

Keller Center Research Report

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Speaking or Writing? The Impact of Expression Modalities

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Speaking or Writing? The Impact of Expression Modalities

Jonah Berger, PhD, Matthew D. Rocklage, PhD, and Grant Packard, PhD

Communicating thoughts, opinions, ideas, and beliefs frequently occurs throughout conversations every day. People talk about restaurants they love, shows they hate, and products they cannot live without. Word of mouth has become a pivotal factor in what shapes one's thoughts and actions. A rave review from a good friend about a new phone may easily persuade the hearer to buy that phone. Similarly, by recounting an awful experience with a restaurant, a customer could persuade those in that individual's circle to abstain from eating there in the future. Americans alone have over 2.4 billion brand-related conversations per day, making word-of-mouth communication an essential part of consumer behavior.



This study indicates that the mode which consumers use to share their thoughts and opinions—whether speaking or writing—shapes the degree of emotion they express and its probable influence on the audience. Written communication does not have the same effect as spoken communication, partly because there are no nonverbal cues to gauge the importance of what is being communicated. Additionally, written communication offers readers more time to deliberate on what they write, which, in turn, reduces emotionality. Speaking, on the other hand, reduces interpretation time, and individuals can get caught up in the “heat of the moment” and say things they might not actually mean. This can be both positive and negative for businesses. In situations where customers are raving about the product or service, the company would rather they “shout it from the rooftops,” whereas in situations where a customer has a negative experience, business would rather have them write a review. Word-of-mouth communication plays a significant role in everyday society, but the mode in which thoughts, feelings, and opinions are communicated can be even more impactful.

Word-of-Mouth Modalities

Both written and oral reviews of products and services can be influential. For example, a real estate agent referral may be the reason an applicant lands a dream job or persuades a prospect to list a property. While the importance of word-of-mouth communication is undisputed, there is less research on how impactful the actual *mode* of communication.

We break down the mode of communication into two categories: speaking and writing. Speaking allows the audience or recipient to fully grasp the emotions behind what is being said. It allows the audience to see expression on the speaker's face and body language and to hear the tone and pitch of voice. Due to the lack of nonverbal cues, it is more difficult to express emotion in written communication. Both forms of communication can express emotions, but different levels of emotion convey those feelings across audiences for the two different modes.

Emotional Expression [Writing vs. Speaking]

Emotions play a crucial role in expressing attitudes and opinions. The mode in which we communicate can mitigate the impact of emotional content. When speaking, people can easily express their emotions through tone, pitch, body language, and other nonverbal cues. Speaking makes it easier to tell when someone is overjoyed about a recent experience with a customer service representative or often when someone is frustrated because a company is not working with them to fix a problem. Words do not even need to be spoken for there to be clear communication between two people. On the other hand, words carry most of the weight when communicating through writing. The lack of nonverbal cues in written communication limits the different ways to express emotion. This includes using different words that are equally positive (or negative) but less emotionally-laden language. For example, instead of using "excellent" in a written review of a movie, when speaking, one might use "amazing" to further increase their expression of emotions. Both words are equally positive, but "amazing" carries more emotional power than "excellent." Written communication further dilutes emotions because of the deliberation entailed when a person expresses opinions in writing.

Using Deliberation to Increase/Decrease Emotionality

Deliberation is a key driver of writing that expresses less emotion. Writing is more premeditated than speaking, which means there is more time for an individual to think about what they are going to write before they actually write it. Unless an individual is preparing to give a speech, there is little deliberation during conversation. Sending a text or an email allows both the sender and the recipient to deliberate on what to say. We find that the more time an individual deliberates on a topic, such as writing a review for an agent or firm, the less the emotional impact as perceived by the recipient of the communication.

Even though written communication may lead to decreased emotionality due to the presence of deliberation, there are situations where individuals can use this to their advantage. Writing can decrease the severity of something in negative reviews. In situations where the goal is to decrease or minimize emotionality, it would be positive to write down what is going to be said consider it carefully before saying it. For example, if an agent needs to deliver bad news, he/she would benefit from writing it down and deliberating on the best way to break the news.

Additionally, the specific channel (phone vs. computer) in which written communication occurs will impact emotionality. Writing on a smartphone (rather than a desktop computer) tends to lead to more emotional language because the small keyboard forces communicators to use succinct messaging. For example, sending an emotional email via smartphone may lead to more “heat of the moment” actions, which, in turn, may lead to less-professional communication; however, when expressing strong emotion, it will have greater impact coming from a phone rather than computer.

Real Estate Implications

Knowing how the mode in which opinions are expressed will impact your reputation can help you plan for the future. In situations where the goal is to increase emotional expression, speaking may be better. For example, a real estate agent who recently sold a house wants to capitalize on the ecstatic homebuyer’s emotions. A solution may be to ask the client to leave a video review online or capture video to use in advertisements. This will allow prospective clients to experience both the verbal and nonverbal cues of the satisfied client.

On the other hand, in situations where the goal is to decrease emotional expression, writing may be more beneficial. For instance, when an agent needs to deliver the bad news to clients that they didn’t get the house for which they had submitted an offer, writing down thoughts in advance before communicating the information is key. The deliberation prior to delivering the news can help the agent take his or her emotions out of the situation, as well as help the agent prepare for client reactions.

