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Impossible to Ignore

Creating Memorable Content to Influence Decisions

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

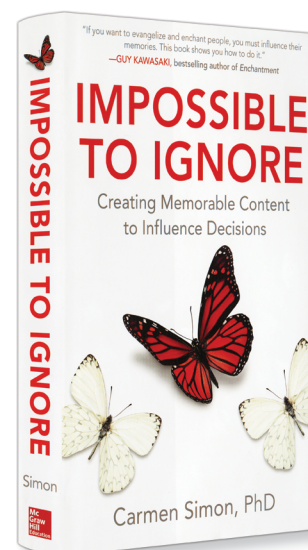
Audiences forget up to 90 percent of what you communicate. How can your employees and customers decide to act on your message if they only remember a tenth of it? How do you know which tenth they'll remember? How will you stay on their minds long enough to spark the action you need?

Many experts have offered techniques on how to improve your own memory but not how to influence other people's memory — and impact their decisions. Drawing on the latest research in neuroscience and cognitive psychology, Carmen Simon, Ph.D., reveals how to avoid the hazards of random recall and deliver just the right amount of content. In *Impossible to Ignore*, she shows you how to execute a proven three-step plan for persuasion: create cues that attract attention and connect with your audience's needs; use memory-influencing variables to control what your audience remembers; and turn today's intentions into tomorrow's actions.

Whether you're giving a presentation, conducting a meeting, delivering training, making a sales pitch or creating a marketing campaign, these field-tested techniques will help you develop content that speaks to people's hearts, stays in their heads and influences their decisions. It's not just memorable — it's *Impossible to Ignore*.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To view memory from the angle of the future, which is more practical when influencing behavior.
- To use three key steps to influence memory and decisions.
- To create distinct, repeatable messages that your customers won't forget.
- How to differentiate between expectation and anticipation and why it matters for memorable content.
- How to retrieve memories through narrative techniques.



by Carmen Simon, Ph.D.

CONTENTS

Memory Is a Means to an End

Page 2

Control What Your Audience Remembers

Page 3

Sweet Anticipation

Page 4

What Makes a Message Repeatable?

Page 5

Become Memorable With Distinction

Page 6

How Does the Brain Decide?

Page 8

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

by Carmen Simon, Ph.D.

The author: Carmen Simon, Ph.D., is a recognized cognitive scientist who specializes in neuroscience research and takes a daring approach to persuasion by placing memory at the heart of all decision-making. She is the co-founder of Rexi Media, a presentation design and training firm that uses brain science to help business professionals stay on their audiences' minds long enough to make a difference.

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Memory Is a Means to an End

Why Memory Matters in Decision Making

At some point, we all create something and hope that other people will act on it: read it, listen to it, like it, buy it or recommend it to others. But how do we get others to act in our favor in an age of increasing competition, complexity and noise? You can spark action by using an overlooked variable: memory.

When we aspire to be a part of people's future decisions, we implicitly ask what the future will bring. All neurologically intact people are relentlessly on fast-forward. Think of your own situation: When you woke up this morning, did you think about meetings you might have to attend, the lunch you might have to eat, the work you really didn't want to do after dinner? The brain has evolved to be a prediction engine because natural selection favors those who can accurately predict the future.

If the brain is a prediction engine, memory is its fuel. In our everyday life, we make behavioral choices that maximize our biological fitness; we rely on memory to predict rewards and we guide our behavior in three ways:

1. A reflexive way, through which we subconsciously alter behavior to ensure biological fitness. It takes only one experience with a hot surface (stimulus) to remember what to do next time to prolong survival (reward).
2. Another way we make decisions is habitual: We tend to repeat actions that proved rewarding in the past, such as taking the same route to work.
3. There is also a goal-oriented way toward decisions, through which we anticipate outcomes based on the past but are willing to change our minds in

light of new information. Imagine looking for a new job when the current one is unsatisfying.

