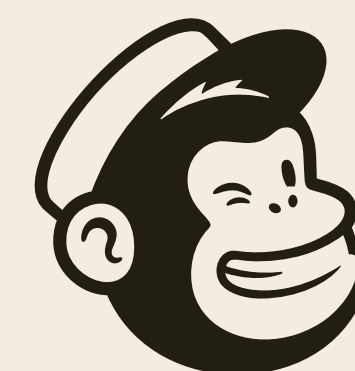


# Strategic Loyalty Playbook

This playbook is based on a  
commissioned survey and was  
written in partnership with

**CANVAS**

A marketers guide to turn the  
Science of Loyalty into practice



**INTUIT  
mailchimp**

# Does Loyalty Matter?

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(Pg. 06)

# The Commitment Spectrum

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(Pg. 15)

# Loyalty Tactics

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(Pg. 27)

# Key Insights

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(Pg. 50)

# What's Next?

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(Pg. 53)

Short on time?  
Jump straight to the tactics

# What is the Strategic Loyalty Playbook?

In the the first report of this series—The Science of Loyalty—we scrutinized the intricate workings of the brain to understand why the fundamental drivers of human behavior and decision-making will outlast any cultural trend.

We learned that long before we were labeled “consumers,” we were survival-driven hunters, hardwired by millennia of evolution. This insight was built into a framework called The Loyalty Wheel that distills loyalty into 4 neurobiological principles: reward, memory, emotion, and social interaction, and then further broken down into 10 behavioral elements.

————→ **[If you haven't read the Science of Loyalty report yet, you can find it here.](#)**

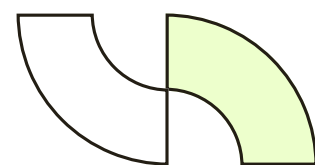
**Now that we know the science, let's experiment.**

This playbook expands on the scientific principles of loyalty with tactical approaches that can help marketers improve their loyalty strategies. Keep reading to:

- Uncover myth-busting insights from our consumer survey and plot your own customers on our Commitment Spectrum.
- Understand the underpinnings of loyal consumer behavior, learning how motivation, ability, and prompts interact to drive repeat purchases.
- Explore tactical approaches to building customer loyalty and improving outcomes for your business.

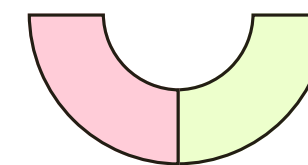
# About this playbook

To guide the tactical approaches in this playbook, we leveraged a rigorous mixed methodology research approach, involving a literature review, a consumer quantitative survey, and qualitative interviews with some of the best marketing experts in the world.



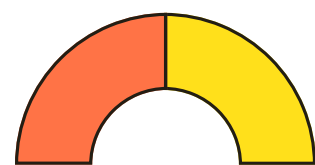
## Line-Ariel (L.A) Bretous

Behavioral scientist, customer experience expert, and founder of 1 LAB Consulting



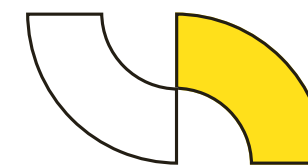
## Richard Shotton

Author of *The Illusion of Choice*



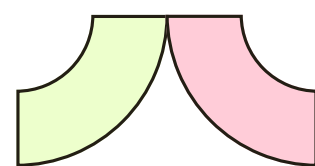
## Eddie Yoon

Author of *Superconsumers*, partner of Greyspace, co-founder of Category Pirates



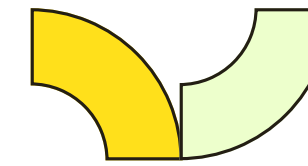
## Denise Lee Yohn

Author of *What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles that Separate the Best from the Rest*



## Dr. Cyrus McCandless

Neuroethologist studying goal-directed behavior and decision-making



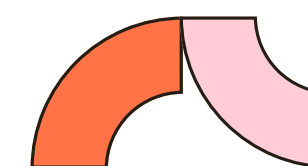
## Bri Williams

Behavioral expert and founder of People Patterns



## Kath Pay

Founder of Holistic Email Marketing



## Adam Ferrier

Founder of Thinkerbell



# Methodology

## Goal of the research

It is Intuit Mailchimp's goal to help businesses nurture loyalty through personalized, helpful, and inspiring marketing solutions. In pursuit of this ambition, we collaborated with our research partner, Canvas8, on a range of expert interviews and a quantitative survey to better understand the science behind loyal behavior and the ways marketers can use this insight to improve loyalty strategies.

We'd like to thank all of our experts and research participants who contributed their valued time and insights to this report.

## Quantitative survey methodology

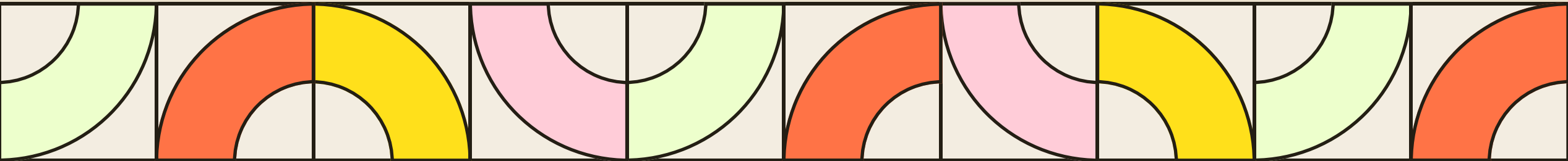
We surveyed people in the UK, US, Canada, and Australia to ask them how they shop across 10 categories: apparel/fashion, beauty products, financial products, office equipment and supplies, health and pharmaceutical goods, jewelry and accessories, manufacturing/raw materials, books and literature, food and beverage, and home goods and furniture.

To better understand loyal customers, we honed in on one category that saw the respondent always or usually buying from the same brand and focused the survey on their most recent purchase from this brand.

## Our survey then uncovered

- Brand affinity (e.g. familiarity, brand associations, satisfaction)
- Brand retention (e.g. frequency and length of purchase, barriers to purchase, likelihood of purchasing again)
- Brand advocacy (e.g. brand interactions, likelihood of recommending it to a friend)
- The purchase journey (e.g. touchpoints, types of content, spend)

*For all Canvas8 statistics/figures: Canvas8 conducted a panel-sample online survey on behalf of Mailchimp Feb 17-27, 2024. The survey consisted of 4,000 respondents (1000 from each of the US, UK, AU, CN). The margin of error is +/- 5.5 percent, as reported at a 95 percent confidence level.*



# Does Loyalty Matter?

# What is loyalty?

In the field of marketing, loyalty is often depicted as devotion to a brand—a narrative of affection and fidelity. However, our examination of the science of loyalty revealed a deeper truth. We found that re-purchasing behavior is not merely a manifestation of love but the result of subconscious cues, steering consumers toward familiar choices. What marketers may interpret as devotion could, therefore, be motivated by something much more neutral.

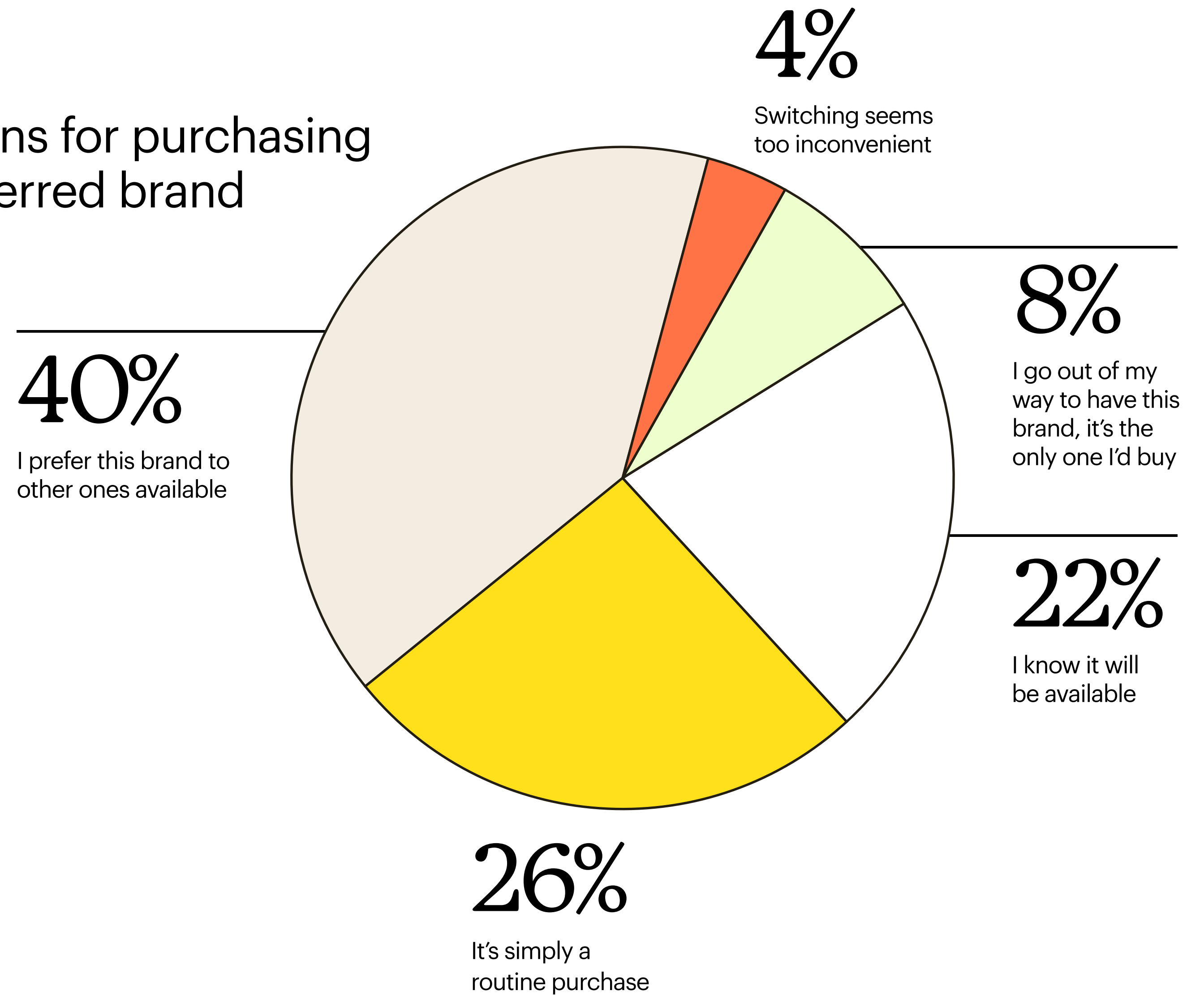
In fact, our research found that a quarter (26%) of repeat brand purchases occur because they're part of a routine—a testament to the power of habit. This tendency is especially pronounced in the food and beverage category, where routine dictates 37% of purchases.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of re-purchases (22%) occur simply because a brand or product was readily available. This is particularly pronounced in the books and literature category, where consumers rely on the presence of familiar brands, which account for 31% of purchases.

But personal preference does also matter; 40% of repeat purchases happen because a customer actively prefers that brand to the others available and this rises to 55% for shoppers purchasing in the beauty category.

In this landscape, loyalty thus emerges as both a sign of devotion and a pragmatic alignment of subconscious forces—a reality that could demand a recalibration of marketing strategies to navigate the complexities of consumer behavior effectively.

## Reasons for purchasing a preferred brand





When businesses are thinking about promoting the idea of loyalty, they are often thinking about the type of commitment inspired by sports teams, music groups, or even family members. It's an ambitious framing that doesn't reflect how we make consumer decisions.

Dr. Cyrus McCandless

Neuroethologist studying goal-directed behavior and decision-making



## To paint a picture of what this looks like in the market, consider these examples:



Alex

Alex has bought cleaning products from the same online brand for many years. He doesn't really think about it; he just knows the products work well enough and that his subscription means he's able to restock his supplies before they run low.



Nita

When it comes to activewear, there's only one brand for Nita. From the design of the clothing to the business' broader mission, this brand reflects who Nita is, so she'd never purchase from a competitor—even if it were more convenient to do so.



