The Secret Brain Science of Content Optimisation
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data, Data Everywhere</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: The Changing Marketing Science</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Changing Marketing Science</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not All Content is Created Equal</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving From Function to Relationships</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I kid you not. Propaganda</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Summary</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: The Science of Attention Grabbing Content</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Science of Attention Grabbing Content</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Brain’s Purpose</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Experiences</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Brands are Constructed in the Brain</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Brains and Decision-Making</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Fluency</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Visual</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime for Emotion and Imagination</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give The Executive Brain Just Enough</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 Summary</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3: Data’s Role in Content Creation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data’s Role in Content Creation</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Brand Focus Fallacy</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kitchen Sink Analysis</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Confirmation Bias Delusion</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Data Lead You In the Right Way</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 Summary</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

### Chapter 4: Three Strategies for Content Optimisation Insights
Three Strategies for Content Optimisation Insights 47
Purchase Drivers 48
Barriers to Purchase 52
Decision-Making Heuristics 57
Linking the Questions Back to Science 60
Chapter 4 Summary 62

### Chapter 5: Get Content Optimisation Insights with Meltwater Social
Get Content Optimisation Insights with Meltwater Social 64
The Science Behind the Analysis 65
Getting Started with Social Data Analysis 67
Purchase Drivers 68
Decision-Making Heuristics 71
Chapter 5 Summary 74

### Chapter 6: Applying Optimisation Insights in Your Content
Applying Optimisation Insights in Your Content 76
Optimising Content for the Brain 76
Don’t Forget to Think Content Fluency 80
Conclusion 81

Footnotes 82
Appendix 1 84
Disclaimer 85
Hello

I’m Dr Jillian Ney. The UK’s first Dr. of Social Media and Digital Behavioural Scientist.

My work specialised in using social data to find out how people make decisions and use this insight to optimise content, conversions and products.

I’m also the founder of The Social Intelligence Lab, the first content site and community 100% dedicated to helping professionals get more value from their social data.

I’m very excited to be working with Meltwater on this guide to optimising your content with fast analysis strategies to get behavioural insights from social data.

So, let’s get started…
Data, Data Everywhere

There’s a whole lot of social data out there. You’ve seen that stats like 3.3 million Facebook posts, 66,000 Instagram posts, and 450,000 tweets send per minute\(^{(1)}\). That’s a whole lot of insights on your customers waiting to be found – or is it?

Mela and Moorman in their HBR article outlined how too much data can lead to too few insights\(^{(2)}\). The irony is the more data fields collected, the less they overlap, creating “holes” in the data. Now think about how people express themselves online, it's a big unstructured, noisy mess.

So, let’s be honest. How easy to you find it to use social data to generate insights for content creation?

When I visit companies, I always hear about the social listening tech that sits in the corner like an unwanted present.

People are a little scared to go back and unwrap it again because they’ve not had much success in getting what they wanted when trying it out for the first time - and, they simply don’t have the time to figure it all out.
It’s frustrating. They know there’s more value in the data but sometimes they just can’t get to it.

We’ve been taught to get all the data that we can. This is great for online reputation management where more data is well, more. But, when it comes to insights for content creation more data can lead to less insights, and whole lot of people proclaiming that this social data analysis thing is too complicated.

So, over the last 10 years I’ve been developing simple ways we can get to the behavioural insights we need to optimise content that speaks to our customers’ non-conscious and primes purchase.

Seems a little far fetched?

Don’t worry. I’ll take you through the science and how to get the insights using the Meltwater Social platform. By the end of this eBook, you’ll have three new fast data analysis approaches that can help you optimise your content for how your customer think.

The rest of the guide is structured in six parts, the science of marketing and attention grabbing content; data’s role in content creation and three fast strategies to analyse social data; tips on using Meltwater Social to get the needed behavioural insight; and how to apply the insights in your content.
Chapter 1

The Changing Marketing Science
Human life and culture has always been about interaction between human beings. As humans, we’re hardwired to connect and interact. Today, these interactions have scaled up with the help of technology. So much so that the internet and digital technologies have changed how we behave and communicate more than any other technology in the last 100 years.

Our lives are becoming increasingly digital and social media has grown as an important brand channel to connect and interact with consumers. Ultimately, placing pressure on you to continually generate new and exciting content that speaks to your customers, strengthens your relationship with them and, drives profitable customer action.

There’s lots of research out there to demonstrate that content and social media marketing has a positive effect on brand equity and drives sales. With 72% of marketers finding that content marketing increases engagement and leads\(^3\), and that content marketing gets three times more leads than paid search advertising\(^4\), it’s not surprising that content marketing and social media is rising as an important engagement channel to interact with customers.
But, not all content is created

Knowing that content matters isn’t enough. You’re still missing a system to ensure that your content ideas attract the right kind of attention from the right kind of people. In fact, research from Zazzle Media reveals that 60% of professionals find it hard to produce content consistently (5) - maybe that is you?

Well, you’re in luck. The rest of this eBook is designed to help you optimise your content ideas and even come up with new content ideas from analysing social data that speaks to your ideal customers mind to create a thumb stoppable moment.

Here’s how it works…
I remember sitting down with a marketing team from a very large company. The marketing team was driven by the product folks and you can probably guess that they wanted to make sure that consumers knew about all the features their products had. This completely guided how the brand communicated, content was about features and utility, and had the hard, hard sell.

It wasn’t a great situation to be in. The posts were all function, features and utility with a buy me now attitude. And, they wondered why they weren’t getting any return for their efforts.

I had to break the ‘bad news’ that the science of marketing had moved on. It was difficult because we were largely dealing with a product team who had lovingly worked on creating each of these features. They’re priority was making sure that everyone knew the benefit of that functionality. After-all, it’s the functionality that sells products?!

But, marketing has moved on and it was my job to demonstrate that sell, sell, sell isn’t as effective as building brands around relationships.
In his amazing book, Customer Experience Branding, Thomas Gad explains that the brands who are winning in today’s connected world are those who prioritise relationships and utilise the principles collective social influence. He sees brands as becoming ‘relational brands’, and these brands that have a greater effect on people than the product-oriented delivery of tangible, predictive benefits and features as they focus their efforts on understanding the ‘important issues in people’s minds’ not the tangibles of product or service sold.

Relational brands play an important role when trying to cut through the noise on social media networks as they play on the brain science that relationships are remembered before details. Let me explain, the brain holds onto relationships between things rather than the details. The brain creates details when it needs then, building them from other memories, cultural norms and expectations - filling in the gaps to create a complete story(6).

How the brain processes and stores this information is important for brand owners, as we need to understand that our content relies on relationships between things, rather than the detail. So, playing on relationships and brand associations works better for engagement than features, functionality and utility.

