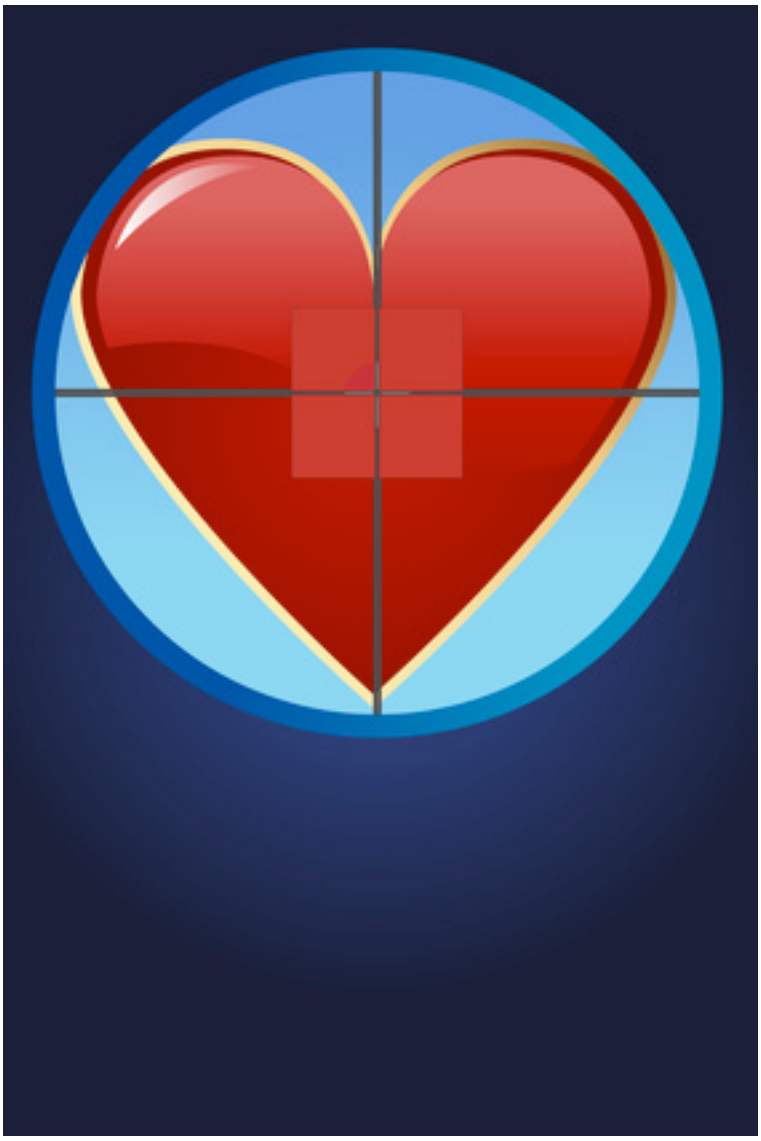
AIMS Method

Identifying and Leveraging Motivators



Bill Burnett
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Ralph Waldo Emerson was a learned man. He'd studied philosophy, science, history, literature, and art. But none of them were particularly helpful when he found himself trying to push a calf into the barn with his son. The two of them pushed from the rear, pulled from the front, grabbed tail and ears alike. Progress was imperceptible. The best evidence that work was being done were their red faces and perspiration soaked shirts. The calf remained unmoved. Then, along came a servant girl. she grinned and stuck a finger in the calf's mouth. The calf, seduced by this maternal proxy, followed her straight into the barn. Emerson smiled at his son and said, "I like people who know how to get things done!"

The right motivator gets things done. My purpose is to help you learn how to get things done by motivating others. The model I will use is useful in all contexts where you need to motivate or influence others. In this eBook I will teach you the analytic side of the model using commercials as our study subject. The other side of the model is the synthetic side. It is how we help businesses create the right message to customers or to employees. We do one day sessions with companies to accomplish just that.[1]

[1] If you are interested in talking to us about this one day process call me at Tailwind Discovery Group, 847 219-2285. We always guarantee our work: You get the value you expected, or you don't pay us.

