

The Art of Consideration

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It's all about engagement

Consumers are connected. They spend time evaluating potential purchases in person-to-person, but not necessarily in-person, conversations. They validate thoughts together. When they buy things they talk about what happened. They have robust networks through which they share experiences, forming the basis for the next round of purchases. They *engage* with the brands they like along with the messages that convey their essence.

Yet, the majority of the advertising is “tell” and “push” oriented. Persuasive effort is focused heavily on the awareness and purchase phases of the buying cycle. Consider TV: it's ubiquitous, and therefore a powerful “reach” tool. But it's a one-way channel, a “let *me* tell *you*” approach that can miss contemporary consumers seeking a more participative role in what's new, what works, and what they've got to have. Historically, the mix bias in favor of awareness and purchase is understandable: it used to be difficult if not impossible to join “water-cooler” conversations on any significant, reliable, or *quantifiable* scale. Consideration—occurring between the awareness and purchase--was off-limits. Now with the web, email, instant messenger (think Southwest Airlines' Ding!), mobile phones and SMS, consumers will come to *you* to do *research*. For savvy marketers this opens up “consideration” opportunities in the buying cycle.

Consideration defined

“Consideration” spans the buying-process activities between awareness and purchase, the point where a consumer mentally “tries on the hat” and begins to validate her potential purchase. Because of the connected nature of consumers, awareness—by itself—is not *sufficient*. Beyond simple awareness is the challenge of “so what?” and “prove it!”

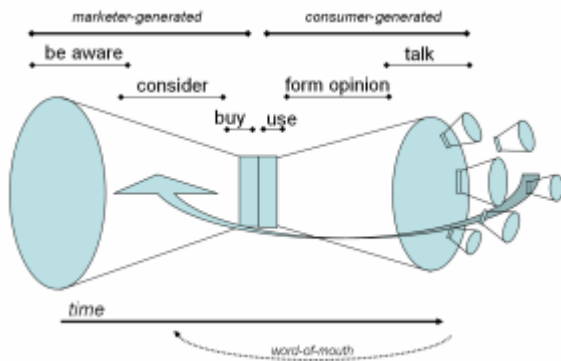
Consumers are most likely to answer these questions by talking with those they trust, taking advantage of the transparent nature of social networks. They think *together* and share information and experiences before buying. A (marketing) presence in the *consideration* process is now a necessary part of advertising and marketing. For contemporary consumers—and especially the Millennials growing up with unprecedented access to real-time information—these consideration activities either reinforce or “out” the awareness-cycle offer, respectively driving or simply stopping any purchase intention.

“No matter what I hear, read, or find on TV, radio, or in a magazine or newspaper, I can verify it on the Internet.”¹

In the classic buying funnel, awareness leads to consideration, in turn leading to purchase. The diagram below depicts the classic funnel, extended to include post-

¹ Consumer comment, Forrester Research, Inc.

purchase opportunities for word-of-mouth and consumer-generated media. Post-purchase is the opportunity to build strong links and drive word-of-mouth and ultimately, evangelism.



Evangelists actively impact consideration processes through word-of-mouth and consumer-generated media.

Along with a bias for awareness, the habit of “interrupting” consumers is common. Media platforms like TV, radio, outdoor...all assume the opportunity to interrupt. It’s ironic that we teach our kids *not* to interrupt us, but

then as marketers often do just that. Consumers are pushing back: 57% of the households in North America are now on the “Do Not Call” list; of the remaining, almost half plan to be. While DVRs are present in only a small percentage of homes now, 43% of those without a DVR are interested in getting one to reduce or skip ads. In households with DVRs, ad skipping reduces exposure by over 50%.² It’s not surprising that contemporary consumers are inclined to act this way: given 3000 messages per day, they’ve got lots of reason. It’s telling that ten years into the Internet “revolution,” and countless studies later on the fragmentation of media, a focus on “awareness” and an assumed right to interrupt still guides a large chunk of the marketing effort. The challenge is to shift into the “pull” messaging that drives engagement in the consideration process by its presence in consideration activities.

