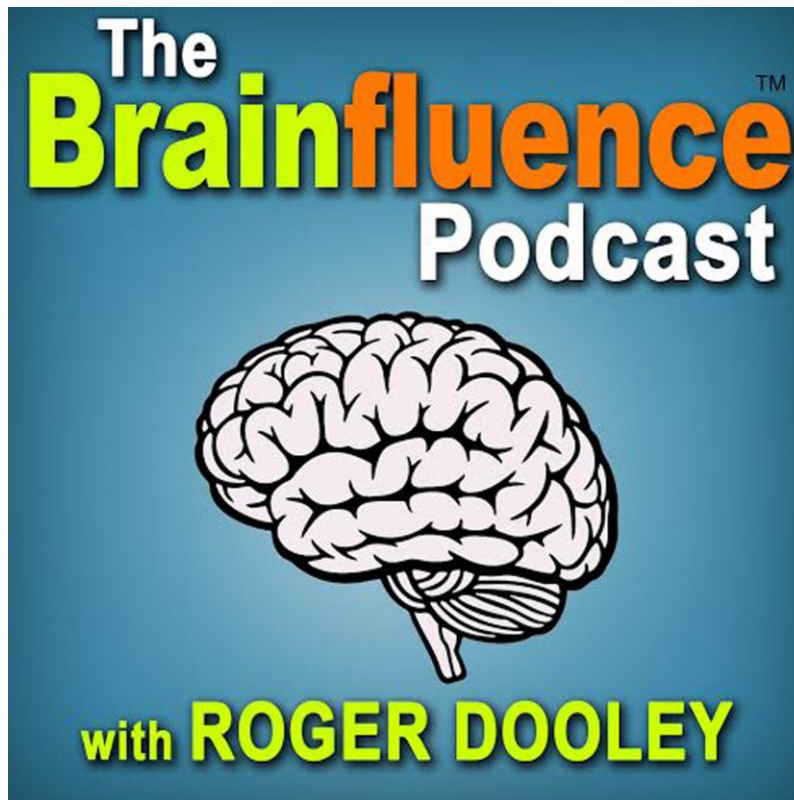


Ep #93: Best Neuromarketing Ideas, Part 2



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Roger Dooley

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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.

Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast. I'm Roger Dooley. For the second week in a row, it is just me. The reason is I began last week covering the most actionable and useful content from 2015, and I'm going to continue that. We had so much really good stuff that I couldn't cram it all into 1 podcast, even hitting the highlights, which is what I'm doing here. We will have the second phase of that. We'll be actually, this week, covering some of the most shared and read articles of 2015. We've got some great guest posts included in that. I know you're going to like this. If you want to refer to the actual blog post where all of these are linked to, including those we covered last week, you can go to neurosciencemarketing.com/blog, B-L-O-G, /best15, that's B-E-S-T-1-5, and you can find them there. We will be covering an audio format today, the highlights of several of those posts. Standby and here we go.

The first topic we'll cover today is How To Write Headlines That Surprise The Brain. You might wonder what I mean by surprise the brain. In fact, our brains operate as a prediction mechanism. At the University College of London, scientists looked at people's brains via fMRI so they could get an almost real-time 3D image of what was going on. They found that if people were presented with a sequence of events and then an unexpected thing happened, their brains lit up in a different way. The scientists concluded that what people were doing was forming a prediction what was going to happen. When that prediction didn't occur, then they were surprised and snapped to attention.

When you're writing headlines or ad copy, getting people to pay attention is really important, probably the most important thing you can do because people are going to be operating on autopilot. They're perhaps going to be multi-tracking as they read your stuff, so that surprise element

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can be really powerful. What sparked this whole article was a fascinating ad from Patrón Tequila. It had a very simple headline. It was a picture of a bottle. The headline was Practice Makes Patrón. Now, if you are an idiomatic English speaker, you almost certainly were expecting practice makes perfect because it's certainly one of the most common sayings in the language. When suddenly you didn't see perfect, you saw Patrón, and that will be true whether you are reading it or listening it, your brain lit up a little bit.

Now, you can come up with your own clever substitutions by taking a common phrase and then modifying the end of it. For instance, don't cry over spilt something other than milk or barking up the wrong something that's not a tree and so on. There's lots of expressions that can be re-purposed. Obviously, all of it may not be right for your product, but by choosing the right one, you can get that surprise effect. I know that it's a little bit different than the common headline practice that substitutes an earlier word. For instance, somebody might say experience doesn't grow on trees. That, too, is a clever play on words. It can attract attention and it shakes up the brain but not in the same way because that prediction process isn't occurring. The unexpected or the word that's not really congruent with what we're anticipating is at the very beginning. A little bit different effect, but very useful technique. Try it yourself when you're writing a headline or leading to an ad or something like that. You may find it gets your readers' attention a little bit better than something that's logical but more prosaic.

