

On the Mark

Helping you **mark** your credit union for success



Marketing Matters

Blog Updates

Online Buzz

Success Stories

Website

Marketing Matters

How People Think

The methodology that may change the way you market your CU

(Part Two of a Two Part Series)

Last month, we introduced you to a new marketing research concept based on the way the brain thinks. A company named Attune has developed a marketing methodology based on the idea that:

1. People think in images and metaphors
2. People make 95 percent of their decisions subconsciously

Attune's research indicates that when people hear words, they don't think of the actual word or even see the letters in the word. Instead, their brain searches for a familiar image. That image is different for each person, because it is based on something they already know or a previous life experience. Attune also discovered that the brain cannot process information as quickly as the information becomes available. As a result, it continues processing that information subconsciously. People make 95 percent of their decisions subconsciously.

"Most of our decision making goes on subconsciously. That's why you can have a so-called Eureka moment after you stop working on a problem and move on to something new. Your brain is still thinking about it," said Maya Bourdeau, founding partner of Attune.

This month, we share Attune's methodology along with a case study to demonstrate how effective that methodology can be.

How People Think: The Methodology

Attune has a specific process it uses to discover how people feel about a given concept. It can be a product, a name or even a marketing strategy. The process begins with one-on-one interviews between Attune and targeted consumers. During the interview, consumers are asked to pick images

that reflect the topic (i.e., trust, saving money, etc.) and some brands. They are told to avoid literal images (so no images of money), and to pick images that reflect what the topic is like (i.e. money is like). The goal is to produce roughly eight images.

“All of our questions are copy questions,” said Jiao Zhang, Attune founding partner. “For example, if a person says the image in their mind is an apple, we ask them what they associate with that apple. If they say fresh, we ask them to tell us what fresh means to them. We ask them what other images the word fresh brings to mind. We unpack each image and its metaphors to get at subconscious thought.”

Attune then sets up circles which represent the consumer and brands being investigated. Consumers are asked to place images closer to themselves to indicate issues dear to them, or further away for issues they care less about. Then, consumers are asked to create characters representing different brands. The entire process takes about an hour and a half.

“We kind of think about the whole interview process as getting people to reveal what they see in their mind’s eye when they hear certain words, and we try to get at it from all different angles,” Bourdea said. “This is so much more effective than a survey, because it deconstructs the brain and taps into emotions. In the end, the consumer ends up choosing the message.”

How People Think: A Credit Union Case Study

Attune recently worked with CEFUCU (\$4.2 billion in assets, 265,000, Peoria, IL) to help bring in new members from a lower income neighborhood in which people tended to distrust financial institutions. Attune used its methodology to explore how individuals with low and moderate incomes feel about money and savings.

What they learned is that money and savings for these people is a perilous journey. These consumers are in a fragile and emotional state when it comes to money. They feel alone. Mothers, in particular, are motivated to save, but it’s very difficult for them to wrap their minds around how to save.

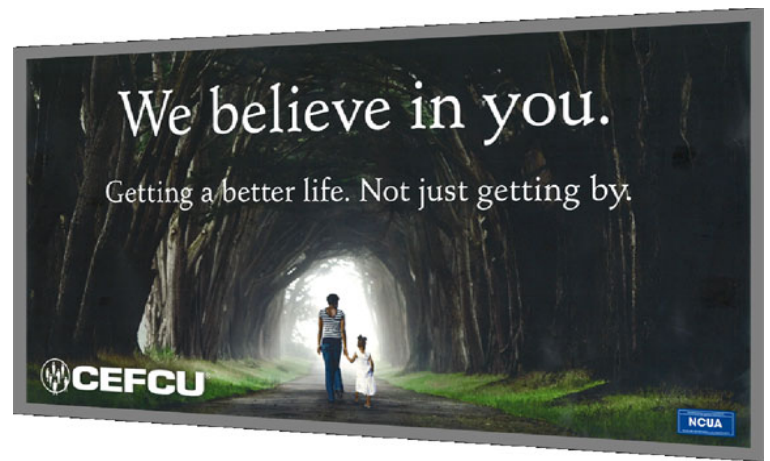
One of the images that emerged from the interviews with this group was a woman and child walking into a forest. Attune used that image on a billboard (pictured below) in the targeted neighborhood. The woman and child in the picture are very small compared to the large trees in the dark forest. That part of the image affirms what this demographic already perceives – the dark and lonely financial journey. However, on the billboard, the mother and child are walking toward the light. That part of the image is the new belief the credit union is trying to instill in this audience. It’s the belief that CEFUCU is the light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak. The words on the billboard are simple, yet powerful: *We Believe in You. Getting a Better Life. Not Just Getting By.*

“Even if you’re trying to change their perception, you have to start with images they relate with and

use those images to create a new perception,” Bourdeau said.

As a result of this billboard, CEFCU added 84 members from the low income neighborhood in two months. This was a 104 percent increase in acquisition.

Attune works with credit unions and organizations in the non-profit sector. For more information on this cutting edge process, e-mail [Bourdeau](#) or [Zhang](#).



Blog Updates

Follow Mark's blogs for frequent and timely information on topics like marketing, branding, generations, leadership, Think Huge and more. Blog posts are updated weekly. Here are links and summaries from some recent posts.

[Niche Marketing Leads to Success](#)

Can small credit unions compete against larger ones? Yes, but not by being all things to all people. Read this post to learn how niche marketing can actually give smaller credit unions a competitive advantage over larger financial institutions.

[CUs Can Learn Something from TV Show Jeopardy](#)

There is more to a credit union youth program than simply publishing a kids newsletter a few times a year. Unfortunately, many credit unions never successfully engage their younger members. In this blog post, Mark explores the lessons credit unions can learn from Jeopardy about engaging youth.

[Hiring Young Observers](#)

There are a lot of compelling reasons to hire employees under the age of 30. Perhaps the best reason is because they are keen observers. In this blog post, Mark shares a unique perspective on an effective way to put Gen Y employees to work at your credit union.

[Toy Story 3: A Great Reminder to Think Time](#)

Thinking huge means thinking time, and nothing requires more time or energy than our children. Guest blogger Colleen Cormier shares how thinking time in short 15 or 30 minutes increments can be the key to lasting family memories.

Online Buzz

Comments and Ideas from Mark's Blog Readers

CU's Can Learn Something from TV Show Jeopardy

"You have NO idea how badly I needed that exact example today to help articulate to my teammates some views on where we should take our youth interaction. You've been forwarded at length, my friend!"

- **Emily Jones**

Hiring Young Observers

"Respect between generations can be a huge factor in this process. The energy, passion, and possibilities are tremendous when seasoned employees connect with a employees bringing fresh perspectives and insights.

'Been there, done that' phrases quickly kill opportunities. 'What if' conversations open the doors wide to help position your credit union forward."

- **Janine McBee**

"Niching seems scary to most financial institutions, and it's easy to understand why-but it is truly the key if you are going to ever create an experience that truly resonates with anyone... Creating a niche financial institution around demographic characteristics (such as age, race, economic status, region, etc.) will not create nearly as engaging of a brand as one that is built around psychographic characteristics (values, beliefs, motivations, worldviews, etc.)"

- Niche Banking -

We want to hear from you. If you have used an idea or learned something of value from one of Mark's blog posts, be sure to leave a comment on the blog so others can benefit from your experiences, as well.

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