So...if you want to stay on people's minds, you must create content that hooks into one or more of these three pathways to decision making. Hook into people's reflexes, such as their preference for aesthetics, social connections or controlling one's environment. Or hook into their habits, such as placing new content in an application they are already using. Or hook into goals they consider valuable, such as the excitement of discovering new things or the desire to be creative or socially desirable.

In addition to these three ways of using memory to influence decisions, what are some other ways in which we can stay on people's minds? Here are 15 variables we can use to influence others' memory: context, cues, distinctiveness, emotion, facts, familiarity, motivation, novelty, quantity of information, relevance, repetition, self-generated content, sensory intensity, social aspects and surprise.

All these variables will be addressed in more detail. We don't have to use all 15 variables in a communication artifact all at once. Research shows that nine out of these 15 variables will impact someone's memory. The combination is up to you. Also, 40 percent of the segments in a communication sequence must have at least seven variables in the same segment. For example, if you're developing a PowerPoint presentation with 30 slides, identify 12 slides that include seven memory variables in the same slide. This way, you can be sure that you're making some critical messages stand out and become memorable. A mistake that business communicators make is to include segments that are too weak or too varied, and nothing has a chance to stand out. ●



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SUMMARY: IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

A Business Approach to Memory 3 Steps to Influence Memory and Decisions

Instead of viewing memory as merely recollecting things from the past, let's look at memory from the lens of the future. Imagine that we share content at Point A, and we hope people remember and act on it sometime in the future, at Point B. This "future" can be as close as two minutes from now, two days, two weeks or longer. So it is pragmatic to ask, what is happening in people's lives, and what do they intend to do at Point B? If we know this already at Point A, we can prepare for Point B so we can become part of people's memories and future intentions.

Research reveals that when people act on future intentions successfully, they complete three steps, sometimes within fractions of seconds: 1) *Notice cues* that are linked to their intentions; 2) *Search their memory* for something related to those cues and intentions; 3) And if something is rewarding enough ... *execute*.

Let's say you have a dinner party and want to buy some wine on your way home from work. You tell yourself in the morning, "When I drive by the store tonight, I must stop and buy the wine." The intention is to buy the wine, and the reward is your guests will think of you as a wonderful host. On your way back, you see the store (so you notice a cue); you think, "What was I supposed to do? Oh, yes, buy wine" (so you search your memory); and you pull into the store (therefore, you execute on an intention).

Consider your own content, and imagine you must help your audiences go through these three steps. With a prospective memory model in mind at Point A, you can prime your audiences with the proper cues, help them to keep in long-term memory what is important, and make it easier for them to execute on intentions at Point B.

Let's imagine you have to create a training program and want to divide it into three sections. At Point A, during the training, people see these three sections. But at Point B, will there be any cues in participants' environment to remind them of these exact three sections? Let's imagine that at Point B, participants will see a software application, which they're supposed to use in combination with your new content. A much better approach is to create the training content at Point A using segments from the software tool because this increases the likelihood that at Point B, people will see cues that will trigger the new behavior you're after. If the content at Point A also includes some of the memory variables we will discuss next and the reward is strong enough for participants to use the new content, then you will have a much higher chance for action because people will

notice cues; they will remember what they're supposed to remember and act. ●

Control What Your Audience Remembers

Practical Ways to Avoid the Hazards of Random Memory

When we want to influence others' memory, we must start with this question: What is it exactly that we want them to remember and act on? In asking this question, we implicitly ask another: How much would we like others to remember?

A concept called the "forgetting curve" hypothesizes that we lose information over time when we make no effort to retain it. The forgetting curve is exponential after the first session, meaning that in the first few days after exposure to content, we forget most of it, up to 90 percent by some accounts. Even memories that are strong at first are fated to be forgotten. The little that we do keep in our minds stabilizes over time. Let's call this the metaphorical 10 percent, since it is difficult to measure definitively how much business content people really remember, because they don't typically consume it with the intent to memorize.

Despite a lot of forgetting, there is the opportunity for a small percentage — that "10 percent" — to become part of our audiences' long-term memory, and it is important not to leave it to chance.

