

Marketing Munchies Podcast Transcript

Season 2, Episode #10

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Announcer: Welcome to the Marketing Munchies Podcast series hosted by Dr. Bridget Behe. Each week Bridget and her guests will share information, insights, research-based findings, and her 30 years of experience to help your horticultural business connect better with current and future customers. Now, let's join our host, Dr. Bridget Behe.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Hi, and welcome to the Marketing Munchies Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Bridget Behe, and my guest cohost, Trey Malone, is back in the studio with me today. Welcome back, Trey!

Dr. Trey Malone: Yeah, thrilled to be here again.

Dr. Bridget Behe: You said, "Hey, Bridget, let's turn the tables," and have you do a little interviewing of me.

Dr. Trey Malone: Yeah, I thought it would be fun to kind of poke around in what you have been working on. I think you have done a great job of interviewing people, but let us see how good a job you do of being interviewed yourself.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Alright, we will give it a go.

Dr. Trey Malone: All lot of this I want to play a little bit of a devil's advocate for your research. As a behavioral economist, I really do enjoy what you work, but I would like to hear your perspective on what neuro economics or what eye tracking really brings to the table for, especially, producers and stakeholders.

Dr. Bridget Behe: When I was first exposed to the eye tracking glasses a little over 10 years ago, it was such a profound "ah-ha" moment for me. I really could see this as a useful tool in my toolbox. For almost three decades now—at the time it would have been two—we were relying mainly on survey instruments, auctions, looking at some of the published sales data. We had a few tools, but when I was exposed to the eye tracking glasses, that is when the neuro economics lightbulb went off for me. Those kind of behaviors, looking at peoples' facial expression, their galvanic skin response, or how much they are sweating, their pupil dilation.

For me, just the specific spots where their eyes are moving—that happens so quickly, so subconscious, that to me, it was not impossible to fake but really difficult to lie or fudge or fake. If there was a way to marry some of this new technology where we can capture peoples' physiological responses with some of the older tools—the survey tools, the auction tools, the whatever tools you are using—I thought, "Man, this is great, because it just strengthens the argument." That now you have got these subjective measures, which some people would say, "Ah, you know..." people are going to tell you what they think you want to hear in a survey, but

their eyes do not lie. To me, so much information gets initially to our brain through our eyes—that was, for me, the place to start.

Dr. Trey Malone: Ten years ago, that was kind of early for eye tracking wasn't it?

Dr. Bridget Behe: Absolutely, it was.

Dr. Trey Malone: It is still kind of cutting edge.

Dr. Bridget Behe: It is.

Dr. Trey Malone: So, how did you even find eye tracking in the first place?

Dr. Bridget Behe: Well, Joe Fox and the folks at *MasterTag* were at a big trade show in Columbus, Ohio. It is now called Cultivate. They had an eyetracker—a desktop eyetracker—there. I sat in front of that to look at an ad and then was shown how my eyes moved. That was my big epiphany, because I thought, if we can put individual products, displays, any type of plant, just about any kind of product in front of people and give them a task—which do you like better? Which is higher quality? Which should you charge more for? Which one would you buy if any? That, they are going to go through that task, and we are going to—it is the window to the brain. We are going to see their thought process. You cannot really think about things unless you are blind, and most of the American population is not. The vast majority of the stimuli, they enter our brain through our eyes. What you look at is really that first indication of what you are going to be thinking about. It was just so cool!

Dr. Trey Malone: In my mind—I have actually never seen one—I imagine somebody being like locked into almost like a mummy cast face, and in they are trying to look at something—that just feels very unnatural to me when I think about how it works. Can you explain what that...?

Dr. Bridget Behe: Yeah. The helmet kind of stuff was the old days. I was a part of an eye tracking study over in the packaging department. They were looking at people and how they read the warnings on prescription labels, and Laura Biggs published that. It was really an interesting study, but you did: you had to artificially keep peoples' heads still. Today, the tool that we use the most, is the Tobii Light Eye Tracking Glasses, and they really look just like a pair of glasses that you would use for vision to see far away or to see up close. They have two cameras over each eye. What they do, is they triangulate where you are looking with those cameras. I think it is really cool. It is attached to a little hand-held device that is about the size of a phone. You can put it in your hand. You can clip it onto your belt. Most people tell me that they forget that they are wearing them after the first 20-30 seconds.

