

The Blog Squad

Interview with Dr. Rachna Jain

Does Psychology Matter in Social Marketing?

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Interview with Dr. Rachna Jain, Chief Social Marketer, Mindshare, Corp.
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Denise Wakeman: Hi. This is Denise Wakeman from The Blog Squad. With me today is my friend and colleague, Dr. Rachna Jain. I'm going to do a quick interview with her because she is a specialist on the psychology of social media. I thought this would be a really important topic for you to learn about.

Welcome Rachna.

Dr. Rachna Jain: Hi. Thank you so much for having me.

Denise: Rachna, I'd like it if you could give a little bit of the nutshell version of your background so my viewers can get a sense of why I'm talking to you about this topic.



Rachna: Absolutely. I'm trained as a clinical psychologist. I hold a doctorate in clinical psychology. I worked for many years as a psychologist. So I did psychotherapy, I did assessments. I began working online in 1998. I used the Internet which is very different than, as you know, than it is now. I used the Internet to sell my practice. People got really interested in how I was getting clients from the Internet. They would ask me questions like how do you use the Internet, how do you make connections with people, how do you get them to contact you. I would give them all of the information but they actually wanted me to start doing it for them.

So I actually got into marketing for other services and businesses. Then with the advent of social media I began to see that social media really is a marketing channel that relies very heavily on psychology and sociology. I began studying how it is people are getting attention, how they're making connections, how they're making relationships, how social media is really changing our attention spans and the way we're interacting online. I put together some information that I think will be really helpful related to the psychology of social media and how you can use it to build your business and brand.

Denise: Excellent. We've been talking about this for the last few days that we've been hanging out here together in the Blog Squad headquarters.

Rachna: Which is super secret and I've been really privileged to be able to see it.

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Denise: Why don't we first set the stage here? Why does psychology matter? Why is it important in social marketing specifically around building visibility online?

Rachna: Absolutely. That's a good question because really the first question is "why do we care", right? The reason we care is because psychology is really the study of the way that people perceive the world, the way that they interact with each other and the way that they feel about themselves. It's really a study in some ways, of the way we perceive our world and how we interact with it. The thing is, the social part of social media is really about interpersonal connection, how we communicate, how we share our ideas online.

Really, having an understanding of psychology is key because any time you're dealing with people the more you understand about how people think, why they think the way they do, the more you can tailor your message so that it actually has them pay attention to you, has them hear you. That will help you increase your visibility. I really see understanding group dynamics, understanding communication styles, understanding attention- I have a clinical specialization in neuropsychology. I'm really interested in the brain and behavior. I'm interested in how we grab attention and keep it. That all relates to concepts of online visibility.

Denise: Is there any psychology research that supports this study that you're doing, this interest that you have specifically in social marketing that we should be taking into consideration?

Rachna: Absolutely. There are quite a few studies. Let me just give you a couple of them in the interest in keeping this from being too long. One of the most- I want to say oldest-it's the longest term studies. It really shows that it's a concept that people have been concerned about for a really long time. It comes from 1977 where a psychological researcher actually studied a phenomenon that says that ***when people see you more, they like you more***. The shorthand is that familiarity breeds likeability.

The extra piece of that is you become more likeable the more that people see you. Especially if you're seen as giving them value or good content or information. Fast forward to 2010 and we see that that's really one of the cornerstones to successful social media. That we be seen everywhere and we give people a lot of value so they ultimately are going to like us. Remember that people always choose to do business with people that they like. Your degree of visibility and your degree of likeability directly will correlate with your degree of profitability.

Denise: Excellent. Now, we've been talking about this over the course of a few days. You mentioned something called "priming." Can you talk about priming and what that means and how that relates to this?

Rachna: Absolutely. Priming is another psychological concept that you can use to build visibility-I call it influence, building influence online. Priming refers to the

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idea that people can be guided to think, behave, or feel certain ways based on information that they're given. If we take it from the psychological perspective, a lot of the priming work has been done by John Bargh. What he's done is he's actually shown that he can change people-the way they walk, the way they talk, what they talk about by presenting different combinations of words and phrases, images and phrases.