The scientific approach to memory has borrowed from fuzzy logic and has produced the fuzzy-trace theory, according to which we form two types of memories: verbatim and gist. Verbatim memories are word-for-word, accurate representations of what we learned in the past, such as recollecting the exact names of all European capitals. By contrast, gist memories include the general meaning of something that happened in the past, and they are less accurate and specific, such as remembering a vacation spent in Paris years ago. Gist memories tend to be longer lasting than verbatim memories. Verbatim memory requires stimuli that people can process easily (such as simple words or actions that are reflexive or habitual) and more intensive and repeated exposure to stimuli.

When you create content, you have three ways in which to evaluate whether you're staying in people's minds with the accuracy you desire: 1) Accept only verbatim. 2) Accept a combination of verbatim and gist. 3) Accept only gist.

SUMMARY: IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

If you work in a courtroom or academia and specialize in topics based on hard facts, it is likely you will want to be remembered verbatim, in which case you must create simple content and provide a lot of repetition. If you work in the corporate world, you're mostly hoping that the audience would remember a combination of verbatim and gist. It's advisable to insist on verbatim memory any time you want to differentiate from competition, otherwise gist memory may enable *others* to receive credit for your work. If you work in a creative field (such as fashion or design), you will probably aim for gist memory. In this case, aim for colorful storytelling and varied content, which gives an audience a strong feeling of comfort and familiarity. ●

Made You Look

How Cues Pave the Way to Action

Cues are important because they are reminders of what to do next, such as seeing a hanger in your closet reminds you to pick up the dry cleaning. Most people in the business world don't sit around and wait for cues. This means the cues we create for them at Point A must be distinctive enough at Point B to attract attention and prompt a specific memory, even when people are busy doing something else.

When the cues you use to attract attention at Point A are similar to what people encounter later at Point B, they are more likely to signal action. For example, let's say that a husband and wife must lower their cholesterol and have to take pills. At home, they can remember to do that if they tie an old routine — drinking coffee — to the new routine of taking pills. Setting the pills by the coffeemaker helps them to act on their intention. This process is in danger when they go on vacation and the coffee drinking does not happen in the same location. Suddenly a routine that served as a cue is no longer in its place, so it's easy to forget to take the pills.

Consider cuing people's senses in an automatic way. The physical properties of various stimuli have the power to attract our attention. A bright-red jacket, a loud sound or the unexpected touch of a lover's cold feet will get our attention in a reflexive, automatic, effortless way. This happens because humans have an outstanding vigilance system, which constantly scouts the environment through an attentional filter and zooms in on what's important for survival. Consequently, physical properties that suddenly alter our environment, such as unusual or bright colors, textures, size, motion, loud sounds, harmony or orientation of objects, force us to look.

What can be externalized to the environment to cue your audiences automatically? Spend time finding the answer to this question because it pays a huge reward: There is an increased likelihood that your audiences will act on what you believe is important because they don't expand too much cognitive energy.

You can also consider tying your content to an audience's current but unfulfilled goal. People tend to pay greater attention to and remember more of what is not finished because the brain seeks closure — and it is seeking it now. Having an active goal enhances recall of relevant information only so long as that goal has not been attained. The goal can be attainable in one shot, such as getting a meal or a winter coat, or it can be something that is process-based and always lingers in the background, such as staying healthy or being socially desirable.

Consider offering the people in your audience both something they can complete using your content and something they cannot complete during a certain amount of time, for which they will have to return to you later on. For example, "There are four steps to create an effective investment plan. Today, we have time to cover the first three." ●

Sweet Anticipation

How to Build Excitement for What Happens Next

There are many advantages associated with anticipation: It provides a cue that something interesting or important will happen, and it leads to improved attention, memory and the decision to act. This is why it is worthwhile to understand anticipation and learn how to create it for your listeners in the quest to become impossible to ignore.

While general expectations are about seeing the future (e.g., "Here is what to expect during business meetings"), anticipation is about feeling the future (e.g., "Here are three reasons to get excited about our next meeting"). Imaginative thought is aspirational, but it's imaginative emotions that push us into action. Anticipation is therefore a stronger expectation, a boost that gets us ready to act.

