

How to motivate people to act



Your guide to

AUDIENCE MOTIVATORS

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Warm-up exercise
- 4 steps to motivate your audience to act
- Creating your message strategy

brooke's²cents

Introduction

For as smart as we are, humans rarely decide to do something based on rational arguments, data, facts, and sheer information. Rather,

we make decisions based on what others are doing around us, and how we feel.

And most of the time these decisions happen in our subconscious mind; not based on careful, thoughtful consideration.

>>

Your job as a communicator is not to throw facts, reason, arguments at your audiences hoping that if people just KNOW the issue then they'll do the right thing.

Your job as a communicator is to

understand what will make your audience care and act.

And then deliver your message in a way that truly resonates with them. This is not manipulation. It's empathy.

>>

Too often we see organizations with great messages, with great causes, go unheard because they didn't consider their audience's perspective.

**You can get their attention
and you can use communication
to motivate people to act.**

I'll show you how...



Purpose

Use this guide to better understand what motivates audiences to act and apply these insights to your own target audiences. This will help you shape communication efforts to get the results you desire.

This guide should be used after you have already identified 1-3 key target audiences for your brand or marketing effort. If you need help identifying target audiences, then please contact me to discuss: brooke@brookes2cents.com.

Qualitative and quantitative data on your target audiences' demographic and psychographic profiles will make your plans more accurate and complete. Again, if you're not sure how to acquire this data, then give me a shout.



Warm-up exercise

Take a minute to think of a company or a brand that you really, really like. This should be a company that you willingly pay attention to and spend time and money on.

Have you picked a company yet??

(Is it Patagonia?? hee hee, just kidding)



Let's look more closely at **why** you like this company.

>> What is it about their messages that really connect to you?

- Is it their choice of words, their tone, how they describe their product/service? Does it sound like it's coming from someone you know, or from someone you admire?

>> Is there anything about the look or "feel" of their ads, catalogs, emails that you really like?

- Do the visuals draw you in and excite you? Or maybe you find them calming and enjoyable?

>> How would you describe this company if it was a friend of yours?

- Happy-go-lucky? Chill and relaxed? A world traveling adventurer? Is this someone you would want to spend time with?

The company you chose has a lot of information to share with you. They could share with you all the details on what they do, how they do it, and why they do it that way. But chances are, you don't feel connected to that brand because they told you those things.

**You connect with them because they "spoke to you".
They understood you and made you feel something.**

That is the kind of communicator, the kind of company and brand, you want to be. You don't need a big budget to do this. You need to know how to truly connect with your audience and motivate them to act.

Let's start the process of becoming that kind of brand!



Step #1: Clarify your “ask”

People are extremely busy creatures. They don't have time to research issues and determine which actions will benefit a cause. When your audience feels unsure of what to do, then they won't do anything at all.

It's important to make your “ask” specific and clear, so your audience knows what to do, and they do it.

There should be no: Save the oceans! Just do one thing! Reduce your carbon footprint! These are too vague. Although they create excitement, they don't guide your audience to an action.

It's Human Nature
unless you tell us specifically what to do,
then we're likely not going to do it.

Pick **one, specific thing** that your audience can realistically do! **Ask your audience to:** Unplug chargers when not in use. Donate \$10 or more a month. Bring a reusable grocery bag every time they go shopping.

Are you just trying to raise awareness and don't have a specific “ask”? You should STILL include an “ask” of your audience! If your main goal is to raise awareness, then there are smaller things you can ask your audience to do. Such as:

- Tell a friend about this cause
- Share this message on your Facebook page
- Read this article
- Check out our website
- Give it a like

Bottom line: ASK your audience to do something and be crystal clear about what it is you want them to do.

Using this space, write in what you are asking your audience to do. Make sure it's specific, singular, actionable, and can be realistically done.



Step #2: Identify what's in it for them

Anytime you're asking people to do something, they should get something in return. It should be an exchange, and your audience should benefit directly in some way.

Benefits should be something the audience receives and feels directly.

We want to believe that people will act to benefit a habitat or species, but what gets people to act is a fair exchange for what they give.

