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Consulting Ltd.

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Advice *squeezed*
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*Happy Christmas, Hogmanay and
New Year from everyone at
Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd*



Nudging Noel Numpties

Richard Thaler, an American Economist, won the 2017 Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences for his work on integrating Economics with Psychology, or as it is more commonly called, Behavioural Economics

Thaler was particularly lauded for his work on Nudging, which has provided a much more scientific understanding of how people think and behave when making economic decisions. Whether it's how to tax the Brits more skilfully, what people invest in, what they smoke, whether they opt in/out of organ donation, or what they buy the family for Christmas, Thaler and his co-author Cass R. Sunstein¹ have provided a hugely important insight.



We all need a wee nudge now and then...

'Nudging' might be paraphrased to mean the altering of people's behaviours without their being aware, not by compulsion, but by clever 'positioning', whether literal or metaphorical. It can be highly persuasive.

In case you're not familiar with the Scottish term 'Numpties', it refers to people who lack knowledge or have a misconception of a particular subject or situation. I start there because my first reaction to nudging is to question whether it is even moral. I think that it is, in *some* cases, provided that the nudge (a) is based on good evidence, (b) does

not include bans or have a bias in the payoffs that result for the initiator, (c) is a force for good, and (d) allows an even-handed choice. This last provision could immediately mean no nudge is moral, as the choice is always deliberately biased, and is selected to steer the responder, like a coxswain, in a pre-set direction, albeit a 'good' one.

Here are two examples: First, many school canteens now encourage healthy eating by putting the good food at the front where it is easily seen, and the fat sticky buns at the back of the counter.

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In this edition:

Nudging Noel Numpties

By Ewan Pearson

Ewan looks at how nudging may help or hinder you when advising clients

In a manner of speaking

By Lynda Russell-Whitaker

Lynda examines the effect of good telephone skills

Voicing our thoughts on corporate and commercial voice-overs

By Richard Keith

Richard advises on what makes for the best voices on your corporate and commercial communication

Stuffed BATNA with all the trimmings, please!

By Alastair Grant

Alastair helps us understand where BATNA fits into a negotiation and why it's important



Nudging Noel Numpties

... continued

Secondly, The UK Dept. of Health has used nudging to increase organ donation by making the default position that you are opted in; you have to choose to opt out. This is good for us, but it seems very 'nanny state'. Note that this is a different approach to, for example, the advertising used to get people to give up smoking or speeding.

I want to explore here how nudging might apply - if at all - to managing and advising clients. Do we think that you should create nudges, or is this immoral, somehow cheating? Is this approach an insult to clients, treating them as numpties when we should serve them with trust and integrity?

These are hopefully longer-term moral dilemmas than we face with the Christmas shopping, and are mullings you can all ponder at will whilst you finish Christmas mulled wine and the cold turkey off.

In the advisory environment, there have always been nudges, and these have largely gone un-noticed. And no, I don't mean the 'pick me, pick me' option over your competitors.

Here are five examples:

1) Within your own and your client's options, where you place your preferred option in the sequence, with the Primacy and Recency effects (going first and last) among the better known.

2) The presenting of what at least seem like equally weighted options on your advice with subtle but persuasive narrative arguments put in favour of the option that is desired most by the client: "You can choose equally from a, b or c, but b is best because..."

3) The use of slides to present one option as better than another by both the design and positioning in the deck.

4) Something put in pre-text or an appendix is always de-emphasised vs. an argument put in the main deck. This is a common approach to risk factors, and I think this does explain some of the many bad investment decisions we have all

made. Hence why regulators are always taking regulation back in the direction of putting risk front and centre, for example with the important but tired health warning that when investing, "*the value of your investment can go down as well as up*". This warning is very tired, and whilst totally valid is ripe for a freshen-up.

5) The use of vocal and visual tools. We may not even be aware we've done so, but we introduce nudges, or bias, into what we say by the way we say something, dialling up the vocal enthusiasm and visual gesturing when we have a preference for one option over another.