Colleen

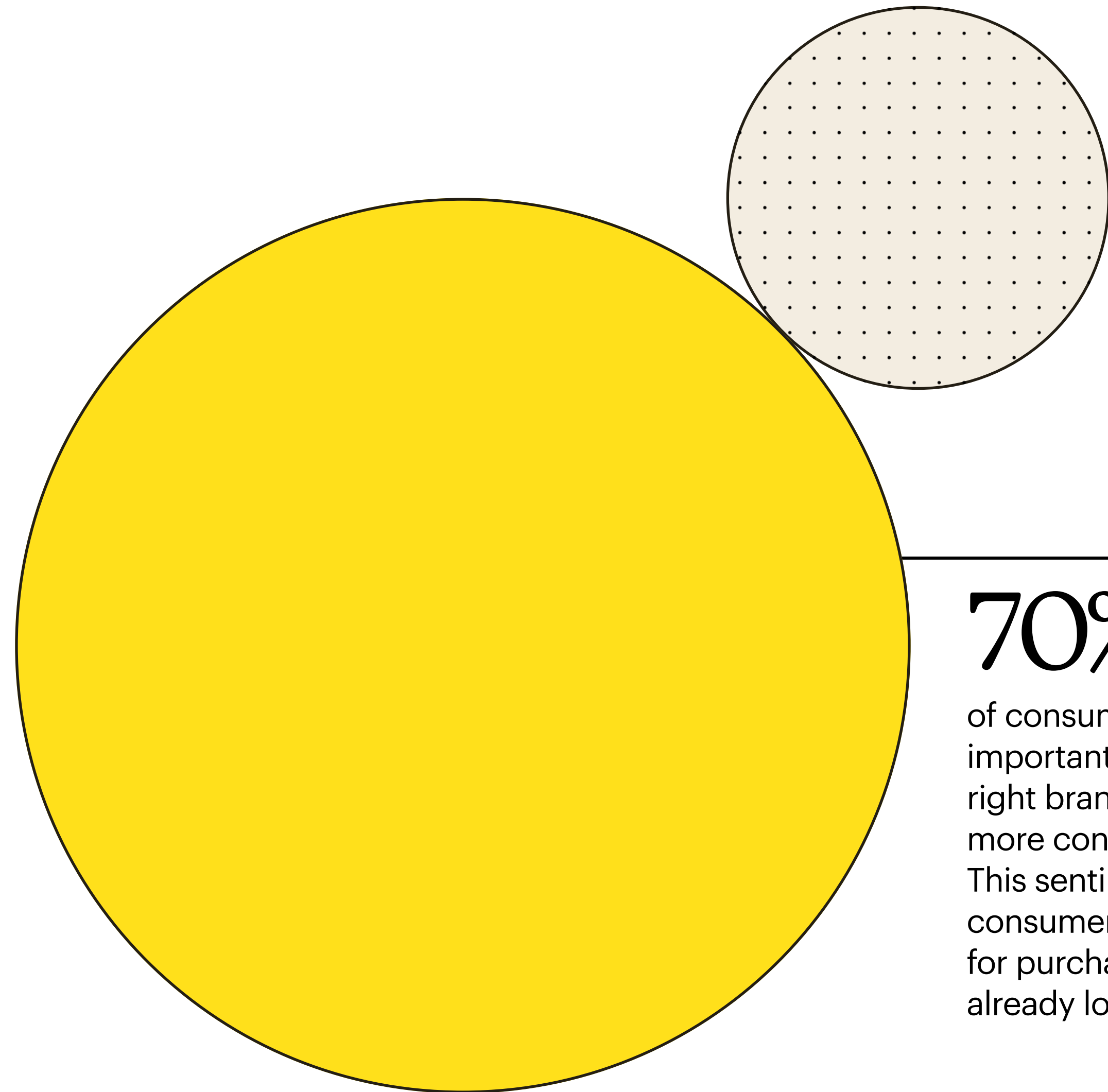
Colleen has been with the same bank for years. She suspects she might receive better service elsewhere, but she'd rather stick with what she's got than go through the hassle of switching to a different bank.

—————→ While Alex, Nita, and Colleen have different *attitudes* to the brands in question, their *behavior* looks the same: they continually opt for the same brand. Loyal behavior is therefore much more nuanced than most would think.



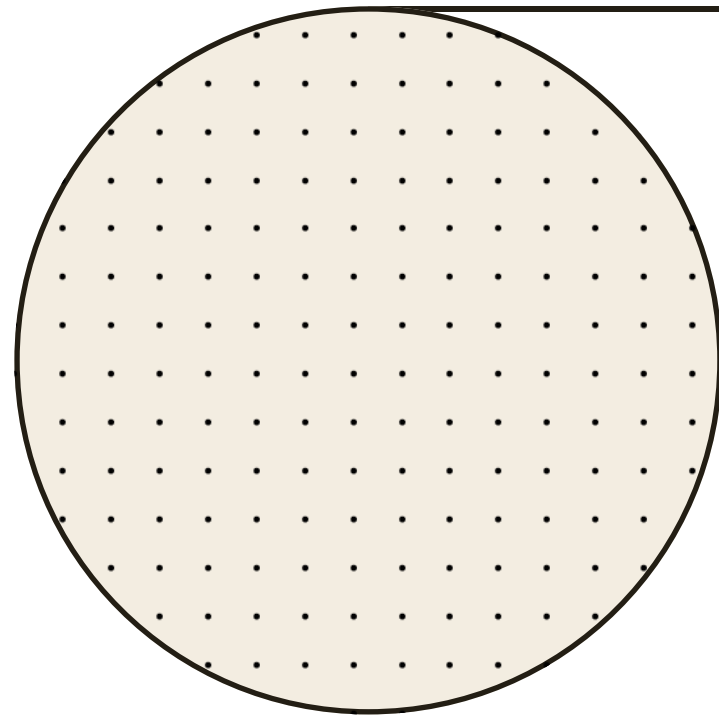
# Loyalty does matter

In today's saturated marketplace, where consumers are inundated with options, our research shows that the principles of loyalty—emotion, memory, reward, and social interaction—are critical in shaping purchasing decisions and driving the growth of a business.



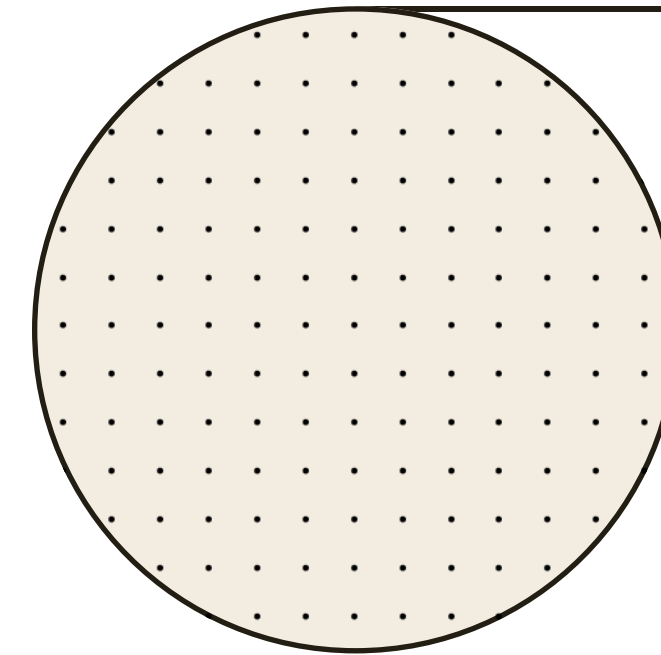
## 70%

of consumers emphasize that it's important to them to buy from the right brand, reflecting the desire for more conscious decision-making. This sentiment is echoed by 69% of consumers who express a preference for purchasing from brands they are already loyal to.



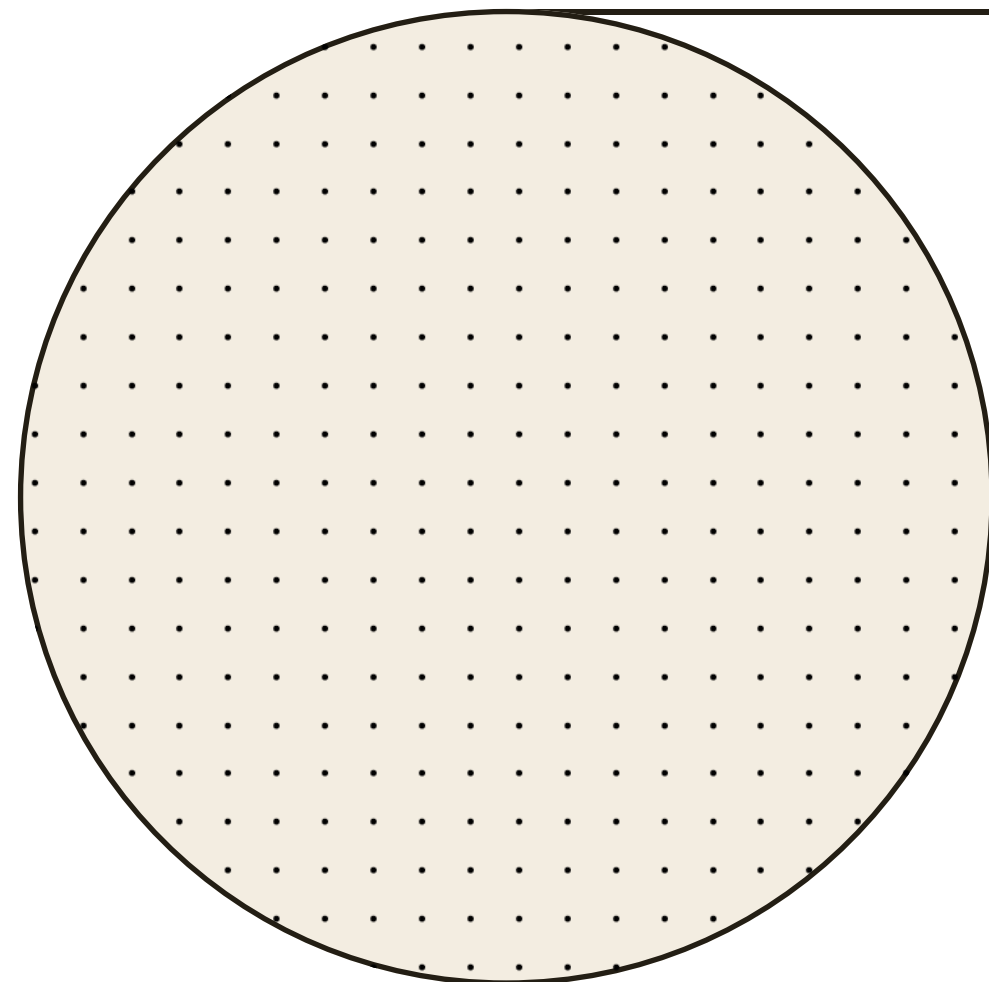
# 58%

of consumers feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of brands available. As a result, loyalty emerges as a beacon of certainty amid a sea of options.



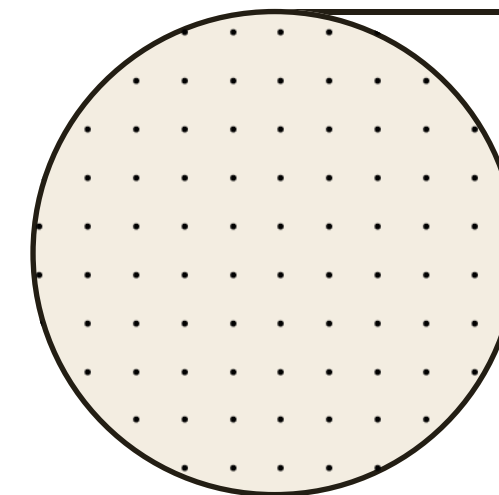
# 53%

of consumers expect brands to reward them with deals and discounts—an expectation that becomes more pronounced in sectors like jewelry (65%), home goods and furniture (64%), and apparel (60%).



# 80%

of consumers say trustworthiness surfaces as a non-negotiable attribute—an idea particularly pronounced in sectors such as finance, where 89% of consumers prioritize reliability and credibility above all else.



# 40%

of consumers seek a sense of belonging and community. But this inclination is more pronounced among 18-34-year-olds, where 57% of consumers prefer brands that foster a sense of community.

# Acquiring new customers was thought to be the quickest route to growth, but opinions are changing.

Our research suggests that algorithmic changes, the rising cost of acquisition, and heightened expectations all potentially make it harder for brands to stand out to new customers. If a brand builds stronger relationships with its existing customers, those customers are significantly more likely to purchase again—boosting revenue and insulating the business against market fluctuations and competitive threats. But beyond offering the prospect of repeat purchases, loyal customers can also act as vocal brand advocates, driving referrals and amplifying the business via word-of-mouth recommendations.

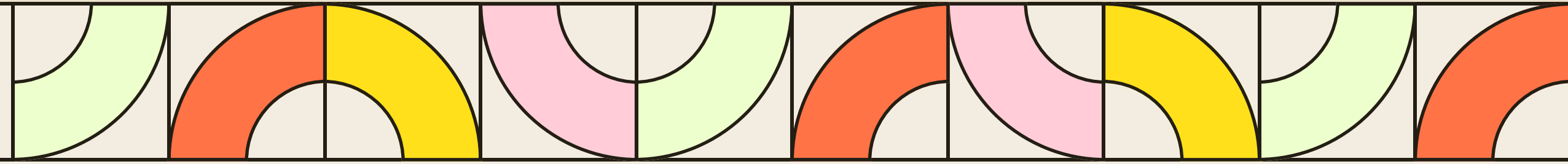
In essence, loyalty emerges as a cornerstone of consumer behavior, driving purchasing decisions, perpetuating trust, and engendering a sense of community. Loyalty is, therefore, a strategic imperative for brands seeking sustainable growth and resilience; in an era marked by choice overload, brands that prioritize building and maintaining loyalty stand poised to thrive in a competitive landscape.



Loyalty isn't just a marketing goal—  
it's a comprehensive business strategy.  
It demands collaboration across all  
facets of the company to enhance the  
complete customer experience.

Denise  
Lee Yohn

*Author of **What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building  
Principles that Separate the Best from the Rest***



# The Commitment Spectrum

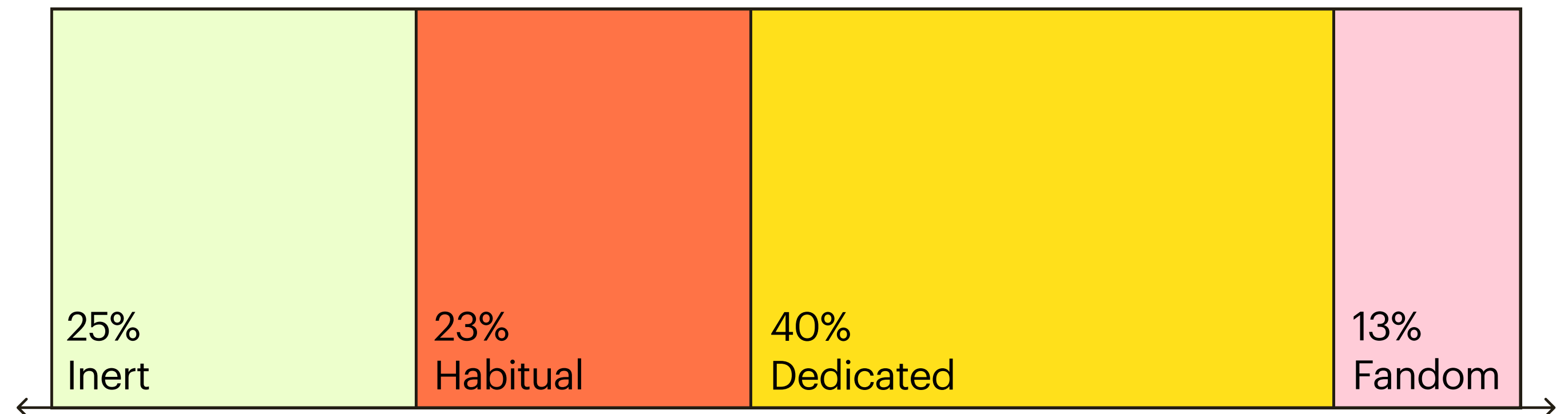
# How committed are your customers?