Lastly, in conversations where shifting modalities is not an option, taking a few moments to deliberate before speaking will have similar effects of decreasing emotionality. Word-of-mouth communication is important, but knowing *how* and *when* to use different forms of communication can become an integral factor in agent success.

Recommended Reading

Berger, Jonah, Matthew Rocklage, and Grant Packard (2022), “Expression Modalities: How Speaking Versus Writing Shapes Word of Mouth,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 49(3), 389-408.

About the Authors

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Dr. Jonah Berger (PhD – Stanford University) is an internationally bestselling author of multiple books including [*Contagious: Why Things Catch On*](#), [*Invisible Influence*](#), and [*The Catalyst: How to Change Anyone’s Mind*](#). He has published dozens of articles in top academic journals, teaches Wharton’s highest rated online course, and popular accounts of his work often appear in places

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Dr. Matthew Rocklage (PhD – Ohio State University) created the Lexical Suite, a computational tool that captures attitudes via natural text, to measure and better understand attitude emotionality and confidence using real-world big data. He is the winner of the Attitudes and Social Influence Early Career Award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology. His research has been funded by the National Science Foundations and published in top academic outlets such as the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, *Nature Human Behavior*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Psychological Science*.

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Grant Packard's (PhD – University of Michigan) research explores self-concepts, motivation, language, perception, and interpersonal influence in interactions among consumers and with firm agents. His research has been published in top-tier journals and presented at leading conferences. Before entering academia, Grant was a marketing executive for Chapters/Indigo and Excite Canada and worked with advertising agencies DMB&B New York and BBDO Toronto.

Boost Your Social Media: Organic Facebook Posts

Yash Chawla, PhD and Prof. Grzegorz Chodak



Social media is the fastest-growing advertising media class in the world. Forecasters predicted that the level of social media users would reach 3.09 billion in 2021, but one year ahead of predictions, in 2020, social media users far surpassed expectations, reaching a total of 4.2 billion. In October 2022, this number reached a staggering 4.72 billion, accounting for almost 60%

of the world population. With the recent increase in social media usage, social media marketing has also increased exponentially. Firms have learned that this is an important venue in which to market to their audience, but they also need help with how to most effectively use this relatively new tool. Many firms have social media pages but need to create engagement with their posts. Firms and social media managers often turn to paid promotions to grapple with this issue, but there may be a better answer. In our study, we analyze the most effective way to post on Facebook in order to drive organic (non-paid) traffic and engagement for your social media account.

About our Study

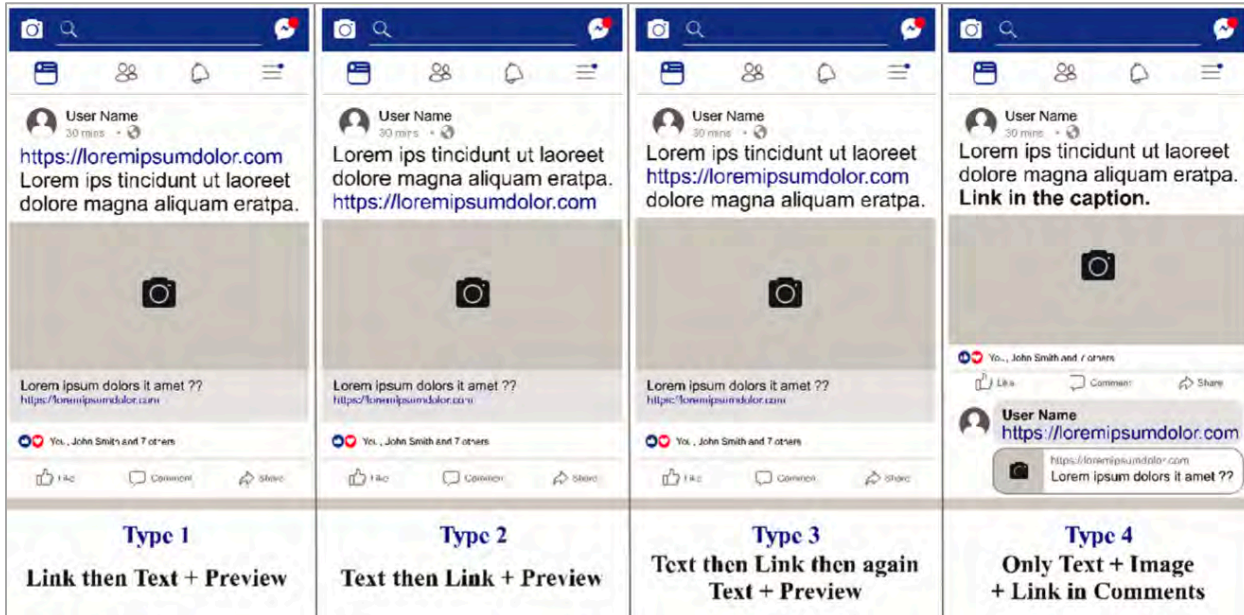
Customer surveys account for a major part of social media marketing studies, and there needs to be more real-world empirical data that could provide holistic insights to the researchers, as well as practitioners. Our study, though, consists of an actual experiment on a real Facebook account using a controlled experimental design. We focused on “organic promotions,” which refers to the unpaid dissemination of marketing content via a Facebook business page. In this study, we have two specific questions we aimed to answer. First, what is the optimal time to post, and what gap in time between posts is most effective when promoting a product organically? Second, how are engagement and effectiveness of a post affected by the visual location of the web link in the post?

