mean, it is amazing to me. I think one of the reasons is, because I've spoken in a lot of those countries as well, not Slovenia, but I've spoken in 42 countries so far. What's interesting to me is that they are very, very outward focused in their marketing.

In other words, because they have such a small home market, they are very good at focusing outward. For that, they're looking for ideas, they're looking for advice, they're looking for the latest trends. I think that's why people like you are invited to speak at conferences, and me, and why my book has been translated into a number of those languages of those smaller

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countries is that they're eager to tap the global market and want help doing so.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, it was a really fascinating conference. The one memorable aspect was another speaker was the publisher of European *Playboy* and for his speech, he had four young women in bunny outfits standing behind him.

David Meerman Scott: Nice.

Roger Dooley: Which was kind of ... It's the first time I've seen that done, I'll put it that way. But I guess he had everybody's attention to some degree.

David Meerman Scott: There you go.

Roger Dooley: So anyway, before we talk about the content of the book, your new book, David. Explain to me how a marketing book gets turned into a movie.

David Meerman Scott: So I've written ten books and the most recent couple, and most of them are marketing books, the second-most recent one is called *Marketing the Moon*. It actually came out with MIT Press, not Wiley, because it's a full-color coffee table book. I did it with a coauthor, his name is Rich Jurek. He and I are both marketing people and we're both Apollo program aficionados.

We also, both of us, collect artifacts from the Apollo moon program. I've got, what I believe to be the largest collection of press kits from the contractors that built the Apollo space crafts and parts and items that went to the moon. I also

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have a very large collection of flown artifacts. I have something that flew on every Apollo mission to the moon. So I was combining my passions of the Apollo Program and marketing with my friend Rich to create this book.

We interviewed half the guys who walked on the surface of the moon. And Gene Cernan, the last man to walk on the moon, wrote the forward to this book. It got a really great reception from both the space community and the marketing and public relations community because it was the first book ever to look at the importance of marketing and public relations to the Apollo moon program.

In other words, we argue that without great marketing and PR, we never would have gone to the moon because we never would have been able to convince the American people that this was an endeavor that we should spend four percent of our national budget and two percent of the people employed in the United States to actually do this crazy-ass project.

Many of the astronauts love the book, NASA loves the book. So a filmmaker called Robert Stone was introduced to the book and he's an Academy Award nominated film director and filmmaker. He ended up buying the rights for the book and the film is currently in production. The title has changed a couple of times. It's currently titled *A Place Beyond the Sky*.

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But in any case, it takes the original ideas of our book, *Marketing the Moon*, and expands them greatly to bring to—and it's a documentary film—bring to the big screen. It's a big budget endeavor. It's currently slated to be released for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Apollo 11, which of course was the first lunar landing mission. That's 2019, July 2019.

So this is a project he's been working on now for more than a year and he's got several more years to go. It's been really fun and exciting to be a part of that. I've signed on as a consulting producer to the film so I'm working pretty closely with Robert on it. But it is pretty exciting. And as you said in your comment there at the open, I don't know of any other marketing book author that's got a feature film in production, so there you go.

Roger Dooley:

Yeah, that's awesome. Congratulations on that, David. So getting back to *The New Rules* book, I have to add having looked through the book and read much of it, marketing and PR have about as many rules as the IRS code I think. This is a 4 and 60 page book and it's really jam-packed with information.

Is it really a thankless job to write a book covering fast-moving topics like social media, mobile apps, and all that sort of thing?

David Meerman Scott:

Well, that's why it's the fifth edition. The original first edition came out way back in 2007, which

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gosh, you know in internet years, that's like a century ago. But when the first edition came out in mid-2007, I was actually writing it throughout 2006. When I was writing it, the most popular social network was Myspace. Facebook was only for students, Twitter didn't exist, YouTube didn't exist. It was a real different world back then.

So I wrote the book because I basically was seeing patterns that I felt nobody else was seeing. I was seeing that marketing is all about content and that my background working for real-time news companies, I worked for Knight-Ridder, I worked for Thomson Reuters. My background working for real-time new businesses gave me a unique understanding of where I felt the whole web thing was going regarding public relations and marketing.