If you're doing video or animation, you could exploit the same effect, too, by having something unexpected happen where you have a predictable sequence of events that people are watching and then suddenly something different happens, and humor operates that way to some degree. It acts with an element of surprise where the comedian is explaining something, and we know what's going to happen and then suddenly there's a reversal at the end where something unexpected and different happens makes us laugh. Try this yourself in your own ads.

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The next article I want to talk about is actually a guest post by Heidi Haskell. It's called 7 Ways to Appeal to Your Customer's Reptilian Brain. Now, that may sound a little odd, but it draws on a couple of things. It draws on the Triune Brain theory that says that our brains were actually divided into 3 parts, a higher, medium and lower level brain, with reptilian being the lowest level of brain.

Also, extensively on the work of the people at SalesBrain, Christophe Morin and Patrick Renvoise, they were probably the first to incorporate the word neuromarketing in an actual book title. Basically, they say that the reptilian region is the attention gatekeeper and the decision maker for the brain. If you can get the customer's attention, the customer's reptilian brain's attention with your landing page or ad or commercial or whatever, you have much better chance of getting them to convert. That was a huge article, so we're not going to be able to cover all of it or even most of it here in this podcast. I'd encourage you to check out the article. We even have a PDF copy of it if you want to download because it's a few thousand words long. We can touch on a few of these 7 ways, and very quickly, those 7 ways are pain points, selfishness, contrast, tangibility, beginning and end, visual metaphor and emotional cord.

As I say, we're not going to go through all of those, but our pain points are 1 key thing that you can do. This isn't necessarily novel if you've been in the sales or marketing for a while, but the reptilian brain is concerned about pain. Often, we're talking about features and benefits and so on when the buyer, perhaps in a B2B situation, is concerned more about job loss or shutting down production or something of that sort. By ignoring those pain points, we're missing the fastest way to that buyer's brain, and hopefully, a positive purchase decision.

Contrast is one of the others. That's well illustrated visually in the article. One example Heidi uses is the classic series of Apple iMac ads where they created this really wonderful contrast both in visual form and personality form and so on between the guy portraying the Mac who is young, put together, attractive and cool, and the PC guy who was

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overweight, nerdy-looking and often appearing in some sort of a frumpy fashion. There's a great visual of the PC guy in a hospital gown compared with the black clad, slender Mac guy. Another example that Heidi uses is an ad for contact lenses that has half blurry side. One half of the ad is blurry and the other half is crystal clear. Again, showing that contrast between using their product and not using their product.

Heidi covers a lot of ground in this one, too. Even getting into things like visual metaphor because the optic nerve connects directly to the reptilian brain, so using the right kind of visual elements can have that direct impact that will maximize sales. There's way too much content in Heidi's article to cover here, so I do encourage you to go to that Best 15 Link and find the Reptilian brain article and check it out and read it at length. It is illustrated on that page with a crocodile-looking thing. Hopefully, you will find that as a reptile and not an alligator or an amphibian if we have any zoologist in the audience. Check it out, it's well worth spending the time to read it and even perhaps download the copy of it for future reference.

The next article is one of 2 guest posts by Jeremy Smith that made our top list for the year. This one is how to optimize for the 3 kinds of buyers be visiting your website. Those 3 types are tightwads, spendthrifts and then average spenders or pretty much everyone else. Tightwads and spendthrifts are very different kinds of buyer. You might say, "I'd love to have spendthrifts who don't really care about the money they spend as my customer," which is nice but not every product category really appeals to that kind of buyer. In fact, the world is made up of all 3 types. If you only focus on one, you may be missing both. The tightwad has some characteristics that are unique. Principally, it's a focus on value and price. They're constantly concerned that they're spending too much, that they're not getting as much as they paid for and are basically pretty conservative types of buyer. If you are selling a massage to that kind of buyer, you'd emphasize the fact that it's available at 20% off, not really how good it's going to feel.

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Compare that on the other hand with spendthrifts who are mainly focused on gratification. They don't experience buyer remorse ever. They are focused much more on the Hedonic benefits of their purchase if it's that kind of purchase. In the example of a massage, they're going to be the ones who want to hear how great they're going to feel and what a wonderful experience it is and not really pay that much attention to the price.

Of course, average buyers are somewhere in the middle. Most of us fall into that category. We have elements of both. In fact, it may vary by product. For instance, if I'm buying paper towels, I'm probably a little bit more of a spender that I'm going to buy something that looks okay and is on sale or inexpensive because I don't really differentiate that much between the brands and don't have any brand allegiance or loyalty or look for any performance characteristic.

