

Five Marketing Psychology Principles You Shouldn't Ignore

For many people, psychology theories are something they only thought about in their Psych 101 course. However, although you may not spend a lot of time now thinking about the finer points of cognitive development or the feeding times of Pavlov's dog, the following are some psychological theories you should keep in mind in order to market your services and products effectively.

Social proof. People don't believe marketing, but they do believe other people. As a result, social proof makes consumers want to adopt the behaviors or beliefs of those they like and trust. If your target audience sees their peers taking an interest in your brand, they will too. To leverage this tendency, share case studies and statistics about your satisfied customers. This will help build your credibility among people in the same demographic and convince them to try your products.

Reciprocity. We've all had this experience: Someone does something nice for us and it makes us feel so good about them that we want to do something nice for them in return. This idea of reciprocity is a great way to build brand loyalty. If you give current or potential customers something—a handwritten thank you note, a free consultation, a branded t-shirt—it will trigger the desire to engage with your company more.

Scarcity. When you create the perception that your product is rare, you increase the desire people have to get it. No one wants to miss out on something valuable, so advertisers take advantage of the scarcity principle by using phrases like "only five left in stock" to let consumers know the demand is so high that they might miss out if they don't act now.

Admit flaws. It may sound counterintuitive, but when brands admit they've made a mistake, it actually builds trust among consumers. No one wants to feel like they've been duped, so if you make a mistake, or you find there is a flaw in your product, be sure to be upfront and honest about it. Remember, the coverup is always worse than the crime.

Anchoring. When you're running a sale, anchoring will subconsciously convince people they need your deal. The way to use this principle is to first display the regular price of the product and then give the sale price. Since people use the first information they receive to make decisions, putting the regular price of a product front and center will make the sale price irresistible to them.

These strategies can be a powerful way to make current customers happy and attract new ones. However, proceed with caution: Although you want to encourage people to connect to your brand in an authentic way, you don't want to use psychology tactics against your customers by manipulating them.