



[Two Precise Steps To Getting Attention](#)

Three Month Vacation Podcast

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Hi. This is Sean D'Souza from psychotactics.com, and you're listening to The [Three-Month Vacation Podcast](#). This podcast isn't some magic trick about working less. Instead, it's about how to really enjoy your work and enjoy your vacation time.

On January 15, 2008, Steve Jobs stood in front of an audience and in his hand he had something that seemed quite boring. It was just an envelope, a yellow envelope, a manila envelope but, still, quite boring. Then he proceeded to take out a computer from that envelope, and that's when the audience gasped. What did Steve Jobs do that was so amazing? It's what you should do as a presenter no matter where you stand in front of an audience. It's what you should do when you're presenting something, a product or a service, and that's something that you should work on. It's called attention.

While we all seek attention, we don't seem to get as much of it as we'd expect. The reason why we don't get that attention is simply because we don't understand the elements of attention. Attention has two elements, novelty and consequences. We'll start off with the concept of novelty. What is novelty? Let's take the example of Sara Blakeley. She started this company called SPANX. SPANX is an undergarment that smoothes the contours of a woman's body, making clothes more flattering, making them more comfortable.

Sara was having a problem. She was having trouble making her first sale. That's because when you're presenting something, it's usually in a boardroom and some buyer is looking at your stuff and you're in a list of seventeen buyers or seven hundred buyers. For some reason, Sara decided to change the tactics. She decided to go with novelty. Instead of making the presentation in the boardroom, she decided to take the buyer to the Ladies' Room. There she was at a Neiman Marcus in Dallas and they go to the Ladies' Room.

To really make a point, Sara had worn some form-fitting white pants, and because it was form-fitting and white, well, you can tell it wasn't that flattering for a woman.



Then she pulled out her product, which she had called SPANX, and she put it on and the buyer saw the before and after. Right there and then, there was a moment of conversion. There was this flashing bolt of light and suddenly she was able to sell this product that she was having so much trouble selling before. What she found or stumbled on or figured out was this factor of novelty. The whole scenario of the Ladies' Room, the white pants, it being form-fitting, all of that combined to form this moment where it was impossible for the buyer to ignore. That's really what you're doing. You're making it impossible for the buyer to ignore you.

In this episode we look at the methods that you can use to get novelty going. We'll look at the length of the novelty and finally, we'll look at the connection. Once you've done your novelty act, how do you connect? How do you stay relevant? Where do you go from there? Let's start off with the first one, which is the methods that you need to use to get to novelty.

When I make the [Brain Audit](#) presentation, I do something very odd. I'll step into the audience and pick up a chair that no one is sitting on. Then I will get the chair to the front of the room and I will say, "I'm going to sit on this chair, stand up." Sit on the chair, stand up. Sit on the chair and stand up. Then I turn to the audience and say, "Did any one of you expect this chair to break? Why didn't the chair break?" What you've seen there is a demonstration of novelty. It's breaking that cycle of whatever people are doing. The method that was used in this system of novelty was to use the demonstration.

You can use stories, analogies, and demonstrations. Those are the most common uses of novelty. Whether you're writing an article, you're doing a presentation, you're in front of a client and you're selling some product or service, one of these three methods, stories, analogies, or demonstrations, are extremely powerful. The reason why they're powerful is more important, and that is because it breaks the pattern. When an audience or a client is expecting something and you've come out from left field, they are forced to pay attention. You are forced to pay attention when someone walks onstage and pulls out a computer from an envelope. You are forced to pay attention when someone starts to pull up a chair and sit on the chair and stand on it.

In another example, when I was speaking in Chicago, there were about two hundred fifty people in the audience. I don't know about you, but it's very hard to get two hundred fifty people to pay attention to you.



