



WK360

A REVOLUTION IN CREATIVE PRODUCTION

THE SCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY OF MARKETING CREATIVE



INSIDE THE CONSUMER MIND

Humans are creatures of habit. As much as we would like to believe that we are individual entities, free of the constraints of fate or consequence, we are mappable and habitual creatures, whose actions and decisions can be deduced, studied and impersonated by those hoping to sell things to us. The science and psychology of marketing is a nuanced and deeply engaging subject, one that is forever evolving, but however deep the theory, or the scope of the subject, the fact is that it works.

In this document we take a look at a number of these factors that affect buying decisions, to help you as you consider how to drive increased brand engagement and sales.



PERCEPTION

Our attitudes, preferences and purchasing decisions about many products and services are formed through conscious and sub-conscious perception. We process external stimuli about a brand or product, and it shapes how we view them. For example, this can take the form of someone that you admire or have a good relationship with acquiring something, and you then perceive it through the lens of their experience.

LEARNING

Learning is when we discover a type of product or service, perhaps through an editorial, a documentary, or via some other form of learning and engagement. If intrigued and assured enough by the initial learning, we will then enter into further research to understand it better.

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Shaped by our culture, background and circumstances. This can be a complex behaviour to map, as there can be many affecting elements. Perhaps you are influenced by something from your childhood, or by a lifestyle choice you have adopted. For example, Gen Z consumers will be more likely to focus on sustainability and environmentalism than Baby Boomers.





BUYING BEHAVIOUR TYPES

Once someone has decided to make a purchase, but hasn't decided on a vendor or chosen provider, you need to understand how they might interact with your marketing based on the products you're selling.

COMPLEX BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Complex buying behaviour is most common when a consumer is considering a high-priced item such as a car. Consumers are heavily involved in the buying decision during these transactions and will often conduct extensive research and pursue social validation and reassurance before committing to the purchase.

DISSONANCE-REDUCING BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Dissonance-reducing buying behaviour is also linked to high-priced and infrequently purchased products, such as TVs or kitchen appliances. Consumer involvement is strong, and they will have conducted extensive research, but may be more conflicted in their resolve to purchase due to there being a marginal difference between brands and product key features. Consumers will hesitate to purchase out of fear or making 'the wrong choice' because there are limited differentiating factors on which to base that choice.

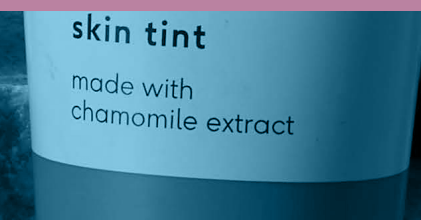
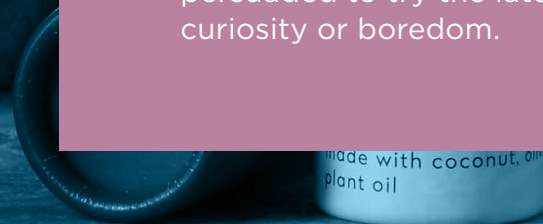


HABITUAL BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Habitual Buying Behaviour is when consumers tend to buy their preferred brand through habit and consistency, but they will quickly change if there is a comparable alternative more readily available or cheaper. Habitual buying would suggest brand loyalty, but actually this isn't the case, and the habitual buying is focussed more on the product than the brand producing it. Consumers don't conduct research or require additional information before making these purchases.

VARIETY-SEEKING BUYING BEHAVIOUR

With Variety-seeking Buying Behaviour, consumers frequently hop between one brand and the next, because switching items is inexpensive, and consumers can be persuaded to try the latest brand for no other reason than curiosity or boredom.



THE SCIENCE OF CREATIVE MARKETING

COGNITIVE BIAS

Cognitive biases play a significant role in shaping shopping behaviour and can be utilised in your marketing creative. These biases are mental shortcuts that our brains take to simplify complex decisions, but they can also lead to irrational choices.





SALE
70%

SOCIAL PROOF

Testimonials, reviews, and endorsements. What would have been word of mouth is now review sites, influencer marketing, and product placement.

ANCHORING EFFECT

The "anchoring effect" suggests that people tend to rely heavily on the first piece of information they receive when making a decision. This principle can be seen in play when a product's original price is highlighted alongside the discounted price, making the discounted price appear more appealing.

SCARCITY AND URGENCY

Presenting the consumer with a perception of urgency, either through stock limitation, price deduction, or an availability window. Fern, a perfume brand based in Somerset, illustrates this very well, by producing just four fragrances a year. Their key messaging is not the fragrance name, scent profile, or even price, but that the releases are strictly limited edition and created only once. They market first and foremost on the scarcity of their product.

EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

STORYTELLING

We're naturally drawn to stories and connections. A compelling narrative will make your product more memorable and relatable. If you're marketing a service or complex product, storytelling and narrative marketing can convey complex concepts to consumers quicker and more effectively than still images and text. Storytelling can also build brand trust and credibility, which reinforces consumer purchasing decisions.

EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

Eliciting emotional responses such as happiness, fear, surprise, and even sadness, can drive engagement and influence decision-making. Even using inspirational imagery can evoke an emotional response and forge a connection. The yearly Christmas adverts by some leading retail brands present both principles exceptionally well, with a strong storytelling element which elicits emotional triggers to drive engagement and brand recognition through the busiest time of the year.





SIMPLICITY AND CLARITY

CLEAR MESSAGING

Overly complicated or contradictory messaging can overwhelm consumers and undermine your messaging or proposition.

COGNITIVE EASE

It seems counterintuitive, but choice – at least too much choice – isn't always a good thing.

In a study conducted by psychologists Mark Lepper and Sheena Iyengar, customers were presented with two different jam displays: one with 24 jam varieties, the other with just 6. For both displays, customers were given a coupon for a \$1 discount on any jam. Although the larger display attracted more attention, the display with fewer items yielded better sales numbers.

People love choice, but decision paralysis is real. Focusing on a clear and straightforward consumer journey improves the likelihood of purchase.

UTILISING VISUAL AND SENSORY ELEMENTS

VISUAL APPEAL

As an agency of creatives and designers, we understand the business of visual and sensory elements to tell a story. We'd all say it comes down to taste, but there are also scientific principles at play here too.



THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF APPEALING DESIGN



1. **Scale** emphasises the relative size of elements to convey importance.



2. **Visual hierarchy** guides the eye to different elements based on their significance.



3. **Balance** involves arranging design elements in a satisfying and proportionate manner.



4. **Contrast** highlights visually distinct elements to emphasise a difference.



5. **Gestalt Principles** is a term used in wider psychology and learning which, simplified, explains how we interpret complex sets of information, recognise patterns and similar elements, and make sense of them quickly. For example, this snetnace mkaes sesne bcaesue fo Gstlaet Piniclpers. It's the explanation of how our minds organise and interpret visual data.



SENSORY MARKETING

The 'thunk' of a car door shutting, or the smell of cinnamon making things feel warmer and autumnal. Sensory marketing is a strong trend at the minute, but it's nothing new. As far back as 2012, global brand Dunkin' Donuts was using sensory marketing for their 'Flavor Radio' bus campaign in Seoul, South Korea. Every time the Dunkin' Donuts jingle played on the radio, an atomiser sprayed the aroma of fresh coffee around the bus. The campaign led to increased visits to Dunkin' Donuts outlets near bus stops by 16%, and sales at those outlets by 29%.



DON'T DISCOUNT THE 'WEIRD FACTOR'

VISUAL APPEAL

Also called the 'isolation effect' or 'bizarreness effect', the Von Restorff effect is the proven psychological theory that the more something stands out from the crowd the more likely it is to be seen. A great example of this is the Cadbury's Drumming Gorilla advert, which featured a man in a gorilla suit drumming passionately along to Phil Collins' 'In the Air Tonight'. There was no supportive messaging, no mention of chocolate, and minimal branding, but the advert was arresting and an immediate hit, spawning multiple parodies and going down in history as the first example of modern viral marketing.



FROM SCIENCE TO PRACTICE

Impactful marketing relies on powerful creative, that takes psychology and science and combines it with visual, audible, and other sensory experiences, to produce creative that speaks, and messaging that paints pictures.


So how can you use this theory in practice? How do you take good creative marketing science and turn that into campaigns that drive your marketing?

- Understand your audience – deeply. Apply the principles of consumer behaviours and buying types to your product, and create a profile based on your findings. Once you know who you're talking to, the creative process can begin.
- Use storytelling, visuals, and emotional engagement as the scaffolding for your creative. Designing creative marketing is a process of evolution. Be inventive, and consider sensory elements, design principles, colour theory, and occasionally a weird idea or two!



- Keep messaging simple and clear, with a strong call to action, and always with benefits taking a hierarchy over features.
- Incorporate social proof and testimonials to build trust and credibility. Leverage cognitive bias to your favour.
- Test, measure and optimise. It is an art to create marketing that always hits the mark. Use a range of analytical markers to gauge success, not just sales and likes.

And if you're still really struggling, consider reaching out to a professional agency. Like us.



HOW WK360 USES THIS SCIENCE TO AMPLIFY BRANDS

We have been developing compelling marketing creative that brings brands to life since 1979 and the science and psychology discussed in this document sits at the heart of what we do.

From developing the very first Easy Jet brand, to reinvigorating numerous health & beauty, retail, leisure and home & garden brands, we have developed experiences that create lasting memories and market-leading growth.

This is what we live and breathe: innovative and creative marketing that creates impact, crafted with brilliance, and supported by forward-thinking, future-proof technology.

As an end-to-end provider of creative marketing services, we are here to take your needs and transform them into experiences that bring your brand to life.

WK360°

IMAGERY MARKETING PACKAGING

A REVOLUTION IN CREATIVE PRODUCTION

[Book a meeting with Richard](#)

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