

**M-MZY**  
*memory by design*

a Corporate  
Visions company



**IMPOSSIBLE** to Ignore:  
The Science of Unforgettable Content

# Memory is the Catalyst for Action

If you're in Sales or Marketing, you're in the business of influencing other peoples' choices. Every time you communicate with your buyers, it's an opportunity to move them in some way—to change, to choose you, or to stay with you instead of switching to a competitor.

There's just one big obstacle in your way: Most people will forget up to 90 percent of what you communicate—and they'll forget it rather quickly.

People act on what they remember, not what they forget. So, if you want to persuade your buyers to act in your favor, you should make sure your message sticks in their minds. You need to become part of their memory.

The latest scientific research places memory at the heart of decision-making. Studies show that in the process of making a decision, your brain predicts the rewards of a choice based on past memories, and then uses that information to make the most favorable decision.

Think about that. The brain is a prediction engine. And memories are the fuel that helps it make better decisions. Memory doesn't just keep track of the past; it helps you navigate the future.

In the following pages, you'll discover the science of unforgettable content. You'll learn why memories influence future decisions, how to capture your buyer's attention, and what it takes to stand out in their memories, so they decide in your favor.

Your buyer's decision to purchase will happen in the future, but you can **influence those decisions** in your favor now.



# How Much Do People Remember?

A psychological concept called the **"Forgetting Curve"** suggests that people lose information over time when they make no effort to retain it. In the first two days after you're exposed to new content, you'll forget most of it—**up to 90 percent by some estimates**.

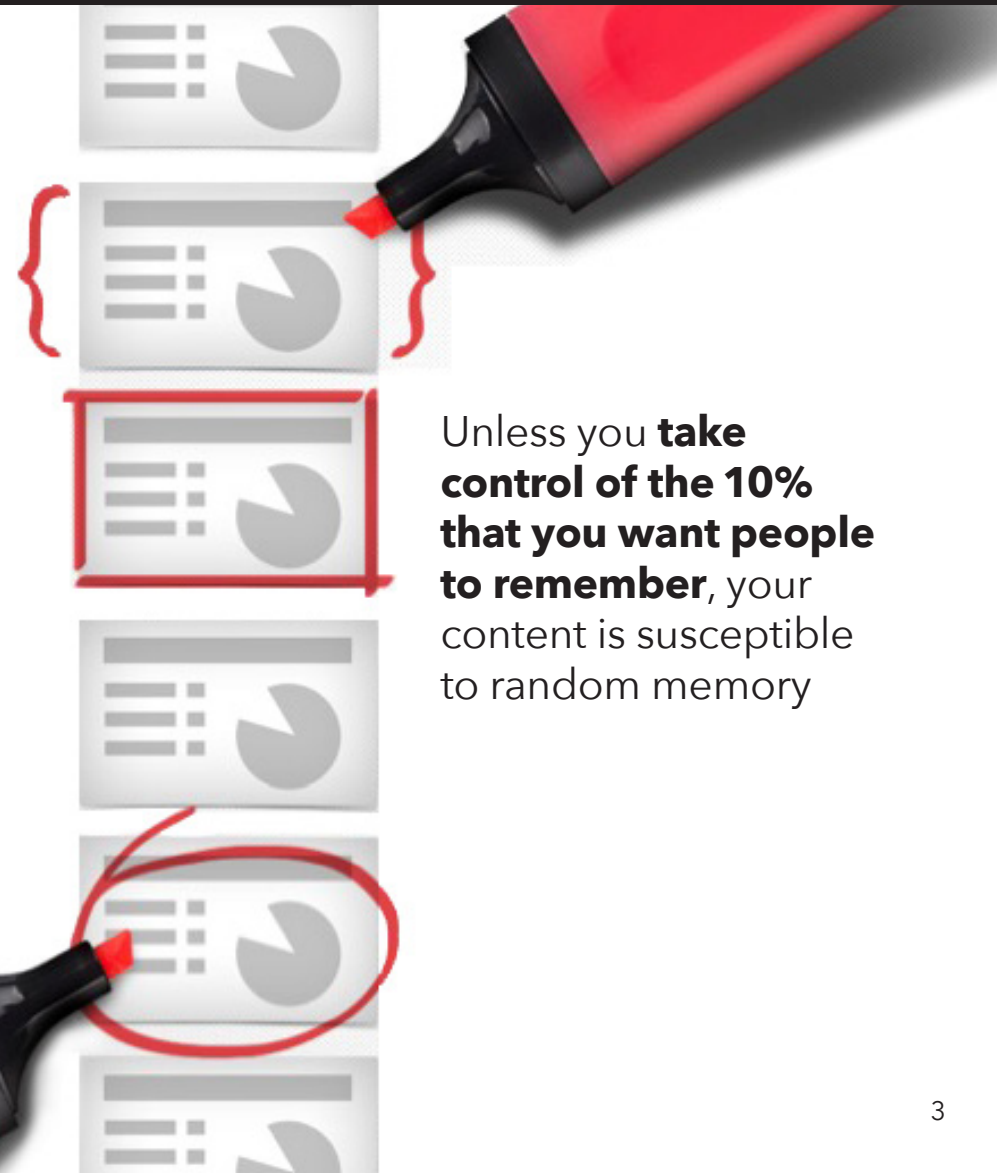
People forget a lot, but the little they do remember stabilizes over time. Sometimes they retain one percent, sometimes 20 percent, and when the stakes are high, they might retain a lot more.

