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Pushing Your Buy Button Neuroscience Meets Marketing

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Consumer therapy—at \$225,000 a pop: Clotaire Rapaille.

There is a lot of emotion associated with toilet paper," says G.

Clotaire Rapaille in thickly accented English. "You can reject your family—'Mommy, stay outside'—and they praise you! Wow!"

Marketers like Procter & Gamble, maker of Charmin, can't get enough of such insights, which explains why Rapaille, 62, is in hot demand. A believer in the collective unconscious of consumers (and a former child psychiatrist), Rapaille is able to cajole regular folk into offering up their deepest feelings about and memories of everything from recreational vehicles to paper towels. The latter apparently appeal to moms, for whom cleanliness plays into a "reptilian" desire to make

sure their genes survive. "You're not just cleaning the table," says Rapaille. "You are saving the whole family."

Research by Rapaille's Boca Raton, Fla. company, Archetype Discoveries Worldwide, starts with a three-hour-long session, during which he turns off the lights, plays a 20-minute relaxation tape and invites subjects to snooze on the floor. When they awake, they scribble their first memory, most powerful experience and last experience with a product, like Jack Daniel's (for Brown-Forman), or a social issue, such as teen pregnancy (for Johnson & Johnson). "They remember things imprinted before they could speak," says Rapaille, who wears his flame-colored hair in a pompadour. "It's just amazing."

So are his fees: \$225,000 for a study like the one on paper products; \$25,000 for a 45-minute lecture; \$125,000 for a group session (for companies like P&G and IBM) on an issue such as America-bashing in Europe.

Clients use Rapaille's revelations—delivered orally, never in writing—to design products, packaging and advertising. The key is devising a "code" for a brand or company—"independence" for toilet paper or "home" for coffee—which the client can turn into a commercial metaphor. For instance, Rapaille says DaimlerChrysler's use of a dog in a recent print ad came out of a brand study by Archetype. Boeing has hired Rapaille to conduct 15 studies in recent years. R. Blake Emery, a psychologist and director of differentiation strategy at Boeing Commercial Airplanes, is a big fan, even though he admits Rapaille's method "smacks of some weird California woo-woo thing." The insights might yield results in a new airplane, the Dreamliner, due in 2008. —M.W.

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