Speaking of refreshing tired warnings, there is a lovely example you will have seen if you've travelled much with British Airways. Their safety video used to feature avatars and one voice over, telling you how to buckle your seat, position yourself for an emergency landing and so on. Now they use well-known and admired actors, and the video purports to be an audition for their roles in the safety video; it uses a lot of humour and wit, as well as higher production values. I have since watched for the passengers' reactions, and noticed that now almost everyone on the plane (including me!) watches the video, starting from the point that they notice there is something new and funny to watch. I am sure this nudge will improve passenger behaviour; it also makes BA a slightly more fun airline to fly with, which is good all round...

Nudging is already there in advisory work, and also in other CRM scenarios such as pitches, sales meetings and sales calls. So long as we use nudging to steer the recipient in the better direction for them, are even-handed and don't treat people like numpties, I think this is acceptable. You may differ!

Happy Hogmanay!

By Ewan Pearson

Reference: 'Thaler, R. & Sunstein, Cass R., (2008) *Nudge: improving decisions and health, wealth and happiness*, New Haven: Yale University Press

Advice *squeezed*
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‘In a manner of speaking’ – talking on the telephone



Whilst speaking on the phone may be a dying art, we shouldn't neglect the importance of doing it well



Lynda Russell-Whitaker

Following a few customer experiences this year that were less than satisfactory, I felt it was time to write an article on the subject of telephone manners.

to do was make some enquiries regarding changes they were making to customers' accounts including an increase in charges, based on literature I had received in the post.

Reflecting on the differences between these poor experiences and other good ones, I think that they are more about the intention and manner of the person providing the service than the service itself. By 'manner' I mean tone, rather than the alternative meaning of 'manners', although let's face it, that goes a long way to appeasing typical customer frustrations.

After going through the usual slow, automated dialing system, the person I spoke to seemed to be less informed on the changes to charges than I was. He then didn't offer to investigate further, or transfer me to someone else who might have been able to help me. As we finished our call, he gave me no indication or assurance that he would take the necessary follow-up action, or even go and learn about his own bank's fee changes! I was left feeling irritated and no wiser as to my options.

Rather than focus only on the negative experiences and some misremembered nostalgia for the 'good old days' of excellent telephone etiquette, I thought what might be more useful for the SpeakUp! readership would be to highlight some comparisons, contrasting some negative telephone customer service experiences I have had this year with some high-quality ones.

I had a rather different and this time mixed example of customer service last month when I was looking around to find a local supplier to replace all four tyres on my car.

These experiences had me wondering how might we all might contribute to improving the quality of our telephone conversations. The more aware we can be when engaging with each other on the telephone, the more we will listen and respond appropriately.

Making a call to the local branch of a well-known supplier, I was stunned by the offhand, casual telephone manner of the person on the other end of the line. Not only did he not seem to be bothered about the potential business, it actually seemed as though I was inconveniencing or interrupting him with my call.

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After some further online searching, I found AA Tyres who were far more friendly, but their customer service was erratic. After dealing with one individual on the phone who kept trying to sell me two tyres rather than the four I was trying to order - surely some sort of Monty Python-esque joke on how to sell - I called back the following day when I hadn't received email confirmation.

"For the last time, I was not mis-sold PPI!"

Unfortunately, the same person answered again and once more tried to sell me two tyres! If I hadn't been determined to change all my tyres, all those customer service 'Cold Buttons' being pressed would have put me off entirely.

My first example is a negative experience, and is one that I suspect you can all relate to as it is disappointingly common: It happened earlier this year when I called a branch of a credit union where I have an account. It isn't my primary current account, and all I wanted

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‘In a manner of speaking’ – talking on the telephone.....continued

On the day of the work itself, the job was done so well that when they had finished I booked my car to stay there for a regular service. The person who had changed my tyres kept in touch with me throughout the day to let me know when he would be arriving with my car. It was a very different and much higher level of professionalism from that of the telephone customer service representative at the same firm.

By further contrast, this year I have had a very positive experience with my primary bank. I have needed to call them a few times this year, and found their service to be very high quality.



Dealing with people effectively on the phone is a skill that can be developed

Even if the customer service rep couldn't solve my immediate issue (and more often than not they were able to resolve matters), the impression I've been left with is that they always take a high level of pride in their work and care about delivering a high-quality service and experience for all their customers.