Identifying loyal customers seems straightforward: they're the ones who keep coming back for more. Yet, as we learned earlier, behavioral loyalty (i.e. repeat purchases) doesn't always equate to active preference. While some customers are emotionally connected to the brand, others might merely follow out of habit or, worse, settle due to the lack of a better option.

We've built the Commitment Spectrum to help you understand what drives repeat purchasing and where your customers might be plotted across it.

There are four parts of the Commitment Spectrum, ranging from Inert to Fandom. We aligned the questions in our survey to the segments of the Commitment Spectrum to get a breakdown of what percent of consumers fall into each. As the visual at right indicates, not all types of commitment are equal. In fact, fandom is actually the lowest driver of repeat purchasing.

THE COMMITMENT SPECTRUM

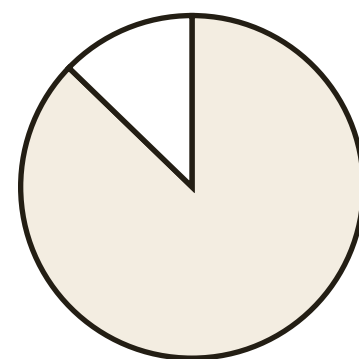




INERT CUSTOMERS —

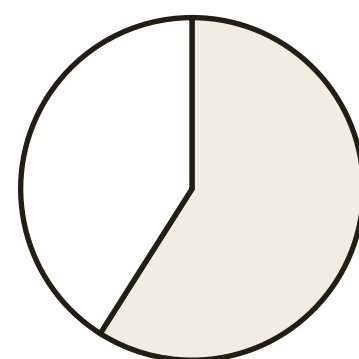
Inert customers continue to purchase from a brand not out of preference but because making a switch is simply too difficult—perhaps they’ve heavily invested in a brand’s ecosystem of products, or they face a lack of alternatives.

Inert customers are more likely to choose a brand because it’s convenient, readily available, offers discounts, or is popular with others. In fact, they don’t always view their chosen brand in a positive light—loyalty’s just easier than making the effort to seek out other options. Think about Colleen, who won’t switch bank accounts because of the hassle.



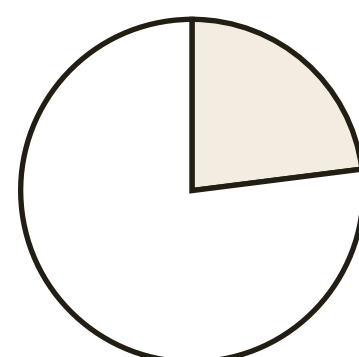
**82%**

said they purchased the product because they knew it would be available. 16% purchased because switching seemed too inconvenient.



**59%**




said that friends or family help them decide what to purchase (vs. 49% total).



**23%**

said discount codes influenced their purchase.

- In comparison to:
- 15% - Habitual
- 16% - Dedicated
- 16% - Fandom

INERT SHOPPER PROFILE	
	TOP CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Books and literature</li> <li>→ Jewelry</li> <li>→ Home goods</li> </ul>	
	PURCHASE DRIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Convenience</li> <li>→ Availability</li> <li>→ Popularity with others</li> </ul>	
	MOTIVATED BY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Rewards</li> <li>→ Social proof</li> </ul>	



If you look at some of the products that people repeatedly purchase the most often, it's not even just a passive [loyalty]. It's a recognition that the cost of switching, the friction of switching, is excessive. So you can actively dislike a bank but still never change.

Richard Shotton

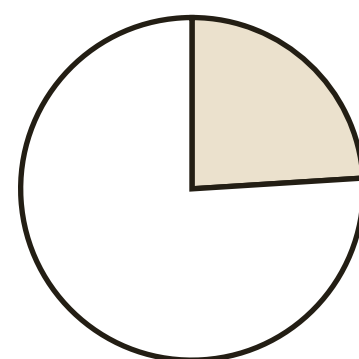
Author of *The Illusion of Choice*

HABITUAL CUSTOMERS —

Habitual customers are motivated by a neurological desire to simplify their decision-making. They will opt for a particular brand out of routine rather than an emotional attachment.

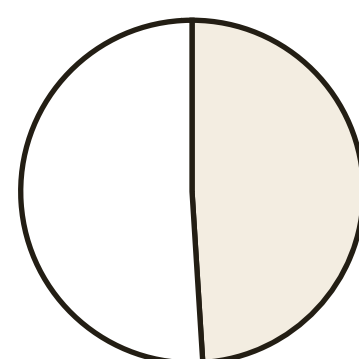
When making purchase decisions, they're more likely to think about the category than a particular brand and they have limited knowledge of the brands they end up choosing.

While habitual customers may tend to stick to the same brand, if they're suddenly met by an opposing force—say, the brand was out of stock—they'd face few qualms about switching to an alternative. Think about Alex, who's happy with his cleaning products.



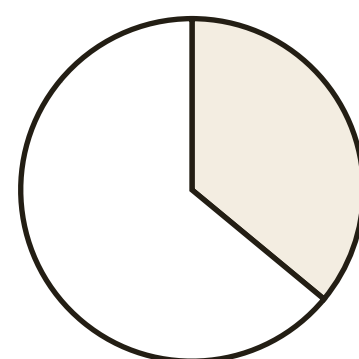
**24%**

said they purchased the brand on a weekly basis.



**49%**




said they would purchase from another available brand if their chosen brand wasn't available.



**36%**

perceive the brand they bought from as convenient.

- In comparison to:
- 33% - Inert
- 26% - Dedicated
- 18% - Fandom

HABITUAL SHOPPER PROFILE	
	TOP CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Food &amp; beverage</li> <li>→ Health &amp; pharmaceutical</li> <li>→ Office equipment &amp; supplies</li> </ul>	
	PURCHASE DRIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Convenience</li> <li>→ Perceived value</li> <li>→ Category</li> </ul>	
	MOTIVATED BY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Ease</li> <li>→ Consistency</li> <li>→ Familiarity</li> </ul>	



Most purchases are triggered by the category, not by the brand. So, 'I'm thirsty, I want to buy a drink.' I think a lot of what we're talking about when it comes to inspiring loyalty is actually building habits, and that's [about] us making it easier [for] people to keep on thinking about [the brand] at the time of purchase and to not go to somebody else.

Adam Ferrier

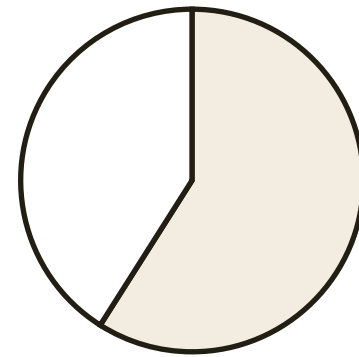
Founder of Thinkerbell

DEDICATED CUSTOMERS —

Dedicated customers are emotionally engaged purchasers who exhibit a strong and active preference for their chosen brand.

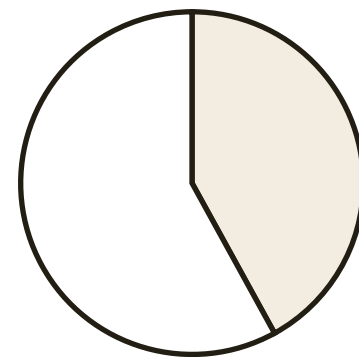
Their loyalty is based on belief in the brand’s vision and purpose rather than its product or service. They go out of their way to support preferred brands, choosing them over competitors even if other brands are more convenient or better suited to their needs.

In addition to actively seeking out brand information online, dedicated customers spread the word about their favorite brands via word-of-mouth recommendations and gifting to others. However, they can be deterred by quality issues, significant price increases (10%+), or negative reviews.



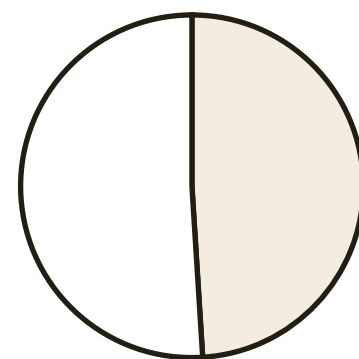
**59%**

bought from brands that give them treats and make them feel pampered compared to just 52% of habitual/inert purchasers.



**42%**




spoke positively about the brand to people they know.



**49%**

would be encouraged to switch brands if there were quality issues.

- In comparison to:
- 42% – Inert
- 47% – Dedicated
- 42% – Fandom

DEDICATED SHOPPER PROFILE	
	TOP CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Beauty</li> <li>→ Jewelry</li> <li>→ Apparel</li> </ul>	
	PURCHASE DRIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Trustworthiness</li> <li>→ Quality</li> <li>→ Purpose</li> </ul>	
	MOTIVATED BY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Identity</li> <li>→ Feeling</li> <li>→ Recognition</li> </ul>	





An emotional bond between a customer and a brand is not just focused on transactional elements. It's a type of loyalty that goes above and beyond. People's emotional loyalty may not stem from convenience but rather from a genuine appreciation of your brand, so they'll deliberately choose you over and over again.

Line-Ariel (L.A)  
Bretous

Behavioral scientist, customer experience expert, and  
founder of 1 LAB Consulting

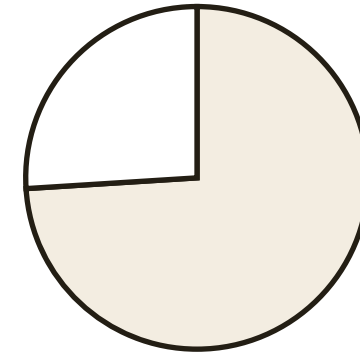


FANDOM CUSTOMERS —

Fandom customers feel a strong sense of belonging and attachment to a particular brand.

These customers form a fandom around the brand, an in-group that shares common values, interests, and a strong emotional connection. Think Nita, whose favorite fitness brand reflects who she is as a person. The loyalty of fans goes beyond transactional relationships; it's rooted in a deeper sense of identity and affinity more akin to love of a sports team or favorite music artist than traditional brand-consumer relationships.

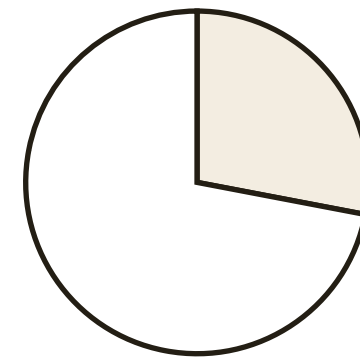
Fandoms are much less likely to be deterred by negative reviews or price rises, sticking with their preferred brand against the odds. But while fans exhibit a strong level of commitment, this type of relationship is notoriously difficult to inspire—and can go wrong if brands disappoint the fandom.



**74%**

said their preferred brand reflects their personal values.




- In comparison to:
  - 68% - Inert
  - 60% - Dedicated
  - 71% - Fandom



**28%**

would consider switching to another brand, even if there were substantial price increases. (10%+).

- In comparison to:
  - 39% - Inert
  - 49% - Dedicated
  - 43% - Fandom

FANDOM SHOPPER PROFILE	
	TOP CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Beauty</li> <li>→ Health &amp; pharmaceutical</li> <li>→ Manufacturing &amp; raw materials</li> </ul>	
	PURCHASE DRIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Authenticity</li> <li>→ Purpose</li> <li>→ Belonging</li> </ul>	
	MOTIVATED BY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Identity</li> <li>→ Social identification</li> </ul>	



There are blessings and curses for a business when it comes to going down the fandom path—the big challenge is that once you have an in-group, it means you have an out-group which you can't service.

Bri Williams

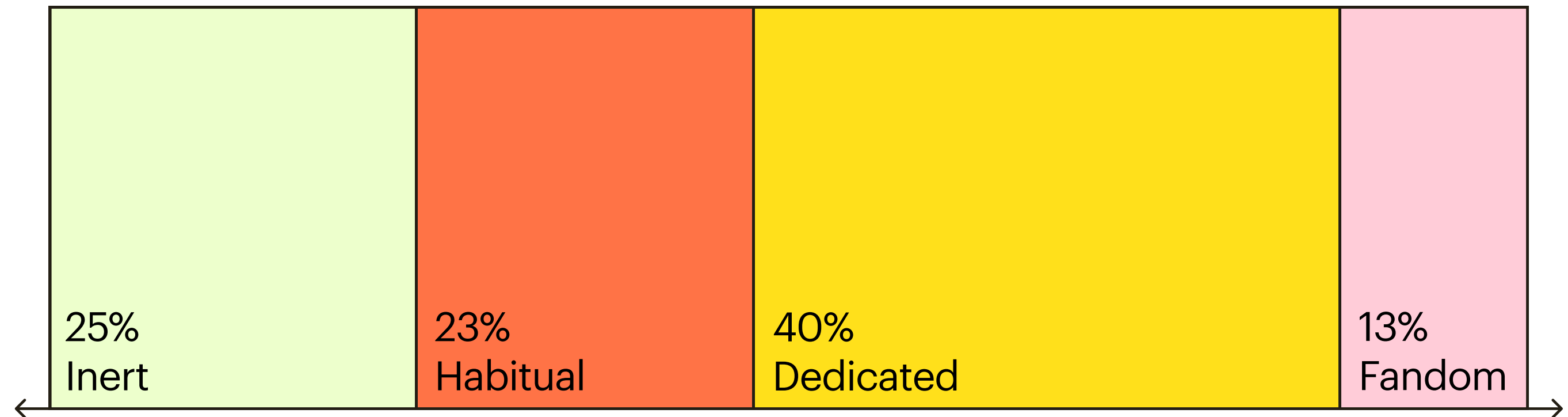
Behavioral expert and founder of People Patterns

# Not all brands need fans

While inspiring fandom may appear to be the North Star, it's not universally attainable, nor is it strictly necessary for driving revenue and garnering repeat purchases. Indeed, just 13% of our interview respondents were brand fans. Experts caution that such affiliations can be extremely hard to cultivate and may not make sense for every brand.