Online investment in 2004 was \$9.6B, or 3.6% of the total media investment.³ With the addition of online media and consideration-cycle tools like AdSense, “Google allows buyers to target the entire consumer buying cycle.”⁴

Post-purchase, marketer’s have a significant opportunity build a durable and valuable relationship. After a purchase there is often considerable consumer-to-consumer conversation: it’s after the purchase that “satisfaction” is assessed and the tone (positive vs. negative) of subsequent conversations is set. Marketers can incite “talk” via conversation platforms like the web, their own blogs, effective call centers, and send-to-a-friend tools on company websites along with in-person happenings like lifestyle fairs and events that facilitate word-of-mouth. Think of some great brands and split them in two groups: those that people talk about, and those that people don’t. Fostering evangelical behavior at any level drives (new) awareness and richens the consideration processes. Failing to enable “talk” misses the leverage afforded today’s marketers via connected social networks.

² Forrester Research, Inc., “The Consumer Advertising Backlash Worsens.

³ eMarketer; Geoff Ramsey presentation at AD:TECH San Francisco 2005.

⁴ Tim Armstrong, VP Ad Sales, Google.

Taken together, "awareness" and "interruptive" efforts have been overdone to the point of consumer backlash: of those surveyed, for example, less than half thought TV was "a good way to learn about new products."⁵ Adding "consideration" to the mix means moving beyond awareness and interruptive methods, gaining a presence in the consumer's consideration processes and thereby opening new marketing opportunities. By being active in the consideration phase, marketers can reach consumers at the precise moments that they are thinking about (your) product or service. In turn, this kind of presence increases the opportunity for real engagement, itself the requirement for more effective marketing.

⁵ Forrester Research, Inc., "The Consumer Advertising Backlash Worsens."

If consideration drives engagement, what should marketers be doing?

As consumers increasingly choose to block the noise—and plenty of evidence suggests this is happening—the impact of traditional advertising is diminished in the overall brand-building toolbox. That’s a shame when you consider that consumers aren’t opposed to learning more about the things that matter to them but rather are opposed to having to sift through all of the stuff that doesn’t. Without consideration-cycle efforts consumers are left to themselves to sort through the thousands of messages directed their way. More likely, consumers will block everything and instead talk with *each other* absent the ability to control their conversation—in both directions—with marketer of interest. The addition of consideration-cycle marketing addresses this and bridges a critical gap for marketers between awareness and purchase while opening the channel for effective word-of-mouth. Consideration-cycle marketing is a toolbox essential.

1. Consideration-cycle activities—including branded entertainment, word-of-mouth, the delivery of targeted high-definition broadband video and educational marketing—are an essential “plus” in the awareness-consideration-purchase process. Marketers should combine these activities with traditional efforts and build a rich, integrated marketing efforts for individual audiences.
2. Marketers should aggressively measure: these measurements should include the individual channels *and* the overall campaign. For example, it’s not enough to know that “branded entertainment” works. It’s equally important to know how well it works with *all other* tools so that the combination can be used effectively.
3. Just as the consumers have new tools, so do marketers. The consideration-cycle enables both sides of the marketing transaction. As the movie studios are starting to recognize, network TV remains a useful tool, but it’s not the only tool. The tools that consumers are now using lend themselves to consideration efforts by marketers. Marketers should—but often do not—use them.
4. Marketers should connect the consideration-cycle activities of current customers with existing measures of customer profitability. While everyone sees the value of repeat customers—and especially those who don’t demand extreme price or service concessions—marketers should also assess the role of specific customers as “reference experts” for other customers. If what appears to be an “expensive” customer is actually the “hub” for your “profitable” customers then in the “consideration” view this customer’s “net



profitability” changes dramatically. Shown in the figure to the left, adding “degree of

customers—and especially those who don’t demand extreme price or service concessions—marketers should also assess the role of specific customers as “reference experts” for other customers. If what appears to be an “expensive” customer is actually the “hub” for your “profitable” customers then in the “consideration” view this customer’s “net

influence” expands the “profitable customer” segment, and, suggests strategies for converting selected non-influential customers to influential customers.