For our experiment, we partnered with a Polish e-commerce store that sells items such as books, games, and films. The Facebook page had 5,032 followers when we began the experiment. With the help of the e-commerce store owner, 24 books were chosen, and for each book, we used four different types of posts (see also Figure 1.):

- Type 1: Weblink, then text, and then preview image
- Type 2: Text, then weblink, and then preview image

- Type 3: Text, then weblink, more text, and then preview image
- Type 4: Text, preview image, and then weblink in the comments

Figure 1.¹



Over four days, 96 posts were created and posted, with one hour between posts. Each post was then allowed ten days to accumulate engagement. After ten days, the number of reactions and clicks were observed.

Our Findings

Throughout our experiment, 101 units of product were sold, and the business gained 13 new followers. The campaign reached over 17,500 Facebook users and accounted for 664 reactions and 258 link clicks. Throughout the experiment, we found that post Type 4 (text and preview image, with the link in the comments) was the most effective. Type 4 accounted for approximately 45% of the reach, 48% of the reactions, and 62% of the link clicks. Through our research, it was clear that a post with a link in the comment section of the post was the most effective and reached more users. It also indicates that the Facebook algorithm is less friendly to posts with links in the caption. Our perspective on it, in hindsight, is that this is a strategy that is adopted to lure businesses for more paid promotions.

The time of the posting was also influential in the reach and engagement of a post. It is difficult to say that posting at one specific time is better than another. Through our study, we noticed the significance of the timing of the post; however, we emphasize that each business and industry is different, and firms must evaluate their own target audiences to learn what time of day is most effective in reaching followers.

Managerial Implications

Social media is an incredible tool that can be leveraged to grow business, particularly for those that have a business-to-customer (B2C) model. As marketing managers or specialists, you constantly look for ways to increase your reach to new customers and drive traffic to your website. Through our study, we recommend that when posting on your Facebook business page, instead of placing the web link in the caption, place it in the comments. Add an image or a video with a caption in the main posts. It will lead to more clicks and more visitors on your webpage.

Another key takeaway from our study is that firms must understand when their specific audience is most engaged. We recommend running an experiment on your own social media channels to better understand ideal times to increase engagement. With a better understanding of your target audience, you can cater your posts to your audience's schedule to increase effectiveness of your marketing communications.

Recommended Reading

Chawla, Yash and Grzegorz Chodak (2021), "Social Media Marketing for Businesses: Organic Promotions of Web-Links on Facebook," *Journal of Business Research*, 135, 49-65.

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1. Chawla, Yash and Grzegorz Chodak (2021), "Social Media Marketing for Businesses: Organic Promotions of Web-Links on Facebook," *Journal of Business Research*, 135, 49-65.

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The Effects of Gratitude vs. Indebtedness

Stephanie M. Mangus, PhD, Dora E. Bock, PhD, Eli Jones, PhD, and Judith Anne Garretson Folse, PhD

Nearly all business exchanges and relationships are built around reciprocity, the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit, which carves the way for people to experience feelings of gratitude and indebtedness. The two emotional states are similar because they both arise from reciprocity, but they lead to different outcomes in relationship quality, relationship satisfaction, and word-of-mouth communication. Learning how both emotional states arise and learning how to utilize them effectively when dealing with both buyers and sellers can help create more positive and profitable outcomes for an agent and the agent's firm. This study specifically focuses on how the salesperson's feelings of gratitude and indebtedness impact seller-buyer relationship quality, relationship satisfaction, and customer word of mouth.



Gratitude and Indebtedness

In a buyer-seller relationship, feelings of gratitude and indebtedness sprout from reciprocity. Gratitude is a positive feeling that arises after one receives a benefit. It's an important factor in developing positive relationships, and there are two theories that explain why. The first is *find-remind-bind*, which occurs when people feel gratitude. In this instance, individuals are reminded where the feeling arose, who initiated the feeling, and the individual sense of gratitude that binds one to the person from whom it came. This further strengthens the relationship between the "giver" and the "receiver." The second is *moral affect theory*, which states that gratitude is a moral affect similar to empathy, guilt, shame, etc. Because of this, gratitude can also be seen as a moral reinforcer, so when one party receives a benefit, the party feels energized and motivated to act in kind ways towards others. Gratitude has been shown to increase commitment and the bond between two parties, increase word-of-mouth communication, and improve relationship quality.