I talk about the old rules are that marketing meant simply advertising and you had to buy advertising, you had to buy attention in order to do TV ads, magazine ads, billboards, send direct mail, whatever it might. Then public relations was really only about media relations. In other words, how can you convince a publication to write a broadcast about you?

Those rules I felt were increasingly becoming obsolete. And again, I wrote this ten years ago. It came out in mid '07 and that book, a lot of people didn't expect it to do well. Even Wiley made it a midlist title and all of a sudden, bang,

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it's like the most popular book that Wiley was offering at that point. It spent six months on the *Business Week* bestseller list. It really took off.

It was really funny how at that point, there were lots of people who were dismissive of the ideas because it was still very, very early in internet marketing and internet public relations. Now, of course, we're eight years since the initial book came out and the fifth edition, as you know, just came out the last couple of weeks.

What I keep changing in each edition are a couple of things. Number one, the tools. The strategies are the same. The strategy is that the best way to reach people on the web is to create great, great content. You create blogs and social networking feeds and YouTube videos and infographics and what you're doing right now, a podcast. All of these forms of content are great ways to reach your audience. That's the new way. That's the new rule.

The strategies of how to do that haven't changed since the first edition but what has changed are the tools. Since that first edition, all sorts of social networks have burst onto the scene, whether it's Facebook or YouTube or Twitter or Instagram. In the most recent edition, I spent a significant chunk of one of the chapters talking about the new video sharing, live video streaming apps, like Periscope, which are new since the fourth edition.



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Also, in each of the editions, I have new stories, I have new examples. It's a very case-study driven book with lots and lots of different examples. In each edition, I retired the old stories, not all of them, but some of the old stories, added some new ones.

In addition, the fifth edition has a new chapter, didn't have this before, about how to integrate marketing and sales. So marketing and public relations with your sales strategy to grow business because I felt as if we're now sort of achieving a kind of convergence between what is considered marketing and public relations on the web and what is considered sales on the web. That convergence meant that I needed to write about it.

So it's been really an amazing journey to chronicle the ways that we can reach people on the web. What's interesting is that we went from a very small percentage of people in the world on the web back when I first wrote ten years ago to well more than half the human beings on the planet on the web today. It's amazing.

Roger Dooley:

Yeah, David, you talk about content as being sort of the key vehicle. I was in Louisville at a conference just a few weeks ago with Mark Schaefer and he talks about content shock, this sort of tidal wave of new and often pretty decent content that makes it difficult for even high-quality content to get found and seen.

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There's just so much that it's hard to find. It's hard for people to consume. What do you think is ... do you agree with Mark on that? And what's your solution if there is one?

David Meerman Scott:

I think that in every business there's always room for more content because I think that there's some truth to what Mark says for those organizations that don't really understand their buyers very well. So in other words, if you're just creating content about your products and services, nobody cares. There's too much content out there already. Save your energy. Save your bandwidth.

However, I'm a huge and very passionate believer that there's always room for content that specifically addresses the problems faced by the people who might be interested in doing business with your organization. I'm a huge believer in that. I think that an organization that truly understands what I call buyer personas, buyer personas are basically just the group of people that have problems that your organization can help solve.

If you truly understand those people because you've interviewed them, because you understand the language they use, because you understand deeply what they're interested in, what they're passionate about, there's no question in my mind that you can create content that will interest them. Even though there's millions and millions of content creators now on

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the web, which was certainly not true ten years ago. It is definitely true now.

So I'm just going to give you an example. One of the new stories in the book, that actually opens of the book from the very first page, is a story about a company called Grain Surfboards. If you were to say, "Oh my gosh, we're creating a company to manufacture and sell surfboards, there's already hundreds and hundreds of companies out there that are selling surfboards. We're not going to be able to break through so it doesn't even matter. Why should we create content?" That would be Mark's argument.

But in my mind, that's absolutely not true because this is a company that when they started said, "You know what? We're different because we're a company that is creating wooden surfboards. We're a company that solves problems for buyers in ways that other companies in the surf industry don't. We're green. We're creating surfboards from natural materials. We're not creating things that will rot in landfills when they've stopped having their useful lives."

They created an amazing site and social feeds. Their Instagram has, I forget the exact number, but call it 30,000 followers. They're just doing a really great job and I came across the company because I did a search simply for the phrase "wooden surfboards." They popped up at the top of the search results, I found their great content

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and I ended up doing business with them. I actually ended up taking a course on how to build wooden surfboards with them.