To help people remember the message you want to deliver, you should consider structuring the content in a sequence for better recall(7), and conveying your overarching meaning in every post.

But, all this theory didn’t sell it for my client. The interesting thing that finally got through to them that meaning is more when it comes to content? Propaganda.
I kid you not. Propaganda.

By demonstrating how propaganda is used to target pre-existing social prejudices and biases in order to manipulate national debates and divide society they were able to understand how tapping into behavioural science can help to craft a message spread and cause action. While I’m not an advocate for propaganda it is very effective at targeting via psychological principles.

The Psychology of Content

In the most basic brand sense, the purpose of content is to grab attention, provoke interest in the message and convert into profitable customer action. What we’re not looking to do is put succinctly by Victor Yocco, author of Design for the Mind: Seven Psychological Principles of Persuasive Design:
“Utilising dark patterns of tricking a user into doing something they wouldn’t otherwise do is not persuasion. It’s being an asshole”. [8]

When we’re looking for insights to optimise content we’re not trying to persuade people to do something potentially harmful, we’re increasing our chances of being noticed online. And, we need more opportunities to grab attention considering that the typically person scrolls the length of the Statue of Liberty each day, most of this in social media feeds [9].

So, how can we grab attention when competing with so many other messages?

Many marketers are turning to behavioural science to get their messages noticed and increase interaction with customers. You’ve probably seen hundreds, if not thousands of articles about how to apply behavioural science into your content efforts. A few of the most commonly discussed principles that you may already be applying to your content are:

**Social Proof**

The psychological and social phenomenon where people copy the actions of others in a given situation. By showing that other people buy from you, use your products and love them you’re giving the brain ‘social proof’ that it’s safe to purchase. You’ll have heard the adage ‘in good company’ when you’re creating pitches. Content wise this means hello to influencer marketing, customer-generated-content, testimonials and using real customers in your marketing.
Chapter 1: The Changing Marketing Science

Reciprocity

Is where you give something for free to tap into the behavioural bias that people feel a sense of obligation to do something for you when you’ve done something for them. Content wise this means hello to free downloads, advice and ways to solve problems.

Loss Aversion

Buys into the tendency for people to be more motivated to protect a loss than the desire to gain something new. It is believed that people find it at least twice as painful to lose something as to have gained it. Content and sales wise, this is free trials or highlighting that the customer may be throwing away money by not using your product.

But, importantly, these principles tell you nothing about the topics you should be talking about, the framing of the message or how to grab your customers attention in the first place.

Nathalie Nahai (10), the Web Psychologist explains that for content to be shareable, and therefore, attention grabbing, it must meet five criteria:

- A carrier for emotional contagion.
- Convey the mood of the sharer.
- Provoke natural curiosity.
- Act as a social commentary.
- Create a shared cultural experience.
So, instead of using general behavioural economics principles you should be looking for the behavioural insight that ignites emotion, conveys moods, provokes curiosity, and acts as social and cultural bonding for your audiences’ unique behaviours.

**Say No to tricks and Yes to Motivations**

So, instead of using general behavioural economics principles you should be looking for the behavioural insight that ignites emotion, conveys moods, provokes curiosity, and acts as social and cultural bonding for your unique audience.

For content, the new marketing science isn’t about using ‘tricks’ to get customers to do more. The new marketing science starts with finding out what is going on inside customers heads, knowing what’s important to them, and the meaning they want to create in their lives to effectively frame our messages (11).

Interestingly, there is research to suggest that from a brand perspective, success comes from creating meaning in consumers’ lives rather than just supporting more shopping. Meaning, less content with tangible benefits and more messaging that is reflective of the meaning customers’ want to build in their lives.

Good content has roots in human psychology, and and it feels like it’s reading their mind. If you do this right, it will have a greater impact on the perceived value and attraction of your offerings.
Chapter 1 Summary

1. Marketing science had changed to prioritise relationships over marketing that features tangible, functional messages.

2. As humans, we’re driven to connect and by utilising brain science marketers can optimise messages based on how people process information and pay attention.

3. The purpose of brand content is to grab attention, provoke interest, and convert into profitable customer action.

4. To use behavioural principles you need to know the specifics that are going on in your customers mind, not generalised behavioural economics principles.

5. Behavioural insights should be used to optimise content based on ‘shared meaning’ to build a relationship with the customer.
Chapter 2

The Science of Attention Grabbing Content
When it comes to content, we’re being challenged to create “thumb stoppable” moments. But, the smart way to create content that grabs attention isn’t to think about the thumb, it’s to optimise the content for the brain. By understanding how people think and pay attention, you can better optimise your content to stand out in social media feeds and get that thumb to stop.

This starts with the brain and here’s why…
The Brain’s Purpose

What’s the brain’s purpose?

Simple enough question, but it might not be the answer you were expecting. To put it simply, the purpose of the brain is to make decisions about the future.

The tricky thing about this is that our behaviour and decisions are driven by our non-conscious. There’s a lot of science out there that demonstrates we’re not the conscious, logical beings that we would like to think of ourselves as. To consciously process all the information and experiences we come into contact with would make our brains implode.

In all seriousness, we don’t have enough capacity to consciously process all that stimulus. But, our brain is amazing, it protects us from this fatigue.

The brain is designed to take conscious information and turn it into non-conscious experiences that help us make future decisions quickly and without exhausting conscious thought. These experiences form patterns in the brain, and the patterns explain how the world works from our point of view.
In experiencing the world, our brain looks for patterns and tries to match these patterns with what is already held in memory. When the patterns match, the neural networks in our brain are strengthened, and when they don’t the brain makes new patterns. When two things happen in close proximity to each other, our brains begin to link the two.

So, our past experience and the patterns we form influence our behaviour and how much attention we pay to different things when making decisions. This includes whether or not we pay attention to your content or the meaning that we infer from your content messages.

Here’s a quick test, have you ever seen one of those optical illusions where an image looks like one image but can be multiple depending on how you look at it?
Looking at the image below, what

A rabbit? A duck? Both?
And what about

A young lady? An old woman? Both?
Past Experiences

People’s answers are linked to their past experiences. The image that comes through first is liked to your past experience and what is most relevant to you from your past experiences and associations in your brain.

We select what we pay attention to and infer how it works based on past experience. We then combine current situations with past knowledge to interpret what to do - that’s the action part, and that’s really important for brands.
How Brands are Constructed in the Brain

For you, this means that your brand is essentially memories; a range of stimuli, concepts and emotions that your customers associate together.

If I said Nike what’s the first thing that pops into your head?

What about Audi, Mac, Apple or Samsung?

