



WHY PEOPLE **BUY**:

# UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF THE **CUSTOMER**

**eBook**

# WHY?

From the time we are old enough to speak, we begin asking the question “why?” and for those who are life long learners, we never stop asking. As annoying as it likely was for our parents and even to those of us who are parents today, it’s that very question that gives us the reason to do something different. To change. After all, what are we asking our customers and prospects to do? Change.

**Why do our customers buy from us?** How does that process take place inside of their brain? Why are some salespeople more influential than others? Why do customers sometimes resist our message?

**Why is it important to even ask these questions?** Like everything in life, understanding “why” usually begins with Understanding “how” something works. Once we learn “how”, the why tends to make much more sense.

This eBook is designed with that in mind. I will help guide you through the “deconstruction” of the human brain, particularly the areas related to trust and the buying process. Once you understand how those “parts” work, you can begin to better craft your messaging to make your conversation “engine” more effective. **Then you’ll truly understand “why” your customer says YES!**



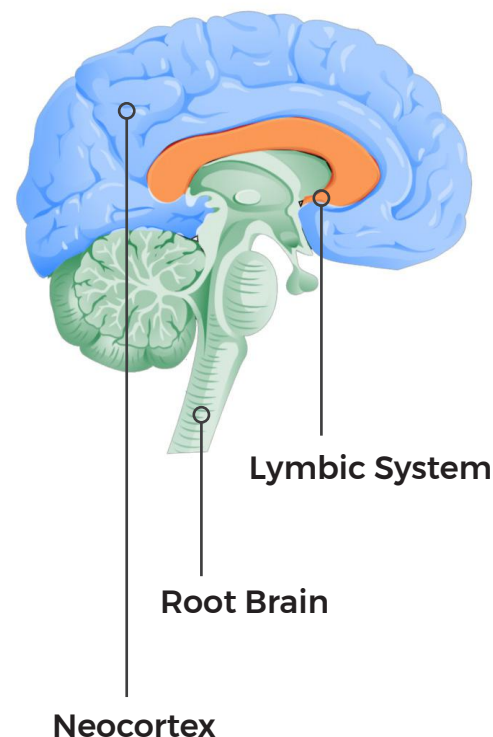
# THE THREE LAYERED BRAIN

Dr. Paul MacLean, senior research scientist at the National Institutes of Mental Health, found that the human brain consists of three distinct parts which have specific but interrelated functions. Like any cross-functional team or committee, the neocortex, limbic system and root brain work together, sometimes with a degree of conflict, to make and justify its decisions.

Your brain makes thousands of decisions every day. Conventional wisdom suggested that the rational, thinking part of the brain that makes us distinctly human (the neocortex) is running the show.

Through Dr. MacLean's and other scientists' work, we now believe the limbic system and the root brain are the primary decision makers. After a decision has been made, often in a split second, the neocortex steps in to justify and rationalize. Although possible, the thinking brain rarely overrides the decision. It will actually work hard looking for ways to reinforce it.

When it comes to making a buying decision, it's of critical importance to understand these three functions within our customer's brains. We all process information in a similar order (inside out, not outside in) so by understanding these biological principles, you can begin to communicate with your customers in a way that builds trust and drives urgency to change vs. unintentionally creating skepticism, judgment and doubt in the mind of your buyer.



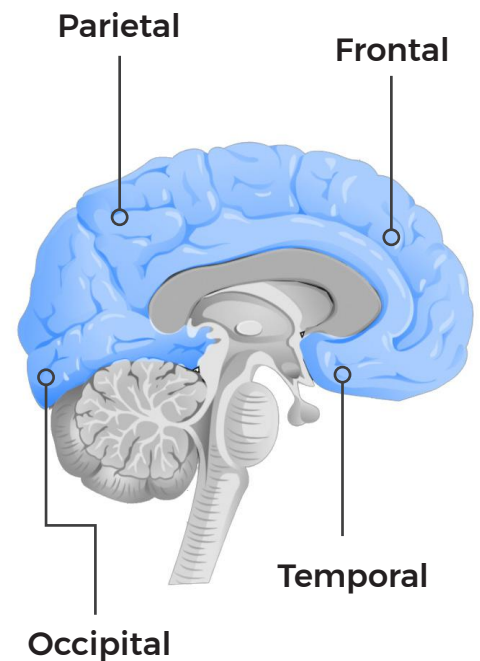
# THE THREE LAYERED BRAIN

## THE NEOCORTEX

The neocortex is known as our “thinking brain”. It’s the large, outer layer of the brain that is responsible for all the conscious processes including analyzing facts, processing information logically, interpreting sensory perception, drawing conclusions of judgment etc..

