The 7 Triggers to Yes
The New Science Behind Influencing People’s Decisions

Based on the acclaimed book by
RUSSELL H. GRANGER

www.The7Triggers.com
Influence is the basis for every human transaction. Wield its power with wisdom and watch the world bloom.”

Russell GRANGER
INTRODUCTION

When The 7 Triggers to Yes was first published in 2008, there were only a handful of volumes about human decision-making as revealed by emerging neuroscience. Today, they number in the hundreds, and barely a day goes by without some publication, article, or blog extolling the mysteries and virtues of neuroscience, emotional intelligence, persuasion and influence.

The insights emerging from this still-dawning field are virtually endless. And yet, when it comes to new skills and techniques, business needs concise, efficient frameworks for people to use in practical, workable ways. That’s what The 7 Triggers to Yes has been credited for since it was cited as “one of the top 10 business books in the past 10 years” by Business Briefings, and the Number-One Book of the Year by Training Magazine.

When embraced and applied consistently, The 7 Triggers becomes a truly functional formula that will enhance and advance your success. And top companies from a wide range of industries clearly agree. They’re using The 7 Triggers not only for sales teams but also for leadership, marketing, and service.

By all means investigate the great work offered by the many researchers and writers in this fascinating and growing field – Robert Cialdini, Kevin Hogan, Goldstein & Martin, Guy Kawasaki, to name a few. Then, use The 7 Triggers as your day-to-day system; as a practical framework of check-points, references, and reminders for how to be a more influential and persuasive person in all your interactions and endeavors.

Russell P. Granger
President & CEO
Rising Tide Partners

“If I’ve been persuasive it’s because I know enough about who you are and what you want.”
Get More Yes in Your Life

What is it that makes people take an interest, buy a product, sign an agreement, support a cause? If you’re using only logic, reason, and data, you’re missing the boat on what really influences people.

Emotional triggers have been on the radar of researchers, psychologists, scientists and educators for over two decades. But it’s only since the advent of live brain imaging that we’ve been able to prove such an enormous dependence on the emotional brain even for seemingly rational mental tasks – tasks like making decisions.

Emotions guide the intellect. It’s not an option. It’s science. So, what if we could tap into that part of the brain that is really responsible for making decisions? What if we could appeal directly to central control, the emotional brain?

Understand what emotional triggers are, why they work, and how to activate them in others, and become a genuine influencer. A catalyst. A game changer. How will you wield your influence?

THE 7 TRIGGERS IS THE MOST PRACTICAL WAY TO USE THE NEUROSCIENCE OF INFLUENCE FOR SELLING, MARKETING, FUNDRAISING, OR GAINING SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF ANY KIND.

**(PERSUADE)**... people to make a decision or take an action by using the latest research in brain science to tap into the brain's internal triggers for making decisions.

**(LEARN)**... how to use the seven powerful triggers so you can elicit a “yes” response from clients, co-workers, employees, and entire organizations.

**(WIN)**... people’s trust and agreement by activating (1) Friendship, (2) Authority, (3) Consistency, (4) Reciprocity, (5) Contrast, (6) Reason Why, and (7) Hope.

**(SUCCEED)**... by understanding the people you want to persuade, how to communicate with them in meaningful ways, and which messages will elicit a YES.
NEUROSCIENCE HAS PROVEN THAT PEOPLE RESPOND MUCH MORE STRONGLY TO EMOTIONAL CUES THAN TO LOGICAL ARGUMENTS.

Emotional triggers can create nearly automatic compliance. They have a powerful impact on every communication and interaction we have with others. Those who understand and use this knowledge can have enormous power to get approval for new ideas, secure funding for projects, or expand accounts and markets. We’ll be focusing on the emotional triggers that are the most consequential to business. Master these, and success is yours. The 7 Triggers to Yes are:

1. **THE FRIENDSHIP TRIGGER**
   Activates trust and agreement through bonding based on “sameness.” The foundational emotional trigger, it forms the basis for other triggers to be activated.

2. **THE AUTHORITY TRIGGER**
   A perception of expertise makes acceptance easier and less risky. Like Friendship, a critical stand-alone trigger as well as a precursor for other triggers to be activated.

3. **THE CONSISTENCY TRIGGER**
   Biological brain flows urge us to be consistent with a mental archive of prior decisions and actions. Learn the consistencies of others, and increase your ability to persuade.

4. **THE RECIPROCITY TRIGGER**
   The universal psychological requirement for quid-pro-quo. Every human society employs it and scientists now believe society itself exists mainly because of this principle.

5. **THE CONTRAST TRIGGER**
   In the brain, objective values simply don’t matter. Perceptions rule. Construct the right comparisons, in the right order, and set an adaptation level that is powerfully persuasive.

6. **THE REASON WHY TRIGGER**
   Provide a reason for acting, and get compliance. Why? Because the emotional brain accepts what it considers to be a valid reason, and acts.

7. **THE HOPE TRIGGER**
   Hope is the strongest motivator of all human activity. Learn and align with what others truly hope for, and the barriers to agreement come tumbling down.
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THE BREAKTHROUGH

During at least two and a half centuries of persuasion research, the realities of brain function were largely misunderstood. The true nature of the decision-making process and the application of that process to persuasion was thought to be impossible to comprehend.

The only tools available were the observation of overt actions, and as a consequence, unscientific behaviorist concepts dominated this period. This led to inaccurate conclusions and a backwards approach to persuasion.

But during the 1990s, new imaging technology and computer power began allowing scientists to explore, in real time, how the brain really functions and how its functioning shapes decision making. In addition, these new discoveries showed how we make judgments and influence others.

These technologies include:

- Positron emission tomography, known as the PET scan.
- Functional magnetic resonance imaging, known as fMRI.
- Stereogeometric functional magnetic resonance spectroscopy, or fMRS.
- Steady state probe topography, or SSPT.

