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## MAKING THE SWITCH

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DIGITAL YEAR BOOK





# Rohit Khanna

## EMOTIONAL RESCUE

**Marketers must find the emotional 'anchor' that underpins the emotologic link if they are to drive true product adoption**

**If you believe that most consumers buy most products based on emotion and then justify their decisions logically, then you are in the majority. Notice that I didn't say all consumers and all products, because there are simply no absolutes in this type of discussion. So, if that's the starting premise, then the question is: why doesn't the life sciences industry do a good job of marrying the emotional and the logical together in its communication strategies?**

Let's take a step back for a moment and look at two case studies that demonstrate the power of an emotologic message (defined as the additive effect or 'marrying' of the emotional and logical messaging elements in a communication campaign).

First, let's look at the funeral home industry. It's hard to imagine that funeral home operators can be viewed as a) savvy marketers and b) the reference point for any outstanding communication campaign. When most of us think of savvy marketers, we think of Apple, Starbucks, Coca-Cola or Virgin.

Funeral home operators, and the industry as a whole, have done an incredible job of marrying the emotional and logical elements. The emotional part comes when they get you to think about making 'final arrangements' for your loved ones (or yourself). There's no doubt that these thoughts tug at the emotional heartstrings. Check.

Then they hit you with the logical side of the message by suggesting that you 'shouldn't leave your loved ones with a financial burden' or that you don't want to get caught in a financial burden yourself during the bereavement process. Check.

Statistics show that 72 per cent of adults have actively engaged in or thought about pre-planning the final arrangements for themselves or a loved one. These numbers are way up over the era when once it would have been considered ridiculous to think about death while you were still alive. Not any more. Funeral home operators have systematically (and it's taken time) used the knowledge that most people buy based on emotion and justify their purchase logically to grow their customer base, thereby 'locking in' future revenue streams.

The other example is DeBeers Diamond Company. During a memorable campaign some years ago, the company (effectively) asked if the woman of your dreams was worth two months salary. We all remember the images of a young man and woman frolicking in their youth, falling in love and planning to spend eternity and beyond together. There's the emotion. And then comes the logic of it all: isn't she worth (just) two months salary? Brilliant. In fact, DeBeers didn't just create the emotologic link that I've described. Inherent in the assumption that organisations must capitalise on both the emotional and logical elements of a message in order to drive product adoption is the fact that there actually is both an emotional and a logical 'anchor' within the product from which to create the link.

For DeBeers this was not the case. It had to create the emotion from scratch. In other words, prior to 1947, the very idea that

a diamond ring was linked with marriage did not exist. So, DeBeers, along with its ad agency, began to systematically target both men and women with the idea that the symbol of love and betrothal was a diamond engagement ring. The slogan that *Advertising Age* crowned as the most recognisable slogan of the 20th Century, 'A Diamond is Forever' was soon after born and, today, the link between diamonds and a symbol of marriage is beyond question ([www.gemnation.com](http://www.gemnation.com)).

### Defying logic alone

Let's return to the original question now. Most companies in the life sciences industry assume that their customers (clinicians) operate on the logical scale only – in other words, 'data' is the only story that needs to be told in marketing drugs and devices. There are limitations around what can be said that prevents companies from making the true emotologic link that consumer brands are more easily able to do. However, when we examine the therapeutic categories of oral contraceptives, erectile dysfunction and rheumatoid arthritis, to name a few, the emotologic link is clear. So, part of the answer lies in our own assumptions about our customer segment and part of the answer pertains to legal and regulatory limitations around creating this link.

The reason why life sciences companies don't do a good job of creating the emotologic link is twofold: they fail to recognise or capture the 'emotional' anchor within the product benefits and they fail to recognise that their customer and the consumer is not the same person.

Messages centred on 'peace-of-mind' or 'convenience' or 'confidence', are not emotional anchors – these are 'cost-of-entry' concepts. No clinician is going to use your product if it's inconvenient or makes him/her nervous about outcomes and side effects. And no clinician is going to use your product if it keeps him/her awake at night worrying about its efficacy.

The 'blurriness' of the customer/consumer is a long-standing one and, to be clear, this column is not an advertorial for more direct-to-patient advertising but the fact remains that emotologic campaigns need to reach the end user/patient or, what I have termed, the emotional conduit. The emotional conduit for healthcare marketers may not be the patient (ideally, it always is) but it may be the nurse practitioner or some other allied healthcare practitioner who interfaces with the patient or caregiver. The emotional conduit must be close enough to be able to convey the emotional aspect of the brand's messaging.

In the end, every single brand has an end-user (patient) or an emotional conduit and every brand has an emotional 'anchor' that serves as the necessary underpinning for the emotologic link – as marketers, you must find these elements in order to truly drive product adoption.

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