- ✓ Logic and analysis
- ✓ Rational thought
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Skepticism/Judgment
- ✓ Control of emotions

When you communicate with facts, data, features & opinions, you are communicating directly with the neocortex. It’s a powerful processor of information and helps us make logical sense of the world around us.



# THE THREE LAYERED BRAIN

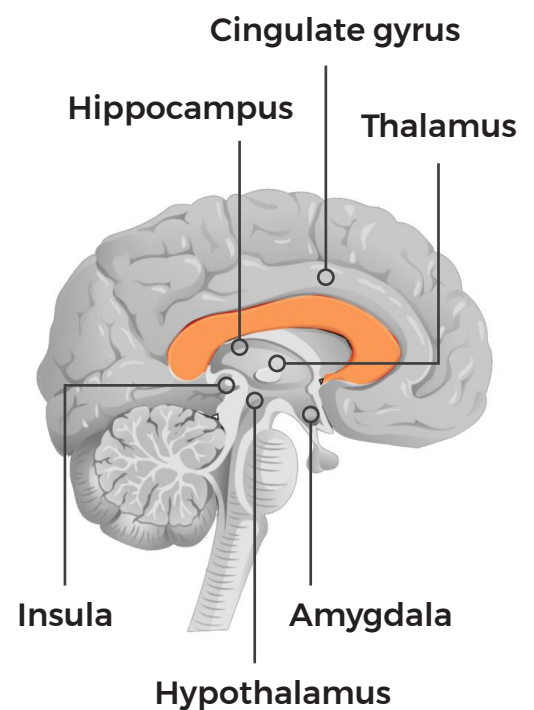
## THE LIMBIC SYSTEM

The Limbic System is the "feeling brain." This is the area of the brain that regulates emotion and memory. It directly connects the lower and higher brain functions. It influences emotions, the visceral responses to those emotions, motivation, mood, and sensations of pain and pleasure. The Limbic System, combines with the Root Brain to strongly impact the self preservation mechanism.

General responsibilities include:

- ✓ Memory
- ✓ Sociability
- ✓ Feelings/emotions
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Visualization

When you communicate with visuals and emotion, that information is typically processed here in the limbic system. Our memories and emotions have a powerful impact on how we assign relative meaning to information we are receiving on a second by second basis.





# THE THREE LAYERED BRAIN

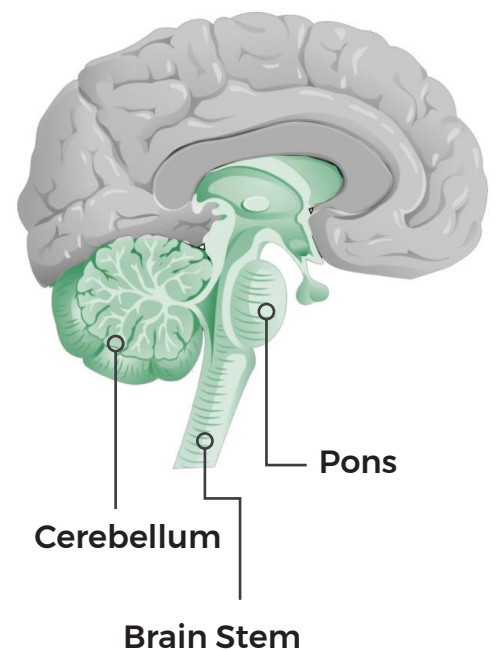
## THE ROOT BRAIN (R-COMPLEX)

The Root Brain is known as the “instinctive brain.” Functions are related to physical survival and autonomic functions associated with body maintenance such as digestion, reproduction, circulation, breathing, heartbeat, stress response, muscle control and balance. Instinctive behavior patterns of self-preservation, social dominance, aggression, tendency to follow precedent, compulsiveness, deception, prejudice and resistance to change.

General responsibilities include..

- ✓ Breathing
- ✓ Hunger/thirst
- ✓ Balance
- ✓ Avoidance/survival
- ✓ Safety

When you have that “gut” feeling about someone, you are processing that through the root brain and assigning emotion to that feeling in the limbic system. You can’t often articulate why you feel that way due to the fact that language is housed in the neocortex and the limbic system and root brain areas have no capacity for language.