Taken together it’s no longer about what the marketer has to say but rather about the consumer and what he or she wants to know now. *Savvy marketers can play to that.* It’s about a shift in content models from ad-supported mass-channels to user-supported niche content. *Marketers can participate by creating content of their own.* It’s about conveying brand-ownership to the evangelists and thereby ensuring a steady, robust word-of-mouth contribution to marketing efforts. *Marketers can genuinely put consumers in control.*

Ultimately, it’s about reaching consumers through social networks by launching great products that offer true value, and engaging customers in genuine conversation to bring about continuous, positive change that earns their continued loyalty.

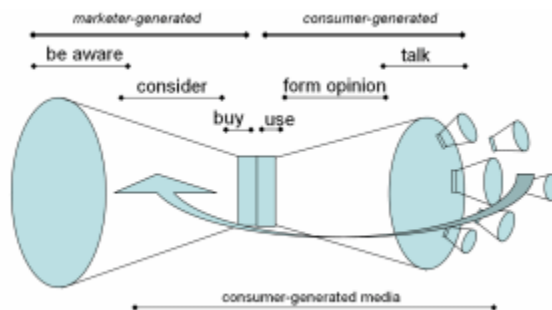
Consideration-cycle marketing platforms and tools.

We've looked at the consideration cycle and its role in marketing. Let's turn now to specific tools and channels that support the new consideration marketing opportunities.

Consumer-generated media

The Internet has had a pronounced impact on how people view their ability to gather unbiased information, to *seek, find, and obtain* a wider range of products and services, and to talk with others about actual experiences both before and after purchase.

Coincident with the launch of the World Wide Web, content itself changed from analog form (sheets of paper, vinyl records, VHS tapes) to digital forms (web pages and blogs,



MP3 audio, MPEG movies) that lent themselves to distribution on the Internet. These two developments multiplied each other, driving the growth in the use of the web as an information and fulfillment platform. Where the transition from “three networks” to “four networks plus cable” split viewers into narrower segments, the combination of distribution and the digitization of content actually changed the ways in

which consumers viewed, used and shared information and content across a range of decisions and activities. Consumers are more connected, more informed, and more likely to share experiences with each other as a result.

The net impact is a “democratization of information,” a relative loss of control for the established content distributors and a corresponding gain for consumers. This democratization—and the tools supporting it—have enabled what is likely the largest driver yet of the changes in how consumers learn: *consumer-generated media*. What was a single, controlled voice being broadcast is now a sea of individual conversations.

Consumer-generated media is unconstrained by the subjects of the discussion—the subjects of a blog cannot directly control the blog or path it takes. Consumer-generated media features the thoughts, hobbies, and interests of consumers. It is often presented with the goal of encouraging or dissuading a specific purchase based on personal experience. Think of the sites that enthusiastically support—or vehemently denounce popular automobiles, stores, telecommunications providers, and airlines as examples. Firms like Intelliseek, Cymfony, Buzzmetrics, and Biz360 specialize in the measurement of online conversations through precise indexing of blogs and similar forums, giving marketers insight into what these consumers think about specific products and services. This information can be folded right back into the product development process, creating products “just for them” and thereby encouraging active, authentic evangelism.

Consumer-generated media is by definition created for and used by those most interested at the moment of interest. Moreover, the content structure itself is a reflection of the

generational clusters of consumers using that content. Websites, the first wave of online publishing, were (and many remain) largely one-directional, island-mentality prospects. That some sites expect others to *ask permission* before linking is proof-positive of this. This first wave—developed and led early-on by Boomers in the early/mid 90s tracks the Boomer mindset: it’s all about me, and it’s my property. More recently, blogs have exploded: they are in many ways an easier way for people to tell their own story. Others can comment—creating an “Us” experience—but the story itself is not open to change other than by the author. The newest publishing platform—the WIKI—is just now taking off. Not coincidentally, the Millennials are coming into influence. The Millennial mindset is “we” compared with the GenX “us” and the Boomer “me” – and nowhere is this more evident than a WIKI. WIKIs invite participation, allow actual changes to the published content, and are essentially controlled only by the collective. Generational norms are expressing themselves via the information structures they create and use.