It's very obvious to me that the call staff at my primary bank have been well-trained and possess a high degree of emotional intelligence, and that should always be a pre-requisite for being employed in such jobs, as well as ongoing professional and customer service training as well as ongoing measurement of the key indicators for these metrics.

I'm sure we would all agree that when working in any kind of customer service role, being able to manage well yourself - your emotions, motivation and your behaviour is a high priority.

Taking all this into consideration, I'd like to suggest something a bit radical: that as customers we all think about our *own* emotions, behaviour, attitude and tone prior to picking up that phone to make a call to a supplier.

Remaining calm and polite usually helps our cause more than anger and frustration when dealing with a customer service representative who either can't be bothered, has not had proper training, or not been properly briefed by (for example) their internal and external communications department.

Similarly, when answering the phone for your enterprise, it's important that you really engage with the person on the other end of the line, especially if it's a potential customer or an existing client.

Referring to my article on *active* listening in the last issue of the GPB SpeakUp! Journal, Edition #62, active listening is indeed not a passive exercise that one can just assume we will get right. It takes training beforehand, then energy and focus during the call itself to engage fully with our interlocutor.

Self-management is not easy in exasperating situations, but usually it's more effective in achieving the desired result, and usually greatly improves the experience - and the rest of our day.

Happy holidays to you all.

By Lynda Russell-Whittaker

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Voicing our ideas on corporate and commercial voice-overs



As the voice of your firm, a professionally trained voice-over artist can bring your story to life with the impact it deserves

The way that clients expect you to communicate with them is evolving. It is becoming even more important to use digital channels to reach new and existing markets – these channels include corporate videos and commercials.

The voice-over on these is crucial to ensuring each video has the specific impact that you want.



The sight of sound: a diagram showing volume changes in a voice recording

We've all been affected by the sound of someone's voice. It may have been a piece of professional communication, or it could have been in your personal life – we've all heard someone speak and thought "wow, that sounds terrific". We've also heard the opposite...

Sometimes we are affected in a more subtle way. Occasionally, we'll hear a voice and subconsciously react to it: that is, we hear it and are moved, but we don't necessarily attribute our resulting thought or action to the sound of the voice we've heard. But that doesn't mean the voice wasn't responsible for moving us in a particular way.

As you know, we specialise in voices. Here at GPB we use a great deal of scientific analysis to advise clients on the elements that contribute to a wonderful voice: we know what makes your voice sound as good as it can, and ultimately we know what makes you sound persuasive.

Of course, we also understand the artistic and creative elements of effective spoken

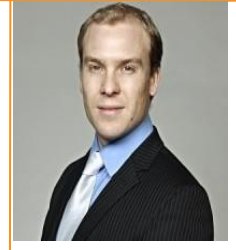
communication that help to ensure that words come to life in a natural but impactful and memorable way. You'll be pleased to know that we adopt the same balanced approach of art and science when we do corporate and commercial voice-overs. So what makes a good voice-over really stand out?

Authenticity. Whilst this is important for all communication, there is an added layer here. If we don't have any visual cues (i.e. facial expression, gesture etc) to guide us, it is even more important that the voice sounds completely believable. The voice-over artist must sound relaxed and conversational rather than 'performed', but perhaps more importantly, they must sound utterly knowledgeable on the business and industry about which they are speaking. This is especially true when the artist is delivering a voice-over that isn't dialogue with another person but is, rather, a 'conversation' with the audience. If they don't sound as if they belong to your company, nobody is going to believe what they are saying about it.

Pitch modulation and emphasis. Whilst our old friend "the pause" is important, creating effective pauses becomes more the job of the director and editor for a voice-over. However, bringing the story alive is down to the artist, and good pitch modulation (going up and down in pitch, frequently and with purpose and for an effect) adds dynamism and engagement to the delivery. In addition, using pitch modulation to emphasise key points (e.g. names, figures, essential benefits) will help the audience hear the most important pieces of information. This helps key points stay in the minds of an audience, which is very useful.

Be comfortably surprising. The great artistry in any voice over is to deliver lines in a way that surprises a listener in a good way. The skill of taking words and turning them into stimulating and impactful communication is a real talent.