For example, he did a study with college students. They were all young and vibrant coming into the clinical testing room. He took video of how they came into the room. He sat them at computers and then he showed them a lot of words and images that had to deal with being old, being infirm, and being in pain. So he showed them pictures of elderly people, he showed words like painful, arthritis, things like that. What he actually found is that every single one of those students left the room slower, walking differently and complaining of pains or aches that they didn't mention prior to coming into the study. There's a little bit more to it but that will give you the sense that words and images are really powerful.

So how this applies to you in your online visibility is that basically it speaks to the idea that you can use the combination of words, phrases, images, your videos, all of your different marketing channels to **create a feeling or an experience in the lives of the people who are watching you**, the lives of your audience. Most people don't think about this consciously. They kind of just put themselves out there and they say, "However people perceive me is how I'm perceived." That's actually ill-considered. It's not really taking very good control of your persona or your reputation.

A better way is to take a step back and be thinking about how it is you'd like to be perceived and then making sure that you're using photos, images, words, phrases, videos on you. All different channels that Denise talks about in order to present the image that you want to present because you can actually impact how people think about you, how they feel about you. Then of course, how they respond to you. In business it's whether they buy from you, work with you and refer you to others.

Denise: So be careful what you're putting out there online, right?

Rachna: That's exactly right. Google doesn't forget. Anything that you put up online or anything anyone says online I'm very certain is archived somewhere. We really want to be very conscious and very careful about how we're putting ourselves out there. Especially as the rate of information becomes more and more rapid. Denise, I know you've been working online for a long time. You've seen how fast information is changing and how fast it's transmitted. There are studies that say now that **we get more messages in a day than our grandparents got in 10 years** or something like that. It really speaks to the accelerated rate of information. Really, it's very important to think about how you want to present and use the psychological concept of priming to your advantage.

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Denise: Can you give a specific example of how you might use priming in a blog post for example?

Rachna: Absolutely. One of the first things that you may do in a blog post is when people come to your site, think about how it is you want them to feel. The idea of this information super highway is that we're running around stressed looking for information all the time. We don't have a lot of time. We want data and information or whatever we're looking for. We want our questions answered very quickly. You can use priming to your advantage by starting off saying something like, "I'm really glad you're here. You're going to get some really good information about 'xyz'," whatever your blog post may be about. You can use images that convey that. If you want your readers to feel confident or empowered you can use images that convey that. Be sure at the end also to explain to them, again to remind them of what you taught them and what you can take away from it and how to implement in their lives.

Really the idea is you want to give them a frame, you want to give them a bookend. This is what you're going to learn. You tell them or teach them whatever you want to say. Then you want to remind them what you told them and why it was so valuable. We would find if you could be in the mind of your readers, they're going to walk away thinking that was one of the most valuable blog posts that they ever read simply because you did the bookending and saying it really is valuable and here's my content. Remember that this was so valuable, this is how you can use it.

That's a simple example of priming. Even then the connections you share, the relationships you make online, who people see you with. We talk about it in terms of social proof. If you are hanging out with all of the top people in your industry you're automatically seen as a top person as well. That's another form of priming. It doesn't use necessarily words, it uses images. People tend to associate you with the other top players in your industry. That's part of the reason everyone wants to take pictures with the really well known people like Denise in order to be connected to them and be seen as somehow related to them or valuable.

Priming happens on so many different levels. It happens all the time. You can use it also in your consultations with people. I don't want to go too far on that. The thing is, is that there's a reason why if you look online people say things like, "This is really powerful information. You're getting it for free. Aren't you lucky?" That's all priming in action.

Denise: Okay, great. Where can viewers learn more about you and your work with psychology and social media?

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Rachna: I have a great audio interview that I would like to offer your readers or your viewers if they're interested. You can access that at www.mindsharecorp.com/go/freeaudio.

Denise: That's an interview that goes much farther in depth about the psychology of social media.

Rachna: Yes. It's about building influence in social media. You're going to hear a little bit about SWAP again. You'll hear about Bargh, but there are definitely probably at least 5 or 7 other strategies that I talked about that you can implement right now to build more influence online.

Denise: Terrific. Thank you so much Rachna for being my guest today. Blog on.

Thank you for reading to this interview with Dr. Rachna Jain. If you have comments or questions about the interview please [post them online here](#). You can get more information about business blogging and boosting your visibility on the web at <http://buildabetterblog.com> and get a free e-course at BoostYourVisibility.com.

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Thank you!

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