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Full Episode Transcript

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https://www.rogerdooley.com/patrick-renvoise-persuasion-code 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. Today we have the second episode of a two part series focused on the new book, The Persuasion Code by Christophe Morin and Patrick Renvoise. Speaking with Patrick, co-founder and chief neuromarketing officer at SalesBrain. Along with Christophe, Patrick is the coauthor of what is likely the first book about neuroscience in marketing. Neuromarketing, understanding the buy buttons in your customer's brain. The full title of the new book is The Persuasion Code: How Neuromarketing Can Help You Persuade Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime. Welcome to the show Patrick.
- Patrick Renvois: Yes. Good afternoon, Roger. Good talking to you.
- Roger Dooley: So Patrick, do people in the industry ever give you static about talking about buy buttons in the brain?
- Patrick Renvois: Yes, they do especially at the beginning and of course, it was a metaphor when we did this, right? But I think that with the scientific evidence now, it's an oversimplification, of course, to talk about the buy button. But it's an oversimplification that works for a lot of business people. Because the real problem is this. There is a huge amount of research that comes out from the research world. In other words, academics study the world of persuasion or influence. So they are looking really hard for that buy button. And the research is fairly complex and very few people have tried to translate what this research means

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for their sales and business people. So when we use the word buy button, it was way of saying well, maybe there is a way to simplify all this really complex research that comes out of the academic world and bring it finally to the business world.

- Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. It's a great metaphor. In the new book, you repeat it. There's a brain with a big old buy button right in the middle of it. It looks somewhat like the Staples easy button only labeled with buy. But I think early in the industry, that kind of panicked some people who really visualized a marketer as being able to push a button in people's brains and that they would go buy stuff that they didn't need. But I just had to ask that since I think that you guys were the first to really popularize that concept and it is a great metaphor.
- Patrick Renvois: We did and it was controversial but it also brought the issue to the forefront of is there really a buy button in the brain or do consumer really have an option? Is there still some free will out there? Because you think that the decisions that are made by the brain are just the result of a series of biological reaction, then you would think that consumers do not have an option. But we all know, we do believe our salesmen, that we do have the will to choose but of course, every marketers are trained really hard to push this buy button in our brains.
- Roger Dooley: And really, there's an element of truth in both sides of that. Yes, we have free will. At the same time, there are many nonconscious factors that cause us to make decisions that we may not admit to or even be aware of. So there's a little bit of both.

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- Patrick Renvois: Yes. It's a very interesting topic, right? And although I'm saying we have free will, you're absolutely right that we should take into account the nonconscious processes that are going on. Maybe we don't have free will. So it would be a very long conversation to get to that final truth.
- Roger Dooley: Yeah, well I think we'll leave the issue of free will aside today. Maybe save that one for the philosophy podcast. But Patrick, in the last session I asked Christophe how he defined neuromarketing because it seems like everyone in the industry has their own definition. So I'm going to ask you the same question. What is neuromarketing?
- Patrick Renvois: Neuromarketing to us is the capacity to measure, the keyword is measure, some form of biological response of the human body to a certain stimulus. In other words, we use different modalities to do that. We will measure heart rate, we will measure blood pressure, we will measure how people contract the 43 muscles on their faces. There are a number of modalities to do that. And of course, the promise of neuromarketing is by making directly these measurements on the body of people, including the brain, we would get a better answer than in traditional marketing whereas, in traditional marketing we tend to ask people what do you want and then we base our strategy on the fact that we believe that the consumer really needs what he wants. But when you ask this question to people, what do you want and instead of just following their selfreported answers, you actually measure on their bodies various kinds of physiological changes, we believe that those physiological changes are going to get us closer to the truth than what they say.
- Roger Dooley: So Patrick, one thing that I noticed in the book was speaking of metaphors, you included an iceberg

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illustration which for many years was in just about every neuromarketing slide deck that I saw with the little area above the water representing people's conscious thought processes and that big submerged portion being their nonconscious processes. I'm curious whether that was in your part of the book or Christophe's. And also, I think that one thing that you do differently than most of the icebergs that I've seen is actually label it and turn it into a hierarchy of different pain points and such. Why don't you explain about how you use the iceberg metaphor?