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Richard Keith

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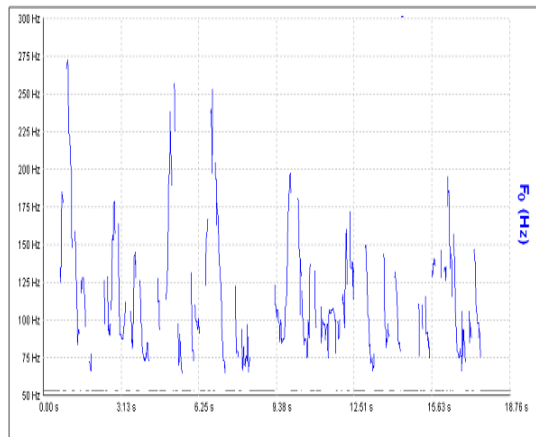




Voicing our ideas on corporate and commercial voice-overs ... continued

If a voice-over is too different to what listeners expect then the audience is put off; if it's too similar then they get bored.

You want a 'Goldilocks' performance – this is what imprints a voice-over onto the mind of an audiences long after it has finished.



The peaks of excellent pitch modulation. We want Alps, not gently rolling hills!

Emotional congruence. We have always been upfront about the need to engage the emotional aspects of clients' decision-making process. You need to tap into their emotions by being honest about yours. When your words say one thing, you have to make sure that the sound of your voice aligns with this and conveys the same message. A voice-over is no different. In fact, because of the aforementioned lack of visual clues, it is perhaps even more important to make sure what is said and how it is said align to tell the right story.

Have something really good to say. Whilst the sound is essential to a quality voice-over, there is no doubt that the really impactful and memorable voice-overs have at their heart intelligent and stimulating words. Like the old saying goes, you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear – so avoiding gimmicks and lazy content always helps the finished product sound fantastic.

Understanding and delivering on all of the above makes for something really worth listening to.



The best recording equipment in the world won't help if your content is no good

As Christmas approaches, and our ears are exposed to the numerous voice-overs from the worlds of advertising and marketing, why don't you set yourself a task? Listen to the voices (no, not those in your head, that's just the eggnog talking – I mean those on the outside of your head on the TV, Radio and Internet) that are delivering the voice-overs.

As you listen try to analyse them, ask yourself and others: Are the voice-over artists using good pitch modulation? Are they aligning the emotions of what they are saying and how they are saying it? Does the voice match the brand image being conveyed? If the answer is no to any of these, how could it be improved? As always, if you hear any really good – or bad examples! – we'd love to know, so please email us.

Merry Christmas & Happy Listening to all!

By Richard Keith

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Stuffed BATNA with all the trimmings, please!



A full helping of BATNA may be just what you and the UK need this coming year

BATNA is an ugly acronym, perhaps conjuring up thoughts of some dubious foreign dish made of unknown ingredients. It is actually is an acronym developed by Harvard University's Negotiation Project, and in particular work by Roger Fisher and William Ury, starting in 1981, and stands for: "*Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement*". Harvard argues that planning your BATNA is a key part of phase one preparation of any negotiation.

In November, Daniel Finkelstein, wrote an article in *The Times*, a UK newspaper, about BATNA in relation to the UK's exit from the European Union, commonly called BREXIT¹. The general idea is simple enough: What happens if your negotiation fails to get the outcome(s) you want? What is the alternative, Plan B?



The UK and EU: are they heading in different directions?

Finkelstein argues that Britain has a weak BATNA: No exit agreement would mean *inter alia* no trade deal, and although some argue that no deal is better than a bad deal, others are horrified at the prospect of arriving at a situation that would appear to harm all parties.

Finkelstein argues our position is so weak that the best BATNA is to play for time, although he acknowledges that the UK Prime Minister's speech on 22nd September in Florence was an attempt to improve our position by using emollient words like "partners" instead of implied enemies, showing an appreciation of their position and that we would continue paying contributions for a period. I think

Finkelstein is being a little pessimistic, as I can see other ways of improving our BATNA. I will come back to that.

We believe that planning your BATNA is much more than "what is your Plan B?" It is a logical process before starting to negotiate, identifying a list of alternatives, should your negotiation break down. There may be a number of options, among which you must try to identify the best option and least worse option (they may be the same). Rank these by probability and do it for both sides.