Alone or in concert, those technologies have now allowed us to see, in real time, the way the brain functions. For the first time, scientists can apply a stimulus and watch it activate decisions and actions in a living human brain.

For example, with SSPT, neurologists can tap into brain function with a non-invasive procedure that collects data from 64 sites on the scalp at a rate of 13 recordings a second from each site. In a single minute of monitoring brain activity, they can record almost 50,000 brain actions. All this new information has been gradually trickling down to the point that now, business schools are offering courses in
persuasion and influence based on the new science of brain function.

We can now see specific parts of the brain literally light up as their functional elements are brought online. We can evaluate and scientifically measure physiological and psychological parameters of neural activation. We can objectively study the brain and its functions and learn how they generate moods, thoughts, decisions, and actions.

Learning how stimuli influence our everyday lives, we now know with reasonable certainty the best ways to lead others to employ the internal triggers that motivate certain decisions and actions. This new scientific awareness is a remarkable contrast to the old behaviorist approaches to understanding brain function. We now know that the brain has specific physical locations for dealing with emotion and with cognitive, rational thought.

These separate physical areas are interconnected, but often act on their own to produce behaviors. We now know how the brain routes information to these areas to make decisions. Most importantly, we know with greater certainty how to use this information to persuade and influence people.

Making use of this knowledge necessitates both acquiring information from the brain as well as interpreting it. This need for interpretation has led to new scientific disciplines that range over a wide subject area. Among them are:

- Physiology
- Neurochemistry
- Neurophysiology
- Molecular neurobiology
- Neuroradiology
- Computational neuroscience
- Psychophysics
- Neuropsychology
- Cognitive neuroscience

Until recently, we thought that the higher forms of mental activity, such as foresight and cognitive thinking, were based primarily on our use of logic and reason. We regarded emotion as an impediment to logic and reason, and assumed that our best decisions were made through applied logic.

"Using reason and logic to persuade clashes with the natural way the brain actually works."

The new neuroscience shows that we had it backward. It shows that we always react emotionally, even to the most trivial occurrences. Even more remarkably, it shows that without the assistance of emotions, we could neither plan nor decide anything.

In other words, if we want to be persuasive, we have to address the emotional side of
decision making. The conclusion of modern neuroscience is that we think by feeling more than we think by any logical process. The amygdala is the part of the brain that feels the right course of action and then triggers an automatic response.

This almond-shaped mass resides deep in the brain’s temporal lobe. The amygdala is the receptor for virtually all stimuli that reach the brain. It has the option to make its own decisions or it can pass information to the cerebral cortex for a review by the rational, thinking part of the brain.

With the new technologies of brain science, we can actually watch as the amygdala functions, acting as a gatekeeper for the thinking part of the brain, the cerebral cortex. We can observe as the amygdala triggers immediate emotional responses, making decisions without even consulting the rational part of the brain. This new knowledge of the amygdala’s role in decision and action forms the breakthrough in how we understand persuasion and influence.

This has deep significance for everyone, especially people in business who are attempting to innovate, or to execute a change initiative – which is what all of selling is. We now know that our prior approaches to gaining compliance from others need drastic revision. No longer can we believe that simply providing the right data or a rationale will do the job.

In fact, emotional decision making is so deeply ingrained in us that people don’t even recognize when they’re doing it. They use the emotional parts of the brain to make decisions, and then interpret their own decisions as if they were made by a rational process.

Indeed, by the time the slow cerebral cortex gets into the act, the amygdala has often made the decision already. And what about when the amygdala is damaged? Medical case studies show that amygdala damage renders people incapable of making any decisions at all.

Clearly, using reason and logic to persuade clashes with the natural way the brain actually works. It’s a losing battle. The good news is that, armed with this new, seemingly counterintuitive approach, you have a huge advantage over those still stuck in the old ways.

These new discoveries will forever change the realities of management and leadership.
FROM ARISTOTLE TO AMYGDALA

Aristotle wrote that the inclination to be persuaded more by our emotions than by logic was a human failing. For Aristotle, logic and reason were the prime drivers of decision and action. And for the next 2,500 years, most people agreed. In the fourth century BC in Athens, scholars, including Plato and Aristotle, deeply studied the process of persuasion.

They defined three ways to persuade people:

1. **Logos**: the appeal to logic, reason, and facts
2. **Pathos**: the appeal to emotions
3. **Ethos**: the appeal of the speaker’s authority, character, and credibility

Aristotle wrote three books about persuasion and made a conclusive pronouncement: Logic made for the most reliable appeal. When the Romans conquered Greece, they continued to study and apply this form of persuasion.

As the Greek and Roman empires declined and Christianity took over, the logical approach to persuasion was replaced by the commandments of God. The church harshly suppressed logic, reason, and independent thought.

An interest in rhetoric and reason reemerged in the British colonies that would become America, and in 1806, Nicholas Boylston bequeathed funds to establish a professorship of rhetoric at Harvard. The 19th century prescription for productive rhetoric followed Aristotle’s advice about logic and reason.

By the 20th century, academic and practical approaches to persuasion began to merge and the question of how we get others to comply was once again opened up to discussion. Chaim Perelman, a Polish philosopher of law, published his book, New Rhetoric, in 1969 arguing for the first time that persuasion was
not purely logical. But psychologists during the 1950s and ‘60s for the most part followed the approach that accepted emotion as a disruptive force that inhibited rational thought.

They believed in the free will, as proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas, by which internal feelings, wishes, habits, and impulses could be controlled. Aquinas believed that free will was an independent controller capable of directing emotion, thought, memory, learning, and decision making. The will could and should suppress the subjective nature of emotion.

Through most of the 20th century none of the major researchers considered emotion as part of the cognitive process. Psychologists gradually developed the idea that the brain should be – wait for it – ignored, since it was too complex to study. Instead, they encouraged science to explore human behaviors and actions, which could be documented and evaluated. But all of that was overturned by the discoveries of neuroscience in the 1990s and the early part of the 21st century.

