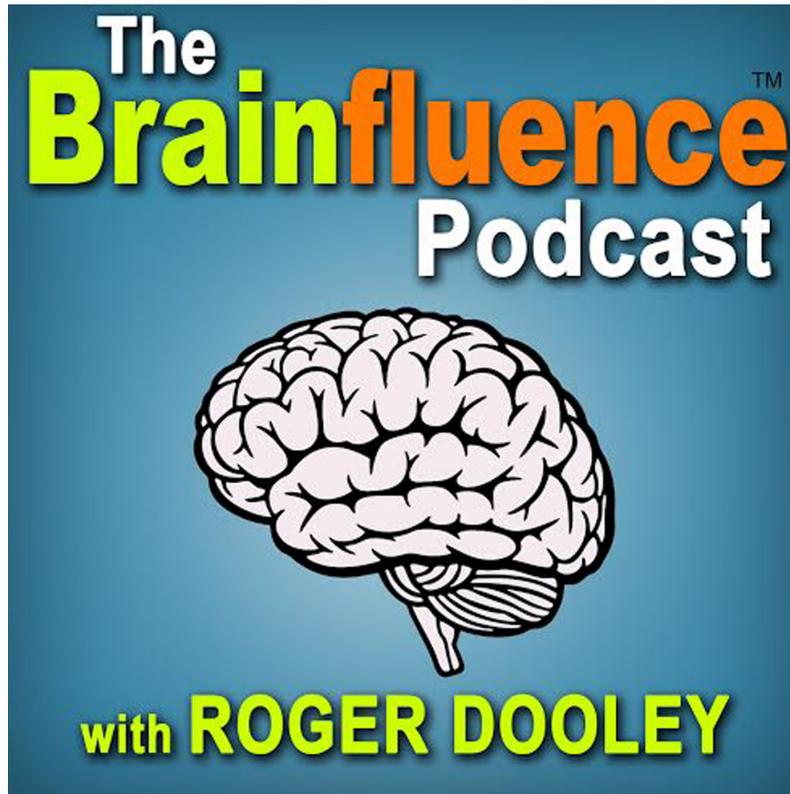


The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host



Roger Dooley

[The Brainfluence Podcast](#) with Roger Dooley

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast. I'm Roger Dooley. Our guest this week is Rohit Bhargava. He's an idea curator, storyteller, marketing expert and the founder of The Non-Obvious Company. Previously, he spent over 15 years leading digital and marketing strategy for global brands at Leo Burnett and Ogilvy. He's a Professor of Marketing and Storytelling at Georgetown University and a Wall Street Journal Best-Selling Author of five business books. Rohit's newest release is the 2018 version of Non-Obvious: How to Predict Trends and Win the Future. Welcome to the show, Rohit.

Rohit Bhargava: Thanks, Roger. Glad to be here.

Roger Dooley: Great. Now, I was going to ask if you consider yourself a futurist and then I noticed on the back cover of your book you call yourself a near-futurist. What's your time horizon? How far out are you looking for trends?

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, it's interesting. I mean, I spend a lot of time and I read a lot of work from futurists and the theories that they have about how the world is going to be in 2050 are just fascinating stuff. Partial science fiction, but partial like really interesting. For me, I didn't really feel like that described what I do because I spend a lot of time looking at what's happening right now. Even though I wrote a book about trends and I rewrite it and update it every year, the horizon is specifically a year and so I look at what are the hot trends for this year and what's happening

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

right now that's going to accelerate, which is basically how we look at why the trends are important right now.

Roger Dooley: Right. As you say, these long-term trends are interesting, but something that's going to happen 40 years down the road really is not actionable for most business people in their situations unless they're in some really long-term strategic planning mode for a large company, clearly insights for the next 12 to 18 months are probably some of the most valuable.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah. I think what's interesting is we look at futurists and we think, oh, this is going to be great for business, but if you look at what most futurists do and how it's used, it's really most valuable when governments are looking at it and city planning, how is our city going to adapt for the next 20-30 years. That's not really the same thing as what a business person cares about. I mean, a business person wants to know what are the things that are impacting how people buy and sell and believe things today and what do I do about that.

