

The Death of Demographics

Valuegraphic Marketing for a Values-Driven World

by **David Allison**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Marketers have long believed that demographics are the key to influencing consumer behavior. If we have enough information about age, gender, favorite brands, and purchasing history, we will be able to make an impact. But this belief is false. Traditional demographics don't help us understand who people are and why they behave the way they do. In *The Death of Demographics: Valuegraphic Marketing for a Values-Driven World*, David Allison challenges traditional marketing tactics by teaching us how to focus on consumer values. By uncovering what drives behavior, you can improve the effectiveness of your marketing by eight or more times.

This book teaches you how to identify the valuegraphics of your target consumer and creates powerful, value-driven strategies to engage them with your product or service. You'll learn why traditional demographic models are inaccurate and go through a step-by-step process to change your marketing strategy into one that's value-driven.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The behavioral science behind consumer behavior.
- How people in different parts of the world behave based on their values.
- Archetypes that dominate in the consumer population.
- Instructions on how to engage each archetype.

Introduction

Organizations collect large amounts of consumer data for the purpose of marketing. The widely held belief is that by knowing your target audience, you can develop a marketing strategy that engages that audience. Unfortunately, data doesn't cover everything and gaps must be filled in by intuition. This is a risky strategy with the potential to cost companies billions of dollars on failed advertising attempts.

While demographics show a certain amount of information about who people are, they don't show the why behind how people behave. People's core values drive their behavior. Without insight into these values, you can't truly know what they want. This book will show you what valuegraphics are and how to harness them to maximize your organization's potential. I will share secrets of behavioral science and give you the tools to truly understand how to reach your target audience.

Part One: This Is What We've Been Doing Wrong

I owned a marketing and creative services firm with clients around the world. Our clients were high-end real estate developers and it was our job to create their marketing campaigns. To do this, we made target audience briefs, designed to specify who we were selling to. The problem was that all of our briefs were virtually interchangeable.

Demographic stereotypes are the rules and expectations that have kept society together. They are the reason we've survived. In the Flinstones era, this dictated that men hunted and gathered, while women were in charge of making babies, cooking, and sewing clothes. Fast forward to the 1950s in suburban America. The men go to work to support their families, while the women stay home. The men who are really good at their jobs get to become CEOs and lead others. They are handsomely rewarded with power and prestige.

While this example is a generalization, it shows how throughout history, demographics have dictated what is required of you at certain times in your life. It's essentially a complex set of stereotypes that lay out society's expectations. These demographics are also what cause us to make snap judgments and decisions about how others will behave. However, they are all based on stereotypes.

Today, many traditional demographic stereotypes have disappeared. In fact, they have caused enormous social prob-

lems that most of us strive to do away with – social classes, homophobia, sexism, racism, etc. The only way to get rid of these things is to rid ourselves of demographic thinking. How do we do that? We focus on values.

We launched the Valuegraphics Project to create an inventory of core human values to give organizations target audience profiles based on values. The database was developed using 750,000 surveys around the world and is 95% accurate. Two facts should be addressed before we delve further into numbers:

1. People around the world agree roughly 8% of the time.
2. People in the same demographic cohort align with each other about 10.5% of the time.

This means that demographic profiling only improves agreement by 2.5%. Marketing to a specific demographic is not much better than marketing to people in general.

Part Two: Fundamentals of Valuegraphics

Data can only get you so far and there will always be some educated guesswork involved in deciding what steps to take. But demographics are historic and do not tell you what people will do. Science backs up the fact that values dictate our decisions.

What We Value Determines Everything We Do

Let's look at an example of how values dictate behavior. A group of friends finds themselves in a dark alley in the middle of a snowstorm. David values experience more than anything else in life. Greg values security. The third friend, Cory, values friendship. It's your job as the VP of marketing at Dark Alley Enterprises to convince people to go down that dark alley.

If your audience places value on experiences, it's easy. All you have to do is convince them that the Dark Alley is jam-packed with thrills you won't find anywhere else. If your audience values security, you'll need a much different pitch. You may have to emphasize the safety protocols and emergency contingency plans. Finally, if your audience values friendship most, it's an opportunity to emphasize the bonds people will form while they embark on this challenge. In reality, you'll need a marketing pitch that emphasizes all three approaches to be the most successful.

The Valuegraphics Database

You'll recall that the database is built from the answers to over 750,000 surveys. The surveys focus on 10 themes about people's wants, needs, and expectations and data was collected from 9 regions around the world. Some countries, like North Korea, are not included in the dataset because collection in those places is unrealistic for many reasons. The database establishes two important things:

1. Demographic stereotypes are useless for describing who people are.
2. The database can identify the shared values of a target audience for anywhere in the world.

There are 56 values identified in the Valuegraphics Database that determine the behavior of everyone.

Part Three: This Is What We Care About All Around The World

What I'm hoping to show you in Part Three is how to use your sociological imagination to think about valuegraphic information. Sociological imagination is your ability to form a picture of what might happen next, based on the information you are presented with.

Valuegraphics of the World

The most important values anywhere in the world are what I call the Togetherness Values. These are:

- Belonging
- Community
- Family
- Friendships
- Relationships

Without exception, these are the most important values on earth. They do not follow regional patterns and everyone in the world has them. Aside from the Togetherness Values, there are a few other common value threads across the globe.

