CUSTOMERS | SALES | TRAINING

NeuroMarketing - 7 secrets to unlocking your customer's brain for instant sales

A way to better understand your customers and ultimately to better serve them. When used in this way, it can have a dramatic impact on your bottomline.

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Have you ever wondered...

- Why even the highest priced or lowest quality products sometimes outsell their competitors?
- Why and how your prospects buy the products or services they do, even if their choices seem irrational or impractical?
- Why some brands have a devoted cult-like following while others have zero loyalty?

A new field called NeuroMarketing -- combining neuroscience, marketing and technology -- has generated a buzz across every industry and every business sector. Let's look at how the latest findings can help you convert more prospects to customers and create life-long loyalty and raving fans.

NeuroMarketing: Is It The Key To Unlocking Your Customer's Brain?

In traditional marketing, we are told to follow the proven formula of compelling headlines, benefits, satisfaction guarantee and a call to action, and your sales will skyrocket. Yet, even top marketers can attest that successful campaigns are a hit or miss proposition to find those that generate big sales.

Until now ...

Neuroscience and behavioral sciences -- such as NLP (NeuroLinguistic Programming) -- are all saying the same thing:

"Our unconscious mind, not our conscious mind -- drives how we respond to ads, brands and products and, ultimately, drives all our buying decisions. Customers don't really know why they buy what they buy, which is why traditional market research fall short."

Let's take a look at the underlying reason why: the architecture of our brain.

Will The Real Decision Maker (In Your Brain) Please Stand Up? According to neuroscientists, there are 3 main parts to the brain, each functioning as a brain unto itself. These three brains -- nestled inside one another -- are as follows.

- The New (or outer-most) Brain: Most evolved part of the brain known as the cortex. Responsible for logic, learning, language, conscious thoughts and our personalities.
- The Mammalian (Middle) Brain: Also known as the limbic system. Deals with our emotions, moods, memory and hormones.
- The Reptilian (Old) Brain: Also known as the R Complex controls our basic survival functions, such as hunger, breathing, flight-or-fight reactions and staying out of harm's way.

While neuromarketing is still a young field with many unanswered questions, one finding is clear.

The reptilian, or old, brain drives your customers buying decisions.

According to Erik du Plessis in The Advertising Mind, the brain rules all rapid decision-making. Market researcher and Chairman, Archetype Discoveries Worldwide, Clotaire Rapaille said in a PBS interview -- The Persuaders that: *"The reptilian always wins. I don't care what you tell me intellectually. Why? Because the reptilian always wins."*

To strengthen your brand, loyalty and sales, you must understand your customers' reptilian hot buttons. A "cortex" message - such as "Buy my product because it is 20% cheaper" - doesn't buy customer loyalty. It all comes down to who triggers the first reptilian reaction. That's why Coke, after all these years, continues to dominate the market.

The Reptilian Brain and Profits: 7 Critical Insights You Must Know About How and Why Your Customer Buys

Our "old" brain often overrides our voice of logic and drives all buying decisions for reasons beyond our conscious awareness.

> ***To influence your customer's buying decisions, you must learn how the "old" brain operates and speak its language.***

Below are 7 key insights about the old brain that can add to your bottomline:

1. The old brain is driven by emotions.

Our old brain operates on autopilot - i.e., a stimulus response mechanism. Emotions are automatic responses to sensory stimuli. The smell of coffee, the sound of the ocean, the view of a setting sun… all trigger an unconscious emotional response.

Emotions play a similar critical role in our buying decisions. Business Pundit (www.businesspundit.com) reminds us that "in an oversupplied economy, customer feelings drive purchase decisions and profitability. Your new imperative is to assess and appeal to your customer's feelings. Welcome to The Feelings Economy."

Key lesson: The more senses you trigger and associate with your products/services, the more you will appeal to your customers' emotions and influence their buying behavior.

2. The old brain decides on the basis of the gain vs. pain tradeoff.
The two basic drivers of all behavior and decisions are: to seek pleasure and avoid pain. According to Kevin Hogan, author, The Science of Influence, "most people react to the fear of loss and the threat of pain in a much more profound way than they do for gain."

