

The 21 Brain Triggers

Every trigger from the Neuromarketing case file, in the order a buyer's brain meets you. Pick three for your next campaign. Use them honestly.

AWARENESS · BRIEFING 02

Win the First Glance

- 01 The first-seconds window**
Frontload your biggest promise, number or image. Don't build up to it.

- 02 Pattern interruption**
Break your category's visual, tonal or contextual pattern, then bridge straight to real value.

- 03 The Von Restorff effect**
Make the call to action the most visually distinct thing on the page.

- 04 Authority markers**
Show genuine credentials in the first screen, not behind an About link.

- 05 Specific social proof**
Replace round, vague claims with exact, true numbers.

AWARENESS · BRIEFING 03

Hold the Attention

- 06 The curiosity gap**
Baseline, anomaly, delay. Specific and plausible, and always pay it off.

- 07 Reciprocity**
Give something genuinely valuable first, with no strings.

- 08 Sensory language**
Swap abstract verbs for physical ones: grab, step inside, see.

CONSIDERATION · BRIEFING 04

Make It Brain-Easy

- 09 Cognitive fluency**
Pass the 12-year-old test, the squint test and the five-second test.

- 10 One clear action**
One page, one call to action. Remove competing links and buttons.

- 11 Rhyme as reason**
Give your tagline and key lines a rhythm people can say aloud.

- 12 Ambiguity aversion**
Spell out exactly what they get, when, how and what if.

CONSIDERATION · BRIEFING 05

Build Belief

- 13 Relatable social proof**
Use testimonials from people like your buyer, with a doubt before the praise.

- 14 Narrative transportation**
Tell a customer's story instead of listing features.

- 15 The IKEA effect**
Add a small, personal contribution step to sign-up or onboarding.

Close the Sale

16 Loss aversion

Remove the fear of losing at the checkout with a specific guarantee.

17 The endowment effect

Trials, visualisation and 'your' language create ownership before purchase.

18 Honest scarcity

Only real limits, and always say why the limit exists.

19 The decoy effect

A genuine third option that makes your target option the clear choice.

20 Present bias and fresh starts

Lead with a quick win and test launching on a fresh-start date.

Assemble & Be Remembered

21 The peak-end rule

Design one standout moment and a warm final touchpoint.

The three-stage funnel

Every trigger serves one question the buyer's brain is asking.

Stage	The brain's question	Triggers
1 · Awareness	"Is this worth my attention?"	01–08: hook, interrupt, contrast, authority, specific proof, curiosity, reciprocity, sensory language
2 · Consideration	"Can I trust this, and is it for me?"	09–15: fluency, one action, rhythm, certainty, relatable proof, story, small investments
3 · Decision	"Is it safe to commit?"	16–20: risk reversal, ownership, honest scarcity, fair decoys, quick wins and timing
Afterwards	"How do I remember this?"	21: design the peak and the end

The metrics diagnostic

Your analytics are a brain scan. Find the symptom, fix the stage.

Lots of impressions, few clicks	Your pattern interrupt isn't working. You look like every other ad, so the brain filters you out before anyone decides.	→ 02 Win the First Glance
Good traffic, weak engagement	You earned the glance but gave no reason to stay. There's no curiosity gap, or it's too vague to pull.	→ 03 Hold the Attention
Clicks, then a quick bounce	A fluency failure. The page is too busy, too vague or doesn't match the promise that earned the click.	→ 04 Make It Brain-Easy
Plenty of interest, little trust	Visitors read but don't believe. Your proof doesn't come from people like them, or it's all claims and no story.	→ 05 Build Belief
Added to basket, no purchase	Fear won at the checkout. Your risk reversal isn't specific enough, or the final step introduces new uncertainty.	→ 06 Close the Sale
Buyers don't come back or refer	The experience ends flat. There's no designed peak, and the final touchpoint is forgettable.	→ 07 Assemble & Be Remembered

The three-part ethics check

Run it before anything goes out.

☐ **Transparent?** Would every claim still stand if the customer could see exactly how it works?

☐ **Value-aligned?** Does the emotional pull point at something that genuinely serves the buyer?

☐ **Harm-reducing?** Could a vulnerable person be hurt by acting on this? If 'maybe', redesign it.

Can't tick all three? You're manipulating, not persuading. Redesign it.

The brain's filters exist to catch dishonesty. Tell the truth in a way the brain can take in.

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ADAPTED FROM THE BRAIN-PROOF PLAYBOOK BY PHIL COLEMAN, CRO COPYWRITER