While gratitude is a positive emotion generated after receiving a benefit, indebtedness is a negative feeling in which an individual feels uncomfortable and desires to repay the person from whom the benefit was received. This emotional state arises from the reciprocity norm, which implies that individuals should help and not harm those who have helped them. With feelings of indebtedness, individuals may go out of their way to try to repay others and have thoughts of "I have to" rather than "I want to." Another way individuals may rationalize feelings of indebtedness is by restructuring the thoughts that initially caused these feelings. For example,

when one receives a benefit and feels indebted, that person may rationalize and assume the other party had ulterior, selfish motives. Both of these tactics are common ways that people use to rid themselves of feelings of indebtedness.

Similarity and Economic Value

Similarity between both parties and economic value are both precursors to feelings of gratitude and indebtedness. Similarity is the degree to which two parties match in terms of personalities, values, traits, and more. Certain characteristics, such as values, thoughts, and opinions have a greater influence than observable, physical characteristics. When two parties are extremely similar, or if they have numerous commonalities, research shows that gratitude is more heavily influenced rather than indebtedness. A salesperson in the real estate industry can utilize this knowledge to improve relationships with clients. Feelings of gratitude improve the bond between two parties; the more similarities between two parties, the more feelings of gratitude are increased when one party receives a benefit. Salespeople should identify similarities with clients to improve relationships and encourage positive feelings of gratitude toward clients.

Economic value is one of the primary drivers in business. Economic value does not only refer to financial benefits, it also includes knowledge gain and the overall ratio of quality received to costs incurred. Real estate agents must function to gain economic value for themselves and their firm; but our research shows that economic value increases both gratitude and indebtedness. Therefore, agents should not focus solely on economic value when aiming to improve perceptions of relationship quality.

Relationship Quality and Word of Mouth

From the sales agent's perspective, gratitude—not indebtedness—strengthens and increases relationship quality and, therefore, positive word of mouth from buyers. Word-of-mouth communication is one of the most cost-effective forms of marketing; however, it is extremely difficult to receive this positive marketing if one has poor relationships with customers. Using knowledge of and paying attention to these emotional states can help salespeople to strengthen and improve buyer-seller relationships. Relationship quality is the overall strength of the relationship between two parties, and it can be a driver of various financial outcomes such as increased sales, premium pricing, and more. Gratitude increases the quality of relationships by strengthening the bond between two parties, which is consistent with both the moral affect theory and the find-remind-bind theory.

Unlike gratitude, salespeople's feelings of indebtedness do not improve relationship quality. In fact, indebtedness can lead to deterioration of relationships, as individuals receiving the benefits typically wish to rid themselves of feelings of indebtedness. Indebtedness can cause individuals to distance themselves, and sometimes even cut themselves off, from the relationship altogether. Furthermore, a damaged relationship due to a salesperson's feelings of indebtedness will hinder

the likelihood of positive word-of-mouth endorsement from the salesperson's customers. As a real estate sales agent, one of the best compliments is for a client or customer to refer you to one of their friends or acquaintances. Positive word-of-mouth marketing can foster more clients, increase the number of properties sold, and boost profitability. Gratitude can strengthen relationship quality, increase word of mouth, and increase overall success with clients.

Real Estate Implications

Emotions matter. Emotions drive numerous outcomes in every buyer-seller relationship, such as relationship quality, word-of-mouth outreach, and even profitability. By understanding the effects on sales agents of gratitude and indebtedness, agents can emphasize steps to strengthen relationships with lenders, clients, and other important players in the real estate transaction. Our research shows that managing sales agents' perceptions of reciprocity may be key to improving client relationships.

Recommended Reading

Mangus, Stephanie M., Dora E. Bock, Eli Jones, Anne Garretson Folse (2022), "The Comparative Effects of Gratitude and Indebtedness in B2B Relationships," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 103(2022), 73-82.

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Stephanie M. Mangus, PhD

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Dr. Stephanie Mangus' (PhD – Louisiana State University) research focuses on buyer-seller dyads in sales and the sales and service interface, including service recovery and the emotions driving salesperson and customer behaviors. Her research has been published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, and *Psychology & Marketing*. She serves as the abstract editor and Editorial Review Board member for the *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*. Her work has been presented at conferences by the American Marketing Association, the Academy of Marketing Science, the Association for Consumer Research, the National Conference for Sales Management, and the Thought Leadership in the Sales Profession Conference. Dr. Mangus' research and expertise have received international media coverage, including outlets such as *The Huffington Post*, *CJAD Radio*, *WLNS-TV*, *The Art Newspaper*, *The Speaker*, *KIJK Magazine*, among others.

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Dr. Dora E. Bock's (PhD – Louisiana State University) research focuses on customer relationships, gratitude, and decision-making. Dr. Bock's work has appeared in *the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Retailing, Journal of Service Research, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, Psychology & Marketing, and Industrial Marketing Management*, among other journals and national conference proceedings. Dr. Bock's research and expertise have received national media coverage, including outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal, NerdWallet, HR Magazine, and Retail Executive* and she has been the recipient of the Department of Marketing's Outstanding Research Award. Dr. Bock has also been recognized for her teaching and has received the prestigious Lowder Teaching Award, awarded by the Harbert College of Business at Auburn University, the Outstanding Teaching Award, awarded by the Department of Marketing at Auburn University, and the Excellence in Teaching Award, awarded by the E.J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University.

