

How To Crash

The Consumer-Controlled Party

And Not Get Thrown Out...

Huh? You mean you're not invited? Someone's obviously playing a joke on you right? Or perhaps the invite got lost in the mail? Something's not adding up, cause consumers love your brand don't they? Everyone loves the way that you continuously interrupt their days and nights telling them how much they need you. They just adore the way you bombard them with on-the-hour reminders of how great you are. Who wouldn't want to hang out with you? You sound like a great friend. And the way you look, damn, you've got style. The bigger your logo gets, the better you look, except when it's illuminated and flashing, can't forget the flashing, then it's better than ever. Well, then it's...it's like super special.

As you and your co-workers finally come to grips with the fact that you're no longer wearing the pants in the relationship with your consumer, you'll first want to understand how this constantly evolving world of consumer-generated content operates. Come on, we've all been there. Plastering our whiteboards with what we believe to be groundbreaking thinking on how to involve our brands in the lives of our consumers. We spit out a few big ideas, put them through our various brand filters, and then light the fuse and bring the concept to life outside our office walls. Except lately, our old pick up lines aren't connecting with our new school consumer.

Listen up folks, the consumer-controlled revolution is already in mid-stride. Time to change your ways, cause it's their world now. The consumer's the new boss on the block. Brands are like the kid at the park with potential, but they're rarely picked to play in the big game. They can only hope consumers will ask them to be on their team. And if they're oh so lucky and play it cool, they'll get the opportunity to actually suit up and play (by the consumer's rules of course). So brands can either recognize this and accept their new role (some may need to audition) in today's hyper-competitive economy or they can continue to throw out yesterday's tactics and become ineffective, irrelevant, and virtually unrecognizable.



Rise of Techreation

Media and brand consumption has not only been transformed, but it's been outright taken over by digital technology. 'User-generated content' has gone from being a hot, industry buzz term to regular go-to, and actionable jargon in every brand marketer's vocabulary. Just look at the industry descriptors that user-generated content has spawned – blogging, social networking, podcasting, and virtual gaming. Well, it's time to study up and apply your learnings, because this movement's only gaining speed and a more passionate following.

As consumers spend more and more time controlling, uploading, downloading, filming, recording, and sharing their own personal experiences with products, services, and brands, we marketers must figure out how we can insert ourselves in this creator's life in a relevant and credible way. Brands have two choices really: 1) They can continue to shout at consumers through traditional media vehicles and hope that's enough to inspire them to take action; or 2) They can embrace the consumer's desire to create, control, and share and empower them with simple creation tools that allow them to self-express...over and over and over.

Ah yes, self-express. That sure brings back memories. It seems the words 'self-expression' and 'experiential' were being used in every agency pitch deck a few years back. Who are we kidding, they're still being used. But the bigger issue is how do these concepts relate and connect to the discriminating consumer of today?

Self-Expression: Doting the "I"

Apple certainly didn't begin the macro trend of self-expression, but they sure kicked it into high gear. They're one of the few companies that recognized a movement about to explode. No, self-expression doesn't stop at picking out the color of your computer

or putting jewels on your PDA or cell phone. Those are just the baby steps leading up to the bigger insight. When Apple re-branded their company with their suite of "I" gadgets and software (I-Mac, I-Book, I-Pod, I-Tunes, I-Movie, etc.) they were making a huge statement. It's no longer about "we" the brand, it's about "I", the individual consumer.

Again, Apple was not the first to embrace this idea, but let's just say they took the concept of "consumers wanting and having it their way" and ran with it (okay, so maybe that was coined by Burger Royalty). Anyway, Apple has always been about creation and innovation, so they were the perfect company to run with the baton for the consumer-controlled economy. And it's not just because they sell products that inspire creativity, but it's because they've established an unmatched credibility with their core consumer over the years by staying true to themselves. We'll address the critical issue of authenticity a bit later, as it's always been an issue for brands, but it's even more of an issue in today's business climate.