So I absolutely, 100 percent, am convinced because I see it again and again and again that there is no doubt that there is room for great content out there, even in what many perceive to be a crowded market.

Roger Dooley:

So part of the strategy should be not just to create great content but to be sure that it's very carefully targeted at the right niche. Because what I've seen lately, there's been an explosion of really pretty good content. I speak and write a lot in the conversion space and there are any number of blogs that are turning out blog posts that are the length of e-books practically and generally, pretty good content.

I mean, it's not all amazing, but much more useful stuff than you would've seen a few years ago where people would jot down an idea or two and put it in a blog post. These are more detailed guides to carrying out some particular kind of task or ten different strategies for doing something. It's pretty good stuff. But the trick should be really to know your audience and be sure that it's targeted at them.

David Meerman Scott:

Yeah, I mean, that's important. What's really critical about that is that you have to truly know your audience and not just make crap up. Because that's what most people do. They just

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say, “Oh, my audience is 25-35 year-old women who enjoy gardening.” And that’s not a market. That’s your made-up demographic.

I’m talking about actually interviewing people who garden, a number of them, 20, 30, 40 of them, to understand exactly what their problems are, exactly how they might use your products or services. Understand the words and phrases they use. Understand what makes them interested in the things that they do and that’s something that very, very, very few companies do.

I would also add another very interesting way to make content break through. That’s a concept I pioneered called “newsjacking.” Newsjacking is the art and science of injecting your ideas into a breaking news story. Newsjacking is a chapter in *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*. It’s also going to be in December, I’m doing an online course called Master Newsjacking and it will be available on NewsJacking.com.

Newsjacking is something I invented back in 2011, wrote a book called *Newsjacking*, and then as I said, there’s a chapter in *The New Rules of Marketing and PR* about newsjacking. Basic idea is that you figure out what’s happening in the news that people are talking about.

If you're a B2B company, what’s happening in your industry that people are talking about on

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the news? If you're a local company, what's happening in the geography that you sell into? If you're a national company, what's happening in the news? What's happening in the global news if that's appropriate to you?

Then you create content that drafts off of those news stories. I'll give you an example. It's an example of actually somebody who learned these ideas from a previous edition of *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*, implemented them, and reached out to me because he was so happy about it. His name is Trent Silver, he's the CEO of an entrepreneurial company. He's actually only 22 years old, called Cash for Purses.

Cash for Purses buys used handbags online from people, high-end, Coach, Prada, Louis Vuitton, bags like that. Fixes them up and then resells them, either through eBay or through retail stores. His biggest problem, Trent's, is finding handbags to buy.

So what he did was when Lindsay Lohan was having well-publicized money problems, Trent then created content where he offered to buy Lindsay Lohan's used handbags. It was great because as soon as he did that, the media had another angle on the story of Lindsay Lohan having money troubles. Dozens and dozens of media outlets talked about the fact that Lindsay Lohan could solve her money problems by selling her used handbags to Trent Silver.

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Roger Dooley: That's brilliant.

David Meerman Scott: And every single one of them listed Cash for Purses in their website with links. I mean, sorry, in their articles, with links to him. So he told me that at the height of this, he was getting between 20 and 50 inquires every single minute. He told me that he got 8,000 inquires. He closed about 20 percent of them and he made \$250,000, a quarter of a million dollars, from just tying his brand to a breaking news story.

I've got dozens of examples I could share if we had more time. But the idea of newsjacking is really interesting because going back again to Mark's statement that you said, sure, if you're creating content on your time, "Okay, I'm going to write a blog post, I'm going to push it out at the end of the week," which is what almost everybody does, it's harder to break through.

But if you're creating content at the right moment, at the precise moment that your market is interested in it because there's something happening in the news, there's something happening in the regulatory environment, there's something happening that's important to your buyers and you get that piece of content out at the precise moment, then people will notice it. The media might notice it and write about it. Your buyers might find it in the search engines, and bang, you're off and running.

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But very few companies do that because they're so focused on the old approach, which is you create content when you're good and ready as opposed to what I call this new approach and I named it newsjacking, the idea of drafting off of what's going on in the world and tying your brand to it.