Patrick Renvois: Yes. Thanks for the question, Roger. It's a really interesting one indeed. So first of all, the upper part of the iceberg is what we believe resides in system two. In other words, in the neural cortex. It's the thought process which people are conscious about and as you said, below the water level, below the consciousness level, is what we consider to be in system one or what we call the primal brain.

> So that distinction everyone has been using it for a long time. What makes it a little bit unique on our side is as you said we've created a hierarchy of what we call decision drivers. In other words, if you look at the consumer, what are the different thought processes that will most predictably dictate what their behavior will be. And our hierarchy is very simple but we [inaudible 00:06:30], they are the likes. So that's the top of the pyramid of the iceberg. I mean, what do people like? It's not because you like something that you will buy it. It's not because that you like something that you will do something with it but it's at the top of the iceberg.

Then, just underneath that, they are the wants. Now once you start wanting something, it will drive your behavior

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more strongly and more predictably than just what you like.

Then, the third level is what you need. Well, what you need is obviously much stronger than what you want and now you're starting to talk about things that will really move the consumer into one direction or the other.

Then, below that, the fourth level is the pain level. So the pain level is some kind of negative emotion that gets people either angry or in some form of discomfort. Well, of course, if you experience pain by definition, your primal brain, your natural instinct will tell you I need to avoid this pain. I need to eliminate this pain.

And then, the fifth level which is even one level further down and which is a décor of every human behavior is our fears. In other words, whenever we're afraid of something, it produces an instant reaction. So that's why for us, this hierarchy is very important because it helps people understand in just a few seconds that these likes, these wants, these needs, these pains, have a different impact on how ultimately the consumer will react.

- Roger Dooley: Obviously, we are a nonvisual medium here on the podcast but I know at the very bottom level of the iceberg there this giant anxiety which is much bigger and more prominent than the tiny little labels on the top. And I think really what you're saying there visually with that is that these primal issues of fear, anxiety, and pain are more powerful drivers of behavior.
- Patrick Renvois: Correct. And again, the promise of neuromarketing is that it will get you there much more effectively than if you just ask people about it.
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- Roger Dooley: So I know Christophe goes by Chief Pain Officer which I took issue with when we chatted. I thought he should be Chief Pain Relief Officer. But talk a little bit about the sources of pain for customers in the context of your framework. What causes pain?
- Patrick Renvois: The pain is all this kind of negative emotion that comes together with a particular product or a service or the life of people. The best example that I like to use is Domino's Pizza. So if you think about people that are buying home delivery pizza, they think they know what they want. In other words, people will tell you I want extra pepperoni and I want garlic on my pizza. Then, we know what they need. When people order pizza on the phone, they need food. They are hungry. They are hungry right now. So they need fuel. But in the case of Domino's, we believe that the pain is the anxiety of not knowing when the pizza will arrive. And when I say we believe, the executives at Domino's have told us this.

The idea is that you're sitting at home, you're ordering or you're in the process of ordering your pizza, think about that number one thing that could really make you feel uncomfortable. And again, it's the idea of not knowing when your pizza will be at the door prevents you from doing anything else. In other words, you might would be willing to start watching TV or you may not want to open up your beer before the pizza arrive or you don't want to call your friends because you don't know when the pizza will arrive. That anxiety of not knowing when the pizza will arrive, we believe in the case of Domino's, is the major driver that will make people decide they want to choose Domino or not.

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And as a result of this, for many, many years, Domino's slogan was 30 minutes or less or it's free. So if you think about Domino's pizza, at the first level, everybody knows they are in the pizza business. But at the real, nonconscious level, Domino's is a FedEx organization which happens to sell pizza and that concept is very, very important why? Because at Domino's pizza, everybody knows they are not in the pizza business. They know they are in the delivery business and that helped them become so successful. So being able to truly understand and specify clearly what those pains are allows these companies to create highly effective marketing strategies.

- Roger Dooley: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense, Patrick. And another thing that Domino's is doing now is they're going beyond the 30 minute guarantee. They will actually give you frequent status updates on where your pizza is. It's going into the oven, it's coming out of the oven. It's in the car and it's waiting and so on which I think further reduces that fear and anxiety that gee, I don't know where my pizza is. It's not here and I thought it was going to be here. Or as you said, I just don't know if I can start some activity that's going to be interrupted by the guy at the door.
- Patrick Renvois: Yes, and if you think about it, imagine the amount of money, time, and energy that Domino's is putting behind the elimination of that original pain. And unfortunately, most businesses that would in the pizza business, they believe they are in the pizza business. But what's made Domino's so successful is that they realized early on that that particular pain, that anxiety of not knowing, is really what's driving the behavior of the consumer and therefore, they are putting all their thought there. And as we all know, they have become successful at it.