The proliferation of consumer-generated media tracks broadband adoption, users of which are more likely to create content for others. The majority of broadband users create or share content with others versus a minority of dial-up users. "Broadband users drive in both directions on the information superhighway. With their tendencies to create and post online content, they value not only fast uploading speeds, but also an open Internet."⁶ With the launch of Current TV the same opportunity is now readily available to younger consumers seeking a broad-reach multi-channel forum, allowing individuals to reach the widest audience for their content and offering them the greatest range of sources to satisfy their appetite for information. Similarly, FilmLoop allows both consumers and marketers to create short sequences of images for continuous display on the desktops of others. Marketers can purchase space and tie specific sequences of visual images to current offers, connecting consumer interest with items available now. Consumers can share this content, helping it spread in the direction of actual interest.

Word-of-mouth, buzz, and viral marketing

While a consumer may hear about a product through any number of means, he more likely than not talks with his friends about it before buying. This is core to the consideration phase, and directly illustrates the importance of good old-fashioned word-of-mouth. Because consumers are so connected, word-of-mouth travels fast within social circles and has real impact: it’s often cited as the most trusted source of information.⁷ By comparison, less than half of those asked in 2004 thought that ads “were a good way to learn about new products, a decrease of over 30% since just two years prior.”⁸

Word-of-mouth—the underlying mechanism for both buzz and viral marketing—depends on individual people finding sufficient emotional relevance with an experience that he or she will talk about it. The experience can be the product or service, or, an event built around it. Products which are immediately infectious (e.g., Hotmail being free) or campaigns which are inherently talk-worthy (e.g., Subservient Chicken) can spread over time and build “buzz,” a powerful campaign reinforcement. Note however that effective,

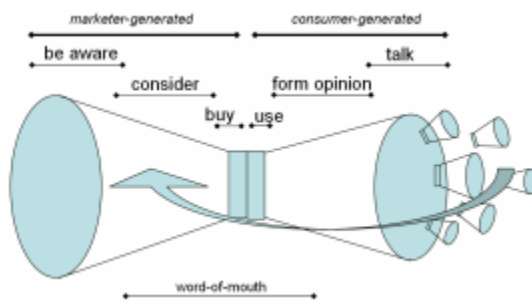
⁶ John B. Horrigan, Senior Research Specialist with the Pew Internet Project

⁷ Forrester/Intelliseek, “The Consumer Advertising Backlash.”

⁸ Forrester, “The Consumer Advertising Backlash Worsens.”

product-oriented word-of-mouth most typically results from an experience with the product, not an ad campaign. When the “buzz” is all about the campaign, it’s generally because of the experience provided by the campaign, not the actual product. It’s essential that this type of campaign—as with any campaign—anchor itself in the brand or product: failing that, people will tend to recall the campaign long after they recall the product.

Firms like BzzAgent create campaigns based on word-of-mouth and the personal validations of customers. The Barbarian Group—creators of Subservient Chicken with CP+B—conceive of and build campaigns that get talked about and passed around. BuzzMetrics and PlanetFeedback, an early online service that facilitates consumers sharing experiences with each other and with the brands themselves, allows subscribing brands to quantitatively understand the depth, tone, and texture of both customer feedback and word-of-mouth, along with its specific drivers. With this information they



can respond quickly and appropriately in order to make the most of what the word-of-mouth channel has to offer. Trust—developed through an effective response to consumer feedback—drives confidence in the brand and hence the likelihood to “talk.”

Importantly, none of the above are sufficient when used alone (or are at

least only rarely so). Word-of-mouth, viral advertising and buzz are generally most effective when used in combination with a range of efforts tuned to the product or service and the intended audience in the context of the specific business challenge. In his book “The Anatomy of Buzz,” author Emanuel Rosen says “Some word-of-mouth enthusiasts argue that if you get good buzz, you don’t need to do any marketing. This can be a major mistake. Distribution, advertising, promotions and other traditional marketing activities can translate the goodwill surrounding your product into sales. While good buzz is the best thing you could wish for, it’s just one component of your marketing mix.”

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) has led a significant effort around the measurement of word-of-mouth marketing: their publication “Measuring Word of Mouth” is available for those interested in current thinking on this topic.