Roger Dooley: Exactly. From the title of the book, Rohit, I assume it's fair to say that you're trying to find trends that aren't already being covered in the press. Today, probably everybody's talking about machine learning and self-driving cars and so on and these are obviously important changes that are taking place right now, but you try and uncover the less obvious. Right?

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, I think that a lot of times when we hear about trends, especially at the beginning of any year, you read these articles saying five trends that are going to change retail and trend number one will be Facebook. It's just so idiotic because Facebook is not a trend, it's a platform

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

that exists and 3D printing is not a trend, it's technology that exists and artificial intelligence. I mean, none of these things are trends because there's no direction to that. It's just something that exists and it's important and it's going to be more important.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rohit Bhargava: The first thing I tried to do when I started writing about trends was redefine what we mean by trends. To me, a trend, the definition I use is that a trend is a curated observation of the accelerating present. That accelerating present part is really important because what it says is this is something that is a combination of what's happening right now and the prediction, the trend, is that it's going to be more important, so you should pay attention to it.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yep. How do you know if a trend is real or maybe you don't? I don't know, but let me give you a personal example from my own history and maybe this is something you consider a non-trend and a technology. It's something when I, I thought I spotted a trend and it cost my business a fair amount of money. About 30 years ago, everybody was talking about home automation and smart houses. People's lifestyles were going to change, home theaters were just coming into vogue, the builder's association launched a huge standards project, and companies like GE, who at that point was pretty well regarded for their foresight, they were jumping in with both feet, so we started a magazine called Electronic House that was part of a longer-term strategy to market products in that sector.

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

We succeeded in becoming the only real publication in that business and, believe it or not, it's still being published today by the company we sold it to, but the market that we thought was on the verge of exploding, and a lot of people thought that it was on the verge of exploding just a year or two down the road, took about 30 years to develop. It's only in the last year or two. What did that in was a combination of product cost and complexity and really not that much demand. There wasn't a lot on the pull side to make it happen, but now with the Alexa and some of the other home assistant type product and with wireless, those issues are being addressed, both cost and complexity. Looking back, should we have looked at that with sort of a different lens to say okay, a lot of people are talking about it, but it's not going to happen?

Rohit Bhargava: As you correctly identified, like it's really hard to tell. Right? One of the things I look at when it comes to predicting what is a trend and what isn't, is there, I mean, looking enough at the ecosystem around something and am I looking enough across industries because a lot of times when we see something that we think is a trend, it's just happening in one place. In your example, you might have seen all of these gadgets for smart homes, but nothing else was smart. Like, we didn't have smart phones, we didn't have smart cars, we didn't have the ecosystem around it. We didn't have home Wi-Fi way back then and so the things that a smart home would have needed to be exploding weren't quite there yet. I think a lot of times, that's what happens when we look at things that we think might be trends. We look in one space because that's the space we know and we think, oh, this is a trend. It's totally going to change everything

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

when it's just happening in that one space and not across industries in a big, big way.

Roger Dooley: Right. Good point. At the time, cars tended to be quite a bit smarter than homes, even those days, but what the purpose of these projects are to sort of create the infrastructure. Wi-Fi was not basically a reality at that point, but the objective then was to create a cabling infrastructure and I think where the rubber didn't hit the road was the cost of that infrastructure ended up just being more than consumers wanted to pay and, as a result, some of the usability issues never got addressed because nobody wanted to even install the technology. Had the tech been cheaper, maybe then you would have seen innovative people coming up with much better user interfaces, but didn't happen.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, it's a combination I think of cost and also if you were putting in that type of system, like you really had to know what you were doing. You couldn't be just like a, you know, a dabbler. If you think about the first people who had smart homes, they were pretty techie people.

Roger Dooley: Oh yeah. Yeah, those were the people who did it because they ... It usually is a case where one family member was a techie and the other people cannot figure out how to turn the lights on, so ...

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, which still happens today by the way.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. Yeah, Rohit, there's the classic piece of wisdom, give a person a fish and he'll eat for a day. Teach a person to fish and he'll eat for the rest of his life, so I definitely want to know what some of the trends you've spotted for 2018 are, but first I'd like to help our listeners

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

become better trend spotters themselves. How did you get started as a trend spotter or curator, Rohit?