Dr. Trey Malone: Is there a big demographic difference? Like do you notice that men look at different things than women, or that younger people look at different things than older people, or are people pretty consistent across those groups?

Dr. Bridget Behe: The movement itself is pretty consistent, but what people look at varies greatly. What we have done, is looked at how their expertise influences their eye movement, and there is a lot of literature that says, if you are an expert at reading EKGs, you are going to find the problems faster than somebody who is not an expert. If you are an expert in soccer you are

going to be able to look down the field and see things that other people who are novices are not going to be able to see. Now, there is some of that. There is some evidence for that in horticulture. We do have some gender differences, although that is more so in the purchase process than in some of their preferences. We do see a little bit of a difference there.

We have not looked at the age differences yet, but I suspect there probably are going to be some. We know that eye movement slows down as a person ages, so that is one of the reasons I have kind of kicked that can down the road to look more at how people are making the decision to buy or not to buy versus what it is that they are buying.

Dr. Trey Malone: Something I have been thinking about a lot lately is the speed at which people consume online information. *Instagram* for example, when people are thumbing through *Instagram* feeds, they only have a split second as a marketer to make some type of a connection through your advertising, through that impression. Do you think that the eye is becoming exhausted at this point?

Dr. Bridget Behe: I think there is an element of exhaustion there. I think we are getting very proficient at what visually we consume. If it is something that we are familiar with, we are probably not going to spend as much time on it, but if it is something visually different—something that is surprising, something that is unexpected—we are going to spend a little bit more time on it. Our work in the retail store, we have got five seconds at most to have a display capture somebody's attention. You think about it, five seconds is not that long, but in the universe of attention span, that is a lot of time. When you figure our eyes move something like six times a second, they are capable of moving, and just where we focus that attention is not random. Within that five seconds or within that handful of seconds, precisely where people look, is very fascinating to me.

We are not going to spend a lot of time looking at stuff that is not useful, is not helpful. We do not have enough time in the day as it is. In one of our studies we published showed that, if you are a price-conscious person, that you physiologically find that price faster than somebody who is concerned about how that plant is grown. The folks who made that decision from conjoint work on how that plant was grown, we were able to show physiologically they saw that production information faster than the price information or anything else.

We are getting—as consumers, we are getting really proficient with our time, and our eye movement is no exception to that.

Dr. Trey Malone: You are probably familiar with the word heuristics. You know, the idea that people use rules-of-thumb to make a lot of the decisions on a day-to-day basis. Is this an opportunity for people to find the heuristics that really drive what consumers focus on?

Dr. Bridget Behe: And that is exactly where we are headed. We are trying to unearth some of the patterns that we see. For example, there is a theory that says people locate their most preferred product, and then they refer back to that. The evidence from the gaze pattern is not quite there. There is another central gaze theorem that talks about, especially when we are talking about a vertical shelf and cereal boxes that our choice most likely is to come from the

center. In the horticulture arena, we do not often merchandize vertically. A lot of this is horizontally or at an angle, and the products are not identical—they are not cereal boxes or shampoo bottles.

What we have got to understand is, how are people using those subtle differences in blueberries, apples, plants, whatever that product is, tomatoes, are they cueing in on the high quality features? Are they cueing in on some of the problems, the blemishes and the bruises? Are they just buying based on price? Then, when they do make that purchase decision, what we do is work backwards and understand what were the gaze sequences, or what were the things they looked at that led up to that decision, and can we find some common denominators?

Dr. Trey Malone: No, that is great stuff. Honestly, historically, I have been a bit skeptical of the eye tracking stuff—partly because I have never seen it. I think anybody that has never seen something like this has a hard time wrapping their mind around how valuable it is. It does seem to be like the next big step or one of the next big steps in marketing research. It is really cool that you have kind of been a pioneer of this stuff for ten years.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Yeah, thanks.

Dr. Trey Malone: So, here is to another ten years!

Dr. Bridget Behe: Yeah, thanks, and I really enjoyed talking about it. We will have to talk about it some more on another podcast. Stay tuned for more eye tracking, and thanks for listening this week!

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Announcer: Thank you for joining us on this week's Marketing Munchies Podcast. For more information or to download the transcript of this podcast, please visit, connect-2-consumer.org. That's C-O-N-N-E-C-T, dash, the number two, dash, C-O-N-S-U-M-E-R, dot, C-O-M.

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