Games

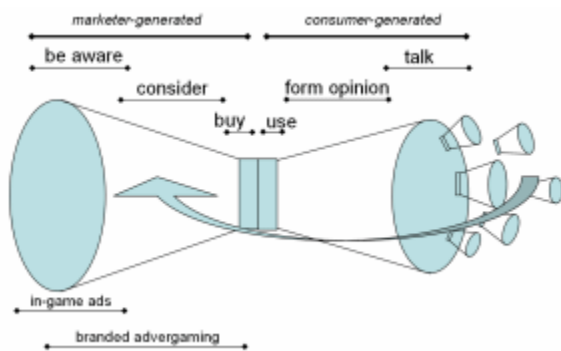
If confidence is the key in purchase decisions then games indeed have an important role in future marketing efforts. Video and online games—through their essentially penalty-free, trial-and-error challenge structures—lead players to *success* as they climb through the various levels of mastery within the game. Sooner or later everyone is a winner—and in that sense the games teach players to persevere, to sort things out, and to expect to be successful. *Games build confidence.*

Games of a variety of forms are played by a truly representative demographic cross-section, including those thought of a “hardest-to-reach.” Consider the number of hours

that Millennial and GenX players spend with games: for them, it's the new TV. Consider too that while playing they are really concentrating on what is going on: it's a "lean forward" experience compared to the more passive "sit back" experience of TV. Songs used in the background become hits: music distributors pay big fees to game publishers to get songs into leading games for this very reason.

As transition media—media that combines all of the traditional planning tools and adapts them into the gamers world—firms like IGA, Massive and Wild Tangent are able to pipe user-specific advertising into a game as the game is being played. Though clearly rooted in traditional interruptive and "awareness-centric" media, in-game ads allow marketing messages to be placed into a game that itself gets a lot of visibility. It's a more relevant platform for a conventionally harder-to-reach segment. Going one better—and hinting at where this technology is leading—messages placed into the game can be changed in real-time and tailored to the interests of specific players. In a recent survey, gamers on the whole did not object to the ads so long as they made the game "more realistic." That's encouraging news for marketers looking for a way to reach people watching less TV.

Advergaming—games built expressly for advertising which combine marketing and game play—are increasingly popular as entertainment in their own right. Wild Tangent develops custom casual games, or, re-engineers "marquis" titles from leading publishers.



Activision's "Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX" was recrafted as "Coast BMX Full Grind™" by adding new riding areas, redefining tricks, and generally reworking the game experience to add specific brand characteristics to the game. The target audience—young active men—loved it and credited Coast with bringing it to them. GMD Studios—creators of the "Stolen Audi A3" stealth campaign—creates elaborate

online and real-world games that invite players into an intriguing experience that can play out over months, and often over multiple continents. These games, along with the "challenge" games like "Coast BMX Full Grind" have a large "viral" component as well as participants invite others in and seek to better their scores or form teams to beat others to the prize. They are a natural extension of an Internet-connected social network.

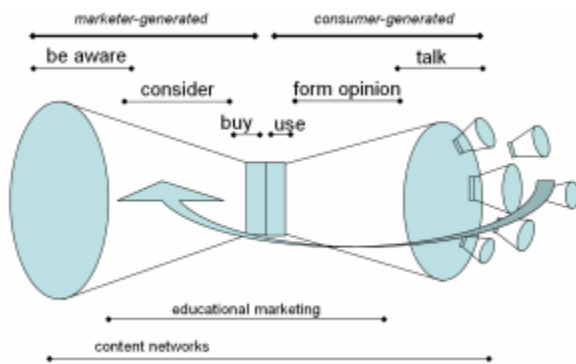
Performance measurement for games includes the obvious—how many people played the game—and the not so obvious: challenge rate (the number of "forward to a friend" competitive invitations), time spent playing, non-personal composite user data, and the specific game and level-play stats. The former are essential to evaluating the success of the game as a marketing tool: the latter are useful for improving the game over time.

Content Networks and Educational Marketing

What better time to tell someone about your product or service than when he is asking about it! Powered, located in Austin, TX, offers a marketing platform built around expert content. This provides distinct engagement opportunities with interested consumers.