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- Roger Dooley: Yeah, not dissimilar to what Uber has done in the field of personal transportation where I don't know about you, Patrick, but I always had a great deal of anxiety about taxis. Especially if you had to get to the airport to catch a flight. You call a taxi and it's just about time but he's not there and you start to wonder, did the message get lost? Is he just around the corner? Is he running half an hour late? And you have no clue. But with Uber, they have eliminated that anxiety because you can see exactly where your driver is. He's just about the arrive. He's two minutes away, or whatever, and now you can just calmly sit there and wait because you know exactly what's going on.
- Patrick Renvois: You're absolutely right. Amazingly enough, the value proposition of Domino's and Uber are almost identical. I'm talking about value prop, not the product itself, of course, right? And if you think about and you look at the younger generations with the coming of internet, the young generation wants instant results. They want to know exactly what's going to happen next. And this is driving their behavior and it's part of the reason that Uber is so successful as well.
- Roger Dooley: Right, and of course, they're actually going into the food delivery business themselves. I don't think Domino's will get into the personal transport business but Uber certainly saw the similarity between the services. Patrick, how does Starbucks relieve pain?
- Patrick Renvois: That's another interesting story. Everybody knows that Starbucks is in the coffee business but they very early on in the history of the company, they realized that there was another driver of behavior. This is what down the road they called the third place. And here is the issue that they

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are trying to solve. They've noticed that 50% of the people, most people, spend 50% of their life at home, and the other 50% of their life in the office. But fundamentally, they don't have a nice transition that allows them to go from their business mode to their home mode. So very early on in the history of Starbucks, they started to talk about the third place.

So what Starbucks is offering is a transitional environment for people to go from their home mode to their business mode. And guess what? They just happen to sell coffee. The coffee is the medium through which they communicate they transfer that notion of transition of home and the office. And by the way, these words, the third place, are not my words. These are the words that come out of the mouths of the CEO of Starbucks. And they train their employees on the concept of the third place. If you think about it, training employees, new employees on how to make coffee probably takes less than five minutes. It takes them about an hour to teach them how to use the cash register. However, Starbucks spends a whole day of training their own employee on the concept of the third place because it has more impact down the road on the attraction that they have towards the consumer.

Roger Dooley: Do you see that as shifting? Because I don't know how Starbucks are in your area, Patrick, but what I'm seeing is a much greater emphasis on store traffic that barely pauses. Either it goes through a drive through window, the newer units wherever possible have drive through windows and they're also doing this pick up thing where people can run in, spot their order, and run out. So they're really not necessarily interacting with humans even. Is that a danger?

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- Patrick Renvois: That's a very interesting remark. No, I don't think so. Because let's talk about their drive through. Actually, when you buy your coffee through the drive through, the third place becomes your car. In other words, the environment where you're going to transition is in your car but at that moment, you will be drinking your coffee in your car. It's not so much the third place as a physical third place as it is that transitional environment. So the speed of delivery could be there. You wouldn't have to stay physically in their store to still experience the benefit of having that transitional moment that helps you go from your office to your home and from your home to your office.
- Roger Dooley: Interesting. Something you talk about in the book, Patrick, is the big picture. Explain that as best you can since we don't actually show pictures to our listeners for explain what you mean by that.
- Patrick Renvois: As you know Roger, humans are visual animals. In fact, we talk about system one or the primal brain and one of the ways to stimulate that primal brain is to send people visual stimulus. There is many reasons for that. The eye bandwidth is actually 50 times greater than the bandwidths to the ear. So down the road, a lot of our processes in our brain are made visually.

Now unfortunately, when most companies communicate their value proposition, they use words. In fact, if you look at most websites, most websites start with the same sentence which is we are the leading provider of. So they use words. By the way, those words are undifferentiated because all their competitors are saying the same thing. So typically when you say that, it has close to zero impact on the brain of your audience.

