



THE MATRIX

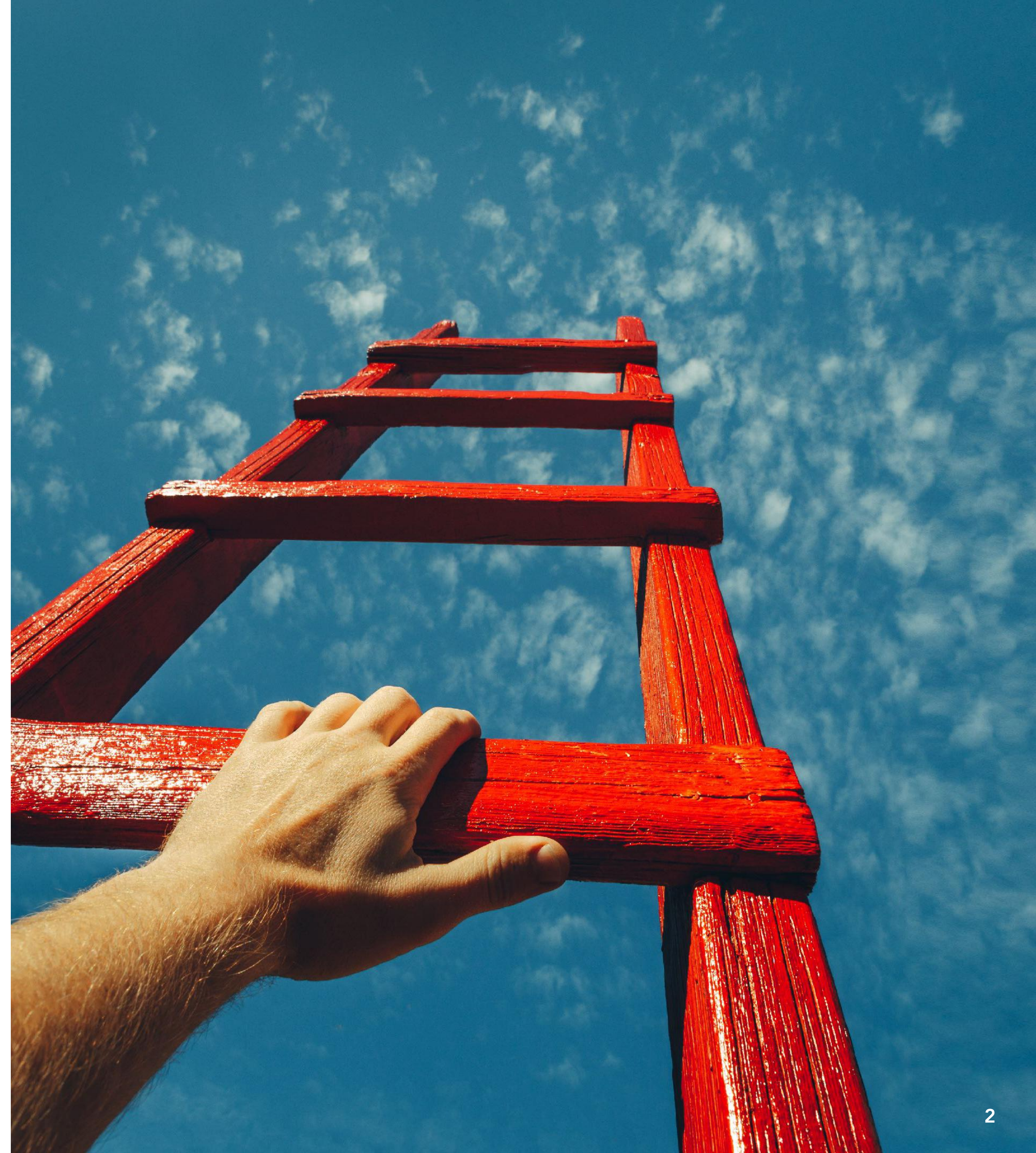
HOW TO UNLOCK BRAND GROWTH
USING THE HIDDEN MOTIVES THAT DRIVE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

MOTIVATED TO GROW?

Motivation is the drive that moves people to act. For brands this means no motivation, no growth because no-one buys. No matter how many needs we address, hopes we appeal to, or incentives and benefits we offer, without motivation nothing happens.

After decades of neglect, the recognition that motivation is a core driver of behaviour is a central insight of contemporary behavioural science. Motivation - and motivational research - are now returning to the heart of marketing.