Most brands are likely to have a mix of all of these customers, and a good strategy needs to have tactical approaches that target different levels of commitment.

THE COMMITMENT SPECTRUM

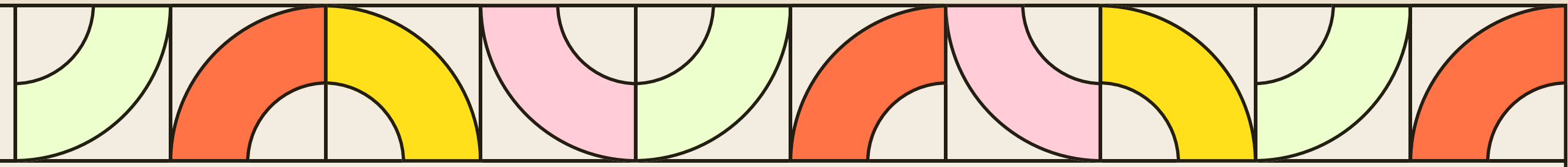




I think a goal like loyalty, whereby people avoid better alternatives out of a sense of obligation or genuine passion, is phenomenally hard to achieve. The danger is that marketers overestimate their chances of achieving that and maybe convert their budget into smaller sales rather than [pursuing] the much, much simpler goal of habit.

Richard Shotton

Author of *The Illusion of Choice*



# 12 Loyalty Tactics

# Loyalty starts with behavior change

To apply loyalty tactics, first you need to understand decision-making. The Fogg Behavior Model, developed by Dr BJ Fogg, director of the Stanford Behavior Design Lab, is a useful framework for understanding the factors that influence purchasing behavior.

The model consists of three key elements: motivation, ability, and prompts. These elements interact to drive behavior and are represented by the formula B=MAP.

## The Formula: B=MAP

Behavior = Motivation x Ability x Prompts

### MOTIVATION

The “Why”

---

Why do I want to support this brand?

Motivation represents the desire or willingness of an individual to perform a particular behavior. It can be influenced by factors such as emotions, needs, desires, and goals. By identifying and leveraging these motivations, businesses can encourage customers to remain loyal to their brand.

### ABILITY

The “How”

---

How easy is it to support this brand?

Ability refers to the individual's capability to perform the desired behavior. To inspire loyalty, brands need to ensure that their customers have the capacity and resources to engage with their brand easily and efficiently.

### PROMPT

The “When”

---

Why should I support this brand now?

Prompts are cues that remind or nudge individuals to perform a behavior. In the context of loyalty, prompts serve to keep the brand top-of-mind and to nudge customers toward repeat purchases. Prompts can take many different forms, from personalized marketing emails to compelling CTAs or push notifications.



USING B=MAP —

In order to build loyal relationships, brands should consider how to increase motivation, increase ability, or increase both.

The route you take will depend on the customers you're trying to target:

**Inert and habitual customers are driven by convenience and ease of use.** Brands seeking to target these customers—or to build a more habitual customer base—should focus on increasing ability. This means ensuring your brand is the customer's most convenient and readily available option. To do this, brands need to design prompts with ability factors in mind.

For example, a brand could send a well-timed automated email to previous purchasers who are likely running low, or they could offer the ability to subscribe for replacements.

**Dedicated customers and fans are driven by purpose and belonging.** To inspire this type of relationship, brands should focus on increasing motivation. This means developing strategies that engage customers emotionally, align with their interests and values, or make them feel special. Prompts should seek to increase motivation to engage with the brand.

For example, a brand could acknowledge repeat customers by offering them exclusive deals or event invites.

—————→ Now you know the theory, let's look at ways to put it into practice. Read on for 12 actionable ways to increase ability and motivation.

# How to increase ability

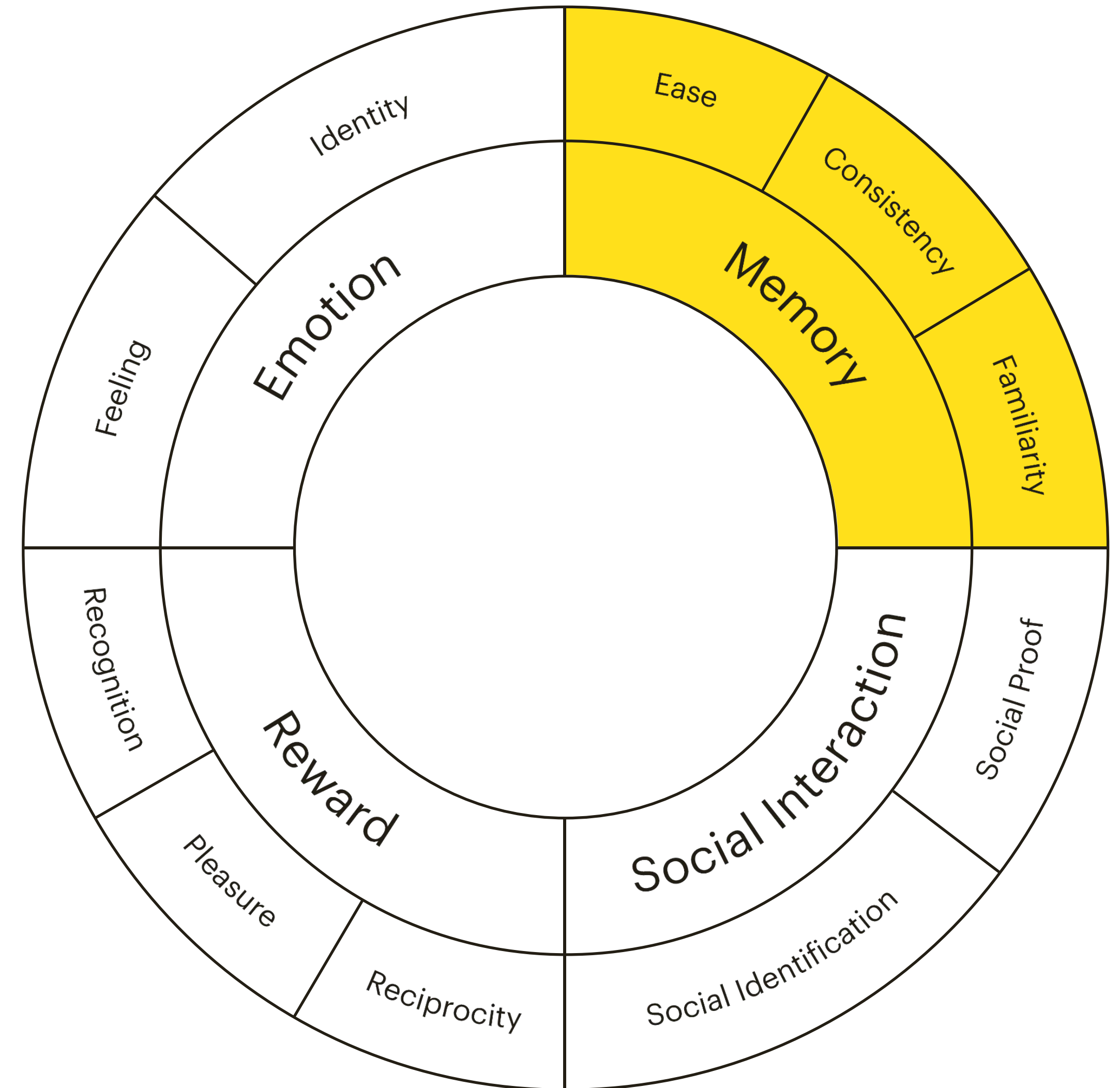
## What is ability?

Ability refers to an individual's capacity to act and hinges on skills, resources, time, and effort. Recognizing barriers to ability is vital—motivation will falter without it.

“We have to understand that the whole customer experience is absolutely crucial to generating loyalty. A large part of the focus should be on optimizing the customer journey: the website, the checkout process, the email marketing, and the delivery. That’s how you’re going to create loyal customers.” — Kath Pay, Founder of Holistic Email Marketing

Three aspects of our loyalty wheel offer insight into how to increase ability:

- Ease
- Consistency
- Familiarity



INCREASING ABILITY — EASE

# Tactics for increasing ease

## Smooth selling

Remove obstacles that could disrupt customers' shopping journeys

## Easy decisions

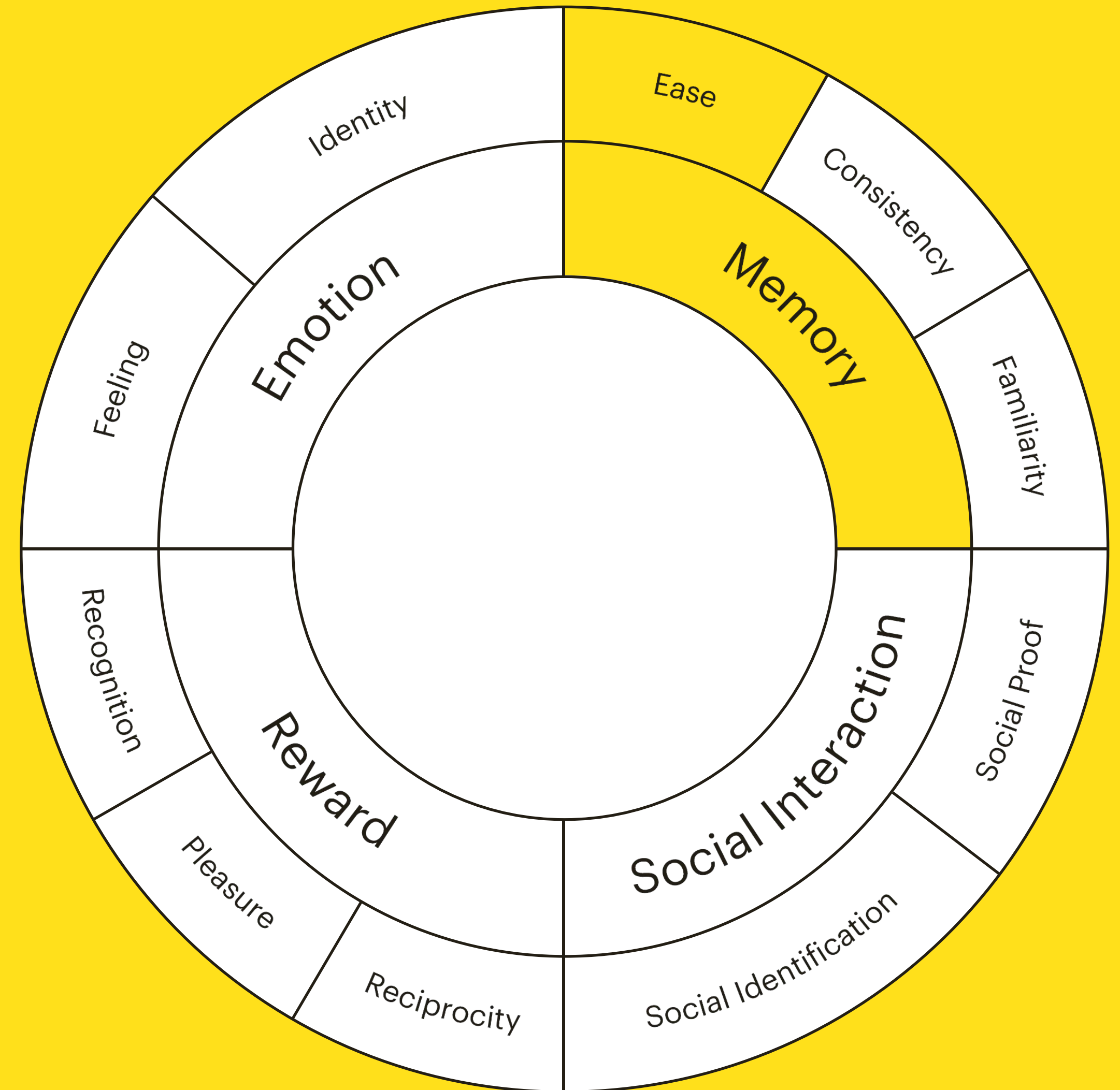
Curate content to help customers combat choice fatigue

### What is ease?

Our brains prioritize minimizing discomfort over the pursuit of pleasure. Making the purchase process as seamless as possible is, therefore, an essential part of inspiring loyalty.

### Interested in the science?

[Discover more in the Science of Loyalty report](#)



## TACTIC

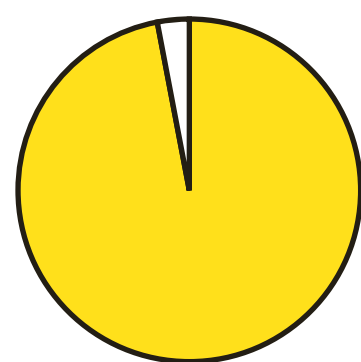
## Smooth selling

*Remove obstacles that could disrupt customers' shopping journeys*

By streamlining the customer's journey and guiding them toward a desired behavior, brands can increase loyalty without making customers feel restricted or forced into a decision.

