Youth Trends and Web Engagement

A Non-Higher Ed Perspective on Reaching Youth

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Viral and Social Marketing Horror Stories
Molson Canadian

- Created Facebook Ads/Groups/Pages
- They encouraged students to share pictures of themselves using Molson Canadian products (alcohol)
- A contest was created for the best party photos (aka binge drinking).
- “Show everyone how you and your crew get the party started!” Win a spring break trip!
Molson Canadian

- How long before the first streaking beer bong photo showed up?

- Don’t hold a college photo contest if you’re a brewery.

- Don’t promote irresponsible drinking.

- Molson needed to tread more lightly when trying to catch their users’ attention, especially when using an unfamiliar medium.

- Could this have been done better?
Target Rounders

- Target Facebook group

- Rounders can earn points for talking about how cool Target is.

- “Your mission: try not to let on in the Facebook group that you are a Rounder. We love your enthusiasm for the Rounders, and I know it can be hard not to want to sing it from the mountaintops (and the shower, and on the bus...). However, we want to get other members of the Facebook group excited about Target, too! And we don’t want the Rounders program to steal the show from the real star here: Target and Target’s rockin’ Facebook group! So keep it like a secret!”
Target Rounders

• The program was outed by a student at The University of Georgia, and quickly picked up by bloggers.

• This is all fake manufactured buzz.

• If you’re not being honest, it can blow up in your face very quickly (it did for Target) and hurt your brand.

• Genuine buzz will come on its own by being honest and open with your customers and true about your brand.
Wal-Marting Across America

- www.WalMartingAcrossAmerica.com

- A “family” blog from Jim and Laura, as they hit the road in their RV (Wally One), going from Wal-Mart to Wal-Mart across the country posting as they go.

- They would visit with employees and customers as they stopped in Wal-Mart parking lots for the night.

- All blog posts were upbeat about how everyone just loved working for, and shopping at, Wal-Mart.
Wal-Marting Across America

Nicole Nominates Stephan for Boss of the Year

Dallas, TX — Nicole Brown is quick to praise her manager, Stephan Gordon, for making her working environment so positive. The feeling is mutual as Stephan takes time out from his round-the-clock rush during inventory to sing her praises as well, here in the Montfort Drive Walmart Supercenter.

Dallas, TX — Kearra Edwards has been a Cashier Associate at the Montfort Drive in Dallas, Texas since the store opened in January 2006. Here she is going the extra mile to place bags in a customer's cart.
Wal-Marting Across America

- Very upbeat blog - set off red flags
- Built around a lie with a deceptive backstory
- Edelman Marketing Firm:
  “For the past several days, I have been listening to the blogging community discuss the cross-country tour that Edelman designed for Working Families for Wal-Mart. I want to acknowledge our error in failing to be transparent about the identity of the two bloggers from the outset. This is 100% our responsibility and our error; not the client’s.”
All I Want for Xmas is a PSP

- Sony created a blog about “Charlie and Jeremy” who wanted a PSP for Christmas.

- i (charlie) have a psp. my friend jeremy does not. but he wants one this year for xmas. so we started clowning with sum not-so-subtle hints to j's parents that a psp would be teh perfect gift. we created this site to spread the luv to those like j who want a psp! consider us your own personal psp hype machine, here to help you wage a holiday assault on ur parents, girl, granny, boss – whoever – so they know what you really want. we’ll let you know how it works for us. pls return the favor. more to come, c&j.
All I Want for Xmas is a PSP

I (Charlie) have a PSP. My friend Jeremy does not, but he wants one this year for Xmas.

So we started clowning with sum not-so-subtle hints to J's parents that a PSP would be teh perfect gift. We created this site to spread the luv to those like J who want a PSP!

Consider us your own personal PSP hype machine, here to help you wage a holiday assault on ur parents, girl, Granny, Boss - whoever - so they know what you really want.

We'll let you know how it works for us. Pls return the favor.

More to come,
c&j.

Wednesday, November 29, 2006:

Holiday Hitz Volume 2
All I Want for Xmas is a PSP

- The site was quickly uncovered for what it actually was, and became a laughing-stock.

- Sony issues an apology almost as insincere as the original campaign.