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I am not going to talk about how to motivate cows. If I'd been in Emerson's position, it wouldn't have taken too much effort before I'd have reached for the cattle prod. That's because I was once a manager. It's human to become coercive, to reach for the cattle prod when we get frustrated, especially managers. But, that would be absolutely inconsistent with what I want to talk about. Rather, here I am going to focus us on how to motivate a different animal, the animal within us, and the cattle prod is out.

Every human interaction starts as a sale. A sale is an effort to motivate behavior. A sale takes place where the seller lacks sufficient power over the buyer to demand the behavior. Put another way, you want people to buy. This notion that it is not a 'Sale' but a 'Buy' comes from my friend Bob Lambert of Samurai Business Group. He rightly points out that when you're selling you have no coercive power. What makes the transaction is the buyer is motivated to do his job, vis. Buy.

The objective of this eBook is to turn you into someone who can adroitly find the message that motivates. In this eBook, I am going to give you the tools and the practice to get good at finding the motivators, leveraging the three techniques to access those motivators, and instantly building a compound motivation model for each unique motivational opportunity. So lets imagine I have been incredibly successful with this book and you have done a great job learning the material. You've crafted a motivational message for a customer you want to motivate and you've just tried it and it worked perfectly. Who is that customer, and what did you successfully motivate them to do.?

No, I mean it. Really <u>do</u> this, imagine you and I have been that successful together: We've crafted a motivational message for a customer you want to motivate and we just tried it and it worked perfectly. Who is that customer, and what did we successfully motivate them to do?

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The techniques in this book represent a handful of the tools I use to help companies craft the kind of message that is powerful. These are messages that motivate customers to buy, and employees to go the extra mile.

We want to motivate customers to buy, and employees to perform. We are going to learn to use the model by looking a commercials, but the astute leader will see that the methods and ideas apply equally to motivating employees to perform. People are people.

The words “employees to perform” are important. What we mean by ‘perform’ is for employees to give their discretionary effort, their discretionary mind, and their heart. People hold back discretionary effort when a cattle prod is used. Thus, we are removing from the discussion the notions of coercive motivators. Assume no power over either employees or customers. You are going to elicit behaviors based on touching something inside the person that causes them to respond just as the servant girl touched something inside the calf.

Money. You will notice that when we talk about motivators, money doesn’t enter the conversation. This may strike you as odd, because lots of businesses use money as a motivator.

Money represents a layer above what the true motivator is. We value money for what it does. It enables us to address and appetite for something, or it provides us an element of identity. We will focus on these lower levels. And that brings us to the model for motivation.

The criteria for selecting this model of motivation is two fold. First it must be something that enables us to identify motivators we can tap in a specific case. Second, it must provide a robust enough model to enable us to catalogue how the competition is motivating its customers. The AIMS model does both.

AIMS is an acronym. It stands for Appetites, Identity, Meaning, and Sex. These are broad categories, but when you get them, you’ll find them very useful. I will introduce a tool that will help us to understand the model and allow us to see how others motivate customers. The following four short sections will introduce you to AIMS and let you have a little fun with each of the four.

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Sex

We start with sex as a motivator. I know “S” is the last letter in the acronym A.I.M.S. but why leave the good stuff for last. Certainly you can think of commercials that use sex to sell. Perhaps the commercial that raised the bar and altered the commercial space, probably forever for the worse, was the commercial that featured teen actress Brooke Shields. It was doubly successful as advertisements go since it also generate publicity as well as consumer buzz. In this now famous commercial, Brooke utters the line, "You know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing."[2] Hit Play.

Obviously, that commercial is a play on sex. Although Brooke was just a teenager in the original commercial, Calvin Klein was using her sexy attractiveness to sell pants. But in this category I am not only talking about sex.

