[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:07] DC: Welcome to B2B Marketing BS.

[0:00:12] GR: Where BS stands for behavior and strategy.

[0:00:15] DC: I'm Deborah Corn, the founder of Print Media Centr and the Executive Director of Girls Who Print.

[0:00:21] GR: And I'm Gee Ranasinha, founder of KEXINO and a behavioral science and marketing strategy consultant. Most marketing conversations focus on what people do, not why they do it. In this podcast, we'll explore marketing through the lenses of behavioral science and strategy.

[0:00:40] DC: Each topic unfolds over three conversations examining human behavior, business behavior, and the real-world consequences that follow. Together, we'll challenge assumptions.

[0:00:52] GR: Question conventional wisdom.

[0:00:54] DC: And explore what actually works in the marketplace, from behavior and strategy to results with no BS.

[EPISODE]

[0:01:04] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. More specifically, we are here with the B2B Marketing BS Podcast Series with Gee Ranasinha, who is a behavioral marketing specialist. Hello, Gee. Welcome to the show, your own show. We're co-hosts.

[0:01:25] GR: Hey there, Deborah. It's great to be back.

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[0:01:27] DC: It really is. I enjoyed our last podcast series, arc. If anyone is not familiar, we are taking one topic, and we are breaking it out into human behavior, business behavior, and results, right? Business communication, business behavior, sort of what I think of that middle one is.

And we had a lot of really interesting comments online. I thought people were excited that we weren't just going to speed through a topic and we were going to break it down. So I think it was an interesting response. Did you get any comments or not?

[0:02:04] GR: Yeah, I think it was a great response considering it's first time out of the gate, right? I think it's an interesting format, breaking it down into three smaller bite-sized chunks. But also, I think we're talking about stuff that isn't very talked about very much.

[0:02:20] DC: Yeah. At least not in the printing industry.

[0:02:23] GR: Certainly.

[0:02:23] DC: If you go to a conference with giant brands there, I'm sure they're consistently talking about this. But I can tell you as someone who worked in advertising, everything that big brands do, you can do yourself for your own business. You just have to adapt it in a relevant and meaningful way for your audience.

[0:02:44] GR: Absolutely. Yes.

[0:02:46] DC: That is actually what we are talking about today in a related way. This is the first conversation in our three-episode arc, and we are going to explore the marketing that people forget. Now, getting attention has become one of marketing's biggest obsessions. Views, impressions, clicks, opens, reach, likes. Everybody loves us. Yay! But noticing something and remembering it are not the same thing. People can see a message, read it, react to it, even engage with it in that moment, but still forget it five minutes later. And this happens to me all the time.

In this discussion, we're looking at the human side of attention and memory and what gives a message a chance to stick. Gee, what must happen for attention to become memory? We're not even breaking it out to short-term and long-term memory, which is also two different things.

[0:03:55] GR: Absolutely, yeah. Well, we need to have attention before we can have a memory, yeah? Clearly. And there needs to be some kind of hook from the attention side of things before it can permeate into our brains to become a memory. So that's why we have to start with attention before we can go into the memory side of things.

The way that the brain works is it filters out a lot of the more – let's call it superficial things which are vying for our attention because they are just music. They're just stuff in the background that we can easily –

[0:04:35] DC: Best quality, best service, best – things like that.

[0:04:40] GR: All of those sorts of things, they just fly past us. Because firstly, we don't believe them. And secondly, everybody says the same thing. So it's table stakes. It doesn't actually register. It's the price of entry. So what gets us noticed is things that are either unusual or that don't fit the expectation that we have. That's why humor works. That's where jokes work, because you think the joke is going down this way, and then all of a sudden it throws something in there, which wasn't what the brain was expecting, and you react with laughter, right?

It's either something that's unexpected, or it's something that's flagged as important and needs to be transferred into memory and usually invokes a number of other senses. Quite often, there's an emotional component in there as well. Okay? If you think back to some of the most evocative memories that you have in your life, I'll bet you, pretty much anything, that every single one of those memories has a strong emotional component. Something where you were happy, where you were angry, where you were sad, whatever. There was always an emotion within that.

And that, in a sense, is the secret, if it's a secret, for moving something from an attention perspective into something that becomes more ingrained in memory. It needs to evoke a

response, ideally an emotional response, so that it permeates the layers of the brain to actually form a memory.

