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Using Psychology in Content Marketing



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Understanding general principles of psychology can help many marketers, content writers, and business owners experience better results from their content marketing campaigns. It can also help writers create more compelling marketing copy, increase sales volume, and pick topics that really resonate with potential customers.

Whether your marketing department consists of just one member or you hire a third party company to handle your content marketing needs, having an understanding of how psychology can be used to create better campaigns can improve the whole marketing process.

Fortunately, you don't need to formally study psychology to make use of effective psychological principles in your marketing campaigns. We've compiled a list of some of the most effective ways that you can use psychology in your own content marketing campaigns.

Developing Customer Avatars



When you started creating your company's first marketing plan, you might have tried making a customer avatar to represent your ideal customer. This avatar describes a key customer's demographics, preferences, and buying habits. Depending on the size of your business, the market, and the number of products you offer, your company may have more than one customer avatar.

As you create marketing campaigns, it's important to keep this customer avatar in mind. You can ask if this campaign would appeal to the customer avatar or if the Facebook Pixel you designated for a campaign fits its intended audience. It would be a waste of money to try to engage with everyone; a customer avatar makes it easier to narrow down the market to who's more likely to buy your products.

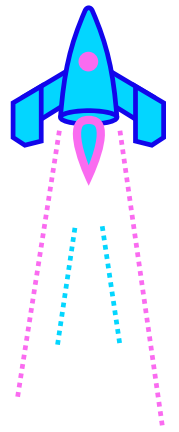
For example, when introducing herself, an **Arbonne** consultant specializing in selling expensive, natural, and high end beauty products proudly proclaims that she sells her products to "anyone with skin." However, this isn't specific enough to be a customer avatar.

Arbonne products cost more than lotions and face products from Walmart, so the type of customer she's selling to is likely affluent and highly invested in her appearance. She may have allergies or is committed to using only safe products. The consultant would have more luck selling to this customer avatar than a broad audience.

Testing Versions of Campaigns

It is important to understand that just because you think a marketing campaign will work a certain way doesn't mean that it will. People can be finicky and react differently than you'd expect.

To get some idea of the public's response, you can send out two or more versions of a marketing campaign to a small part of an email subscription list to see which one will perform better, then only send out the most successful one.



Creating Scarcity

Customers are more compelled to make a purchase now if they believe they won't have the opportunity to get the same product at the same price later.

LuLaRoe sells limited edition prints in small quantities that customers feel they must buy now if they want their favorite print. **Target's Bullseye's Playground** features affordable decor and storage items that aren't available outside of what's rotating on the shelves. These companies have successfully created scarcity so customers believe that they should buy what they like now with little time to talk themselves out of it.

However, you should only advertise real scarcity. If you constantly tell your customers this is the last of a certain item but continue to sell it, your customers won't believe that this item is truly limited. You don't want to lose the trust of your customers.

Focusing on the Outcome

Researchers have found that marketing campaigns focusing on the results that consumers can expect **outperform lists of specs and features**. This means that although it is tempting to focus your product descriptions on exactly what the product offers, it's equally important to describe how your product or service will make them feel. Let customers know what it's like to use your product and focus on the emotions.

Weight Watchers could simply detail how \$45 a month gets you access to meetings and an online tracker. However, that's not as compelling as focusing on the outcome of getting to your goal weight, feeling healthy, and feeling supported. A customer looking to invest in a weight loss service is much more likely to place value on the brand that promises these benefits, as opposed to only the tools they'll use to get there.

Understanding Customer Fears

One of the most basic marketing psychologies is fear. The makers of the **Owlet Smart Sock** understand and use new parents' fear to sell more products. It is absolutely terrifying to be a parent of a newborn. Parents fear that their infant may smother themselves in the middle of the night or otherwise stop breathing, so they constantly check on their baby. Owlet promotes a product that can help alleviate these fears with a monitor that keeps up with the baby's vital signs and alerts the parent if something's wrong.

Should you try to scare your customers in your company's content marketing campaigns? That depends on your company, products, and brand identity. However, developing products that soothe fear is certainly a way to increase sales.



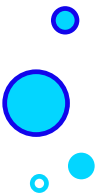
Identifying the Power of Reciprocity

Reciprocity can be a helpful tool in marketing campaigns. After people receive something, they're more willing to want to give something themselves. You've experienced the power of reciprocity when you were handed a sample of bourbon chicken at the mall and then felt compelled to buy an entrée-sized portion of it. You were more likely to choose that restaurant in the food court simply because you felt obligated, at least in some subconscious way.

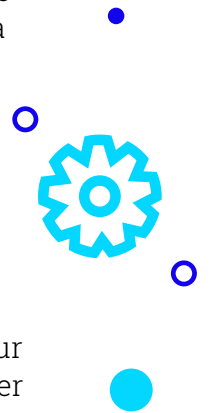
If your company is in a position to give free or discounted products to new customers, this can work the same way. Diaper maker Lil Helper admittedly doesn't invest a lot in its own outbound marketing, but it does offer new customers a **58% discount and free shipping** on a trial diaper package. The company claims that once the customer tries their high quality cloth diaper, they'll want to buy more. While this is true, the company also uses the principle of reciprocity to sell more product by sending freebies along with the diaper.

Highlighting Social Proof

To avoid buying poorly made products or getting involved in a scam, most shoppers look for some kind of social proof when making a buying decision. This can be as simple as choosing a product with a large number of Amazon reviews over a new product from a new company with no reviews. There is strength in safety in choosing products or services that have already been vetted by other people.



Try to include social proof whenever possible. This can be customer testimonials, the number of reads and shares, or the number of projects you've completed. Be sure to include as much information about clients as possible. Mentioning a company or a person by name has more weight than an anonymous CEO.



Repositioning the Competition

There are also ways that you can **reposition competitor products** against what your company offers to make it clear that your product fills a certain need or niche better than anything else available. While you shouldn't make outright negative claims about your competitors, you can suggest why your product is superior.

DIDYMOS is one of the original manufacturers of woven babywearing wraps. It is also a company that does an excellent job of repositioning its competition. On the company's About page, it includes how the brand is "synonymous with high quality, beauty, commitment to the future," has a "significant role" in starting the babywearing tradition in 1972, and that its products are made with "fair, sustainable production in the textile industry." This paints a picture of the company's competitors, who, based on this information from DIDYMOS, produce low quality products, have fewer years of experience, and uses unfair, unsustainable textile practices.

Taking Advantage of Impulsive Behavior

Many people make impulsive purchases that they wouldn't make if they had more time to debate the purchase. That's why financial gurus tell people to think about their purchases and to implement a "24 hour rule," where they need to wait to buy something to see if they really need it. As a marketer, you want to take advantage of this **impulsiveness** from your customers, not encourage them to wait to think about it.

One way to encourage impulsive purchases is to make it a very easy process to buy things from your company. Amazon's Buy Now or **1-Click Ordering** feature is a great example of this. Instead of adding an item to your cart, you can buy it immediately using your default shipping and payment options.

Even if you don't have a way to implement this type of purchasing workflow on your company's website, you can use the same psychology principles to increase sales. Instead of putting your call to action to buy your product or services only at the bottom of the page, sprinkle a few more CTAs earlier in the text to see if customers will make the purchase without reading the entire landing page.

Conclusion

Psychology is the study of the human mind. By better understanding how your customers think, you can create better content marketing campaigns that are engaging and effective. You may find that your company already utilizes several of these strategies in existing campaigns, but there may be others you can add to your sales strategy.

