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Definitions of English words often change quite rapidly these days. In the not-too-distant past the definition of words was often set in concrete. Today the meaning can change in the blink of an eye. With new and faster ways to exchange ideas and with wider and more culturally, socially and educationally diverse groups connecting together - words are put back on the hard anvil of evolution and transformed into something new and more reflective of current life and living.

There is a growing global movement where consumers are asking businesses to take care of the things that they care about. The request is mainly tacit and despite it being an ironic request it non-the-less signals that we are in a time of change. Consumers these days want their 'goodies' but they don't want the environment to be destroyed in the creation of their 'goodies'. They want cheap products but they do not want workers to suffer to create those cheap products.

Until recently there was no real answer to this complex puzzle but today one actually exists. It exists in the reforging of a simple single word - GET. Today there is a new movement of consumers wanting to get and at the same time give. They are reforging the word GET into the word GIVE.

Every day automated email notices arrive in my inbox from Google Alerts for two keywords - BOGO and B1G1. I see all the new places these words are turning up on the Internet. Little by little these two words are gaining a their new meaning as more and more people take up the Buy One Give One cause.

B1G1 and BOGO are acronyms for Buy One GET One free. You buy one and they give you an extra one for the same price.

Look up BOGO on Wikipedia.com (there isn't a definition yet for B1G1) and you will discover these definitions for BOGO:

- * An acronym in the retail industry that stands for Buy One Get One. For example, you could say "Buy 1 DVD, Get 1 FREE!
- * An acronym in slang British that stands for Britons Of Greek Origin or Greek Britons.
- * Bogo, Cebu, a city in central Philippines.
- * Norway, a village in Norway.
- * Norway, a village in Norway.
- * The mascot of the ITESM CEM.
- * BogoMips, an unscientific measurement of CPU speed
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BOGO Lights - torches that give

There's an entrepreneurial business in the USA called SunLight Solar which was founded by Mark Bent. They've created a special torch that's not only an amazing and sturdy solar-powered light; his company also gives a free torch to that in need in developing countries every time one is sold. If you look up their website you will learn more about their "BOGO light".

"The BoGo - our Buy one/Give one - program has successfully provided lights to many, many thousands of people in the developing world, changing lives because of your purchase and participation." - BOGOlight.com

Mark Bent has flipped the BOGO acronym upside down when he started to use the word as part of his product name. For him now and the thousands who buy his lights, BOGO today means Buy One GIVE One. Each person

gets to give a light every time they buy one for themselves. So now with each sale people who do not have the benefit of electricity can tap the power of the sun to support them in their lives.

There are many other well known and less well know businesses now doing Buy One Give One giving or transaction based giving as it is becoming known. Some of the famous ones are One Laptop Per Child and TOMS Shoes. Some of the less well-known ones (in the USA at least) are based in Australia, New Zealand and the UK - Maple Muesli, Blinds Couture, Earthstar Publishing, Figure 8 Body Chains, Honestly Women magazine, Sunsplash Homes and Thavibu Gallery based in Thailand are just a few special businesses that are leading the Buy One Give One movement in their parts of the world.

Many Buy One Give One businesses are uniting under the common banner of Buy1GIVE1 run by a social enterprise based in Singapore. Buy1GIVE1 is the home of transaction-based giving. Any business based anywhere in the world can now start doing Buy One Give One giving with ease. It is becoming like a 'CSR plug-in' allowing a business to instantly start giving from each and every product or service sale, starting from just one cent. And it is no longer about giving an equivalent product to someone else; instead it is about contributing to a project that resonates with a company's activities. So for example a restaurant can feed a child, a TV manufacturer can give a cataract blind person the gift of sight (Get Vision-Give Vision), a magazine publisher can plant a tree for every subscription and a builder can build a low-cost family home for those in need (Buy1BUILD1) - the list is endless.

Something special is happening these days as more and more people are switching onto giving and 'citizen brands' as a part of their everyday experience. The 2008 Edelman Goodpurpose global study of consumer attitudes reveal that almost seven in 10 (68%) consumers would choose to remain loyal to a brand during a recession if it supports a good cause, and 71% say that when they think about the economic downturn, they have either given the same or more time and money to good causes. This very same study highlighted some other major things as well like:

* Half (52%) of consumers globally are more likely to recommend a brand to others when it supports a good charity cause over one that does not.

* 54% would sing the praises of a brand to promote their products if there was a good cause behind it.

* And going even further globally, consumers are voicing a strong desire for marketers to connect their brands to social causes or action. Forty-two percent say that if two products or services are of the same quality and price, commitment to a social purpose trumps factors like design, innovation and brand loyalty when choosing one product brand over another.