The topic that I was speaking about was pricing, about how to increase your prices without losing customers. How would you start such a presentation? I started the presentation with a video of New Zealand. That is novelty. It breaks that pattern in a matter of seconds. It doesn't matter what you are thinking or doing or thinking of doing. The pattern is broken. You have to pay attention.

When Tom Dickson wanted to sell his blenders, well, how can you break a pattern with blenders? When an iPhone comes out, it's extremely coveted. To destroy an iPhone is crazy. It almost flies in the face of reason, so that's what he did. He broke the pattern by going the opposite way. What he did was he took that iPhone and put it in a blender and crushed it to pieces. That got everyone's attention. He became a sensation on YouTube. The sales have soared since then. Whenever you look at this factor of how people have got attention, it's by going almost counterintuitive, that everyone expects you to go one way and you're going the other way.

When we go back to the sixties and we look at Bill Bernbach, he started up an advertising agency which is now called BBDO. He had a lot of these things. We had the Volkswagen, which is the Beetle. All of America was thinking big, big cars, big everything, Big Mac. His campaign was completely the opposite. It was think small. They started selling these Bugs, the Beetle Bugs, and they were about thinking small. In the car rental business, Avis and Hertz have been at each other's throats forever. It was such a delight, such an attention-getter when Avis said, "We're number 2. So why go with us?" Immediately, that gets your attention.

What we're looking at here is this attention-getter, which is this disruption in what people are expecting to get and what you give them. It's done through stories, analogies, demonstrations, and just plain counter intuitiveness, but at the very core of it, what gets attention is the novelty. If you're expecting me to say something and I say exactly that, you fall asleep. You have to find something that's going to wake me up. Yes, novelty wakes me up, but what about the length of that novelty? How long should I go before I stop?

When we read a novel, we tend to find a lot of description; the character is being built up. The same thing applies to movies; the character is being built up. When you're communicating, you don't have that build-up time. Let's say you're [writing an article](#), you've got maybe a paragraph, maybe two paragraphs of telling a story or a demonstration or creating some kind of analogy.



That's it. Then you have to go and connect. You have to continue. You have to go to the next section. You can't stay in the novelty for too long because the novelty wears itself out.

The same thing applies with [presentations](#). When you're standing there in front of an audience, you don't have half the presentation to get the novelty across. In fact, it would be boring. When you sit on that chair, stand up, sit on the chair, stand up, that's quick. When Sara Blakeley went through the whole routine of changing into SPANX and showing how it made a difference, that was quick. The same thing applied to Blendtec where he spun those iPhones around in the blender. Again, it's quick. It doesn't have to be very quick; it just has to be quick enough. The novelty lasts for a few minutes, and this applies to reading or speaking or anything.

If you're standing in front of a person, making a presentation, you've probably got a few minutes, maybe three or four minutes. If it's an article or a sales page, you probably have less time; you have twenty seconds, thirty seconds. The novelty of a story, demonstration, or analogy doesn't last very long. It's best to get there, not to be too hurried about it, but to tell the story and get out of there. Pretty much like you've heard in the podcast here. There's a story, it shows up, you get the point, and then we move on to something else. That something else is the third part in today's episode, and that is the consequences.

When you look at a story like Little Red Riding Hood, yes, it's a story. It's a novelty, it's very interesting and kids love it. The little girl is headed to her grandma's place and she's taking some goodies for grandma. Then along the way, she meets the wolf and there are consequences, not just for the girl but for the grandma as well. There is a moral to that story, but before we get to any kind of moral, we are looking at two distinct phases. One is the whole novelty of the girl meeting the wolf and then the consequences.

Sometimes the consequences are not so apparent. When Sara Blakeley shows the before and after of SPANX, those consequences are apparent immediately. When Steve Jobs took the MacBook Air out of the envelope, there didn't seem to be many consequences. In the Steve Jobs presentation, the consequences are in the lightness. When you don't have that light MacBook Air, which was billed as the lightest notebook, well, you've got a heavy computer.



