Ep94 - Interview: Susan Weinschenk, author of 100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People, on the psychology behind effective user experience

MichaelAaron Flicker: [00:00:00] Welcome back to Behavioral Science for Brands, a podcast where we bridge the gap between academics and practical marketing. Each week we sit down and go deep behind the science of some of America's most successful brands. I'm MichaelAaron Flicker.

Richard Shotton: And I'm Richard Shotton.

MichaelAaron Flicker: And today we're sitting with Dr. Susan Weinschenk behavioral scientist, writer, speaker, and a leading voice in applying psychology to design and user experience. Let's get into it. Susan, welcome to Behavioral Science for Brands. We're so excited to have you here today.

Susan Weinschenk: I am so glad to be here.

MichaelAaron Flicker: We have, we always like to do a little feature on the folks that come on the show.

So if you'll let me, if indulge me just for 30 seconds, I'll give our listeners a little background on you and then we can have our conversation. So Susan, you are the Chief Behavioral scientist and [00:01:00] CEO at Team W, where you consult with everyone from large companies to startups on how to apply behavioral science to create more effective communications and experiences.

You're the author of a number of influential books including 100 things that every Designer Needs to know about People, which as we were talking about before the show started, is packed. With practical science-based strategies for influencing behavior that Richard and I are huge fans of, and you've spent over

30 years studying what motivates people and how to design the way humans actually think, decide, and behave.

We're thrilled to have you here to have a conversation and learn from you. And our listeners love stories, so we thought we'd start with an opening story. How did you get introduced to this world of behavioral design, applying psychology to user experience? Where was your first moment where you [00:02:00] learned about this field and got interested?

Susan Weinschenk: Oh, well, we're gonna go far back in time. Far back in time. And I'm not even gonna tell you the year, although as I described the scene, you might, you might start to guess. I don't know. So I was in graduate school and I have a PhD in psychology and, and I went to graduate school at Penn State University and they have a language requirement for graduate students, but they had this weird twist.

Where you could opt to take a programming language instead of a foreign language. Oh, it's, and I was kind of like, well, I don't know. That sounds interesting. I had never pro done any programming, so I said, I'm gonna do it. So I sign up for this programming class. Now I'm, this is so far back that to, to program the computer.

You did it with these cards with punch cards. You may have seen that in some old black and white [00:03:00] movies or something. And so I, I did my first program. I'm all excited. I hand it to the guy who runs it through the computer and then you wait, 'cause you didn't talk to the computers, you didn't interact with them.

I wait for my printout to a peer and it was like some program that was supposed to add up some numbers and give you an answer. And it came back and it said job aborted. And I thought, what? And, and I, and I still remember the moment I'm in this building. 'cause I remember looking at the clock and thinking, wait a minute, this, this kind of communication to humans, it's not gonna work.

How are we supposed to get anything done with computers? If this is the way it communicates? The computers should be communicating in ways that work for us as the humans. We should [00:04:00] design for humans. Right? And that was the moment. Now I didn't realize that this was already a thing. You know, I was studying psychology, how people think, how people learn.

I didn't know that psychology and computer science had already been put together, all field called, you know, human factors. I didn't know about it, but

that was the moment that I said, this is what I wanna do. I wanna apply what I know about psychology and behavior to the design of technology so that it works better for the people.

And that, that was my aha moment and, and then everything came from that.

MichaelAaron Flicker: When you think back on that story and the career that you've had since then, the technology is changing so rapidly. How has the human factors, how has the, the, the computer's ability to interact in the way that you were hoping back then?

How has that changed as the [00:05:00] technology has gone through so many so many evolutions?

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah. You know, it. The, the technology has changed a lot. Humans don't change that much, actually, you know, it takes them kind of thousands or hundreds of thousands of years to change. So it's been very fun and very interesting.

To see the cycles and, and you know, I've been doing this long enough that I got to see all the cycles. It's like, oh yeah. Graphical user interfaces. Uhhuh Uhhuh. Very excited. Uhhuh. Yeah. Oh, the internet. Yeah. Yeah. Very excited. Oh, ai. Very excited. Right. I've gone through all of those and it's kind of interesting to see the cycles of how we apply what we know about humans.