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Dr. Eli Jones (PhD – Texas A&M University) is a Professor of Marketing, Peggy Mays Eminent Scholar, and the former Dean of Mays Business School at his alma mater. He served as the Dean of three flagship business schools over 13 years – Mays Business School, the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas, and the E. J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University. Prior to becoming a dean, he was on the faculty at the University of Houston as an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor (with tenure), Full Professor, Associate Dean for Executive Education Programs, Director of the Program for Excellence in Selling, and the founding Executive Director of the Sales Excellence Institute. He has published sales and sales management research in top academic journals, and he is a co-author of two professional books, *Selling ASAP*, and *Strategic Sales Leadership: Breakthrough Thinking for Breakthrough Results*. His new book, *Run Toward Your Goliaths*, is about his and his wife's faith journey. He is the recipient of Excellence in Teaching awards on the university, national, and international levels having taught strategic selling, advanced professional selling, key accounts selling, sales leadership, and marketing strategy at the undergraduate, MBA levels, and in executive education programs globally.

Judith Anne Garretson Folse, PhD

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Dr. Judith Anne Garretson Folse's (PhD – University of Arkansas) research focuses on consumer-based strategy through explorations of source and message effects (persuasion),

consumption emotions (e.g., gratitude, pride, regret, empathy), brand authenticity, and firm/customer interactions with theoretically and managerially relevant implications for bilateral and unilateral communications, services, and relationship marketing decisions. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Journal of Advertising*, *Psychology & Marketing*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, and *Journal of Business Research*, among other journals and national conference proceedings.

Power Distance Belief: A Tool to Design Tailored Appeals to Persuade Your Audience

Lingjiang Lora Tu, PhD, JaeHwan Kwon, PhD, and Huachao Gao, PhD

The art of selling is no easy task to master. Imagine the possibilities that could emerge by adapting your message to your client's mindset. You would wonder less, sell more, and be able to tailor messages to specific consumers. In consumer-based businesses, understanding how to effectively design marketing messages is key. Studies on power distance belief bring salespeople one step closer to understanding what is going on in the minds of different consumers. This knowledge increases the power to persuade audiences through appeals tailored directly toward specific consumer mindsets.



What is Power Distance Belief?

Power distance belief, or PDB, is a term that describes how people perceive and accept hierarchy and inequality in social interactions.¹ PDB gives us a better understanding of people, and it can be used to appeal to individuals in a more personalized way. Understanding PDB is the first step in learning how to persuade your audience through tailored appeals.

Individuals with a high PDB accept inequality as a fact of life. High-PDB individuals honor hierarchy, and they support lifestyles that have clear boundaries and roles. For example, high PDB are more likely to consume luxury products that signal high status and respond to educational advertising appeals that promise higher status degrees and jobs. On the other hand, those with low PDB believe in equality for all members of a community. These individuals support lifestyles that are participative with power distributed equally. For example, educational appeals work best when they emphasize enjoyable learning and positive experiences.

Tailoring a message to someone with high PDB is done much differently than to someone with low PDB. Since power distance belief affects a wide range of consumer behaviors, it is important to understand how to best utilize it to maximize the impact of sales messages with each type of consumer.

Appealing to the High-PDB Consumer

High-PDB individuals believe in inequality, and they are attracted to structure. Messages aimed at high-PDB consumers will be better received when they target cognitive appeals. Cognitive appeals are rational claims. They are appeals with logical and clear reasons behind them. High-

PDB consumers find cognitive appeals more attractive because they focus on outcomes that are more rational and externally oriented, promising status, advantage, and superior results.

How individuals respond to the appeals presented to them depends on their learning mindset. High-PDB individuals have an activated outcome-learning mindset, which means consumers use reason to see messages presented to them as essential tools that will help lead to success. For high-PDB consumers, everything boils down to where they fall in the hierarchy. This is because high-PDB consumers care about the destination more than the journey. Structuring a sales message in a way that emphasizes success is an effective way to take advantage of the high-PDB consumer learning mindset.

Furthermore, when trying to reach high-PDB consumers, you should infuse your messages with rational appeals. Use outlines and structure. Emphasize the final reward, and don't be afraid to mention status. By understanding a high-PDB consumer mindset, you can create selling advantage.

Appealing to the Low-PDB Consumer

By contrast, low-PDB consumers respond to appeals and perceive outcomes differently than high-PDB consumers. While high-PDB consumers are attracted to cognitive appeals, low-PDB consumers respond to affective appeals, which appeal to emotion and experience. When using affective appeals, it is best to lead with emotion and mention feelings of satisfaction. Low-PDB consumers also find affective appeals more attractive because they align with a preference for equality and respect for individual preference.

Low-PDB individuals respond to appeals with a process-learning mindset. These consumers see messages as part of their journey and love being involved in the processes. They respond to appeals to discover more about themselves as they learn and grow. At the end of the day, low-PDB consumers are going to care more about how they were impacted by their interactions rather than the status they've achieved. Aiming marketing messages toward a consumer's journey or self-discovery will be best for activating a process-learning mindset.