Why does anticipation have so much power over our brains? The power stems from the "juice" that fuels it: dopamine. When we simulate the future, we are looking for rewards, and neuroscientists confirm that stimuli predicting the possibility of a reward invoke the same neuronal activity as the one triggered by the reward itself.

So far, we know two things: 1) if there is an anticipated reward, people notice and are willing to exert some effort

SUMMARY: IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

to get it; and 2) dopamine is released in even higher doses when there is an unexpected but pleasant reward. Let's see how we can put these findings into practice.

Providing a modicum of uncertainty in your communications is effective because dopamine spikes in the face of unexpected events. In general, uncertainty makes us uneasy, which is why it is often referred to as "tension." We can tolerate some tension as long as 1) we know its degree, 2) we are reminded about the importance of the final outcome, and 3) we can tolerate the amount of delay until that outcome is realized. Let's identify practical guidelines associated with each.

First, let's look at **the degree of uncertainty**. As a communicator, you must balance how much information to reveal (and allow listeners' brains to predict accurately) and how much information to withhold (and get listeners ready for action, even if the action only implies people showing up to listen to you). Uncertainty can derive from the "what" or the "when" of a situation, which means you can manipulate these two variables when you create a message of anticipation. For example, telling your friend you have a gift for her but not telling her when she will receive it plays with the clarity of *what* and the surprise of *when*. Or, saying that "the meeting at 8am will reveal some insights" plays with the clarity of *when* but not *what*.

Second, let's address **the importance of possible outcomes**. When we anticipate events, the brain typically estimates the worst and best possible outcomes, consciously or subconsciously. Reflect on your own messages. When you build anticipation for an upcoming event, ask from your listeners' perspective: What are some possible outcomes? How important are they? And is there a big difference between the best and worst outcome? For example, scheduling a conference in Hawaii cannot have too many bad outcomes. Even if the conference sessions are subpar, the location mitigates the tension.

The delay before the outcome is realized contributes to uncertainty too. This is the time that elapses before an outcome is realized. When you create any sort of communication, you essentially take your audience from one state to another state. The time lapse between the starting point and the destination can be short (seconds, minutes) or long (weeks, months, even years). In business communication, the length of the delay depends on your audience. Sometimes casual business audiences are in such a rush that only a short delay is effective, such as revealing an important point at the end of a 300-word blog. When your audience is patient and extremely interested, you can create a slightly longer delay with longer sentences and stories instead of just a few words and bulleted lists. ●

What Makes a Message Repeatable?

Techniques to Convince Others to Repeat Your Words

When we share information at Point A, we hope others will retain it and retrieve it at Point B to inform their next action. This means that at Point A we must create a memory strong enough that it endures long term. One technique for solidifying memory is repetition. However, since we are looking at memory from the perspective of the future, this chapter is not so much about repeating the same message over and over at Point A. That's only part of the technique. The challenge is to make sure people can repeat that same message at Point B on their own. And how to create a message so it is repeatable in the long term is something that demands investigation.

One way to make a message repeatable long-term is to ensure it is **portable**, meaning that you can use it in different contexts. For example, a team of scientists at Cornell University studied the attributes of a quotable movie line. The team built a computer program that analyzed thousands of quotes tagged by users on IMDb, or Internet Movie Database. The program compared quotable lines in a specific movie against other lines of the same length said by the same character in the same movie. Their observation was that most memorable lines were applicable in various contexts. For instance, the famous line in *Jaws*, "You're gonna need a bigger boat," is portable; you can use it on or off the water to allude to the need for more resources.

Start by creating generic statements, using few personal pronouns or indefinite articles, and keeping the statements in the present tense. Can people repeat your favorite message at the supermarket, gym, dog-boarding facility or new hair salon where a total stranger is approaching you with scissors? May the force be with you.

You can also create distinct **words tied by simple syntax**, such as "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die." If asked to quote anything from the movie "Princess Bride," people who have seen it would most likely repeat this quote. The syntax in this quote and the order of words are simple and easy to understand. Yet the word choice attracts extra attention. The name "Inigo Montoya" is unusual. The word "prepare" is something we may expect in the context of preparing a meal or preparing for a meeting, not preparing to die.