These are the natural, quick, non-conscious associations that you hold about those brands. If the content and communications about those brands match your associations and beliefs you are more likely to stop in the feed and interact with the content. If they don’t, your non-conscious will not view the content as relevant and you’re likely to scroll on past.
These are the natural, quick, non-conscious associations that you hold about those brands. If the content and communications about those brands match your associations and beliefs you are more likely to stop in the feed and interact with the content. If they don’t, your non-conscious will not view the content as relevant and you’re likely to scroll on past.

The key to increasing the effectiveness of your content strategy is to understand that brand are managing perceptions and experiences in people’s minds. This means that understanding your customers memories and associations are important as they can be used to quickly let the know the content is relevant and meets the customers meaning for their identity, producing a thumb stopping moment.

Memories, associations and expectations are also why branding is important, and why advertising is more effective when run over a long period of time. The closer the memory link between the stimulus and the brand the more likely one is to prime the other. So, when creating content remember to continue to express consistent messages and meaning.

Knowing how the brain handles experiences and processes information is important when thinking about optimising your content. The areas of the brain that guide our decision-making are also important to consider.
When I run social media audits, the most common thing that stops engagement is that the brands talk about themselves too much, and in a logical way. It seems counterintuitive not to talk about your brand in your own content, right?

But, it could be why you’re not getting enough attention.

We’ve all got that one friend that talks about themselves all the time, they are geniuses at manoeuvring the conversation back to their lives. How does that make you feel?

Don’t be that person with your content.

I say that because your customer doesn’t want to hear about you, they want to hear about themselves. We’re hardwired that way because the parts of our brain that govern most of our decision-making are selfish and emotional.

Our neuroscientist friends explain this behaviour with the argument that our brains are made up of three brains in one. There’s many different terms for these brains but the most common (or the ones I like the most) are, the reptilian brain, the emotional brain, and the executive brain. Here’s what they do for us:
The Reptilian Brain
This is the most primitive part of the brain and it governs basic survival. It is responsible for much of our decision-making processes. The reptilian brain doesn’t understand language, it is only visual and it is largely governed by fear.

The Emotional Brain
this is the part of the brain that deals with your feelings, hormones and moods. The emotional brain also plays a significant role in decision-making.

The Executive Brain
This is the most evolved part of the brain and it is responsible for rational thought and logic. The emotional brain is the place where our conscious thoughts and language capabilities live. When we’re using the executive brain, it eats up a lot of

Basically, for content to be effective you need to create content that passes the non-conscious processing test. You’ll only get people to stop engage and act upon your content if the non-conscious believes the content to be relevant. This means that the content must be simple and hit the emotional and selfish desires of the customer. I like to think of this as content fluency.
Content Fluency

Content fluency can be thought of as aligning content with simple messages that speaks to a customers non-conscious.

Content fluency works in line with how our brain processes information. As humans, we prefer to view simplistic content and unconsciously avoid information that appears to be complicated.

Think of emojis, they communicate emotion in a simple, extremely fast way. Meme’s communicate a common ‘inside’ joke quickly in a highly visual way with supporting text to reinforce the message.

When it comes to content optimisation, the easier your content is to understand at a glance, the more likely it is to hook your audience and keep them engaged.

Here’s three quick ways to optimise for content fluency.
Think Visual

The reptilian brain doesn’t understand any language but it controls a large part of our decision-making.

This means that visuals matter.

Research shows that information that we see, images or sensory related information is processed faster than words or sentences as different and more steps of processing are involved in reading words. In fact, 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual, and visuals are processed in the brain at 60,000 times the speed of text\(^{(13)}\).

When it comes to information recall, if a relevant image is paired with the information, people retained 65% of the information three day later compared with 10% of that information with no image\(^{(14)}\).

Neuroscientist, Jennifer Arnold, argues that the strategic use of sensory and emotive words in combination with great visuals is an ideal magnet, particularly when the words are visuals are created specifically for the target audience\(^{(15)}\).

Consider the use of stock images for one second. We’ve probably all used stock images, I know I have, but when the image doesn’t match the narrative, there’s likely to be a bit of cognitive dissonance and people scroll past.
Chapter 2: The Science of Attention Grabbing Content

If you came across this image, what would you think the article was going to be about?

Communication? Speaking? Or if music is your thing, perhaps singing?
This was the original article

The story the image was actually about becoming a better leader with listening as one of the five tactics. But, speaking is conveyed.

Visuals must relate to your brand and topic, the closer the link between the stimulus and the visual the more likely one is to prime the other and our brain’s pay more attention. What you can take from this, is that you need to understand associations, as well as context and expectations to create visual meaning.
Prime for Emotion and Imagination

The emotional brain also controls a lot of your decision-making. Generally speaking, this means that emotion trumps logic in marketing. For instance, Brain Juicer found evidence that message-led advertising often performed poorly compared to emotional led marketing\(^{(16)}\).

Behavioural psychologists have explained these findings through the power of system 1 and system 2 thinking:

**System 1**
Thinking is perceptual and involuntary and thus happens very fast. This is what you might refer to as gut reactions. When I’ve been referring to non-conscious behaviours, this is system 1 thinking.

**System 2**
Thinking is slower and more considered. This is the rational and logical part of our brain that assesses the facts and uses deductive reasoning to reach a conclusion. You could think of this as the executive brain.
Prime for Emotion and Imagination,

System 1 thinking suggests that emotional advertising works by moving people to become closer to the message through emotion, and facilitate effortless system 1 decision making. However, new research into system 1 and system 2 has identified a third decision-making route, system 3 - the imagination.

Neuroscience and psychology research has discovered that when customers imagine their possible futures, the outcomes they would experience after making the choice, and how those outcomes will make them feel were also predictors of choice\(^{(17)}\). An example of system 3 marketing, getting the customer to think about how they will feel driving that new car.

So, emotion and the feeling of the experience can increase content fluency and help you grab more thumb stoppable content moments. If we are to think of this in a B2B context, you’d ask ‘what are my customers jobs to be done?’ However, we need to go deeper into focusing on the job and also the underlying emotions and psychology behind it.

And, when we need to convey logic, the trick is to give just enough information.
Give The Executive Brain Just Enough

When we use our executive brain, it can take up a lot of energy and as a consequence, we tend to look for shortcuts in processing the information we are receiving. These shortcuts can be explained through the many reported behavioural biases, see wikipedia for a long list\(^{18}\).

Typically, we do not display rational thinking but are bound within the constraints of our own thinking and the information in which we have access. This means that the idea of satisfying can come into play. Satisfying explains, that as humans we cannot always find the ultimate optimal choice, we instead see out the option that is ‘good enough’\(^{19}\).

