The Cognitive Tactics That Will Help Your Website Convert

It’s time to go beyond traffic and understand your customer’s frame of mind.

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Huge online conversion numbers drive great sales, and although it’s not a simple task, it’s possible with the right push. For your company’s website to achieve great ROI, you need more than just traffic; you need visitors who are ready to take action. One of the proven ways to effect that is by connecting with customer emotions. Noted Harvard Business School professor and author Gerald Zaltman, for one, has asserted that 95 percent of an average customer’s thought process before purchasing takes place in their subconscious mind.

If that is indeed the case, then cognitive neuroscience could be the golden solution to your site’s conversion deficiency, enabling you to understand how to your target customers’s emotions, thoughts, memories and overall frame of mind when shopping online. Here, we’ll discuss four of the principles that govern the art and science of conversion optimization using cognitive neuroscience, and how each one can be best applied to your marketing strategy.

Tactic #1: Create cognitive ease.

Cognitive ease is the measure of how effectively our brain processes information. If potential customers find your website confusing, they're more likely to switch to your competitors. But how do you know if your website's fluency (both the design and content) is top-notch? Task someone who's new to it with finding and buying a specific product of interest. If they hit a snag in the process, then something needs to be fixed ASAP.

Psychologically speaking, customers hate expending their mental energy while making a purchase; however, if your site subtly and precisely integrates cognitive fluency, customers will find it easier to make decisions, positively influencing your conversion rate. Some ways to do that include using simple, direct language; providing visual product descriptions where possible; and opting for an easy-to-read font.

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Tactic 2#: Implement the Von Restorff Effect.

The Von Restorff Effect, also known as the isolation effect, proves that an item's apparent distinctiveness amongst similar items increases the probability that it will be more readily recalled. To seize visitors's attention using this principle, try strategically placing your Call-to-Action (CTA) or "Buy" buttons. In addition, use visual contrasts and cues that guide people to the proper CTA buttons, and make sure your CTAs stand out fom other actionable links.

Tactic 3#: Leverage the power of social similarity.

Humans are by nature social creatures, and majority affirmation is key in influencing the formation of our cognitive biases. You're more likely to secure customer compliance when you can illustrate that past users with similar profiles have generally taken comparable action. Ways to go about this including using social pressure in your copy to keep customers glued to your message, narrowing down your demographic scope and evidencing social proof with images at strategic points on your site.

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Tactic 4#: Employ the Anchoring Effect.

An anchoring effect occurs when people rely too heavily on an initial piece of information as the point of reference from which to form their own opinions. Psychologically, the human mind does not contemplate the value of something based on its isolated, intrinsic worth, but rather it makes decisions based on comparative values. That being the case, you can smartly influence your visitors's frame of mind by making sure they encounter a striking initial stimulus anytime they visit your site. Strategically, this can be achieved when you subconsciously influence the prices customers consider to be acceptable, perhaps by displaying a higher price first.

As a business owner, are you engaging with your customers on this level? If not, you're missing out. If you want to see huge conversions, you need to keep your target consumers's emotions in mind when designing and crafting copy for your company's site.

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