On the other hand, if I'm buying, say, an accessory that will make air travel easier for me. I spend a fair amount of time on planes. That for me is going to be something that I'm going to look mostly at the benefits that I'm going to get, how will that help. Will it make more efficient, more comfortable or whatever? Within some limits, I won't be focused on the price. If it's not crazy expensive, I probably will not pay much attention. Even if I'm comparing products, I'm going to be looking at reviews and what other people said, but not whether one is 10 or 20% cheaper than the other one.

In the article, Jeremy explains how to sell to tightwads. You don't want to use emotional triggers about how they deserve it or it's the best for you. Instead, focus on pain points like losing money hurts, save your money and get the best future you can buy for your money. Using triggers like that, that will actually appeal a little bit to a fear of missing out and that kind of thing. They will respond to value propositions. If your product offers are really great value, explain that in clear terms. Numbers, data, charts, all those kinds of things will help the tightwad buyers perform that rational justification for why they should open up their wallet and take out their

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money. Similarly, if you can provide detailed numbers, claims, endorsements, all those things will help with the tightwad buyer.

Now, if you're selling to a spendthrift, it's really very different. You can use a lot of emotion in selling to them. They are not going to be analytical. You don't really need a bunch of charts and graphs and data for them. You don't need to emphasize your price. Use imagery. Appeal to their Hedonic aspirations. Even colors can play an important role. Very different.

Now, if you're selling to average buyers, you may have to split the difference. You may have to incorporate some hard rational information for the tightwads or the tightwad portion of our brands. You may have to incorporate some emotional cues to, which is actually not a bad approach to many kinds of advertising. You also have to think about the kind of product you are selling. If you are selling expensive watches, you do not want to even try and appeal to tightwads because they simply are not going to be your customer. There you want to focus purely on the spendthrift type of customer.

Now, as we start 2016, probably most of us are concerned about trying to make the year as productive as possible. We're all looking for those little productivity hacks or an edge that will help us get all of our work done. I wrote a post about free to-do list apps. I also reached out to some experts for advice on habit formation. Again, this is a long-ish post. I'm not going to be able through everything here, but I'll hit a few high points. One high point is that data from to-do list app maker shows that 41% of the things that people put on their do-do lists never get done, so 4 out of 10 items are never checked off as being accomplished. I think that's 1 reason why to-do lists often fail to be effective because the stuff builds up on there that isn't getting done and finally, our to-do list is just as big massive things that aren't done. They're probably not going to get done, and we give up on it.

I reached out to a couple of experts. Art Markman from the University of Texas is an expert on habits. He wrote a book called Smart Habits or Smart Change actually, Five Tools to Create New and Sustainable Habits

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in Yourself and Others. He uses a couple of kinds of list. I'm not going to detail his techniques here. He has a pretty lengthy comment. Check out the post if you want to hear from Art. Then I also reached out to Nir Eyal, who's a past guest on the show and co-panelist at South by Southwest this year, 2016. He wrote *Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products*. He knows a little bit about habit formation. He tries to put repeated tasks on his to-do list. In other words, he puts something [saying 00:15:54] I'm going to be sure I meditate daily or I spend 15 minutes reading foreign language or something like that and makes sure he incorporates that on his to-do list. By doing that repetitively, eventually, it actually becomes a habit form.

Also in the article, I go through a bunch of free tools, some that I've tried and others that I haven't tried but have heard about, and all different ways to keep track of your to-do items. If you're looking for some good habits to start off 2016, check out the article about free to-do list apps.

Another one of my really popular posts was my Neuromarketing careers post. Now I'm guessing that most of my listeners aren't really looking for a change to a career in neuromarketing, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it other than to say that there is no simple straightforward path simply because the field is still evolving and it isn't clear what skills will be needed going forward. Will neuroscience skills be needed, more general marketing skills, analytical skills, data crunching? There's certainly all kinds of roles in this industry. Also the educational side hasn't really been well defined.

Just in the last year, we're starting to see some serious education intuitions who are doing research in the area, mainly at the graduate level, places like Temple University, University of Akron, Iowa State University and a couple of others. We're also seeing some neuromarketing degree programs. For example, the Autonomous University of Barcelona is offering a master's degree in neuromarketing. I believe some other European institutions are doing this as well. This would certainly be 1 path, although not necessarily an automatic path to a neuromarketing career.

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What I would suggest as probably 1 of the most useful things that you could do if you are interested in that type of career is try to work for a company, with a company in some way, even as an internship if that's appropriate to your level of employment to get some hands-on experience and learn more about the field because as I said, there's simply not any easy-defined path. There's not a certification program that automatically qualifies you for employment in the industry. I would develop the diverse skillset and above all, try and get some real-world exposure in real actual neuromarketing company.

