

Attention & Engagement Psychology

If you can master this section, you will do well as a digital writer.



People don't remember what you say, they remember how you make them feel.

This is worth repeating:

Humans are emotional beings, not logical.

99% of the population have not developed themselves to the point of being free from — or in control of — their ego.

That is the foundation of capturing and holding attention.

Poking your reader's ego.

Feeding it = making them feel “good.”

Starving it = making them feel “bad.”

If you can take people on an emotional journey of love, hate, excitement, deceit, calmness, and any other emotion that eventually ends in a benefit for their life — you have mastered the art of content creation.

Dan's 10 Koemmandments Of Capturing Attention

As you are scrolling through social media or just reading content in general — try to keep an eye out for these tactics being used. That is the best way to solidify this information in your head. Notice when your attention is being captured and question “why.”

There are many ways to capture attention. I've found these to be the most replicable and practical (number 8 is the most important):

1) Specific Numbers

Using numbers in your hooks, headlines, or tweets will make people stop to see what the numbers relate to.

These can be in the form of:



- **Statistics** — “There are 7 billion people on this earth”
- **Dollar amounts** — “Apples new \$1175 iPhone has this new feature”
- **Metrics** — “I sent 322 cold emails” or “After 293 days...”
- **Lists** — “7 bad habits that are preventing you...”

The more specific the number is, the more it catches peoples attention.

If you can't make it super specific, that's fine. Don't stress it.

Here's a recent example:



DAN KOE
@thedankoe

How I turn 1 piece of content per week into a \$45,275 a month creative income and 340,000 followers in ~2 hours a day

(in 5 simple steps):

2) Pattern Interrupts

A pattern interrupt is something that breaks people out of their normal conditioned patterns.

If someone is scrolling on Twitter and used to a lot of political commentary, a well formatted list tweet will make them stop their scroll.

Most of the things in this list are pattern interrupts.

3) Negativity Bias



The human brain is wired to remember and pay attention to negativity.

This does not mean you have to be negative all the time.



It means you need to use the negative forms of words.

If you are saying something positive, but the point is better illustrated in its negative form, use that.

“You are going to achieve great things.”

Compared to:

“You will never hit rock bottom again.”

The second is most potent. We remember negativity. It is the most relatable aspect of many peoples' lives.

It can still be a positive message while leveraging the reader's negativity bias.

4) Group Callout

This is simple, call out the specific person you are talking to.

- If you are in your 20's...
- Calling all creators, coaches, and freelancers!
- Fathers are a gift to humankind...

Even if your audience doesn't fall into the specific group you are calling out, it will allow them to “pick a side” and compare themselves to what you are saying.

I talked about bodybuilders the other day. Even if people don't consider themselves one, it helps paint a picture that they can relate to:



DAN KOE
@thedankoe

A bodybuilder is happier than the average person when eating bland chicken and rice everyday – because he is progressing towards a meaningful goal.

Things that are often boring and monotonous become enjoyable when you have a reason to pursue fulfillment over pleasure.

If someone talks about being a father, I can still relate because I will be a father one day. I will still pay attention to and take the advice.

This also works when it comes time to promote. You can call out exactly who the promotion is for and paint a picture of the problems they are struggling with.

5) Problem Callout

 Calling out the pains or problems people are experiencing will also make them relate to the post.

MOST people have encountered the same problem or pain as everyone else throughout their life.



If you can describe the feeling accurately, you have attention at your fingertips.

You don't have to be dead on with this. Simply describing pain points will have people trying to relate their experiences to it. If they can relate, they will engage.

Here's an example of calling out a pain as simple as "feeling terrible:"



DAN KOE
@thedankoe

You feel terrible because your subconscious knows that you could be doing better.

6) Potential Benefit

The opposite of calling out a problem. Again, pains and benefits. Your mind needs to think in pains and benefits. That is your unique “why” behind whatever “what” or “how” you are writing about.

