The secret path to marketing success: Gut - Heart - Head

Humans love instant gratification. In fact, our brains are wired for it. But the path to marketing success is not instantaneous. It starts in the gut, meanders around till it hits your heart, and finishes in the head — if you play your cards right.

Say hello to the holy trinity of marketing success: Gut, Heart, Head, in that order.

This isn't a new idea. In fact, it's a proven process of persuasion that dates back thousands of years, to the ancient Greeks.

Aristotle was onto something. His famous modes of rhetorical persuasion — Ethos, Pathos and Logos — were strikingly similar to Gut, Heart, Head. [Effective arguments, Aristotle said, include all three.](http://bnbranding.com/brandinsightblog/information-is-killing-your-advertising/)

**Ethos is the credibility piece.**

The persuasive power comes from the character of the presenter and her credentials, experience and insight.

The idea goes like this... If the audience has a good gut reaction to the presenter, they are much more likely to believe the presentation or buy the product.

It comes down to trust.

Back in the Mad Men days of advertising Ethos was used to sell everything from toothpaste to pick up trucks… put an actor in a white coat and you’ve got yourself a credible expert. “Nine out of ten dentists recommend…”

These days people are more skeptical, and it takes more effort to earn trust in the marketplace. That’s what being a “thought leader” is about. That’s why white papers and case studies make for [good “content.”](http://bnbranding.com/brandinsightblog/definition-content-saying-showing-today-improve-brand/)That's why authenticity is such a hot topic in marketing circles.

That's also why so many companies pay millions for celebrity endorsements and big-name voice overs.

When Donald Sutherland does a voice over for orange juice, even the farmers feel the love. That's ethos plus pathos. Gut and heart equals booming orange juice sales.

**Pathos is the emotional heart of your sales pitch.**

The English words “sympathy” and “empathy” come from Greek root, "Pathos".  This is where passion and creativity comes into play, and it's where most business people fail miserably.

Managers, particularly those inclined toward the finance side of things, think vertically. They work in a straight, logical line from one thing the next. Top to bottom. It's hard for them to leap out of that left-brain world and into the realm of emotion and empathy.

Creative folks, on the other hand, think horizontally, diagonally and vertically. Sometimes all at the same time.  We bounce from one seemingly unrelated thought to another and connect the dots in brilliant new ways.

That's why creativity is so valued in the advertising world.

All the latest brain research proves that emotion drives behavior, not logic.  So smart brand managers know the path to marketing success is hiring advertising pros who can communicate the emotional heart of their brand messages.

It's not just a digital media buying exercise. It's strategic message development. It's not just reaching an audience, it's making an honest, emotional connection with real people.

**Logos is the rationalizer.**

Sometimes you need more than just a credible presenter and a heart-felt pitch. That's why there’s Logos. [Pure Logic.](http://bnbranding.com/brandinsightblog/just-the-facts-on-more-effective-advertising/) Stats and data. The brainier, cognitive leg of the stool.

Unfortunately, many companies rely solely on this. They present all sorts of supporting facts about the features of their products and [forget all about the main emotional benefit.](http://bnbranding.com/brandinsightblog/three-logical-reasons-why-brands-need-more-emotional-thinking/)

This is especially true in business-to-business marketing and in technology marketing where it's all about the data.

But just because someone's making a buying decision at work doesn't mean she's suddenly turned into Mr. Spock. She still has feelings.

In their extensive research, Antonio Dumasio and Joseph LeDoux of USC have verified the theory that the head is primarily used to justify decisions that have already been made in the gut and the heart.

We aren't rational, but we are rationalizers.

Their studies show that emotions don't decide for us, but they weigh in early and heavily into the decision making process. Plus, emotions are inextricably interconnected with rationality, so no decision is purely logical.

"We're not thinking machines, we are feeling machines that think."

That's why it's very difficult to sway a consumer to change from one tried and true brand to something completely new. A long list of rational bullet points cannot compete with gut feelings.

Douglas Van Praet, in "Unconscious Branding" sums it up for marketers: "The emotional part of the brain serves as the primary driver of our behavior, while our rational mind acts as a backseat observer that, more often than not, goes along for the ride."

So the path to marketing success is a matter of balancing Aristotle's three elements..

Ethos — credibility to elicit that positive gut feeling about you and your product. Without it, no one will be open to receive your message.

Pathos — emotional content to connect in the heart and create brands that are truly loved.

Logos — facts and data to help people rationalize their decisions in their own heads.

If you want [a more balanced marketing effort](https://bnbranding.com/brandinsightblog/the-yin-yang-of-marketing/), give us a call.

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