

## Is What They Say, What They Mean?

**How Neuromarketing breaks the barrier on consumer testing.**

Seeing as how technology is developing at speeds quicker than we can find ways to utilize it, the data and metrics at our fingertips are limitless. We, as savvy marketers and stoic mad men, always find ourselves tasked with the challenge of figuring out “How can we create demand, move the needle and do good work?” One would think that with all the current tools, analytics and big data, we would have pinpoint accuracy in our message and delivery. Not so; we are no further along than we were 50 years ago. The bigger question is, “Is what consumers say, really what they mean?” We have always wished we could hack the brain and truly see the mechanics of a campaign or brand to see what motivates brand advocacy and repeat purchase decisions. In the last decade we have fully mapped the human genome, and with advances in collecting big data, we are quickly on the way to understanding what makes us tick. Big data is a collection of data sets so large and complex that it becomes difficult to process using on-hand database management tools or traditional data processing applications. Neuroscience over the last two decades has pushed the envelope on mapping the brain and its mechanics. Essentially, it's like being given a Google map for the human brain. This application of mapping the brain and reading its patterns can shed light on the connection a message truly has on a consumer, creating amazing potential for marketers. This practice is called neuromarketing.

When we market to consumers, we are speaking to both the logical and emotional parts of the brain. We strive to create an emotional connection first and then humanize the brand. Secondly, we follow our messaging with facts, figures and logic to satisfy the analytical decision processes of the brain. Focus groups have always been more ambiguous in data and have a bigger margin of error simply because humans feel a constant need to please and can easily be lead to a certain decision or opinion. Neuromarketing uses EEG and other neurological monitoring along with eye tracking to help us measure the physical responses in tandem with the participants' auditory responses for more accurate and complete response data. The largest components of the thinking part of a human brain, including emotion, take place in the subconscious area that is below the levels of controlled awareness (Limbic System). As marketers, we have always been curious to perceive the techniques of effective manipulation of subconscious brain activity. The main reason is to inspire the

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desired reaction in a person's perception as deeply as possible. This lower brain perception is one of the strongest motivators in humans. Understanding the base level of human emotion to a brand or product allows us to look through a window we have never before had the ability to see through. This allows us the opportunity to create truly visceral marketing messages that trigger a response.

The roots of neuromarketing dig deep to Harvard University where the concept was developed in the 1990's. Psychologists developed the neuromarketing model and the mechanics to better measure human responses with a complex set of analytics and measurements. These types of analytics are not measured like Google analytics; the science and momentum are measured a bit differently.

Let's explore this subject further. \*At the base of neuromarketing is "meme" (by Richard Dawkins)- a unit of cultural information similar to a gene). A meme is a unit of information stored in the brain. These units are effective at influencing a person who is making choices and decisions within 2.6 seconds. If "meme" is chosen properly, we remember the product, joke or song and are willing to share it. Memes stay in memory and are affected by marketers in message, tone and texture. One might wonder: What exactly is a meme? A meme is like the aromas of fresh baked bread, sweets, and grandmother's best pie; characters in fairy tales, and melodies that can't be shaken from memory. Thus, neuromarketers examine consumer's responses i.e. (brain scan, revealing subconscious motives) and manipulate them to measure the effect. With the immediate readings of EEG sensors, neuromarketers can monitor and track electrical waves as they relate to an emotion, smell or memory, and relate to attention from specific areas of the brain. The base connection is to the amygdala, which is an almond-shaped region that plays a role in storing emotionally rich memories that help trigger physical reactions (rapid eye movement, sweaty palms, faster heartbeat, increase in breathing etc.) Subsequently, the hippocampus is where memory lingers and in the lateral prefrontal cortex, which governs high-level cognitive powers (one being attention or lack thereof). Once the brain waves are monitored and collected, complex algorithms can sift through the data to connect each reaction to a specific moment. Surprisingly, most brains are eerily wired very similarly, which is why the smaller group testing is so effective and we don't have to throw such a large cast net to garner accurate results.



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Evök prefers this deeper research method of neurological testing because it is much more efficient, cost effective and precise than traditional methods like focus groups. Neurological testing is much more precise and only needs to test a couple dozen subjects. This method is made possible since most people's brains are wired so similarly, even though some differences exist between male and female brains, and between children and seniors. Evök doesn't believe in hunches, and truly understands the value in examining deep, rich data. We collect large pockets of data and input, and record and analyze billions of data points during a typical neurological testing project. Our success relies on an accurate read of the subject's subconscious mind. In addition to this form of testing, we compile traditional research such as focus groups and surveys to help give a well-rounded measurement of the conscious mind. This allows us to truly see "Is what they say, what they mean?"

I site the study of how neuromarketing settled the age-old dispute of Coke vs. Pepsi:

In a study from the group of Read Montague, published in 2004 in *Neuron*, 67 people had their brains scanned during the "Pepsi Challenge", a blind taste test of Coca-Cola and Pepsi. Half the subjects chose Pepsi, since Pepsi tended to produce a stronger response than Coke in their brain's ventromedial prefrontal cortex, a region thought to process feelings of reward. But when the subjects were told they were drinking Coke, three-quarters said that Coke tasted better. Their brain activity had also changed. The lateral prefrontal cortex, an area of the brain that scientists say governs high-level cognitive powers, and the hippocampus, an area related to memory, were now being used, indicating that the consumers were thinking about Coke and relating it to memories and other impressions. The results demonstrated that Pepsi should have half the market share, but consumers are buying Coke for reasons related less to their taste preferences and more to their experience with the Coke brand.

This is a great example of how neuromarketing can be used in the marketing industry. The applications are limitless and telling, which is why so many Fortune 500 companies, like Coca-Cola, General Motors, Nestle, and Procter & Gamble are on board. Not everyone agrees that neuromarketing is the next great thing, of course. Large corporations and big business have driven a majority of the funding. Additionally, naysayers tend to categorize it with the array of businesses like biometrics or facial mapping that promise all sorts of progressive marketing breakthroughs. As with most progressive techniques, there will always be push back from traditionalists. Each year, hundreds of

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thousands of focus groups are organized around the world, and about \$4.5 billion is spent globally on qualitative market research. We believe there is a happy A-B medium and each has its place and chapter in an even bigger story.

In summary, it is a bold new frontier and we, as marketers, should be willing to embrace new advancements in technology and practice in order to better understand and connect with our audiences. Neuromarketing offers tremendous value, and evōk advertising is proud to be on the forefront of this technology to assist our clients in reaching their full potential.

If you need guidance, please feel free to contact evōk advertising at 407.302.4416 or visit [evokad.com](http://evokad.com).

\*Study provided by The Branded Mind: What Neuroscience Really Tells Us about the Puzzle of the Brain and the Brand by Erik Du Plessis



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