When trying to effectively persuade low-PDB consumers, salespeople should build messages around the experiential benefits the product/service has to offer. Messages that engage strong emotions involve the consumer and engage low-PDB buyers in anticipating positive experiences.

Real Estate Application

Real estate is a consumer-based industry where success can hinge on the ability to understand and interact with consumers. When trying to lease or sell a property, it is essential to highlight what the asset has to offer compared with what your client is specifically looking for and the

approach most likely to engage them depending on which PDB orientation the client demonstrates.

With clients who lean towards high PDB, focus on the status of the desired neighborhood. Additionally, you might emphasize the luxury associated with the features of the home. A message focusing on how the consumption of the product could lead to economic gain would also be a productive way to win over the client. In contrast, low-PDB clients will respond better to a message focusing on the experiences that will occur within their homes. Rather than making the process structured, salespeople could paint verbal pictures of enjoying a new home in various situations. It would also be beneficial to pull in emotions and nostalgia that surround a new home purchase. No matter who you are dealing with in your transaction, taking the time to recognize customers' power distance belief can pay off.



Recommended Reading

Tu, Lingjiang Lora, JaeHwan Kwon, and Huachao Gao (2022), “Heart or Mind? The Impact of Power Distance Belief on the Persuasiveness of Cognitive Versus Affective Appeals in Education Marketing Messages” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 59(1), 173-190.

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1. Oyserman, Daphna (2006), “High Power, Low Power, and Equality: Culture Beyond Individualism and Collectivism,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 16(4), 352-56.

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Dr. Lingjiang Lora Tu's (PhD – University of Texas at San Antonio) research focuses on consumer psychological issues such as identity and thinking style and their marketing implications for cross-cultural differences. Her research received prestigious awards including the Sheth Dissertation Award by ACR and the Best Paper Award by American Marketing Association. Her research has been published in leading marketing journals including *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Marketing Letters* and *International Journal of Research in Marketing*.

Tu's research received worldwide media attention including NPR, KGO 810 Consumer Talk, Market Business News, Neuroscience News, many other internet and TV news outlets.

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Associate Professor of Marketing, Baylor University

Dr. JaeHwan Kwon (PhD – University of Iowa) has received a variety of awards, most recently the Young Researcher Award from the Hankamer School of Business. He has two years of strategic consulting experience with over seven such international firms as LG electronics, GM Korea, and SK Telecom. His research interests include human evaluative judgment and decision making, new-tech products, visual information processing, and consumer mindset. His research has been published in highly respected marketing and business journals such as the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *European Journal of Marketing*, and *Journal of Advertising*, among others.

Huachao Gao, PhD

Assistant Professor, University of Victoria (Canada)

Dr. Huachao Gao's (PhD – University of Texas San Antonio) research centers on exploring consumers' purchase decisions from a cross-cultural perspective. Specifically, he examines how individual consumers from different countries/regions or with different cultural backgrounds might be different in processing marketing information, evaluating marketing offerings, and making final purchase decisions. Dr. Gao's research interests focus on pricing, status consumption, loyalty program design, and consumer identity. His research has been published on top marketing journals such as *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, and *Journal of Marketing Research*.

INSIDER: Huddle: How Women Unlock their Collective Power

Isabella Ip, MBA Candidate

As a female in leadership, or even in the workplace, it is easy to feel isolated, out of place, and exhausted after consistently managing perceptions. In her new book, *Huddle*, Brooke Baldwin examines the powerful concept of a *huddle*, which empowers women to replace these negative feelings with feelings of being seen, of deserving the position they hold, and of being ready to take risks and challenge the norms in place.

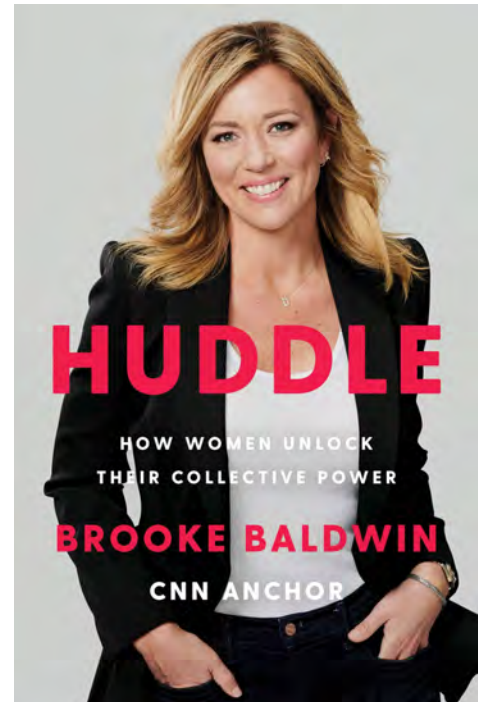
THINK POINT #1: Huddles are a Decision

Baldwin stresses that women are each other's most valuable asset via a collective group coming together to provide a safe and authentic space to support and embolden one another. During a time when women may sense they are fighting each other for a limited number of seats at the table, they should create their own table and welcome others to a seat at that table. While men can be included in huddles, Baldwin maintains that there is a confidence that can come from "boy-free zones." For some, single-sex environments can provide a safe space to stand out, embody independence, speak up, and take risks.