At Brand Genetics, we are specialists in understanding consumer motivations and applying this to drive brand growth. In this short deck, we share a core motivational framework that can be used in conjunction with behavioural science models (e.g. COM-B) to help brands drive sales.



BLUE PILL VS RED PILL

Understanding and harnessing motivation is all about understanding and harnessing people's goals.

But what are people's goals? To understand the goals that move people to act, marketers are faced with a 'blue pill' vs 'red pill' choice, like Neo in the Matrix...

Take the **'blue pill'** - ignore this deck - and stay in a familiar, comfortable reality. Doing what marketers have been doing for decades and go back to old pyramids of needs and psychoanalytical voodoo...

But take the **'red pill'** - and read on - and you'll be offered the truth that is based not on theory, but on new evidence-based insights from behavioural science into what really motivates people in practice.

At Brand Genetics, we're a red pill agency.



TAKING THE BLUE PILL

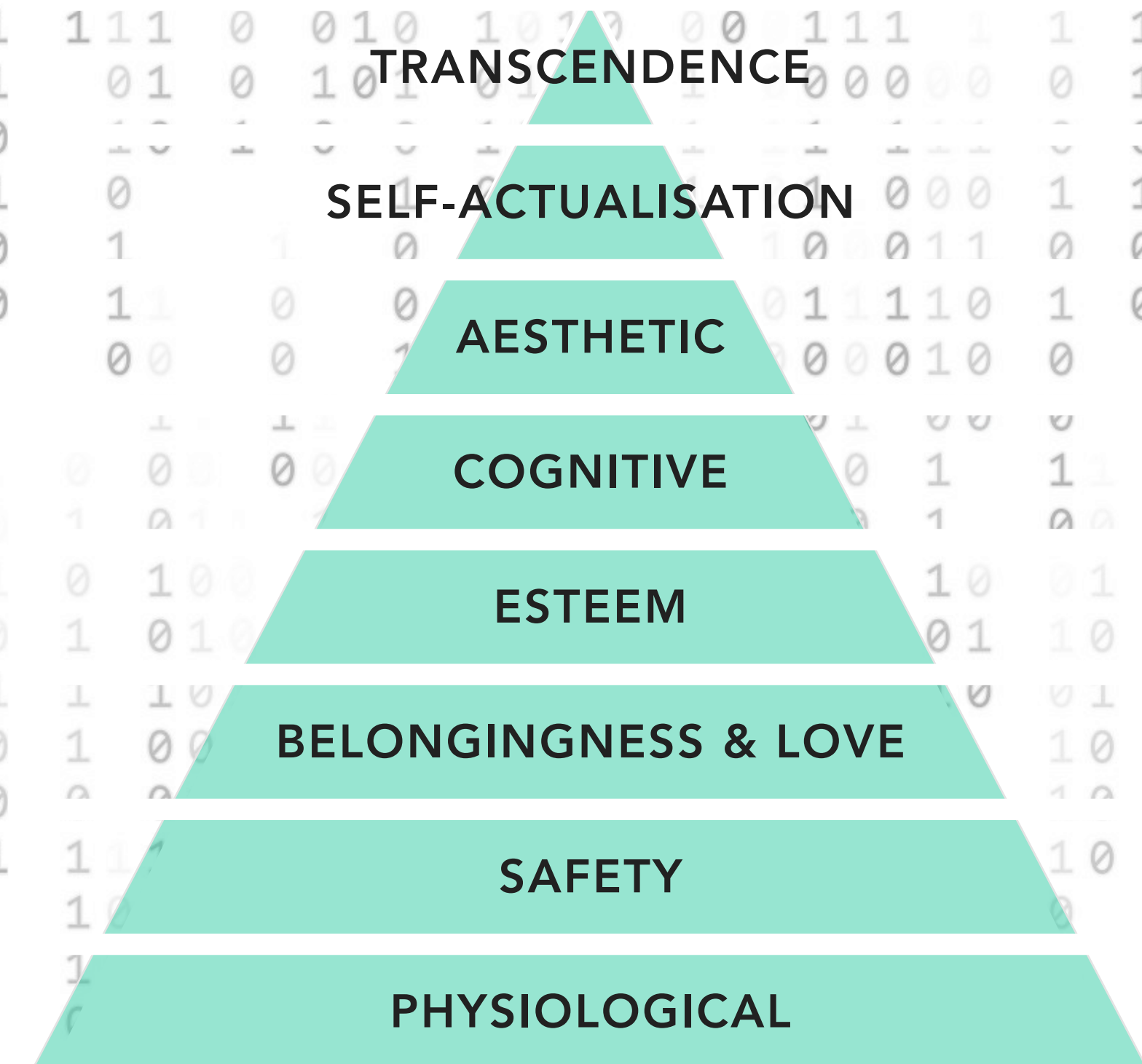


The 'blue pill' approach to motivation is the one you'll find in old marketing textbooks. It draws from pre-scientific theories of motivation based on Freudian psychoanalysis, Jungian archetypes or exotic pyramids of needs.

The most famous of these, misattributed to psychologist Abraham Maslow, involves a pyramid of needs believed to universally motivate behaviour. In fact, it was an American business consultant in 1960 called Charles McDermid¹ who invented this theory.

There's nothing necessarily wrong with McDermid's pyramid (or other blue pill views about motivation), but there's little scientific evidence to back them up. If we want a more contemporary science-backed understanding of motivation, another route is needed...