These messages are driven through the media and in the presentation. When you went with Avis instead of Hertz, it was to show you that Hertz is number one; they don't care. Number two, we have to care. In many cases the consequences are either stated or implied. When you're making a presentation, when you're speaking to a client, you cannot afford to let it be implied. You cannot afford to let the client figure out what the consequences are. You need to tell them.

When I'm making a presentation on pricing and I show them this video of New Zealand, the next thing I talk about is [The Three-Month Vacation](#) and how pricing affects your ability to go on vacation and how you have to work a lot harder and money is not easy to come by. What happens is a very unconnected topic like the video on New Zealand then connects nicely into pricing with consequences. When I do the Brain Audit presentation, sitting down, standing up, sitting down, standing up, what are the consequences there?

Again, the consequences are explained. It's how a chair is built on science and how marketing doesn't work on science, how it falls apart, how we raise thousands of dollars just buying some crazy system that's supposed to be working tomorrow instead of understanding the science behind it and why things work. Then the audience gets it. We've gone from a stage of novelty to a stage of consequences, and that's how you get and you keep that attention. You can do that very, very quickly. It does take some practice. All of the great stories and demonstrations and analogies, all of them have to have this little practice routine before they go live. Once it goes live, you'll see the results for yourself. You'll stand up and people will pay attention. Then you'll drive home the consequences, and they'll want to know how do I buy into whatever it is you're selling?

Yes, that brings us to the end of this episode. Let's do a quick summary. We started out with the methods of getting attention. We saw that the methods are usually a story, an analogy, or a demonstration, but at the very core it has to be almost counterintuitive. It has to be something that the audience or your client is not expecting to hear, and that gets the attention. It snaps the person to attention.

The second thing you want to do is you want to figure out the length. The length needs to be short enough. In an article, that means a paragraph, maybe two paragraphs. When you're meeting a client face-to-face, you'll get three, four minutes. Anything more and you're just pushing the boundaries.



Novelty lasts only so long, and then you have to move to the next stage, which are the consequences. That was our last section, which was the consequences. Sure, you can have implied consequences, but it's very dangerous because the client needs to know specifically what are the consequences of not taking that action. You should bring that in your presentation, in your speech, in your article, in your sales letter.

There you go. Novelty and consequences, and you get attention. What one thing can you do today? We covered quite a lot. The important thing that you can do today is to look at whatever you're saying. Whatever you're saying is what you'd call intuitive. It's what you've trained yourself to say. How about going counterintuitive? Let me give you an example. I started writing a series on writer's block this week, and maybe I'll make it into a booklet, maybe a book, but I went counterintuitive. How would we do this intuitively? How would we come up with a title? We'd say, "How to avoid writer's block." Mine was counterintuitive. It said, "How to get writer's block." Notice how it gets your attention? That's what you want to do, that one thing.

This week, try and do one thing that is counterintuitive and you'll see how it just gets the attention of your audience. Then move to the consequences.

Yes, that's the end of this episode. If you haven't already rated this podcast, please do so at iTunes. If you have a list and would like to share this podcast with your list, please do so. I'm telling you because unless you tell, things don't happen. On another front, if you've been struggling to finish your book or your e-book, then there is a workshop and this is at Psychotactics.com/dc. It's three days. It's a lot of fun. More importantly, it helps you understand the structure of how to finish a book.

A book is very frustrating to write, and the reason why it's frustrating is not because of the whole factor of the content. You already have the content in your head. It's how you structure it. When you are able to structure it quickly, put the book together quickly, your client is able to do the same. They're able to read it, to consume it. As a result, they come back for more. They come back for more consulting, for more training, and for more books and products.



That's psychotactics.com/dc. We'll see you there on May 5th, 6th, and 7th. That's it from [The Three-Month Vacation](#) and Psychotactics.com. If you haven't been to Psychotactics, go there today. Bye for now.

Oh and before I go—Can I ask you a small favour?

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