Think about when you read reviews, you’ve probably already made up your mind about your choice, you just use the reviews to make sure your right. That means that if you give the executive brain the right information, simply and quickly you can provoke interest and convert action.

For example, your customer might have one product feature or benefit that they don’t want to compromise on. The trick is to find this insight, find the key features and benefits that consumers want to have met, and those they will not compromise on. Then use your content to demonstrate how you meet those expectations.

And, remember to aid your narrative with relevant visuals.
Attention

Gary Vaynerchuck famously declared that he ‘day trades attention’. As marketers, we all talk about grabbing attention all the time, even the metrics that we use are all based on attention. Think about it, we’ve got passive attention measurements for reach and impressions and active attention measurements for engagement metrics. But, what exactly is attention?

I won’t bore or confuse you with the scientific process of attention (but if you want to know more that’s given in an easy to read format, pick up the book Decoding the Irrational Consumer)(20). For our purposes here, you can think of attention as an active process that is constantly being informed by our memories, assumptions of what we are looking at and the environment around us.

The way in which our brain processes information based on context, expectation and memories all influences where we focus our attention.

This ebook has (hopefully) argued that to grab attention there's six key stimuli to consider…
Chapter 2: The Science of Attention Grabbing Content

Visuals
The first line of defence for the brain as we decode images much faster than text. The rule of thumb is to accompany text with relevant images.

Selfish Desire
The underlying psychological reason or the external stimuli that prompts a purchase. This is what I call the psychological reason for purchase.

Emotion
The emotion surrounding the purchase. This may be the emotional connection to the purchase or the emotions displayed during the purchase process.

Future Feeling
Using the imagination and highlighting the future feeling of purchasing your brand, products and services.

Tangible Benefits
While I will always argue that emotion and imagination trumps logic, to get a customer to take action and purchase you need to give them enough tangibility to proceed with a purchase.

Shared Meaning
The overarching meaning that you are creating and sharing in your customers' lives. This might be a larger meaning of ‘save the planet’ or something that is more in the line of selfish desire like ‘confidence’.
Leading neuroscientists and psychologists agree and add a couple of extra stimuli:

**Contrast**

The contrast of where you start and where you can finish by using your product or service. The brain is attracted to things that are in contrast with each other to make quick decisions and to avoid becoming confused\(^{(21)}\). Think about all the contrast photos in weight loss, hair care or those grow your eyelashes products that are following everyone around social media right now.

**Beginnings**

We know that the brain has a short attention span, this results in the reptilian brain remembering the beginning and ending of whatever it hears. That means starting with a strong introduction that relates to your customers selfish desire and ending with a clear call to action.
The reason all this works is because we identify what is relevant to the customer, what they are trying to achieve, the underlying psychology of how they want to feel and the necessary information to know it is safe to proceed.

In all of this, we are essentially using a behavioural principle called homophily. Homophily is the behavioural tendency for people to group with other people who are like them.

When we mirror our audience behaviours we create an element of homophily to show we relate to them and “people like them” use your brand, and that it is safe to engage with your content. Research shows that a homophilous source is believed to be more trustworthy, credible and reliable, as well as being more effective\textsuperscript{(22)}.

It’s our job to ensure that we give convey message that highlight our brands meaning and confirm that we’re for people like them. For me, the quickest and easiest way to find these content optimisation insights in in social data.
Chapter 2 Summary

1. We need to speak to our customers non-conscious to create thumb stoppable content. We can create thumb stoppable moments by mirroring our customers’ behaviours through the concept of homophily.

2. We should position our content in the lives of our customers, not our brands as selfish desire is a primary attention trigger.

3. Content fluency should be used to optimise messages and create consistent meaning in your content.

4. Emotion trumps logic and if you give the brain enough to satisfy needs you can prime customers into making decisions.

5. Visuals are hugely important and need to reflect the meaning behind the message being conveyed. Visuals help to trigger attention, shortcut processing time and can aid in information recall.

6. Inspiration and getting customers to imagine how they will feel when using your product or service is a strong motivator of behaviour and can be used to create better and more emotive content experiences.

7. Memories, associations, expectations and desires are all important content optimisation strategies to ensure that content is relevant to your customers’ thinking.
Chapter 3

Data’s Role in Content Creation
Data’s Role in Content Creation

So, what is data’s role in content creation?

There’s a common misconception that data stops the natural creative process. And, let’s face it, no one likes being told what to do. No one. Not a three year old, not a teenager, not even you.

This is especially true when it comes to your work. You’re the expert in your own world, you’ve build up experiences and knowledge, you know your customers, and you probably have a million ideas on how to engage them.

The last thing you want to do is analyse a load of data to only be told that your idea was right in the first place or worse, that you’re wrong. This is why research just doesn’t feel sexy. You’d probably rather spend your time writing a first draft of an article, brainstorming content ideas, going to a video shoot or rounding up influencers. It’s all so much more exciting.

You will already have your own intuitions about what works and what doesn’t - social media insights are a source to enrich your understanding or confirm your idea or as I like to see it, a way to optimise your content for fluency.
Chapter 3: Data’s Role in Content Creation

There’s research out there to highlight that companies who adopt data driven marketing are more likely to be profitable compared to the competition, six times more likely to be profitable year-over-year \(^{(23)}\).

So, why do social data analytics initiatives still fail? Across on The Social Intelligence Lab blog, I argued its errors in the analysis process rather than with the data or the tools\(^{(24)}\). I’ve found a few fallacies at play when it comes to data driven content creation.

The Three Fallacies in Data Driven Content Creation

Just over a decade ago at the launch of commercial social listening the buzz around ‘online reputation management’ was deafening. I mean, what brand wouldn’t want to know ‘what people say about them when they aren’t in the room’? Being able to track brand mentions in real-time kick started the love hate relationship with social data.

It’s also responsible for the first two social data analysis fallacies - the brand focus fallacy and the kitchen sink analysis.
The Brand Focus Fallacy

The brand focus fallacy is when you spend too much time focusing on analysing the brand to generate engaging content ideas.

Yes, knowing your brand is essential. But, if you only analyse data in relation to your brand you’re being to ‘micro’. You’ll be missing vital insights that can completely change your content marketing game.

Remember, we need to understand where our customers memories, associations and expectations come from, you can’t do that just by looking at your own brand. Go ‘macro’ and understand what is happening around the customer, how their behaviours come to be, and where your brand fits into it all. To help with this, I created the Customer Behaviour Environments Model.
Customer Behaviour
Environments

By finding out what is happening in each of these environments we can better understand where expectations and experiences arise, allowing us to create more effective communication, experiences, products and services.