PYRAMID OF NEEDS



Traditionally, motivation was about satisfying needs

TAKING THE **RED** PILL

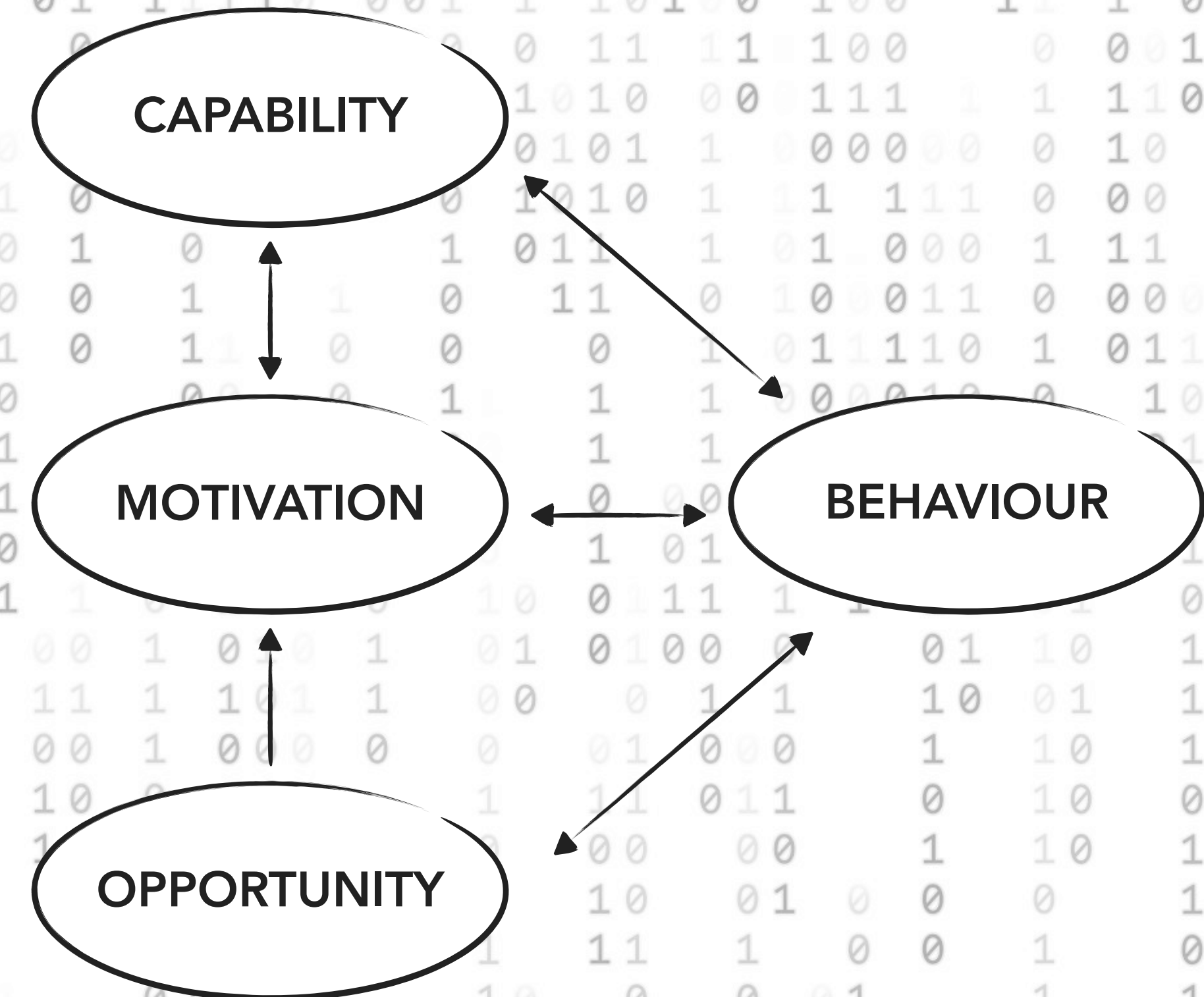


The red pill approach to motivation draws on contemporary behavioural science, which uses the scientific method to understand behaviour and what motivates it.

The surprising truth? Motivation is about achieving goals. People are motivated when they feel capable of achieving their goal, when they feel they have the opportunity to attain that goal, and when past experience tells them that attaining the goal is worthwhile. This is the essence of the 'COM-B' model that is dominant in the scientific field of behaviour change today^{2,3,4}.

The secret to brand growth is to align with and reinforce people's goals, ultimately facilitating goal-attainment by increasing people's capability and opportunity to achieve the goal. Do this — through brand strategy, innovation and communications — and your brand will grow, because you increase motivation and thus move more people to buy.

COM-B MODEL OF BEHAVIOUR



THE MOTIVATIONAL MATRIX



The peer-reviewed Motivational Matrix, published by the American Psychological Association, synthesises a range of motivational models into one simple and usable framework⁷.

It focuses on positive, higher order human goals and critically **each of the nine goals has been scientifically shown to motivate behaviour across different activities**⁶.

At Brand Genetics, we use the Motivational Matrix to complement our ‘jobs-to-be-done’ (JTBD) approach to motivational research (see [here](#) for our JTBD primer).

Whilst JTBD research reveals people’s task-based, ‘focal’ goals (e.g. seeking refreshment or energy), **the Motivational Matrix guides us in understanding the hidden, higher-order goals that also motivate buyer behaviour.**



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

THE MOTIVATIONAL MATRIX

| | ME GOALS <i>Feeling positive in myself</i> | ACTION GOALS <i>Feeling positive about my actions</i> | SOCIAL GOALS <i>Feeling positive about my relations</i> |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Expectations | <i>Safe, Confident</i> SECURITY <i>Insecure, Afraid</i> | <i>Free, Powerful</i> EMPOWERMENT <i>Trapped, Frustrated</i> | <i>Accepted, Belonging</i> BELONGING <i>Isolated, Lonely</i> |