So while Apple has been using their smarts to attract a new following of consumers (and flip the entertainment industry on its head in the process), many other brands are following suit and turning their attention towards the needs of their increasingly more influential consumers. When McDonald's switches from *We Love To See You Smile* to *I'm Lovin' It*, this isn't just a coincidence. Anyhow, the point of this paper is not to educate you on popular fast food slogans, it's to show you how the consumer has evolved, how brands have reacted, and highlight ways in which you can reach and inspire consumers to interact with your brand, and become the passionate evangelists you set out to cultivate each and every day.



Consumer as Creator

If one thing's for sure, one size definitely doesn't fit all. It never has. Consumers have always wanted to feel like individuals. Us marketers love to break them down into little sound bites made up of demographics and psychographics, but they're much more than that. They're truly unique and one-of-a-kind creatures. For years, consumers have wanted to unleash their creator and interact with brands on a whole new level, but there weren't always adequate tools in place to enable a true, two-way exchange between brand and consumer.

So how can you achieve the balance of connecting with your highly demanding consumer, while building your brand at the same time? By offering promotional programs and tools that let consumers show off their personality (or at least give them the illusion of showing it off) and allowing them to impress others with their abilities and smarts.

This 'consumer as creator' movement has recently led to a number of high-profile, brand success stories, from: 1) Consumers designing their own sneakers (Nike ID – www.nikeid.com); to 2) Letting consumers create their own brand communications (whether that's ads for Converse – www.conversegallery.com or labels for Jones Soda – www.jonessoda.com); to 3) Inviting consumers to go beyond the old school 'letter to the editor' way of voicing their opinion to being able to stretch and shape products and services through collaborating directly with the brand (Procter and Gamble's interactive website www.vocalpoint.com works with influential mothers to help the company develop products and services that moms really care about).

Playing vs. Spectating

While the four "Ps" of business (product, place, price, promotion) have remained relatively unchanged, the

meteoric rise of the new creator consumer has surfaced another "P": *participation*. What used to be a passive one-way conversation between brands and consumers, has now turned into a mandatory active relationship. You can no longer view your consumer as merely a spectator. They're smart individuals with their own thoughts, ideas, philosophies, and needs. Listen and learn people. Connect with this new eager participant by providing them with improved ways to *contribute* as well as *consume*.

The best and the brightest brands and marketers have always gotten this, but one can also take a cue from one of the biggest. Cammie Dunaway, CMO at Yahoo! recently told the audience at the Association of National Advertisers Conference that her job as a marketing executive is not to bang out intrusive communications with annoying yodeling but rather, to empower Yahoo! users to create messages and communities that draw in other users and increase the time spent with Yahoo! by existing consumers. "I call it participation marketing. Allow them to help you shape the brand experience. Content is no longer something you push out. Content is an invitation to engage with your brand."

Controlling the Experience

So we've talked about the consumer's desire to self-express, their love for the new role as creator, and the importance of being seen as a participant and contributor. Now, let's take it one step further, and address the idea of giving them total control by positioning their hands at 10 and 2 on the steering wheel. As the highly-addictive Tivo or the explosion of the blogosphere have taught us, consumers want more freedom and they want to be able to better control and soak up their experiential world.



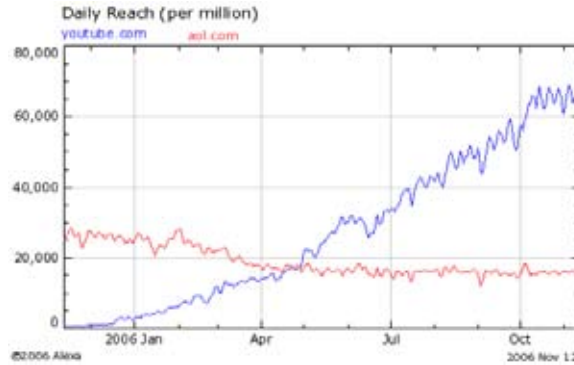
Cont'd **Controlling the Experience**

Digital technology has flat out altered how both media and brands are being controlled and consumed. Nowadays, any consumer with basic knowledge of computers, video, or still photography, can create and share their works of art, opinions, and personality with the world. Because of the increased availability in photo-generating, movie-making, and voice-recording programs, consumers are now able to create what typically takes major production studio months to produce, film, edit, and print.

