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Guerrilla Sales & Marketing

## Marketing Goes 'Minority Report'

LORI TURNER

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*Editor's Note: This is the first in a two-part series.*



Lori Turner

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Neuromarketing is a relatively new field that studies how a consumer's brain reacts to marketing stimuli. A couple of years ago, a Web search on the topic would return a handful of results. Today, you'll get close to 300,000.

Neuromarketing researchers use technology, such as MRI scans, to measure brain activity when consumers are exposed to products, brands and advertising. It's a new, somewhat controversial tool for helping marketers fine-tune marketing campaigns, strengthen brands and design better products.

The ensuing ethics debate involves whether or not neuromarketing research could eventually uncover an "inner buy" switch, which, when flipped, would turn us into roboshoppers – a bit reminiscent of Minority Report.

So what exactly are these brain scans uncovering? First, it's important to understand three key brain regions.

The "old brain" houses your most basic survival impulses, such as "fight or flight." It resists change. Your "middle brain," the limbic system, connects emotionally with the world. While these two brains make up only 1/6 of your brain's total mass, they drive the majority of your decisions.

It's your "new brain" or the neocortex where you process information logically. Unfortunately, the old-brain, middle-brain tag-team is more powerful than the neocortex. So, typically we base buying decisions on survival or emotion. Then the new brain scrambles to logically justify these decisions.

As marketers and sales people, we must first connect with the customer's old and middle brains. There's no reason to discuss "new brain" facts and benefits until you've given consumers: (1) assurance your offer won't cause pain or stress, and (2) an emotional reason to do business with you.

A recent neuromarketing study determined that your old and middle brains make a purchasing decision a full seven seconds before you logically make that decision. Consequently, marketers could benefit greatly from knowing how your old and middle brains are likely to respond to ads.

Instead of asking focus group participants how they might respond to an ad (or how their new brain might logically process an ad), an MRI can reportedly tell us how their brain actually responds, including the old and middle brain's reaction.

Fast Company reported on big brands using neuromarketing research, including Microsoft, which wants to understand its customers' frustrations with its computers.

Frito-Lay is reportedly using this research tool to improve their appeal to women. Findings show that women's emotional brains respond better to

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MORTGAGES	142	142	2,557
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Weekly Edition



“healthy” campaigns than “guilt free” messaging.

So, as small-business owners and marketers that don’t have a budget for neuromarketing, what can we learn from the big brands that do? It’s all about engaging the old and middle brains.

Check out next week’s column for neuromarketing tips you can incorporate into your sales and marketing strategy.

*[Lori Turner](#) is managing partner of RedRover Sales & Marketing, [www.redrovercompany.com](http://www.redrovercompany.com). You can follow RedRover on Facebook and Twitter.*

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