# THE THREE LAYERED BRAIN

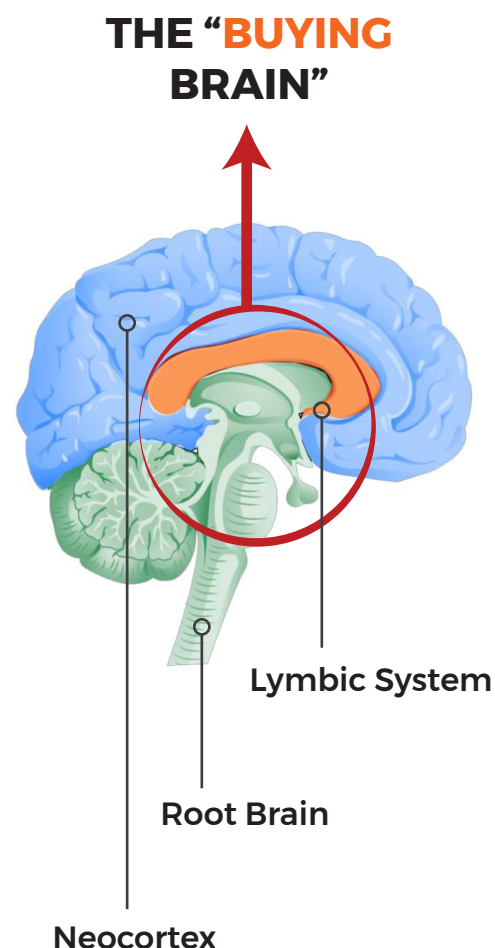
## THE “BUYING BRAIN”

Why is understanding this so important? Because “how” we communicate with our prospects and customers dictates “why” they respond the way they do. For instance, now that we know the primary decision making centers of the brain are instinctive and emotional (root brain and limbic system) we know our message must BEGIN there.

Unfortunately, most sales messaging is built around facts and figures, data and opinions. This type of message hits the outer portion of the brain (neocortex) and requires the listener to not only determine the necessary emotion associated with making the decision but sends them into “skeptical” mode as the neocortex is essentially trying to “protect” the listener by challenging everything with logic.

When you use a visual based, emotionally engaging message delivery, you’re speaking directly to the part of the listener’s brain that’s determining things like trustworthiness, likability, connection etc... It’s also the part of the brain that applies that emotion to increase motivation to change. In essence, the root brain and limbic system combines to be the “change” brain whereas the neocortex is the “status quo” brain. Do we need the facts and data? Of course. But we need them to validate the way we instinctively feel about doing something different.

As it pertains to the overall structure of the brain, it’s important to remember that our message must contain the right combination of ingredients to bypass the skeptical neocortex yet have enough credibility to back up our claims to satisfy this rational, logical “thinking brain”. As we dive deeper, we will uncover more about how our customers’ brains are responding to different types of messaging and what we can do to maximize our impact.



# THE SCIENCE OF TRUST

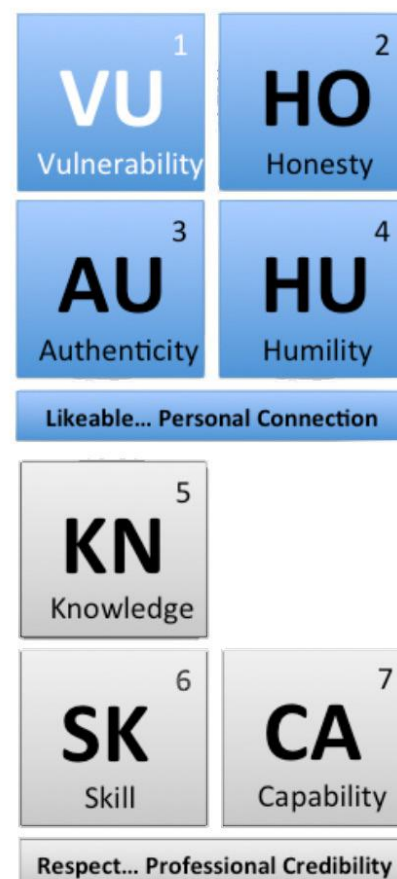
## PERSONAL TRUST (CONNECTION) AND PROFESSIONAL TRUST (CREDIBILITY)

Most people would agree that people buy from people they trust. Have you ever given much thought as to why you trust someone? On the personal side, we trust people we like and we like people we connect with.