Turning Getting into Giving

In the minds of consumers, Buy One GIVE One is expected to replace Buy One GET One as the new global giving movement led by Buy1GIVE1 spreads. Certainly with the massive sales results and consumer demand shown for companies like BOGOlights, One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) and TOMS Shoes, this tide will continue to spread and grow.

I did a Google search on the 25 topmost key words connected with the keyword BOGO as an experiment to see what would show up. The results were interesting so I have displayed them below. You may notice that right now the word Give doesn't show up. It will be interested to do this test again in twelve months time to see what changes. Consumers are now driving change and yes they want to receive free gifts (traditional B1G1/BOGO) but equally they also want to give to others or see others being given to.

Here are the results:

Free, networking, boots, groups, music, dallas, togo themes, wallpapers, buy, applications, skins, values, coupon, African, gift, photography, blogging, discount, sharing, shopping, pics, join, prose

Transactional or transaction-based giving

Buy One Give One giving is transactional - every time you buy something, you give something. In the case of SunNight Solar, TOMS Shoes and OLPC they happen to give physical products of the same nature for everyone sold. However, in most cases, Buy1GIVE1 associated businesses give a charitable contribution from each sale. Giving can start from just a one-cent contribution per sales transaction and go up to thousands of dollars in the case of Buy1BUILD1. At 1cent any business in the world can afford to give from each sale especially when they also know 100% of the contribution goes to the cause.

The actual amount given from each and every sale is not the point of focus with Buy1GIVE1 transaction based giving. It is not about saying 10% is contributed or 5c from each sale - instead the focus is on the story and sharing the simple joy of giving. In the end, if you think that 1c is not a lot to contribute and is not likely to make much of a difference think again and consider the following.

From its origins in Ethiopia, where the main coffee production is still from wild coffee tree forests, coffee consumption has spread throughout the world. Today Brazil is still by far the largest producer producing an average output of 28% of the world's total coffee. Brazil produced enough coffee in 2006 to make 216 billion four hundred million - 216 400 000 000 - espresso coffees. If we calculate that across global production then we get a daily global consumption of around 2,117,416,830 cups of coffee. The figures are hard to find but let's guess that 40% of the world's coffee is sold in coffee shops then we would get that 846,966,732 cups are sold commercially each day globally. This would equate to about 5,485,714 cups in the USA alone seeing they purchase around 21.9% of the world's coffee beans.

If we considered the impact of the coffee industry alone taking up Buy1-Give1, imagine now that for every cup of coffee sold a child in a developing region like Sub-Sahara Africa received clean drinking water from a well and it only costing 1cent to do this. Surely any coffee shop could afford to contribute this amount from the sale of a single cup of coffee. Imagine the different that this one action alone would make in the world.

Transaction-based giving is the story of a thousand-mile journey starting with a single step. Digging a well costs a few thousand dollars, however when you break the cost down it only takes the sale of a single cup of coffee to give clean water to a single person for a day¹. This is the incredible and simple power of transactional giving. It is like the compound interest of giving - a little turns into a huge amount very quickly.

Of course any company can do transaction-based giving with any of its products or services and do it on their own as some are like TESCO in the UK giving school uniforms to kids in Africa in partnership with Save the Children. And yet if companies choose to join together under a commonly recognised banner/brand they can have a powerful effect. The ripple that a single company creates is added to that of another and the ripple grows into a tidal wave of giving. This is the power of giving and doing things together.

Everyone wins with Buy One Give One transaction based giving. The consumer wins - at no extra cost to themselves they have made a difference through their purchasing choices. The business wins in so many ways. And of course the charity cause wins because they are now able to receive small amounts from numerous sources aggregated and paid in a lump sum by Buy1GIVE1.

A new beginning

If you check Wikipedia today you should find that a new definition has been added for BOGO. It is time for a change. A change from focusing on GETTING to focusing on GIVING. The subtlety in the words that we use so often point to a deeper underlying meaning. I added this small addition to Wikipedia, "... an acronym in the marketing industry that stands for Buy One GIVE One."

Just imagine our world where every time you shopped and bought something you gave something - automatically and seamlessly. This is the simple joyful magic of transaction based giving.

This is the world I want to be part of.

Just remember - you don't 'get' giving till you get giving.

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Footnotes: 1 Calculated by taking the average cost to dig a well, dividing it by its average expected life without major maintenance divided by the number of people in the community benefiting from the well on a daily basis.

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