As a general measure, we call the small amount of information you will remember, "the metaphorical 10 percent." This 10 percent is what you can use to become part of your audience's long-term memory, and it's important not to leave it to chance.

Ultimately, the problem is not that people remember very little. The problem is that they remember very little at random. Imagine you're speaking to five people. If they misunderstand or ignore your content, each person will take away a different message.

Unless you take control of the 10 percent that you want people to remember, your content is susceptible to random memory. Thankfully, there's a framework for getting people to act on what you want them to remember.

It's called the Prospective Memory Model.



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# The Prospective Memory Model

Getting your buyers to act on what they remember always starts with an intention they either already have or one you want to plant in their minds. Prospective Memory means “remembering a future intention,” and using this model has remarkable advantages for every seller and marketer.

Imagine this for a moment: You create content at Point A, hoping your audience remembers and acts on it at Point B. The skilled presenter knows how to communicate information at Point A, so it creates a future intention at Point B and motivates their audience’s decisions based on that intention.

## Influencing action at Point B

Research says that people act on future intentions when they complete these three steps:

1. **Notice Cues** that are linked to their intentions
2. **Search their memory** for something related to those Cues and intentions
3. And **execute on their intentions** if something is rewarding enough

With this Prospective Memory Model in mind at Point A, you can prime your audience with the proper Cues, help them keep what’s important in their long-term memory, and make it easier for them to execute on intentions at Point B.



In most business content, the process of Prospective Memory is left wholly to chance. As a result, your audience forgets a lot, and the little they do remember doesn't always lead to action.

# Three Steps to **Influence Memory and Decisions**

People learn and adapt when they remember what's rewarding and what's not. When people talk about their future intentions, they're visualizing a reward from either moving toward something positive or away from something negative.

When you ask your buyer at Point A to act on a future intention, they strike a tacit deal with you. They implicitly say, "I will stay with you to Point B as long as you keep me rewarded." And they will look for rewards at all three stages: when they notice Cues, when they search their memory for connections between those Cues and intentions, and when they decide to execute. No rewards, no action.

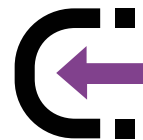
**Here's how you can influence these three steps:**



## **Create Cues**

People always intend to do something next. Cues are signals or **triggers that something must be done** at a specific time, or during a specific event.

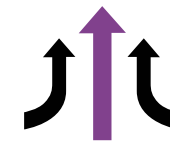
For Cues to work, they must be both distinctive enough and tied to an intention people care about.



## **Bridge Cues and Intention**

After noticing a Cue, your buyer will search for a memory related to that Cue and their intentions to act.

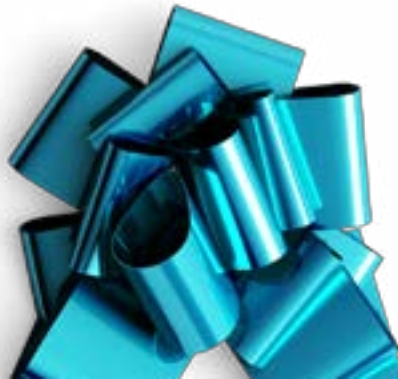
If the Cue and intention are sufficiently linked in your content, and **if they notice the Cue when it counts, your buyer will act** on their intention.



## **Motivate Decisive Action**

People will only act on their intentions if the result is rewarding enough. But memory doesn't influence action on its own—emotion and motivation also play a part.

