



Marketing Messages

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Marketing on the internet is the new prime time

The internet as a medium for marketing promised to revolutionize the way we reach customers. After some initial missteps, largely caused by applying the old rules to a new game, we have emerged into an exciting era of possibilities. What seemed a futuristic forecast at best only a short time ago is now coming to fruition.

Where the advertiser had full control with traditional media, consumers now interact with content. It's now all about choice and control. And to be chosen, you must be innovative and interactive. "The internet is the new primetime," says **Hunter Madsen, Marketing Director for Yahoo Canada**. "The internet represents 20% of weekly media usage, but marketers currently spend only 6% of their ad budget on it." This imbalance is likely to change as marketers discover new ways to utilize the medium. A recent **PricewaterhouseCoopers** report, *How to Capitalize on Lifestyle Advertising in a Customer-Centric World*, observes "Convergence has blurred the lines between content, advertising, distributor and consumer." They advocate lifestyle advertising that allows advertisers to respond to consumer feedback in an interactive way through continuous dialogue. Personalized, participatory, socially interactive, relevant and trustworthy are the signatures of effectiveness.

When Dove launched the **Dove Self-Esteem Fund** in Canada in 2005, their goal was to improve women's body image by educating girls on a wider definition of beauty. To build awareness, they created a TV commercial, "Little girls" which featured images of young girls with captions such as "thinks she's fat" and "hates her freckles". They placed the spots on TV shows like *Nip Tuck* and *America's Top Model* to provoke discussion. The campaign generated a lot of talk and free media coverage. Great campaign by the old rules, but flash forward to the fall of 2006 and enter the internet application. Dove filmed a digital commercial called "Evolution", featuring a fast forward view of makeup and touchup techniques that turn the girl next door into a billboard model. The clip illustrates the impossible ideal that the beauty industry has created. This time the spot was released on Dove's website and loaded on the shared content forum, YouTube. In one month it received 2.3 million hits and was picked up on US talk shows, CNN, Fox, Entertainment Tonight and Good Morning America. They estimate to have received over \$50 million in free media. Strategic online placement was used rather than TV media placement. Viewers were pulled through viral word of mouth rather than having the message pushed at them during TV viewing. An accurate measure of views was achieved rather than as estimate of TV show viewers. And finally, online placement was free and the persuasive value of the media endorsement was priceless.

Yahoo has pioneered something they call Behavior marketing. By tracking demographics, geography, context and behaviour of a Yahoo web search user, they can match advertisers ads with individuals whose recent behaviours online suggest that those brands might be relevant to the person at this time. The service brings classic direct marketing tactics to an online application. Yahoo creates models by gathering behaviour data anonymously. Each profile indicates an area of product relevance on a particular day. They've determined an average purchase cycle for each product category and tied this into the length of time ads are displayed. Based on the frequency of searches, time spent browsing and the type of material viewed, they further profile users as "engagers" or "shoppers." Advertisers pay on a cost per click basis, so it's not only targeted, but also measurable. Although Yahoo declines figures, they do say revenues grew 450% last year. **Hunter Madsen**, Marketing Director Yahoo Canada also notes, "Most fortune 500 companies are using or testing our system in the US. A travel company on our site which through traditional means had a \$42 per customer acquisition cost, now tracks at \$7 per customer." This system arrived in the US in 2006. Watch for it in Canada in the next 18 months.

The **Vancouver East Cultural Centre** conducts a regular email campaign to promote each show to past attendees. Built as an attractive html graphic template, they are able to track who opens it, time spent, responses to offers and clicks to their website. "We include filmed audience feedback from opening night to promote short run shows where reviews often publish after closing", says **Heather Redfern, Executive Director**. This is a brilliant application. Their internet based campaigns have replaced large mail outs of past. It's targeted, cheaper, and arguably more effective.

The recurring theme seems to be: engage your customer, know your audience, customize, measure and track. The winners are those positioned to influence conversations around their brand. Welcome to the new game.

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