To help sell a new sports team my client used this model to understand where sport fits into people’s lives, the differences in expectations and associations between different sports, then drilling down into their sporting industry, their competitors and then their brand.
Chapter 3: Data’s Role in Content Creation

It helped them with new content ideas that were in line with how sport is regarded and consumed. Also differentiating them from competitors playing on heightening natural emotions and imagination rather than just sharing the same content as everyone else.

The Customer Behaviour Environments model highlights that analysing content performance to generate new ideas isn’t the ideal solution. I call this ‘marking your own homework’.

You’re recycling ideas and reducing them down from what you have done before instead of finding out if a completely new angle could give a better return. Instead, you need to understand where your brand fits into the lives of customers and how their other experiences shape their expectations and behaviours.

The role of your content is to help your brand create meaning for the customer in their mind. After all, branding is managing perceptions and experiences in people’s minds and the best content is when it feels like “you’re reading my mind”.

Data’s role is to find out what that meaning should be.
The Kitchen Sink Analysis

The second fallacy resulting from being sold on getting access to unlimited data and focusing on the brand is the kitchen sink analysis.

The kitchen sink analysis is when we analyse absolutely everything to try and find an insight. You rinse and rinse the data looking for something, anything, that’s a bit interesting even if it doesn’t answer the original question set.

The kitchen sink analysis leads to reports hundreds of pages long and usually says nothing about the original question set. It’s also responsible for all the reports that sit unopened in executive inboxes because the insight doesn’t really help them. And more than likely, your boss’s opinion that social data analysis is a waste of time.

To overcome the kitchen sink analysis fallacy, I suggest that you focus on:

- Answering a specific question. This guide is going to give you four questions that are designed for optimising content.
- Knowing what the insight is going to be used for to help focus the analysis and insights generated. This guide will help you to understand how to use social insight in content creation.
- Thinking about ‘why’. Real insight isn’t the what, it’s understanding why this is happening.

You can save a lot of time in data analysis and increase the quality of your insights by avoiding the kitchen sink analysis. Meaning that social data can quickly play a role in optimising your content because you’re confident that you’re going to get actionable insights.
The Confirmation Bias Delusion

While the kitchen sink analysis pushes you to analyse absolutely everything to find an insight, the confirmation bias delusion is when you analyse social data to validate your idea, causing you to potentially miss the larger picture.

You go in with a fixed mindset to confirm what you are thinking is right which then impacts how you analyse and interpret the data. You’re looking to validate an assumption, so that’s what you do instead of finding out how people really think and feel.

Strategies like looking through tweets or posts without formal analysis or actively looking for data to support your claim without exploring what else the data says are examples of the confirmation bias delusion.

To overcome the confirmation bias delusion, I suggest that you focus on:

- Repositioning your analysis from validation to testing.
- Developing formal data analysis approaches. In this guide, you’ll get three strategies for content optimisation insights.

Sometimes data confirms your thinking other times it gives you new ideas but you’ll never know what speaks to your customers’ brain if you don’t overcome the confirmation bias delusion.
Let Data Lead You In the Right Way

When we explored the science of attention grabbing content, we found that branding is managing perceptions and experiences in people’s minds\(^{(25)}\). The purpose of data analysis in content creation or optimisation is to understand what’s going on in your customer’s mind and using that insight to reinforce an existing belief or association - or to weaken for a belief or association that isn’t true.

The latter can be difficult to achieve. As humans, and when creating marketing messages we have a tendency to use logic to sway an argument. But, the part of our brain responsible for most of our decision-making isn’t logical. And, have you seen what happens to the brain when you tell someone something that doesn’t conform to their beliefs?

New research shows that: “If there is a belief that the brain considers part of who we are, it turns on the self-defense mode to protect that belief”\(^{(26)}\).

Basically, there is little chance of that message being accepted. Consider the conversation and content surrounding veganism. That content can be graphic and extreme with many meat eaters complaining about such content trying to sway their way of life. There’s even the meme of...
On the one hand the content speaks to vegan beliefs but it doesn’t exactly speak to the beliefs of those who eat meat. The content is not positioned in a brain friendly way to sway existing beliefs but instead triggers the brains self-defense mode. The question is, are you inadvertently triggering your customers self-defense mode?

I’m not advocating for using data to replace the creative process but I am advocating for you to use behavioural insights (generated from social data) to optimise the underlying messages and positioning of your content.

What you now need is an analysis system that relates to your own people, your own customers, the public and your competitors.
Chapter 3 Summary

1. Utilising data in the creative process isn’t about being told what to do, it’s about using signals from your customer to optimise your content performance.

2. You may be unknowingly falling into data analysis fallacies that stop you from getting any actionable insight. Are you following brand focus, kitchen sink analysis or confirmation bias analysis?

3. To properly use social data content creation you need to consider that your original idea might not be the most effective and follow where the data takes you, not where you want it to take you.

4. Instead of analysing all the data in relation to your brand, think about the customer behaviour environments. It is these environments and from these experiences that expectations, memories and associations are created, and it is these elements that predict where attention is focused.

5. You don’t need to analyse all the data to get the behavioural insights you need to optimise content. Focus on answering specific questions and how you want to use the insight. This will save you time and the pain of analysis going in no clear direction.
Chapter 4

Three Strategies for Content Optimisation Insights
Chapter 4: Three Strategies For Content Optimisation Insights

Three Strategies for Content Optimisation Insights

I’m willing to be that no one has given you a clear process to follow when it comes to social data analysis. I want to change that today. Today, you’re going to get three questions that can help you to build a system so you can quickly optimise your content with behavioural insights from social data.

You ready?

Great. Let’s get started.

To optimise your content for your customer’s brain and create thumb stoppable moments, the three questions that I’ve always found to generate actionable insights are:

- What are my customers intrinsic and extrinsic purchase drivers?
- What are my customers barriers to purchase?
- What are my customers decision-making heuristics?
Purchase Drivers

Way back in 1956 a book written by Victor Schwab described forty emotions which cause people to act. I call these intrinsic purchase drivers and you can find the full list of emotions on appendix 1. Even after all these years, technological advances, and societal evolution there are a number of basic needs and wants that drive behaviour. The role of social data is to identify which ones are the most relevant to your customers.

For example, when I analysed data relating to mattresses I found that the primary purchase driver to buy a new mattress was pain.
Chapter 4: Three Strategies For Content Optimisation Insights

From the 902 usable mentions about purchase, 816 of them mentioned pain. Some of the mentions were also about pain in relation to another of the extrinsic purchase drivers.