Big Media Meet The New Guard

As we've witnessed in the last year, user-generated content sites have taken a massive bite out of big media. Why? They allow consumers to easily create, control, and share their content. Put simply, big media has failed to keep up with the pace of change in consumer behavior. Several upstart companies have recently succeeded where the big guys have floundered, by allowing consumers to experience the Internet on their own terms. Hmmm. It's no secret that failure to innovate (and listen to your consumer) will put the death grip on your company and sometimes even take down entire industries. We won't mention names.

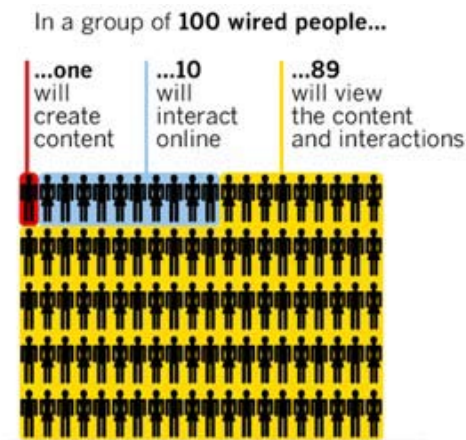
Enabling self-expression and the simple sharing of video clips, has lead YouTube to be one of the most visited sites on the Web, out performing scores of heavily-funded big media initiatives and years of R & D at competitors like Yahoo!, FOX, Viacom, and Microsoft. If something noteworthy goes down, you can bet a clip of it will be up on YouTube in a matter of minutes. That's instant gratification at your fingertips and big reason why they were just acquired for \$1.65 billion in stock.



Reaching close to 50 million blogs, the opportunity for users to share their opinions, thoughts, and lives has generated a readership that dwarfs traditional print media corporations readership, both offline and online.

Flickr's searchable database of photos sparked a wave of user-generated content that covers virtually every place, topic, and event, in a way that news services and professional photo services can't. Flickr has become one of the web's most trafficked sites as photojournalism has been taken over by citizen journalists.

By empowering users to create and share their personalized content, user-generated media services have become the poster children for growth in the new economy.



Source: Business Week; indata, 08/06; Bradley Horowitz, Yahoo



The Good. The Bad. The WTF?

While this new blank canvas for marketers has inspired some really great thinking and breakthrough concepts when it comes to motivating this new breed of consumer, it's also hit some noteworthy potholes along the way.

For years brands would do anything to have their logo or product inserted into any piece of entertaining content; be it a paid product placement in a television show, a film, or stuffed inside a celebrity goody bag. However, now they're getting exposure without even paying the piper. In the following sections we'll highlight just a few examples of corporations showing inexperience with dealing with this emerging phenomenon.

As you'll learn, a big key to brand success in this fickle universe is not limiting your aim to only getting your customers involved at a tactical level. Strive to move beyond traditional advertising and promotions, even into product development, virtual worlds, and customer feedback forums.

Creative Independence

As consumers become even more empowered, informed, and opinionated, and even more comfortable with 'having it their way', they will begin to have total influence and control over a company's product offering. Case in point, Current.TV. If you're not familiar with Al Gore's new, non-traditional television network, you may want to put it at the top of your to-do list.

Current is handcrafted for today's consumer. The entire network is focused on moving the viewer from spectator to participant by supplying them with all of the necessary tools they need to self-express, control, and share. If Tivo lets you control network programming, Current takes it one step further and lets you create the programming. Instead of calling it user-generated

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At North Venture Partners, we've been waist deep in the consumer-generated content kingdom ever since it began bubbling up. Sure, we've witnessed our share of over-hyped and underwhelming product offerings, but we've also been fortunate enough to work with some of what we believe to be some cool emerging tools and toys of tomorrow. Here's a snapshot of a few ambitious newbies that we feel provide value and interesting opportunities for brands and consumers alike.

Socialize It

So you know your audience lives online. You know that running a banner ad campaign alone won't create meaningful impact with or compel your consumer. You've already built a MySpace page for your brand, but realized that wasn't going to amount to anything other than being a category 'me too'. So what else can you do?