| Experience | <i>Unique, Interesting</i> IDENTITY <i>Ordinary, Boring</i> | <i>Involved, Absorbed</i> ENGAGEMENT <i>Passive, Indifferent</i> | <i>Sharing, Caring</i> NURTURANCE <i>Selfish, Unloved</i> |
| Outcomes | <i>Talented, Exceptional</i> MASTERY <i>Incompetent</i> | <i>Victorious, Productive</i> ACHIEVEMENT <i>Defeated, Pointless</i> | <i>Proud, Respected</i> ESTEEM <i>Ashamed, Disgraced</i> |

Adapted from Forbes, D. L. (2011). Toward a unified model of human motivation. *Review of General Psychology*, 15(2), 85-98.

HOW TO USE THE MATRIX



The Motivational Matrix can be used by brands looking to drive growth by aligning their positioning and innovation with one of the Matrix goals and facilitating goal achievement.

At Brand Genetics, we’re fans of this because it’s a fundamentally human-first approach to brand growth - putting brands to the service of people’s goals.

We’ve found that the structure of the Matrix is useful in choosing which motivational goal is most profitable for a brand to support.

Specifically, if a key competitor facilitates a goal in one particular column and row, then look for goal in a different column and row. This can help build human-first brand equity by establishing a stand-out distinctive, different and desirable identity in the market.

| | ME GOALS <i>Feeling positive in myself</i> | ACTION GOALS <i>Feeling positive about my actions</i> | SOCIAL GOALS <i>Feeling positive about my relations</i> |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Expectations | <i>Safe, Confident</i> SECURITY <i>Insecure, Afraid</i> | <i>Free, Powerful</i> EMPOWERMENT <i>Trapped, Frustrated</i> | <i>Accepted, Belonging</i> BELONGING <i>Isolated, Lonely</i> |
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THE NINE HUMAN GOALS IN THE MOTIVATIONAL MATRIX



#1 SECURITY

MY GOAL IS TO FEEL SAFE, CONFIDENT AND FREE FROM WORRY

Security is perhaps the most basic of universal goals linked to human wellbeing. Without it, it's difficult to experience the autonomy and agency necessary to pursue other goals.