The educational content itself is intended to make the consumer smarter: a bank may offer an educational series on preventing identity theft, or a car manufacturer may teach consumers about hybrids. To be clear, the content must be “bias neutral” to qualify as “educational marketing,” since “teaching me to buy a specific product that I offer” is simply an infomercial. Importantly, for products that are truly superior in a distinct class of applications the educational materials can appropriately establish that. Presenting the material without bias is essential, as this both “validates” and “constrains” a marketer “telling its own story.” For example, who better to learn about banking from than a bank? At the same time, if the information is biased toward the interests of a particular bank, consumers will detect this and terminate any developing “trust” relationship. It’s no longer sufficient to get that “one shot” in there: the message has to be sustained and validated over time. Educational marketing offers that possibility.

Leveraging what already exists, the educational experience can be offered as part of a company’s web experience: a pharmaceutical or health-care firm might offer a class on well-baby visits, or a sports franchise may give its fans know-how on home entertainment



systems (all the better for watching sports.) The educational offered should generally be related to the company’s products: the connection is more effective when such a link exists as the message is more likely to be viewed as “valued” and less so as “clutter.” Put simply, contextual placement is what is going to earn mind-share in future marketing: anything not contextualized is going to be ignored. Firms whose

products are related to the content can purchase advertising space within the content: if the content is “home theater design” then Samsung might advertise its extensive line of plasma screen TVs.

In a recent application, Powered teamed up with CNET to launch a series of technology classes: digital photography, building a game PC, designing a home theater system, and similar fare. Each of these was sponsored by a provider of technology relevant to the topic (e.g., HP sponsored a digital photography series; Panasonic sponsored titles on HDTV and Home Theater). These online classes worked because the content was essentially neutral: rather than boasting about themselves, the companies whose products were featured simply provided consumers with the background information to understand why *products like theirs* were a good choice. Samsung didn’t say “we are the only TV...” but rather said “make sure the TV you buy can do this and this and this....if you are going to be using it to view that or that or that.” It’s very similar to what Progressive did

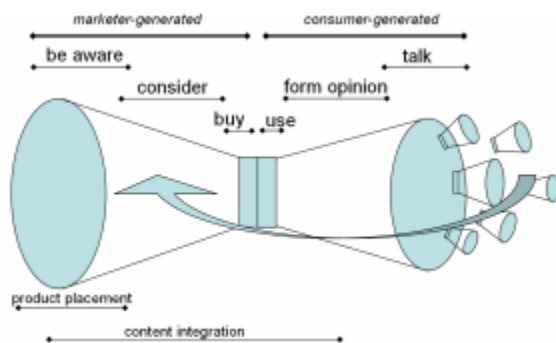
with its automobile insurance quote service: Progressive presented itself *along with the quotes of its competitors*. This information helped a consumer make an informed choice, and said something powerful about Progressive. When a consumer chose Progressive, she knew *why* she chose Progressive. An informed choice translates into evangelical talk.

On the measurement side, the educational marketing platform provides significant depth. Because participants register for the classes, there is rich (non-personal) user-data available for analysis. Standard tracking techniques can be employed (e.g., DoubleClick’s Spotlight services) in conjunction with promotional offers handled at a remote site. Because an educational experience takes place over time—classes often last 6 weeks—the marketer gains significant temporal access to the consumer as her consideration-based perceptions and intent change. The intrinsic value consumer’s associate with a free education (think the norm of reciprocity) gives the marketer insights into why the consumer is interested in a topic: Imagine how you might market digital photography products if you knew the consumer was a new parent. Plus, as individual users take subsequent classes, interest-based targeting becomes a viable option for future educational marketing efforts.

Branded entertainment and event marketing

Contemporary lifestyle is marked by an amazing degree of integration between activities: practical multitasking is simply one facet of an actual increase in the ability of consumers to handle multiple sources of information simultaneously. Kids really can listen to music, watch TV, and do homework at the same time. Branded entertainment offers a context that leverages the associative allure of a recognizable brand combined with the enjoyment of entertainment. Directly combining an event like an outdoor festival with the products and services that people use out-of-doors (like cell phones, camping gear, and off-road vehicles) provides an authentic sampling where consumers can experience new goods and services, or new ways of using old ones. The challenge—as with any form of

marketing—is in the authenticity of the experience. Done cheaply, branded entertainment pollutes an entire channel. Done well, consumers enjoy learning about the things they are interested in a context that’s engaging.