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, I think for me the first thing I had to change in my mindset and the first thing I would encourage anyone to change is this idea, which I think is a myth, that trends can be spotted because I don't think trends are spotted, just like I don't think looking at flour, eggs, and sugar on a shelf is the same thing as a cake. You have to turn it into something, so ideas can be spotted and that's actually the key, becoming a collector and a spotter of ideas, interesting ideas. One of the first things I teach people is how do you become the sort of person that consistently saves these interesting ideas and then teach them how to spot patterns between those ideas so that they can start to identify what trends are. Your analogy of teach a man to fish, I mean, that is really what I believe. I'm not one of those people that believes that I'm the futurist and I'm the only one that should be able to predict trends and you should pay me if you want to know what the trends are. That's not my mindset. I believe that any of us can learn to do this if we just have a better process for things that we kind of take for granted.

Like, for example, taking notes. I mean, nobody usually has ever taught us how to take notes properly and so what we end up doing is either trying to write down everything or, if you remember when you were back in school, like you'd have the textbook and you'd highlight everything, which is totally useless, right, because there's no insight there. You just highlighted the whole book. You may as well of highlighted nothing.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, when I was in college, I bought a couple of used textbooks and a couple of them were so heavily

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

highlighted ... First of all, I hated it because highlights are distracting. I prefer to interpret it pretty much as the way the author wrote it, but so much stuff was highlighted that clearly you might as well memorize the whole book.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, and we're doing that because nobody's ... we've never learned how to consume information in a better way.

Roger Dooley: Right, so what are some of the behaviors that people would engage in to do a better job of that?

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, so one of the behaviors that I try and teach people is to have better sources of information and by better I don't mean more authoritative necessarily, I mean more diverse because the problem right now with all the algorithms and fake news and all of this stuff we're surrounded by as data is that there's a huge confirmation bias inside of it. Smart people kind of know that, but they don't really know how to get outside of it because, at the end of the day, as soon as you log on to your computer and it knows who you are, that algorithms already started and you kind of can't get out of it. I mean, even if you log out, you still have cookies saved and you still have certain things on your computer that are funneling certain types of information.

One of the things that I teach people to do, which is a very simple thing to do, is when you go to an airport or a bookstore, you buy a magazine that's not targeted towards you. I have subscriptions to Modern Farmer Magazine. I subscribe to Teen Vogue Magazine. I mean, these are not magazines that are meant for me, right, I don't do any farming and I'm definitely not a teenage girl, but by buying those, I get outside of my own world view. I

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

see the world through someone else's point of view and I think that that is a key ingredient to being a good trend curator.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Are there trends of different scales? I'm sure the answer must be yes. In particular, I wonder about trends that only affect specific areas or topics that aren't going to be in your book or the business press. They're too specific. In fact, a friend of mine, Carrie Vanston, here in Austin, co-authored a book back in 2011. I'll read you the title. It's a long title, Minitrends: How Innovators and Entrepreneurs Discover and Profit From Business and Technology Trends: Between Megatrends and Microtrends Lie Minitrends, Emerging Business Opportunities in the New Economy. Now, that's a mouthful for a book title, but I think just the title itself raises the point that there are trends of various scales and I assume that if you're in the plumbing industry, there are trends there. If you make disposable diapers, there's trends in that market and so on and Austin has trends that aren't the same as Portland or Tokyo. Do you buy into that theory? How do you expand on that?

Rohit Bhargava: One thing that you probably know about my personality, Roger, is I'm not the one who goes on a diet and then yells at somebody else for eating a donut. You know what I mean? I'm not the guy who's going to tell someone they shouldn't describe a trend in a certain way. Now, there are things that are happening in a certain region that aren't happening elsewhere. When I talk about trends, I don't really focus on that type of trend, so I don't do industry trends, I do trends on probably, as your friend would describe it, a more macro level, ...

Roger Dooley: Right, mm-hmm (affirmative).