I am using the word ‘sex’ here because, well, it gets your attention. Besides, it works well for the acronym A.I.M.S. However, the category it represents is broader than just sex. In this category of motivators are: love, friendship, family, belonging, jealousy, power, guilt, and, of course, sex. The category comprises our deep needs for constituent security and connection with other people. It is anything we desire of other people.

[2] Calvin Klein http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YK2VZgJ4AoM accessed 9/19/2011

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There are wonderful ads that tap into this motivator. Here is one that Dan Heath showed me from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership called Embrace Life. Of the list above, see which of the motivators it taps into: love, friendship, family, belonging, jealousy, power, guilt, and/or sex. Perhaps you can detect a different motivator. (Hit Play or go to the site in the footnote below. [3])

Clearly, the category "Sex" is broad. Think of it as those things we want of others.

[3] Embrace Life http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-8PBx7isoM accessed 9/19/2011

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Identity

Think back to the Brooke Shields commercial for Calvin Klein. Clearly sex was a motivator Calvin Klein was tapping into. Heterosexual men who saw the commercial saw Brooke as a sexy movie star who wore nothing between her and her jeans. One can only imagine what else when through such men's heads, but I think we could reasonably expect that it related to sex.

But there was another motivator in play as well. Young women who saw the ad might have internalized it differently. They might well have thought, 'if I wore pants like that, I would be seen as sexy too.'

That introduces Identity. Identity is how we want others to see us. At the core we identify ourselves using what I call the Me and the I. Me stands for Meaning, which we will get to shortly. I stands for Identity. We are social animals and we have a need to fit into the broader social fabric. How other people view us is critical to our sense of identity and we go to some lengths to create our identity. What goes into identity is reputation, position, rank, influence, esteem, fame, prestige, standing, and character from the perspective of how others view us.

Identity is usually a part of why people buy big houses, or wear expensive watches, or drive sports cars, or make big public donations to various causes. They are trying to get others to see them in a particular light. For some people Identity can become their most important motivator. That was probably true for Sandy Weill, former Chairman of Citigroup when he wrote "*Fortunately, the investigation ran its course with Citigroup and the other major Wall Street firms settling the regulatory issues at the end of 2002. I wasn't charged with any wrongdoing, ...The weeks of seeing my reputation--my most important asset--dragged through the mud wore me down and hurt deeply.*" He saw reputation as his most important asset, that's Identity. Moreover, through the years Mr. Weill has been very public with his philanthropic giving, and that is all about Identity too.

Take a look at the Whisk commercial for "Ring around the Collar". No question, this is about Identity.[4]

[4] Whisk http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16Jt7W283fk&feature=related Accessed 9/19/2011

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Meaning

Meaning is about behavior that has value to us personally. It includes accomplishment, self-creation, problem solving, the sense of mastery, and doing good. Whatever it is, it matters to us personally.

I use the example of my wife using Method cleaning products. Method's products are all environmentally friendly, no negative impact on the environment. The packaging is all either fully biodegradable or recyclable. And the product is effective. The product makes meaning for my wife because it allows her to have a clean kitchen, bathroom, laundry while having no negative impact on the local landfill and no negative impact on the environment. Personally she gets satisfaction from using method products.

The US Army tapped into our need for meaning with their 1981 commercial with the tag line "Be All That You Can Be."[5]

Tom's Shoes also taps into this by turning each customer in to a philanthropist. When you buy a pair of Tom's Shoes you are automatically providing a pair of shoes to a child in a 3rd world country.

[5] US Army http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2uPoMaCgJg&NR=1 Accessed 9/20/2011

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Appetites

Appetites are similar to sex, only instead of people, appetites are around things or personal pleasures. Appetites include our desire to own nice things, have another glass of wine, to stop off at McDonalds for a quick burger and fries. The most direct advertisement go after appetites. Any commercial that boasts about the great taste of their product, or how satisfying it feels to own something, etc.,. E.g. Campbell Soup advertisement “Mmm mm, good!”