SUMMARY: IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

The impact of simple syntax on memory is backed by scientific studies. Research shows that people are able to reproduce sentence structures independent of meaning, words or sounds, even when they have amnesia. Research also shows that once the syntax is simple, providing a safe canvas, the foreground must be marked by distinct words, or disfluency. Disfluency has benefits because it induces cognitive roadblocks, which, in a counterintuitive way, invite deeper processing. Another advantage of disfluency in messages is that it encourages us to ignore surface properties and focus on deeper meaning. This leads to the formation of abstract thoughts. A burst of disfluency, when attention is likely to fade, is especially effective. But...use it sparingly. If all characters in the “Princess Bride” movie had unusual and difficult-to-pronounce names, we would not remember them as much. ●

Become Memorable With Distinction

How to Stay on People’s Minds Long Enough to Spark Action

One way to avoid forgettable content is to make it distinct from what your audiences see elsewhere. However, it is one thing to draw viewers’ attention to a distinct stimulus and another for them to remember that stimulus long term.

Researchers suggest that when the brain detects differences between isolated and background items, encoding results in two categories: the isolated items and the background items. Imagine three red dots surrounded by 50 black dots. Since the isolated items represent a smaller category compared with the background items, recall is better for isolates. The probability of retrieving an item from one of the two categories is inversely proportional to the size of the category. This is why, when we create content, it is useful to ask 1) How many items do we want to isolate? 2) Do they represent the most important content we want others to remember?

It is practical to regard any messages you create as a set of items placed along a temporal continuum (e.g., a set of paragraphs in an email or blog, a set of sounds in a meeting, a set of slides in a presentation, a set of campaigns in a marketing initiative). Audiences can discriminate between items depending on their position along this continuum. Similar items that crowd a psychological space are harder to discriminate compared with something that is distinct in a crowd or that does not have much in its close proximity. For instance, you may remember a word better if it

was followed by five pictures but not if it was followed by five other words.

You can also **create distinctiveness by thinking in opposites**. If distinctiveness is providing a stimulus that is different from neighboring items, we can create it by choosing the opposite of what an audience just saw. This idea may be easy to understand, but opposites are not always easy to identify because not everything can be described in opposition. It is useful to consider opposites from a contextual angle, with a fuzzy-trace approach. In underdeveloped nations, rich and poor consider themselves opposites, but an outsider from a well-developed nation may consider them both poor and not opposites at all. What matters in your content creation is, What does your audience consider the opposite of what you presented for a while? Maybe a dialogue after a monologue? Maybe seeing something dynamic after something static? Maybe being informal after a formal segment?

You can also **achieve distinctiveness with a human touch**. If we consider distinctiveness “departure from the expected,” a deviation that many will appreciate and find impossible to ignore is one with a human touch. We create our communication in the service of other people. Notice what happens when we shift from a formal, technology-oriented message to an informal, human-oriented language. “When I’m not deep into algorithm design, data modeling or analytic visualizations, I really like to ski,” says Pedro Desouza, data scientist from EMC.

Patagonia’s CEO Rose Marcario also achieves distinctiveness with a human touch. Recently, she embraced an environmental approach to business for her company. Patagonia advises consumers not to buy its clothes. By doing so, it sacrifices some of its earnings. The company also shares product breakthroughs with competitors — all in an effort to cause less wear and tear on the environment. The message in Patagonia’s paradoxical campaign “Don’t buy this jacket” is do not buy more than you need. Can you identify ways to create distinctive content using a human approach to business? ●

‘I Write This Sitting in the Kitchen Sink’

The Science of Retrieving Memories Through Stories

Let’s consider a story from Kevin Kregel, a former NASA astronaut. I had the opportunity to interview him, and no interview with an astronaut is complete without a story about seeing our planet from an exclusive vantage