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

Rohit Bhargava: ... but I apply them to micro levels. Oftentimes what I'll do is I'll say, well here's a macro trend that's happening over here and over here and over here, and if you're in healthcare, here's why it matters for you. That's kind of my approach, which is to go broader because a lot of times what ends up happening is I, in the process of doing the research for the trends and when my team's collecting all these ideas and things, we'll find lots and lots of micro trends. The challenge is to elevate your thinking to put those into some sort of a bigger picture.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, it goes both ways. It's a bottom up approach as you're sort of aggregating these little micro trends to see if they represent part of a larger trend, but also then going the opposite direction and if you identify a larger trend that seems to be real, see how that could impact particular industries or markets.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, and you know the nice thing is that it really does lend itself to that because you can imagine. I mean, if you do all the research and you have a trend and you have kind of eight stories that describe that trend, you could pretty easily pick out two of them that have something to do with financial services, go in to speak to someone about financial services, and say, "Hey, here's how this trend is working in your industry."

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rohit Bhargava: The nice thing about that is I can make, at the same time, I can make the trends broad enough that they describe big ideas, but also super relevant for someone no matter what industry they're in.

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Fair enough. Rohit, why don't you explain the Haystack Method as part of the curation process?

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, the Haystack Method was kind of my analogy for describing the process that I started to use. It was based on this cliché of trying to find a needle in a haystack and actually flipping it around and saying that the important thing about curating trends or ideas is not finding a needle in a haystack, but spending enough time gathering enough hay, so that you can put your own needle in the middle of it. The Haystack Method has five phases, versus just gathering, so saving interesting ideas and the second is starting to aggregate those ideas, so curating them into clusters. The third is elevating your thinking, so we were just kind of talking about that. Instead of microtrends, like it elevates to bigger ideas. The fourth phase is naming and I'm a brand strategy guy and I've spent my whole career in marketing. I spend a lot of time figuring out like what am I going to call these trends, so that the ideas behind them stick? Then, the last phase is proving and that's really where we do a lot more research. We validate, we do interviews, and we try to be really, really brutal about testing whether this actually is deserving of being one of the 15 trends that we put out every year.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). The process sounds a little bit like what I go through in writing a book and it is to aggregate content. When I see an article that could be interesting, maybe it's just the headline that attracts me or the first sentence or two, I will tag it with, while both using tags and the appropriate folder. Do you have a workflow that you use to, you know, any favorite tools that you can suggest to our listeners?

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, I do. I mean, I use a bunch of different things, I mean, so I use a combination of physical ways, so I'm ripping things out of magazine and things like that, but I also use a couple of digital tools. Every week I put out a weekly newsletter that just curates the best, most interesting stories of the week, and I use Feedly to go through a bunch of different RSS feeds and then I use an app called Pocket to save those. Then, I translate those into the weekly newsletter. There's a combination of digital tools and then there's a very visual method for like how I read books with little colored tabs and things like that. I try to, in the book and also online, just share a bunch of photos of how that process works for me. I also, for the first time this year, I did a time lapse video of how this curation kind of works. That was actually really ... I did it on the LinkedIn and I'll make sure you have the good stuff for your show.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, be sure to put it on the show notes page. I think everybody ...

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah.

Roger Dooley: ... would like that.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, and it was really, I mean, it's just 30 seconds, but it really kind of shows how this process works in a sped-up kind of way. I mean, people really responded to it. I mean, they were really interested in that process of collecting ideas and there's just ... I mean, if you read the comments on the post, there's some fantastic ideas for how, other ways to collect ideas and kind of do that.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's funny that we both use Pocket. I find it's such a useful tool because, well, it's sort of like the first law of productivity is don't interrupt what you're

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

doing just because you're distracted by some potentially interesting piece of content, but you find that stuff and you don't want to just ignore it and forget about it. That really enables you to save it and so you can really fast review it later. If it turned out to be useless, well you can delete it and otherwise you can save it, but you can do it on your time, when you're ready to start reviewing some content, not when you're in the middle of a project or whatever. That's a great tool and it's free.

