



# 3 WAYS

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE DRIVES  
ACTION FOR MARKETERS

By **Nancy Harhut**  
Chief Creative Officer  
HBT Marketing  
[nharhut@hbtkmktg.com](mailto:nharhut@hbtkmktg.com)



In marketing, **it's important to remember** that your customers and prospects will default to hardwired behaviors — certain automatic, instinctive, reflexive responses that are ingrained in humans. Keep these behavioral science principles in mind to prompt increased engagement and response to your campaigns.

## 1. IT'S NOT ABOUT HOW PEOPLE THINK, BUT HOW THEY FEEL



- **EMOTION** – Your target will make decisions for emotional reasons and then justify those decisions with rational ones, so include elements of both in your marketing.
- **LOSS AVERSION** – Humans are twice as motivated to avoid the pain of loss as they are to achieve the pleasure of gain, so remind them of the pain your product or service helps them avoid, or the pain they may find themselves in without it.
- **ENDOWMENT EFFECT** – People overvalue what they already possess, so make your customers and prospects feel ownership.
- **RECIPROCITY PRINCIPLE** – Your target will feel indebted to you if you give them a gift, even one they didn't ask for. Once they receive it, they'll feel obligated to return the favor in some way.

## 2. YOUR TARGET'S CHOICES ARE LESS RATIONAL AND MORE REACTIONAL



- **AUTONOMY BIAS** – Humans have a strong urge to exercise some control over themselves and their environments. Choices offer people control. They can change your target's reaction from "do I or do I not want this" to "which of these do I want."
- **LABELING** – When people are labeled as part of a group, they will begin to act like its other members, even if they hadn't previously thought of themselves that way. Label your customers in a way that's consistent with how you want them to act.
- **PRESENT FOCUS BIAS** – Your target will likely prefer sooner, yet smaller rewards over longer, yet larger ones (although they may later regret it). This means they can put off decisions that don't offer instant gratification unless you help them bridge the gap between their present and future selves.

- **AUTHORITY PRINCIPLE** – Since childhood, people are taught to recognize and respect authority. As adults, it's ingrained in them. They'll generally believe what authorities say, and do what they instruct. Incorporate authority recommendations and endorsements into your messages.

## 3. HUMANS RELY ON AUDITORY CUES

- **REASON WHY** – When people hear "because", it can prompt them to automatically comply, before they even process the rest of the sentence. People are more apt to do what they're asked if given a reason.
- **ANCHORING** – The first price or number people hear becomes an anchor against which they evaluate others. Mention a more expensive price first (perhaps what a competitor charges) to make your lower price seem even lower.
- **FRAMING** – How you describe your product or value proposition influences how people perceive it. Choose frames that get people to see things differently and in a favorable light for you.
- **RHYMES, ALLITERATION, HOMOPHONES** – Choose the words in your marketing copy carefully. People judge a phrase that rhymes to be more truthful than a similar one that does not. They more readily notice and remember phrases that all begin with the same first letter. And a word with a matching word (sounds the same but has a different spelling and meaning), can make people think of the actions associated with the matching word.



For more information, email us today at [GetInTouch@HBTmktg.com](mailto:GetInTouch@HBTmktg.com)