Let’s put that into context. Schwab’s emotional drivers (appendix 1) found that we want to be comfortable, and it literally takes pain for many people to recognise they need to buy a new mattress. This is interesting because when you see mattress adverts on the TV or read marketing material, you tend to find they use a logical “you need to replace your mattress every eight years” argument.
While it’s true that you should replace your mattress every eight years, who is checking this? And, what if you feel it’s still in good condition? You’re unlikely to go out and buy a new mattress without some kind of ‘event’ happening, not just because it’s eight years old. Generally speaking, it takes until people feel pain before they think about a new mattress. Even better, social data can also tell us about the type of pain they feel.

From the 801 usable mentions about pain, 456 of them were driven by lower back pain.

But, intrinsic purchase drivers are not the only part of the story. In my mattress example, the analysis highlighted that moving home, renovating bedrooms or sagging mattresses caused extrinsic purchase drivers.
In content, purchase drivers can be used to quickly trigger need recognition. By mirroring the emotions, situations, needs and wants that your customers hold in relation to your product or service you can speak to your audience’s non-conscious desires and guide your marketing strategy with behavioural insights.

Another example that I always remember of purchase drivers transforming marketing strategy is from Ben and Jerry’s ice cream. Generally speaking, when do you think we buy ice cream?

It’s likely the first thing that came to mind is when it’s hot and sunny.

The team at We Are Social actually found that people tend to purchase Ben and Jerry’s when they are feeling down. Instead of being a satisfying treat on a hot day, Ben and Jerry’s are more often a comfort companion, being driven by intrinsic rather than extrinsic drivers. That insight completely changes how the brand is positioned, the meaning that is shared and the focus for the content.
Barriers to Purchase

Barriers to purchase are one of my favourite types of analysis to run. They are effectively the things that may stop your customer from buying your products and services, and they are a great way to find out what associations (logical or not) people hold about your brand, product or service.

If you can figure out your customers barriers to purchase you can pave the way to overcome their natural internal objections. This is particularly useful when there is an association that is untrue and you want to use content overcome the link. It works best over time, so you can’t just post one message about it.

If we go back to my mattress example for a second, when considering the new mattresses-in-a-box, many people had a natural aversion because of they use of memory foam.
From the 919 usable mentions 422 were about being too hot and 535 were about the perceived smell. In discourse analysis, this was found to be because of underlying association of bad smells and being too hot from past experience of memory foam mattresses.

How did these mattress companies respond? By leaving overt messages and subtle signals that conveyed coolness.
The messages in your content don’t have to always be literal, they can be subjective too. The fans in the mattress-in-a-box content reinforces the feeling of being cool.

If you pick up any marketing text, you’ll read about barriers to purchase. The most common barriers to purchase are price, perception and convenience. Social data can help you to understand the price versus quality debate and also identify the specific perception and convenience barriers.
When I’m running research I typically remove price and brand from the analysis and run this analysis separately for the brand and competitors.

If we look at purchase barriers in the finance industry, say for unsecured consumer loans, here is what we find.
Chapter 4: Three Strategies For Content Optimisation Insights

The 2398 usable mentions highlighted that people are most likely to discuss their perceived ability to obtain finance as the main barrier to purchase. Like with the purchase drivers, there are intrinsic and extrinsic purchase barriers. Other barriers included obtaining the quoted APR and lack of credit history. One way finance brands are overcoming perceived ability to obtain finance are with credit checkers that can quickly show customers if they are likely to qualify or not.

However, this does not tackle the perceived guilt when people are overspending. There could be a contrast in the emotion between overspending and having financial health secured. It is clear that finance communication needs to display trust, fairness and give consumers confidence that they can handle their finances.
Decision-Making Heuristics

Decision-making heuristics are not only a useful way to make your content stand out but also a good way to increase website conversion.

When looking at how the brain makes decisions we found that the logical, executive brain takes up a lot of energy and looks for the easy way out. For our brands, this means finding the product attributes and/or benefits that are the most important considerations for our customers.

One of my favourite examples of optimising for decision-making heuristics is in the sale of white goods. I was working on a project that looked at how to choose the right fridge freezer and discovered an insight that no one was talking about.

I know fridge freezers are not sexy but when it comes to product attributes they have a lot but some are more important than others. As a customer, we are not going to look at every single attribute. We’re going to look for the ones that satisfy our needs, our decision-making heuristics. If we remove the price, design and the brand from our decision-making, here’s the important decision-making heuristics.
Chapter 4: Three Strategies For Content Optimisation Insights

The most important?

Noise. The noise is really important to people when they’re looking to purchase a new fridge freezer. So, if I was selling white goods, I’d look to convey how quiet and reliable our products are.

If we swap over and look at the decision-making heuristics for smartwatches and fitness bands. What do you think the decision-making heuristics are?

So, let’s take out price, design, brand. What’s left?
Chapter 4: Three Strategies For Content Optimisation Insights

Well, from the 2311 usable mentions various decision-making heuristics were displayed. Many of these like notifications, tracking steps and running, monitoring heart rate are standard functionality. What I found interesting about this study is that the reliability of the sync function was an important decision-making heuristic for fitness bands.

That functionality might not be seen as important to the manufacturer but it has the highest discussion rate of customers. And, it is also generates the highest complaint and customer churn rates.

Like, the noise of fridge freezers, the sync ability is a hidden insight about what is important to customers when they purchase, and can offer you a point of differentiation in your content.

To make content stand out and to sell more fitness bands concentrate on the reliability of sync and being able to keep up-to-date with with reliable fitness data.
Linking the Questions Back to Science

The questions you need to answer are pretty simple. We’re simply looking to optimise the content based on what our customers non-conscious is secretly searching for.

You sold on the approach?

Great. I’m glad you like it.

If you need a re-cap to help demonstrate how the questions link back to the behavioural science we covered earlier in the ebook, take a look at the table on the next page.
### Chapter 4: Three Strategies For Content Optimisation Insights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attention Triggers</th>
<th>The Science</th>
<th>Question to Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 1</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 2</td>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visuals</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 1</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 2</td>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfish Desire</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 1</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 1</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 3</td>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Feeling</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 3</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible Benefits</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 2</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfying</td>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Meaning</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 1</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 2</td>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 1</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 3</td>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginnings and Endings</td>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Purchase Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 1</td>
<td>Barriers to Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System 3</td>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The intrinsic and extrinsic purchase drivers provide insights into the motivations to purchase your brand, product or service. Use these insights to increase the relevance of your content based on the consumers’ underlying emotions and use contexts to mirror their behaviour.

The barriers to purchase provide insights into the intrinsic and extrinsic circumstances why your customer may not purchase your brand, product or service. Use these insights to overcome negative associations and reframe where you overcome the barriers.