The UK and EU are playing a dangerous game of chess with Brexit talks

The next step is to see how you might improve your BATNA: In 1475, France's Louis XI knew he could not defeat England's strong army under Edward IV, so he negotiated to pay a substantial sum up front and an annuity for the rest of Edwards's life (which turned out to be short, as he died in 1483). Louis bought the English off. He entertained the English army to 48 hours of eating, drinking and merry making. He even offered to get the Cardinal of Bourbon to forgive Edward's future sins as he was committing them.

The English returned home, thus ending the 100 year war. Louis remarked: "*I have chased the English out of France by force of meat pies and good wine instead of a long, protracted and costly war*".

He knew his BATNA! Could we do the same with BREXIT? Jean-Claude Juncker does enjoys a glass or two. Probably not!

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Alastair Grant

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Stuffed BATNA with all the trimmings, please!... continued

Our Services

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd is a respected adviser based in London. We enhance the performance of businesses, helping clients to excel in the use of the spoken and written word, improving the performance of individuals and teams. Over the long term our work improves the way a firm does business.

We coach and advise individuals to perform at their best in the toughest situations including: Presentations, New Business Pitches, Business Development, Negotiating, Media Interviews, Telephone Calls and Document Writing.

We also produce scientific voice, visual and content analysis reports, which are unique to GPB. We then provide voice and visual coaching, and content advice.

Our clients' needs are the only focus of our work; we listen to them and closely tailor our response to deliver first class coaching and advice. In support of this we selectively pursue new ideas and approaches, continually hone our advice and create tools such as:

- Voice, Visual and Content Analyses,
- Prospect Relationship Management (PRM),
- the Information Iceberg,
- Client s' Rights Act,
- Feature, Benefit Impact (FBI),
- Buyers' Criteria Analysis, (BCA), and
- our Q&A Methodology.

So, seek ways - maybe with some lateral thinking - to improve your BATNA.

However, that's not enough. As I've said, you need to also identify the other parties' BATNA. In the case of BREXIT some of this may be easy to identify. But Britain is dealing with many voting states, and their BATNAs will differ. Have we worked out those differences? I think not.



Sometimes the writing is on the wall when it comes to negotiation

The next step is to find ways of weakening their BATNA. We know that German car manufacturers will not want to resort to WTO rules when exporting their fine cars to Britain. In Poland their BATNA may well be more about defence and treatment of the many Poles who work in the UK.

If you consider that your BATNA is so weak that you are in a position that the other party can dictate terms, then you must create a different BATNA. Writing in *Harvard Business Essentials: Negotiation*², Danny Ertel described how Colbún, Chile's third largest producer of electricity managed to do this.

Colbún was at a severe disadvantage in negotiating leverage. Chile had to bargain for transmission capacity with the transmission arm of its main competitor who would, of course, have Colbún at its mercy and demand an exorbitant price. Colbún couldn't therefore purchase such capacity, so decided to set about creating its own transmission line manufacture. Feasibility plans were made.

Construction contracts were put out to bid. This approach worked as the other side steadily reduced its price quote as Colbún's BATNA progressed. I decided to try a bit of lateral thinking in response to Finkelstein's view by writing a letter to *The Times*. To my surprise and pleasure it was published on 23rd October as shown below:

"Sir, We contribute 2 per cent of our GDP to defence compared with 1.2 per cent by Germany. Most countries are well below 2 percent, although eastern Europeans, Poland in particular, have increased spending where the threat from Russia is most felt. We spend about £38 billion a year on defence. Supposing in our Brexit negotiations we offer to increase our spending on defence to 3 per cent, in place of a £10 billion or £20 billion payment, as part of the package?"

This would shame those countries not pulling their weight but also be helpful to a German chancellor who might like to increase defence spending but lacks the support of the German population. It would also be warmly welcomed by eastern European countries and the U.S. Such a move could be a win-win for all parties except Russia."

Alastair Grant, Royal Marines, London SW14

The Harvard Business Review has a really useful set of tools covering many subjects. The BATNA checklist is amongst them. See <https://hbr.org/businessstools>

Happy BATNA!

By Alastair Grant

¹ GPB's website, gpb.eu, lists many new words. Click the link on the right side under Recent Press.

² *Harvard Business Essentials: Negotiation*², available from Google and Amazon books.



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