Together, the three processes predict, measure, and recall the rewarding (or punishing) outcomes of a choice. Are you making it clear how your content enables others to **move toward something rewarding?**



## Getting the Gist of It

Your buyers retain very little and at random. So, you need to control the 10 percent they take away from Point A (your content), so at Point B (their decision), they'll remember and act on the most important information.

Science has coined what's known as "Fuzzy-Trace Theory," which states that people form two types of memories: Verbatim and Gist.

**Verbatim** memories are word-for-word, carbon copies of what you learned in the past. By contrast, **Gist** memories capture the general meaning of something from the past but they're less accurate and less specific.

Interestingly, Gist memories tend to last longer than Verbatim memories. This is because people's minds wander in and out of paying attention every 12 to 18 seconds. During these moments, the brain has an internal dialogue to make sense of the information and formulate a meaning around it, which sticks around much longer than the precise details.



Even if people don't remember specific details of your presentation, the exposure to the information can create a feeling of familiarity. The more people are exposed to something, the more they prefer it, assuming it doesn't move them away from what they consider rewarding.

Verbatim memory is harder to keep intact for a long time, but it's much stronger in the near term. So, it's important to consider when you expect your buyer to make a decision. Right after you talk to them? A week later? A month later? The answer determines what kind of information you need to share—whether you should repeat specific details (and fewer of them) or share more general information.

Do you need your audience to remember your message **verbatim** or **just get the gist**? Is a sense of familiarity sufficient for people to remember your message and take action in the future?

# Made You Look: Building Powerful Cues

To influence your buyer's future decisions, you need to use strong Cues in your content, which trigger memories later on and motivate your buyers to act on their intentions.

To affect your buyer's action at Point B, the Cues you communicate at Point A must closely match what your buyer will notice at Point B, and be distinctive enough to trigger a specific memory, even if they're busy doing something else.

**Cues are signals to act.** Constantly ask at Point A: Am I showing my audiences a Cue that attracts attention in a similar way to what they will see on their own?



**WE SHARE  
CONTENT HERE**



**THEY REMEMBER  
AND ACT HERE**

Research shows that when people choose to act, they rely on memory to **make decisions in 3 ways:**

## **A Reflexive Way**

People respond automatically based on past experiences.

## **A Habitual Way**

People repeat actions that have proved rewarding in the past. If you're part of people's habits, you've become part of their memory.

## **A Goal-Oriented Way**

People anticipate outcomes based on the past, but they can change their minds in light of new, more rewarding information.

# The Importance of Cues

To understand the importance of Cues, consider a simple example in which people are asked two rapid-fire questions and to blurt out an answer to a final statement. **It goes like this:**

What continent  
is Kenya in?

What are the two  
opposing colors in  
the game of chess?

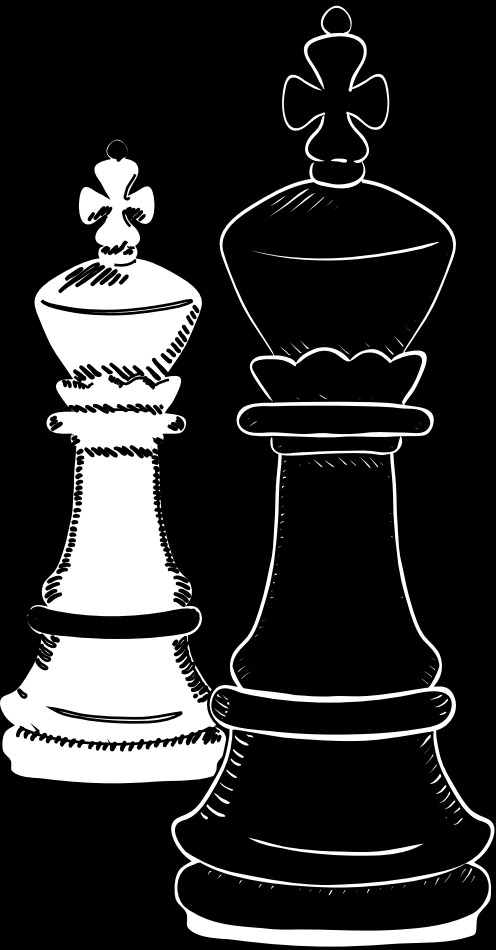
Name any  
animal.

Name any  
animal.