When people are motivated by the security goal, they seek protection, safety, reassurance and predictability. Unlike other goals in the Matrix, security is motivated by what psychologists call a 'prevention' regulatory focus, which means the main goal is to avoid negative outcomes.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the security goal by addressing people's insecurities and worries, selling confidence, and defending against threats. In a nutshell, it's about offering peace of mind, such as the Dettol efficacy promise of killing 99.9% of Bacteria



**Kills 99.9%
of bacteria,
dead.**



#2 IDENTITY

MY GOAL IS TO BE MYSELF

A core human goal is the expression of identity, which simply means acting authentically, with agency, and in accordance with one's own values, personality, strengths and tastes. In plain language, identity is about expressing who we are or who we want to be, by what we do and what we buy.

When people are motivated by the identity goal, they seek products or services that can reinforce, reflect or build a positive sense of identity.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the identity goal by creating and communicating value either around **human personality, human values, or human strengths**. An example of this is Converse, who further facilitated consumers who were organically using their shoes as a canvas, by launching the 'Converse by you' custom design service!





#3 MASTERY

MY GOAL IS TO REALISE MY TALENTS, STRENGTHS & POTENTIAL

Humans are universally motivated by the goal of mastery, which simply means we want to feel masterful. Mastery facilitates wellbeing by improving our self-esteem, sense of control and satisfaction.

When people are motivated by the mastery goal, they look for products or services that help them build expertise and excellence. It's not about product excellence, but about making people excellent.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the mastery goal by promising to help people achieve their distinctive and unique potential, such as Dyson's hair range which focuses on super tangible tips and education to build your at home beauty skills (notice how rare it is to see a model not using the product on themselves in comms)!





#4 EMPOWERMENT

MY GOAL IS TO DO WHAT I WANT

Empowerment is about freedom and control. It's about stamping your will on reality, and feeling free and able to act in accordance with your desires and decisions. Empowerment facilitates wellbeing by improving our sense of 'self-efficacy', our belief in our own ability to get what we want.

When people are motivated by the empowerment goal, they look for options that make them feel powerful, confident, capable and in control of their own destiny. Empowerment promises can be particularly effective if people feel disempowered, frustrated or exploited by situations or others.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the empowerment goal by promising to help people take back effective control of their lives. For Him's is at the front of the male wellness revolution, putting the patient in control of previously highly sensitive issues.





#5 ENGAGEMENT

MY GOAL IS TO DO WHAT I LOVE

As a goal, engagement is about seeking out activities that we find intrinsically interesting, enjoyable or rewarding. Engagement is linked to wellbeing because it's a sign we find what we're doing is inherently rewarding.

When people are motivated by the engagement goal, they are seeking experiential involvement, excitement, stimulation, pleasure or just plain fun. When fully engaged, people can experience a 'peak' experience of 'flow', a state of wellbeing characterised by positive focus, absorption, and a feeling of being at one with whatever we're doing.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the engagement goal by promising an engaging experience that is sensorially rich and intrinsically rewarding. BMW's focus on 'Sheer Driving Pleasure' captures the essence of the engagement goal.





#6 ACHIEVEMENT

MY GOAL IS A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

To differing degrees, people are universally motivated by the goal of achievement, which means we strive not only to pursue our goals but also to attain them. Achievement facilitates wellbeing by improving both our self-esteem and self-efficacy (confidence in our own abilities), especially if our goals stretch us to use all our capabilities.

When we're motivated by the achievement goal, we look for products and services that help us accomplish tasks, by amplifying or improving our prowess, skills and talent.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the achievement goal by promising to **enhance performance, help people excel and win**. Although not directly enhancing performance, with its long standing 'King of Beers' mantra s Budweiser has consistently connected those with ambition to achieve and celebrated those who have accomplished - standing out in the crowded global beer market by aligning with the achievement motivation.