To the design of that new technology, whatever that new technology is. Obviously, you know, if you're just talking about the technology being user friendly, that has [00:06:00] improved, you know, immensely in many ways. But I also find it kind of funny that right now, at least with some of the AI tools, guess what, we're back to just typing.

Yeah, in one line it's like, wait a minute, we did this before, a long time ago. And then we're back to that, you know? But it's been very, it's been very fun and very interesting and, and it ...

But it never, it never stops. You never get to the point where. Oh, we don't need to think to worry about that anymore.

We always need to think about what is the human reaction to the technology that's, that exists?

Richard Shotton: And you've put together a, a, a brilliant book, a hundred things, every designer needs to know about People. How long into your career was it before you, you wrote that? [00:07:00]

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah, that was let's see. That was a couple of decades in, and that, that was such a interesting book because that started actually not as a book that started in 2008 as a series of blog posts.

You know, blogging was very big in 2008. Right. And if you were gonna, you know, be an influencer in those days, if you were an influencer, you had a blog. That's what the influencers had and. So I thought, I'm gonna do this thing, I'm gonna do this blog. And I was like, what am I gonna blog about? I had I had watched a movie, uhoh, I'm not gonna remember the name of the movie.

It was the, it was the movie about the woman who was blogging the recipes, Julia Child recipes, and what was the name of that movie? See, I should remember it. Maybe I'll remember it before we're done. And it was based on a true story.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Julia, Julia, and Julia. [00:08:00]

Susan Weinschenk: Yes. Yes. And, and she had started a blog by doing that.

And I was, I remember I, I read the book first and. I was thinking, well, maybe you know, that's what I should do with my blog because people like to go on journeys with you, and that's what she did. And I said, so I'll do a journey, I'll do a hundred things. And I just made up that number and then it was like, oh my God, I need to come up with a hundred things.

Once I got started, I couldn't stop. I had to have the a hundred. So that's how it started. And I, I, I guess actually got to a hundred things. And then I thought, you know what? I think I, and that was not my first book I had written. Some other books before I thought, I think I should make this into a book.

And so that's, that's how the book came about.

Richard Shotton: And, and I love it as a, a format. That was the first book of yours that, that I bought. And I think part of the attraction was, you know, [00:09:00] it's easy and digestible and I love that. Practical sim simple.

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah. I can tell you of all my books, it is the most popular book.

So that was the right decision to do.

Richard Shotton: And in the book you cover lots of different areas. Maybe we could cover some of those and some of the, the most important bits one of the areas you talk about is how you grab attention, how you get them to focus their attention or, or whatever you want to communicate.

Could, could you take us through maybe one of the best tactics for, for grabbing bill's attention?

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah. And I, I think, you know, I'm gonna, I am, you're probably gonna hear me say this the rest of our time together. It depends on the context, right? But I would say if, if I were just giving blanket how to grab attention, probably two things.

One is we wanna grab the attention of the, part of the, the [00:10:00] pre attention. Visual cortex. So we want to just change one thing, and color is probably the most important. So if you really wanted to grab someone's attention, everything on the screen, if we're talking about a screen, would be black and white.

And one thing would be this big pop of color, right? And that just, that triggers a certain part of the brain. It's just a quick automatic trigger and they're gonna notice it. And you know the mistake. We make is we have, this is color and this is a different color, and that's a different color, and then it doesn't work.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Hmm.

Susan Weinschenk: Our brains are not triggered that way. So that would be one thing. And then the other thing I would say is, again, if it's visual high a face showing a lot of emotion. Okay. Because again, there's parts of our brain that are particularly attuned to faces and parts of our brain that are particularly attuned to faces showing high emotion.

And tho, [00:11:00] you know, that would be what I would do that would grab attention. Yeah.

Richard Shotton: With that point about faces have, have you explored why? Is there an underlying reason why people might disproportionately pay attention to Facebook? Yeah.

Susan Weinschenk: There's actually a part of the brain called the fif formm facial area, FFA.

It'll be on the final, so pay attention, taking notes as we go soon. There's a particular part of the brain, the FFA, and that's its job is to pay attention to faces. It's also not just paying attention, so it'll notice right away when something looks like a face, even when it's not a face. Like you know how some cars have like two headlights and a gray paraia looks like a face.

