

Debut

Neuroscaping°

The Mental Commute

Finding your working mindset
without leaving home.

By Ben Moorsom and Benan Demir PhD





When working in an office, it is more than the physical relocation that happens every morning, there is also a brain shift. Think about your normal routine before remote working

Current global circumstances have driven a dramatic and rapid change in our daily working habits. Millions of workers in almost every industry found themselves working from home with little to no warning. Initially there were issues of having the right equipment. Across most companies, this was solved quickly. Finding a suitable space for working, however, continues to be an issue that many have yet to solve. Some positive developments have come from the need to protect our health. In many cases, productivity has risen as workers find a better work-life balance, and the environmental impact cannot be understated, among others.

Remote working takes a toll

The longer remote working is the norm, the more relevant the workspace issues are. The biggest are the ability to maintain focus, sustain attention and be productive when working remotely. In the initial move to working from home there were teething pains. Many employees did not have the right environment, so it was not unusual to see ironing boards and kitchen counters used as standing tables and so on. After that initial rush, businesses began providing practical solutions such as the right equipment that home workers need, and in most cases employees eventually settled into a work routine.

The initial excitement and break from the normal 'travel to work' routine empowered

and enthused workers, with many businesses declaring improved productivity from workers in this early period. Now remote working has become the norm and there are no indications that things are going to change again in the medium term.

The problem that we face now is that the novelty has worn off and living and working in our homes has become the everyday routine. Ultimately, the lines between work time and private time have blurred into nonexistence. This is an issue for almost all stakeholders, but there are proactive steps that can be taken, once we understand the root of the problem.

Your working mindset

For those of us now working from home for the foreseeable future, maintaining the focus on productivity is increasingly challenging. There is a reason for this.

Simply put, it's our mindset. When working in an office, it is more than the daily physical relocation that we engage in every morning, there's also a brain shift.

Think about your normal routine before remote working. You grab breakfast at home, have a coffee, then head out for the commute to the workplace. Because the brain works with habits and adjustments, it knows that it's work time when you arrive, and triggers the working mindset that is focused, attentive and prepared.

Today's routine is very different. Without the travel, without the signal that you need to be in a working mindset, it can be difficult to switch away from the relaxed mindset that is normal at home. This can result in loss of concentration, distraction and more. Adapting to this means finding a way to instill that same commute reaction and transition to the work mindset, even when your commute means walking over to a desk in the corner of a room.



The Mental Commute

The answer is to build a mental commute, one that takes the brain on that same journey as a physical commute. This is a great opportunity in some ways, because more often than not, physical commutes may be useful for the brain, but are seldom pleasant. Whether it's the stress of city traffic or the crowding and annoyance of a subway or train, few of us would call the commute an enjoyable experience. So now, we all have the ability to create a commute that does the job of changing the mindset and preparing for work, without the stress, pollution and hassle of the physical version.



To create your own mental commute, think about the things you did on your previous, physical one. The idea is to replicate the essence of that commute to prepare you for work. One of the things that everyone does during a commute is leave home. Now, we all need to be at home to work, so going off to an office is not practical, but taking a short walk or bike ride (just 10 or 15 minutes around the block), can help trigger the right responses in the brain.

On your way to work, did you listen to music? If so, get the music on, listen on your walk, or have it on at home as you prepare for your workday.

When you finally arrived at work, what did you do first? If you grabbed a coffee, then do the same at home. Chances are you spoke to colleagues, and this is where

the new commute begins to shift towards work. Do the same at home. Surround yourself with your colleagues across the virtual world. Whether it's an email, a Zoom/video call or a chat system that you have in place, check in with others, make small talk - just as you would in the office. Share your experience; you may find others feel the same way. Just the act of talking builds a mental work circle that will help you focus.



Before you begin your journey to work

It is worth remembering that the commute itself is the final part of your morning routine. Leaving home and arriving at the office also takes us away from the daily chores and other tasks we have to do in life. However, when working at home there is no separation, and this can be a distraction.



Whether it's a phone bill that needs paying, ironing that needs doing or even just cleaning up after a rushed breakfast, at the office they are out of sight and out of mind. At home the bills could be sitting on the desk that's your current work station, and the never ending housework is all around you. Chances are that we end up taking care of those things when we should be working, because they are right there in front of us.

Instead, create separation. Do chores before starting your work day. If you have bills, either deal with them before work, or put them away and take care of things after work is finished. Clear your desk of anything from your personal life and keep it away from your workspace. This will help maintain that work mindset you need throughout the day.

The Mindset for work success

Creating a routine that mimics your normal commute allows you to better separate work and personal lives, even at home. Not only will this help maintain focus and increase productivity, it also aids you during our off hours as well by making it easier to switch off after work and enjoy some well-earned relaxation at home.

About Ben Moorsom

Ben is the creator of Neuroscaping®. A behavioral communications practice. Since founding the Debut Group in 1997, Ben has made it his mission to challenge and disrupt ineffective conventions of business communications, pioneering new approaches that strengthen brands internally, engage people more effectively and deeply capture their attention. By applying advances from psychology and neuroscience, Ben and his team turn audiences into active participants. They use Neuroscaping methodology to cut through the noise and competition at the gateway to the human mind, placing business messages near the front of the line. Ben is a frequent keynote speaker and co-conspirator at global conferences on communication thought leadership.