SUMMARY: IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

point. Here is what Kregel remembers from one of his missions, after being in space for eight days: “The flight deck on the space shuttle is not that much bigger than a 737,” he said. “A bit wider, a bit deeper, but not by much. There are six windows and two overhead windows. We turned off all the displays on the flight deck and blocked off the access to the mid-deck because there are lights there that you can’t shut off. It was pitch black. Even though there was not much room, we all had good body control, and floated, and put our faces in front of a window so you could not see anybody else. You could see the Earth below, and the stars, and we floated that way for 45 minutes, listening to Pink Floyd, “The Dark Side of the Moon.” It felt like you were just flying and you weren’t really in the shuttle. Nobody said a word. Nobody moved. Nobody touched anything. We were all floating in our separate window and the sun finally came up, and it was gorgeous.” He concluded humbly, “I guess that’s what it must have been like to be on LSD in the ’60s.”

The reason this story has a chance to be remembered is because it meets the three criteria for a memorable story: It has perceptive, cognitive and affective elements. Perceptive elements are based on sensory impressions in context (such as experiencing pitch black in a flight deck slightly larger than a 737’s), and include actions on a timeline, such as first turning off display lights, *then* blocking off lights from other areas, *then* taking a spot in front of a window and *then* listening to Pink Floyd until the sun comes up. Cognitive elements include facts, abstracts and meaning, such as how big the space shuttle is and how many windows it has, the name of a music album and the abstract thought of being on LSD. Affective elements include emotions, such as enjoying a gorgeous sunrise from space.

The absence or imbalance of perceptive, cognitive and affective elements in a story is what makes business content forgettable. Ineffective communicators tell “stories” that 1) stay too factual or too abstract; there is nothing wrong with facts or abstract ideas, but when the other components are missing, it leads to forgetting; 2) have no plot — nothing really happens across a timeline; and 3) lack emotional intensity.

Emotion is a particularly critical component in memorable stories because emotional stimuli lead to neurochemical activity in the areas of the brain responsible for encoding, storing and recalling memories. How do we include emotion in our messages, especially when business content is dry, technical and complex, and audiences increasingly cynical?

Nostalgia is an emotion that helps to abstract and extract meaning. It is especially effective with cynical audiences

because it levels the knowledge in the room. Romancing the past has the potential to strengthen the bond with others. When everyone feels like an equal, people are more likely to trust each other and are more likely to allow themselves to be swayed in a certain direction by others. This is why messages that start with “Remember when ...” are so effective.

Also, use **intense** emotions. An old Nike ad with a lot of attitude says, “If you’re serious about sports, buy Nike shoes. If you want to dance, buy Reebok.” This works for memory because it adds tension, which generates emotion. It is not a flat statement such as, “Buy these shoes to enjoy running.” This would generate an emotion, too, but not a strong one. You don’t need to bash the competition, but it is important to ask, “How intense is the emotion I include in my content?” ●

How Much Content Is Too Much?

How to Handle Content Sacrifice

Brevity is advantageous because it gets attention and sustains it since there is not much to absorb. It also creates a feeling of mastery and completion, which generates positive emotions. But what happens when we can’t bow to the rhetoric of the micromessage? Consider the steps below when determining the length of your message.

Consider what the audience must remember.

When we want others to remember precise information, to recollect it with details, we aim for verbatim. If we are satisfied when others are familiar with what we said, without recalling many details, or use some of their own words to describe what they remember, we are aiming for gist.

If we aim for verbatim, we have to leave some room for repetition and elaboration to make sure concepts stick in a precise way. If we aim for gist memory, we can get away with more content as long as at least one main message is clear and we draw attention to it often.

You must also **determine what the audience must act on next**. If our intent for a communication effort is to have others simply “like” the content, leave a comment or share it with others, these intentions are better achieved with shorter content. On the other hand, if the audience needs to make a difficult decision, such as awarding us a significant amount of money, effort or time, then longer content is necessary to be convincing.

