



Top Ten Marketing Ideas to Consider in 2008

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Few marketing programs completely fulfil one's hopes. In the New Year, marketers should avoid over-hyped opportunities to focus on measuring success by one satisfied customer at a time. Here are the key ideas you should consider.

Time to Green.

A 'green' plan is no longer a luxury. Every day, another venerable brand commits to a sustainable future. While there is much "green washing" rating services like B Corporation will set the standards that will have major corporations fighting to prove their green. As GE announces billions in green related sales and BP fends off bad eco-press, you may find a new seat in the boardroom, the CGO (Chief Green Officer).

The Great Outdoors

This year's great surprise was the rebound of out-of-home advertising, which grew faster than any channel except the internet. Outdoor reinvented itself as a technology-rich means of engaging, entertaining and educating commuters. Mini Cooper tested RFID activated billboards with personalised messages aimed at drivers-by, a customised approach that linked "old" (outdoor) with "new" (online), transforming an integrated media platform into a cult building club.

"Narrowcasting" video networks continue to sprout, enabling marketers to put their message in front of selective targets—from health clubbers and deli shoppers (captive shoppers), to movie goers (ideaCast), pet owners (SeeSaw Networks), and elevator riders (Captive Network). Innovations like these will drive out-of-home to new heights.

Get Game

Gaming now permeates society, creating fresh ways for marketers to connect. Millions of non-golfers are swinging virtual clubs as Nintendo's Wii transformed video games. Senior Citizen Centres bought Wii's to entertain guests and connect with grandkids. MTV invested \$500 million in online games, on top of the millions it spent for AddictingGames. Even B-to-B marketers will be smart to give gaming a fresh look while blending in messaging, training or recruiting.

Mobile—I Can Hear You Know

This may be the year mobile deserves a closer look and listen as tech improvements create new opportunities. Bluetooth-enabled phones have made it easier for marketers to provide contextually relevant information. For example, the Air Force set up blue tooth transmitters at racetracks to reach potential recruits. Apple's iPhone partnered with Google and Yahoo to enable ad supported programming. Cellfire enlisted a million people to receive coupons for everything from burgers to videos. Mobile marketing can deliver highly personalised, and useful information when and where needed. As long as marketers don't spam, mobile marketing may be the missing link in personalized communications.

Join the Club

Wise marketers will capitalize on the growing appeal of social networks. Besides the Goliaths MySpace and Facebook, social networks exist in niches from teens (Pizco and Tagged) to seniors (Eons) to photographers (Flickr) to do-gooders (AllDayBufet) B-to-B (LinkedIn & Plaxo) to gamblers (BetsGoWild) to local clubs (MeetUp). Chase's partnership with Facebook has helped make their "+1" credit card the card of choice among college students. Marketers will be smart to create a social network, or take an existing one and make it physical. (Second Life held its first online convention in



2007).

Rise of the Widgets

Mini-software applications, “Widgets” provide unprecedented access to hard-to-reach targets, as Facebook and MySpace can attest. According to ComScore, 220+ million folks use widgets last May. iLike, which allows Facebook users to share iTunes playlists, grew over 10 million users in 10 months. Slide, which creates slideshows and embeds them in social network homepages, claims to be the largest personal media network in the world, reaching 120 million viewers monthly. That’s but the beginning of the widget avalanche.

Roll Video

With 70+% broadband penetration, streaming video is a must marketing tool. eMarketer reports 123 million Americans watch a video monthly; three quarters tell a friend. Whether a B-to-B or B-to-C marketer, video is an enormous opportunity to engage, educate and entertain, the three new “Es” of successful marketing. Lots of brands are producing instructional videos to help customers install or use their product or service. Others create pure entertainment, hoping to build brand affinity or drive traffic. But the ubiquity of video is not without challenges. With over 7 million hours of video online, cutting through requires quality story telling and judicious editing.

From Behavioural to Contextual

Marketers will add behavioural targeting to contextual “search efforts. AOL believes in the future of behavioural targeting, having spent \$275 million for Tacoda systems, which claims to reach 120 million people in 31 discrete audience segments monthly. eMarketer predicted behavioural targeting will increase ten fold over the next five years, growing from \$350 million to \$3.8 billion ad spend. A test we ran for Panasonic yielded 50% more imminent buyers of a particular consumer electronics product, making it far and away better than a simple search buy.

Focus on the Experience

The need to focus on integrated marketing approaches isn’t news. But what will be news is how brand experiences move to the top of the integration food chain, becoming the driving force of communications. Once upon a time, events and online initiatives were treated as “below the line” after thoughts. Increasingly marketers realise that interactive brand experiences can be far more effective than advertising and should be the starting point of a customer conversion.

Marketing as Service

For years, marketers were more concerned with what they said, rather than what their target heard, resulting in endless monologues. Marketers who continually support their customers through the course of life, providing value in each communication, will score big in 2008. The value exchange can take many forms, but only if the marketer understands the needs and aspirations of its target and commits to a genuine dialogue at every point of contact. The HSBC BankCab, which provides free rides to HSBC customers in New York City, is one example of marketing as service, transforming customers into brand evangelists with every ride. Marketers who treat marketing as a service and deliver real value to customers and prospects alike will undoubtedly triumph in 2008.