

The Holiday Season: One Big Triggering Event

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When we talk about **motivating behavior change**, we tell people that simply making them aware of something rarely drives them to that behavior. They usually need a **triggering event** – whether it is naturally occurring, like a time of year or an anniversary – or “manufactured” – something the organization does – to gently push stakeholders toward a behavior. The possible exception to this is advertising during the holidays, when people are already poised and ready to deliver the ultimate desired behavior in a retailer’s eyes...buying merchandise!

Even with the naturally occurring triggering event of the holidays, though, companies are creating “**manufactured triggering events**” to drive behavior in the form of sales, coupons, emails, apps that entitle the shopper to discounts etc. Once they get you into the store to purchase what you came for, of course, their **ultimate desired behavior** is that you make some spontaneous additional purchases of cool stuff that catches your eye.

New Years as a triggering event? Everyone in the personal training/fitness facility world knows that New Years is the perfect triggering event for signing people up for health and fitness programs...since they have probably just made a New Year’s resolution to lose weight, train for a specific event or just lead a healthier lifestyle.

(Personally, I try to avoid going to the gym at peak hours during January because it is packed! I wait until February to resume my normal routine, knowing that even the best-intentioned folks will have trouble sticking to their newly-adopted behavior without some positive reinforcement to keep them going).

In our business, the New Year is a triggering event for our clients to finalize budgets, conduct strategic planning and re-evaluate their activities from the past year ... what’s been working and what hasn’t?

This is the time of year that we like to remind them how JJ&W can be helpful in many areas beyond our crisis communication work...including (but not limited to) research, strategic planning and employee communications. The **intermediate behavior** we want is for them to think of us when they have a need for public relations or management consulting services...the ultimate desired behavior is that they call us to help them on whatever problem or issue they are about to tackle.

The question for you is: As we enter the New Year, what are the triggering events to get YOU to move YOUR key stakeholders toward specific desired behaviors?