We are driven by cravings for things as well. At 10pm that piece of chocolate cake that is in the fridge, that next bottle of beer, wanting a CD because it has a song on it you love. Lots of commercials go after our appetites.[6]

[6] McDonald’s Ad. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSxEBfQ_msg accessed 10/2/2011

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That's the brief introduction into the classification of motivators. Here they are in a snap shot.

Category	Descriptors
Appetites	Our desire for things: goods, food, drink.
Identity	How we want others to see us: reputation, position, rank, influence, esteem, fame, prestige, standing, and character.
Meaning	Things that have meaning to us personally: accomplishment, self-creation, problem solving, the sense of mastery, and doing good.
Sex	Our deep needs for constituent security and connection with other people: love, friendship, family, belonging, jealousy, power, guilt, and, of course, sex.

Lets assume that more is better in this case. The more motivators you can link to the behavior you are after, then the more likely you are to get that behavior. A useful starting place would be to be able to identify these motivators. Thus, I want you to get started with a fun exercise to identify specific motivating lines in a commercial and what motivator you think they are after. It is possible for an ad to go after more than one motivator.

Here is your first challenge. What motivator in this commercial were they trying to tap into?[7]

Clearly in this commercial, the tag line is Winston tastes good like a cigarette should. This is a music video with nothing to it but the jingle. Obviously Winston is appealing to our Appetite for things that taste good. It just goes to show that you can have a

[7] Winston http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lSeGiZvPztc&feature=player_embedded accessed 10/5/2011

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successful product even where you make absurd claims, like a cigarette tastes good. Although they don't say it in the commercial the idea is that Winston cigarettes taste better than alternative cigarettes, that's why you should try them.

We are going to use a very simple tool to help us analyze motivational messages. In one section we will identify the statement, or image that is designed to trigger a motivator. In commercials the image almost always plays a role in the message.

Statement 1	
Statement 2	
Statement3	

Once we capture the statement (or image) from the message, we will then designate which of the AIMS are being activated by that statement.

Appetite	
Identity	
Meaning	
Sex	

In the Winston commercial we just watched the jingle statement was "Winston tastes good like a cigarette should"

Statement 1	tastes good like a cigarette should			
			Appetite	1
Statement 2			Identity	
			Meaning	
Statement 3			Sex	

We put the "1" on the Appetite line to indicate that it applies to the first statement.

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There is another commercial for Winston from around the same time that taps into more than just appetite. See if you can identify other motivators that might be present in this ad.[8]

You pick out the statement or image in the commercial or story and write it in the space next to Statement 1. Then pick the motivator(s) from the list on the right, putting a #1 in the right-most box for each applicable motivator. You do the same for the second statement or image you want to point out. For example in the people portion of the second Winston ad you could evaluate it this way. Your form might have looked something like this:

Statement 1	That tastes good like a cigarette should		
		Appetite	1
Statement 2	Well everybody is smoking Winston	Identity	2
		Meaning	
Statement 3		Sex	2

In the commercial, people are playing cards and a cigarette is offered to a lady. When two of the men simultaneously show their packs of Winstons, one of them says "Well everybody is smoking Winstons" I scored this as addressing two motivators. First, it taps into the notion of belonging (Sex) with the word 'everybody'. Second, it taps into Identity as well. You want to be seen as part of the in-crowd, which is what is meant by 'everybody is smoking Winstons'. That is your desired identity--to be part of the in-crowd. It is the identity claimed implicitly by the two men who are already in the in-crowd because they already each have a pack of Winstons.