Part of that is, like I say, being different, right? The way I explain it to my students is different is better than better. Because we can always say, "Oh, we're faster, cheaper, higher," whatever, whatever, right? And everybody goes, "Yawn, yawn, yeah, fine, okay, move on." But if we say it in a different way, or using a different channel, or using a different media, or explaining a different way, it's remembered in a different way.

Part of all of this is the way that we choose to articulate our value. Like you said, if we're talking about innovative solutions, best-in-class quality, blah, blah, blah. It's like, yeah, yawn fest, right? Nobody's interested because we've heard it all before. We probably don't believe it. And it's what everybody else says in the category. So we ignore it.

It's also stuff that we can't remember because we can't put an image to those words. Okay? So innovative solutions, what do you think of in your brain when you think of innovative? There's nothing, right? What do you think of? There's nothing.

[0:07:24] DC: Honestly, I think of like a computer server. That's the first thing that popped into my head.

[0:07:27] GR: If you go to a stock photography site and type in innovative solutions, you're going to get those really cheesy hands holding an atom and things like these sorts of nonsense, right?

[0:07:40] DC: Oh, you mean like the stock photography, yeah.

[0:07:42] GR: Right, all of that stuff. It's not remembered. And there are studies that prove that we don't remember them over the longer term. Words which are abstract have a harder time being recalled than words which are what we call concrete, where you can actually picture the word means in your brain. Because when we want to recall it, there are two paths to recollection: the actual word, as well as the image that we have in our brain. That's one thing. It might not sound sexy because we're using plain Jane words, right?

[0:08:18] DC: Well, yeah. But I mean, growing up, words matter, right? Everyone says words matter; your words matter.

[0:08:24] GR: But we may not sound clever, right? And it may not get us a keynote at some trade show. But if it moves a buyer to the next stage of that customer journey, which as marketers this is what our job is about, that's what we need to do. So speak in terms that the customer will understand. And once we've got that, don't change it. Repeat it again and again and again. Because the other side of memory retention is about repetition, repeating the same thing again and again and again.

And this is where lots of companies get it wrong because they've been doing this for weeks, months, maybe even years. And they say, "You know what? It's time. We need to have a change. We need to refresh this." And that's exactly the time when it's actually permeating into your target audience's memory. The thing is, they're never looking at it the amount of times that you are. You're seeing it all day, every day, 100 times a day. They're seeing it maybe two or three times a month, if that.

I think it was Leo Burnett, who was a very famous advertising guru of the 60s and 70s, a little bit in the 80s. He said that one of the key things with all of this repetition stuff was just when you're absolutely sick to death of what you're saying is the instant that your customer starts to notice you're marketing.

[0:09:50] DC: Yeah, it makes total sense. It's like when they interview musicians, and they're like, "We don't want to play these songs. We've played them a million freaking times, but we have to because it's what they want from us." They want to hear that song.

[0:10:08] GR: Yeah. No, you can play the new stuff on your new album, right? But people are coming for your greatest hits.

[0:10:16] DC: Exactly. Which they know and they remember, and they want more of.

[BREAK]

[0:10:22] DC: Are you looking to elevate your game, take your bottom-line customer relationships, and events to the next level? Then, I want to work with you. I'm Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. I engage with a vast, global audience of print and marketing professionals across all stages of their careers. They are seeking topical information and resources, new ways to serve their customers and connect with them, optimize processes for their communications and operations, and they need the products and services and partnership you offer to get to their next level. Print Media Centr offers an array of unique opportunities that amplify your message and support your mission across the Printerverse. Let's work together, bring the right people together, and move the industry forward together. Link in the show notes. Engage long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:11:25] DC: Why do some messages stay with us while others disappear almost immediately, even if you loved it, even if you like, "This is the funniest thing I've ever seen in my life." And then three minutes later, you're like, "Oh, yeah, I just saw something really funny, but I can't remember what it was for. I remember why it was funny, but I don't remember who was behind it."

[0:11:53] GR: Well, let me answer that question with a question, which is extremely rude to do, but we're friends now, right? We can do that sort of thing. Let me ask you, can you tell me anything about a piece of print marketing? Okay? Something that arrived in the mail or got handed to you at a show. Something that you still remember, even if you actually got it years ago. And why do you think that one is remembered more than all of the other bits and pieces that you've had since?