Now, you've got an idea of how to go trend fishing, so to speak. Let's talk about some of the trends in the latest version of Non-Obvious and particularly with a focus on marketing. What about over-targeting. It seems like marketers are sort of salivating at the prospect of individually targeting customers based on their behaviors, their interests, and now even maybe their personality. There are a couple of companies that claim to be able to determine a person's personality by either their answers to a few questions or analyzing their social media posts. It seems like targeting is sort of the future of marketing. What's over-targeting?

Rohit Bhargava: Over-targeting was really, I mean, it's a good example of the method of Non-Obvious thinking, right, because in the realm of everybody talking about targeting and personalization and how to customize everything that you do in marketing, this was really an idea describing how we might be doing a little too much of that. We might be leaving lucrative customers on the table because we're too super focused on trying to hit the same people over and over again or doing a level of personalization that actually isn't working. I share the story, like one of the stories in the beginning of the chapter is about how I happened to be shopping for a bow tie for once because I

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

had to wear one to an event. I'm not a bow tie or any kind of tie routine wearer, so this was really kind of a one-time purchase for me. I just wanted something a little different for this one event. I went online and I search for bow ties and being a last-minute shopper, of course, I didn't find anything that I could get in time, so I physically went to a store locally. I bought my bow tie, I went to my event.

For six weeks after that, I got retargeting ads for bow ties sent to me by all of these online retailers who must have thought oh, this guy's going to be a great bow tie customer for us. We better get him back. He put a bow tie into his shopping cart and he didn't check out. They're starting to do all their remarketing and all their algorithms. They're spending all of this money to try and get me to click or the impression-based money and it's just never going to work. I started wondering at that point, is this world of adverstalking as I called it because I felt like I was being stalked by the ads, is that really the best we can do and is that really the best way to do digital advertising? I know that retargeting works and I know the numbers. I get it. I know there's a reason why they're doing that, but at the end of the day, the philosophy of it just seems flawed in a couple of different ways because they're targeting the wrong person. They don't actually know anything about me apart that I happen to put a bow tie in my shopping cart once and that's not enough. We should be able to do better than that.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, I can top that story. At least, you might think that a bow tie buyer would prefer to have several styles and if they saw an interesting one that they didn't own anything similar, they might buy it, but a few weeks ago I bought a fancy shower head. Now, a shower head is sort of a one-time purchase unless you're going to replace all the

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

showers in your house or something like that. Since that time, I've been getting ads, I've been getting emails. It's crazy, when I actually purchase the product, in fact, I'm being retargeted by those channels, by the same company that sold me the product. I can understand somebody else saying, okay, well we don't know if you bought it or not, so we're going to target them. He just looked at it on our site, but there is a better way to do it.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, and I think there is also this mistaken assumption, I mean, that we know exactly who our customers are. I mean, a great example of a brand that's totally shifted that is Harley Davidson. Right? I mean, they for years and years and years, their target customer was a middle-aged guy and now one of their fastest growing segments are women because they uncovered that women are half the market and they might like to ride motorcycles, too. There was another example I found that I wrote about of a company called Blu Homes, which make custom homes. They had these really nice, modern designs and they had a no-haggle kind of policy, which people love, so the price was the price. They thought that their audience would be sort of 30-something year old, urban, home buyers. They found that instead their audience was what they called "green grandmas." It totally changed the way that they had to do their marketing because they found that this was really appealing for somebody who was kind of downsizing to their next home.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rohit Bhargava: That became a huge market for them and so I think a lot of times we think that our audience is one thing and we laser segment into that when actually, we could be leaving some opportunity on the table.

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

Roger Dooley: Right, I guess the tradeoff is you don't want your marketing to be completely undifferentiated because then you're wasting a lot of money and annoying people, but at the same time, as you point, better be sure if you're targeting people that you know that's your market and you're not missing some other market out there.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, that's right.

Roger Dooley: Rohit, one of your other marketing topics is backstory telling. What's that about?

Rohit Bhargava: This one's very close to my history. I mean, I've been writing about storytelling for 10 years, since my first book, and this is all about the power of telling the story behind why your company or why your product exists, so it's not just tell a great story as a pitch, it's tell the backstory. Tell the history. Go backwards. Share your heritage and tell people why this is really powerful and interesting. There's some great examples of that that I absolutely love. I mean, this past year, last year actually, Grey Advertising did this beautiful campaign where they renamed the entire agency after its founders. If you think about it, in the advertising industry, most ad agencies are named after the people who founded them. Right? I mean Ogilvy, Leo Burnett, Saatchi & Saatchi, I mean there are ... Jay Tinalutee. I mean, they're all named after the founder.