Yeah. So, but anything that looks like a face. It grabs immediate attention and also it processes very quickly the emotion of the face. So that's why, yeah, that's I

Richard Shotton: think, a tactic that some brands have started to use. So you've got Amazon, they have a little arrow that makes to the A to Z, so it looks like a smile, it looks [00:12:00] like a face or the craft mac and cheese pack has a little ma upturned piece of macaroni to look like a smile.

So clever ways that businesses have started to, to, to hack that. And in a busy environment like a store, they get a bit more attention than their That's right. Surrounding brands. That's right. Have you seen any other brands cleverly use this, this idea

Susan Weinschenk: of, of faces?

Richard Shotton: Hmm.

Susan Weinschenk: I think I mean, I think a lot of brand, I don't know about particular brands doing it, but I know a lot of websites that will do it.

You know, if you have I know a couple of medical device firms mm-hmm. You know, they make medical devices. But if you go to their, their homepage, what you'll see is this smiling patient who looks like she's just been cured, you know, with their, with their device. So the interesting thing about faces is that we can [00:13:00] also combine that with storytelling.

So the picture is not just of a face showing emotion, but because of what they're wearing or where they are or who else is in the picture. It's all automatically evoking a story and our brains like stories. So then we start. To, you know, and you gotta understand most of this is unconscious. Like, we're not even aware of it, but we're already starting to tell ourselves the story about this woman who has just been saved by this medical device.

And she's very happy, you know, and that's all going and in a split second, that's all going around and it's having an impact on us.

MichaelAaron Flicker: We've heard, we, we've heard you talk about that, that people process information better in story form and how designers can harness stories. It sounds like you're starting, you're starting to give us a little insight into this, but how can designers harness stories to better communicate?

Susan Weinschenk: [00:14:00] Well, one way is what I just said. Yes. Make sure in your images, you know, don't forget stories are not just words. Right. So make sure that in your images you're telling a story, but, but you can use words and you can tell stories and, and so anytime you're presenting I mean that same medical technology company, I remember looking they were a client of mine and I remember looking at their.

Annual report to investors, right? And it started with a story about a patient and what the device had done for her. And then it transitioned into all the statistics about how many devices and how many people in the revenue. And, but it started with that story 'cause we know that. People like stories.

They process information better in story format, you know, and, and obviously I keep referring to the brain, and that's a lot of the work that I've done, right, is, is [00:15:00] attaching what we know about the brain to then what we can and should do in our communication. But there's a, the research on the brain shows that when someone is listening to a story, their brain parts of their brain are activating as though they were the actor in the story.

And obviously it's not exactly right, but if the story says, and then this person, you know, reached for the, this, there's a part of their brain, the, the pre-motor cortex. Pre-motor, not the motor cortex that'll make them reach, but the premortal motor cortex actually starts to activate as though they were reaching.

So there's a real, you know, it becomes very personal to us. And there's. There's research that goes back to the 1880s. I love going back to the 1880s that's even older than me. You know, Gustav Fray tag, who analyzed the best stories in Western [00:16:00] civilization, and there's a whole story arc. You wanna use, there's like a, a, a story format that really works.

It's pretty simple. You gotta set the scene, you gotta have some, you gotta have a character, a main character that can either be a good guy or a bad guy. But it's gotta, you gotta have a main character, then there has to be rising tension. Ah,

something's happening, something's happening. And then you get to that highest climax point, and then there's the falling tension.

Oh, it's gonna get resolved. It's gonna get resolved. And then there's the resolution. And you know, so even when you're, and I, I mentor people a lot and I'm like, you use this format. All the time, even like you're presenting to your stakeholders about some research you did with users. Tell it like a story.

Oh, the problem was that the users couldn't find what they were looking for [00:17:00] and then we, what we did was we changed some things on the screen and now look at the numbers. They can find what they're looking for, right? I mean, it's like, yeah, just whatever it is, use that story arc. You know, why not?

Richard Shotton: That's a really interesting way of thinking about it, that these aren't. Tactics that are just used when you are writing a novel or producing an ad. We should think of these tactics as something we use in very kind of everyday situations. Like presenting, like persuading in a In a client meeting.

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah. Yeah.

