

1) Priming

Have you ever played the game where one person says a word, and the other immediately responds with the first thing that comes to mind? That's kind of how priming works. You're exposed to one stimulus, and it affects how you respond to another stimulus. Psychology Today gives the example of two groups of people reading the word "yellow" followed by either "sky" or "banana." Because people have a semantic association between the fruit and its color, the "yellow-banana" group will recognize the word "banana" faster than the "yellow-sky" group recognizes "sky." What's this got to do with marketing? Lots. Using subtle priming techniques, you could help your website visitors remember key information about your brand -- and maybe even influence their buying behavior.

2) Reciprocity

Introduced in Dr. Robert Cialdini's book, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, the concept of "reciprocity" is simple -- if someone does something for you, you naturally will want to do something for them. If you've ever gotten a mint with your bill at a restaurant, you've been the victim of reciprocity. According to Cialdini, when servers bring a check to their patrons without a mint, the diners will tip according to their perceptions of the service given. With one mint, the tip jumps up 3.3%. Two mints? The tip jumps "through the roof" to roughly 20%.

3) Social Proof

Most marketers are aware of this concept already, but it was too important to leave out from this list. If you're not familiar with it, social proof is the theory that people will adopt the beliefs or actions of a group of people they like or trust. In other words, it's the "me too" effect. Think of this like an awkward middle school dance -- few people want to be the first one on the dance floor, but once a few people are there, everyone else wants to join in. (Keep in mind, this desire to conform doesn't go away when you get older and less bashful about your dance moves.)

4) Decoy Effect

You'll often see this effect in pricing models -- one price point is intentionally included to entice you to choose the most expensive option.

5) Scarcity

Ever gone to buy airline tickets and seen a tagline that says "Only 3 seats left at this price!" Yup, that's scarcity (another Cialdini concept). This psychology principle goes back to the simple formula of supply and demand: The more rare the opportunity, content, or product is, the more valuable it is.

6) Anchoring

Ever wondered why it's so hard to resist a sale at your favorite clothing store? Often, it has to do with anchoring -- people base decisions on the first piece of information they receive. So if my favorite store typically retails jeans for \$50, but I find them on sale for \$35, I'll be ecstatic. "I just got a crazy deal on these jeans," I'll think. I'll probably even buy them. But if my friend typically shops for jeans that are \$20, she won't be nearly as impressed.

7) The Baader-Meinhof Phenomenon

Ever heard about a product and then start seeing it everywhere you look? You can thank the Baader-Meinhof Phenomenon. It starts happening after you encounter something for the first time, and then you start noticing it cropping up in everyday life. Suddenly you see ads for the product every time you watch TV. And when you go to the grocery store, you happen to walk down the aisle and spot it. And all of your friends all have the product.

8) Verbatim Effect

According to a study by Poppenk, Joannisse, Danckert, and Köhler, people are more likely to remember the gist of what someone said, not the specific details. So when you attend a session on how to blog for your business, you're most likely going to remember details like "Have another person edit your work," not "Send a Google Doc three business days ahead of time to a peer so they can edit your work. Don't forget to use Track Changes so you know what you missed!" They called this the "verbatim effect." And it can have a huge effect on how your content performs. I'd recommend spending even more time than you already are on perfecting your headline. Not only should it be search- and sharing-friendly, but it should also accurately describe what's in your article.

9) Clustering

People have a limited amount of space in their short-term memory. In fact, most people can only remember seven pieces of information (plus or minus two pieces in any given situation) at a time. To cope, most people tend to cluster similar pieces of information together. For example, if you had a whole grocery list of random items, most people would tend to mentally group items into certain categories (dairy, grain, meat, etc.) to be able to better remember what exactly was on the list.



10) Loss Aversion

Loss aversion means pretty much exactly what it sounds like: Once someone has something, they really don't like to lose it. When Daniel Kahneman studied this concept, participants were given mugs, chocolate, or nothing. Then, they were asked to make a choice, they were given two options: If they were given an object, they could trade their objects, or if they were given nothing, they could choose one of the two items. The result? Roughly half of the participants who started with no items chose mugs, but 86% of those given mugs to begin with stuck with that item.

Moral of the story? People don't like to lose what they've already gained.



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