[0:12:34] DC: I love that question. And I do have something that is from this year. So it's current, and it's from Virgin, Virgin Cruises. And instead of just getting some postcards saying, "Hey, there's Virgin Cruises, and you could be part of it," and all of that, they addressed the postcard to future sailor. And I was like that is freaking brilliant, to the point where I called some of the direct mail companies and I was like, "What has to happen if they're addressing it to future sailor? It can't go to dear – is it still able to be distributed everywhere as like a dear

occupant, or is it considered personalized because it says, future sailor?" People were looking into it.

But the reason why it stood out is because it wasn't like, "Deborah, the future sailor." It was not that at all. It was just like, "Hey, future sailor, check out these cruises without kids." Virgin has adulting cruises and things like that. So that really stood out to me because it spoke to me in a way that wasn't gimmicky at all. It spoke to me in an aspirational way, like I could be a future sailor. It spoke to me in an inviting way, like, "Hey, future sailor, we're waiting for you." It just touched upon everything. And Gee, I saved the postcard.

[0:14:16] GR: There you go. Now, see, the thing is, what I would say, as a behavioral scientist, as a marketer –

[0:14:23] DC: Wait, can I add one more thing?

[0:14:25] GR: Yeah, sure.

[0:14:26] DC: I don't remember any details about the offer or the cruise, where it was going. Nothing. Just that. If I wanted to ever be a future sailor, I would look to Virgin.

[0:14:39] GR: Exactly. And I would say that the reason why it's permeated into your memory is something we touched upon earlier on. It broke the pattern. It broke the expectation that you had. Something was different. It's just like at the moment, everybody's jumping up and down about printing, about embellishments in print, right? Because it's another way of creating a memory in terms of the tactile essence of many embellishments, okay? But it could be a format. It could be the story. It could be a joke. It could be a lizard, a gecko, rather. It could be a lot of different things. And you may remember, we talked about this in the last series, about a thing called the von Restorff effect.

[0:15:29] DC: That's easy for you to say.

[0:15:30] GR: Yeah. There was this psychologist called Hedwig von Restorff, and she came up with an experiment where – we were doing this thing where we talked about it last time. It was a

list of furniture, and people had to remember a list of furniture: table, chair, dresser, wardrobe, stool. And all of a sudden, they'd throw in the word like fish, okay? And then they'd be asked like, "Which words do you remember?" And of course, everybody remembered fish, right? Because whatever breaks a pattern gets remembered, while whatever blends in gets thrown out. The brain works by remembering differences rather than groups of things.

[0:16:13] DC: Right. But when you break the mold – don't you have to consistently break the mold to keep the attention? Or do you break the mold and then just deliver on that over and over again?

[0:16:26] GR: Once you've broken the mold, you've created a concept. Your job then is to expand and deliver on every permutation of that new concept that you've now introduced to that buyer, okay? The brain is constantly making predictions. It's a prediction engine, right? Like I said, that's how humor works. So when a message matches what it's expecting, there's nothing worth storing. But when something doesn't fit, that little jolt of, "Hang on, what's that? Sailor?" It's exactly what flags it out as worth memorizing.

A printer that gets remembered for speed is remembered because of a story, right? Maybe there was an overnight reprint that a client needed and tells everybody about, right? It's not remembered because of we offer a fast turnaround, right? Because everybody says we offer fast turnaround, okay? It's because of that particular story, which evokes a particular emotional reaction, which then soaks in and becomes a memory.

[BREAK]

[0:17:36] GR: Your print shop runs like a finely tuned machine. From job ticket to shipping, print production just works. Which isn't worth much if it's a Tuesday afternoon and the phone's not ringing. A poor sales pipeline is an input problem, not an output problem. Why do our customers pick us? And where do we find the ones who've never heard of us? Printers who can answer these questions are the ones buyers call before the quotes go out. Everyone else gets asked about price. KEXINO works with you to extend your reach, generate leads, and close more business. Find us at kexino.com. That's K-E-X-I-N-O. Because nothing's going out if nothing's coming in.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:18:24] DC: That's actually where we're going to next. And it's interesting. Because as you were saying that, I started to remember about all the things that the printers did during COVID and the stories that they told about how they – and I remember the printers who did it, that they made cardboard cut-outs of all the kids and took school photos for them and created these things so they could have drive-by proms and all of that. And it was emotional, which is why I remember it. I couldn't tell you the colors of the things that they made, the signs and all that stuff, but I can tell you the applications because there were videos of just happy people in a time where a lot of people were not happy. I mean, this is almost a rhetorical question at this point, but what role does emotion play in whether something is remembered?