MichaelAaron Flicker: And do you think that's so effective because. They're now along for the story. They're thinking about it in some way as if it's them in the story, you're reference. Yes. And that's why it's more engaging because

Susan Weinschenk: that's why it's more engaging. 'cause now they've identified they're part of the story.

It's not just information, but they're emotionally engaged. [00:18:00]

MichaelAaron Flicker: Fascinating. We've heard elsewhere that you've said people are inherently lazy. Yes. And you, and our question is, how can people adapt communications or products to reflect that, to be aware of that, to, to be cognizant of that?

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah. You know, I love Daniel Kahneman's work.

Mm-hmm. His book Thinking Fast and Slow, and he talks in there about. You know, system one thinking and system two thinking. And the idea is that we're actually all walking around most of the time not thinking that much. Like, and, and it's, it's, it's adaptive, right? If we were deeply thinking about, you know, walking out to our car, we, you know, we, we'd never be able to even make it out to the car.

So this is very adaptive. So we walk, we're all walking around in the world, just not even paying that much attention to anything and. That [00:19:00] means our brains are trying not to work hard. Trying very hard not to consciously work hard, and we, we have to understand that. So whenever you make something hard to do, difficult, hard to understand a lot of steps, people, you're just gonna lose people.

They're, if they have a choice, they're gonna say, oh, forget that. You know, if they don't have a choice, they'll slog through it, but they'll just get more and more confused. So, you know, this is the whole idea about making things easy. And usability and you wanna make it as easy as possible. You wanna eliminate all those moments of friction.

And especially there's a, in the user experience work that I do with clients, I talk about I didn't invent this term. I don't remember who did invent this term, but moments that matter. Right, because there's particular, you know, when they have filled out the form and now you want them to press the button to submit it, or when [00:20:00] they're initially looking at the website, but you want them to click on that donate now, or whatever it is, what is that moment, that moment that's really important.

Make sure there's no friction around that particular action because. You, you, you only have so much brain power that they're gonna be willing or able to commit to, to what you're asking them to do.

Richard Shotton: Now, when we first started talking, you said you might mention this a few times, that context is super important.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Yeah.

Richard Shotton: And I know in. Your books, you've also said, well, there are, okay, wait a minute. Make it easy. Hugely important principle. But you said there are some occasions where actually adding a bit of friction in Makes sense. Can, can you tell us when UX or, or product designer should add in a bit of, of friction?

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah, so this is, you know, that's always right. You, you're making these generalizations, but then it doesn't always hold well, here's an [00:21:00] analogy I like to use, which is. If I said to you, oh, listen, I have just designed a game. I decided I wanted to be a game developer. I have this new game, you are going to love it.

You don't have to think at all. There's nothing difficult to look at on the screen, and there's nothing you have to do with motor. Like, you don't have to use a, you know, stick or press any keys or anything. You're gonna love it. You'd go, that sounds like the most boring game in the world. Like why would I want that?

Right. So we have, we have to balance, there are times when you want to add in friction and you, you want that to either be cognitive or visual or motor or a combination to add engagement and interest. And that's what we're always balancing. Is, how easy is it to use versus how [00:22:00] engaging does it need to be?

If it needs to be interesting and engaging, I have to build something in. Right? But you wanna do it carefully because. Cognitive by the way, is the most expensive, meaning it uses the most brain resources. If people have to think, if they have to remember, if they have to decide. That's using a lot of brain energy, so that's gonna be expensive.

Visual is next. It doesn't take quite as many to find something on the screen. Things are coming at you right where, find information visually, and then the least taxing is motor, right? I have to press a button, I have to use a mouse, I have to use a gesture. So you can use any of those three, but you just wanna do it carefully and find that right place for your situation.

Where do you get. Enough engagement, but not so much friction that people will give up.

MichaelAaron Flicker: It strikes me in these long form [00:23:00] journal journalism articles. The most common new features are the scrolling infographics. So you're using the motor of your thumb to pull through, but actually very little text and actually so less it's, it's less text and visually and cognitively.

You see the part of the map light up and you get a half a sentence. You see something else change and a little bit more information. So it's. I, I wonder if that's an example, a modern web, mobile web design of using motor more and visual and cognitive less.

Susan Weinschenk: It is. It is. And there's other things going on there though as well, because again, with the brain because that's tapping into habit and that's tapping into dopamine.

