



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## RESULTS OF POLL FOR THE BOOK COVER DESIGN WINNER

The results from the poll to inform the selection of the book cover design are in and have been tabulated (without the help of a top accounting firm). It has been an interesting experiment. I learned as much about your preferences as much as I did about how you assessed the designs. Thank you all for participating in the survey. I sincerely appreciate and respect your input!

Two designs emerge as being most preferred, albeit with a small “n” of 43. These are:

- #315 – ERRORS in a red box with cracks
- #308 by u.t.dezines – lightning bolt in red and green that reads like a sales chart AND #311, also by u.t.dezines of a man (in a suit) holding a golden lightning bolt (I'm linking these as the designs are variations of the same basic concept.)

Results for the top box and second box (i.e., 5-star and 4-star ratings, respectively) for finalists are displayed in the table below. Note that the last column provides a “score” derived from taking the top box and adding ½ of the second box score to it.

	AVG. RATING	5-STAR - #	4-STAR - #	TOP + 1/2 2nd
<b>Cracked “ERRORS”</b>	3.2	12	1	12.5
<b>Red-Green Bolt</b>	3.1	4	11	9.5
<b>Man Holding Bolt</b>	3.0	5	5	7.5
<b>Warning – Inverted Triangle</b>	2.6	2	8	6.0
<b>Blue Design</b>	2.3	4	2	5.0
<b>Award Medallion - Blue</b>	2.3	0	5	2.5
<b>Award Medallion - Gray</b>	2.1	0	3	1.5

You may not agree with me, but when I add the top + 1/2-second box for the two bolt submissions, the score is 17.0. That would make it the clear winner, however, I believe it may overstate participants’ preference and the score. However, in this poll the score is not entirely the point!

First let’s talk about what respondents think of the aforementioned two finalists. The cracked “ERRORS” clearly has its champions. Here's what they have to say:

- Stands out and grabs my attention.
- The clean lines draw my attention, and the title stands out.
- I instantly recall (the cover) post-24-hours following the first view.
- The cover is classic ...
- Looks credible and serious enough to have depth in terms of content.

I personally like it because it highlights, and in no way detracts from, the title and sub-title, the essential elements to engage marketers and readers. This is particularly important given the provocativeness of the sub-title. As such, I believe it paves the way for the prospective book buyer to turn to the back cover, which provides the copy to make the sale.

The “Bolt” executions are also captivating. Here’s what respondents say about it:

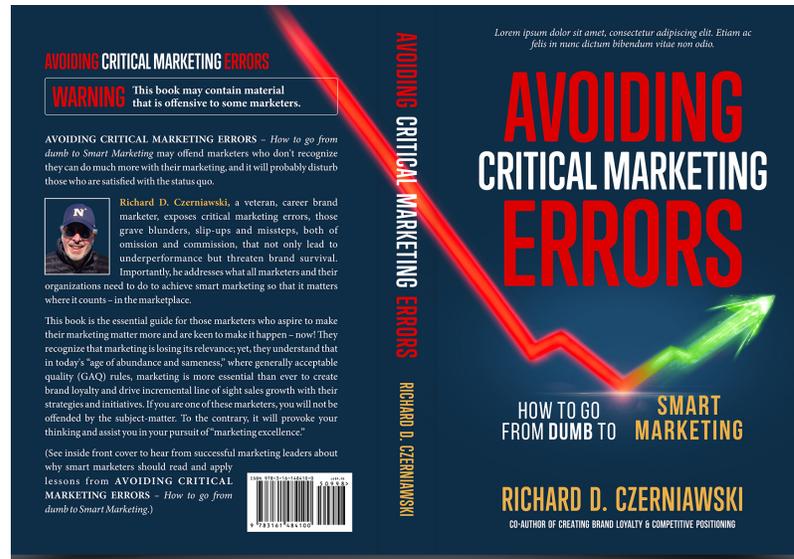
- The image of the trend line ties in well with the message of going from dumb to smart.
- Very clear and compelling (imagery).
- I Like the change in trajectory shown in the graphic.
- I like the idea of the downward trend in red, with the glow at the bottom being the "intervention," and then the upward trend being green. It clearly defines the idea of the book.
- This version has real stopping power while efficiently communicating the value proposition: creating a positive inflection in performance! Everything about this cover— colors, typography and graphics— commands attention and communicates a reason to select the book and five in!!!
- Love how this draws out the move from dumb to smart marketing. The red/green chart line is highly effective.
- Grabs my attention and communicates a positive, compelling message that the book will help me take control and turn around brand performance.

I too like “Bolts” (red and green version) because it communicates that dumb marketing (i.e., where critical errors of omission and commission occur), hurts the business. Whereas smart marketing leads to incremental growth. It also makes it clear that we, marketers, are responsible and accountable for line of sight sales and profit performance!

So, if the score is not the point, then what's the purpose of conducting a survey. For one, it is to rule out what isn't working. Another is to identify any red flags concerning each of the designs through the respondents’ verbatims so that I might iterate my way to success. The point is to use the input (and in this case with an “n” of 43, very limited, but highly knowledgeable and professional, input) to aid, not replace judgment.

While I will direct some minor changes based upon input I received, I'm choosing to go with the red to green bolt on dark blue background. It is bold and I expect it will grab attention. Moreover, it communicates what is in store for the marketer who reads and applies the learning from the book. S/he has the ability to positively impact performance by avoiding critical marketing errors and implementing smart marketing. Additionally, I believe I can use the lightning bolt, sales graph symbol for promotional purposes. Finally, I hope to write follow-up books and/or articles on the subject of this book and the lightning bolt will serve as a symbol to tie them together.

So, here is the winning design, before any further changes:



I hope you will read it when it comes available (Fall 2019).

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