**Be inspired**

Amazon's one-click ordering feature simplifies the checkout process, so it's extremely easy for customers to make purchases without going through multiple steps or detours. This streamlined experience eliminates many of the barriers to completing a transaction and makes it easy to repeat purchase.



# 97%

of repeat purchasers said their preferred brand makes it quick and easy to purchase; this was the number one brand association for repeat shoppers.

**Put the tactic to work**

- How could you use visual prompts to communicate the simplicity of engaging with your website? For example, could you include a sidebar that clearly shows the customer's progress through each stage of the checkout process?

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- Streamline your customer's path to purchase by incorporating email or SMS reminders that help them to pick up where they left off.

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- Frustrations with the payment process or a lack of support channels often get in the way of conversion. Consider ways to reduce barriers in how you collect payments and always provide accessible live support options on all channels.



## TACTIC

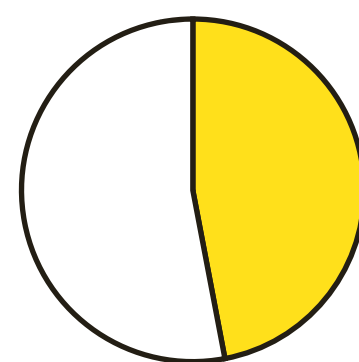
## Easy decisions

*Curate content to help customers combat choice fatigue*

In an era of choice overload, online shopping can feel overwhelming. By anticipating the needs of customers and proactively suggesting products or promotions, brands reduce the decision-making burden for customers, creating a friction-free experience that drives repeat purchases.

### Be inspired

Cuup helps shoppers find the perfect bra by having them fill out a questionnaire. Afterward, they provide recommendations on fit, size, and style. Even better, Cuup will remember the preferences of those who create an account, making it easy for them to search and find things in their size in stock.



# 47%

of all email subscribers explore new product offerings through brand emails and 39% go on to make a purchase after reading.

### Put the tactic to work

- Consider how simple interventions, such as allowing customers to save sizes to their profile, can help them pick up where they left off with your brand.

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- Use predictive analytics and leverage data from previous interactions to anticipate customers' needs.

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- Limit choice through curated selections that simplify the decision-making process and position your brand as a trusted advisor.

# Tactics for increasing consistency

## Choice validation

To encourage renewed commitment, help customers feel justified in their choice

## New routines

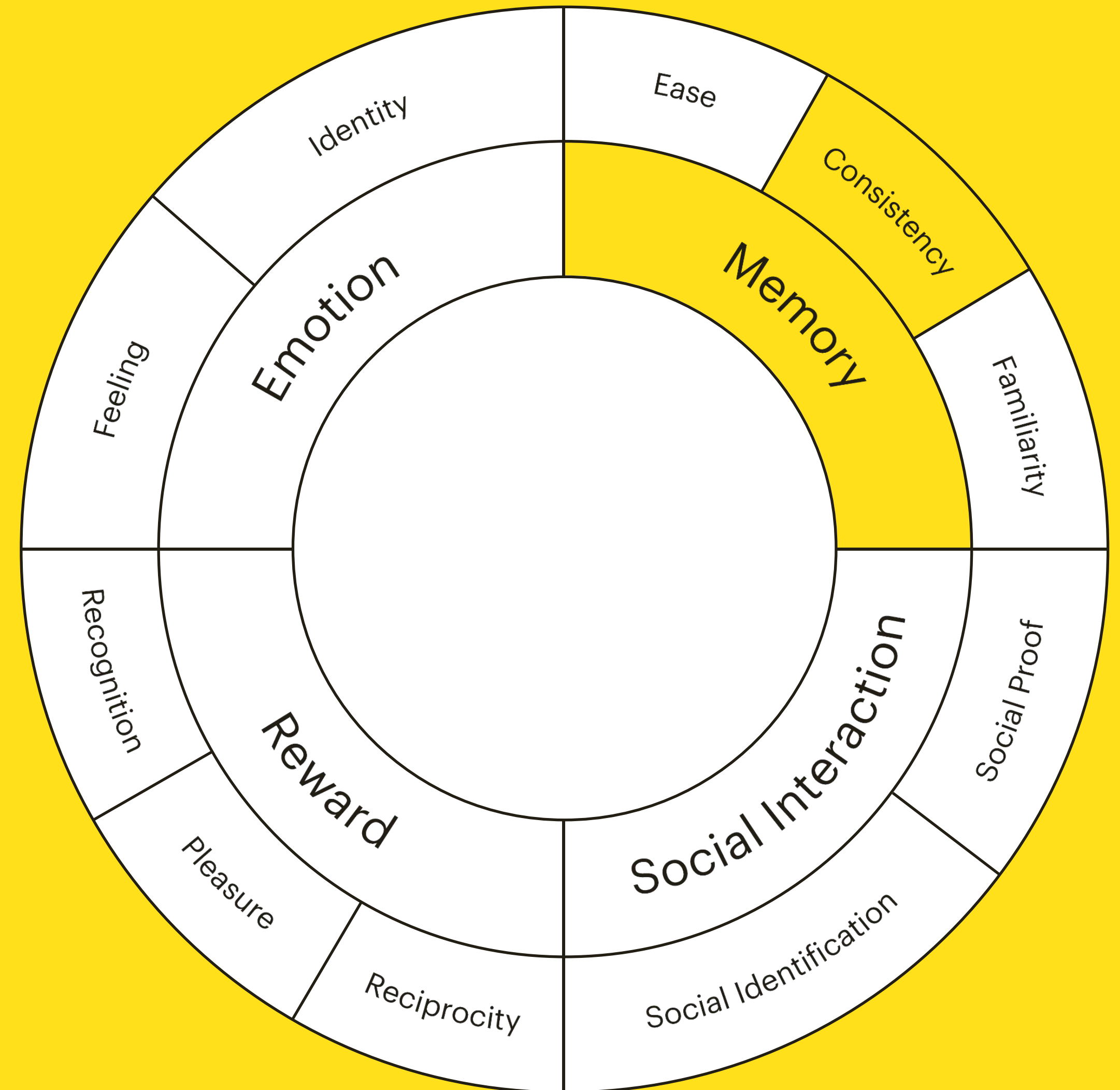
Build repeat purchases into your customer's routine

### What is consistency?

People are hardwired to act in a way that's consistent with their past actions. This helps us simplify decision-making and save processing power for the things that truly matter—and it's good news for repeat purchasing, too.

### Interested in the science?

[Discover more in the Science of Loyalty report](#)





## TACTIC

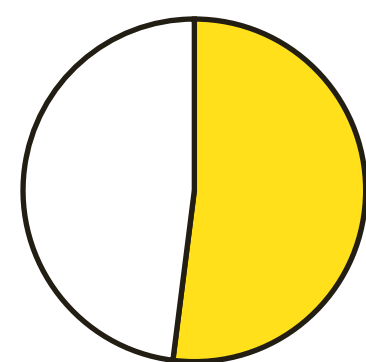
## Choice validation

*To encourage renewed commitment, help customers feel justified in their choice*

Reminding people of the enjoyable experience they've had with a brand or product reinforces the idea that their choice was a good one. This validation helps them feel more confident in their decision, leading to increased loyalty and a higher likelihood of repeat purchases.

### Be inspired

Spotify Wrapped provides users with a personalized recap of their year in music. This annual feature not only celebrates users' music tastes but also reinforces their connection to the platform by highlighting their favorite moments and discoveries.



# 52%

of inert purchasers and 51% of habitual purchasers had a very favorable opinion of their preferred brand, but this rises to 84% among fans.

### Put the tactic to work

- Communications that demonstrate the value of your product or service over time can help prevent customers from switching. For example, consider prompts that show how choosing your product or service has saved customers money—or delivered some other concrete benefit—during their time as a loyal customer.

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- Acknowledge repeat customers with personalized email prompts that highlight how often they've supported your business.

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- Simple prompts such as a handwritten “thank you” note can go a long way in helping customers feel validated in their choices. What small touches could help you to communicate your worth and generate repeat purchases?

## TACTIC

## New routines

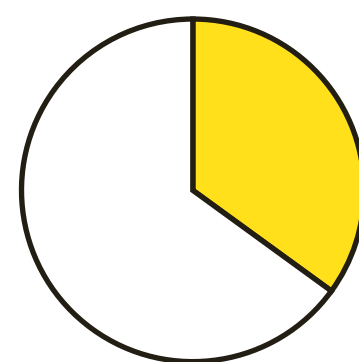
*Build repeat purchases into your customer's routine*

Encourage habitual engagement with your brand by integrating it into customers' routines. The brain forms habits by linking repeated behaviors with consistent cues. Consider "Taco Tuesday," which isn't just a manifestation of taco loyalty but a weekly habit ingrained in many routines.

### Be inspired

Casual dining restaurant Applebee's released a "date night pass" enabling customers to purchase 52 weekly meals at a value of \$30 for just \$200.

Recognizing how expensive date nights can be, the chain offered customers an opportunity to build a weekly date night ritual at their restaurant. The first round of passes sold out in a matter of minutes, prompting Applebee's to allocate a further 1,000 passes by ballot.



# 35%

of those who purchase a product on a daily or weekly basis said their preferred brand was the only one they'd consider (vs. 22% among those purchasing on a monthly basis or less).

### Put the tactic to work

- What key moments or periods of the day align with your brand? Think about how KitKat positions itself as a treat for when you need a break or how stationery brands and Walmart activate around the back-to-school period.

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- Consider ritualizing things like Q&A sessions or content segments as weekly events on social media to promote habitual engagement from customers.

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- Align with traditions and life milestones by prompting purchases around key calendar moments, such as Christmas, Mother's or Father's Day, or birthdays and graduations.

# Tactics for increasing familiarity

## Smart exposure

Be top-of-mind with strategically placed brand codes

## Familiar foundations

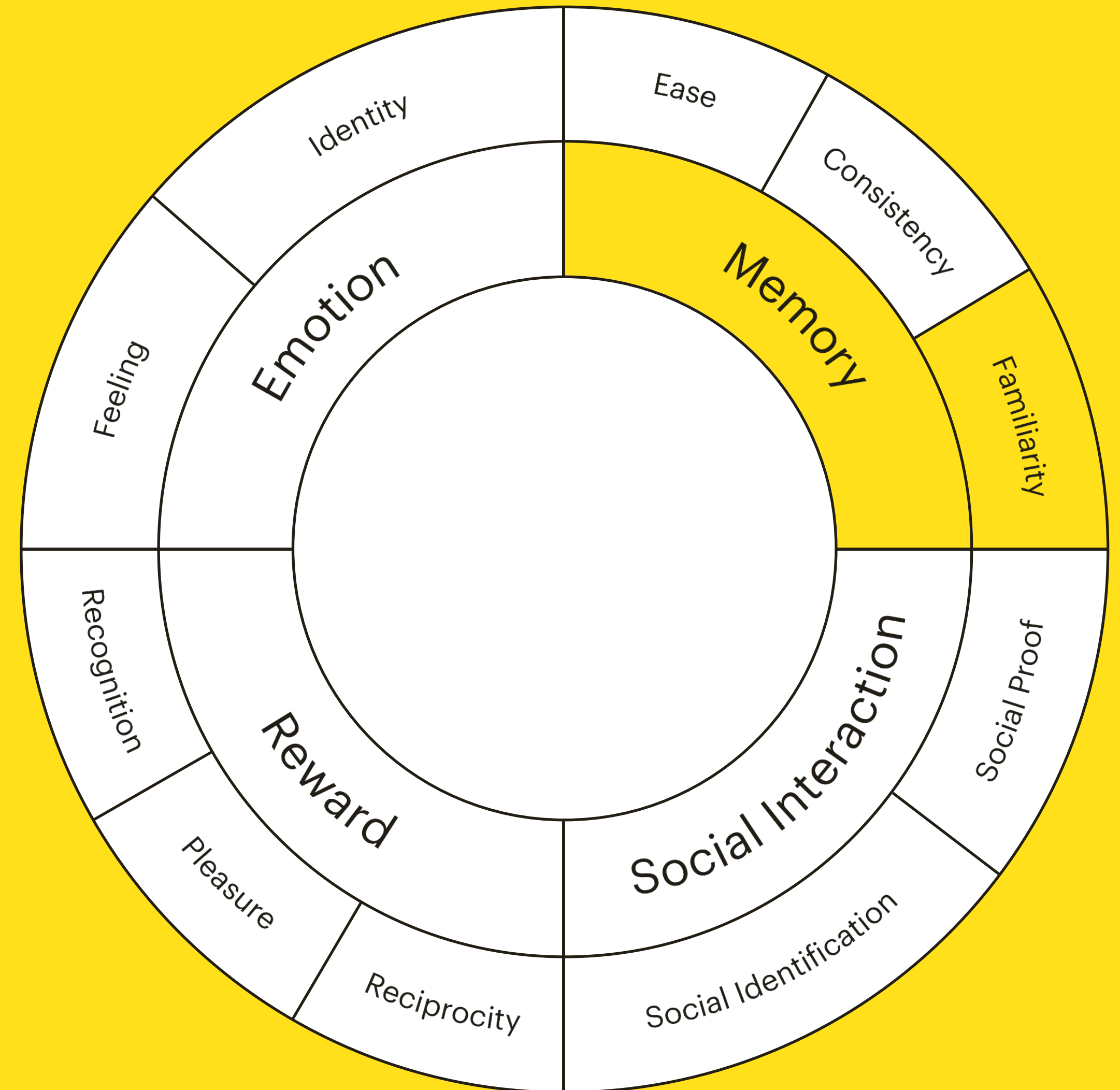
Foster familiarity by showing up in trusted spaces

### What is familiarity?

People have a cognitive bias toward things they know and are familiar with. With each exposure to a brand, the mere exposure effect takes greater hold, increasing the likelihood that customers will develop a preference for that particular brand.