Grey was named after the wallpaper in the office and the reason for that is because the founders were both Jewish and had Jewish sounding names. When they were founded in 1917, it was a liability to be Jewish and so they named their agency after the wallpaper. A hundred years later, to celebrate the anniversary, Grey Advertising in London changed the name of the agency for a hundred

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

days to Valenstein & Fatt, which were the founder's names. It was such a powerful way to tell this founder story and differentiate this agency from every other agency and explain why they were named after the wallpaper. That type of story, it generates a lot of interest because it's interesting and it doesn't have to be a technique only used by brands that are a hundred years old. I mean, this can be used by even newer companies because it brings to life the reason why you exist.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, it's great because it's an emotional story, too. I think it really ties into an emotion that people can feel and empathize with, so yeah, that's great. Oddly enough, I knew of a direct marketing agency a while back that, for the same reason, they picked a very WASPy individual's name as the name of the company and in fact, this person was even listed, who is totally non-existent, was listed on their stationery and so on. When I client wanted to speak to him, oh, well he's traveling or he's out of the country. They always had a good excuse. Then, finally, after a period of years, they even published a death announcement for him and they retired him in that way. Sorry to note the passing of whatever his name was, so it put that particular thing to rest, but it was really amusing that they were able to pull that off, too. As far as I know, nobody ever really called them on it or exposed it. Maybe they weren't a giant agency, but even so it was funny.

Rohit Bhargava: You've got to appreciate their level of commitment to follow through on that. You know?

Roger Dooley: Yeah, right, right. Right to the very end. Well, probably were faced with the dilemma, hey, you know, we're going to have to do something about this non-existing guy sooner or later. Rohit, if you had to pick one or two other

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

non-obvious trends in your newest version of the book as being particularly important, what would they be?

Rohit Bhargava: I think there are, sometimes there's relationships between the trends and there's two in particular that I think are related, but really important. One is something I call truthing, which was the idea that we are increasingly seeking the truth behind all this fake media that we see by trusting the people that we know or the situations that we have first hand experience with. If you think about a customer who is inclined to be skeptical already and then now, in the media climate today, they're even more skeptical, what are they going to trust? They're going to trust experiences and real things that they've interacted with, so every marketer is talking about experiences. How do we create brand experiences, how do we be more experiential? Right? One of the reasons why that's so important is because that's what people are trusting more than anything they see virtually.

The other trend that's related to that is something I call manipulated outrage and I think the world is filled with that right now where we are being manipulated to be angry. It's a really interesting cultural phenomenon and it's not just in the US. Digging into it is a fascinating exercise for any of your listeners who are really interested in human behavior. Right. I mean, the behavioral research behind this idea of why we feel outrage and how outrage, in some cases, has become an identity that people describe themselves as having. What happens to that consumer, that person who feels like it's their job to be outraged? Can they ever be satisfied because now that's become part of their identity to be outraged? That's really interesting if you think about it because nobody would have described themselves like that I think five years ago.

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

Roger Dooley: No. I mean, does this spill over? Like, you certainly can imagine some sort of tribalistic outrage where across the world you see these nationalistic tendencies being fanned whether it's about immigrants or some other topic. Much of it is about getting back to whatever the traditional values are and saving the culture and so on. That sparks outrage, but how does this carry over into the business world? What would be an example of that?

Rohit Bhargava: Well, there's a lot of things you can do if you know that someone is inclined to be outraged. For example, you could promote a product as the alternative to something that outrages people. High fructose corn syrup is a good example, right? There's a lot of people who are really ticked off about high fructose corn syrup and so all these marketers in the food marketing realm are staying far away from high fructose corn syrup and even calling basically the same substance something else just to avoid that term because they know it's so loaded. You think about the business model behind media and how, you know, I think there was some fascinating data from cable news programming since Trump became President saying that Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, all of them had double digit ratings growth in the second part of 2017 and that's what they're selling. I mean, on both sides. This is not a partisan thing. I mean, both types of networks, whatever their biases are, are basically selling outrage, right? They're either selling outrage about people who are against the President or they're selling outrage for people who are for the President, but it's all outrage.