Applying the term "huddle" to the concept of women supporting, relying on, and empowering one another is not a new concept. Huddling was evident during the 1960's and 1970's through the League of Women Voters, who fought to demand legal equality. Baldwin also shares how African American huddles were created in our history through "generations of struggle, hardship, patience, and joy." Huddles have permeated government, sports, and popular culture, and they can also be applied to the current daily lives of everyday working women.

THINK POINT #2: Huddles Provide Support to Do Hard Things

Women must intentionally lean on one another for support during situations of injustice and loneliness. Huddles are a great tool to find support and, conversely, *give* support when fighting an uphill battle. The idea of a collective can also provide support for individuals to feel confident about their actions and taking a risk. Not only do huddles provide emotional support to face difficult and seemingly impossible situations, but the influence of huddles can also be enhanced through multiple minds (and experiences) working to produce a solution.



Baldwin tells the story of 19 African American females elected as judges in Harris County, Texas. These women fought fiercely “[to restore] compassion to the bench in a county where people of color and the poor were disproportionately penalized by the justice system,” for representation, and for the future generations of young Black women. These 19 women were overlooked by their party, regarded as a guaranteed loss, and called unqualified, even though many had ample experience practicing law. As a response, these women created a huddle and campaigned together, motivated one another, and cared for one another, even looking after one another’s children. Even after winning their positions, these women continued to use the huddle to support one another in uphill challenges, such as when outgoing judges refused to help transition their courts. Additionally, these women continue to benefit from their huddle by asking each other specific questions and depending on one another for advice. Not only does this prove the collective power and support of a huddle, but also shows the expanded wisdom that comes from 19 collective minds.

THINK POINT #3: Huddles Require an Abundance Mindset

Within the workplace and in life, women can feel motivated to compete with one another. Women often perceive a glass ceiling in the way of advancement and accomplishment, or that there are only a few favored positions at the top of the ladder. This scarcity mindset encourages competition—a competition where women believe they must hoard the resources they have and possibly even sabotage other women. The scarcity mindset is the opposite of that of a huddle, and the two cannot work in congruence.

An abundance mindset creates the idea that there are always resources to be shared and sufficient for additional individuals. Female leaders must intentionally provide access to other women when receiving access themselves to power or resources. *Huddle* creates the idea that power can be seen as a party, and keeping the power to yourself is like being at the party by yourself. An abundance mindset also means experiencing genuine happiness and excitement when others in our huddle succeed as we fight our own insecurity or envy. A huddle stresses benefitting others—rather than merely oneself.

THINK POINT #4: Huddles Provide Safe Spaces to be Authentic and Vulnerable

A huddle is stronger when it includes women who are personally and professionally connected, but this connection comes through vulnerability. Vulnerability allows women to focus on one another and work together to target challenges. In personal and professional spaces, women often worry too much about how they are perceived by men (and also other women). In these situations, a huddle provides space where energy does not need to be consumed by overthinking perceptions. Such an atmosphere allows room for women to be unapologetically authentic and understood.

Authenticity and vulnerability can be difficult. When women are bold enough to share their thoughts and pains out loud, they are opening a protected space for others to follow suit. Vulnerability is difficult and can take practice, but openness is a necessary to create connection and trust within a huddle. An action of vulnerability indicates an intentional choice to invest in the huddle.

Real Estate Implications

Huddles have proven successful in many different industries, and real estate is no different. Because 64% of real estate professionals are female, the situation is ripe for the creation of new huddles. Working women are constantly balancing different roles: mom, friend, daughter, wife, employee, boss, and more. As such, it may seem as though working women are too busy for huddles. Despite the balancing act, Brooke Baldwin stresses the importance of pushing against the demands of competition and perfection to find and maintain a huddle with those who will help widen your perspectives and experiences.

Recommended Reading

Baldwin, Brooke (2021), *Huddle*, Harper Business: New York, New York.

About the Author

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Isabella Ip is a graduate student from Coppell, Texas. She earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Business Fellows and Economics with a secondary major in Biology from Baylor University in May 2021. Isabella is currently pursuing an MBA at Baylor University with a concentration in Healthcare Administration with hopes to work as an administrator in a hospital after graduation.

INSIDER: The High 5 Habit: Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit

Tyler O'Mary, MBA

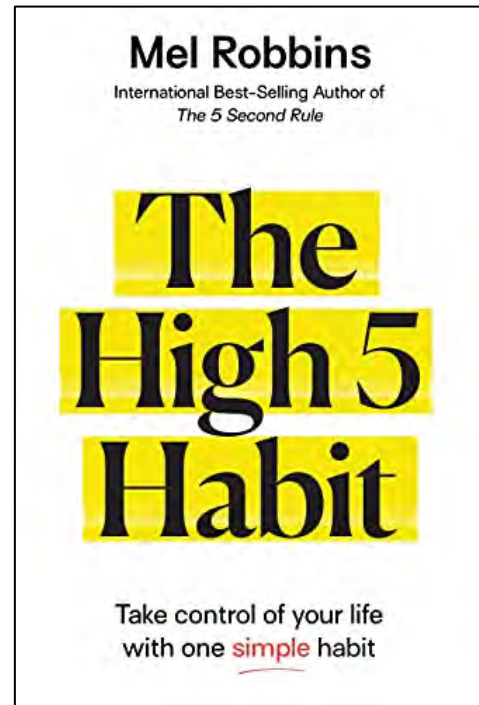
In today's world, people are always on the go, completing task after task in a never-ending cycle. There is a constant juggle of work, family, friends, a "to-do" list of chores, and even the occasional, unexpected twist that always seems to creep in with the most unfortunate timing. After a while, the constant hustle and bustle of daily life can overwhelm us to the point where we lose our drive, our love for our passions, and sight of who we are and what we want to be. We dread getting out of bed each morning and long for a break as we go through the same routine of checking box after box off our long chore list each day.

As we continue to dig deeper into this hole, we lose sight of the most important thing: ourselves. Most people live each day by putting others first—celebrating others' victories and consoling others when they're upset. In addition to putting ourselves last, we also tend to be extremely hard on ourselves. The culmination of all these things makes it extremely easy for our mental health to drain, putting us in dark spaces.

In *The High 5 Habit: Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit*, Mel Robbins explains that the simple act of high-fiving yourself in the mirror first thing in the morning can help you take charge of your life by restoring your confidence and positivity. *The High 5 Habit* helps us escape negative thoughts, push through anxiety, and turn dreams into reality.

THINK POINT #1: A High 5 Goes A Long Way

How we see ourselves is often how we see the world. More likely than not, we are our own worst critic, constantly criticizing what we say, do, and think. Continually bashing ourselves can make us see the world in a negative light. We go from optimism to pessimism, and it eventually drains every ounce of confidence from our bodies. To regain control of our lives and turn pessimism into optimism, a simple high-five goes a long way. So, first thing in the morning, give yourself a high-five. The high-five is usually seen as a celebration or a form of nonverbal encouragement of others. Whether it be with friends after your favorite team scores the game-winning touchdown or encouraging someone after they closed the deal, a high-five connects individuals on a positive level.



It may seem pointless at first, but over time, the validation, confidence, celebration, optimism, and action that the high-five symbolizes becomes part of who you are and can help you believe in yourself again. Even though it may seem silly, science says it works.

THINK POINT #2: The Proof is in the Pudding

Researchers agree that giving a high-five to someone is a shared connection where energy passes from one person to another. Researchers also found that repeating mantras is beneficial if you actually believe what you are saying. For example, if you repeatedly tell yourself that you can do a certain task, that belief can actually come to fruition; however, a self-mantra doesn't work if you don't truly believe it, as your mind will find reasons to reject it. You can tell yourself that you're the best salesperson in the world, but if you don't believe every ounce of that thought, then you won't live up to this expectation. This is one of the reasons why high-fives are so powerful. Our minds don't reject high-fives because we associate them with believing in the person.

Researchers conducted a study of NBA teams where they tracked the number of high-fives each team gave throughout the pre-season and beginning of the season. They found that the teams who high-fived each other more were actually more successful and advanced further in the playoffs more often. This study, among other similar studies in other industries like sales, further proves that high-fives are directly correlated with success.

THINK POINT #3: Flushing Out the Negative

Giving yourself a high-five is only half of the battle—you must still reject negative thoughts that creep into your mind. Studies show that constantly criticizing yourself leads to lower motivation. Once you dig yourself into a hole, it can be extremely challenging to pull yourself out. The more you repeat negative thoughts, the more you're going to believe them, and the more you're going to find evidence for them; however, if you deliberately change your thoughts, you can rewire your default way of thinking. By deliberately and repeatedly thinking positive thoughts, you can essentially delete the negative thoughts holding you back from achieving your dreams.

Try to transform negative thoughts and emotions into positive ones. For example, rather than expressing jealousy of a colleague or competitor, reframe those thoughts into a positive or motivating thoughts, such as, "If she can be successful, then I can, too!" Humans are all vulnerable to negative emotions like jealousy, guilt, inadequacy, and fear, but reframing them to a more positive light will help create a new way of thinking.

Real Estate Implications

Real estate is a challenging industry in which to work, particularly when working as a commission-based agent. When in an economic or real estate downturn, it can be easy for agents

to allow negative thoughts to creep into their psyche. Over time, negative thoughts can take hold, and the proverbial hole is so deep that it becomes seemingly impossible to climb back to the top. The simple act of high-fiving yourself first thing every single morning will allow you to take control of your life, think positively, and have more confidence. This confidence can help you land more clients, close more deals, and lead others on your team more effectively. When things aren't going your way, rely on the notion that your hard work is leading you somewhere. The combination of a high-five and deliberately changing your thoughts will allow you to turn your dreams into a reality.

Recommended Reading

Robbins, Mel (2021), *The High 5 Habit: Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit*, Hay House, Inc.: Carlsbad, California.

About the Author

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Tyler O'Mary earned his Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Business Administration with a double major in Finance and Entrepreneurship and Corporate Innovation from Baylor University.



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