

Gifting

PERSUASION

We feel the need to reciprocate when given something as a gift.



What can you give away? It could be a free account or upgrade. Maybe a free report (personal informatics are interesting). Perhaps a gift card. Make it something unexpected. And if other similar services are giving away the same thing, it's not a gift—it's expected.

See also: **Delighters, Variable Rewards, Badges**

Recognition over Recall

ATTENTION / PERSUASION

It's easier to recognize things we have previously experienced than it is to recall those things from memory.



Multiple choice or one-click options are an easy way for people to interact with a site. When asking people to list things from memory, try complementing (or replacing) empty form fields with defined, random or intelligent choices that people can click on or rate.

See also: **Visual Imagery, Limited Choices, Contrast, Feedback Loop**

Social Proof

PERSUASION

We tend to follow the patterns of similar others in new or unfamiliar situations.



To put people at ease or guide a decision, find creative ways to show social activity. This can be in the form of stats (favored by, number of views, comments), good positive reviews/ testimonials, or by providing visibility into the actions or outcomes of other users' behaviors.

See also: **Bystander Effect, Testimonials, Identification**

Curiosity

ATTENTION / PERSUASION

When teased with a small bit of interesting information, people will want to know more!



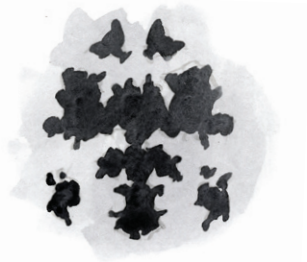
When—and what—can you hold back? Reveal just enough to arouse interest, then tease someone into taking the next step. You can also arouse interest by doing something unusual and unexpected—people will stick around long enough to determine what's going on. Similarly, puzzles are intriguing.

See also: **Pattern Recognition, Badges, Gifting**

Pattern Recognition

ATTENTION

Our brains seek out ways to organize and simplify complex information, even when there is no pattern.



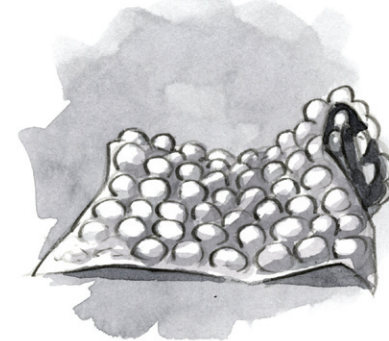
What information can you display in a way that arouses curiosity and encourages a pattern seeking behavior? Patterns can be found within a single page (a list of albums for example) or spread across a site (a curious icon set or color coding that make sense once the pattern is discovered). Also think about ways it might be beneficial to enable users to organize or label information—maybe make a game out of arranging things!

See also: **Juxtaposition, Feedback Loops, Completion, Curiosity, Gestalt Psychology, Visual Imagery**

“Delighters”

ATTENTION / MEMORY

We remember and respond favorably to small, unexpected and playful pleasures.



What can you use to surprise someone? Maybe it's a funny phrase or a compliment. It could be a small gift such as a hotel leaving candy on a pillow. Even the satisfaction of discovering a connection or solving a mental puzzle can help form a favorable and memorable impression.

See also: **Badges, Surprise, Pattern Recognition, Gifting**

Peak-End Rule

MEMORY

We judge our past experiences almost entirely on how they were at their peak (pleasant or unpleasant) and how they ended.



What are the peaks and endings in the customer experience you've designed? Peaks may be the core value you provide or a small surprise thrown into the user journey. Endpoints can be (1) obvious—fulfillment for an e-commerce site or (2) more subtle—like a registration confirmation page. Identify these and make them better. Focus on the customer's perspective—not your own.

See also: **Delighters, Surprise, Narrative, Gifting**

Want to see more?

A full Mental Notes™ deck will be available Spring 2010. In the meanwhile, I hope you find this sneak preview to be a useful and exciting tool!

This project began—like many things—as a way to make sense of something complex: the numerous insights into human behavior found in theories about game mechanics, the latest findings from neuroscience, best sellers explaining behavioral economics and many more sources! As a designer, I found myself thinking more frequently about how some of this psychology might be applied to my client work. But as you probably know, in the midst of a busy project it's all too easy to focus on the essentials and forget the nuances that distinguish great products. Mental Notes are how I've decided to collect these insights together in an easy reference tool. Of course, this personal project quickly grew into something I wanted to share with others.

3 ways you can help out:

PRE-ORDER THE FULL DECK (AT A REDUCED RATE!)

This project is largely (at some personal risk) self-funded. Printing costs, packaging and custom illustrations are quite expensive. Please go to www.getmentalnotes.com today and order an advance copy.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

In addition to pre-ordering the Mental Notes deck, visit getmentalnotes.com to maintain a discussion about these ideas. There's plenty more things to be said about each of the 50 Mental Notes, and I'd like to hear about ways you're using these ideas in your work!

SPREAD THE WORD

Twitter. Facebook. Mailing Lists. Please let other people know about this project! To maintain creative control over **Mental Notes™** a decision was made to forgo the typical publishing route. While this decision benefits the final product, it also means foregoing many of the distribution channels available to publishers.

Thank you!

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