

THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

# Psychographic Selling

**G**ood evening. Tonight's story centers on a tiny, upstart company founded by two college roommates with a vision to create a digital platform where friends from all over the world could meet and socialize. So successful was their endeavor that it quickly grew into a multibillion-dollar global interest with over 2 billion monthly users — and a dark secret that would soon bathe an entire industry in scandal.



## Psychographics are your greatest marketing tool

Our story begins in the virulent aftermath of exposure as Facebook's secret exploitation of user data changed the world forever. It's a digital world now — a psychographic world. And we have to learn how to live in it.

Halloween is approaching, and I think the great Alfred Hitchcock would have loved the unseemly nature of the recent Facebook scandal. I am certain he would have respected Facebook's ability to rise above it and continue to grow.

In fact, in light of Facebook's continued double-digit growth, it would seem people are very willing to give the company their private data in exchange for a free online haunt. Clearly, for savvy independent retailers who desperately want to find new customers on the cheap, Facebook (and companies like it) are your best bet.

That's where psychographics come in.

### MORE THAN DEMOGRAPHICS

You're probably already using demographics (statistical data relating to your prospects' age, income, education and location) in your marketing plan. Demographics *can* tell you if someone can purchase your products, but they aren't the best way to tell if someone is *likely* to purchase from you.

For that, you need psychographics — statistical data relating to your prospects' attitudes, aspirations, behaviors and psychology. With psychographics, you can zoom in on prospects who are inclined to do business with us and ignore those whose behaviors indicate they aren't interested in music.

Any business can call Facebook's ad department and learn more about this powerful tool, but there are plenty of third-party marketing firms that expertly utilize psychographics already. They can help you look at your past customers and find people with similar web-browsing histories, Facebook habits and psychological characteristics. They can help you create "mirror audiences" (targeted groups of

people with similar psychographic profiles to your existing clients) and market directly to them. They can even help you reach people who have visited your website but didn't purchase or fill out a contact form.

I recently conducted an experiment on Facebook. I ran my favorite piano sale ad using traditional demographic data. I decided to spend \$35 per day on that ad. Then, I worked with Facebook to create an audience with psychographic profiles similar to my Facebook followers, past sale prospects and recent website visitors. I ran the same ad and only targeted my psychographic mirror audience, spending \$15 per day on that ad. At the end of my two-week test, the psychographic audience produced more clicks than the demographic audience I spent more money on, even though it included far fewer people. My sale was very successful and Facebook advertising had a lot to do with it.

When "Psycho" came out in 1960, the movie horrified a generation and changed the film industry forever. Now, psychographics are doing something similar. Why not take a risk this Halloween? You don't have to dress up like your mother to do it, and it could help you slash your marketing budget at a time when your creditors are out for blood. **MI**

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