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However, if you could use a visual. And we call those visuals big pictures or neural pictures or persuasion pictures. Instantly, the customer will relate to that. Now let me tell you a little bit more about this concept and which of the pictures provide the best impact. Typically again, on a website you use words, text, to talk about your solution. Instead, it would be way more effective to start to jumpstart your homepage with an image of the pain of your customers and possibly on the same image show a relief of the pain.

Let me give you an arduous example that every one understands. If you are selling products to grow hair, you want to show a picture of a guy who is bald on the left side. And on the right side, you want to show the same guy with a head full of hair. Or if you're selling your program to lose weight, you would show the pain of the guy who is overweight on the left side, and the relief of the pain after the guy has lost 100 pounds.

So those images, we have proven actually. We have a lot of research on this. We've proven that those images are registered by the brain faster than anything else and it helps the consumer truly understand what and why they should buy from you.

Roger Dooley: Right, just in case any of our listeners missed one little key point that you made there, Patrick, the before goes on the left and the after goes on the right because at least in our culture, time flows from left to right so even though the pictures might be the same, you don't want to put the before picture on the left hand side. You want the buying picture to be there.

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- Patrick Renvois: Absolutely. If you miss the order, if you do the before on the right side, it creates cognitive dissonance in the brain of the people that were raised in the Western cultures. When you write vertically, you would put the before picture on top, the after picture underneath it. Now if you live in a country where it's the opposite, you have to follow the local norms.
- Roger Dooley: One picture that I think was really interesting that we can communicate visually also to our listeners is an ad for, I think, it was Weight Watchers where it's a very simple image. It shows two doors and a white wall and the left side door is extra wide and it says entrance. And the right side door which would be the after door, presumably, is extra skinny and is about half the size of a regular door so only a thin person could go through it. And it's labeled exit. And I think that, again, gets to what you're saying where our brains instantly grasp what's going on there.
- Patrick Renvois: Yes, yes, you're right. Now again, these examples are the best ones we've been able to find but think about how many companies are selling products that are sophisticated and unfortunately they never make the effort to communicate that value proposition visually. So as you know, a picture is worth a thousand words but when it comes to neuromarketing, the picture is worth a billion words.
- Roger Dooley: So your company is called SalesBrain and I know you work not just with people who advertise but also with people who are involved with direct sales and presentations. I'm curious what insights you have in that arena, if you're going to be interacting in person with somebody, what are some ideas that you can convey to our listeners?

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Patrick Renvois: So are you talking about the difference between B2B versus B2C sales?

- Roger Dooley: Yeah. Typically, I would say most ... Well, certainly there are some B2C sales that are in person but I think you see that more in the B2B environment.
- Patrick Renvois: Right. So as you know, Roger, we are big promoters of system one or the primal brain. So because we believe that every human being is more predictably driven by the unconscious system one primal brain, we believe that it's important regardless of whether you're selling B2B or B2C that you understand better that primal brain. It's the essence of human nature. It's the reason why people behave one way versus another. And it's the reason why at the end of the day, people buy one product versus another. So for example, we have a lot of client in the complex sales environment and when people buy a nuclear power plant or they buy very complicated medical device, they still use their primal brain and although they will tell you no, no, we're only going to make a completely rational decision, it is not true because decisions are not made by computers. Decisions are made by individuals and the individuals will always weigh the impact of the decision on their own survival.

In fact, one of the big companies that was known for this was IBM, right? For a long, long time, the motto of IBM was you never get fired for buying IBM. Now they sold supercomputers, \$20 million and above, and you would think that at the end of the day, the large company that were buying IBM computer were going to make only a rational decision. But they did not and the proof is in the slogan that IBM was using which is you never get fired for buying IBM. The biggest value proposition of IBM was not

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financial. It was all personal and if you were the key decision maker at NASA or in a big government organization, you would make that decision to buy IBM mainly because it was the best way to protect your own job.