Perhaps the bigger opportunity lies with brands sponsoring existing conversations or creating their own communities. If you've followed the Web 2.0 inferno, you know that 'Social Search' is the sexy saying du jour. With too much information on the Internet, consumers want smarter search tools that let them discover, connect and socialize with expert knowledge, desired topics, and quality information.

Consumers are now dating a whole new slew of 2.0 sites (i.e. Yelp, Kaboodle, Eurekster, StumbleUpon) to satisfy their hunger for a more personal and relevant search experience. However, even with hundreds of start ups focused exclusively on the search, discover, and share user behaviors, very few products have been able to develop the right mix of bells and whistles to attract both consumers and brands into the same ring so they can have healthy dialogue.

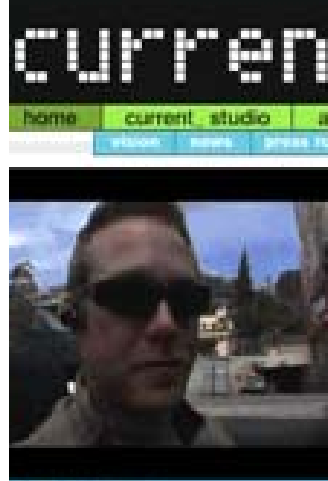


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Cont'd **Creative Independence**

content, they instead call it viewer-created content or VC2. Right now, VC2 makes up about a third of the channel and is rapidly growing. We could be witnessing the next citizen journalism effort that will take a bite out of big media.

A few brands have already recognized the potential for Current to reach and engage their consumers. T-Mobile, Toyota, Sony, and Mountain Dew have all signed on to run a “you create the ad” contest. Not the most inventive promo, but at least they’re presenting the opportunity for both fame and fortune (\$1,000 if the ad runs on Current and up to \$50,000 if the ad runs outside of the Current portal).

As you read the creative briefs that are posted on Current’s site, you can’t help think of those threatened agency creatives. What will happen when the client begins to get better creative from their consumer than the agency?

Tip: Time to fill that whiteboard with game-changing thinking on how you can get involved in this consumer-generated world, because your brands are getting a taste of what creative genius exists beyond the walls of your slick conference room.

Losing Control

Earlier this year, Coca-Cola and Mentos were mashed up in a consumer-generated video that showed what happened when you mix the two products together (hint: a really cool explosion). While this video caught the viral wave, was viewed more than 2.5 million times on www.revver.com, and received unbelievable press, both brands reacted in very different ways.

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FatVine (www.fatvine.com) is one exception. They’ve built their entire concept around the thought of ‘connective wisdom’. Tapping into the insight that social intelligence is more preferred than computer-generated intelligence. People favor word-of-mouth especially when it comes from someone inside their personal and trusted network. FatVine enables consumers to “Grow Their Know”; grow their knowledge about certain topics as well as grow their own personal Rolodex of experts. For you Web nerds, think Linked In meets Del.icio.us.



For brands and agencies, FatVine gives them the opportunity to get involved and connect with their consumer in a number of ways: 1) They can advertise on the site through traditional methods; 2) They can sponsor existing conversations on relevant topics (example: Toyota Prius could sponsor the hybrid car forum); or 3) They can build their own branded community where consumers can talk to each other in a comfortable, non-controlled environment.



Cont'd **Losing Control**

Almost immediately after the video began to generate huge buzz, Mentos chose to sponsor the original video. Coke, however, issued a very corporate-sounding statement saying it hoped “people want to drink Diet Coke more than try experiments with it.”

But after realizing they were missing out on a huge opportunity, Coca-Cola made a last-ditched attempt to ride the cultural wave and re-launch www.coca-cola.com as a user-generated site. Predictably, consumers called bullshit. One blogger angrily wrote, “Seems that Coke loves the buzz from the Mentos-Coke deal after all, as long as they are controlling how it occurs!”

Hopefully lesson learned in Coke’s case. Consumers want to express themselves without you (the brand) dictating how they do it. Instead, take advantage of situations like this and use it as an opportunity to gain a better understanding of your consumer.

