

5 HUMAN BEHAVIOR HACKS THAT INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

By **Nancy Harhut**
Chief Creative Officer
HBT Marketing
nharhut@hbtmktg.com



Embed these **decision-making shortcuts** in your emails



#1 THE AUTHORITY PRINCIPLE

At a young age, we're taught to respect and respond to authorities. So by the time we're adults, it's ingrained in us.

Consequently, anyone or anything that represents an authority produces a hardwired response in us: We listen and follow.

More than that, we assume that they know. That they're the experts. And that they've done the legwork for us.

How can you use this?

- In your emails, include a quote from an expert who's recommended you.
- On your website, display badges or symbols from professional organizations you belong to.
- For your white papers, choose industry experts as authors.



#2 LOSS AVERSION

Social scientists have found people are twice as motivated to avoid pain as they are to achieve pleasure.

Yet in marketing, we're all about the benefits — all the things someone will achieve or gain if

they do what we ask them to. And it's smart to focus on benefits. Just remember, a little well-placed Loss Aversion can go far.

How can you use this?

- Replace "Take advantage of" with "Don't miss" in your subject lines
- Focus on what your target will lose out on if they don't do what you ask, or what they can happily avoid if they do
- Flag upcoming deadlines and expiration dates



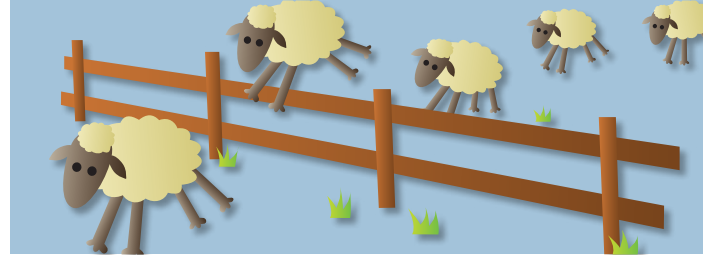
#3 THE RECIPROCITY PRINCIPLE

When someone does something for us, we feel compelled to return the favor. If you send me a birthday card, I make sure to send you one. If you treat me to lunch, I make sure to pick up the check the next time.

The truth is, we really don't like to owe anyone. And for that reason, we'll sometimes do even more in the name of reciprocation, just to wipe out the "debt."

How can you use this?

- Advertise a free guide on how to do something, and then watch customers come to you to buy the supplies or service they need to do it.
- Provide a basic version of an app for free, and then ask people to purchase an enhanced version.
- Email a small surprise gift, and then follow up with a sales request.



#4 EYE MAGNET WORDS

When we write, we write in a linear fashion — one word followed by the next followed by the next. But when we read, we skim and scan.

Fortunately, some words are scientifically proven to leap out and attract the human eye. Among them are *new, now, introducing, announcing, finally, soon, free, quick, easy* and *your target's name*.

How can you use this?

- Put eye magnet words in high-read pieces of real estate like content titles and subject lines
- Begin subject lines, headlines, and lead sentences with one of these words
- Personalize where you can

#5 SOCIAL PROOF

Research shows that when someone is uncertain of what decision to make, he or she will often look to others and follow what they do.

This is especially true if the other people observed are like the individual. We assume they know something we don't. And so we follow their lead. Social scientists refer to this as the "herd mentality."

How can you use this?

- Add testimonials to your web pages.
- Identify a product or service as your "most popular."
- Suggest what items people similar to your target have purchased.

For more information,
contact **Nancy Harhut** today
at nharhut@hbtmktg.com