#7 BELONGING

MY GOAL IS TO FEEL INCLUDED

Humans are social creatures, and motivated by a sense of belonging. The belonging goal is about feeling included, accepted and part of a social group. Data shows that strong social bonds are one of the strongest predictors of our overall wellbeing⁸, which is why we strive for affiliation, inclusion, appreciation and a sense of relatedness with others.

When we're motivated by the belonging goal, we look for products that help us build secure attachments and facilitate fitting in with others.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the belonging goal by helping bring people together. The belonging goal has become the mission of GymShark with their "We are proof of what happens when we pull together" United we Sweat mantra! Bringing inclusivity even to competitive sports!





#8 NURTURANCE

MY GOAL IS TO HELP THOSE I CARE FOR

Nurturance is about caring. As a species we appear to be wired to care and help people with whom we share our genes, our space, our culture, and perhaps our common humanity. The altruistic experience of caring for others is a key driver of our wellbeing⁹.

When people are motivated by the nurturance goal, they look for products that help them care for others. Think of the gifting economy. More broadly, the nurturance goal is about kindness and nurturing relationships and the wellbeing of others, including cooperation and collaboration.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the nurturance goal by helping people show how much they care, and to help others grow, flourish and thrive. Vuori allows buyers to 'invest in happiness, invest in you'. Products are all about comfort and premium quality through the lens of nurturance





#9 ESTEEM

MY GOAL IS TO FEEL RESPECTED

The esteem goal is about status-seeking, which means striving for social admiration and respect. Being held in high esteem facilitates wellbeing by promoting self-esteem. With esteem comes power, privilege and prestige, which can unlock access to scarce resources and further benefit wellbeing.

When people are motivated by the esteem goal, they are looking for products and services that improve their social status by building reputation, garnering attention, improving influence, or enhancing attractiveness.

SO WHAT?

Brands can appeal to the esteem goal with status symbols that help with status signalling and virtue signalling. This may appear a territory exclusively for luxury brands, however Keep Cup have proven this can work in something as everyday as coffee. As the worlds first 'barrister standard reusable cup' users can signal both green and quality conscientiousness.



MOTIVATED TO GROW?

LET'S TALK

Brand Genetics is a brand growth consultancy specialising in insight, strategy and innovation. We leverage motivational research to help brands uncover the hidden goals that motivate behaviour and move people to buy.

To help brands harness the power of human motivation we use insights, tools and methods from behavioural science, including the COM-B model and the Motivational Matrix.

If you're motivated by a human-first approach to driving brand growth, take the **red pill**, and let's talk!



THE CHOICE IS YOURS



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WANT MORE?

There are plenty more ways marketers can better tap into human nature and help shape consumer behaviour.

Humans are hardwired to pay attention to the new, the different or the unusual, so in turbulent times it's tempting to focus on what's changing in the world. However, by following this path you and your businesses may be leaving the bigger opportunities on the table

For example utilising the 7 key laws of Human Nature every Brand manager should know. Check out our additional report where we also break down examples of how these insights can be applied to the world of marketing, innovation and strategy to inspire new thinking in your organisation.

[Click HERE to find out more](#)



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APPENDIX: UNPACKING THE MATRIX



To make the best use of the Matrix, it can help to understand the logic behind it. Specifically the structure of the Matrix can help you identify a motivational goal for a brand to support that is distinctive and different from your competition.

The three columns in the Matrix show goals by motivational 'focus'. In the first column there are three goals related to feeling positive about oneself (me-goals). In the middle column, goals related to feeling positive about our actions (action-goals). And in the third column, goals related to feeling positive about our relationships (social goals). These correspond to the three established drivers of human wellbeing, autonomy (agency), competence and relatedness¹⁰.

The rows are more loosely organised, but refer to the time dimension of our goals - whether they are based on expectations (future), experiences (now) or outcomes (past).

Finally, each cell shows the name of the motivational goal. Above the goal you will find descriptors of the things people want to feel *more* of (above), and below you'll see things they want to feel *less* of or *avoid*. These correspond to goals for people who are motivated, respectively, by a 'promotion' regulatory focus (seeking positive outcomes), and those motivated by a 'prevention' regulatory focus (avoiding negative outcomes).

To differentiate yourself from the competition, simply select a goal from a row and column that is not associated with your key competitor, and that is credible for your brand. Align your brand with this goal, reinforce the goal, and most importantly help your target market achieve this goal. Do these simple things and you'll deliver a human-first brand growth!