Walk Your Talk

As brands try to be hip through association and forge connections with various pop-culture areas, the authenticity of those associations become very important. Toyota Scion’s VP of Marketing Jim Farley gets this, “I think the most important thing for us is to be credible, he says. “Just talking to consumers, they don’t believe a damn thing we say anymore. And I mean that in a positive way. They’re really, really smart.”

However, Scion which has done an amazing job at connecting with and being accepted into urban culture, hip-hop’s inner-circle, may have just lost some of that street cred it worked so hard at establishing. Their latest hip-hop promotion, NEXT UP, an unsigned emcee search, basically imploded when Scion and it’s marketing partner decided to disqualify an emcee

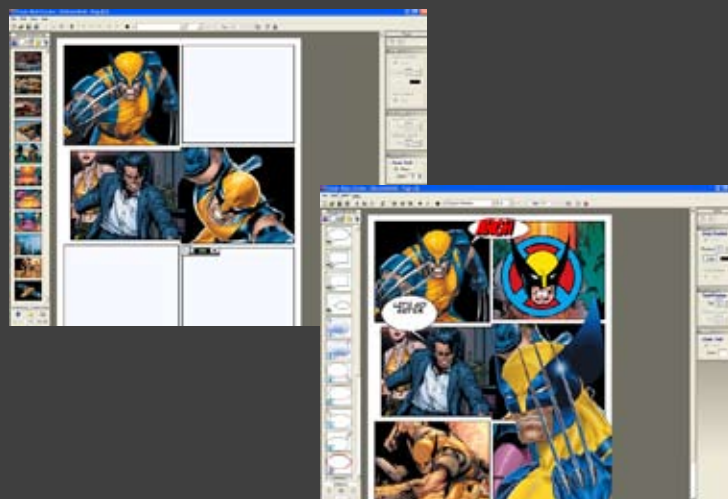
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Remember, the more you listen to your consumer, the more you know what they want. The more you know what they want, the better you’ll be equipped to develop products, services, and promotional programs that keep them happy and motivated. But be careful, sites like FatVine should not be treated as one off tactics. Don’t just shake the consumer’s hand and say “nice to meet you”, strike up a conversation and develop a relationship. You know, become friends.

Fill In The Bubbles

Remember the old Chinese Proverb ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’, meaning complex stories are more easily told with a picture than they are with a written description? What would happen if you flipped that statement’s definition on its head and allowed the words to explain the picture?

Well, then you would have Planetwide Game’s Comic Book Creator (www.mycomicbookcreator.com). Their new software moves the user from spectator to participant, by allowing them to assemble their very own comic books by dragging and dropping text images (i.e. fill in thought bubbles), into a template.





BEFORE



AFTER



Cont'd **Walk Your Talk**

because of his politically-charged lyrics about President Bush and the war.

The HoustonSoReal blog summed up the feelings of the hip-hop community best when they wrote, "Scion as a company has garnered a lot of praise and has also taken a lot of heat over the past couple of years for their co-opting of hip-hop music and culture to sell their cars. Does this action prove the nay sayers right? Find out for yourself. We feel as though Scion and Inform Ventures need to be taken to task for their decision. If they are so down with the streets and hip-hop culture then why are they trying to censor one of its strongest voices?"

Connect Through Community

As much as consumers desire to create their own works, they're also willing to collaborate with a brand if they're spoken to an authentic and straightforward manner. For all of the controversy surrounding the corporate leadership at Hewlett-Packard in the past year, they still managed to pull off one of the better, feel good promotional efforts of 2006.

HP set up camp in New Orleans and with the help of volunteers, scanned, downloaded, restored and reprinted photographs from hundreds of families whose photos were damaged by Hurricane Katrina. They often were able to create photographs that were larger and of higher quality than the originals. The families received a CD of their photos, and credits on HP's online photofinishing service Snapfish, where they were able to share, print, and create keepsakes and gifts from their photos. This is a great example of a company thinking creatively, collaboratively, and authentically about their consumer.

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As more and more brands and agencies look for innovative ways to engage their new school consumer, it's experiential products like this that should be acting as brainstorm fuel at your next marketing powwow: it checks both the consumer box and the one for moving the brand equity needle.

