

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/changing-entrenched-consumer-behavior/>

How do you conduct market education when you're asking consumers to make a radical shift? Ethan Brown, the president, co-founder and CEO of Beyond Meat, says the question goes deeper than marketing, into the realms of psychology and neuroscience. The key, he finds, is understanding what the customer wants and giving them all of it, even if the material or underlying technology is far different from what the consumer could have imagined.



Transcript

This is a really good one.. Curious to hear your thoughts on how to efficiently conduct market education when you're defining a new market and changing an entrenched consumer behavior.. - Right, so that's a great question.. And I'm endlessly fascinated with that 'cause the fate of my brand depends on doing it right.. And so, in fact, I don't really have any marketing books about that anymore, I'm reading a great book called, "Behave" which talks about why we do, as humans, from a neurological fact of why, as humans, we do what we do, in the moments leading up to what we do, and the days before, hours before.. And so this is a deep psychological question.. You know, how do we get consumers, so there's many things we do today that we just started doing.. But there are few things that go through the course of evolution we've done consistently, and literally before we were human, we started to consume animal protein, right? It's one of the things that led to this big brain we have.. Our brains, when we first started eating meat, were about 600 cubic centimeters, they're about 1300 now.. That happened because our stomachs shrank, the energy was going to our stomachs, essentially started going to our brains, you were getting more nutrient-dense food in the form of meat..

So meat gave us a big, sort of, did a big service to us.. But it also gave us a brain to figure out how to not use it anymore, right, from an animal.. And so barbecues, holidays, it's ingrained in who we are, at least in the western world, right? And so, how do we occupy that part of the brain that says I want that satiating and delicious protein, but do it in a way that's come from plants.. And that's where I get back to this Got Milk campaign, and the Go Beyond campaign.. Let's take all the trappings of meat and apply them to material that is meat, but just meat from plants, and help the consumer get there perceptually and mentally.. And I think that's working...