About Benan Demir PhD

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Benan has a BA Media Studies and Entertainment Technology from the University of Portsmouth, UK, Graduated from Masters in Cognitive Systems and Interactive Media in Pompeu Fabra University, Spain. Continued her PhD. In Brain, Mind and Computer Science at University of Padova, Italy. Benan has worked as a cognitive scientist and advanced tech research lead for leading companies over the past 8 years... Dedicating her work to improving technologies while focusing on the human brain and human emotions.

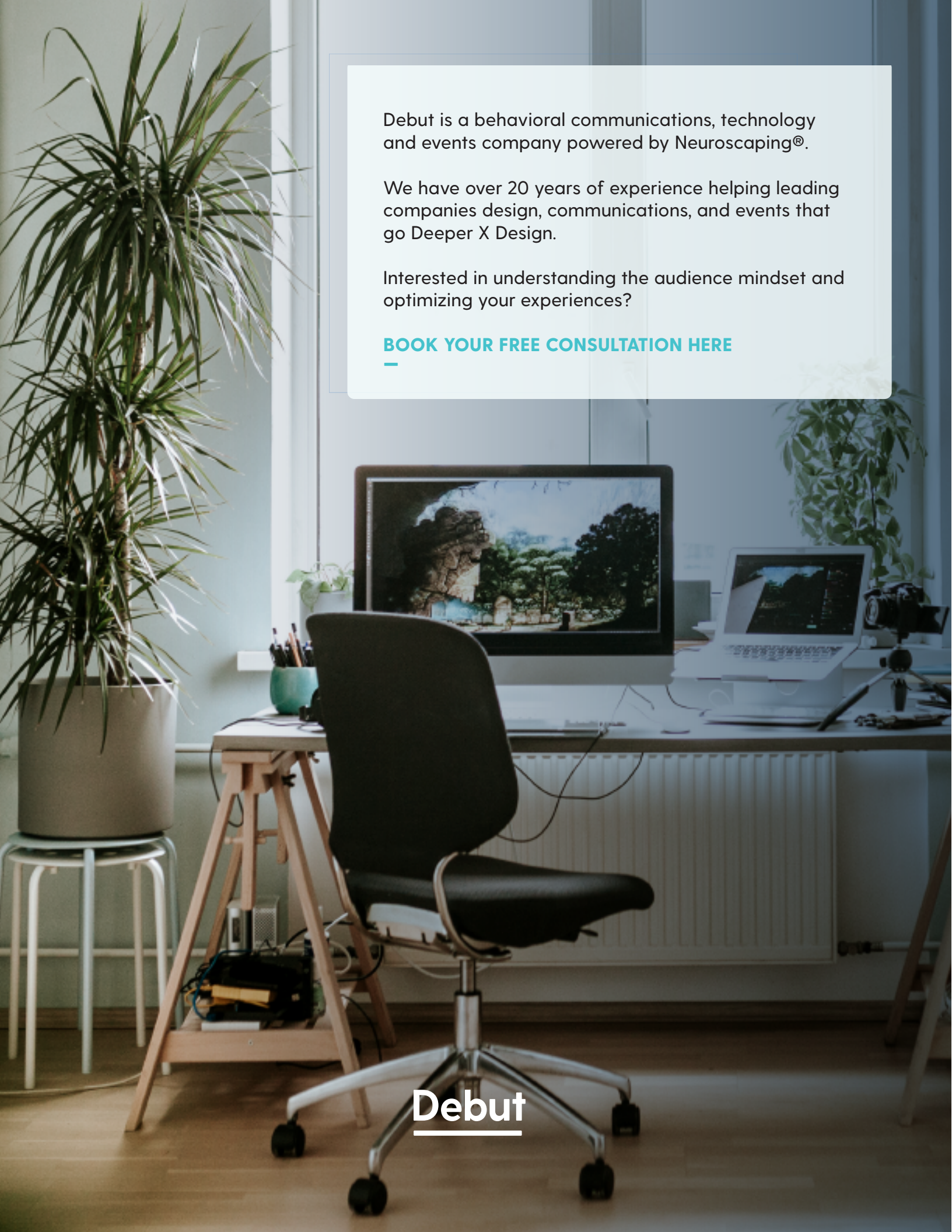
About Neuroscaping®

Neuroscaping® empowers and enables companies to forge stronger connections with their audiences.

Neuroscaping® is the behavioral insight engine that informs the design communications and experiences. Deconstructing what we perceive as “engagement” into behavioral lenses. Harnessing research from the fields of neuroscience, cognitive psychology, social psychology and data science and beyond - to drive better engagement outcomes.

By approaching design decisions to better align with how people truly think, feel, and act, we can improve an individual's internal state leading to greater satisfaction and retention of messaging. People take more in and have a better experience. This process of Neuroscaping® allows Debut to go deeper by design. Reducing “guesswork” and creating with intent.

Debut manages the largest AI-powered knowledge-base of engagement insights to help guide communication and experiential design for companies that require progressive engagement products and services.



Debut is a behavioral communications, technology and events company powered by Neuroscaping®.

We have over 20 years of experience helping leading companies design, communications, and events that go Deeper X Design.

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