




**MINDSTATE**

# **3 PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS YOU'RE LOSING MONEY ON YOUR MARKETING**

And What to Do About It

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It is now estimated that we are exposed to **thousands of marketing messages per day**. The vast majority of these messages are never seen or noticed, even when they are right in front of our face.

Because all of these messages are being sorted by a very sophisticated, subconscious filter that we all use without ever realizing it. This filter makes it very difficult for any messaging, no matter how good it used to work in the past, to break through and get noticed.

Most marketing isn't designed with this filter in mind, leading to unreliable results and wasted marketing spend.

These days, **nothing is riskier than wasting time and money on ineffective marketing**. And unfortunately, it's likely that your marketing is becoming less effective at driving consistently effective results.

But there is a solution. A behavioral science-based solution can help your marketing seamlessly pass through your customers' filter to trigger true emotional engagement. This approach is built tapping into subconscious 'mindstates' to develop marketing messages that are psychologically optimized. The end result? Less marketing waste and consistently better ROI.

But rather than getting into the weeds of 80+ years of behavioral psychology to understand how to market to these subconscious mindstates, let's look at how to optimize your marketing through a lens we can all relate to — **planning a family road trip.**

Like your marketing, planning any road trip requires a few elements: a destination, a vehicle, a map and a few handy shortcuts. If you're not getting consistent lift from your marketing, it's likely you're making one of these critical mistakes needed to optimize your messaging around.





# 1. You Forgot About the Destination

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All road trips begin with selecting where you want to go. In the same way, the best marketing guides readers to a clear destination or goal that their customers want to reach. Goals directly impact one's behavior, and goal theory proves that all consumer purchases are made with a higher-order goal in mind.

Without a destination, you've got no road trip. It's the same with marketing. If your messaging doesn't show how you will help them reach their goals, you can't provide them with a psychological purpose to buy into your brand. They'll be stuck in the proverbial decision-making "driveway."

In the same way, if you're advertising a destination your customers don't want to go to, they won't be interested. And who could blame them? Few people would be willing to settle for Paris, Texas, if their heart is set on Paris, France.

To get consumers out of the driveway and through your doors, be explicit in your messaging about where your product or service will take them. Thoroughly research their goals for your product and why they might buy what you sell. Then, remind them of their goal and how you can help.

For example, if their goal is to run a marathon, be direct in showing them how you can help them achieve that specific milestone. Don't make them think it through. It's an easy but often forgotten part of persuasive marketing. If they see their goal in your message, it will pass through the first part of their subconscious filter.

If you're unsure about your customer's higher-order goal, here are three common goals most people have in today's uncertain world: they want to feel **SAFE**, **IN CONTROL** or **RELAXED**.

These emotions can be a bridge until you know the specific goals your customers have for you to help them meet.



## 2. You're Taking the Wrong Vehicle

Choosing the right vehicle can make or break the trip. A vehicle, when properly chosen, is an essential part of reaching any destination. If you don't believe me, cram your family of four into a midsize sedan and see how far you can drive before everyone has a meltdown.

In mindstate marketing, the 'vehicle' used is one of nine, core human motivations. You can optimize copy and visuals by identifying specific motivation driving your consumer to go after their goal.

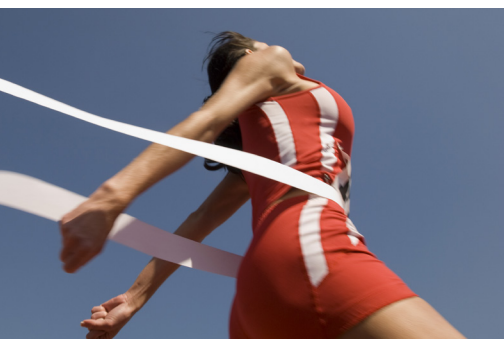
Once you know what motivates them to reach their goals, simply use images of copy associated with that motivation to connect your brand with their ultimate goal. This is called "priming."

Here are a few examples of priming used in business:



- If you're trying to promote an upcoming marathon and you know that Achievement is their core motivation, consider images of runners crossing a finish line or breaking a ribbon.
- If you're trying to promote website security software and you know your prospects core motivation is Security, show them an image of a padlock or safe.
- If you're trying to promote healthy baby food and you know that Nurturance is their core motivation, use images of parents touching a child's face – an act strongly associated with love.

You get the drift. Take a few moments to really think about which of the nine core motivations are truly driving your customer and once selected, how you link your brand to these motivations using priming.





### 3. You're Following the Wrong Map

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With your destination and vehicle selected, it's time to choose the road you'll travel. You likely use a map on a road trip to make sure you're on the right track. (Or a GPS, if you're into that sort of thing.) What you may not realize is that your marketing provides customers with a mental road map as well, and if it isn't a map they want to follow, they're not going to engage with you.

