



Whole Brain Marketing®

By John P. Fullingim

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Do You Really Understand What Motivates Your Customers?

Marketing insiders have always known that there was an elusive element used by successful marketing executives. Some called it gut feel. Others called it plain luck. Whatever the formal name, it was not taught in business school. And it was critical to success.

This so-called black box skill could not be measured for years; but, with the advent of modern psychology and powerful desktop computers, the mystery can now be unraveled. By understanding a new, powerful process, many have achieved new levels of success and dramatic changes in their “luck.”

Examples include:

An international computer company applied the method to lead development for a sophisticated network management device. Prior attempts to generate interest had only produced the “industry average” of 1% response. The new method yielded a 700% response

increase.

A world-class performing arts company applied the method and produced record season subscription sales and sold out the entire run of their initial presentation.

A failing large public exhibition with dismal attendance applied the method and doubled exhibition revenue in only two weeks’ time.

A financial planning firm used the method and produced an unprecedented 11% inquiry rate from physicians.

Impossible results? Not if you understand the true nature of how people buy and think about purchases. What’s the secret? Simply understanding that the logical, linear, mathematical ordered world of business may work for accounting, production, scheduling, or even business law; but it’s worthless for marketing. Why? Because marketing deals with people.

People are not logical. They change their minds. They behave irrationally. They are fickle. They act on impulse. They say one thing and do another. And, despite what most would tell you, their responses are entirely predictable.

The method that makes sense of the morass of conflicting emotions, habits, and thinking is known as **Whole Brain Marketing®** because it identifies appeals that work on all parts of the brain. This involves scientific analysis of responses stemming from emotions, logic, and habits and then creating marketing programs based on this knowledge. Most sales and marketing methods address only the logical portion of



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the buyer's process. By making the error of thinking that people buy rationally, millions of "sound, logical" marketing programs fail each year. We call this approach partial-brain marketing, and its results are predictable. They include customers telling you that your prices are too high, dismal advertising response, and having to react constantly to the "market leader."

Some examples include General Motors' thinking that people would continue to buy large cars with poor quality control. IBM never believed that w\the freedom PCs provided would make their flagship products obsolete. Apple never thought the "inferior" Windows platform could usurp their "superior" Macintosh.

All of these corporate blunders could have been prevented if the executives in charge had understood that people do not react solely with their rational mind.

Most marketing programs center on the appeal to the logical, thinking part of the brain called the cerebral cortex, the home of the familiar left and right brain. While this portion of the brain is used for evaluating decisions, it is of fairly low importance in motivation. Many marketing plans are based on data elicited from the cerebral cortex. This data will have a very low success rate at predicting buyer behavior. It will also be of low value in guiding advertising or promotion efforts since logic is not dominant until buyers begin to justify a purchase or weigh alternatives. Logical appeals will not motivate new sales.

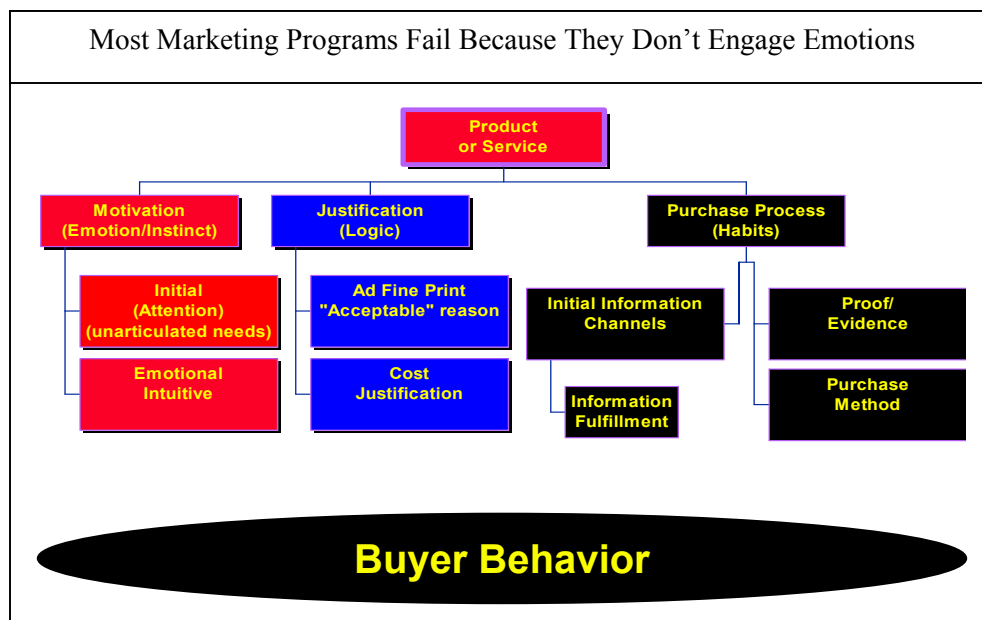
Think of the last purchase that you made. What initially