Roger Dooley:

Are there some risks associated with that approach, where something just doesn't quite hit the right note with the newsjacking and ends up looking either cheesy or somehow inappropriate?

David Meerman Scott:

You do need to have a legitimate tie to the story. Now the example that I shared of Trent Silver, I mean, Trent Silver has a company called Cash for Purses. His business is he buys people's used handbags from them. Lindsay Lohan was having money troubles. Every picture that we saw over that period of time, she was actually carrying a high-end handbag. It was perfectly aligned.

Roger Dooley:

Right, yeah, that makes a lot of sense because I think she's not necessarily the most sympathetic character in the world either.

David Meerman Scott:

Yes, it worked great. However, you're right, you should make sure that you have a legitimate tie to the story and you need to be extremely careful if there's a story that has any kind of negative consequences, death and destruction in particular. I would not try to tie your brand to



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the Paris bombings. As we're recording this, it's only a couple of days after the Paris bombings. Now, not a good idea unless you have a legitimate tie to the story. And even then, you have to be extremely careful.

I'll give you an example. During Hurricane Sandy, which happened a couple of years ago on the U.S. east coast, there were companies like American Apparel and others that newsjacked Hurricane Sandy. Now remember, Hurricane Sandy, over 100 people lost their lives, billions of dollars in property damage. People were homeless, they lost their homes. It was terrible.

American Apparel had a 20 percent off sale for anybody who lived in the states affected by the hurricane, which is ridiculous. They got a lot of negative attention for trying to do that. But at the same time, during the same storms, Duracell, the battery company, on their Facebook page told where their mobile charging vehicles—and they had a number of these van-like mobile charging vehicles—were going to be.

They would show up in places such as New Jersey that were affected by the storm where the power was out. They would for free offer to charge people's mobile devices and for free give people batteries. They promoted the location of those vehicles on their Facebook page. They had tens of thousands of people like them on Facebook for this.

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They got tons of media attention because unlike American Apparel, that was trying to sell unrelated product off the back of this tragedy, Duracell, obviously a power company, the power was out and they were for free offering people some power so that they could get their mobile devices recharged or they could have some batteries for the devices that needed to have batteries. It worked out great.

So, yeah, you need to be careful, especially with a story that you don't have a tie to or a story that in some way has death and destruction attached to it.

Roger Dooley:

Makes eminent sense and that's the wrong way and the right way to do it, those two examples. So David, I mentioned the size of your new book. I would think maybe an entrepreneur who picked it up or even a new CMO might be a little bit intimidated by that. How would you suggest that the reader use that book?

David Meerman Scott:

Yeah, so, it is 460 pages as you mentioned. But, I write like I speak. I write like a blog post. It's chatty, it's conversational, it's very, very story-driven. I've organized the chapters that you don't have to read it in a linear fashion. You can just jump back and forth. Very much like a blog, you go to somebody's blog, you take a look at the index, you pick and choose the stories that you might be interested and read a couple of them and maybe bookmark and come back later. That's how I wrote the book.

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Just in this podcast, we spoke about buyer personas and we spoke up newsjacking. Both of those are individual chapters in the book. I don't know exactly how many pages each is but call it 30 pages each, so you don't have to read 460 pages, you can read the 30-page chapter on buyer personas. You can read the 30-page chapter on newsjacking, and you're off and running with some interesting strategies for reaching buyers just by doing that.

If you found that interesting, maybe you go back and take a look at another chapter, perhaps the section on how to use Periscope, one of the newest and most interesting social networks out there. So yeah, although it is a textbook from the perspective of hundreds and hundreds of universities and colleges around the world are using it in their classes, which is pretty exciting for me, it's not a textbook in the sense that you have to read it cover to cover and it's written in a dry, kind of academic manner, because it's not.

Roger Dooley:

Yeah, a couple weeks ago I spoke to Gabe Weinberg, founder of DuckDuckGo and also author of the book *Traction* and one of his key insights in *Traction* was that particularly for a startup, I mean, if you're a giant brand, then you probably have to be in many channels. But for smaller companies and startups, you really need to pick a channel or two perhaps at most, that are going to give you the most bang for your buck.