The world of advertising is already coming up with applications for the new research tools. One discipline that is well under way is imaging of the brain to detect when it encodes a visual scene and moves it into long-term memory as opposed to just noticing and discarding it.

This has obvious significance in advertising. SSPT technology reveals which ad images are recognized faster and remembered longest. Impressions that go to the emotional areas of the brain were shown to have the best recall. Retention of ad elements influences brand awareness and buying behavior.

Our knowledge of how to influence people is advancing rapidly. We can now tell which frames of a video are most effective. It turns out that scenes of 1.5 seconds are more memorable than longer or shorter ones. This ability to predict how people will respond to a message is going to reshape the world of marketing and advertising.

"Impressions that go to the emotional areas of the brain were shown to have the best recall."

Focus groups will disappear, as advertisers recognize that when people state a reason for why they buy a product, they generally are wrong. Brain imaging reveals the truth: We tend to prejudge things, and we have now learned that our judgment is determined largely by our emotional response.

Even before the new technological advances in brain science, psychologists had seen hints of this. In taste tests of Pepsi and Coke, the results were about even when people didn’t know which was which. If they were told which one was Coke, however, Coke would win, usually by
a wide margin with the same group of tasters.

This is important, because it means that people cannot really *tell* you how they choose one product over another. It never rises to the level of consciousness. In fact, the Radiological Society of North America questioned whether anyone could *ever* make a rational decision!

To succeed at persuasion, we must direct our appeals to the center of emotional action, the amygdala. That’s where emotional triggers are.

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### YOUR CURRENT PERSUASION OPPORTUNITY

The goal for the 7 Triggers system is to help you successfully persuade and become a great influencer – whether it’s selling more products and services, galvanizing people to your cause, or getting support for an idea or a business. Your potential is infinite, the sky is the limit. Your market is huge. So dream big dreams – learn The 7 Triggers to Yes system and the future is yours!

Take a minute to jot down a real-world CPO – your Current Persuasion Opportunity. Make it a prospect, or a client. Make it real – write down the name of the person, and the product or services about which you will engage with them. As you go through the program, make notes about how you will employ each trigger and its elements for your persuasion opportunity.

If you don’t have it already, you will find an interactive form to organize your trigger elements on The7Triggers.com website – click “Apps & Tools” in the navigation and download the PDF file.

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**Brain Decision Routes**

**Short Automatic Route**

- **Stimulus**: Emotion Based Request
- **Amygdala**: Quick Search, Trigger Activated
- **Immediate Automatic Response**: Action Preempted

**Long Analytical Route**

- **Stimulus**: Logic - Data - Reason Based Request
- **Amygdala**: Cognitive Evaluation
- **Delayed Decision**

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BONDING AND TRUST

Everyone knows that those who are well-liked and trusted can more easily get what they want from other people. Friendship is one of the most powerful triggers in the repertoire of persuasion. The Friendship Trigger embodies all the elements that create positive feelings in others — likability, trust, similar interests, dependability, fairness, compatibility, cooperation, teamwork, collaboration — the list goes on. Friendship, or liking, is a prerequisite for most other triggers to be effective. If affinity and trust are missing, most of the other triggers won’t work.

Why is the Friendship Trigger so powerful?

The amygdala has been storing information in this trigger since the moment of birth. Bonding creates liking and trust. Every animal, including humans, begins the bonding process at birth. We bond with anyone who cares for us. In the absence of our own parents, we will bond with aunts, uncles, or surrogate parents. In a very short time, the amygdala becomes hardwired to respond to the trigger of liking and trusting.

There is now a wealth of research documenting the power of the Friendship Trigger. Today we know how the circuitry works to trigger a positive friendship response. The recipe for success in terms of this trigger involves being honest and credible and doing whatever you can to be well liked.

The value of being liked has been demonstrated in courtrooms for years. Lawyers know that if they can get a jury to like their
client, they have a much better chance to obtain the desired verdict. The same is true for the lawyer. If the jury likes the lawyer, facts and logic take a back seat. In fact, 80 percent of all verdicts are based on the lawyer’s opening statement, and a significant part of that is the lawyer’s ability to be liked by the jury.

Virtually every multi-level marketing program employs the Friendship Trigger. Consumer products companies get people to gather their friends at homes for a friendly demonstration of products. The sales pitch becomes a social evening with trusted friends. Those friends make a purchase and then recruit other friends in a profitable chain of sellers and buyers.

Documented analysis of medical malpractice lawsuits confirms how the friendship trigger works. In the majority of suits, the doctors were not sued primarily because of bad medical practice. They were sued because of the way the patients felt they were treated on a personal level. In addition to the medical problem, the litigants felt that the doctor didn’t respect them, rushed them, belittled them, and was hostile or aloof. Put another way, doctors who are well liked are far less likely to be sued.

The Friendship Trigger also plays a powerful role in politics. Ronald Reagan was well liked even by political opponents. He came off as a good and trusted friend, and he was re-elected by the biggest landslide ever. Likewise, as controversial as Bill Clinton was, he was also well liked, even by those who sharply disagreed with him. He, too, was easily re-elected.

The evidence is clear: We are more persuaded by the Friendship Trigger than by facts.

To activate the Friendship Trigger requires establishing a basis of familiarity and similarity with someone. People tend to gravitate towards those who have similar backgrounds, share similar interests, dress the same, and talk the same. We are naturally more comfortable with those we believe to be like us.

Therefore, to be perceived as a friend, seek out and talk about common interests, whether business, personal, social, or political. The interests can span a wide range, from football to boating to golf or parenting. The secret to presenting an aura of similarity is simply to learn enough about the other person so that you can identify interests you have in common.