Benefits don't have to match the exact dollar amount or level of effort your audience gives. It just needs to be perceived as a fair exchange in the eyes of your audience. As examples, audience benefits can take the form of:

- Recognition in annual reports
- Lower home electricity bills
- A chance to win a prize
- More fish to eat for the future

It's Human Nature
we're a selfish species and we need to know
"what's in it for me?"
before we give.

Are you having trouble thinking of a benefit besides "you'll feel good"? It can be hard. Especially if what you want are donations! If this is the case, then see if you can create benefits for your audience, such as: exclusive content, invitations to special events, discounts, or swag!

Bottom line: identify at least one benefit your target audience gets directly by fulfilling your ask. Let them know what's in it for them.

Using qualitative research, and reflecting on your own experiences with companies you connect with, identify 1-3 benefits your audience gets from fulfilling your ask.



STEP #3: Remove obstacles

“Hassle factor” describes situations when a task has become difficult to complete, and the person gives up trying to complete it. To avoid having the “hassle factor” get in the way of your audience fulfilling the ask,

**make sure the process for taking action
is easy to complete.**

Remove the obstacles.

Here are “hassle factor” examples you can look for in your own process:

- Can your audience donate on your website without having to click-through multiple pages? Does the donation form require too much information to complete, much of which isn't required?
- Are you telling people to buy new lightbulbs but not providing information on exactly which kind to buy, or where they can buy them?
- Are you asking people to read and share a petition but they must first sign-up to a site, create a log-in and password, and then verify it?

These may seem like small obstacles, but they're enough for people to feel the hassle and give up trying.

It's Human Nature

if we encounter resistance to our initial effort to take action, then we will likely give up and not try again.

“Hassle factors” can be avoided by walking through the steps it takes to complete your ask and identifying moments that take more time or effort than necessary.

Bottom line: find ways to make it as easy as possible for your audience to take the desired action.

Walking through the steps it takes to fulfill the ask, identify potential hassle factors and how they can be addressed.



STEP #4: Find what motivates action

To get humans to do something, your messages must provide an emotional trigger. “Emotional” refers to the non-rational side of ourselves that is often, subconsciously, driving our actions. These are the same type of emotional triggers that *drive us* to order dessert when we’re supposed to be on a diet.

Message motivators make the action feel easy, desirable, urgent, and socially popular.

Here are examples of motivators that can be used to drive action.

- **Others are doing it!** we most often do something because we see other people doing it. This drives us to act because it:
 - demonstrates that the action is worth doing (others have done it)
 - increases belief that the action can be done (if they can do it, so can I)
 - creates the fear of missing out on something socially popular (FOMO)
- **I can do it!** empower your audience by demonstrating that their actions do matter and can make a difference.
- **I want to be *that* person:** position the action as something that will make the audience feel good about themselves, and look good in the eyes of others.

It's Human Nature

information is never enough.
we are motivated primarily by how we feel
and by what others around us are doing

Bottom line: emotionally drive your audience to act based on what others are doing and how they’ll feel doing the action.

Write down which of the above motivators may work for your audience and how you would include it in your message.



Create your message strategy

The message strategy outlines the approach your messages should take when asking the audience to do something.

Bringing it all together in a message hierarchy:

What you want the audience to do

+

Motivators for doing the behavior

+

What's in it for them

Why are benefits at the bottom of the message hierarchy and not earlier? This is because benefits appeal more to the rational side of our minds, which is great for “closing the deal” as it helps the audience justify their actions. But the real drive to act comes from the motivators, which should be featured as early as possible.

But there really is no one set formula for how to bring these elements together. Play around with different ordering and try combining some elements. You should test a few versions with your audience to assess which ones are most likely to motivate action.

I hope this guide to understanding your audiences' motivators has been helpful. I strongly believe in the power of marketing to effect positive change in the world. **Thank you for contributing to that cause!**

>>

Through my email group, I regularly share fun insights and easy-to-use tools to develop marketing plans that motivate people to act. Join the group today by [signing up here](#), and you'll get first access to insights and resources (like this one!), and exclusive access to free support from me.