Let me explain. On some trips, you might want a sense of adventure, so you accept the risk of getting lost and take the road less traveled. For other trips, you might opt for a familiar route to make the experience more relaxed and reduce your chance of getting lost.

When making decisions, we follow a mental road called our regulatory approach. In other words, we subconsciously decide whether we want the thrill of adventure or the reassurance of something familiar.

A customer's regulatory approach impacts how receptive they are to your brand messaging. When you understand how they 'approach' your category (to maximize good things to happen or minimize bad things from happening), you can frame your solution or offering to feel like the most natural path for them to take in that situation.

To show you how this works, consider the following hypothetical example of a healthy chip brand selling its product to health-conscious consumers with different regulatory approaches:

- To someone who seeks to eat healthy by maximizing the good, the brand could say, "These all-natural chips are loaded with nutrients."
- To someone who seeks to eat healthy by minimizing the bad, the brand might say, "These zero-calorie chips have no preservatives."

They're selling the same chips in two different ways to make them feel like a natural path for a range of consumers.

Take a moment to think about how your customers approach their goals. Are they cautious in their approach or do they swing for the fences in an optimistic way? Once you determine this, think about how you can reframe your messages and visuals to appeal to the correct approach for them.

## 4. BONUS: You Aren't Providing Them with a Shortcut

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If you're like most people, all you want to do is reach your destination as quickly and painlessly as possible. And that's certainly the case when it comes to marketing.

Subconsciously, we often look for mental shortcuts that make our decisions easier. These are called cognitive heuristics. For instance, we often make a decision based on how something makes us feel rather than logic or in-depth research. This is known as the affect heuristic, and it's something we aren't often aware of.

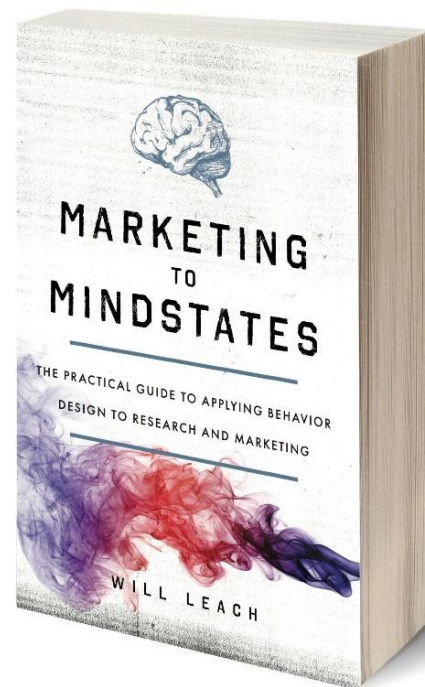
Understanding and catering to your customers' natural heuristics is key to influencing their behavior. If you can find the right shortcut for your customer, you can help them make a quicker, easier decision that highlights your brand over others. If you don't, they have to exert more effort into evaluating your product and are more likely to choose a competitor who makes that decision easier.

One way to uncover the shortcuts your customers are using is to ask them about the first time they encountered your brand. Say your company sells Greek yogurt. If a shopper tells you they discovered your brand because so many people were raving about it, you know they're using a 'social proof' shortcut and will likely be influenced by reviews and testimonials.

Another shopper might tell you a store employee handed them a sample of the Greek yogurt, so they felt they had to buy it. That's a 'reciprocity' shortcut. If you want to influence that type of shopper, it would help to send them free sample coupons.

There are lots of different cognitive heuristics, or shortcuts, you can place into your marketing to trigger an action. If you want an exhaustive list, just type up "cognitive heuristics" into any browser and choose some that you think may work on your customer.

Alternatively, you can take a look at the book [\*Marketing to Mindstates – the Practical Guide to Applying Behavioral Design to Research and Marketing\*](#) to discover the top 22 cognitive heuristics used in marketing and how to take advantage of them.





# Accomplish More Compelling and More Reliable Results with Your Marketing

The principles of the Marketing to Mindstates methodology are simple, but applying them can be overwhelming even to the most experienced marketing professionals. You don't have to do it on your own. Mindstate Group provides a variety of resources to help you confidently apply behavioral design to your strategies.

## If you want to do it on your own...

Purchase the [\*Marketing to Mindstates\*](#) book. In this comprehensive guide, you'll learn the 18 mindstates customers have in the decision-making process and proven tips you can follow to better target each.

[Get Your Copy](#)

## If you want to do it together...

Attend one of our in-person or virtual webinars. We offer live and virtual workshops on a global scale, teaching marketing directors and researchers from all corners of the world how to create and execute a successful science-based marketing strategy.

[Learn More](#)

## If you want our team to handle it for you...

Schedule a free consult with TriggerPoint Design. Our mindstate experts at TriggerPoint offer in-depth behavioral research methods that get at the heart of your customers' emotional drivers and provides message consulting to make those insights immediately actionable.

[Schedule A Consult](#)