



BOOK REVIEW: Practical Digital Marketing and AI Psychology: How to Gain Online Consumer Trust and Sales Using Technologies and Psychology

By Jonathan Gabay, London & New York: Routledge, 2025, 432 hlm., £34.99 (paperback), ISBN: 978-1-032-53028-4

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Practical Digital Marketing and AI Psychology: How to Gain Online Consumer Trust and Sales Using Technologies and Psychology, by Jonathan Gabay, London & New York: Routledge, 2025, 432 hlm., £34.99 (paperback), ISBN: 978-1-032-53028-4.

Introduction

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has radically changed the digital marketing landscape. In this context, Jonathan Gabay's (2025) book *Practical Digital Marketing and AI Psychology* is a guide that bridges classical psychology and its application in technology-based digital marketing. Over the past decade, the marketing world has rapidly transformed due to technological disruption. Consumers no longer respond to advertising but demand authenticity, empathy, and relevance in every interaction with a brand. This book responds to these changes with an interdisciplinary approach that combines a deep understanding of human behavior with practical applications of AI, such as microtargeting, prompt engineering, and cognitive modeling.

This book covers communication and media history, from cave paintings to AI-powered social media, and highlights how cultural values and historical currents shape human interactions with technology. The authors introduce practical techniques that are relevant to the needs of today's digital marketing professionals. This book also highlights a specially curated list of AI prompts to help marketers develop data-driven communication strategies. The approach presented in this book provides a concrete bridge between marketing theory and the application of generative tools such as ChatGPT. The book is organized into nine main chapters that begin with *Forethought* and end with *Afterthought*. Each chapter is designed to take readers through the historical and psychological connections between humans and media and how brands can leverage AI to improve consumer relationships.

Review and discussion

The introduction to this book, *Forethought: Everything Connects*, presents a narrative across time that connects the evolution of human communication with the development of technology and psychology. The author begins by tracing the journey of humans from making cave paintings, the Industrial Revolution era and the internet to the AI era to show that every form of communication is always rooted in the human need for meaning, security, and connection. The author emphasizes that understanding the history and symbolism of communication is key to developing an effective digital marketing strategy based on empathy. Through this philosophical approach, the author positions himself as a marketing expert and a storyteller of civilization who invites readers to see that all digital interactions today continue the prehistoric era that began with humans' search for authentic relationships.

The first chapter, *Atlas of Your Mind*, discusses the close relationship between the biological workings of the brain and consumer responses to digital communication. The author explains that consumer decisions, both when purchasing products and interacting on social media, are influenced by parts of the brain such as the amygdala,

prefrontal cortex, and limbic system that work outside of rational consciousness. With an easy-to-understand narrative style, the author shows how perceptions of brands are formed based on how the brain works with past emotional experiences, colors, sounds, and the language used. This chapter introduces the concept of “mental maps” as the basis for effective marketing strategies. Emphasizing empathy and understanding of neurological responses in consumers are the keys to building communications that are not only interesting but also build trust. This chapter emphasizes that understanding the human brain is a strategic foundation in digital communication marketing.

The second chapter, *I vs AI*, is the center of gravity of the entire book, presenting an in-depth analysis of the complex relationship between human identity (“I”) and artificial intelligence (“AI”) in the context of digital marketing. Through five subsections in this chapter, the author presents an analysis that covers philosophical, ethical, psychological, and technical aspects. From deep questions about digital identity in AI Am to public concerns about AI in *The Storm Ahead*, which shows the threat of manipulation and job loss due to AI. Meanwhile, in the *Deeper Perspectives* subsection, AI is described as a tool and co-creator that changes how we think and interact. *The Ready?* The subsection emphasizes the importance of adopting AI based on values and moral responsibility, while the *Jump!* The subsection provides practical guidance in the form of 50 examples of engineering prompts applicable to the marketing world. The author has succeeded in arranging this chapter as a bridge between critical reflection and practical solutions that make AI a means to build more humane and meaningful digital communication.

In the third chapter, *Me, Myself, and I*, will take readers on a more intimate and in-depth exploration of the formation of personal identity in the digital world. The author reveals the contradictions of the online world, where social media that promises connection often gives birth to fragmented identities that depend on external validation. By referring to psychological concepts such as self-concept and reflected self, this chapter shows that online identity cannot be separated from how we want to be seen by others, and this is where it becomes a strategic opportunity for marketing. Brands that understand this dynamic will be able to speak to consumers’ deepest aspirations by building more authentic and memorable relationships that can reflect themselves. This chapter is interesting, with a call in the closing saying, “technology should strengthen self-esteem, not exploit it.” This is a touching chapter and very relevant to someone’s search for identity in the digital world.

The fourth chapter, entitled *Giving “I” What “I” Wants and Needs*, dives deeper into the realm of subconscious psychology by adopting the classic Freudian and Jungian approaches in the context of digital consumer behavior. This chapter dissects the roles of the Id, Ego, and Superego. Where the Id drives instant shopping impulses, the Ego becomes the rational balancer, and the Superego leads to control based on social values. It also discusses Jung’s concept of Shadow, which appears as negative online behavior such as trolling or inauthentic self-image. The author sharply relates how advertising and brands can trigger this dark side, both consciously and unconsciously. However, rather than manipulate, the author invites marketers to appreciate the complexity of the consumer’s inner self and build trust based on empathy. This chapter emphasizes that consumers are not just data but individuals with deep psychological conflicts, so successful marketing must be able to respond to this complexity with a more human and meaningful approach.