Roger Dooley: Right.

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

Rohit Bhargava: It's generating attention and people are subscribing and then they're selling advertising against it. I mean, there's a real business model for outrage.

Roger Dooley: Boy, that's true. I don't know if it's a good thing, but you're certainly right, Rohit. Say, one last question. I think the idea of updating your book annually is a great idea. It's like a continuity program where you can sell the same book again to the same people, but one danger is people can go back and look at the previous versions and see whether the trends materialized. Now, I shared my trend fail with you. Do you have any trend, one or two, that were kind of spectacular misses?

Rohit Bhargava: I have more than that actually, but one of the things that I really believe in is a level of transparency and I've been doing this now for eight years, so if you do the math, 15 trends a year times eight, I mean, that's more than a hundred trends. Not every one of them has panned out the way that I would have hoped, but from a transparency point of view, at the end of each book and, in particular, at the end of this new 2018 edition, there's a 40-page appendix. In the appendix is a recap of every single trend, along with a grade, a rating for how that trend did over time based on not just what I think, but also further research that my team has done, people that we've spoken to.

Some of the trends that are older, like six or seven years old, as you can imagine, have not done all that crazy well. Some of them were, they're describing micro ideas. I mean, I remember I did one that I thought was such a brilliant way of describing something that was based on this idea of like there are more and more brands doing like ... I don't know if you remember this, but it was a

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

watch company that did like the one second film festival and people would submit a one second film. That was like, that was the competition. I looked at all of these like short ... This was the time when Vine videos were taking off and these like super short videos. I describe all of these as pointillist filmmaking. It was based on pointillist painting and that was kind of how it was titled. It was like, you know, it was a clever way of describing what was happening, but two years later, that was kind of gone. I mean, Vine went away and ...

Roger Dooley: Right.

Rohit Bhargava: ... it really panned out.

Roger Dooley: Although, you know, it seems like it does live on in some Instagram stories and those sorts of things. They can be, not exactly what you described perhaps, but sort of an evolution of that maybe.

Rohit Bhargava: Yeah, look, I mean, hey I'm like anybody who tries to predict the future, like I'm tempted to, you know, say when someone's asked me about any trends, I'll either say yeah, it came true, or not yet. I mean, those are the easy answers, right, but being more self-critical and saying look, we thought this was going to be big and it wasn't and therefore this grade has a C minus, or whatever we grade it at, that's a level of reflection that I think people have really appreciated year after year in this report because they know that it's not based on BS, it's not based on us trying to say look, we're selling digital advertising, so what's the hot trend for 2018? Digital advertising. You know, like ... duh. At least it's not self-serving in that way. This is based on what's actually happening out there. It's based on lots of interviews and

The Newest Non-Obvious Trends for 2018 with Rohit Bhargava

reading and research and real data and it's useful because it's not biased that way.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, I think that transparency is great and I think that relatively few people who make predictions ever go back and revisit those, unless they were big winners and then they will call your attention to them. That's probably a good place to break off, Rohit. Let me remind the audience, today we've been speaking with Rohit Bhargava, Trend Curator and Author of *Non-Obvious: How to Predict Trends and Win the Future*, now out in its brand-new 2018 version. Rohit, how should people find you?

Rohit Bhargava: It's super easy. If they want to find out about the book or get a free excerpt, they can just go to NonObviousBook.com/2018, which is the new version and if they want to find out about me or watch some videos of me talking about some of these principles and things like that, they can just go to my personal site, which is RohitBhargava.com and my blog is also there.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well, we will link to those things as well as the video that Rohit mentioned and to any other resources we spoke about on the show notes page at RogerDooley.com/podcast, and there will be a handy text version of our conversation there, too. Rohit, thanks for being on the show.

Rohit Bhargava: Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Thank you for joining me for this episode of the Brainfluence Podcast. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at RogerDooley.com.