So there's, pavlov's work back in the early 19 hundreds taught us that we can become conditioned. We can have [00:24:00] learned responses to particular triggers or events, and that, that, and, and it is, this is really what a habit is. We, you know, that's what habits really are and. These become stronger and easier to create these learned responses when they involve a little bit of motor or muscle movement.

So that. That scrolling thing that we're doing, it becomes, it's just this habit thing. Then that, and it's also tied to dopamine. 'cause every time we scroll, we get a little bit more information. And dopamine just loves informa, dopamine's released in our, in our brains. And dopamine makes you curious. It makes you want to learn more.

Oh, so now I just keep, I do it again. Oh, there's something new and then I learn more, and then I release more dopamine and then I will do this again. And you just get into these dopamine classical conditions, [00:25:00] loops. That's why it works so well combined with what you just said. Very. It is a very good insight that it's a little bit of work, but not that much.

Right. Not that much.

Richard Shotton: Have you seen any other commercial examples of people adding in a bit of friction? Very successfully.

Susan Weinschenk: I, it's, it's very, it's really tricky. I've seen people do it poorly.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Okay. Where

Susan Weinschenk: Let's make it hard. I've actually had clients that said, well, because we decided we should add some friction.

We are making it hard to find. Which button they should press to. It's like, no, no, don't do that.

Richard Shotton: Don't do that. That's the moment that matters. Keep that. Yes. Yeah.

Susan Weinschenk: So I think what you have, I, so I don't know that I've seen a lot of really good examples of that. I think you have to use it very, very carefully and, and just make sure you're not doing the moments that matter.

Yeah. So that you're using, you are using [00:26:00] it to en engage people and hold their interests long enough to get them. To that moment that matters, and then you do away with all of it.

MichaelAaron Flicker: How about an example of you know, these most new cars have these auto steer features where if you're veering off the lane, it rumbles the steering wheel just a bit to get you back into the center of the lane.

Is that an example where they've introduced some friction and some interruption to your driving? But to grab your attention or is that Yeah. Am I in the wrong neighborhood?

Susan Weinschenk: No, no. I think they are. I think they are. I, I have a funny story about that though. You please. My funniest story. Yeah. So I was on a trip to meet with a client and I rented a car right.

And a car I'd never driven before. And I get on the highway and I'm driving in the big city tra you know, outside of the city traffic [00:27:00] and, and as I'm driving, I feel this vibration. In my butt. Okay, now I'm wondering if you're gonna edit this out because that the

MichaelAaron Flicker: problem unedited the long cut

Susan Weinschenk: and I'm thinking, oh my God, the car must be like, falling apart.

It's a brand new car. And, and so then I just, you know, ignore it. And, and there it is again. And it keeps doing it. And I'm like, and then, then I made the connection instead of the steering wheel. It was in the seat and it sometimes it was on the right side, and sometimes it was on the left side, and sometimes it was both.

It was. So annoying. Yeah. And then I, you know, I had to pay attention 'cause then I was cracking up, right? Yeah. And laughing hysterically while driving. So ...

MichaelAaron Flicker: the wrong place for friction, that was the wrong spot to gimme friction.

Richard Shotton: So in so many ways,

Susan Weinschenk: who thought that out?

MichaelAaron Flicker: That's amazing.

Richard Shotton: Well, I [00:28:00] really like this division of cognitive visual manual. Yeah. I've never thought of friction in those three ways because. I think you are right. I, I struggle to think of examples of people doing it well. The couple I can imagine are all about manual friction or I think that's the phrase you used.

So the two that I think of were the apple box, like apple, when you are buying it, when you're setting it up, moments of matter maybe is very, very frictionless. But when it actually arrives in your house, you don't just tear the pack off in a second. There's. Literal friction. You know, there's a kind of suctions as it were.

Yeah. And your point about it makes it interesting. It gives it a special status. Yes. So, so, so I hadn't thought of that categorization, but it seems to work with Apple. And then the other one where I think it worked really well, but unfortunately I, an accountant has removed it, I think was the sand Pellegrino fizzy drinks, like kind of premium fizzy drink.

They used to have a foil lid on it. [00:29:00] That's a bit of friction,

Susan Weinschenk: right?