Liraz provides some interesting psychology behind why horizontal layouts don't work as well. She draws on Gestalt's Law of Closure, which basically says our brains try and complete things that appear to be incomplete. The problem with the horizontal layout is that it may appear to be incomplete. What she suggests is some ways to improve horizontal website layout will be, for one, to don't use boxes and horizontal lines because these are particularly significant to our brain and implying, okay, that's all there is. Everything that's in this box or everything above this line is important. There's probably not anything below it. You can add a down arrow that might signify, "Hey, okay, there is more stuff down here. You just can't see it." Or you could add a vertical element. For instance, some kind of a small side bar type thing or something else that's going to imply to the viewer that this is a continuous page. It doesn't end at the end of the screen and you should keep on looking.

In my next article, How To Set The Right Price Every Time, I cover several different kinds of pricing hacks or little elements of pricing psychology. The one that I think is most interesting, and it's based on some new research on what the scientist called the rounded price effect. It has to do with whether it's better to use rounded prices like \$100 or not so rounded prices that are more precise like \$99.72, for example. There were a lot of things that go into that kind of decision.

They did some interesting work on what kind of products work better with each kind of price. It has to do with the way customers are making

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their decision whether it's an emotional decision as in buying an impulse product or a luxury item or perhaps a fashion item or whether it's a more a practical, rational decision. In that case, you would want to use the odd price or the non-rounded price because a price like that, like say, \$99.52, is obviously not a nice, clean number. It's what psychologist would call [disfluent 00:21:01]. It's a little bit harder to read. It's harder. It will help kick the customer's brain into that rational decision-making mode.

On the other hand, an even price like \$100 is easily processed. If the customer is making that decision in an emotional way, the price won't slow them down. Their brain will simply process that easily and hopefully, they'll continue along that purchasing path. It isn't just the product itself that determines whether you should use one kind of price or the other. It depends, too, on the way that you're promoting that product. For instance, if you are using emotional appeal, images, maybe a sexier approach to your ads, a fun approach, then you probably want to go with a rounded price.

On the other hand, if your advertising is focused on features and benefits, comparisons and price, then you want to go with precision. The same product can be presented in different ways. For instance a camera could be presented as a fun way to share family memories. In that case, a rounded price is going to fit the rest of the ad better. On the other hand, if you're comparing the features of the camera to the competition, talking about its great new specifications and so on, in that case, a precise price might work out a little bit better for you.

Now, our most read and most shared post of 2015 was another guest post. I said that Jeremy Smith had 2. This is the second one. The title of this post is 67 ways to Increase Conversion with Cognitive Biases. Needless to say, we are not going to go through all 67 here today or even most of them. This is a massive post. It's about 7,000 words long. In it, Jeremy goes through just about every cognitive bias that's been documented in the human brain and tries to explain briefly what it is and then also come up with an idea or 2 as to how you could apply that bias in

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trying to improve the conversion rate on your landing page or app or site. They go from A to Z literally. We've got the ambiguity effect at the front end and the Zeigarnik Effect at the tail end. There's pretty much everything in between.

Because this post was so huge, we turned to a 30-page eBook that you can download to. It's a great read. It's also, in addition, to being a really useful tool for optimizing conversion rates, it is a great illustration of the [foam balls 00:23:46] of the human mind and how we think of ourselves as being rational decision makers and logical beings but in fact, all of these biases go to show the exact opposite, that we will not always behave in a rational way. We will be biased by weird things that don't make a difference. The cheerleader effect, for example, people tend to look more attractive when they're in a group than individually.

The Zeigarnik Effect, by the way, is interesting because you're probably thinking of productivity at this time of year and how to complete tasks, especially those owners' tasks that you don't like. The Zeigarnik Effect basically says once you start something, you're more likely to focus on that. Perhaps, you have been putting off, doing your taxes or something else you really don't enjoy. If you just get started on it, you are much more likely than to return to the task than you were before.

One of the 67 biases that Jeremy talks about is the hot-hand fallacy, which basically says that people tend to believe in the predictive power of past events and that for example, a card player might have a hot hand and they're on a streak, where in fact, there is no statistical streak happening. It's just the way things are turning out. He gives some examples of how you could employ that. For example, in personal branding, you could point out a list of successes that you've had. That will perhaps have some predictive power, not so much for you, as for the people who read that about you. In a customer situation, Jeremy suggests that you could remind a customer of how many times they've been right making decision and hence, increase the probability that they think that this will be a right decision to purchase

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your product. This goes on and there's really a lot of great content here. It's a wonderful reference. I suggest that you visit that.

That is the last of our best of posts for 2015. There are certainly plenty of other good ones that are worth a look, but we had narrowed it down to a pretty small list, and even that filled 2 podcasts. I hope you have enjoyed these 2 weeks with me alone. Next week, I expect we will be back to having a really interesting guest. By all means, visit the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast, where you will find both a set of links to the posts we've discussed as well as a text version of this conversation or this monologue in this case. Until next week, thanks for tuning in.

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.