When in someone’s office, for example, look for clues. In most people’s offices, they are abundant. If there are photographs of the kids, talk about them. If there are awards, ask about them. Books and magazines provide clues to people’s interests. Then sit back and let the person talk. Be a good listener. People love to talk about what interests them.

If you don’t know someone well enough and can’t find the right clues, you can always look someone up on the Internet. Even if that doesn’t work, there are many universal topics that will provide common ground, such as family, travel, business, sports, entertainment, investments, and food.
In establishing similarity, dress is important. You need to look like the people you’re attempting to persuade. The author describes a real-life situation in which he had to make a presentation to a group of very competitive, conservative, and low-paid executives in a particular industry. The executives were all women, and he felt that he might be at a disadvantage because his competitor was a female vice president from another company.

But when the competitor showed up in a full-length mink coat and jewelry out of a Vogue fashion shoot, he knew he had it made. The competitor had violated the Friendship Trigger by flaunting her wealth.

In another setting, a representative for a company was attempting to persuade various people at a large manufacturing operation. When he met with the executives, he wore a suit and tie. When he met with the foremen and supervisors, he took off his coat and loosened his tie. When he met with the union workers, the tie was gone, and the sleeves were rolled up. He was using the friendship trigger by mirroring his audience. And he garnered the support of every element in the company.

Mirroring is critically important when using the Friendship Trigger. Mirroring means matching someone’s style, dress, and actions. If the person you wish to persuade is laid back, then take things slowly. If she is a high-powered, fast-paced kind of person, then don’t dawdle.

Researchers have used high-speed cameras to document mirroring in action. Super performers were found to be mirroring the people they were trying to persuade. In slow-motion replays, these top performers were actually shown to be breathing in and out in synchronization with the other person. Mirroring creates a feeling of similarity that sends a powerful signal of friendship to the amygdala. Employ the friendship trigger well, and you’ll build a strong foundation for the rest of your persuasive communications.
The Authority Trigger
CREDIBILITY CUES

When someone thinks that you know what you’re talking about, you’re already perceived as an authority and are well on your way to successful persuasion. That’s why the authority trigger is so powerful. We respond with unthinking, automatic compliance to those we believe have authority, credibility, and power.

Establish your authority, credibility, and expertise and you can quickly and automatically trigger someone’s amygdala to make a decision in your favor without even consulting the cerebral cortex.

Decisions always involve risk. And as part of the limbic system, the amygdala is very sensitive to risk. When you are perceived as an authority, that tends to reassure people and give them a feeling that risk is lower. That makes coming to a decision easier. One way to make sure that people perceive you as an authority is to do your homework and have the answers. Know your products and services and all relevant material inside and out. Pick the brains of other experts. Hire a consultant. Find a professor at the local college. Get help from anyone with knowledge in your area of interest.

Once you have the information, use it with precision. It’s all right to say, “This will reduce costs.” It’s much better to say, “We have documented statistics to show that this approach will cut payroll costs by 6.8 percent.”

AUTHORITY TRIGGER ELEMENTS

- Dress & bearing
- Accomplishments
- Research
- Papers, articles, books
- Endorsements
- Success documentation
- Speeches/Presentations
- Education
- Degrees
- Awards & Certifications
- Training
- Titles
- Affiliations
- Professional designations
- Experience
- Achievements
- Promotions
- Specialized expertise
- Relationships
- Background qualifications
Show people documents when you have them. Build air-tight credibility. Knowledge backed up with proof is a strong persuader.

Dress, carriage, and non-verbal cues are also important components of authority. Dress the part and act the part. Carry yourself with confidence. Make eye contact. Look and act the role of the authority figure you are.

Share information about any awards, commendations, achievements, promotions, and success stories. The more someone knows of your past success, the more you will be perceived as an authority. Let people know that you have done the hard work of researching your subject. Talk about the books you’ve read, the searches you’ve done, the databases you’ve examined, and the experts you’ve interviewed.

If you’ve written anything relevant to your subject, make sure that people know it. People believe the written word. Authors are perceived as authorities. Likewise, provide people with information about any speeches you may have made. Obtain and share positive comments from anyone who has worked with you. Positive input is stronger when it comes from others.

"The more someone knows of your past success, the more you will be perceived as an authority."

Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals always display their degrees. Don’t be shy about mentioning your own academic accomplishments and displaying your awards. Titles work the same way, as do affiliations and memberships in relevant organizations. Likewise, inform people of your real-world experience. Catalog those that are relevant.

Researchers have found that authority is a major controlling factor in our lives, our businesses, and our politics. In a study of persuasion, 65 percent of the outcomes were based solely on the subjective perceptions of the persuader by the others. This all has to do with credibility. This can be your most precious persuasion asset. Establish credibility, and you will sidestep the cerebral cortex and go directly for the amygdala. You will earn quick, virtually automatic compliance.
The Consistency Trigger
IDENTITY HEFT

Our internal guidance system compels us to be consistent with the way we see ourselves and our admired peers. From birth we create an internal databank of beliefs and past performance. We use these as an easy, safe, comfortable, non-thinking guide to making current decisions and to generating behavior. Consistency and conformity are primal instincts governed by the amygdala. We laugh when others laugh, cry when others cry, and glance up at the sky when others do.

Each decision we make has some similarity to some decision in the past. When we have to make a new decision, we’ll call up emotional memories of previous decisions that worked well and are strongly inclined to make a decision that reflects that experience.

The famed neuroscientist Antonio Damasio referred to this as a “navigational aid” and said, “If that is broken down, you’d be at the mercy of facts and logic and that’s just not good enough.” Since beliefs, values, feelings, and perceptions have little to do with fact and logic, you will succeed better by working in concert with someone’s perceptions, no matter what reality is. For the purpose of persuasion, perception is reality.