The challenge of authenticity leads to an important distinction regarding branded entertainment: stuck on after-the-fact it’s likely to be detected and rejected. A

*tactic perceived is no tactic at all.*⁹ Product placement and similar forms of “adhesive marketing” pasted on to pre-built content potentially exposes brands in the courts of public opinion. That is rarely good in a highly connected society. It also risks legislative backlash given that it’s often viewed as a subversive trick, designed to fool consumers who would have otherwise skipped a similar advertisement. By comparison, thoughtfully *integrated* entertainment marketing—think “HGTV” or similar platforms designed for a

⁹ James A. Baker, Founder, Baker Communications.

very specific interest and audience—provides a welcome marketing vehicle that informs consumers and provides the information needed to *succeed* in home renovation projects. Consumers actively seek this content and refer others to it.

Not surprisingly, branded entertainment is at the forefront of a wave of integrated marketing campaigns, campaigns that tie together the products consumers embrace with the things they like to do. CAA—privately held and known for its extensive relationships with both talent and content creators—is often able to bring a marketer into the branded entertainment process well ahead of the development of programming so as to authentically integrate the brand into the entertainment.

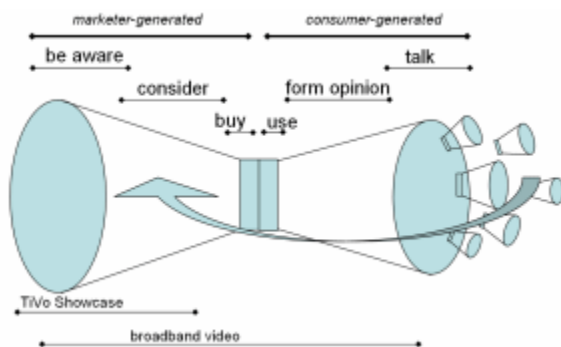
On the event marketing side, The Marketing Arm developed a “truck tour” for the Air Force—this allowed the Air Force to take the full experience of the Air Force to communities, high schools, and events where people interested in learning more about the Air Force were naturally gathering. Red Bull—a brand built largely without traditional advertising—maintains a variety of motorsports and athletic programs for the consumer marketing and business-to-business opportunities. Reactrix offers a “whole body” interactive platform that is ideally suited to product and lifestyle events: participants are able to physically interact in fun and creative ways that highlight unique attributes of a brand, or a product or service.

Taken together, these lifestyle-integration channels allow marketers to demonstrate products, provide consumers with both direct experience and the chance to listen or interact with evangelists, and associate their brands with the elements that define the lifestyles of influential consumers. The result is a really natural “consideration” vehicle that touches awareness and often carries through to the point of purchase and beyond.

Broadband video and consumer control

How consumers view and use media is evolving rapidly. Time-shifting—think DVR—and now place-shifting—watching content captured at one location while in another—are relatively new behaviors that provide marketers with an incredibly rich set of messaging opportunities. Sling Media—and wide range of practical applications. Using the Slingbox--a \$250 hardware appliance from Sling Media—you can access *your DVR* from

your front porch or your friend’s house. As an example, think about how place-shifting enablers like the SlingBox change “hotel TV” and its assumed ad value. Instead of hotel TV, travelers will watch their own TV and increasingly “on-demand” content instead.



These types of evolutionary tools further accelerate the shift toward consumer *controlled* media: the logical outcome is

evident in new content forms including podcasting, broadband video, and TiVo showcases. Maven Networks offers a broadband video platform that a marketer can use

to create a wholly-owned “TV channel.” Maven provides an ideal platform for promotion, corporate reputation management, and similar communications. In a recent campaign, 20th Century Fox teamed up with Maven to release full-screen, HD-quality movie trailers and bonus content over the Internet. Beginning with the “Master and Commander” film, viewers not only embraced this content but returned to the 20th Century Fox website an average of 3.6 times to watch additional videos. Most telling click-through to show-time information and ticket purchase was an amazing 24% (compared to 1% or 2% common with typical online campaigns) along side a 26% click-through to the movie website.

