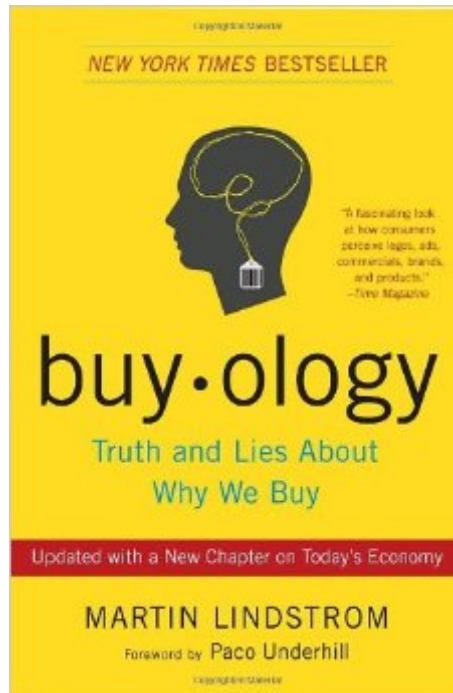


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# Buyology: Truth And Lies About Why We Buy



## Synopsis

How much do we know about why we buy? What truly influences our decisions in today's message-cluttered world? An eye-grabbing advertisement, a catchy slogan, an infectious jingle? Or do our buying decisions take place below the surface, so deep within our subconscious minds, we're barely aware of them? In *BUYOLOGY*, Lindstrom, who was voted one of Time Magazine's most influential people of 2009, presents the astonishing findings from his groundbreaking, three-year, seven-million-dollar neuromarketing study, a cutting-edge experiment that peered inside the brains of 2,000 volunteers from all around the world as they encountered various ads, logos, commercials, brands, and products. His startling results shatter much of what we have long believed about what seduces our interest and drives us to buy. Among the questions he explores: Does sex actually sell? To what extent do people in skimpy clothing and suggestive poses persuade us to buy products? Despite government bans, does subliminal advertising still surround us — from bars to highway billboards to supermarket shelves? Can "Cool" brands, like iPods, trigger our mating instincts? Can other senses — smell, touch, and sound — be so powerful as to physically arouse us when we see a product? Do companies copy from the world of religion and create rituals — like drinking a Corona with a lime — to capture our hard-earned dollars? Filled with entertaining inside stories about how we respond to such well-known brands as Marlboro, Nokia, Calvin Klein, Ford, and American Idol, *BUYOLOGY* is a fascinating and shocking journey into the mind of today's consumer that will captivate anyone who's been seduced — or turned off — by marketers' relentless attempts to win our loyalty, our money, and our minds.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book has a very interesting premise - using MRI to examine, not cognition, memory, or emotion, but advertising. And some of the results are rather interesting. For example:- Negative messages (anti-smoking ads, say) can activate desires just as easily as positive ones.- Strong brands can activate the same brain centers as do religious topics.- Indirect advertising (the coke glasses sitting in front of the American Idol judges) can be more effective than direct advertising. Probably the biggest takeaway is that what people say and how they really feel are not the same. Actually, having written all this out, I'm not sure that these results really are all that unexpected and interesting after all. ;^) My biggest beef with the book is how thin it is beyond the basic reporting of results. Yes, it actually is over 200 pages (just barely), but there is an awful lot of padding in there. Part of that is going over some very basic ideas (subliminal advertising, e.g.) ad infinitum, but also being extremely anecdotal. I like anecdotes, and feel they make for a great read, but the author really goes overboard - especially when it comes to anecdotes about himself. In fact, the author's ego really gets in the way here. Here are some samples: "But this study wasn't going to come cheap, and I knew that without corporate backing, it was dead in the water. But when I get an idea in my head that keeps me up at night, I'm persistent. Politely pushy, you might call it. Those twenty-seven messages on your answering machine. They're all from me (sorry)." and "By way of profession, I'm a global branding expert. That is, it's been a lifelong mission (and passion) to figure out how consumers think ...

Buyology is a well-crafted book organized around a series of fMRI studies of the brain. The premise is to explore the connection between marketing and neuroscience to understand why we buy. The premise is full of hype as Lindstrom explores connections between sight, sound, smell, sports, sex and religion and the brain. Positioned in this way, the book should be a headline grabbing set of findings that change the way we think about brands, our purchasing decisions and the messages with which we are bombarded every day. Unfortunately, the conclusions of the brain studies are largely predictable and refine rather than revolutionize marketing and neuroscience. This makes the book a better magazine article rather than a 200+ page book. Unless you are marketing professional or someone who has this as your hobby, your time would be better spent looking at other books that cover the same subject area with more detail and more science. I found Jeff Hawkins and Sandra Blakeslee's Book "ON intelligence" and Daniel Pink's "A whole new mind" to be better books on the

connections between neuroscience and social interactions. Each chapter in Buyology follows a similar pattern. The start sets up the issue, for example are brands as strong in people's minds as religion. Then the author spends 20 or so pages providing review and opinion on the subject area. This part often repeats materials, stories, and findings found in every marketing book. Yes the usual suspects are quoted here "Apple's 1984" ad and the like. Finally in about a half a page, Lindstrom give the example -often based on a very small sample size - of the experiment. Then there is a rationalization of the findings that in the end maintains the status quo in marketing.

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