Consistency, then, amounts to acting in a way that reflects one’s past experiences, values, feelings, and perceptions. Being consistent with these experiences makes us comfortable. Since the amygdala has saved all those prior experiences for us, being consistent acts as a precise navigation system to help us determine

CONSISTENCY TRIGGER ELEMENTS

- Automatic or analytic mode
- Spending habits
- Affiliations with clubs/associations
- Social status / personal style
- Risk tolerance vs. aversion
- Peer group values
- Political - conservative/liberal
- Habits, inclinations
- Self-perceptions, self identity
- Pride
- Values, principles, ethics
- Education
- Prior decisions - individual/committee
- Prior actions
- Reference groups/peers
- Papers, articles and books
- Goals, motivations
the best of several choices. The amygdala helps us to make decisions that are consistent with our perception of ourselves.

We persuade by making people comfortable. Consistency is the internal trigger that motivates us to be and to act the same as those we positively relate to. We each have reference groups of people to whom we look for consistency, and we work hard to be consistent with those groups. Our internal guidance system requires us to be consistent with two categories of expectations: our own, and those of our admired peers.

Historically, we didn’t know how or why this trigger worked, yet marketers have been applying consistency on a hit-or-miss basis for years. For example, they would hold a contest asking consumers to write in and say why they liked a certain product — a breakfast cereal, for example. This created a file in the mental database that would urge the customer to be consistent in the future. The next time she shopped for breakfast cereal, she would be more likely to buy that brand, because she had bothered to write out why she liked it in the past. The amygdala points her to the product and tells her to be consistent.

"We persuade by making people comfortable."

Another feature of consistency works like this: Before making a purchase, you might vacillate about the decision. Yet after the decision is made, you love the choice. You are being consistent with your prior decision.

Almost 200 years ago in France, theater owners realized that audience members react to a performance in the same way that they see others react. Thus, when a small group of theatergoers cheers, the rest of the audience will cheer, too. When a few rise for a standing ovation, their behavior encourages others to stand as well. Businesses sprouted up to rent enthusiastic audience members to theaters. These shills would laugh, applaud, stand, and cheer at pre-arranged points in the performance. It worked, just as the TV laugh track works in today’s sitcoms.

Consistency appears to be one of the triggers that is fully developed in the amygdala at birth. Children will imitate the behavior of
others from a very early age. Whenever there is uncertainty in our information or decision process, we look to what others are doing to help us choose. We tend to be consistent even when we know logically that there’s no reason to be. Zagat’s restaurant guides, for example, are very popular. But they’re nothing more than a compilation of the ratings sent in by ordinary customers. The ratings are without any particular authority. Yet, we heed them.

Many times consistency behavior comes not from what we are, but what we imagine we might like to be. Marlboro was once the worst-selling brand of cigarettes. Then the company created the fictional Marlboro Man, and sales took off, as people bought the brand in order to be consistent with the image of rugged independence that they wanted to imitate. The virility, strength, and defiance of the image struck a chord around the world, and Marlboro is now the leading global brand.

The secret to accessing someone’s consistency trigger is to learn what he or she will be consistent with. Here are six things you’ll want to learn about the person:

1. **Automatic or analytic:** Learn which mode someone uses and facilitate accordingly. People tend not to switch modes.
2. **Big spender or cheapskate:** Spending habits strongly influence decisions. Match your proposal to the person’s natural habits.
3. **Joiner or loner:** A person’s group affiliations are likely to suggest precisely what they will be consistent with.
4. **Social status:** We strive to be consistent with the status we think we have. Learn how people perceive themselves in terms of social, business, and economic status.
5. **Risk tolerance:** Examine someone’s reputation for decisions and actions, then frame your proposal according to the person’s risk profile.
6. **Peer values:** People tend to be consistent with the values of those around them. Find out who their peers are and what they believe for valuable insight.

If you frame your proposal in a way that makes it consistent with all these qualities and tendencies, you will be well on your way to persuasive success.
The Reciprocity Trigger
QUID PRO QUO

The reciprocity trigger is easy to use and it delivers predictably positive results. Reciprocity — the law of giving and receiving — is a powerful, basic internal trigger that we all respond to willingly and automatically. It has deep historical roots in human development.

Long before the concept of money evolved, our ancestors traded, bartered, and exchanged goods, services, and food. They created a network of indebtedness that has been built into our psyche. The amygdala responds to reciprocity easily and unerringly.

Success with the reciprocity trigger requires a little planning. Ask yourself: What can I give the person I’m dealing with? What gift will be appropriate and elicit a give-back response? Then make a list.

Here are a few of the many possibilities:

- Physical gifts, such as flowers, food items, promotional premiums, books or apps.
- Entertainment, such as tickets to sporting events, shows or concerts, golf outings, etc.
- Information, including consultation, tips and suggestions, articles or other documents, helpful web sites, or new industry data.
- Compliments such as praise, your time, a birthday wish, a LinkedIn recommendation, or simply a sincere thank you.
- Business perks, such as time off, travel, lunch or dinner, involvement in a desired project, a bonus, a promotion, increased budget, or an award.

The secret to creating a psychological debt is to use every opportunity to benefit from this trigger. Make offers of any type and if the favor is not returned immediately, you are building up IOUs that can be called on in the future.

Before getting together with anyone you wish to influence, make a list of all the goods, services, and information you might bring to the meeting to elicit reciprocity. Perceived indebtedness will often get things done that nothing else can accomplish.
The Contrast Trigger
DIFFERENT WINS

Not only is it effective, the Contrast Trigger can be fun to use. And properly applied, it’s extremely successful. By fully understanding the contrast trigger, you’ll be able to frame your request for action in a highly specific, very effective manner, and agreement is virtually automatic.

“...All decisions are influenced by context.

By using contrast, we convince someone to accept our proposal because it’s better than all the alternatives. A proposal will look like a sure winner when it is positioned against the right comparisons. The way we judge something and make a decision, pro or con, is based on what we’re using for comparison.