With the increasing applicability of both broadband video and timeshifting, marketers have the opportunity to create new content for very specific audiences. Using the 3 am timeslot on RFD-TV, which calls itself “America’s most important rural network,” the show “I Love Toy Trains” has become a hit with kids *in households with DVRs*. Apple’s leadership in adding podcasts to its iTunes service further accelerates this behavior.

Taken together, marketers have relatively low-cost, new channels into homes: highly focused content, time and place shifted. Let interested consumers find it. These technologies firmly establishes in the mind of the user the idea of “on demand” content. This prepares consumers for the expanding range of content services that provide a very high degree of control over *what, when, and where*.

Summary

As consumers increasingly take control of the information that reaches them and how it is used in evaluating purchase options it is becoming more important to involve consumers directly in the generation of effective word-of-mouth, and, to better leverage the content they create on their own. Consideration-cycle activities are an essential “plus” in the awareness-consideration-purchase process. Marketers should combine these activities with traditional efforts to improve the overall performance of a broad-based campaigns.

At the same time, marketers should aggressively measure: not knowing what works or why is the equivalent of guessing. That’s no way to build a solid brand that endures over time. Just as the consumers have new tools, so do marketers. This includes generation and measurement of effective strategies and tactics. It also includes measurements that enable marketers to understand who is using their product and how. Understanding the latter often leads to the discovery of new markets, with ready-made evangelists.

Finally, marketers should connect the consideration-cycle activities of current customers with existing measures of customer profitability. Expanding the “profitable customer” segment and engaging them in campaigns is an essential practice for marketers.

The practice of consideration-cycle marketing offers exciting opportunities for marketers willing to test the waters. Jump in: the water has never been better.

List of Firms Referenced

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Cymfony	http://www.cymfony.com
Biz360	http://www.biz360.com
CurrentTV	http://www.current.tv
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Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA)	http://www.womma.org
BzzAgent	http://www.bzzagent.com
PlanetFeedback	http://www.planetfeedback.com
The Barbarian Group	http://www.barbariangroup.com
GMD Studios	http://www.gmdstudios.com
Wild Tangent	http://www.wildtangent.com
Massive	http://www.massiveincorporated.com
IGA	http://www.iga.com
Powered	http://www.powered.com
CNET	http://www.cnet.com
Reactrix	http://www.reactrix.com
CAA	http://www.caa.com
The Marketing Arm	http://www.themarketingarm.com
Sling Media	http://www.slingmedia.com
Maven Networks	http://www.maven.net
RFD-TV	http://www.rfdtv.com

About this paper

When I first sat down to write this, my objective was straightforward: briefly document the trends I saw as an advertiser developing around word-of-mouth and its generation, and, help promote the businesses of those firms I thought were part of the emerging consideration-cycle solution central to these trends for the benefit of our clients.

About half-way through, I had a thought: what I undertook this as an “open-source” effort? How would that work, and how would that improve it? I sent the early drafts to a dozen or so colleagues, and asked them to send it on. In exchange, I asked for comments, alternative points-of-view, and examples. What I got back amazed me. Not only did people participate, they expanded and improved the content.

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About Dave Evans

“If we couldn’t interrupt you, how would we reach you?” That’s the question that Dave starts with as a communications consultant focused on word-of-mouth and consumer-generated media. Dave listens to what a client’s business communications needs are and then selects applicable channels to deliver an effective solution. His expertise lies in his ability to match client needs with consumer preferences as to how and when they would like to be talked to.

Dave co-founded Digital Voodoo in 1994. Digital Voodoo has worked with clients including Microsoft and HP helping internal teams develop and use emerging media communications. In addition Dave worked with GSD&M as a Strategy Director for integrated communications, with Progressive Insurance Company as a Product Manager and a Systems Analyst for the Voyager deep space exploration program with Jet Propulsion Laboratories/NASA.

Dave holds a B.S. in Physics and Mathematics from the State University of New York/College at Brockport.

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