In studies like these, when asked all three questions, roughly 20 percent of people will answer "Zebra" to the last question. About 50 percent will respond with an animal from Africa.

But if you remove the first two questions and ask someone to simply name any animal, less than one percent will volunteer a zebra. By directing people's attention to specific stimuli (Africa, black and white), you can **influence what they will say or do next.**

This is because memories are stored in an associative way—related concepts are linked. The reminder of one spreads through a network of related concepts, making recall of a particular concept more likely. This is a subconscious and automatic process called "priming."





# Using **Reflexive Cues**

Size, shape, color, and other physical properties have the power to attract your buyer's attention to a Cue, almost despite themselves. And if you control where they're looking, you're one step closer to controlling what details they remember from your content.



**COLOR**



**SIZE**

Your audience can easily become distracted or confounded by visuals that look too similar. Their brain has to work harder to take in and create meaning from that information. But if you **direct their attention** to the information you want them to see **using automatic, reflexive cues**, you reduce the burden on their brain.

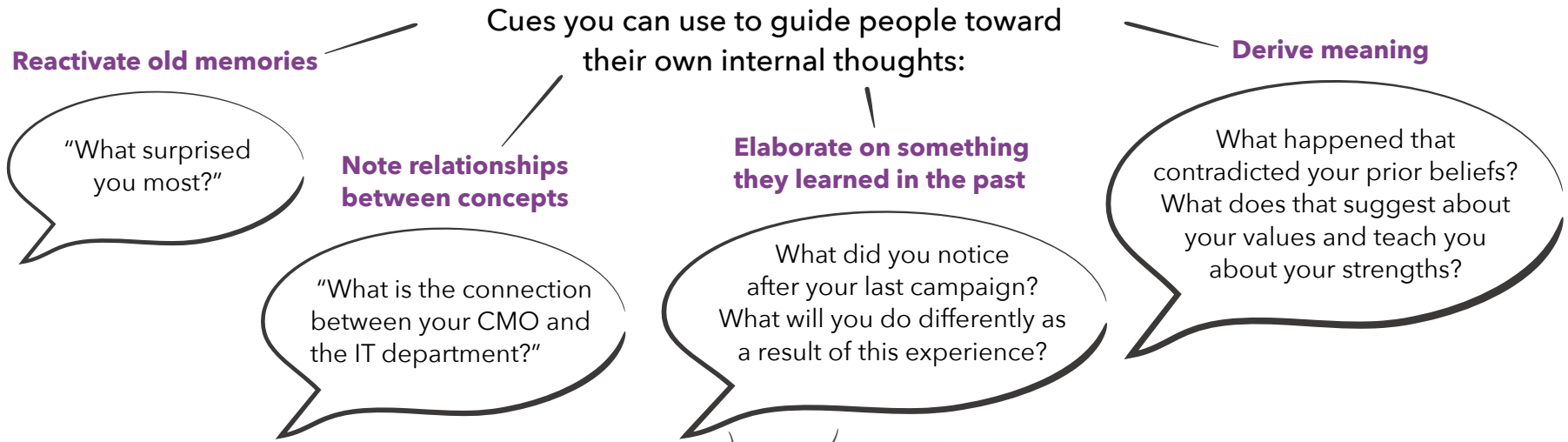
# Using Habitual Cues

People are more likely to remember new information if it relates to their existing habits. Once you know your audience's habits, you can use habitual Cues to direct attention from those habits to your message.

One way to do this is to give your audience Cues to focus on habitual thoughts. Then, link those thoughts to your message. These kinds of reflective questions help promote long-term,

Gist memory because you're asking your buyers to create a meaning around the information they're learning.

The **memories become even stronger if you reactivate** them on subsequent occasions over time. If there's something really important for your prospect to remember in two weeks, ask a few of the same questions you've already asked again, along with some new questions, to reactivate and reinforce their memory.