- Financial security is the top value in Europe, China, and the rest of Asia. It is high on the list in other regions.
- Basic Needs are only a top concern in North America

The Valuegraphics of The United States

Behind the Togetherness Values of Belonging, Family, and

Relationships, Americans are driven by Personal Growth, Health & Well-Being, and Basic Needs. Employment Security and Religion & Spirituality follow close behind.

The Valuegraphics of The European Union

Family, Belonging, and Relationships are most important to Europeans. Interestingly, creativity falls among the top ten things valued in the EU, along with Possessions, Community, Personal Responsibility, and Loyalty. This doesn't mean that creativity isn't valued in other regions of the world, just that it's a higher priority in Europe. For example, in Africa, it ranks 23rd. It's valued by African people, but 24 other values are more important in Africa.

The European Union also shows both Possessions and Experiences scoring high on the valuegraphics chart. This is unusual and the only instance where these two values score together in the top ten. It suggests that possessions are viewed as Experiences and Experiences (or memories) are sometimes viewed as Possessions. Confidence is twice as high in the EU compared to anywhere else in the world, which is worth paying attention to when marketing to European audiences.

The Valuegraphics of China

China is a remarkably unique place valuegraphically speaking. Patterns appearing in China only appear in this country, which is why China is its own region in the Valuegraphics database. The top ten values for China are Family, Relationships, Financial Security, Personal Growth, Harmony, Righteousness, Loyalty, Wealth, Social Standing, Religion & Spirituality, Possessions, and Security.

The Chinese culture has the ability to incorporate great diversity of opinion with traditional Chinese values. Another fascinating anomaly in the Chinese data has to do with the value of Family. While Family tops the list of values for many parts of the world, this value in China can't be overstated. It's like an ultra-super-mega-value in China.

The Valuegraphics of Africa

African countries place immense value on Basic Social Values like Relationships, Community, Loyalty, and Respect. Relationships and Community are reciprocal, as in the concept of Ubuntu. Ubuntu translates as, "I am because you are, and you are because I am." The question of "Am I my brother's keeper?" in Africa is unequivocally yes.

Religion & Spirituality can be a powerful value for marketers, or a dangerous one. It won't fail to elicit opinions, but it can be either unifying or polarizing. It's important to see

this value through the eyes of your target audience, as it can mean orthodoxy or it can simply be an awareness of the spirit as part of the human condition.

Africa is the only region in the world where Patience is a top ten value. Balance of work, community, and spirituality also ranks high.

The Valuegraphics of Oceania

To gain an understanding of what is valued by people in Oceania, it's best to look at their values in clusters. The stability values of Financial Security, Basic Needs, and Employment security rank high. This indicates that people want to know for certain they have enough money to live on and that they can put food on the table. These values make people "Cost-Conscious" or "Fiscally Responsible" and less likely to spend money on items with intangible benefits.

The forward-momentum values of Personal Growth and Personal Responsibility are also important. These values change how things are viewed. A gym membership isn't about getting fit, it's about creating a better version of yourself. Buying a new home isn't a place to live, but a step forward to a new chapter in your life.

The Valuegraphics of Central/South America

The values in Central/South America are focused on security, family, religion/spirituality, and basic needs. Tradition, Respect, and Loyalty also rank high on the list.

The Valuegraphics of the Middle East

Morality is the headliner in the Middle East, ranking second behind Family. This is something completely different from anything else in the world. This value exists outside of any specific religious beliefs but extends to their entire culture.

Part Four: The DIY Valuegraphics Toolkit

When you know the valuegraphics of your target audience, you have a starting point. Now I will give you a step-by-step guide to researching the values of your target audience.

Step One: Send Out the Quiz and Tally the Results

Sending your target audience the Valuegraphics Archetype Quiz is the first step to gaining information. There are 15 different archetypes explained in detail in the book. Every

person will fit into one archetype category.

Step Two: Find Your Superhero, Sidekick, and Nemesis Archetypes

The quiz results will point you toward your target audience. Your "superhero" is the primary archetype. If a second archetype scores high, it is your sidekick, and the archetype scoring the lowest is your nemesis.

Step Three: Check the Charts for Your Region

Compare your quiz results with the results in Part Three of this book to find any similarities or differences that are worth investigating further.

Step Four: The Values Thinking Process

Now it is time to bring your data together and generate actionable ideas that target the shared values of your target audience.

Conclusion

Humans are hardwired to spend their lives in pursuit of the things they value. It's how humanity works. The Valuegraphics Project was created as a replacement for outdated and broken demographic profiles. It's kind of like an encyclopedia of human behavior for marketers. Knowing the values of your target audience allows you to know why people do what they do and what strategies will engage them in the future.

By using the steps outlined in this book, you can change the way you market to audiences around the world. You can be an agent of change for how the world thinks. Conversations have always been "us vs. them." Whether it's rich vs. poor, black vs. white, male vs. female, and so on. By using these outdated demographic labels we perpetuate division and stereotypes. Thankfully, we are moving into a more values-driven world. By changing how we look at the world, we can change the world.



David Allison launched the Valuegraphics Project in 2015 to create a worldwide map of core human values. Today, global brands and organizations from PayPal to Lululemon use valuegraphics to understand how groups of people make decisions-about anything, anywhere on Earth-and activate their target audiences eight times more powerfully than ever before. Learn more at [Valuegraphics.com](https://valuegraphics.com).

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