Next, *Brand Kisses in the Mind* in Chapter Five examines how brands create deep emotional connections with consumers through symbolic elements such as logos, colors, voices, and authentic brand narratives. This chapter describes the relationship

between consumers and brands as a personal relationship that requires trust, clarity of intent, and a sense of security. It emphasizes the importance of building a consistent human digital persona and updates Maslow's theory of needs to reflect the modern consumer's need for connection, validation, and online identity. The author also highlights the dark side of symbolism, which, if used without ethics, can become a tool for emotional manipulation. However, if managed transparently, symbols and narratives can strengthen public trust. In a reflective and practical style, this chapter emphasizes that the true power of a brand in the digital age is not in its products but in the "emotional kisses" it leaves in the minds and hearts of consumers.

This book also bridges classical marketing theory with modern consumer behavior in a fast-paced and connected digital world, as discussed in Chapter 6: *Modeling Excellence*. This chapter emphasizes that to achieve brand excellence today; marketers must adopt a multidimensional approach that combines emotional engagement, personal values, and authentic user experiences. Here, gamification is introduced as a strategy to increase loyalty by ethically triggering intrinsic motivation. In addition, what is interesting here is the importance of value clarity, namely the clarity of brand values, in answering the needs of consumers who are now more concerned with sustainability, inclusivity, and mental health issues. The author encourages listening marketing, namely reading subtle signals from consumers empathetically to create relevant and meaningful communications. *Modeling Excellence* is a strategic guide for today's marketers to encourage them to excel technically and demonstrate their character and integrity amidst the hustle and bustle of the digital world.

In the seventh chapter, *Brain Sells* illustrates the author's expertise in dissecting how the brain and, more specifically, the consumer's personal motives can become the main field of effective, ethical and meaningful marketing strategies. This chapter reveals how a truly effective marketing strategy is not only based on data but must penetrate consumers' psychological core through the ME drive, namely personal motivations rooted in values, dreams and identity. The author emphasizes that modern consumers ask more than just "what are the benefits of this product?" but "does this brand reflect who I am?". With an emotional and narrative approach, this chapter shows that emotional resonance at every touchpoint, from design to campaign language, plays a vital role in creating engagement. His analysis of the power of words in triggering brain reactions enriches practical insights for marketers. However, what is interesting here is also a warning of the dangers of psychological exploitation and encourages an empathy-based approach and ethical responsibility. *Brain Sells* is a reminder that behind the algorithms and data, the core of marketing is still human, and brands that understand the brains and hearts of consumers will survive.

Alone Together, found in chapter 8, presents a sharp and emotional reflection on a seemingly paradoxical phenomenon. It conveys how humans feel increasingly alienated and lonely amid an era of digital hyper-connectivity. This chapter deeply reflects on the digital era's paradox: "The more connected, the lonelier humans feel". The author highlights how social media, which was created to establish connections, often triggers social pressure, loss of authentic identity, and dependence on external validation. This is because shallow and curated online interactions create emotional distance between people. The author invites brands to act as empathetic connectors with consumers, not just as digital space fillers. Brands must be able to create genuine experiences by building inclusive communities and becoming "digital friends" who are meaningfully present in consumers' lives. *Alone Together* is an invitation to re-humanize digital communication and make marketing a bridge to more authentic and supportive relationships amidst the crisis of modern alienation.

As a closing chapter before the final reflective section of the book, Chapter 9: *Scan—Cognitive Biases, Fallacies, and Rules of Thumb* presents a very useful “mental toolbox” for digital marketers and decision-makers. Here, the author explains that even though we live in the data era, humans still think with intuition and mental shortcuts. The author outlines popular biases such as confirmation bias, anchoring, social proof, scarcity, and the framing effect and shows how they affect consumer perception of marketing messages. In addition, this chapter highlights common fallacies that often appear in advertising, such as bandwagon and false dilemma. What makes this chapter stand out is its emphasis on the ethical use of these techniques. We are reminded that understanding the human mind is powerful but also responsible. Scan is an applicable and reflective guide to help marketers design effective, humane, and ethical communications in dealing with the psychological complexities of digital-age consumers.

As a reflective epilogue, *Afterthought* is a closing that invites readers to pause for a moment to reflect on the role of humans in a digital era dominated by sophisticated AI and algorithms. This section emphasizes that human values such as empathy, integrity, and freedom of thought must remain the main compass behind all technology. The author reminds us that trust is the most valuable digital asset, and only brands that uphold transparency and authenticity will survive. This closing also calls for the importance of digital wisdom, which is the ability to make ethical decisions amidst the extraordinary power of technology. With a wise tone, *Afterthought* changes the reader's position from a passive observer to an actor responsible for shaping the future of more humane digital communication.

Overall commentary review for the book

This book provides valuable insights into how artificial intelligence and digital psychology can be used strategically to build trust and emotional connections between brands and consumers in the modern marketing landscape. By combining classical theory and practical applications, this book offers an applied approach relevant to marketers and digital information service practitioners, educators, and managers of AI-based systems. The framework developed by Jonathan Gabay serves as an applicable guide in designing empathetic, personal, and value-based communication. This book is highly recommended as an important reference in developing ethical and effective digital communication strategies in business and public service contexts. In addition, this book provides a strong conceptual foundation for further research on digital user behavior, psychology-based user experience design, and the ethics of using AI in online interactions.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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