

Building the Brand Memory

Gimme! The Human Nature of Successful Marketing



For too long, many marketers have ignored the basics of how human beings are wired and how they work emotionally. And as a result, the effectiveness of their marketing and advertising suffers.

Marketers who understand the emotional triggers and genetic characteristics of their consumers are better able to persuade and convince them with their marketing programs. *Gimme!* explores these evolutionary traits in ways marketers can easily understand, so they can better leverage these primary human drivers of behavior for greater marketing success.

Published by Wiley

ISBN 0-470-10029-X

US \$24.95 / CAN \$29.99 / UK £16.99

Available from booksellers everywhere or online at gimmebook.com and amazon.com

Gimme! is a fun and very practical read. It is a sharing of over twenty years of John Hallward's research experience, studying, and reading. You won't agree with it all, but you will find it all thoughtful and thought-provoking. What more can you ask from a book!

— Bob Barocci, President/CEO,
The Advertising Research Foundation

Welcome back to *Lessons Learned*. In this issue, marketing research guru John Hallward explains the link between advertising and the creation of memories.

Let's try a little memory exercise to make a point. Here are two sets of numbers to remember. We will revisit them shortly. If you like, consider these as a message from an advertisement to you, the target: 7 0 4 1 7 7 6 and 6 1 2 1 7

Let's take a look at long term memory. Consider for a moment your childhood, and the first few grades in elementary school. Can you picture the school? Your classroom? Your desk and table? Why do you still have this in your memory all these years later?

Experts tell us these units of memory are burned into our neural networks by several characteristics: duration of the stimuli and neural processing, the **intensity** or **richness** of it, the **relevance**, the **simplicity**, the quantity or repetition over time, and the quality of the emotions attached to the memory.

These characteristics are where advertising and persuasion begin. It all starts with how beliefs, feelings, and attitudes get into the brain and are stored. In order to get into long-term memory, the item needs to match some of these elements listed above. Perhaps this is why we all remember our early childhood school days; they were emotionally traumatic to us at that stage in our lives.

Our brains also work better with simple units. The more simplistically we can store a memory as a unit, the cleaner the recall. Any one incoming stimulus fires upon tens of thousands of neurons, if not more! This creates a lot of brain activity, neural firing, and complexity. In an effort to streamline and catalogue these activities, the brain summarizes each complicated firing as a unit (an engram).

The brain is creating basic triggers or memory units (associations, visions, mnemonics, and metaphors) for easy future retrieval. In our



complex environment, we simplify into units as a way to cope with the huge overload of stimuli. This is the whole idea behind the concept of a mnemonic, which is a system or device to remember a bigger more complex thing.

Let's revisit the numbers from the beginning of this document.. Do you recall them?

If you do recall them, why? If not, you likely found no relevant meaning, no mnemonic, or simple memory unit to recall them. You also likely had no emotional reaction to them, and they were not presented in a nice pictorial unit. But if I gave you these same numbers in a different way, your likelihood of remembering them would increase. Think of Independence Day in the U.S. and the American Flag. The first number is a message for July 4, 1776. I just put all the numbers together; month, day, and year: 7 04 1776. The second number is for the word "flag." This is a little more complicated because it is coded by the associated number in the alphabet that spells FLAG (sixth letter, twelfth letter, first letter, and seventh letter). 6 12 1 7 = "Flag"

So now, for Americans in particular, these two series of numbers have likely become easier to remember, as one unit (the American flag). You can picture the message, with the Stars and Stripes, in your mind. This stimulus is emotionally relevant to you (if you are American). And this memory is now represented as one simple unit. Now, one week from today, you could likely recall these same numbers because of the American flag!

A memory unit helps us to store and retrieve details that are more complex. Advertisers should strive to serve simple memory units, preferably in visual ways.

What We've Learned About Focused Advertising

Do we find proof that advertising works better when it leverages how our human brains work? Yes! Ipsos has tested and tracked all types of advertising. In our databases of tens of thousands of ads, we have learned:

1. Advertising that focuses on a unified storyline performs better than advertising that offers a cut up fragmented collection of video shots.
2. Ads using a brand jingle, an established iconic character, or familiar brand theme also tend to earn better ad recall.

That is, there is a benefit to create advertising which reflects how our brains have genetically evolved. It helps to create simple easy memory units for good ad recall. Naturally, decision making is also based on how we retrieve our memory. We will review the very important role of retrieval and triggering in the next issue.

Please share these e-newsletters with others.

Write us at info@ipsos-na.com with questions and comments.

About the Author



Advertising research expert John Hallward started his career with Procter & Gamble, and Johnson & Johnson. He then co-founded the Canadian firm of

Tandemar Research Inc., a leader in advertising research for top advertisers. After Tandemar was acquired by Ipsos, he went on to become Director of Global Product Development for Ipsos ASI, where he is also a member of the board. *Gimme! The Human Nature of Successful Marketing* is his first book.

Ipsos ASI



Ipsos ASI is a leading global advertising research firm, and is part of the worldwide Ipsos

Group. Ipsos ASI offers a full range of advertising research solutions to help clients make the best decisions at all stages of the advertising process: advertising development, advertising pre-testing for qualifying advertising, advertising tracking, and brand equity/brand health evaluation. Ipsos ASI has also recently introduced new holistic integrated advertising assessment. The firm focuses on providing advertisers with the insights to help in the development, evaluation, and improvement of their advertising efforts to help them build stronger marketing performance for healthier brands. To learn more, visit www.ipsosasi.com.