7) Social Proof

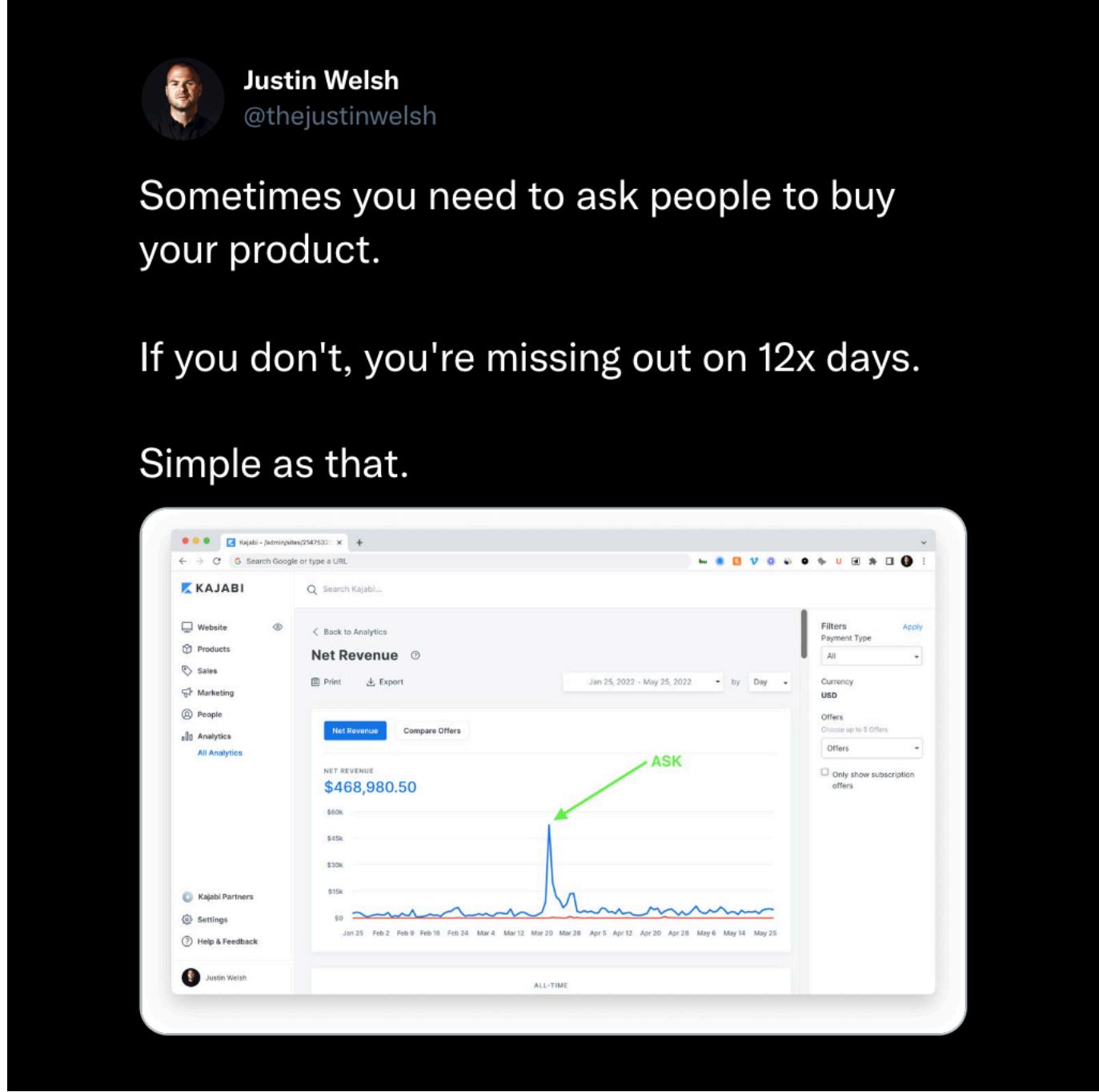
Again this is authoritative and implied an information gap.

 When you flex your results or credentials, people automatically assume that you know more than them. They will take your content more seriously and read to find the information they are “missing.”

This works 100x better when it isn’t viewed as a “flex.”



Justin Welsh is the current king of this:



Use social proof to illustrate a point you are trying to make.

8) Confidence & Conviction

This is by far the most important point here.

You can create highly impactful tweets with confidence alone — it allows other aspects of attention-grabbing to fall into place.



You are right about everything at this very point in time in relation to your goals, vision, beliefs, values, and everything else that forms your perspective of reality.

Your job is to have confidence and conviction in your beliefs and a credible or clear argument to back them up (if you have to).

Everyone is on social media to be told what to do in a confident way. Nobody is secure in their actions, choices, and beliefs. They are looking for someone to confirm them with confidence and give them that clarity to act.

Tools you can use to sound more confident:

- Eliminate words that imply uncertainty
- Speak in absolutes when possible
- Exaggerate your point to add energy

Of course, do not abuse these for the sake of engagement.

Rather than saying:

"It may be wise if some people developed their skillset."

Say:

"It is crucial that everyone on planet earth develops their skillset."

Just by being confident, the words flow easier and the writing is more impactful.

 I can go on to back that argument up with statistics or more creative firepower that I have in my mind.

Here is an example of me being confident in what I was saying:



DAN KOE
@thedankoe

The greatest skill one can develop is decreasing the time between idea and execution.

This tweet got featured in a big newsletter and sparked a lot of controversy.