[0:19:20] GR: It's crucial. Anything that's remembered deeply has an emotional component to it. Anything. It's one of the things that permeates down into the deepest recesses of our brain. Anything else that's remembered is remembered by force or because we have to remember it for a particular reason. There is an action related to it. If I don't remember this, it'll negatively or positively impact my life in a particular way, right? There's always some kind of association with it.

Otherwise, those kinds of memories that you're talking about are human memories, which are emotional memories. And yet as marketers, we tend to sort of hide behind all of this technology, and we're sort of exercising emotion out of the equation, which is why there's so much bland marketing out there because it's marketing done by remote control, right? And I'm loving it, right? You know exactly who I'm talking about.

[0:20:21] DC: Just do it.

[0:20:21] GR: Just do it. Think different, right?

[0:20:23] DC: Which actually broke the mold because it's usually three words in advertising. It's three words. Punctuation does not count, but think different is only two.

[0:20:33] GR: And these were all came up from a human being. AI couldn't write those three taglines.

[0:20:37] DC: No way. Where's the beef? Never. Never. No, yeah.

[0:20:42] GR: Emotion is how the brain tags something as important enough to keep. So keeping it as some kind of creative decoration to add once the proper, rational, boring content is sorted, is putting everything exactly 180 degrees from where it needs to be. Because it's a biological mechanism that decides what gets stored in the first place.

[0:21:05] DC: Yeah.

[BREAK]

[0:21:08] DC: Like what you hear? Leave us a comment, click a few stars, share this episode, and please subscribe to the show. Are you interested in being the guest and sharing your information with our active and growing global audience? Podcasts are trending as a potent direct marketing and educational channel for brands and businesses who want to provide portable content for customers and consumers. Visit printmediacentr.com, click on podcasts, and request a partner package today. Share long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:21:43] DC: Okay, so we end these episodes with something we call the BS Breakdown, where Gee shares three things that you, listener, can do right now to put today's discussion into practice for you, your personal brand, your business, whatever is your jam at the moment. Personal branding counts in this, by the way.

[0:22:06] GR: Absolutely. So the BS Breakdown, number one, if you are using any form of measurement software or even doing it the old-fashioned way, all right, stop reporting impressions as though they were memories because they're not. They are ego numbers. Impressions and opens, all they do is tell us the message was delivered, right? But they tell us nothing about whether anything got stored.

What you should do is ask every new customer who else they considered and where they first heard of us. And that can be an automated form. But when you ask them where they first heard of us, don't make it a dropdown where they can select Google search or looking up a trade magazine. Keep it a free text. Because quite often, where they first heard of you is nowhere near you'd imagine where it came from.

[0:23:04] DC: I always check other, and then have to fill in anyhow.

[0:23:08] GR: It's always better. So that's the first one. The next one I would say is get the brand side of things in there early and say something that people can picture in their minds, okay? So if attention falls off a cliff after the first couple of seconds of being exposed to our marketing, then our brand has to be right at the start rather than tucked up into a corner somewhere that people see at the end, okay?

And after that, swap all of those abstract claims, innovative solutions, and all that nonsense for concrete phrases because that's what memories hold on to. And the third one is find the emotion that our buyer actually feels and create marketing content around that. Sit down with a few customers and ask them, right? Because they will tell you. Ask them what keeps them up at night. What are they most afraid of getting wrong? And then build the messages around those feelings rather than around the size of our press, the bindery capabilities, all of that nonsense. Find out what those messages are and repeat those messages consistently enough so that it never slides down the back of the sofa. It needs to be repeated and repeated until you're absolutely sick of it. Because I guarantee you, your customers are only just seeing it and, of course, remembering it.

[0:24:38] DC: Gee, thanks so much for your time. Today, we have explored the human side of why attention alone does not guarantee memory. In the next episode in this arc, we'll shift from human behavior to business behavior in 'scene isn't remembered', which is what we're talking about here.

Gee, thanks again so much. And thanks to everybody who's listening or joining us for the first time here at B2B Marketing BS. Please subscribe to Podcasts From the Printerverse wherever

you're listening so you do not miss an episode. Everything you need to connect with Gee is in the show notes. Until next time, mark it long and prosper.

[0:25:20] DC: Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through printmediacentr.com, we'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

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