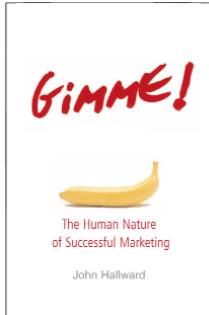


# Triggering is Key (and Crucial for Established Brands)

## Gimme! The Human Nature of Successful Marketing



**For too long, many marketers have ignored the basics of how human beings are wired and how they work emotionally. And as a result, the effectiveness of their marketing and advertising suffers.**

**Marketers who understand the emotional triggers and genetic characteristics of their consumers are better able to persuade and convince them with their marketing programs. *Gimme!* explores these evolutionary traits in ways marketers can easily understand, so they can better leverage these primary human drivers of behavior for greater marketing success.**

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***Gimme! is a fascinating book and a very interesting piece for anyone interested in any aspect of why we do what we do. The combination of real data, personal experience, and genetic evolution theory is unique in its ability to help us learn how to do better in the future.***

— Kate Sirkin, EVP Global Research  
Director, Starcom Media Group

In issue five, we learn why marketers need to trigger brand attitudes to influence motivation more strongly.

When we consider brand choices, we assess the many mental and emotional benefits the brand represents and promises. Many studies show how advertising can create attitudes, but unless the attitudes are triggered into action, at the right time, the opportunity is lost.

The mind will only take the body to where it can see. There are two important concepts marketers need to appreciate to fully activate motivation and behavior: **Expectancy Theory** and **triggering**. Both are influential and highly affected by marketing programs. And some brands should likely focus on triggering much more than they currently do!

Expectancy Theory (from Victor Vroom) is the concept that decision-making is based on what we envision as the pay-offs of each possible choice. That is, for each possible decision, we have an expectation of the pros and cons, which we then consciously and subconsciously evaluate to make a decision. Thus, it stands to reason that our decision-making process is only based on what we can see or expect. It is beneficial and even desirable for marketers to illustrate the emotional pay-offs for consumers so that they can “see” the future for their expectations. Second, if we have forgotten related facts, or fail to call up the right associations, then these missing pieces may have only a minor subconscious influence or none at all. Advertisers need to (1) create the expected pay-off, and (2) then make sure it is recalled at the appropriate moment.



Let's recognize that many advertised products and services are familiar to consumers. Many mature brands have existed for 20+ years and consumers already have established their attitudes and associations towards these brands. The challenge is no longer to build the attitudes and beliefs about the brand. Instead, future success of advertising will be based on triggering (retrieving, activating) the established attitudes into action. In my opinion, much advertising around the world fails to recognize the importance of **triggering**. We are told what we already know about the product features. And frankly, after product trial, we are very informed. A few selling messages are unlikely to change what we have experienced first hand. Thus, once the brand attitudes (hopefully the emotional associations) are established, marketers need to trigger these attitudes to influence motivation more strongly. We need to activate people enough, at the right time, so that they call-up and strongly consider our desired brand attitudes...better than for some other brand!

A great example of a successful campaign that used triggering well is Miller's "It's Miller Time." Most North American adults over 35 years of age know the slogan and its implications. Miller's campaign leveraged the concept that after a hard day's work, it was time to relax and enjoy a beer. It is an emotional transition from work to relaxation, a beer category consumption time. The campaign took ownership of it by triggering the Miller brand as the beer to have at the end of each day, for happy hour, etc. "Miller Time" is a beautiful, easy-to-remember slogan that activates positive feelings of quitting time, triggers the beer consumption period, and ties in the brand name, all in one easy-to-remember memory unit. This is not about product features, how the beer is made, purity or great taste. These elements are known and already familiar to consumers. Instead, "Miller Time" is a great example of triggering the attitudes and the brand at the relevant time association (with relevant emotional associations).

### **Timing is critical**

I feel that many established brands continue to highlight in their advertising the product features, and/or the emotional associations that they wish consumers to have. Instead marketers would be better served working on the triggers which call-up these established elements at the right time. No consideration means no activated brand preference. Triggering and activation is as important as creating the belief in the first place. And to be clear, simply repeating the benefit is not the same thing as building the triggers, at the right relevant occasions.

The next issue will discuss dealing with undesired brand beliefs, and mitigating their impact.

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### **About the Author**



**Advertising research expert John Hallward started his career with Procter & Gamble, and Johnson & Johnson. He then co-founded the Canadian firm of**

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