People were arguing whether or not it was the “greatest” skill. Some were proposing what their greatest skill was.

This made people comment and quote tweet, leading to more engagement and impressions.

I wrote this tweet in the moment when I had executed on an idea quickly. Doing that gave me a lot of joy, so I wanted to share that joy with others. It worked.

Is it 100% correct? No.



Was it 100% correct when I wrote it, through my perspective, relating to my personal experience?

Yes. At the time I was 100% convinced that that was the greatest skill.

I went on to add nuance in the replies. If I had added nuance in the actual tweet, it wouldn't have done as well and opened up the opportunity to be featured in a big newsletter.

The people YOU want to attract aren't the people that "hate" on your work.

Here is one other — a bit more extreme — example. Can you sense the motivational and practical energy "flowing through the screen?"



DAN KOE
@thedankoe



How to get ahead of 99% of people:

- Go quiet for 3 months
- Laser in on 1 BIG goal
- Self-educate like mad
- Apply everything you learn
- Fail as much as possible

Every month, take a break and have some fucking fun.

Bursts of intensity are how you blow past everyone else.

By the way, these types of high-energy advice posts pull in quite a bit of followers.

In summary — have some conviction behind what you are saying. This is not a skill that needs to be trained. It's just a matter of writing the words in the most impactful way. Leaders don't dance around the point they are trying to get across.

9) Active Voice

Active voice implies that there is a story. It eases people into what you are saying.

Passive voice is often boring and gives away the “mini-story” too early. There is no anticipation that makes people want to figure out what happened next.

When you are practicing writing tweets, go through this article and edit out any passive voice you are using.



This also helps with being perceived as confident.

10) Warnings & Cautionary Advice

What should people look out for when they are trying to achieve something?

Can you warn them of something they will encounter as they are trying to reach where you are now?

When you are doing your weekly reflection, or just reflecting on your life, what roadblocks can you help people navigate?

This is best illustrated with this tweet. I hit on a hot topic like dopamine and warned them of another hot topic (then wrapped it up with confidence).

This sparked a LOT of controversy, but I have research to back up that point AND gave nuance in the replies to build a deeper connection with my audience:



DAN KOE
@thedankoe

Be careful telling people about your goals. It releases dopamine similar to achieving them. Skip the instant gratification. Go quiet and build.

What Holds Attention?

Once the curiosity loop is opened, the mind feels committed to figuring out the rest of the story.

That is what holds attention — crafting a compelling story.

Stories are layers of metaphors, concepts, perspectives, and experiences that take people on a journey.

 People want to understand the entire story. They want to know what came before, during, and after any given event (from capturing attention).

Here are 2 things to keep in mind when it comes to holding attention:



1) Structure

We aren't in high-school anymore. Long, professional paragraphs don't matter and reduce readability. Especially on Twitter — people log on that platform to escape the professional world.

How do you improve the structure of all of your content?

- **Bullet lists** — use numbers, bullets, and other tactics that help you break apart what you are saying. These lists create a “story” in themselves.
- **Line breaks** — use line breaks whenever possible, but don't just add line breaks for the sake of it. Be creative. Use line breaks to emphasize specific sentences and help your writing flow.
- **Starting short and concise** — Use shorter sentences or paragraphs at the start of your content. Capture attention with short and punchy statements, then let loose and get creative with how your sentences flow.
- **Break apart sentences** — use parenthesis and “—” dashes over commas. This sentence is too long (until I make people want to know what are in these parenthesis).

Here is an example of all of the above in one hook:



DAN KOE
@thedankoe



Most people suck at DMs.

"Hi"

"How are you"

"Please follow back"

Will probably get you blocked more than it gets responses.

Let me make DMs easy for you in 7 steps:

2) Novel Perspectives

This requires you to get the bulk of your ideas from books, podcasts, or other longer-form content that gives more nuance to certain ideas.

Novelty increases dopamine levels in the brain. It brings more clarity to an idea that has been talked about over and over.

If you are getting all of your content from Twitter while trying to grow on Twitter — you will probably end up with the same perspective as everyone else.



Previous Lesson:
The Evergreen Content Style



The Content Synthesis System

Idea Generation, Dissection, & Insight

Lifestyle Design

Module 4
The 2 Hour Content Ecosystem

0/9 ✓

The Experience Model

The 3 Point Content Ecosystem

The Evergreen Content Style

Attention & Engagement Psychology

The Cornerstone Newsletter

Writing & Newsletter Frameworks

How To Leverage Threads

Unlimited High Performing Tweets

Tying It All Together

Module 5
Bonuses & Resources

1/15 ✓

What's Next? (Upgrade + Discount)

The Master Swipe File