Richard Shotton: It doesn't need any thought. Doesn't

require you to look a different place. It needs

Susan Weinschenk: little special, a little different.

Richard Shotton: Yeah, but it makes it special. So I, I really like this categorization. I think that's a very useful,

Susan Weinschenk: yeah. And that, and, and that, that characterization, it's called human factor loads.

And that goes back to like the mid 19 hundreds that was first developed by the, you know, pre usability, pre user experience of it was the people who were just working in this field called human factors. Came up with that kind of characterization and I think it really holds well. It really, it still holds because it's just, you know, this is the way humans are.

Right. Cognitive, visual, motor.

Richard Shotton: Fantastic. Fantastic. So, so another maybe us on to a slightly different area. Yeah. Another part of the book is all around memory.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Mm-hmm.

Richard Shotton: And that is a, you know, hard task for any commercial communicator. How do you get your message remembered or how do you get [00:30:00] the information that you wanna convey, remembered.

Could, could you give us a couple of, of, of tips in that area? What are some of the things that people could use from, from psychology to boost the chance that their message is remembered?

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah, I guess I would say there, I think there are three main ways, two of which might be more powerful than the third.

One is repetition, right? Just repeat, repeat, repeat. We know that in the brain the brain connects. Repetition with familiarity and familiarity with positive.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Mm-hmm.

Susan Weinschenk: The brain unconsciously likes things that it's familiar with, that it knows about. And if you repeat something enough, it becomes familiar and then the brain says, oh, yeah, yeah, I know that.

I've heard that before. I like that. And, and then we'll remember it. So repetition is one. Another one is, is [00:31:00] connecting the information to something that's already known. So if you can connect the information as it comes in, this is especially true for adults. There's an interesting thing that happens during adolescence before adolescence.

Every time new information comes in the brain creates like a little new neuron branch for it. And that's why children can learn so quickly and so easily. And then during adolescence that kind of changes. The hormones change it and the brain kind of prunes things back and after adolescence when new information comes in, it will not stick unless you can attach it to something that's already there.

This is why, by the way, children who learn a little bit of, even a little bit of a foreign language. Before adolescence, later on in life when they go back to learn

that it's easier for them to get. [00:32:00] Whereas for if they haven't, it's like it's harder. It has to connect to things. So I think that that's useful if you can connect it to, to what people already know.

And then the last one is emotion. So we process memories differently if they are emotionally charged. They get processed through a different brain network than if they're not emotional. And this is why you see, you know, in commercials, you know, they'll have, there'll be some big emotional scene, some car race, and then at the end the guy gets out holding a can of a particular soda or something and Right.

'cause now that connection has been made between that brand and just a heightened arousal state. So that's another way that you do it, is if you can really get emotions going, a higher arousal state, and then the message, it'll just [00:33:00] process differently and it'll stick longer.

Richard Shotton: I mean, so you've got repetition,

Susan Weinschenk: repetition, emotion,

Richard Shotton: emotion and connecting to something.

No.

Susan Weinschenk: Yes. Have

Richard Shotton: they got those three? The most surprising one for most listeners would probably be the connecting to something already know. Yeah. Could, could you give an example of. How, how that could be applied. So if someone is a communicator, whether it's commercial or, you know, in a meeting, is, is there a way that they could use that principle?

Have you seen any good examples? Yeah,

Susan Weinschenk: yeah. So you just, you want to, instead of just saying okay, you know, here's the new information, right? And then you just give them the new information. You first say. Yeah, you probably already know that. And then you, you bring up that body of knowledge that it is you, you are pretty sure is [00:34:00] already in there.

You already know this, you know? Did you know now we're gonna take the new thing. That there's another way to look at it that's a little similar related, but a little bit different, right?

MichaelAaron Flicker: Mm-hmm.

Susan Weinschenk: So now I, when I'm learning this new thing, I'm not just learning it outta nowhere. You've, you've already stimulated the part of my brain that holds the memory and the information about item number one.

You're attaching it. It'll just make it much easier to come in and much easier to remember that way.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Brilliant. That's a literal way to do it. In a meeting, you help them open their card catalog in their brain, go to this section and pull it up. There may be lateral ways to do it in a commercial. You know, your example where you can show something like a big open field with the wind blowing or the top of a [00:35:00] mountain, and that accesses this idea of, of being outside or feeling free.