However, personal trust alone won't get your prospect to "yes." You must also have professional trust or credibility. To put it another way, people buy from people they trust, they trust people they respect and they respect people they find credible. To be an influential sales person, you must be able to demonstrate both personal trust (connection) and professional trust (credibility).

As it pertains to the "buying brain", your customer's brain is processing trust based on everything from the communicator's body language to the information you are communicating and how you are communicating that information. Trust is ultimately a feeling so there is a continual back and forth happening in the mind of your customer between the instinct and emotion of the root brain and limbic system to the credibility/validation processing in the neocortex.

Eliciting trust from your customer is a blend between your natural connection ability but also your ability to solve their problem from a perception of credibility.



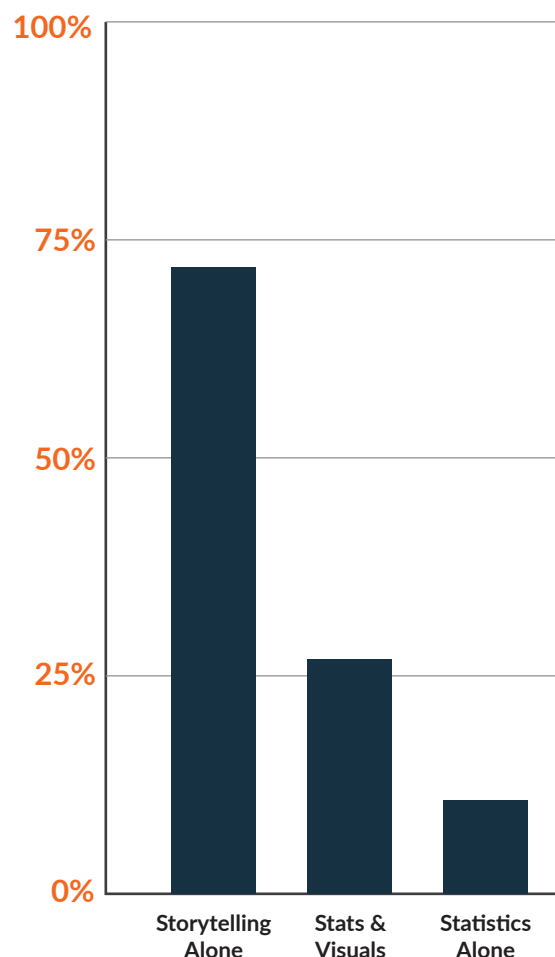


# RETAINED IN THE “MEM”BRAIN

## HOW MEMORY RETENTION AND VISUALIZATION IMPACT DECISIONS

Reflecting back on the section of the Limbic System, you may recall that memories and visualization occurs in this area of the brain. It makes sense, then, that the more we can “see” or visualize a message, the easier it will be to recall later. Memory recall generally comes attached to emotions, some of which we are immediately aware of while others may sneak up on us. When I reflect back on my memories of growing up on the farm with my Papaw, I can literally “see” those moments in the barn or on the tractor. Science has now proven that content is significantly more memorable and impactful when it is delivered in a visual way. In fact, take a look at this study from the London Business School.

They communicated the same content to three different groups, but in three very different ways and then measured the retention and impact. Not surprisingly, when they delivered it via facts (neocortex), the retention was less than 10% but the same information delivered through visual storytelling was retained at around 70%! Driving the message deep into the root brain and limbic system is a guaranteed way to bypass the skeptical neocortex. Visual storytelling techniques are the #1 driver to accomplishing this.



# RISK OF LOSS VS. GAIN

## WHAT MOTIVATES US TO CHANGE?

There are many schools of thought on how to best motivate prospects to change. With the backdrop of what we know about the brain design and how our instincts and emotion drives the change then the neocortex jumps in to validate/rationalize, the following process makes much more sense. Behavioral economists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky found that human beings are twice as motivated to avoid a loss as they are to pursuing a gain. For example, if I called you and told you I had a nice meal prepared, please come over and eat with me you may or may not come. However, if I called and told you that I had the last remaining food for 200 miles and you likely wouldn't be able to eat for a week, you would absolutely come.

“ ***Humans give 2X the decision making value in avoiding a loss vs. pursuing a gain*** ”

In the first example, no matter how many “features” I could describe i.e. steak with mushrooms, creamed spinach etc..., etc..., you would never attribute any more “value” to the option of coming over. Your fear of loss on the other hand, not only drives you to come over, but creates more urgency to do so. The very same effect happens in sales. The brain essentially stops giving you additional credit for all the great “features and benefits” of your products & services and loses motivation to take action.