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You simply can't say, "Well, we're going to do YouTube. We're going to do Instagram. We're going to pay-per-click ads and we're going to do SEO" and so on and so on. Because you'll run out of money. Most of those will probably not generate good results.

You have to maybe through some very quick testing, try and find that channel that works and then really put your effort into that. And that channel may change over time, something may work for a period of time, but as you hit your sort of next level of business, there may be another channel that will then start to work for you.

But I think in combination with a book like yours, where you've got the play-by-play for all these different techniques and topics, I think that would make a lot of sense.

David Meerman Scott:

Yeah, I absolutely believe that, no doubt. I myself practice that. I'm reasonably active in LinkedIn and Facebook, and you know, I go in a couple of times a day just to see what's going on. I post maybe once or twice a week and see what's going on. I'm much more active on Twitter, which I'm in several times a day. I'm posting several times a day. But there's a lot of social networks that I'm not in, I simply don't go to.

So, yeah, I totally believe that, especially if you're an entrepreneur or you're a solo practitioner. In my case, I've got a company of

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one. I don't have any help. I have some virtual help. I have some people who come in on a project basis to help me out but I don't have anybody who's out there doing my marketing for me. I'm doing my own marketing and it's a matter of figuring out, "Okay, where do I want to focus?"

In my case, what I've found is that the center of my universe is my blog. The reason that's important to me is because my blog is my own real estate. I own the URL. It's my real estate. I'm not driving people to Twitter's real estate or Facebook's real estate or some other real estate.

While those are still fine and I'm on them, my best stuff and the things that are more important to me live on my blog because that's real estate that I own. That's when if people do a search they find me, they find my site and they might learn more about what I do, my books, my speeches, and whatnot.

Roger Dooley:

Yeah, I was just at a community building conference and most of the folks there were on their own platforms. They had their own software and their own domain and so on, but I've seen lately a lot of even marketing experts who are building communities on Facebook and that just strikes me as being a little bit scary to trust your community to a site that has been known to really change the rules quickly and

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without much notice or concern for the folks that have been supporting them.

David Meerman Scott: Well, I've seen people who've had tremendous success doing things like that. I mean, LinkedIn groups, people who moderate LinkedIn groups, people have had tremendous success with that and the new LinkedIn blogging platform I actually use myself as it proves to be very valuable.

So I think there's still room for that but I do think, I absolutely do think, that every organization should have a home base on real estate that they own. That home base is where you have your best stuff and you drive people. Then you use social networks as your outposts to funnel people back into your home base. That's the way I would look at it.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, it makes a huge amount of sense. Well, I have a suggestion for the sixth edition, David, when that comes out. You'll have to devote a little bit of coverage to neuromarketing techniques because we're seeing such a revolution in that area where it's becoming much more affordable, accessible to smaller companies. It's not just for the Coca-Colas of the world. They're doing things like using webcams and even phone cams to gauge emotional response to content or in ads.

David Meerman Scott: Right.

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Roger Dooley: So it's developing now. It's not quite primetime yet, but I think by the time you're working on that edition that maybe it will be.

David Meerman Scott: Awesome. I look forward to that.

Roger Dooley: So let me remind our audience, we're talking with marketing expert and author, David Meerman Scott. David's newest book is the fifth edition of *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*. David, how can our listeners find you and your content online?

David Meerman Scott: My site is also my name, David Meerman Scott. So you Google my name, you'll find me that way. On Twitter I'm @DMScott, that's D-M-S-C-O-T-T. If you want to learn more about newsjacking, which is my favorite strategy for getting content out there, just go to [Newsjacking.com](http://Newsjacking.com).

Roger Dooley: Great. We'll have links to those resources and your books, David, and anything else we discussed, any other resources, on the show notes page at [RogerDooley.com/Podcast](http://RogerDooley.com/Podcast). There will be a text version of our conversation there too. David, thanks so much for being on the show and best of luck with the new edition.

David Meerman Scott: My pleasure, Roger. It's great speaking with you. I enjoyed it very much and I do look forward to learning more about neuro stuff.

Roger Dooley: Great, well, it's coming. Thanks, bye-bye now.

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Thank you for joining me for this episode of *The Brainfluence Podcast*. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at [RogerDooley.com](http://RogerDooley.com).