And then you could insert the new, the new thing to it. So to your point, that visual, it doesn't have to be in words. Your, yeah. Your point is that we can do it through site sound in motion as well. Yes. Mm-hmm. So helpful to hear. Do. Do you think that you've seen one be more effective than the other two, or you said when you started two are probably more than the third?

Yes. Two of, so I'm wondering which is I? Which is which? Yeah.

Susan Weinschenk: Oh, should I make you guess? Which one is the least? Effecti? No, we should make

MichaelAaron Flicker: Richard guess. Alright,

Susan Weinschenk: Richard. So we had the three, we had repetition, we had connected to something you already know, and we had a high emotional charge. So I think two of those are more effective than the third.

Richard Shotton: Oh, okay. I mean, I would go, so

Susan Weinschenk: which one is the least effective? [00:36:00]

Richard Shotton: I guess it would depend on how, how emotional, how reti, how, how much repetition. But I'm gonna go for the two. But I think the biggest, I would go emotion and repetition

MichaelAaron Flicker: and I'll guess, yeah, emo i, I think it's emotion and connecting to something already known.

Susan Weinschenk: I hate to tell you that Richard's right.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Oh, per usual. Per usual. Thrilling.

Susan Weinschenk: And I told you there wasn't a final, but there was. Yeah, basically there really was.

Richard Shotton: I felt like I'm back at college. Excellent, excellent.

MichaelAaron Flicker: This probably would've represented how we would've done had we gone to school together. So this is all, this is all stacking up just perfectly. So fascinating discussion so far. So many of our listeners work on brands that cross culture. And Susan, we wanted to get a chance to hear you think share how does. [00:37:00] What we've talked about today how connect to culture, how does culture how does design, how do you think about design when you're communicating to different cultures?

You know, what's your thought on coloring culture? You know, any, anything you could share with us on this?

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah, i, I, I think this is so difficult in so many ways because you know, it, it's important and we know it's important. Yet on a day-to-day basis, it's just hard to, to, to remember and to take it into account.

We're, we're so, we're so enmeshed in our own culture, and this is true not just for culture, but you know, even generational differences, right? There's, there's look, for the most part, we're all humans in our brains work the same way. So that's the good news is that most of the stuff that, that I talk about in, in [00:38:00] my books and in my talks are true for pretty much everybody.

But there are some things that really do are affected by culture and, and yet it's messing and hard to, to, to deal with that. You know, you're, you're developing an app for everyone in the world. How are you gonna take. Specific cultures into account. But if it's important, you know, I, I had a client and they were

developing an app primarily for young people in certain parts of Asia, and it's like, okay, well here's problem number one.

This thing is being developed by you know, 30 year olds in the us. We got a problem here. You know, we have to build into the process engagement with people in that target audience and who know that target audience or it, or we, we know [00:39:00] it's going to fall flat in, in some way. We don't even know how, but it probably will.

So the things that matter. Color matters. Color ha has certain meanings. You know, red means. Stop or danger in, in some cultures, and it means good luck and fortune in other cultures. White in some cultures means clean and antiseptic, and in other cultures is the color of death, right? And so the, these are kind of important about how you're using those colors.

That's one thing, the amount of color. The amount of visual stimuli is different. There are cultures where the, the expectation is that things will be very colorful and there'll be a lot on the screen. And then there's cultures where if you show, if you show the very colorful, busy screen.

People will just go, oh, [00:40:00] what's that? You know, they're just not used to it. And then ano, so I would say color, I would say amount of visual clutter or, or things. And then the last one that I find really interesting is what some, an idea called progressive disclosure. So one of the. Really good ways of lowering that cognitive load is to not show everything all at once, right?

To give people a little bit of information and then they can click to get some more information. And that's a very, it's called progressive disclosure, a very effective technique, except not in certain parts of the world, where if you do that, that causes mistrust. Then they say, why aren't you showing me everything all at once?

What are you hiding? Right? And so if you didn't know that and you used progressive disclosure, you know there's [00:41:00] gonna be this one segment over here where if that's part of your, your audience, you're in trouble because they're gonna say, I don't trust anything these guys are doing. So you have to, you have to really partner with people who are in that culture when you're doing your design.