The key to using the knowledge is to have trust built with the prospect first and then use relevant insight to get their attention. You cannot fear monger your customers or it will have the opposite effect. This process takes much work and a lot of practice but when you learn how to use it effectively, you can position the “risk of loss” provocatively and then follow up with how you are uniquely qualified to solve the problem (pursuit of gain).



# COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

## THE DISTANCE BETWEEN BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon which refers to the discomfort felt at a discrepancy between what you already know or believe, and new information or interpretation. It therefore occurs when there is a need to accommodate new ideas, and it may be necessary for it to develop so that we become "open" to them.

Psychologist Leon Festinger proposed a theory of cognitive dissonance centered on how people try to reach internal consistency. He suggested that people have an inner need to ensure that their beliefs and behaviors are consistent. Inconsistent or conflicting beliefs leads to disharmony, which people strive to avoid.

A common example of cognitive dissonance occurs in the purchasing decisions we make on a regular basis. Most people want to hold the belief that they make good choices. When a product or item we purchase turns out badly, it conflicts with our previously existing belief about our decision-making abilities.

Our customers have preconceived beliefs about us as salespeople, about the value of our products or services and about the need to make a change in general. In particular when faced with a price vs. value situation, the "dissonance" created between what they believe about the value of your product will result in their internal need to ask for a discount to bring their brain back into alignment with what they perceive it is worth. This is why it is so critical to be effective at differentiation. Without it, you are stuck in a repeated commoditized conversation.

After all, your customer already believes they are good at decision making. If they "over pay" for your solution, that will create significant dissonance in their brain therefore, they will do everything they can to ensure they remove that risk.

Great communicators remove that risk for them and allow their brain to remain in consonance, particularly when it comes time for final evaluation and decision.



# THE SIX LIMBIC LEVERS

## THE KEY TO BYPASSING THE NEOCORTEX

Now that we know where decisions are made in the Buying Brain, it should be obvious that we need to target those parts of the brain with our messaging and communication style.

When your sales and marketing teams collaborate to construct the messaging, there are six key “levers” that have been proven to make significant impact on the decision centers: Your message must elicit an emotional response, be visual, create contrast, be experiential, simple to understand and it must be egocentric, i.e. clearly show what’s in it for the listener. Accomplishing this can be challenging but will pay huge dividends and drive results.

**Let’s look at each one in more detail:**

## EMOTIONAL

People experience a wide range of emotions every day. Happiness, anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, excitement, and love to name just a few. When your brain stores your memories in the hippocampus, the emotions associated with those events are also tucked away for future use. When people communicate with each other, they constantly draw upon their past experiences and the emotions that go along with them. Sometimes we want to experience those feelings again. Sometimes the exact opposite is true and we will do just about anything to avoid feeling that way again. Either way, your subconscious is using your emotions tied to previous experiences to drive your decisions.



# THE SIX LIMBIC LEVERS

## VISUAL

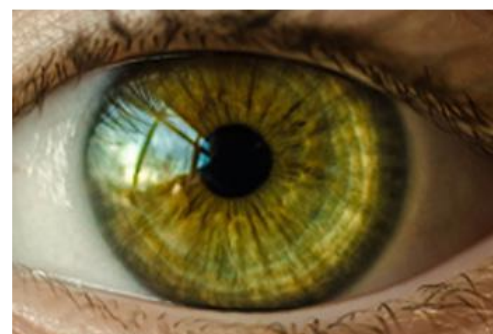
The optic nerve is physically connected to the Root Brain and reacts to visual stimuli in just a few milliseconds. After the stimuli is processed instinctively in the Root Brain and emotions are associated, the information ultimately reaches the visual cortex (in the neocortex), where your brain goes through the data validation process.

Have you ever been startled by something and then “just reacted without thinking about it” This happens every day on the highways of America. Your root brain is constantly on the lookout for things that can hurt you and then reacts before you can even think about it.

**There are several reasons why visual stimuli is so important:**

- ✓ It's the first sense that gets to the root brain
- ✓ Warns us of impending danger
- ✓ Triggers memories which surface emotions in the limbic system
- ✓ The brain is a cognitive miser and wants to conserve energy.
- ✓ Supports processing fluency, or the ability to of the brain to quickly interpret the information in front of it.

