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"A psychological trigger is the strongest motivational factor any salesperson or copywriter can use to evoke a sale."

—Joe Sugarman

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3 psychological triggers that boost sales

Legendary mail-order copywriter Joseph Sugarman thinks that psychological triggers can "increase sales and response beyond what you would normally expect," as he writes in a recent article in *The Copywriter's Digest*. He provided three examples that bear out his ideas:

■ **Positive Trigger #1: Guilt**

Any factor that causes your sales prospects to feel guilty if they do not buy your product is likely to boost sales, Sugarman says.

One example: the stickers carrying your name and return mailing address that many fund-raisers send to you free of charge.

People often feel guilty if they use the stickers but donate no money.

So many of us send a \$20 contribution, triggered by perhaps 50¢ worth of return-address labels.

■ **Positive Trigger #2: Conviction of Satisfaction**

Don't stop with the typical mail-order time-limited guarantee, Sugarman advises.

"A satisfaction conviction ... adds something that makes it go well beyond the time period, he says."

Instead of saying, "If you're not happy with your purchase, you can return it for a full refund within 30 days," Sugarman urges use of copy like

"If at any time you're not happy with your subscription, we'll refund its entire price – even if you cancel just before your last issue."

"In many tests," Sugarman says, "I've doubled response – sometimes by adding just one sentence that conveys a good satisfaction conviction."

■ **Positive Trigger #3: Curiosity**

In the subject line of most advertisements that have reached him, Sugarman notes, "I have been able to tell, at a glance, that the solicitation was for a specific service or offer."

For example, "Reduce your CD and DVD costs 50%," tips the reader off to what the advertiser is selling.

The key, he says is to put a curiosity-provoking statement message that does not appear to be advertising into the headline of your mailing or the subject line of an e-mail. This piques curiosity – and leads to action.

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