### Interested in the science?

[Discover more in the Science of Loyalty report](#)





## TACTIC

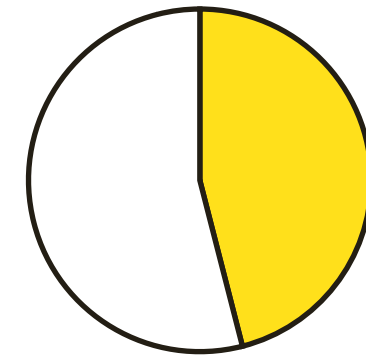
## Smart exposure

*Be top-of-mind with strategically placed brand codes*

Multichannel marketing can keep brands top-of-mind during purchasing decisions, especially when messaging is consistent and brand codes—such as the logo, color, shape, pattern, or image associated with the brand—are used generously across the consumer journey, as this simplifies information processing and fosters familiarity.

### Be inspired

Headspace's quirky approach to visual identity makes it instantly recognizable—the meditation app is full of charming characters, bright colors, and memorable moments that aim to establish its unique identity in the wellness world. Through strategic partnerships with airlines and mattress companies, Headspace cleverly integrates its brand codes into external wellness spaces, firmly aligning its brand with the category and keeping it top-of-mind for consumers.



# 46%

of repeat purchasers said they know a lot about the brands they purchase from. This rises to 60% among fans, who feel they know the brand best.

### Put the tactic to work

- Consider how unique design and identity assets can help strengthen your brand's overall recognizability.

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- Engage all the senses. Non-verbal cues—such as catchy jingles or memorable logos—can serve as auditory and visual hooks that foster brand familiarity and make ad campaigns more effective.

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- Examine opportunities to deepen customers' mental associations with your brand via strategic partnerships and sponsorship in relevant areas.

## TACTIC

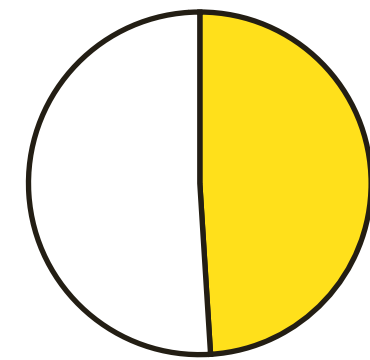
## Familiar foundations

*Foster familiarity by showing up in trusted spaces*

Many people repeatedly purchase from a brand because it's what they've always known; perhaps the product has been a household mainstay for years, or they've frequently seen friends use it. Finding ways to show up in people's trusted circles—by tapping into family rituals or incentivizing customers to share your brand with their friends—can build a comforting sense of familiarity.

### Be inspired

Razor brand Harry's created a pre-launch referral program that helped the brand disrupt the direct-to-consumer market with impressive results. Users were encouraged to refer their friends in exchange for free prizes: 5 referrals got customers a free shaving cream, while those hitting 50 referrals received a one-year free supply of blades. The pre-launch strategy boosted brand familiarity among entire networks of men, with the brand totaling 100,000 email signups in just one week.



# 49%

of repeat purchasers said that recommendations from friends or family help them decide what to buy, rising to 72% among 18-24-year-old shoppers.

### Put the tactic to work

- Incorporate a sense of timelessness or nostalgia into branding and packaging design to communicate consistency across generations of customers.

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- Build familiarity within social networks by offering dual-sided refer-a-friend initiatives where both the referrer and the referee receive benefits for supporting your brand.

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- Give customers a feeling of being in their comfort zone by positioning new products within familiar settings.

# How to increase motivation

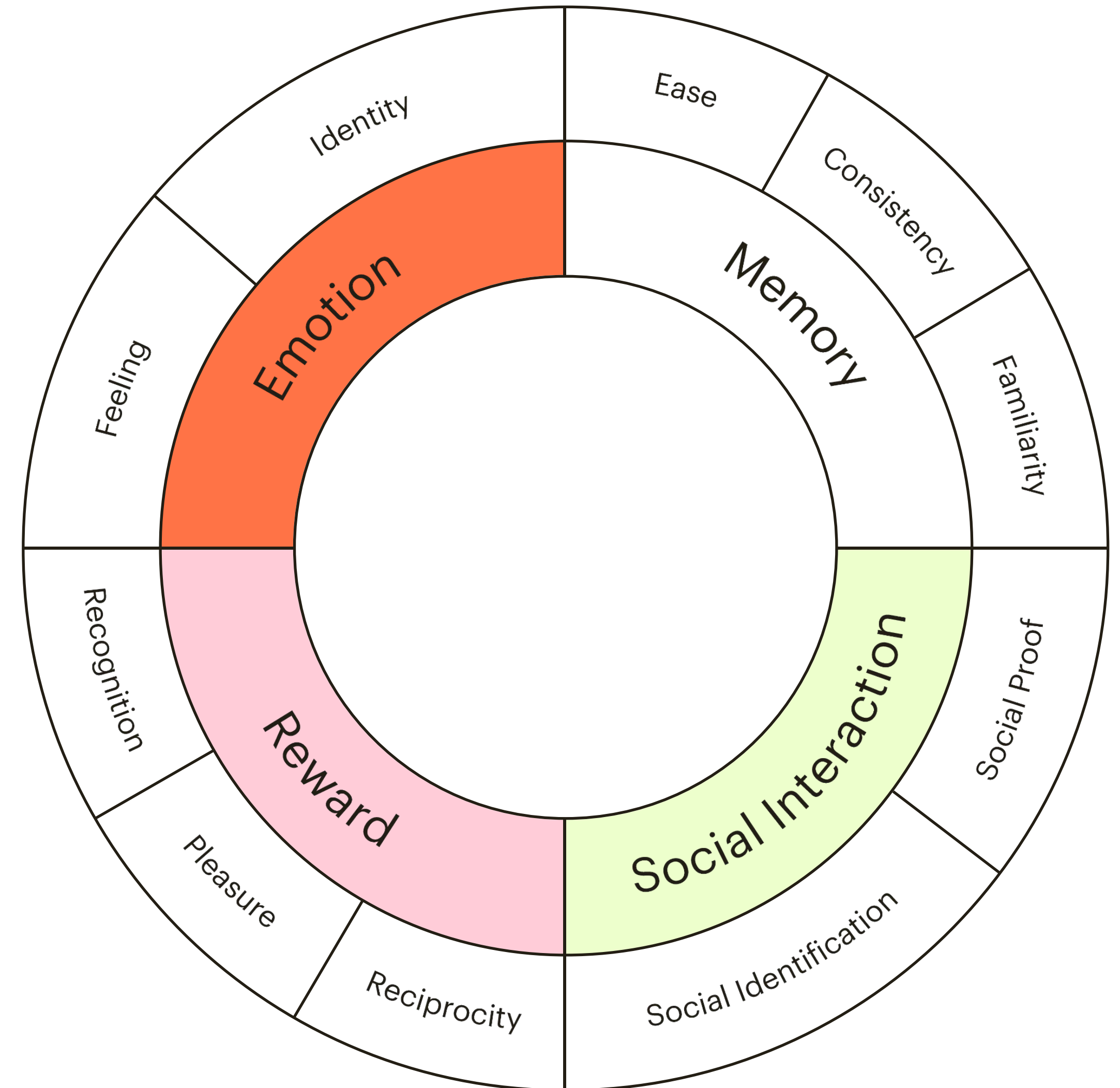
## What is motivation?

Motivation refers to the individual's desire or willingness to perform the behavior. Motivation can be influenced by factors such as intrinsic desires, social norms, or external rewards.

It's very hard to create motivation where it doesn't already exist. It's much easier to enhance motivation that already exists at some fundamental level. Increasing motivation, therefore, begins with understanding and tapping into existing feelings toward a brand.

Three aspects of our loyalty wheel offer insight into how to increase motivation:

- Social Interaction
- Reward
- Emotion





# Tactics for increasing social interaction

## Gift giving

Promote organic peer-to-peer marketing through gift giving

## Insider status

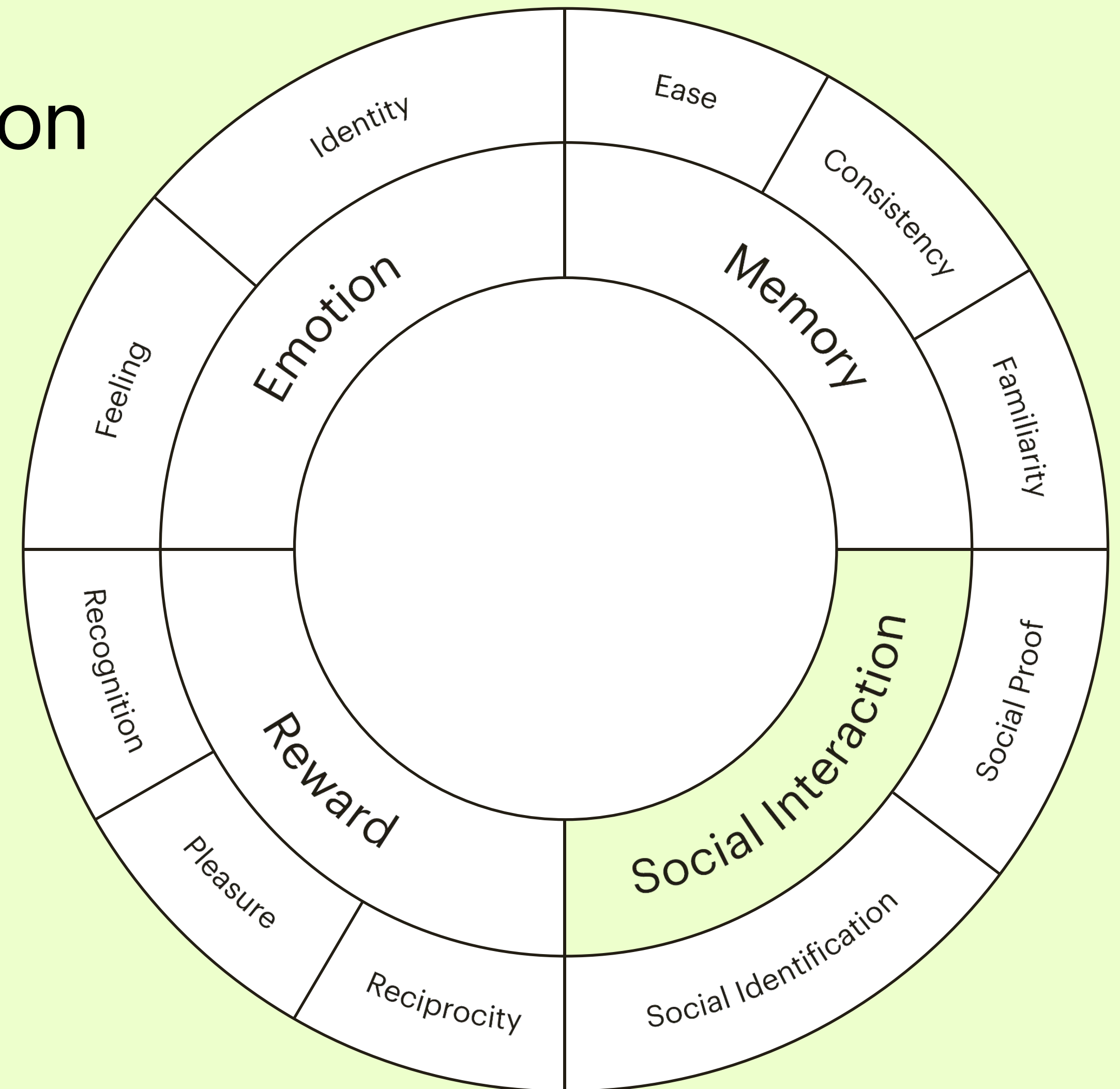
Help customers feel heard by asking for, and responding to, their feedback

### What is social interaction?

Social dynamics and interactions reshape our brains and behaviors, significantly influencing consumer decision-making. Therefore, interpersonal relationships emerge as a key avenue for inspiring repeat purchases.

### Interested in the science?

[Discover more in the Science of Loyalty report](#)



## TACTIC

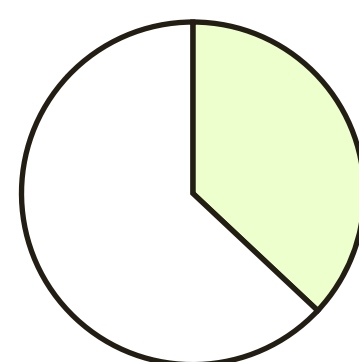
## Gift giving

*Promote organic peer-to-peer marketing through gift giving*

People are extremely influenced by the opinions of others—particularly if those opinions are held by individuals they know and trust. Gift-giving strategies are excellent ways of leveraging social proof to build positive brand associations and drive loyalty. In fact, Eddie Yoon says, "Gifting—often by superconsumers—is one of the most effective and least utilized strategies for loyalty."

### Be inspired

Flower delivery service [Bloom & Wild](#) lets customers set in-app reminders for all the special occasions in their lives, like birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays. When the dates approach, the app sends a reminder along with discounts that incentivize the shopper to complete the purchase—a great way of encouraging gift-giving via personalized and timely prompts.



# 37%

of consumers have recommended their preferred brand to friends or family and only 22% have given it as a gift, revealing an untapped channel for spreading the word about a brand.

### Put the tactic to work

- Make it easy to gift your brand by offering shoppers options like gift-wrapping services and gift receipts at checkout.

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- Interactive elements, such as quizzes or tools, can bring a fun and engaging twist to gift-giving, matching buyers with personalized gifts for their loved ones.