got you interested in the product or service? How did you feel? What did you think? Was your INITIAL response logical or rational? Not the reason that you decided to make the purchase, but the INITIAL REASON. It was probably emotional. You were likely excited about either avoiding a problem or gaining a benefit. This is generally true whether the purchase is a new capital asset costing millions of dollars or a personal purchase costing one hundred dollars. This emotion is key to motivation and changing buying behavior. Great salespeople intuitively understand this. Somehow marketing people and market researchers either forget it or never learn it.

The emotions in the brain are controlled by the limbic system. Most market research does not measure the limbic system or emotions, and is, therefore, virtually worthless. Unfortunately, most marketing strategy is based on worthless market research. This generally produces worthless marketing strategy.

Good marketing strategy begins with the emotions. It asks what problems customers are trying to solve. What kind of stress do they cause? What good emotions would prospects experience if they had your product or service?

Only after a prospect becomes excited about experiencing the positive emotion do they turn to the logical parts of the brain to evaluate the purchase. Since most marketing presentations, advertisements, and promotions skip this step, the more logical points are never read or heard.



Another critical part of a successful marketing campaign is matching prospective customers' habits. Habits are stored in the reptilian brain and, like the emotions, are often ignored by marketers. Prospects have specific habits or patterns that they follow in making a type of purchase. Some products are perceived as helping avoid problems; others are seen as helping gain something new. If the wrong appeal is used, the prospects will not respond. Apple and other

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computer companies have tried to position their Newton and other PDA products as gaining new abilities. We suspect that they would be much better off positioning them as solutions to problems, say as a way to prevent getting stuck in a meeting without enough paper, or as a way to carry a whole briefcase of handwritten ideas in a pocket.

Now that we understand the three parts of the brain, we can study the market in a very different way than before. The emotional limbic system must first be engaged for a prospect to buy. Then the logical and associational cerebral cortex must be given the right facts to justify a purchase. The reptilian habit systems must be given the correct buying methods and types of information for a buyer to be comfortable.

Most marketing departments do not have the ability to get this information on a market or a segment. That's where modern brain theory, psychology, and computer systems can play a role. Computer modeling can be used to construct programs that will identify unconscious buying influences that act on the logic, emotions, and habits simultaneously and identify the best way to appeal to and satisfy all brain parts. This **Whole Brain Marketing®** research will then provide the best messages, pricing, distribution and information channels, and other information to maximize appeal.

Whole Brain Marketing® results are often very different from market research. Typical research results produce what is "logical." Remember, people do not buy logically. The best conventional market research will measure the response of one-third of the brain. In order to be accurate, studies must be objective and free from the influence of preconceptions. This rules out focus groups and other subjective methods. Studies must also consider all three brains, and must be able to measure them in simultaneous combination with each other. This requires sophisticated models based on psychological testing methodology and involved analysis, and it is worth the trouble. Marketing based on this type of approach will produce results that most would consider unattainable.

***John P. Fullingim** is Managing Director of Applied Behavioral Sciences Marketing, L.L.C., a management consulting firm specializing in influencing customer motivation. Whole Brain Marketing®, the firm's proprietary process, is employed by many publicly traded firms to attract and retain market share and to resolve other marketing issues. John can be reached at: John.Fullingim@absciencemarketing.com*