

Neuromarketing: Tapping the 'buy button' in your customer's brain

 By Leigh Andrews

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Ever wondered about the impact of a specific colour included in your email marketing, or the music playing in the background of your bricks-and-mortar store? Here's why it's all-important in building a connection with your consumers.

Colleen Backström is MD of Kaleidoscope response marketing, the leading online marketing company specialising in “the practical application of the science of neuromarketing for email and web”. That’s quite a mouthful, but what it boils down to is knowing what triggers your audience’s attention. Then, having got their attention, turning that into an opportunity to build affinity for your product or service.

In Backström’s latest [‘neuromarketing for email’ workshop](#), scheduled for 30 June at Gibs JHB she will explain that as much as 95% of our decision-making is based on emotion – that’s a fact that can be attributed back to a [Harvard study](#) back in 2003. In 2007 this concept was broadened to explain that emotion actually fuels our decisions and that strong emotions go so far as to boost both attention and memory.



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That’s why marketing for so many ‘grudge purchases’ like insurance has gone beyond merely explaining the benefits of the product or service and instead weaves a new narrative thread to draw in a potentially untapped audience through the storytelling route, so as to tap into our [humorous](#) or nostalgic decision-making processes and our future selves.

The science of emotion

No longer just the domain of [behavioural scientists](#), understanding what makes something important to the people you’d like it to be important for is the crux of the matter. Neuromarketing is literally the study of emotion and how we choose to buy. This makes it crucial to the success of e-commerce, which is all about interacting with consumers in a non-face-to-face manner and enticing their loyalty to your brand.

Every aspect of your communication thus needs to follow suit, with everything from email marketing to social media interactions becoming more successful if you take care to tap into a specific emotion like pleasure, delight or compassion. Our feelings then leave an impression that makes an impact. Marketers simply need to switch focus from their own brand to

how their messaging makes the viewer feel and how they can better tap into that. There's nothing 'airy-fairy' about this as MRI scanning lets us literally measure emotion in the brain through nerve-fibre imaging and seeing how the brain quite literally lights up when met with certain messages along the decision-making journey. Unsurprisingly, [sex](#) and food remain our biggest decision-makers. It's as primitive as that. "We don't have a choice as that's what drives the human race," explains Backström.

Introducing the brain's buy button

In order to design for maximum emotional impact you need to target specific senses, processed by the emotion centre of the brain, the amygdala. It's first trigger is **sight**, so visual storytelling is your starting point. Tell your brand story in pictures not words, people are run by instinct over analysis of content. The brain reacts to aspects such as colour – blue is seen as the most trustworthy – as well as luminosity or brightness. Consumers also trust large pictures over small so avoid using 'click to enlarge' options where possible and go with eye-pleasers like scenes of nature and images of women over men if trying to elicit sales.

Hearing also triggers a reaction in-store: Backström points out that music with a slower tempo means more sales, as faster pace can make consumers feel rushed or nervous, which means there's less chance they'll feel safety and trust – that means less chance of return traffic, whether on foot or through mouse clicks.

Whatever the advertising medium, respect your readers and ask yourself if it is worth the interruption. Before you begin marketing to them, find out who they are and what they fear and get delight from.

[Click here](#) for more on the intuitive customer decision-making process as discussed by Matthew Willcox, head of FCB's institute of decision making in the US, at an exclusive local presentation back in March, and [click here](#) for my previous article on Backström's workshop. Also go back through your digital memory lane by reliving the [secrets to improve your email marketing success rate](#) Backström shared last year as well as why [ignoring neuroscience](#) is at your marketing campaign's peril.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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