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- Look beyond the big calendar events and stand out from the crowd by prompting gift-giving for smaller, less obvious milestones and celebrations. Think: World Friendship Day, the start of a new season, or a payday treat.

TACTIC

## Insider status

*Help customers feel heard by asking for, and responding to, feedback*

When a business has strong feedback channels, it signals to customers that their input is valued, enhancing the buyer-brand connection. Offering feedback opportunities across channels can showcase a brand’s adaptability and commitment to improving the customer experience.

### Be inspired

Beauty brand Kiki takes customer feedback to the next level, asking not only about the customer experience but also having customers vote on which products and launches they’d like to see next, fostering a sense of insider status while gathering feedback to better understand their customer needs.



### Put the tactic to work

- Create exclusive opportunities for loyal customers to offer feedback, by, for example, requesting their opinion via an email survey. This will help to deepen the customer’s sense of engagement with the brand and provide useful insight into loyal customers’ thoughts and opinions.

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- Use social media to create engaging polls, quizzes, and interactive stories that foster two-way communication with your audience.

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- Make it clear to customers where their feedback has been actioned and use this as a talking point.



# Tactics for increasing reward

## Meaningful rewards

Personalize reward programs to customer lifestyles in order to boost satisfaction

## Game on

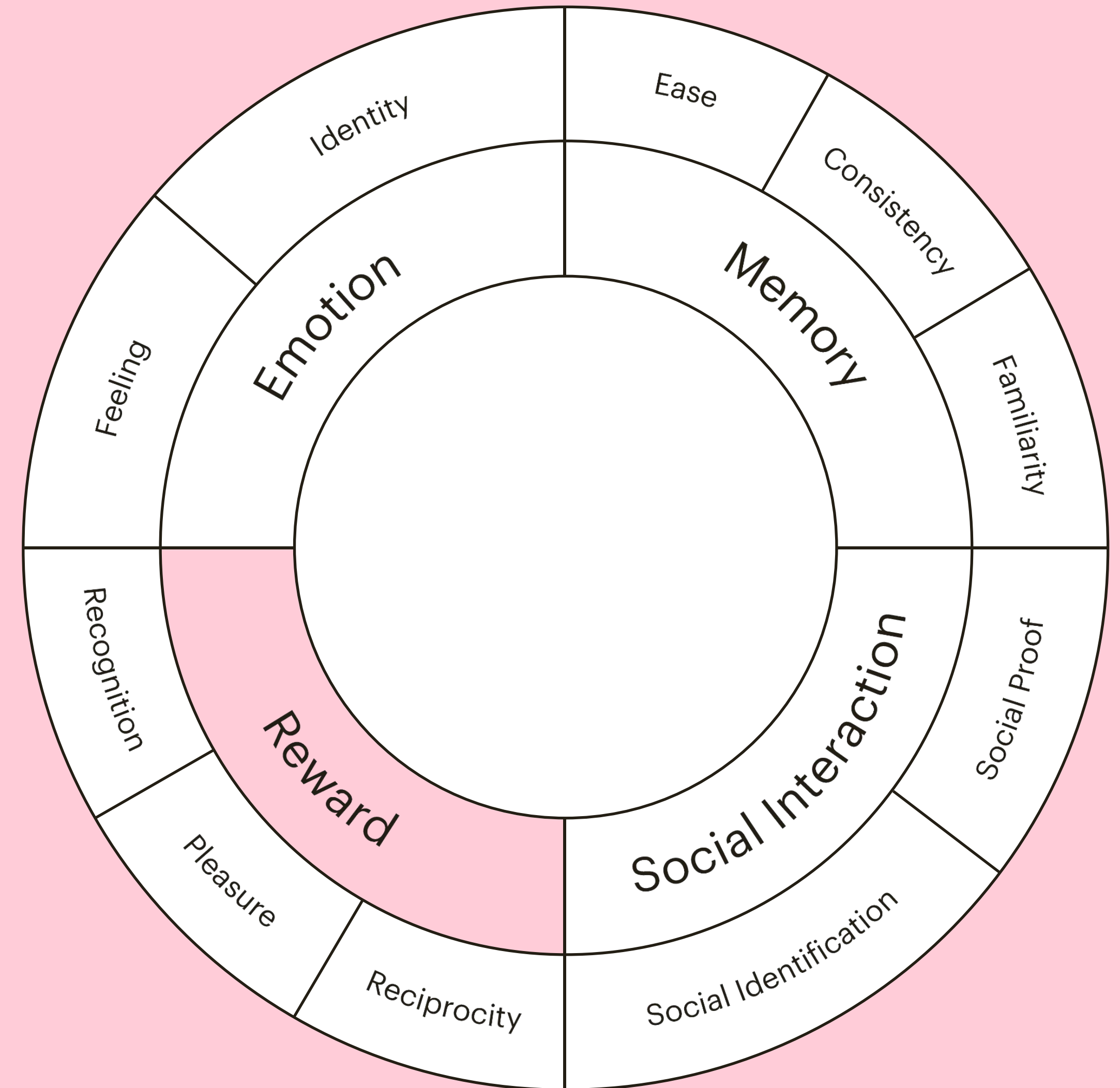
Gamify your rewards to foster a sense of achievement and fun

### What is reward?

Rewards serve to reinforce behaviors. Brands leveraging the reward system trigger pleasurable sensations, cultivating loyalty by tapping into evolutionary survival mechanisms.

### Interested in the science?

[Discover more in the Science of Loyalty report](#)



## TACTIC

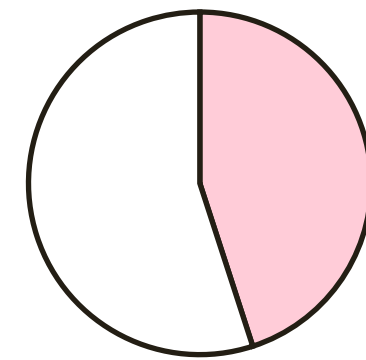
## Meaningful rewards

*Personalize reward programs to customer lifestyles in order to boost satisfaction*

With an abundance of reward programs available, customers are more likely to choose the brands that offer the rewards most closely aligned to their individual needs and preferences. Monetary rewards aren't the be-all and end-all here. Hyper-personalized rewards that speak to customers' lifestyles and interests can feel more relevant and enhance engagement, ultimately driving customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

### Be inspired

DoorDash launched a rewards program that gives diners credits for eating out at local restaurants. The [program](#), available in select markets, encourages customers to boost their local economies while they patronize small businesses.



# 45%

of repeat purchasers like their preferred brand to provide them with deals or discounts. But rewards and incentives aren't always monetary. In fact, 87% said their preferred brand made them feel good, which was the second biggest driver of loyalty, after consistency.

### Put the tactic to work

- How might partnerships with different brands and businesses—and the ability to spend points in more than one way—lend versatility to your loyalty program?

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- Give customers opportunities to earn rewards by doing more than just supporting your business. For example, customers could earn points and benefits by engaging in sustainable practices or by logging activities on a fitness app.

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- By offering rewards that support a greater good, you can empower customers to feel better about their spending decisions while also building loyalty and driving engagement.

## TACTIC

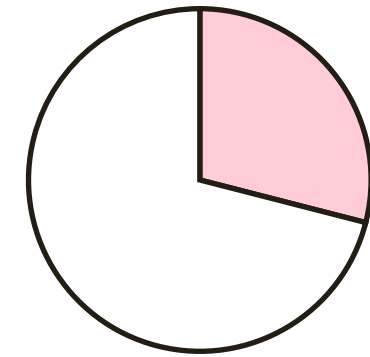
## Game on

*Gamify your rewards to foster a sense of achievement and fun*

By gamifying rewards and tiering loyalty programs, brands can transform the purchasing experience into a fun and engaging activity that instills a sense of achievement and excitement. This not only encourages repeat purchases but also enhances customers' overall satisfaction when it comes to the brand—all while amplifying marketing results.

### Be inspired

Alo Yoga encourages customer loyalty through its tiered rewards system. The structure incentivizes customers to reach new tiers, with benefits ranging from early access to sales to invitations to exclusive events to a personalized concierge service.



# 29%

of repeat purchasers said they'd like to receive loyalty perks from their preferred brand. However, currently only 16% have joined a loyalty benefits program, suggesting untapped potential.

### Put the tactic to work

- Leverage the “fresh start effect.” People are more open to taking action toward achieving a goal after a special occasion or key date has passed. How could special prompts around the new year, a new month, or even after a customer’s birthday help to motivate them while also serving your loyalty goals?

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- Offer other means of accumulating points beyond making purchases, such as by referring a friend or engaging with the brand on social media.

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- Tier loyalty programs and encourage customers to level up their engagement for access to even better rewards.



# Tactics for increasing emotion

## Shared interests

Build emotional resonance by aligning your brand with a cultural niche or social cause

## Sense of ownership

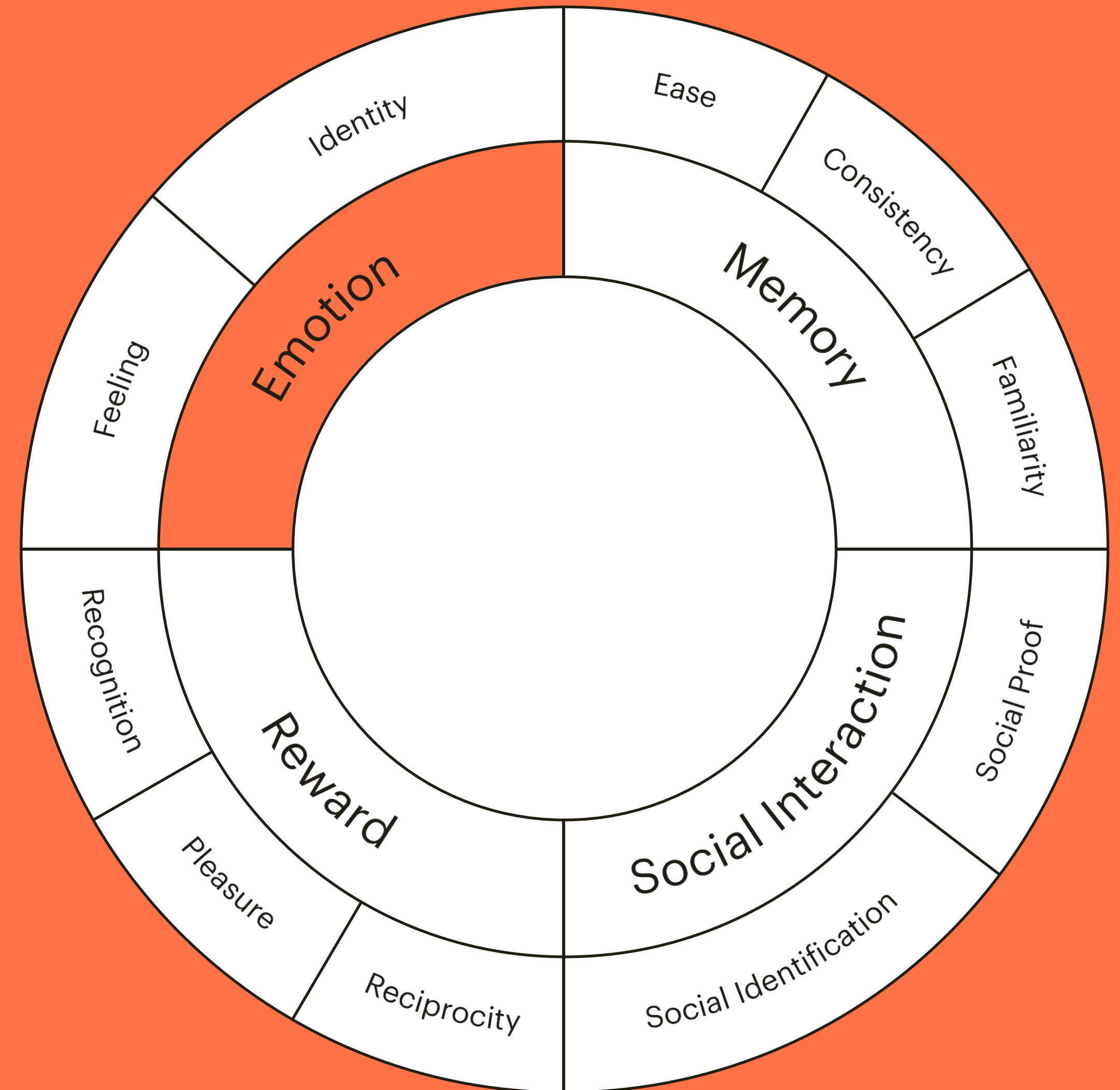
Actively engage consumers to foster a sense of co-collaboration

### What is emotion?

Emotion influences both memory and social interactions, inspiring loyalty-driven purchases (as distinguished from those driven by habit) that foster lasting connections between brands and customers.

### Interested in the science?

[Discover more in the Science of Loyalty report](#)



## TACTIC

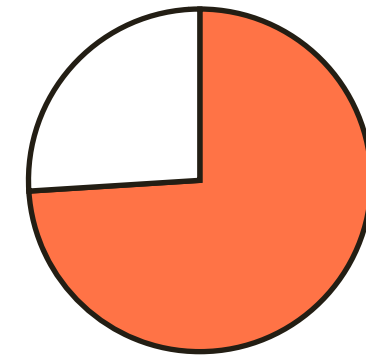
## Shared interests

*Build emotional resonance by aligning your brand with a cultural niche or social cause*

By genuinely aligning with customer values and interests, brands can cultivate a deep emotional attachment. Embracing a particular niche—whether a social cause, community, or subculture—can inspire loyalty by using value alignment to create a sense of belonging and cultural relevance.