Richard Shotton: I, I really like that as a bit of advice 'cause it's such a, a simple thing to do that so often gets overlooked. But many of these kind of catastrophic areas would be avoided if you just had some people in the team

who represented a particular culture or ethnicity that you are, you are selling to. Or you.

The one example that I, I, I love of a, a brand failing to do that and having awful consequences. I think it's a General Motors brand, but in Britain it's called a voxel. So you get voxel cars and they had a a type of car probably back in the eighties, nineties called De Nova. Right. It sounds like kind of [00:42:00] new.

They'd launched it in spade and Novar means literally doesn't go. Right. So

how many Spanish speakers had, it'd been a party that's decision's go how much money would've been saved if if they had, yeah. So, so great bit of advice. I love that. Yeah.

MichaelAaron Flicker: We're coming up to our end of time, but

Susan Weinschenk: okay.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Before we come to a close let's try to squeeze in at least one more question.

Susan Weinschenk: Okay.

MichaelAaron Flicker: A hundred is a lot of things to remember.

Susan Weinschenk: Yes.

MichaelAaron Flicker: If we asked you to pri rank, prioritize the top two or three that you think. Commercial users, communicators could most, should most remember, if we couldn't end today's talk without the top two or three, could we force you to rank some of your Yeah.

This [00:43:00] is like things you think are most effective.

Susan Weinschenk: Which of my children are my favorites? Right. Is this the question question that you're doing to me? Yeah. Sus, I have a hundred of them. Okay. Okay. I'll do it. So let's see. I'll pick three. How's that?

MichaelAaron Flicker: Perfect.

Susan Weinschenk: I would say one of them we've I would pick one of the ones we've talked about, which is if you wanna grab attention visually, pick one thing, like one color.

Don't overdo it. If you just wanna grab attention, just pick one feature. That would be one. Another one I would say has to do with memory which is people. Can remember process information only three to four things at a time. And it's interesting 'cause not only it does that have to do with remembering and processing information, [00:44:00] it also has to do with satisfaction of their choice.

There's interesting research that shows if there's just a few choices and people are more satisfied with what they chose. So I think it's really important. Don't give people 10 choices or. 10 things to remember. Three to four. That's the number. And then I guess the last one I would pick is just remember that most decisions are made unconsciously.

People are not really consciously aware. All this stuff we're talking about is largely unconscious. You can't just ask people, do you want this or do you want that? Would you prefer it this way or that way? Because they're gonna make up an answer and they're gonna believe it's the right answer, but it's probably not, not true.

And so you've gotta test. You gotta test things out. You can't just ask [00:45:00] people

Richard Shotton: because I, I think often the mistake that we see businesses, brands doing again and again is asking their customers and then taking that information at face value. I think the danger is often people will say, I want all the information, gimme all the information, and I'll, I'll make a decision.

And then you transgress many of the other points you've mentioned, that action in reality, people are lazy. They, they can't hold too much information in there.

Susan Weinschenk: Right.

Richard Shotton: So that is a, I think a really powerful point to, to land. Yeah.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Susan, thank you for such an interesting and wide ranging discussion. I'm absolutely certain that everybody listening will enjoy it as much as we have.

If folks wanna learn more about the work that you do or if they want to connect with you we talked about an opportunity that you have coming up in January. Could you tell everybody a little bit about this?

Susan Weinschenk: Yeah, we have we have a course we teach called the [00:46:00] Behavioral Design Workshop, which is all about all of the stuff that we're talking about.

And there's a course coming up. It's a virtual online course. It's being hosted by Smashing the Smashing Conference people. And it's over the course of several, it's like two and a half hours. But several days over a couple of weeks. So, you know, it should be easier to sign up for. And I would recommend that people check that out, be the behavioral design workshop from if they, if they just went to smashing, CONF stands for Smashing Conference, smashing conf.com, they can, they'll find that information.

MichaelAaron Flicker: And like we always do, we'll put this in the show notes and make sure it's in the link. Great. That's great. So everybody can click find it and click. And Susan, thank you for joining us today. For those listening if you found this helpful, please [00:47:00] share it with others to help them learn about this.

And until next time, I'm MichaelAaron Flicker.

Richard Shotton: And I'm Richard Shotton.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Thanks so much for listening.