[8] Winston http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9o5i9eNPhY&feature=player_embedded accessed 9/27/2011

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A Little Practice

Let's assume that more is better. The more motivators you can link to the behavior you are after, then the more likely you are to get that behavior. A useful starting place would be to be able to identify these motivators. Thus, I want you to get started with this exercise to identify specific motivating lines in a commercial and what motivator you think they are after. It is possible for an ad to go after more than one motivator.

You pick out the statement or image in the commercial or story and write it in the space next to Statement 1. Then pick the motivator(s) from the list on the right, putting a #1 in the right-most box for each applicable motivator, just as I did above. The second statement of image is described in Statement 2 and so on. Have some fun, this is all opinion, and your opinion is, well, your opinion.

Lets try one. Sticking with cigarettes for the moment (no I don't smoke) and there are a couple of motivators in this one. See if you can identify them. Sometime the motivator is just a sound or a visual.[9]

Statement 1				
			Appetite	
Statement 2			Identity	
			Meaning	
Statement 3			Sex	

This ad cleverly hits on two motivators with one line, "He is one of the last of a wild and very singular breed". The commercial is talking about the horse, but also about the man. Obviously it is an Identity appeal. But near the end of the commercial, the Marlboro man whistles back the wrangler to let the wild stallion go. That is reaching into Meaning - the value we place in freedom.

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[9] Marlboro: Wild Stalion http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=8250a00140 accessed Sept 26, 2011

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Here is one more before we move on.[10]

Statement 1				
			Appetite	
Statement 2			Identity	
			Meaning	
Statement 3			Sex	

This Pepsi Commercial employs humor in a couple of peaks in the commercial We will talk about the importance of peaks in motivation a bit farther on. What motivators are at work here. Since there is no dialogue we can reference the visuals. In doing this kind of an exercise there are no right or wrong answers. It is what you perceive. The objective is just to practice trying to see the motivators. Later you will reach into this new skill to craft messages that motivate.

In this Pepsi commercial you can reasonably argue they tap all four motivation categories. First the Appetite for the drink itself is almost assumed in the commercial. Second, Identity is what the narrative of the commercial is about. It is how everyone sees our hero, his identity is established in the end. Meaning is evident in the hero's achieving his goal. We see his success and understand how that is personally valuable. And finally, the Sex motivator is express in belonging to the group. All in all a pretty well constructed commercial from the motivation category perspective.

That leads us deeper to the next level. It is not enough just to tap a motivator, it is probably more important how powerfully we tap that. We must now consider Fear, Pain, and Gain.

[10] Pepsi: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40DykbPa4Lc&NR=1 Accessed 9/28/2011

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Fear, Pain, and Gain

Any good salesperson can explain the value of the Fear, Pain, and Gain concept.

Pain represent an immediate need that must be fulfilled right now. We use the word 'pain' to designate this because pain is exactly that type of thing. When you're in pain you immediate need is to return to a painless state. It cannot wait. Relief is needed right now.

What we are talking about is not coercive behavior in which physical pain is the motivator - the cattle prod. The pain we are talking about here is in our heads or in our state of being, or certain to happen in the future, for example a head ache.

According to sales lore, if you want to trigger one of the AIMS then Pain is your best bet. I suspect that is not always true, but I leave that for you to judge as you play through the rest of this book. Pain is used in messaging often enough. This commercial is almost enough to induce a headache. [11]

Now you put the statement number in the appropriate box(es) under Pain, Fear, Gain.

			Pain	Fear	Gain
Statement 1					
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

[11] Anacin3 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_rQf5pBZdU&feature=related accessed 9/30/2011

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Pain isn't only about physical pain, emotional pain can play to the audience in very touching ways as well.[12]

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

Of course the category covered by 'pain' encompasses more than physical pain or emotional pain. It is any need demanding immediate satisfaction. This include obsession as well. If you read Wind in the Willows you will recall Mr Toad, rich, flamboyant, and prone to becoming obsessed in an instant. He becomes so obsessed with a fancy motor car, he steals it.