Quite often, we have to **meet time constraints imposed by others**. A client says, “You have an hour for this presentation.” Someone may be a bit thrifter: “We can

SUMMARY: IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

give you only 30 minutes.” In an investor presentation, you may have 10 minutes. Adjust to any of these situations by starting with two questions: “What do I want the audiences to remember?” and “What do I want them to act on?” If these are clear — and knowing that we speak at a rate of about 140 to 160 words per minute — you have a metric for how much you can say in 30 seconds, 10 minutes or one hour. Treat each of these segments as a stepping-stone for the audience to get closer to a reward. ●

How Does the Brain Decide? The Neurobiology and Neuroeconomics of Choice

As our lives unfold in a series of decisions, ranging from fully automatic to fully strategic, we may experience some tension balancing them. A little voice in your head may say, “I am craving something sweet.” The automatic voice adds, “A KitKat bar would be really good.” And the strategic voice asks, “Can I afford the calories?”

Reflecting on your own content, ask this: What gives your own audiences a rush? What do they crave? What lights their fire naturally? Can you divide your content approaches so as to appeal to something automatic and strategic in balanced proportions? For example, in a current antismoking campaign, we see a young girl, Amanda Green, writing a “contract” in which she agrees to relinquish part of her freedom to a cigarette. The voiceover bluntly states, “There is a contract in every cigarette; when you light up, you sign up.” The commercial appeals to all three decision drivers: a reflex, our automatic desire to be in control; an existing habit, smoking; and a goal, quitting. The ad ends with “Know the real cost,” which appeals to a strategic approach for quitting.

In any decision, the brain will select a choice to maximize a reward, which is based on what the brain values. But how do we know what people value? Here are some dimensions to consider. We value what is functional, in the sense of having tangible attributes, such as a dishwasher, a type of detergent, or even insurance. We value things for their *emotional* value: think of the last time you used your GoPro or enjoyed food, drinks, or a film with friends. We value things because of their epistemological value, meaning products or experiences that give us the opportunity for *knowledge* development and intellectual stimulation, such as books and seminars. We value things for their *aesthetics*, such as clothes and decorations. We also seek *hedonistic* values because they evoke sensory pleasure, which is why we enjoy good hotels and fun nightclubs.

Sometimes we choose because of *situational* value, such as selecting champagne versus wine because of a special occasion. And if we’re lucky enough, we may be exposed to things of *holistic* value: choosing a vacation in Paris with a new lover is likely to appeal to a range of values from emotional to epistemological, aesthetic to hedonistic.

Which of these values do your customers appreciate, and are those values coming across clearly in your communication? If so, then there is a greater likelihood of action. ●

The Right to Be Forgotten and the Intent to Be Remembered How to Balance Accidental and Purposeful Forgetting

The ability of your audiences to remember will influence their decisions, but their ability to forget may be equally important to your cause. Think of it this way: Forgetting is accidental or purposeful. *Accidental* forgetting happens when people fail to encode new information we provide them or when existing knowledge we’ve given them decays over time because of a lack of reactivation. Forgetting is *purposeful* when we want to convince people to give up old routines in favor of new thinking. In this case, it is preferable that audiences forget the old and remember the new.

Reflecting on your own content, consider catering to both types of forgetting. Reactivate your most important message often to avoid accidental forgetting, and purposefully direct your audiences’ attention toward new things when the old does not serve them any longer.

Being on someone’s mind and influencing decisions is a position of honor and responsibility. Using the guidelines, consider placing in people’s minds thoughts and ideas that are enduring enough and rewarding enough to help humanity evolve and take us all on fulfilling paths. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Impossible to Ignore*, you’ll also like:

1. **360 Degrees of Influence** by Harrison Monarth. Monarth provides advice on how to gain the trust and respect of those around you and how to expand your influence well beyond your immediate environment.
2. **Resonate** by Nancy Duarte. Nancy Duarte shows how to transform any presentation into an engaging journey by understanding your audience, creating persuasive content and eliciting a groundswell response.
3. **Pitch Perfect** by Bill McGowan, Alisa Bowman. Bill McGowan offers seven principles of persuasion to use to establish the right tone for the right message to the right person at the right time.