Consumers focus more on not getting hurt over the need to feel great when making decisions. "They overemphasize the importance of pain by about 2.5:1 in decision making." How to overcome your customer's distorted gain vs. pain trade-off?

Key lesson: Marketing guru, Seth Godin illustrates through his Joy/Cash Curve that high value purchases often trigger increasing amounts of buying pain. His solution: add more joy and pleasure to the buying process, such as he did in his work with Lexus.

According to Godin, when you make buying pleasurable, you actually reset the customer's value meter. How are you adding more joy to your buying process?

3. The old brain is highly influenced by beginnings and endings.
Research confirms that the beginning and ending of an event or experience alters our perception of the entire experience. Our initial impression becomes the filter for how we perceive what is to follow. The most recent experience leaves a final impression with greater weight.

Key lesson: In marketing, for your message to be accepted, it is critical to leave a strong first impression -- like a compelling story, a big smile, etc.

Also, if a customer has a pleasant or unpleasant experience with your product or company, that most recent experience will influence future purchases more than all other experiences combined. What impression are you leaving with your prospects in the first few seconds or words? How has your last customer contact enhanced or jeopardized repeat sales?

4. The old brain is visually oriented and responds rapidly to images.
From the moment we are born, we are able to see shadows and associate meaning to them. In communications, we are told that 65% of our how our message is received is through our physiology (or visual cues). Study after study has shown that someone's first impression of you is based on your physical appearance.

In each instance, it is our old brain rapidly responding to visual cues, not words. Words are the realm of the "new" brain and are secondary in the buying process.

Key learning: Enhance and deliver your core marketing message visually-

e.g., the design of your product, images in an ad, external packaging, etc. Where can you visually strengthen your brand and emotional connection with customers?

5. The old brain perceives the "pain of buying" in relative, not absolute, terms.
Neuroscience tells us that the pain in the old brain is most activated with price. Not in absolute terms but rather in relative terms -- such as fairness

vs. unfairness, or alternative uses of dollars. Therefore, how you present or frame your prices could be driving customers away. How can you minimize activating the pain trigger with your price?

Key lesson: From various posts by Roger Dooley (Neurosciencemarketing.com), key strategies include:

- Emphasize sales prices (which does not activate pain in the old brain)
- Utilize "package" pricing over pricing of individual components (the latter shows greater pain activity in the old brain)
- Series of small "bite-size" investments in place of one large investment (Netflix)

6. The old brain understands only what is tangible, physical and concrete.
According to Patrick Renvoise, author, Neuromarketing: Is There A Buy Button In The Brain?, the old brain is constantly scanning for what is familiar and tangible. It does not understand numbers or abstract terms, like "integrated approach" or "comprehensive solution."

> ***Key lesson: To speak to the old brain, you must use tangible benefits -- i.e., what a customer will see, feel, hear, taste or smell as a result.***

E.g., a promise of greater happiness is gibberish to the old brain. Instead, tell your prospect how he/she will wake up every morning with a smile. Or use metaphors (such as referring to your service as the "Cadillac" offering) to make your benefits more tangible.

7. The old brain's control over buying decisions varies from culture to culture.
According to market researcher, Clotaire Rapaille, some cultures are very reptilian, such as the American culture. Americans want instant gratification. They have a bias for action. Other cultures -- such as the

French and German -- are more cortex, control-oriented. Their bias is thinking over doing.

Key lesson: Adapt your marketing communications to each culture and what part of their brain drives buying decisions. Use emotional appeal with Americans; use logic with European cultures.

While neuromarketing is still in its infancy, it has the potential to revolutionize the way we market our products/services. The most important point is to use it for the right reasons. That is, as a way to better understand your customers and ultimately to better serve them. When used in this way, it can have a dramatic impact on your bottomline.

Denise Corcoran - CEO, The Empowered Business (tm) - assists CEOs, executives and business owners in taking a quantum leap from the ordinary to extraordinary - from unrealized dreams to mastering their destiny - from slow growth to exponential results. A business & leadership coach, growth strategist and Master NLP Practioner, Denise's unique "inside out" approach can help you and your organization transform untapped potential into profits and results.

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