> *"As the familiar sound broke forth, the old passion seized on Toad and completely mastered him, body and soul. As if in a dream he found himself, somehow, seated in the driver's seat; as if in a dream, he pulled the lever and swung the car round the yard and out through the archway; and, as if in a dream, all sense of right and wrong, all fear of obvious consequences, seemed temporarily suspended. He increased his pace, and as the car devoured the street and leapt forth on the high road through the open country, he was only conscious that he was Toad once more, Toad at his best and highest, Toad the terror, the traffic-queller, the Lord of the lone trail, before whom all must give way or be smitten into nothingness and everlasting night."*[13]

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[12] Kunhadi's Mother's Day http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPdt_1ooxOo&feature=player_embedded Accessed 9/23/2011

[13] http://www.enotes.com/wind-willows-text/vi---mr-toad Accessed 9/21/2011

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Fear

Fear is the anticipation of something unwanted being forced upon you. It is the worry that a visit to the dentist is going to be most unpleasant. It is the sickly feeling that you forgot to turn off the oven before leaving for vacation. Fear in commercials is very common. The most obvious example is in the insurance industry. Allstate is running the Mayhem commercials, here's a bunch.[14]

livepage.apple.comlivepage.apple.com

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

[14] Allstate: Mayhem http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoiLluBf7mI accessed 10/2/2011

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Fear of something unwanted isn't only about impending physical pain or financial loss. It can be personal: (WARNING: you'll have to watch the video game pre-commercial first) [15]

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

Personal hygiene is a whole category unto itself, usually based on fear. It has even created its own lexicon. 'Halitosis' is a word introduced by Listerine in 1921 following an earlier very successful term introduced by Odo-Ro-No, a deodorant for women, which in 1919 became the first company to use the term "B.O."

[15] Have you brushed http://dai.ly/p2fYbC accessed 9/30/2011

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Gain

Gain is about receiving more benefit. According to the lore, it is the least effective trigger of Pain, Fear, and Gain. Gain is expressed as becoming: richer; healthier; happier; better looking; better smelling; better hearing; better sex. Here is an example of a commercial that uses gain as the trigger[16]:

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

The gain in this commercial is left up to the imagination of the viewer. You have to already know what the product does before the commercial makes sense.

[16] Viagra http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xk9JwV8sZTs accessed 9/24/2011

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Insurance is usually focussed on fear. Here is one that is not. Clearly it's a Gain message--sandwich, girl, hot tub... but you have to wonder how effective it is.[17]

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

[17] State Farm; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SauUa5Z4Ihw&feature=pyv accessed 9/30/2011

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We've added Pain, Fear, and Gain to our AIMS model and build some skill around identifying where and how these can be used. Here is the model:

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

Now when we go after a motivational message, we want to know which of the three triggers to use. You may have already used the modified grid in the Pain, Fear, and Gain discussion above. If not, let's get some practice using the expanded grid. This is a little more challenging because you have to look for the AIMS that are addressed and the Pain, Fear, and Gain triggers being used.

Here's a practice commercial[18]:

OK, this one is pretty easy, not much to it. Lipton is trying to motivate you by showing you how you can gain happiness by drinking their bottled ice tea.

Statement 1	It's about tasting good too		Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			1
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

[18] Lipton http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yW7LCHjgNzM accessed 9/29/2011

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Here is another one with a bit more going on here. No wrong answers, it is what you perceive. Different people may respond differently to the same message.[19]

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

[19] Levis http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSG807d3P-U&feature=fvwp&NR=1 accessed 9/27/2011

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Here are some more to practice on:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNeRQ6W28qE&NR=1

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wt5FiZQrgM&NR=1

Statement 1			Pain	Fear	Gain
		Appetite			
Statement 2		Identity			
		Meaning			
Statement 3		Sex			

That takes us through the first two tools, and leave four more, which will get us a complete analysis for effective messaging. The remaining tools are available from bill@innovationceo.com

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