What’s Your Trigger?
Different Methods Produce Different Results

“It might take several approaches to reach more people.”

Your Score Card
I want to say I love playing golf. But, I really don’t play well enough to love it… yet. I am working on my game. Although I have hit a hole-in-one (in a tournament in 2005), I still pretty much stink at the game. The foursome I was playing with couldn’t believe I made the shot that day. Particularly after all of the other shots I didn’t make the rest of the time! If I didn’t have a plaque, photos and the official score card to prove it, I wouldn’t believe it either.

I took several lessons from Ed, a very good local golf pro last year. Ed used examples he called “triggers” to help me understand what he wanted me to do on the practice area. He tried several different triggers all aimed at one same point. Each situation he described was a way to get me to think differently about my swing and the game.

One trigger, while very amusing to watch, works great... I mean outstanding!

Ed said that he taught this same technique to a fairly poor golfer who protested the unusual swing. “What if my friends or children see me doing this? What if other golfers point at me, stare or even worse, laugh at the absurd procedure?” The well-dressed man said defiantly. The pro smiled and asked, “What if you do it the normal way and miss every shot by a mile, or worse you miss the ball completely... Won’t they laugh at you even more?”

That story worked with me. It would be more embarrassing to mess up the shot results than to look funny making the shot. I tried it playing with a group of executives. After a frustrating few opening shots, I tried the unusual swing technique.

I tried it. They laughed, but I then tied the best hitter in the foursome in distance. One remarked, “How does he DO that so well with such a crazy shot?!” I hit the ball better, although unconventional. Then they started talking about how they could adapt their shots in a similar way.

The next day that same critic introduced me as not only a Reinvention Business Leader, but “The Reinvention Golfer!” I liked that. In fact many wannabe golfers came up during breaks to ask
me to demonstrate the swing so they could replicate it. They didn’t care how weird it looked if it worked.

There is an old saying in golf: “There is no diagram on a score card.” It doesn’t matter how you made the shot within the rules, only the final score matters. The same is true in business. It won’t matter what you did to get there ethically, only that you got there better than you or your competitor did it before.

What does your business or leadership score card look like?

**Trigger Practice**

When I present in front of audiences I speak on primarily ONE subject: “Reinvention Made Easy.” The stories I tell; the examples I use; and the interaction we generate in small buzz-group discussions are all triggers to convey the same point – Reinventing yourself. Some work with certain people, others work with other people. It doesn’t matter if you don’t get each one, enough people get most of them that each works on someone in some way.

GM has struggled through these past few years. They have had to take government bailout money, change CEOs and discontinued several lines of automobiles (Saturn and Pontiac). Ford has done much better, showing a profit each quarter since GM was bailed out, making a profit and building better cars (although they had to discontinue the Mercury brand). Lexus, Mercedes and BMW have fared much better… They produce high-end luxury cars that you would think would have been the first to go in a recession.

While Albertson’s grocery stores have been closing outlets, Whole Foods has been expanding. WF charges more for goods (we call them “Whole Paycheck”) and markets to a particular clientele. Trader Joe’s has had similar success in this economy. How do you explain their success selling for MORE when people are spending LESS?

How do you explain the success of Nordstrom’s and the lack of success by K-Mart and JC Penney? How do you explain the success of Elmer’s Restaurants who have ruled out coupons while low-end restaurant chains are struggling?

These are all triggers to get people to stop thinking the way they always have and create new patterns of actions. It is that simple. Each trigger is designed to make you think differently than you were thinking when you started reading this article. These are designed to infiltrate your comfort zone and make you “itch.” They are like pebbles in your shoe… they make you want to either walk funny, or remove the discomfort.

Great stories and great sales pitches make you uncomfortable enough that they stick with you long after you hear them. That is what a good trigger does.
For example: I started taking physical therapy for recovery from recent surgery. The therapist came in cheerfully and after an initial evaluation, she declared, “I am going to give you some triggers to help you get better.”

“Do you understand what I mean when I say ‘triggers?’” she asked (She must have met my golf pro!).

The triggers she suggested worked because she got me thinking about my situation and recovery different. They made me take actions that were different than what I had been doing. She got me to perform exercises using the examples that “triggered” a positive response in my understanding.

What gets your customers, clients, prospects, members or employees thinking different about their situation or problems? What can you do or say to trigger a different response in different people? That is just one of your triggers. You can use more...The more you use, the more they will reach.

Remember, not everyone relates to every trigger you utilize. Just like Geico uses several different triggers to create a response in their customers (remember the cavemen, the lizard and the “president” of the company talking in commercials? Those were all running concurrently for the same company). With one message: “Fifteen minutes can save you money!” Do you relate to that trigger better now? Now they use two guys playing stringed instruments.

**Different Thinking**

Try a different trigger. If what you have been doing hasn’t been working, it can’t hurt to try something else that might work better (besides, what you have been doing hasn’t been working too well, remember?).

Great marketers know that it will take several approaches or triggers to reach more people. They like to do something different to shake things up. They think different and they demand we think different to continue to work with them.

iTunes is a different way of listening to music than CDs, tapes or vinyl record albums. Netflix and streaming are different ways of viewing movies on demand (Best Buy is discontinuing in-store CD sales and will probably soon discontinue DVD sales in stores). Kindles, Nooks and e-readers are different ways of people reading books. Pizza delivery was a different way of eating dinner with family or friends bent on last minute planning. Smart phones are different ways of using a GPS. The internet was a different way of advertising than newspapers, radio or television broadcasts.

The content remained the same, they all simply reinvented the delivery method.
These triggers are intended to make you think about the same thing… being very different about what you do than you were prior to reading the last paragraph. The list of differences goes on… to be continued in your industry next! What will you do when that day comes?

Different examples and choices produce different results. To get ahead, you need to be different. Or someone else will take the lead in your place. You need to start thinking differently. Constantly question the status quo. Make comfortable people feel uncomfortable. If you don’t start now, someone else probably will! And you will be left back in the pack with everyone else trying to catch up.

Start thinking unique, looking unique and targeting uniquely. Different approaches will reach different people (All people are unique in almost every way).

**Easy Action Steps:** What can you do to trigger more response in your target conveying the same bottom line message? How can you get people to see the same situation in a different way or light? How can you communicate your message in several ways to make people uncomfortable with their status quo?

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