### Be inspired

Vans is known as the go-to choice of footwear for skateboarders. But the shoes weren't initially developed as skateboarding shoes. Rather, they were adopted by the community after they found the shoes were durable and provided a good grip. Today, Vans caters to its customers' interests by regularly partnering with athletes and core skateboarding brands, as they did recently for their limited-edition shoe collaboration with Krooked Skateboards.



# 74%

of fans say they shared values with their preferred brand (vs 68% total), showing that shoppers on the upper end of the loyalty spectrum were more likely to select a brand that aligns with their personal values or goals.

### Put the tactic to work

- ➔ Rather than centering your brand in marketing initiatives, consider how to make space for customers to engage in their shared interests, such as sponsoring events and venues or funding community initiatives.

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- ➔ Measure and report on the impact of your brand's social and environmental initiatives by sharing genuine progress updates and success stories with customers.

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- ➔ With smaller communities, know the difference between additive and extractive engagement; make sure your engagement is adding something rather than simply aligning with a particular subculture for clout.

## TACTIC

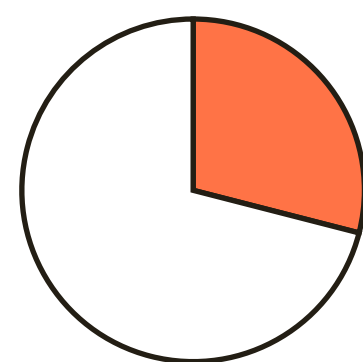
## Sense of ownership

*Actively engage consumers to foster a sense of co-collaboration*

Co-creation with customers builds stronger relationships by fostering ongoing engagement and product advocacy. It can help drive innovation and, for the customer, lead to a deeper satisfaction with—and investment in—the products and ideas they've contributed to. This helps their loyalty grow because it encourages them to identify with the brand.

**Be inspired**

LEGO launched the [LEGO IDEAS hub](#), a place for LEGO enthusiasts to share their creations. The website runs challenges—allowing users to submit creations based on themes—and functions as a shop where customers can buy popular creations made by their peers.



# 29%

of email subscribers participate in surveys or giving feedback, showing they are keen to share their thoughts and opinions with brands.

**Put the tactic to work**

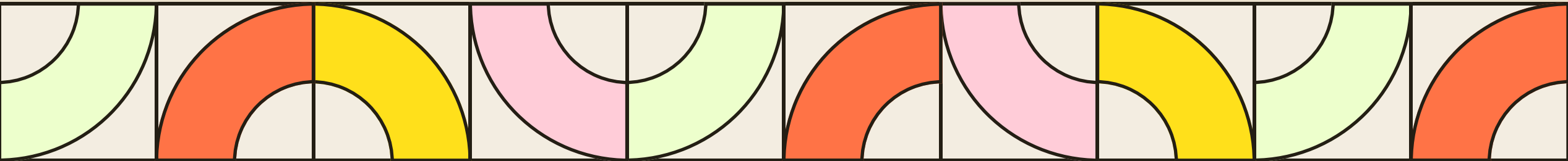
- Consider how the use of email or social media channels could promote customer involvement and platform their ideas.

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- Explore interactive experiences, such as challenges or quizzes, as a means of capturing customer ideas and boosting engagement.

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- How might your brand create a dedicated space for customers to share their creative ideas?



# Recap

TACTICS FOR —

# Increasing ability

## Familiarity

People have a cognitive bias toward things that they know and are familiar with.

→ **Smart exposure**

Be top-of-mind with strategically placed brand codes and symbols

→ **Familiar foundations**

Build familiarity by showing up in trusted spaces

## Consistency

People repeat past behavior in order to simplify the decision-making process.

→ **Choice validation**

To encourage renewed commitment, help customers feel justified in their choice

→ **New routines**

Build repeat purchases into your customer's routine

## Ease

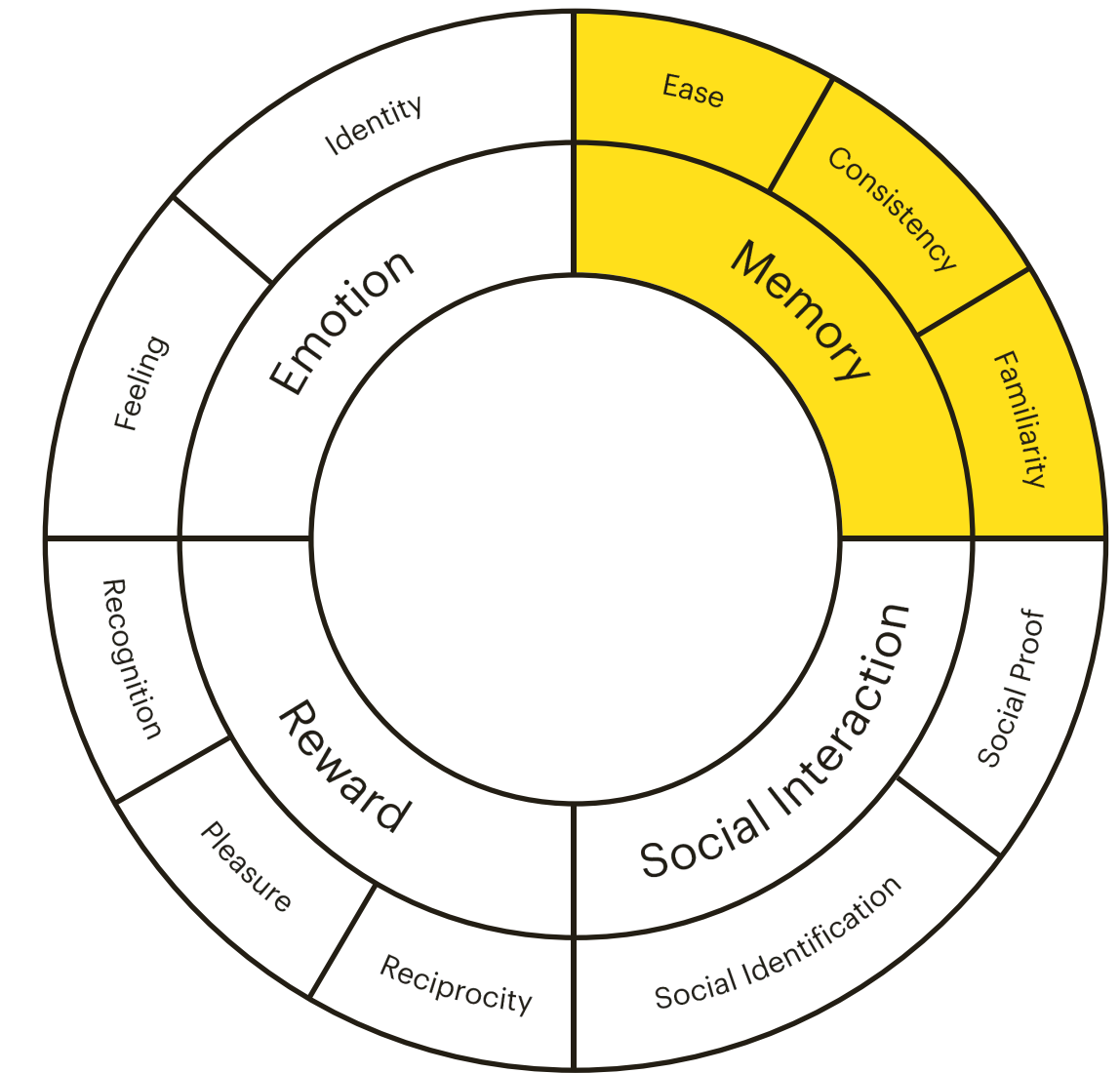
People are more likely to develop a preference for frictionless experiences.

→ **Smooth selling**

Remove obstacles that may disrupt customers' shopping journeys

→ **Easy decisions**

Curate content to help customers combat choice fatigue





TACTICS FOR —

# Increasing motivation

## Social interaction

Social dynamics and interactions reshape our brains and behaviors, significantly influencing consumer decision-making.

→ **Gift giving**

Promote organic peer-to-peer marketing through gift giving

→ **Insider status**

Help customers feel heard by asking for, and responding to, their feedback

## Reward

Customers will repeat past behavior to simplify the decision-making process.

→ **Meaningful rewards**

Personalize reward programs to customer lifestyles in order to boost satisfaction

→ **Game on**

Gamify your rewards to foster a sense of achievement and fun

## Emotion

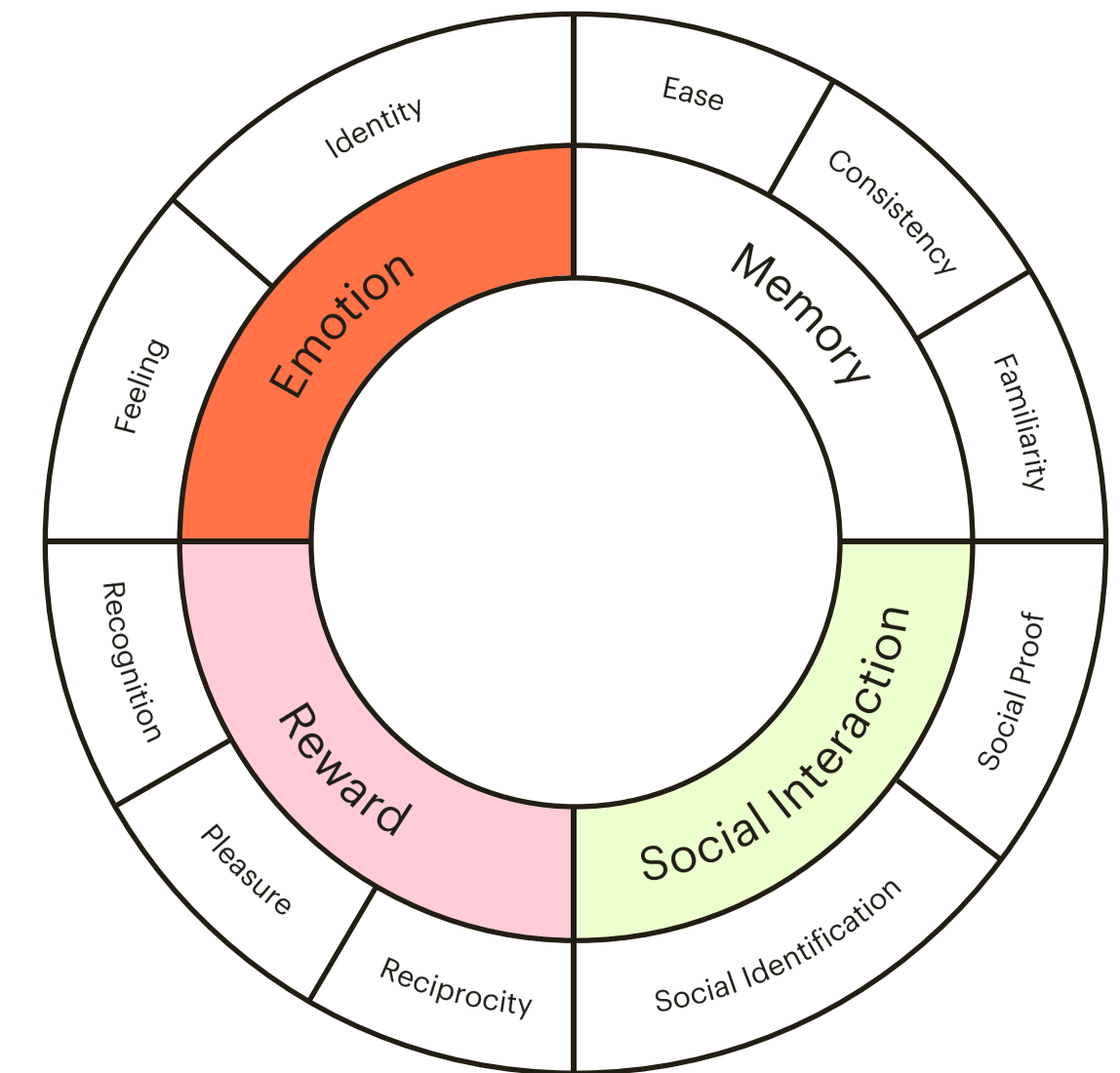
Emotion influences memory and social interactions, inspiring loyalty-driven purchases that foster lasting customer connections.

→ **Shared interests**

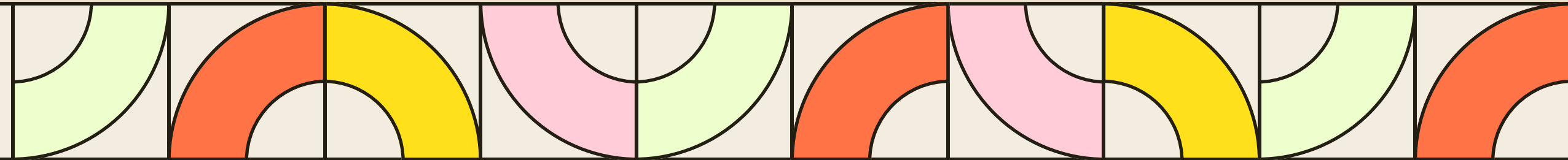
Build emotional resonance by aligning your brand with a cultural niche or value

→ **Sense of ownership**

Actively engage consumers to foster a sense of co-collaboration







# Want to know more?

### Intuit Mailchimp

Intuit Mailchimp is an email and marketing automations platform for growing businesses. We empower millions of customers around the world to start and grow their businesses with world-class marketing technology, award-winning customer support, and inspiring content. Mailchimp puts data-backed recommendations at the heart of your marketing, so you can find and engage customers across email, social media, landing pages, and advertising—automatically and with the power of AI.

### Canvas8

Canvas8 is an award-winning strategic insights practice operating out of London, LA, New York, and Singapore. Its focus is on enabling organizations to be better, by understanding changes in human culture and behavior.

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