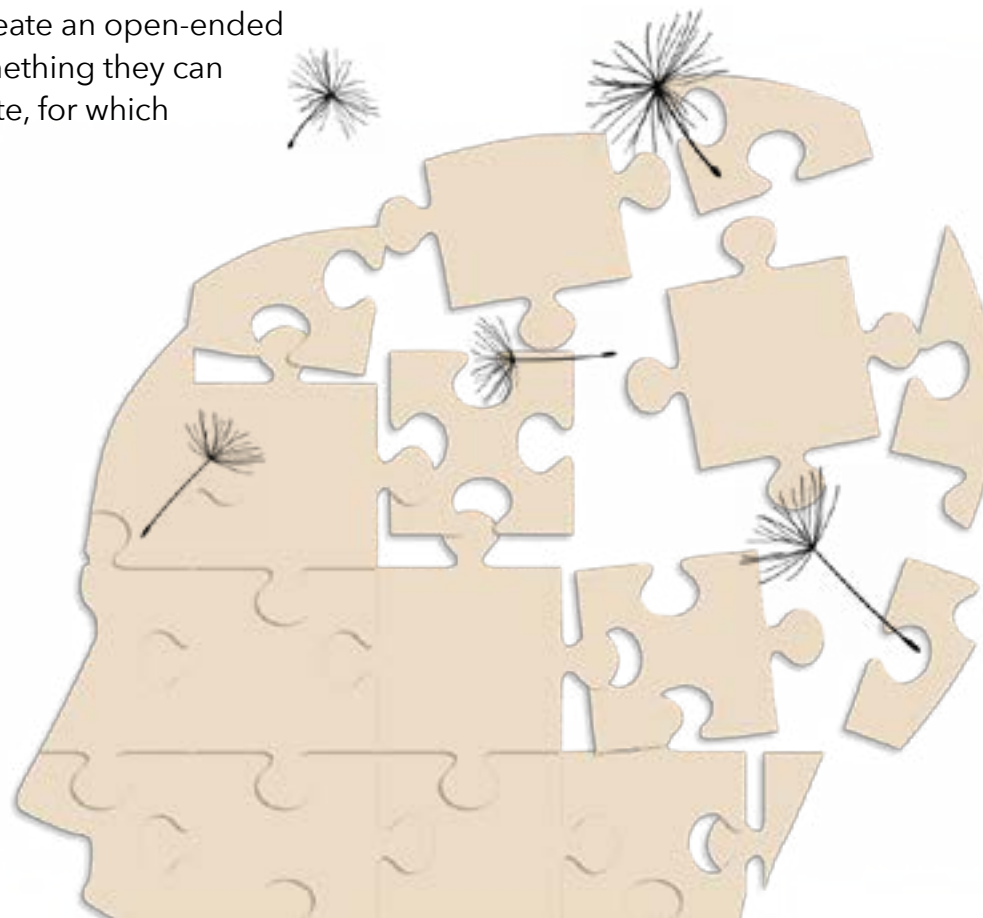
# Using Goal-Oriented Cues

Unlike reflexes or habits, goal-oriented Cues require some cognitive effort to notice, but they still get attention because goals are typically fueled by needs. And the fulfillment of those goals is rewarding.

The brain constantly seeks closure. And people tend to pay more attention to and remember more of what is not yet finished. That's why soap operas and cliffhangers are so effective—they always **leave viewers hanging** with one unexpected line or unresolved story.

Consider tying your message to a current but unfulfilled goal as a way to **be more memorable**. Or, create an open-ended goal for your audience—give them both something they can complete and something they can't complete, for which they'll need to return to you later on.

**Studies show** that asking someone to imagine for 30 seconds that they'll do something in the future improves the likelihood that they'll act on that intention.



# The Science of **Unforgettable Content**

Using the Prospective Memory Model for content creation, your goal is to become part of your buyer's future.

You create content and share it at Point A, connect it to your buyer's intention, and encourage them to remember to act on it at Point B. Using this approach, you can intentionally place memories in people's minds and use Cues to guide them toward future action.

Memory works on the basis of associations—one thing can trigger another. What Cues exist in your buyers' world that can trigger memories of you? How will you influence what you want them to remember, instead of leaving the process to chance?

The brain is searching constantly for the next and biggest reward. In the process, it balances ease and exploration. It goes back to low-effort habits that have proved rewarding in the past. And it seeks to **learn new information that brings better rewards.**



Are you going to be part of your buyer's next reward? When you develop content that hooks into rewards from the past but also provides new sources of rewards, **you become impossible to ignore.**

An elephant is standing in the middle of a city street, surrounded by yellow taxis. The scene is set in a city with tall buildings in the background. The elephant is the central focus, and its presence is highly unusual for a city street. The taxis are yellow and have a 'T' logo on them. The buildings are tall and modern, with many windows. The overall scene is surreal and attention-grabbing.

# Making Your Content Impossible to Ignore

You're only successful if people remember you. With Memzy, you can create and deliver content that's scientifically proven to make your message more memorable.

**[Contact Us to Learn More](#)**

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