All decisions are influenced by context. For example, if you place your hand in a bucket of cold water, your hand feels cold. If you then place it in a bucket of water at room temperature, that water feels warm — warmer than it really is. You have adapted to the cold temperature and now make judgments that are different from those you’d make if you started by putting your hand in a bucket of hot water.

Scientists refer to this as your adaptation level.

The human brain responds in a relative way, not an absolute way. This is one reason that logic, reason, and cognitive thought play less of a role in decision making than we previously thought. Objective facts take a backseat to adaptation level comparisons and perceptions.

In making a persuasive presentation, the way you set up someone’s adaptation level determines your success. For example, if you have a project for which you need funding, you can frame your presentation in two different ways. First, present the very expensive way to accomplish your task. Then present the way you really want to do it, which costs far less.

This paves the way for an easy comparison and a quick decision. Similarly, a realtor will show prospective buyers more expensive homes...
first, then show them ones that are within their actual price range. This sets the buyer’s adaptation level to the higher-priced homes, making the others seem like bargains.

Likewise, manufacturers who sell at volume discounts will present the full price of a single item first. By comparison, the volume discount makes the product seem cheap. To succeed with this trigger simply requires presenting stimuli in a meaningful order. Here are six useful examples to try:

1. **Cost comparisons:** Always create several options. Then present the highest cost first, replete with bells and whistles, and show the target item with the real cost last.

2. **Time comparisons:** Show the lengthy, laborious approach first, and the simple and quick proposal second.

3. **Energy comparisons:** If the person you are persuading is influenced by his expenditure of personal energy, then show different input requirements with the easiest one listed last.

4. **Resource comparisons:** Define the necessary resources. Start with the most involved, costly approach. Finally, show the proposal you really want approved, the one that saves valuable resources.

5. **Personal effort:** Determine how you want the project to be done. Position the easiest route last.

6. **Alternative comparisons:** Whenever there are several ways to get the job done, show the options, presenting the most difficult ones first, then the relatively easy approach you want. Compare and contrast the options to amplify the easiest of your suggestions.

Using these techniques, you can show how your proposal is better than other options, different from the competition’s, and different from what others have proposed. Do the serious work of finding the comparisons, and then arrange them in the best order to show that yours is easier, cheaper, safer, less risky, and better.

If the person you are trying to persuade is risk-averse, show how your proposal reduces risk. If he’s concerned about cost, show how your proposal will save money. If he’s frightened, reduce his fear. If he’s adventurous, show how this will be an exciting new experience.
CALL TO ACTION

The simplest of the triggers is the Reason Why Trigger. It involves giving someone a tangible reason to do what you’re proposing. The amygdala will accept a valid reason and doesn’t bother to send the information on to the cerebral cortex for rational, analytical evaluation. The amygdala approves the reason as a shortcut to avoid heavy thinking. The result is that you get compliance.

There’s a surprising volume of scientific research into the Reason Why Trigger. Long before anyone knew how the brain pathways worked, academics created experimental situations to test the concept. They would construct a situation where someone was asked to do something – for example, to break into a line of people waiting to accomplish a task.

If a person tried to break in without a reason, the answer was no. But if he gave a simple explanation, such as being double-parked, people automatically complied. The amygdala simply accepted the reason and the request was met with immediate, nonthinking compliance. Because of the new scientific research, today we can apply this trigger with predictable results.

Anything that makes even a little sense will work as a Reason Why Trigger. Scarcity, real or perceived, is a good example of marketers using the reason why trigger. A “going out of business” sale influences people to buy — before it’s too late. Pricing certain items very high, like perfumes, convinces people that the product’s quality is high and the price is justified. They believe that you get what you pay for.

Likewise, “limited time offers” create a reason why trigger. The obvious reason is that the offer will end, so the customer has to act now.

**REASON WHY TRIGGER ELEMENTS**

- Cost
- Limited pricing
- Time issues
- Limited supply
- Impending event
- Exclusivity or rarity
- Team support
- Possible advancement
- Contest
- New Information
or lose. Likewise, a limited edition, a collectible, a short production run, and a one-of-a-kind item all activate the reason why trigger.

To use the Reason Why Trigger effectively, make a list of real, plausible reasons why the person you’re dealing with should act. Stretch your imagination to find good reasons.

Here are seven examples to consider:

1. **Cost.** Provide a good reason why your proposal is higher in price than others. Use a price versus-value equation to set up the reason why.

2. **Limited pricing.** When the price is limited by availability, time, or any other factor, make that clear.

3. **Time issues.** Any and all timing issues are viable ways to activate the reason why trigger. You can set your own time limits — on your own availability, on the terms of the deal, or the project itself.

4. **Limited supply.** If your proposal involves anything that may be limited in supply, say so. Any limits that make for a good reason to act will help your case.

5. **Impending event.** An event that will stop or slow down the process you seek can be a good reason to proceed now. You can usually find impending events that will activate the reason why trigger.

6. **Exclusivity or rarity.** Establish the rarity or exclusivity of any element of your proposal as a reason why someone should act now. Make the proposition exclusive to the person you wish to persuade for a limited time, and you have a double reason why.

7. **Possible advancement.** If the opportunity you suggest might lead to the person’s advancement within the company, present this as a great reason why she should act.

The Reason Why Trigger is fundamental to our decision-making process because it motivates our inherent need for amygdala-based, non-thinking shortcuts to avoid the time, energy, and pain of complex thinking. If you do the work of thinking for the person you’re trying to persuade, the reason why trigger is activated, and you get compliance automatically.
The Hope Trigger
A BIGGER BETTER DEAL

Charles Revson, the founder of Revlon, is famous for saying, “In the factory we make cosmetics. In the store, we sell hope.” Hope is a combination of wishes and positive expectations. Its power of persuasion is unmatched. We are easily persuaded by those who understand our hopes and dreams and promise to help us realize them. The key to this trigger is simplicity itself: Learn what people hope for. Then, emphasize what will help them realize their aspirations.