Your ability to effectively conjure up images in the minds of your customers through the use of the neuroselling techniques is very important in communicating with the buying brain. Visualization is also extremely important for your marketing partners. Effective sales collateral uses visual elements such as contrast, curves, symmetry among others to help you reach the buying brain. If your collateral are words on a page (and we've all seen those) then your marketers aren't helping you tap into your customers' brains.





# THE SIX LIMBIC LEVERS

## EXPERIENTIAL

Have you ever heard the saying, “Don’t just live life, experience it.” Our lives are made up of a series of experiences that shape each one of us. Getting our customers to feel like they are experiencing something with you and the emotions that go along with that will strongly influence the buying decision.

Take the example of the Porsche Boxster... Showing a picture is great, it’s a beautiful car and very few people would ever say otherwise. Now, actually get behind the wheel and take it out for a test drive.

Experience the sound as you rev the high-performance German engine and feel the exhilaration of the various power bands as you weave in and out of traffic at 100mph (don’t try this at home). Experiencing a Porsche is the only way to go!

It’s all about immersing your customer in the experience that you want them to be in. This type of message delivery involves more of the human senses and the more senses involved, the more emotionally connected we become.





# THE SIX LIMBIC LEVERS

## CONTRAST

Every minute of every day, people subconsciously compare and contrast, determine friend or foe, pain or gain, good or bad. When presented with a decision, people compare what's in front of them with what they know from past experiences. How they feel about those experiences plays a significant role in arriving at the decision. This all happens at the subconscious level first, in the root brain and the limbic system. Your rational thinking neocortex wants to validate and justify your instincts and feelings and will usually find a way to do just that.

The brain associates all value relative to contrast. The more contrast it perceives, the more value it will associate. Effective contrast isn't just about the obvious such as price etc..., it also involves the way we feel about the differences. The reason people will pay several hundred dollars more for an iPhone vs. an LG or Samsung is not because there is significant contrast from a functionality standpoint.

It's due to the emotional contrast the buyer has created based on how they feel about the iPhone. Contrast comes in many forms from the obvious, conscious things like features to the less obvious sub-conscious things like emotional attachment.



# THE SIX LIMBIC LEVERS

## SIMPLICITY

We live in an age where information is coming at us at a rate unparalleled with previous generations. The average person is exposed to around 3000-5000 advertising messages per day! Our brain is on information overload. Between television, radio and now, social media, we are bombarded with more and more information with which to make decisions. The problem is, more is not better to the Root Brain and Limbic System. The "Buying Brain" is all about simplicity. It needs to boil the information down into clear and concise imagery by which it can attach emotion and meaning.

When we are in a selling situation, it's imperative to remember that your customer's brain has been working on information overload prior to your arrival and will continue to do so after you leave. You must simplify your conversation into visual, emotional elements that are memorable and easy to understand.

**“ That’s been one of my mantras - focus and simplicity. Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it’s worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains.**

**-Steve Jobs**



# THE SIX LIMBIC LEVERS

## EGOCENTRIC

Our brains are constantly looking out for number 1! As much as we might not want to admit it, our subconscious minds are always asking the question, "What do I get out of this?" We have all seen somebody getting pulled over by the police for speeding and thought, "Thank goodness it's not me!" Even when people are generous, your brain thinks, "How am I benefiting from my generosity?"

When we are in a selling situation, it is critical to understand how your product or service will benefit your customer personally. We will talk more later about effective ways to uncover these personal benefits that will drive buying decisions. For now, suffice it to say that you must ensure that you communicate the personal benefit or "What's in it for me?" (WIIFM) for each stakeholder.

Don't misinterpret this. This is from the customers' perspective... It's not about your commission, although that is nice! That said, when you become an expert in neuroselling techniques and can use the Limbic levers to effectively communicate with your customer's buying brain, your commissions are part of your WIIFM.





# NEXT STEPS

We understand that every organization has many competing priorities. Ironically, every single priority is designed in some way to help grow the business yet very few actually speak to the fastest and most effective way to increase revenue...which is the right message, told the right way.

Understanding the “buying brain” may seem a bit complicated and next steps can seem unsure, but rest assured we’ve taken the science and boiled it down into simple, easy to understand and implement programs that allow your organization to institutionalize these techniques for maximum impact.

If you’d like to bring a new, science based approach to how you or your company builds and delivers more compelling narratives that drive change and moves your prospects off “status quo”, please visit our website. We offer plenty of resources for you to begin your journey.

**Learn more at [www.ReadySetGrow.io](http://www.ReadySetGrow.io)**