Decision-making heuristics provide insights into the functional requirements that need to be met to make a purchase. Use these insights to create better content fluency by highlighting the areas you know customers can’t live without.
Chapter 5

Get Content Optimisation Insights with Meltwater Social
Get Content Optimisation Insights with Meltwater Social

So far we’ve explored the changing nature of marketing science, the science of attention grabbing content, data’s role in content creation and the quick questions you can answer to generate content optimisation insights. Now, I’m going to walk you through the considerations and steps I take when analysing social data.

Now, I’m going to give you the exact approach that I use to find insights on purchase drivers, barriers to purchase and decision-making heuristics with social data. Better still, you’ll be able to get the insights quickly from Meltwater Social yourself.
The Science Behind the Analysis

In The Social Intelligence Lab’s, State of Social Intelligence Survey we found that many people who analyse social data aren’t exactly aware of the science behind their work. But, the science is pretty simple, so I’m sharing this with you.

Thematic Analysis

I’ve always asserted that social data is qualitative data but on a quantitative scale, and the best way to get through all that data is with thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a really common form of analysis in qualitative research. It focuses on identifying patterns of meaning across the data. It is the method I use to identify, analyse, organise, describe and report the themes around social data.

So, when I said that mattress purchases are driven by pain or by moving home, I created these themes [you might call them segments or categories] through thematic analysis. You might already be doing thematic analysis without knowing you’re doing it.
When we’re analysing social data it is really important that we don’t just read the numbers or just the themes, we need to look at the conversations in their social context. Discourse analysis melds linguistics and sociology by taking into account the social and cultural context that language is used. Discourse analysis helps you to understand the context being discussed in all those social media posts.

So, when I said that the perceived fear of not being able to obtain credit was a key barrier to purchase, I was also able to understand the underlying emotions and psychology based on the linguistic style used in the posts.
Getting Started with Social Data Analysis

As every analysis project is different and we are essentially analysing human language it makes it impossible to give you ideas on what your ‘thematics’ or categorisation will be and what the context of those posts are.

For my personal clients I would run a workshop to ‘deconstruct’ the question and build out the boolean search and segmentation. For you, I have developed a workbook that helps you to break down the question you are trying to answer and then gives you strategies on how to get the right data, and segment that data. You can download the workbook by clicking here.

The rest of this chapter will explore each of the three data analysis strategies to find behavioural insights. It will cover what you should be analysing, the focus of your data gathering efforts, tips on the best data to use, tips to get started with cleansing the data and creating your thematic segments.

A word of advice before we start.

There isn’t a very fast automated way to analyse social data like this - you can’t push a button. You need to do a bit of research and create thematic segments, but you should be able to get insight between thirty minutes and an hour.
You’ll start with a lot of data then cleanse the data to usable mentions for the questions you are answering, creating your thematic segments as you go. This means that you will have to read the content to understand the context.

Then you can start to create the thematics or categories to run the analysis.

The good thing about Meltwater Social is that you can create a boolean query or use the ‘keywords’, ‘must include’ and ‘must exclude’ to play with the data, meaning that people with all skill levels can run the analysis.

**Purchase Drivers**

As everyone who reads this eBook is likely to be analysing a different product or service, I cannot give specifics on the analysis for purchase drivers. But, what I can take you through are the key considerations, and give you tips to shortcut the analysis time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Considerations</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to Purchase Definitions</td>
<td>The intrinsic and extrinsic thoughts, behaviours and circumstances that can stop or delay a purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Focus on gathering data across the whole category, that’s from your brand and your competitors as well as general conversations. You’re looking for how people talk the associations, perceptions and external events that prevent them from considering a purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>The best data is generally forums and reviews because they contain longer narratives but you can still find purchase barriers insights from other social media posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleansing the Data</td>
<td>You’ll want to remove posts that are from companies, are sale pitches and conversations that do not contain discussions on the elements that prevent purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Segmentation</td>
<td>To segment the data properly you will need to read the comments and create your themes for purchase barriers. Pay attention to how people write about the barrier and the underlying emotion behind the barrier. Start to use the language used to create a sub-query that will help you gather all the mentions for that particular theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Barriers to Purchase Starting Point</td>
<td>Intrinsic purchase drivers are the internal thoughts and feelings that can stop a purchase. Remember with the loan purchases, there was a perceived thought that people would not get the loan that stopped the purchase. Find out what is going on inside your customers heads by looking at barriers to purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Barriers to Purchase Starting Point</td>
<td>Extrinsic barriers to purchase are the external circumstances that stop a purchase. Price is always a barrier. To get started, look for negative associations to your brand, product or service, look for the natural links that are negative [they may even be untrue], and the external environmental factors like websites and past experience or memories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>If you have created the new segmentation criteria when deciding on the relevant intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to purchase you can automatically count [and check] how many mentions are in each theme. Remember to look at the context of these conversations to properly understand what the customer is trying to tell you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insights</td>
<td>The intrinsic and extrinsic purchase barriers give you insight into the conscious and unconscious things that stop people from purchasing. Use these insights in your content to overcome the natural objections (subtly and without engaging the brain's natural defense process).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Decision-Making Heuristics

There are other things that you can find out by analysing barriers to purchase. For instance, you can identify where you and your competitors are weakest.

Like with the purchase drivers, sometimes there isn’t that much of a difference between competitors. If the barriers are the same for all competitors, it means they are universal barriers for that product category. What you need to do with your content is to demonstrate how you overcome these barriers or untrue natural associations.
## Analysis Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Considerations</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics Definitions</td>
<td>The product attributes that the customer needs to satisfy before making a purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Focus on gathering data across the whole category, that’s from your brand and your competitors as well as general conversations. You’re looking for how people talk the product attributes and the feelings of using/consuming the product or service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>The best data is generally forums and reviews because they contain longer narratives but you can still find decision-making heuristics insights from other social media posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleansing the Data</td>
<td>You’ll want to remove posts that are from companies, are sale pitches and conversations that do not contain discussions on the product attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Segmentation</td>
<td>To segment the data properly you will need to read the comments and create your themes for decision-making heuristics. Pay attention to how people write about the product attributes and the emotion of use. Start to use the language used to create a sub-query that will help you gather all the mentions for that particular theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making Heuristics Starting Point</td>
<td>For decision-making heuristics the easiest way to start is with your product or service attributes. However, you’ll need to check through the data to make sure there are not any ‘unknown’ attributes. For example, the ‘noise’ of fridge freezers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>If you have created the new segmentation criteria when deciding on the relevant decision-making heuristics you can automatically count [and check] how many mentions are in each theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insights</td>
<td>The decision-making heuristics will give you insight on the most important product attributes. If you convey logic, tangibles and utility in your content do so around the decision-making heuristics. They are the features your customer is subconsciously looking to satisfy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are other things that you can find out by analysing decision-making heuristics. For example, the insights can be used in website conversion rate optimisation or in advertising.