- Roger Dooley: Right. And it makes a huge amount of sense, something I hear all the time at conferences is well, all this psychology and neuromarketing stuff is great but I'm in B2B so we don't really get into that. And of course, that's not true. The motivations may vary but certainly job preservation is right up there, perhaps possibility for promotion, scoring some kind of success, and all these factors that a buyer would never articulate. He's not going to say I want to buy your product so that I don't get fired or so that I get a promotion. But how your messaging conveys what the outcome of using the product can be could affect those things. And of course, IBM was in a great position then because they were the standard choice and even if they screwed up which they occasionally did, nobody got fired because hey, we went with IBM. If you went with somebody else and they screwed up, hey, you're the guy that didn't buy IBM. And so, it was totally logical.
- Patrick Renvois: Yeah, I spent most of my life competing with IBM. I was with a computer company called Silicon Graphics for many, many years. You're absolutely, right. At the end of the day, the personal value for all the people, all the decision influencers, it drivers their decision much more strongly sometimes than just the financial value of the solution. So things that you started to mention like being the hero in your company, being promoted, getting your bonus at the end of the year, spending more time with your children. All this personal value is very often

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underexpressed by people who are selling in the complex world.

But again, because of this primal brain ... In fact, in our model we have a very simple description of how you can maximize the value presented to the client. So down the road, as you mentioned, it's not only value for B2B but it's also extremely valuable for B2C people to understand these processes. Over 50% of our customers come from B2C.

Roger Dooley: We were talking about IBM and one thing that IBM was known for in its day was a dress code where all their salespeople were pretty much clones from a dress standpoint. Is it still important to dress in some way when you're in a sales room?

Patrick Renvois: Yes. Remember, again, that those people from IBM, the reason that they were dressing with white shirt, white tie, and dark blue suit is because their own customers, the directors of NASA or Boeing or big government and the Army and et cetera, they were dressed formal. The way we explain this is in the world of reptiles, it's good if your customers look like reptiles, that you look like a reptile. Or if your customer is a sheep, you want to sound, look, and smell like a sheep. If your customer is a wolf, you want to sound, look, and feel like a wolf.

So that similarity is very important because again, it goes back to the time where we were still very primitive individuals but we still were making commerce transaction. And if I make a commerce transaction with somebody that looks, feel, and sounds similar to me, there are less chances that I will get killed. In other words, think about it, the commerce transaction started as a way

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of exchanging goods between people from the same tribe. So the more I look like your tribal people, the more chances I have to survive. Now doing cross tribal commerce transaction was the best way to get killed.

- Roger Dooley: That's a good message, I think, and it really brings a few things into play. You've got maybe a little bit of Cialdini's liking effect by showing that you're similar to your customer. You have things in common. And maybe even a little bit of mirroring which is another sales technique of mirroring gestures and so on. Probably the combination makes the customer feel more comfortable with you and relate better. Just one last question, Patrick. You know it's been about 16 years since your first book came out. Some things haven't changed, I guess, but have there been any significant changes or surprises along the way that not only sparked you to write the book but you had to say wow, we didn't see that coming when we wrote the first book.
- Patrick Renvois: Well, there are a few things but first of all, I think the main thing is that we've gotten a little smarter in those last 16 years so I think we can now help our customers. We can help other people understand faster what took us years and years to assimilate. So that's important because being knowledgeable is one thing but being able to communicate in your knowledge quickly and effectively is even more valuable. So that's, I think, is going to be the main difference between the two books now.

Another big aspect of it is when neuromarketing first started, us and many other people thought it would be ... it would revolutionize the world and et cetera. And the pace of change, the pace at which neuromarketing has brought this benefit to the market has not been what we

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were expecting at the beginning. And I think in the book, we give a couple of explanations of why we believe it's been much slower than expected but although it's been slower, what we can tell you is that all the research that we see, whenever we work with people on this, the results are ... It's very effective. In other words, by realizing that people are acting from their primal brain, it explains a lot about human behavior.

- Roger Dooley: Let me remind our listeners that we're speaking with Patrick Renvoise, co-founder of SalesBrain and co-author of the new book, The Persuasion Code: How Neuromarketing Can Help You Persuade Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime. Patrick, how can people find you and your ideas online?
- Patrick Renvois: They can find the link probably on our website. The book is also on Amazon so if you just google Persuasion Code, you will find ways to buy the book if you're interested. If you go on salesbrain.com, you will get more information about what we do.
- Roger Dooley: Great. Well, we will link to all those places and any other resources we talked about on the show on the show notes page at rogerdooly.com/podcast. And if you missed it, check out our first episode featuring Patrick's co-author, Christophe Morin. Patrick, thanks for being on the show and good luck with the book.

Patrick Renvois: Thank you, Roger.

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 <u>http://www.RogerDooley.com</u>.