- Busted. Nailed. Snagged. As many of you have figured out (maybe our speech was a little too funky fresh??), Peter isn’t a real hip-hop maven and this site was actually developed by Sony. Guess we were trying to be just a little too clever. From this point forward, we will just stick to making cool products, and use this site to give you nothing but the facts on the PSP.
Chevy Tahoe & The Apprentice

- Chevy and The Apprentice team up to create a campaign based on the show.
- Website visitors could create their own advertisement for the Chevy Tahoe using provided stock video, photos and music clips.
- Enter the contest, and win great prizes!
- Loyal Tahoe users would spread the word about how great the vehicle is.
Chevy Tahoe & The Apprentice

• Unfortunately.. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD6c-C0Z5r4
Chevy Tahoe & The Apprentice

- Not a bad idea in general, but contest entries went live without any sort of screening, and digital graffiti was created.

- Chevy left the videos up (with the exception of vulgar content).

- “A contest of this sort doesn’t come without risks. As we expected, people who are opposed to SUVs for a variety of reasons quickly discovered that they were also welcome to participate. Early on we made the decision that if we were to hold this contest, in which we invite anyone to create an ad, in an open forum, that we would be summarily destroyed in the blogosphere if we censored the ads based on their viewpoint. So, we adopted a position of openness and transparency, and decided that we would welcome the debate.”

- Is this good or bad for the company?
Diet Coke & Mentos

• Drop Mentos into Diet Coke to get a wonderful chemical reaction.

• Internet Phenomenon...

• Thousands of videos and photos of this reaction are all over the internet.

• This went viral on its own.
Mentos & Diet Coke

http://revver.com/video/27335/extreme-diet-coke-mentos-experiments/
Mentos & Diet Coke

- Mentos: “We are tickled pink by it,” says Pete Healy, vice president of marketing for the company’s U.S. division.

- They have embraced the phenomenon as it made its way around the internet.
  - Sponsoring Videos
  - Setting World Records

- Coke: “We would hope people want to drink [Diet Coke] more than try experiments with it,” says Coke spokeswoman Susan McDermott. She adds that the “craziness with Mentos...doesn’t fit with the brand personality” of Diet Coke.

- Coke is telling their community to stop playing with Diet Coke, and trying to lead people to use it on their terms.
Vespa Scooters Blog

• Vespa Scooters created a corporate blog for their company.

• Recruited (unpaid) brand evangelists for writing positions at these blogs.

• Vespa found several very enthusiastic bloggers for their site, then set them loose (with certain guidelines).

• Vespa was able to give their marketing an extra boost by putting customers that truly love their product front and center.
• Vespa forgot about their bloggers!

• Slowly the (volunteer!) bloggers started to turn negative and abandon the blogs.

• Vespa did not support the blogs or provide the support they promised: “They won’t be paid, but will get added exposure for their writing. They’ll also receive access to Vespa and get briefings about new product launches. Vespa may also give them promotional products.”

• Don’t turn your most enthusiastic customers against you.
(more examples)
Starbucks - Free Coffee Promotion

• Starbucks send free coffee coupons to employees in the Southeast

• “Forward to your friends and family!”
Malibu Banana Boat Youtube Contest

• Submit video ads for new product with $25k prize.

• Decent campaign

• http://www.youtube.com/MalibuBanana

• Lack of transparency in judging - said they would take user votes into consideration

• No finalists were given, and users claimed the contest was rigged
Resident Evil T-Virus

- Resident Evil video game release campaign in Europe

- Text message were sent to people’s cell phones with a message referring to the plot of the video game.

  “Outbreak: I’m infecting you with t-virus, my code is ******. Forward this to 60022 to get your own code and chance to win prizes. More at t-virus.co.uk”

- If you weren’t familiar with the game or site, you could confuse this as an actual virus

- This was not an opt-in campaign, anyone could send messages to anyone else
Carlton Beer

- Youtube video

- Crowd of people showing beer bottle

- Went viral very quickly

- The ad was bad bad because you don’t know what the ad was for – no memory of the brand.
Rahodeb (Whole Foods)

• Whole Foods CEO posted on financial forums about Wild Oats being a bad company, hoping their price would go down and they could buy them.

• “Would Whole Foods buy OATS? Almost surely not at current prices…What would they gain? OATS locations are too small.” Rahodeb also said Wild Oats’ management “clearly doesn’t know what it is doing.” The company, he wrote, “has no value and no future.”

• Quickly discovered – used an anagram of wife’s name to post

• Got into trouble with the SEC
Agency.com Subway Campaign

- Created **Going to work for Subway** video

- Agency.com, put together a pitch for subway to try and get the campaign.

- Instead, they were made a laughing stock.

- “When We Roll, We Roll Big!”
How to Avoid Similar Fates

• Don’t lie

• Transparency is important

• Don’t corrupt your audience

• Don’t take advantage of your audience

• Don’t get caught?
Questions?