Good luck with the analysis.

A final tip before you get started. When doing the research to find the right themes, create and save a lexicon bank. The lexicon bank is essentially a word/phrase bank and this can be used again to shortcut time on any other analysis you run.

Next, I’ll give you some insight on how these behavioural insights can be used in your content.
Chapter 5 Summary

1. When running purchase drivers, barriers to purchase and decision-making heuristics as I explained here you are running thematic and discourse analysis.

2. Focus on gathering the right data by researching the phrases customers use online when talking about purchase drivers, barriers to purchase and decision-making heuristics.

3. Remember to cleanse the data to remove unusable mentions. Sometimes there can be a lot of data to remove as the conversation does not relate to purchase drivers, barriers to purchase or decision-making heuristics.

4. Start by creating your thematics on known themes like product attributes. But, don’t forget to spend some time reading other mentions as there may be hidden insights that you don’t know about.

5. The insights can be used to leave the non-conscious breadcrumbs that your content is relevant, meets their emotional and imaginative needs, and is something that is helps them to create meaning in their lives.
Chapter 6

Applying Optimisation Insights in Your Content
Chapter 6: Applying Optimisation Insights in Your Content

Applying Optimisation Insights in Your

Now that you have your behavioural insights, you need to apply them to your content creation efforts. This can be done in two ways, to optimise the content that you’re already thinking about or developing new content based on what you know to be important to your customers. Here’s my tips for getting started...

Optimising Content for the Brain

I have a few rules of thumb when it comes to optimising existing content or creating new content ideas. Your content should meet at least one of the criteria below to optimise to grab the non-conscious attention.
Induce a positive emotional

Where thoughts conflict with emotion, the brain prioritises emotion. I don’t know if you remember when Facebook published that questionable study on emotional contagion\(^{27}\)? They found that when a user makes a status update with emotional content, their friends are significantly more likely to make posts of the same sentiment. So, if they see more negative posts, it encourages more negativity and if they are positive, it encourages more positive posts.

When looking at purchase drivers we also found that people are naturally motivated to seek pleasure in consumption preferences. The data you have analysed will highlight what positivity your customers are looking for, or better still what pain or negativity your brand, product or service solves for your customer.

Provoke future desires

System 3, the imagination and feeling around the future ending with having consumed a product or service was found to be a good predictor of choice. In exploring purchase drivers we can find out more about the future desires of our customers.

Better still, if you can find the driving psychological reason for purchase and map your content themes and underlying meaning around this your content will pop even more.
Provoke natural curiosity

The brain does not like things that are unfinished, this is called the Zeigarnik Effect. If you start working towards a goal and fail to get there, thoughts about the goal will keep popping into your mind while you are doing other things, as if to remind you to get back on track to finish reaching that goal\(^\text{(28)}\). The Zeigarnik Effect is used by many products to encourage users to complete something.

When looking at purchase drivers, barriers to purchase and decision-making heuristics we identified the unfinished things in relation to your brand, product or service - play on this.

Provide context and contrast

Neuroscientists argue that the brain likes context and contrast. One way content creators have used both natural curiosity and context and contrast is through clickbait headings. The heading provokes curiosity because the context and contrast between the two subjects being discussed generally don’t make sense.

You could use this strategy in your own content or you could use the barriers to purchase or purchase drivers to show context and contrast in how the customer feels just now compared to when using you.
Chapter 6: Applying Optimisation Insights in Your Content

Reinforce social validation and self-esteem

People are more likely to engage and share content when there is a high level of homophily. If your content provides social validation and promotes their self-esteem, they are more likely to interact and engage with you.

You can find the social validation insights from purchase drivers and how the customer wishes to consume your brand, product or service. You can relate to their self-esteem by understanding purchase barriers and you can tailor this around specific decision-making heuristics.

Lower the cognitive load

The cognitive load is the total amount of mental effort being used in your working memory. Remember our brain really doesn’t like having to process complex information. So, you should look to lower the cognitive load with relevant images that convey shared meaning to your audience, relate to their selfish desires, and accompanying copy should reinforce the message of the visual.

Decision-making heuristics are great to lower the cognitive load based on important functional aspects. Purchase drivers are great to relate to consumption needs and underlying desires. Barriers to purchase are great to highlight how your particular brand, product or service overcomes these.
Don’t Forget to Think Content Fluency

Before posting, give your content ideas a once over to see if they meet the five content fluency checks:

**Conceptual**
Does the content and meaning behind the content meet the semantic associations, use cases, perceptions, purchase drivers, decision-making heuristics and motivations to purchase your brand, product or concept?

**Perceptual**
Is the message easy to read and process?

**Linguistic**
Do you use simple language?

**Emotive**
Do you convey emotion in your message?

**Imaginative**
Do you convey a future desired state?
I hope this eBook has given you some more inspiration in how to use social data insights to optimise your content. Enjoy creating those thumb stopping moments!
Footnotes


(4) McCoy, J. (2017). 9 Stats that will make you want to invest in content marketing, Content Marketing Institute, Accessed Online https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/10/stats-invest-content-marketing/


Footnotes

## Appendix 1: Key Emotional Drivers

The key emotional drivers published in Victor Schwab’s book are broken down into four categories as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Want To Gain</th>
<th>People Want To Save</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>Advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise from others</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride of accomplishment</td>
<td>Security in old age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Increased enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal prestige</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Want To Save</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discomfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Want To Be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognised authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Want To Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express their personalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfy their curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win others’ affection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disclaimer

Although the information and data used in this report have been produced and processed from sources believed to be reliable, no warranty expressed or implied is made regarding the completeness, accuracy, adequacy, or use of information. The authors and contributors of the information and data shall have no liability for errors or omissions contained herein or for interpretation thereof. References to any specific product or brand by trade name, trademark or otherwise does not constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation of favouring by the authors or contributor and shall not be used of advertising or product endorsement purposes. The opinion expressed herein are subject to change without notice.

Copyright © 2019 The Social Intelligence Lab

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non commercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed “Attention Permissions Coordinator”, at the address below:

Dr Jillian Ney
The Social Intelligence Lab
Tontine
20 Trongate
1st Floor
Glasgow
Meltwater is the global leading media intelligence platform.

Our software combines the power of AI with the largest news and social media database in the industry, to bring our clients advanced Media Monitoring, Social Media Listening, Social Media Management, PR Analytics and Influencer Engagement tools.

meltwater.com