

Chapter 14

A Neuromarketing Perspective on Measuring Marketing Influence at the Unconsciousness Level

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ABSTRACT

In a context characterized by an inflation of marketing messages, it is imperious to understand how consumers succeed in making the buying decision. Starting by briefly describing the structure and the role of the brain and the differences between consciousness and unconsciousness, the paper aims to investigate the way neuromarketing can help in comprehending the feelings of the consumers, the way products or services match the consumers' needs, and the way companies can discover the insights of decision-making process. This paper can be perceived either as a guide for the companies that aim to find more on the way people manage information and make decisions or as a comprehensive description on human being marketing behavior that can serve both business, academic environments and consumers.

INTRODUCTION

In a context characterized by a dynamic market, by increasingly sophisticated consumers and by an immense amount of information, the way companies work in order to accomplish individuals' expectations become a complex issue. Therefore, the main questions that can be asked are what consumers really feel and think on a certain product or service, how that product or service should match the consumers' needs, and to what extend companies can discover the insights of decision-making process.

Considering the above background and the need to deeply enter the secrets of consumers, the present paper aims to theoretically investigate the role of unconsciousness on the individuals' decisions at the marketing level. In this respect, issues like how the brain works and neuromarketing are some of the main themes assessed.

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This paper can be perceived either as a guide for the companies that aim to find more on the way people manage information and make decisions or as a comprehensive description on human being marketing behavior that can serve both business and academic environments and consumers. First, using the insights of this paper companies can develop instruments in order to find more valuable information on what exactly consumers' want and need. Second, academics can use the information as an inspiration source for their further experiments and in order to improve the already used instruments. Finally, consumers can find information about themselves and about the way brain works and, thus, uses it either in their shopping behavior or on other social decisions.

Starting by analyzing insights of the brain and the role of consciousness and unconsciousness, the paper emphasizes the way the modern marketing can complete traditional marketing by shifting the focus from the product to the complexity of the consumer. Thus, the core concept of this paper is neuromarketing. Based on this concept, the main discussed areas are related to the instruments of neuromarketing, the way it offers extra information comparing with the traditional research methods, its entrepreneurship applicability and its ethical perspectives.

BACKGROUND

An Insight of the Brain

Although representing only 2% of the total body mass, the brain is responsible for all the marketing behavior and it consumes approximately 20% of the body energy (Morin, 2011, p.134). Renvoisé and Morin (2007) consider that the simplified structure of the brain is the following one: the reptilian brain or R-complex (responsible with instinct), the middle brain or the limbic system (responsible with emotions), and the new brain or neo-cortex (responsible with rational thinking). Being entities for which the survival process is the most important one, the human behavior is mostly controlled by the reptilian brain (Morin, 2011, p.134). In comparison with the new brain that is slow in reaction, it effort itself in order to answer to a certain stimulus, it is intelligent, conscious and partially controllable, the reptilian brain is 500 million years old, is the first that reacts to incentives, it is always on, it is unconscious and incontrollable (Renvoisé and Morin, 2007). In the same respect, emphasizing that there are a lot of aspects related to impressions, intuitions and decisions that are far to be deeply understood, Kahneman (2011) splits the brain in two parts: System 1 (reptilian brain) and System 2 (new brain). The two concepts have been initially used by Keith Stanovich and Richard West. System 1 is described as being automatic, permanent, quick, effortless, and involuntary. In contrast, System 2 is the part of the brain that pays more attention to the mental effort, it can realize complex calculus, and it is associated with decision and with concentration (Kahneman, 2011).

The description of the parts of the brain and the way they work and react is important in the marketing context, mainly considering that almost 80% of the information received by a consumer is internalized at the unconsciousness level (Morin, 2011, p.134). Put it differently, although the cognitive functions of the brain are treasured, in a context in which individuals receive more that 10.000 messages per day, a large part of this information is lost unless it addresses the reptilian brain (Morin, 2011, p.135). Therefore, one can conclude that a message in general and a marketing message in particular are efficient mainly if it contains stimuli that can activate mainly the instinctual and unconscious part of the brain, namely

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