What originally was aimed at individual players of online games as a way to give them a method for crafting original stories based on their in-game character and plotlines, has now turned into an exciting branded entertainment tool. Paramount recently licensed the software to create an interactive experience for their moviegoers, so they could put together their very own *Nacho Libre* comic. In addition, online games publisher Sony Online Entertainment and the National Geographic Society have signed on to license their own versions of the software.



Marketers obviously see it as a ticket for consumers to interact with their brands in a compelling way; by putting the creative power in the hands of their users and fans. As the Paramount executive put it, "It inspires the creators themselves to share their works. A benefit of the Comic Book Creator software is we can enable people of all ages to actively participate versus having a passive experience with the content".



Your World. Your Imagination.



Let's Get Virtual

Remember when creating an alternate online personality meant adding an element of mystery to your screen name or email address? Well, that's so yesterday's news. New virtual worlds, like Second Life, There.com, and Habbo Hotel, have taken the idea of self-expression and super-sized it. These sites enable their users to create and dress up their own avatar (online alter-ego) and let them interact (text, chat, audio message, and yes, even have sex) with other avatars. These avatars actually shop at hipster fashion boutiques, drive the latest cars, and have their fingers on the pulse of the music scene. Funny, but that sounds remarkably similar to one of those alpha influencers that brands typically pay lots of money to reach and attempt to persuade...

To no surprise, marketing and entertainment executives are intrigued by the possibilities these video-game-like virtual worlds offer up in terms of reaching and interacting with their influencer target. As consumers spend more time and money online instead of offline (namely at concerts, movies, and shopping malls), marketers see the virtual world as a great testing ground for seeding and promoting new products. American Apparel was one of the first brands to set up a store in the virtual universe. On Second Life, they're using their storefront to sell t-shirts and virtually seed their new denim line before its real world launch (or RW as people in the virtual world call it). They currently offer virtual shoppers who buy virtual clothes a 15% discount off the same items in the RW.

Brands from Coke to Toyota to MTV are now deeply involved in this space and more are following with their own marketing and media dollars. Starwood Hotels plans to open a virtual loft-style hotel on Second Life where avatars can check in a year before the company builds the real thing in the RW.

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Agency execs should be salivating, as the promotional applications for this software (which they offer as a white-label license) are endless. If you're looking to offer your consumers a value-add to stimulate trial or repeat purchase, Comic Book Creator works equally well with a QSR brand as it does with a CPG brand as it does with a new movie release.

Unfortunately for Paramount, they decided to follow a re-occurring trend in this consumer-generated world when they didn't allow the software users to include their words or text in their *Nacho Libre* comics. Uh oh. How do you expect to bring all of the creators out into the open if you don't allow them to create their way? A Paramount executive explained, "If the product is themed *Nacho Libre*," she said, "it should maintain the core of the brand. Otherwise it would be a generic brand not associated with the movie."

Perhaps we should overnight them a copy of this whitepaper so they don't blow their next opportunity at creating something truly viral? Screw that, we'll snag some screen shots from the *Nacho Libre* DVD and have Jack Black tell him in ~~his own~~ our words! ■





Con'd **Let's Get Virtual**

"When you're going after young trendsetters, you have to stay on the cutting edge," said Adrian Si, interactive-marketing manager for Scion. "We did MySpace about two years ago, but...I think it's a little too mainstream now."

Virtual worlds have existed since the mid-90s in the form of multiplayer online games, but such games offered little in the way of socializing and self-expression. According to Yankee Group, in-game advertising revenue in the US is expected to rise from \$186 million in 2005 to \$875 million in 2009.

Are we witnessing the next generation in guerilla marketing? Perhaps, I mean how many times can brands go back to the same influencer network to seed their beverage, bubble gum, or action flick? If you're buying the hype, just make sure you do your research before jumping in with both feet. It's still early in this space and you have to learn the ropes on how this virtual culture behaves. Lastly, don't fall under the enticing spell of just accumulating dollar signs for your brand. Before you'll be able to produce meaningful revenue from the virtual world, you'll have to first demonstrate to these digital tastemakers that you know how to create a meaningful experience.