We can find hope triggers working everywhere around us. The hugely successful state lotteries leverage the hope trigger by promising instant riches. Never mind that the odds of winning are infinitesimal. The average individual is more likely to be killed by lightning than to win the lottery, yet people buy tickets every day.

The vitamin and pharmaceutical industries are based on hope, too. We buy these products in the hope that we’ll look better, feel better, and live longer, happier lives.

Jack Welch employed the Hope Trigger when he engineered the dramatic turnaround at General Electric. He went to virtually every operating division in every part of the world and gave managers and workers a single message. His message required no logic or cognitive thought. It contained no data, facts, or figures. His message was simple: Every G.E. unit that is not number one or number two in its industry would be either fixed, sold, or closed.

Upon hearing this mantra, the employees hoped they could keep their jobs. That inspired them to achieve miraculous results in the

HOPE TRIGGER ELEMENTS

- Happiness
- More time
- Health
- Independence
- Goals and ambitions
- Fears
- Success
- Profit
- Avoid loss
- Achievement
- Promotion
- Fame or notoriety
- Stability
- Peer acceptance
coming months and years. By activating their hope trigger, Welch pushed them to heights of achievement that no amount of logic or data could have done. Welch’s hope trigger was reinforced with his Authority Trigger. It was a powerful package.

Donald Trump employed the Hope Trigger in conjunction with the Friendship Trigger to position himself with the right people to execute his visions. Through his extraordinary persuasiveness, he was able to accomplish such feats as getting the city of New York to grant him a 40-year tax abatement on his $70 million Grand Hyatt Hotel.

How do you learn what people hope for? Simply ask.

Each person and group that Trump persuaded hoped to achieve the results that Trump had outlined. Trump researched what those people hoped for, and then tapped into their internal guidance systems to execute his goals.

When you learn how to determine what people hope for, it’s easy to position your presentation to address those hopes. How do you learn what people hope for? Simply ask. Here are seven potential areas to consider when preparing to use the Hope Trigger:

1. **Happiness.** The unending quest for happiness is perhaps the biggest of all human hopes. We’re hardwired to accept any approach that even remotely enhances our happiness. When you show how your proposition will produce positive feelings, you’ve activated the hope trigger.

2. **More time.** We hope for more time and hope to accomplish more in the time we have. Show how your proposition will save time and accomplish more.

3. **Health.** Each of us hopes to stay healthy or become healthier. Find ways to align your idea with this hope. For example, your proposal may lower stress.

4. **Independence.** Most people who feel trapped, hope for a degree of independence. If your idea can help achieve that hope, put it in those terms.

5. **Goals and ambitions.** Professional goals drive many lives. People will usually tell you their goals. Once you have learned them, activate the Hope Trigger by showing how your plans will accelerate their ambitions.

6. **Fears.** What does someone want not to happen? Each of us hopes that certain fears will not become reality. And fear is a big motivator. Learn what people hope to avoid and frame your proposal to support that hope.

7. **Profit.** We all want profit. When you show how someone may profit financially, emotionally, socially, in business, and at home, you have engaged the Hope Trigger.
People love to talk about themselves, so it’s easy to find out what they hope for. Once you learn what they hope for and what they wish to avoid, you can successfully apply this trigger.

Consequences motivate behavior. Be sure you explain how those consequences support the hopes and goals you have uncovered. There are three rules of consequences:

1. Consequences perceived to provide rewards motivate behavior and action.
2. Consequences perceived to be negative or punitive create negative decisions and behavior.
3. Consequences that deliver neither reward nor punishment create no behavior.

Be certain that your proposals offer – and clearly articulate – rewards in keeping with people’s hopes and aspirations. And make sure that you also mention negative consequences of inaction.

Like all the triggers, the Hope Trigger requires that you do the thinking beforehand so that the person you wish to persuade does not have to connect the dots themselves, and can respond with near automatic compliance. Combining the authority and consistency triggers with the Hope Trigger works especially well.
GETTING COMMITMENT

At this point, you will have done the job of planning and executing your engagement. You will have learned the values and criteria to be used in making a decision. You’ve determined which of the triggers will be most effective to facilitate the decision-making process.

You’ve made an outstanding presentation targeting the emotional issues that will trigger the action you seek. With excellent communication, you have generated understanding and good feelings all around. You’ve overcome resistance and are on the road to full commitment.

“Fully 63 percent of all presentations end without a specific request for action.”

Curiously, at this point, most people fail to take the next crucial step to reach closure. Several major research projects have documented that fully 63 percent of all presentations end without a specific request for action, and without a final agreement.

Without that request for closure – without formalizing your agreement – all the hard work that went before might be for nothing. Until you get closure, you haven’t produced the decision and the action you seek.

Closure simply means wrapping up the process by taking the following five steps:

1. Get agreement on a defined decision.
2. Confirm the agreement you have reached in writing.
3. Obtain agreement for how to proceed on an idea, a project, a solution, or a change initiative.
4. Define the next step.
5. Agree on a time frame for action.

If the project you propose is a multi-step situation, closure may include these three additional items:

1. Agree to meet with other interested parties.
2. Arrange your own follow-up meeting.
3. Document all the requirements for these next steps.

Remember that while it’s up to you to do the persuading, it’s really the other party’s
obligation to make the decision and to comply. Your task is to help the person reach – and then acknowledge – the desired decision and action.

One of the most important steps to take in the service of closure is to have a defined goal. It should be fine-tuned and clear. If your presentation and your use of the seven triggers are based on this firm foundation, then you will wind up executing the process well. You can simply move forward and ask for closure, outlining the execution process and the details.

