

## Behavioural Science – Reading List For Sales & Marketing Leaders

If you're a Sales & Marketing Director looking to deepen your understanding of behavioural science to sharpen strategy, messaging, segmentation, sales tactics and more, these books are among the recommended. They are grouped by theme so you can pick depending on what you want (strategy, persuasion, consumer psychology, habits etc.).



### Foundational / Classic Behavioural Science & Behavioural Economics

Book	What It Covers Well	Why It's Useful for a Director
<i>Thinking, Fast and Slow</i> by Daniel Kahneman	The dual-system model (fast / slow thinking), cognitive biases, heuristics, decision errors.	Helps you understand how customers and even your own teams think and decide; gives framework for spotting where assumptions go wrong.
<i>Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness</i> by Richard H. Thaler & Cass R. Sunstein	How choice architecture and small “nudges” can influence behaviour without coercion; how to design environments that steer decisions.	Useful for designing customer journeys, interfaces, offers etc. — subtle changes often yield big returns.
<i>Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioural Economics</i> by Richard Thaler	The evolution of behavioural economics, challenges to standard rational-actor models.	Good for grounding: helps you argue for and build behavioural science into your marketing/sales strategy with credibility.



### Persuasion, Influence & Consumer Psychology

Book	What It Covers Well	Why It Helps in Sales & Marketing
<i>Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion</i> by Robert B. Cialdini	Key principles like reciprocity, social proof, scarcity, authority, etc.	Great for crafting messages, sales conversations, ads, loyalty programmes. Knowing what drives “yes” and what blocks it.
<i>Predictably Irrational</i> by Dan Ariely	Many experiments showing systematic irrational behaviour: how we misjudge value, fairness, expectations etc.	Useful for testing assumptions, pricing strategies, framing your product messages.
<i>Decoded: The Science Behind Why We Buy</i> by Phil Barden	Explains decision journey: how consumers process info, make choices; how to use behavioural science to shape each touchpoint.	Very applicable for marketers wanting to optimise funnels, messaging, positioning. ( <a href="https://yourstory.com">YourStory.com</a> )
<i>Contagious: How to Build Word of Mouth in the Digital Age</i> by Jonah Berger	Why things catch on, what generates word of mouth, virality; “STEPPS” framework.	For boosting reach, referrals, designing campaigns that people share.

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## Habits, Behaviour Change, Long-Term Engagement

Book	What It Covers	Why It's Useful
<i>Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products</i> by Nir Eyal	The Hook Model (Trigger → Action → Variable Reward → Investment), making products/services customers return to.	If part of your offer is repeat usage, ongoing subscriptions or service retention, this is gold.
<i>The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business</i> by Charles Duhigg	How habits form, cues & rewards, how to change or shift habits.	Helps in designing user behaviour, onboarding, switching behaviour, breaking bad habits.

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## Recent / Tactical Application for Marketers & Sales

Book	What It Covers Well	Why It's Especially Useful Right Now
<i>Using Behavioural Science in Marketing: Drive Customer Action and Loyalty by Prompting Instinctive Responses</i> by Nancy Harhut	Very practical: applying behavioural science in marketing communications, email, ad campaigns, social media; with case studies. ( <a href="#">Waterstones</a> )	For translating behavioural science theory into marketing action; improving conversion + loyalty.
<i>The Illusion of Choice</i> by Richard Shotton	How marketers use framing, anchoring etc. to create “choice” even when options are constrained; exposing subtle influences.	Helps sharpen ethical considerations and avoid “manipulative” feel; also to design better choice architectures.

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## Ethical / Consumer-Centric Considerations

- Sometimes behavioural science can feel manipulative. As a director, thinking about trust, long-term brand equity, ethics is vital. Some books (e.g. *Nudge* and *The Illusion of Choice*) explore the boundary between influence and manipulation.
  - Always test behaviour-based hypotheses in your own market / product context — what works theory may not always translate cleanly.
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