Milli Vanilli Part 2.0

If there's one rule for marketers to follow as they try to forge connections through the blogosphere, it's be real or pay the consequences. Unfortunately, companies want so badly for their products to be accepted and evangelized by the cool kids on the block, that they will often dip their feet into the dangerous waters of unleashing dishonest, poser tactics. Creating and publishing "faux consumer-generated content" is a slippery slope folks, as it often results in producing

more damage than diamonds. This has been especially true in the entertainment industry.

After Warner Records sent out MP3s to indie music blogs asking them to promote their band Secret Machines (genuine), they then decided to follow up by having hired guns post fake fan comments on those same blogs endorsing the band (dishonest). It didn't take long for them to get ID'd and then openly bashed by the blog police, causing further hurt to Warner's credibility. "Let's try this hip new underground music source, but we'd better rig the game in case they don't respond the way we want them to", fired off one irked blogger.

NBC got the smack down when they tried to promote their new series *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip* by trying to mimic DeFamer, a heavily trafficked Hollywood gossip blog. NBC even went so far as to call their parody DeFaker and hired a gossip blogger to dish about the show's characters. The idea had some promise, but the execution was miserable. The site's comment section quickly became a feeding ground for bashers of both the forced attempt at viral marketing and the show (NBC pulled down the blog without comment). DeFamer's editor even responded with this gem, "...we wish the folks at NBC the best of luck with their continuing online marketing endeavors on behalf of Studio 60, which we're told include a series of cutting-edge YouTube videos starring a Lonelygirl15 look-a-like who struggles to find a way to tell Aaron Sorkin (Studio 60's creator) that she's only interested in him as a friend."

It's pretty simple really. If you want to generate positive buzz and stimulate interaction in the online space, you can't try to blatantly trick your consumer. After all, they've got sharp ad radar. And sooner or later they'll expose you as a nothing but a badly intentioned lip-syncer.



So Now What?

Remember when the bulk of consumers only seemed to care about creating around certain occasions? Like creating their own Halloween costume (sometimes featuring your brand), their own Holiday cards, or making a snowman with a carrot nose. Apparently their desire and drive to create has always been there, but the easy-to-use tools, toys, and technologies were not. Well, today's consumer is getting increasingly more comfortable in their new role as creator. So you better think up ways to hand over even more tools, more big ideas, more occasions, and more power. But don't try to crash this consumer-controlled party empty handed, cause this savvy consumer can smell an uninvited and unworthy guest from a mile away.

The Essential 6

1. Change Your View

It's time to view your consumer as both customer and collaborator. Give them tools to create and share. Give them the option to work on their own or right alongside you.

2. Don't Be Afraid.

Hey, if you're a tad worried and feel a little out of your comfort zone, that's probably a good thing. Embrace the fear. The only way you learn to take risks is by taking them.

3. Be Authentic.

Don't hand over the keys to the kingdom and then take them back the minute your car hits a bump in the road. Consumers will cry foul on those that pose.

4. Pave Your Own Path.

Whatever you do, don't become another 'me too' brand. Why did you get into the marketing profession

in the first place? Strive to create a new experience or a 'never been done before' done promotional program.

5. Listen & Learn.

Let them know their opinion matters. Don't fill their mouths with what you want to hear. Learn from what they're saying and deliver the goods to them (COD is unacceptable, pick up the postage on this one).

6. Don't Date. Commit Dammit.

This is a courtship. You can't just go out on one or two dates with your consumer and expect them to fall for you. You'll have to earn some respect through repeated action before you can win them over. ■

If you're planning to launch or re-launch a consumer-facing product, please feel free to contact a North Partner and we'll set up some time to talk shop. We'll tip you off to what seems to be working in this consumer-generated world and of course, clue you in to those misfires that have recently made the consumer black list.

The best way to get a hold of a North Partner is by sending a short email introduction to us at info@northvp.com.

North Venture Partners is a Los Angeles and San Francisco based strategic consulting and investment firm that works with early-stage lifestyle, entertainment, and technology ventures.

The North team includes a diverse collection of venture development, financial advisory, and brand marketing change agents: we work with early stage ventures to deliver the planning and execution needed to connect with consumers and ultimately with investors.