By recognizing that each of us depends on our own internal self-guidance system to trigger the decisions we need to make every day, we can now understand how to influence people. With intelligent application of the seven triggers, we can help people to quickly and automatically reach a “yes” decision.
“Within weeks after completing the 7 Triggers course and putting its techniques to use, we secured the largest single account transaction in the company’s 100 year history. The 7 Triggers has taken hold here like the Frisbee and the Hula Hoop.”

Ernie Weeks, VP Sales
Utica National Insurance Companies

TRIGGER WORKSHOPS: THE PRACTICE GAME EDITION

7 Triggers corporate training is a highly customized examination of how the formula applies to specific products, customers, and selling challenges.

Rising Tide collaborates with Marketing, Sales, and Senior Leadership to support and incorporate current core values, goals, brand strategies, marketing objectives, and any current sales models and/or training programs. Rising Tide also:

• creates custom training content for sales professionals and their leadership
• works directly with sales leadership, training managers and sales professionals in the field, pre- and post-training.
• provides workshops for live events at regional or national meetings.

A variety of ongoing support resources are also available, from on-site coaching to documents and tools that help employees organize and deploy the 7 Triggers formula on-the-job. Support solutions may be developed as part of the up-front discovery, analysis, and custom design phase of the program.

Please visit The7Triggers.com/customtraining for more details.
TRAINING F.A.Q.

What is the purpose of 7 Triggers corporate training?

7 Triggers training gives corporate leadership, marketing, and sales organizations the most practical and actionable way to use decision science when selling ideas, products or services; when developing or negotiating agreements; and when seeking to gain support or cooperation of any kind. It is a reliable, proven formula for creating meaningful professional relationships that produce faster, stronger, more consistent results.

What can we expect in the way of results / ROI?

7 Triggers training produces more confident professionals who are able engage with partners, prospects, and customers more productively and profitably. Working with the brain instead of against it involves changes in perspective, messaging, and behavior which may be subtle or incremental – but which are also game-changing when it comes to producing desirable results with greater speed and consistency. Outcomes include:

- A better framework for deeply engaging colleagues and customers.
- The ability to know which messages will actually motivate YES decisions.
- A vocabulary for planning and analyzing effective persuasion strategies and tactics.
- A real and reliable way to “connect the dots” for customers.
- Better lead development, more closes, expanded accounts, increased market share.

How is The 7 Triggers different from other sales training?

7 Triggers training is really not sales training at all. Conventional sales training is about process. The 7 Triggers is about people. Trigger training is often used as a critical complement to an existing sales model because it’s not about how reps sell but about why customers buy. It is the other half of the selling equation. Program participants learn how to use scientific insights into human decision-making to shorten selling cycles, expand accounts, and close more sales.
TRAINING F.A.Q.

How is 7 Triggers training different from the source material? Why not just have all my people read the book?

They absolutely should all read the book! Certified 7 Triggers training begins where the source material ends. It is not a stand-up version of the book. Such an approach is not actionable enough at an organizational level. As facilitated by Rising Tide Partners or its authorized affiliates, 7 Triggers corporate workshops are fully customized, highly participatory examinations of exactly how the 7 Triggers formula applies to a company’s own products, customers, and markets, and how it can solve real-world business challenges.

What kind of follow-up and ongoing support is available?

We’ve worked hard to ensure that certified 7 Triggers training is not just an event but a primary, developmental exercise that serves as a foundation for real behavioral change and performance improvement. A variety of support resources are available, from on-site coaching to documents and digital tools that help employees organize and deploy the 7 Triggers formula on-the-job. Ongoing support requirements and solutions may be developed as part of the needs analysis and custom design phase of the program.

What does it cost?

There are three cost components to certified 7 Triggers training:

1. customization,
2. per-participant fees, and
3. facilitation.

All are variable based on the needs of the organization and the size of the training audience. Please contact us to discuss your requirements and goals, and we’ll provide a preliminary cost estimate in just a few business days.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

During his lifetime, Russ Granger improved the lives and fortunes of thousands of businesses and countless individuals around the world. He turned his passion for achievement into highly successful books, seminars, speaking engagements, and a series of innovative training programs that served as the industry standard for some of the world’s largest companies, including AT&T, Squibb Corporation, Aetna, GE, Citibank, American Express, Prudential, and Morgan Stanley.

When Russ produced his first sales course, there were few corporate training departments and no such thing as an instructional designer. He knew that professionals learn best by doing, and that business cares only about results. So Russ created highly participatory workshops that enabled employees to effectively improve performance. This new dynamic approach would revolutionize not only the companies and industries Russ served, but corporate training itself.

Russ was degreed in psychology, and was a fast-track corporate executive before becoming a serial entrepreneur who built multiple profitable businesses in a variety of fields. But his greatest achievement was helping others succeed.
MAKE IT WORK

IN ORDER TO WORK EFFECTIVELY, THE 7 TRIGGERS FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE APPLIED SPECIFICALLY AND CONSISTENTLY.

Although it can be a critical game-changer for sales organizations, the 7 Triggers system is not technically a sales training program. Sales training is about process; the 7 Triggers is about people. It’s not about how reps sell, but about why customers buy.

Used as a powerful complement to any standard sales model, results are best achieved by filtering an organization’s communication components – e.g. brand platform elements, marketing and sales messages, product and service features – through the 7 Triggers “organizing system.”

Recognize that some triggers are more inward-facing, in that they apply substantially to the value proposition; whereas others are more customer-facing in the way that they relate directly to the very humanity of an individual. It’s important to structure your trigger deployment accordingly.

Proper realignment of marketing messages and sales communications according to the priorities set by the 7 Triggers can yield enormous benefits. But it’s just as important for people to use the 7 Triggers in small, consistent ways in their daily communications – and not just with customers. The incremental advantages accrued from using fully triggered communication all day, every day is what turns an organization from being merely functional to being powerfully persuasive.