

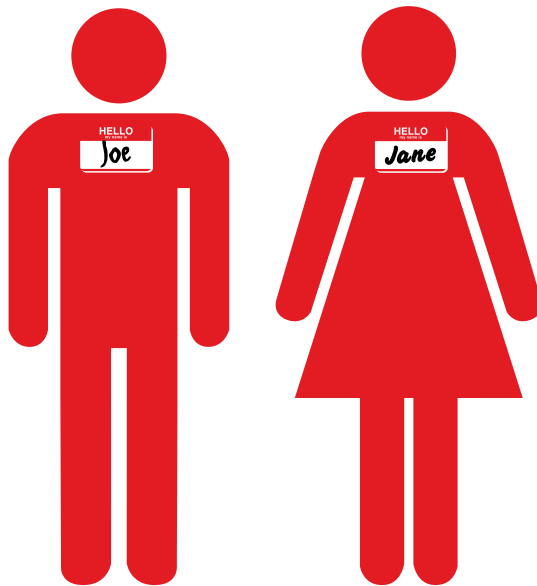


Gravity

(Content Is) Marketing

▶ The ninth in a series of strategic marketing white papers by Hiebing, an integrated brand development and marketing firm.

Meet Joe Conner and Jane Summer, Consumers-at-Large.



It's Wednesday, January 21, 2009. Joe and Jane program their DVRs for the premiere of "Lost," pay their bills online, grab their mobiles, pop their iPods into their cars and head for work, where they'll answer Facebook's existential question with a remark they hope their 147 friends will deem clever. Hello, life as we live it.

Now, here's the thing: Joe and Jane won't even take note of any of the many commercial messages they'll pass along the way.

But why? Are they overwhelmed? Bored? Apathetic? What's it going to take to keep them within reach?



All Roads Lead to Choice.

Consumers are demanding—and receiving—more control than ever before. Don't want to watch TV commercials? Get DVR. Don't want to hear radio ads? Use your MP3 player. Don't want to be hit up by a better long distance carrier? Put your name on the no-call list.

News flash: This isn't news. But it does matter more with each passing minute.

So the question becomes: What are you going to do about it?

With everything from mobile advertising to declaring you're a fan of Culver's custard to "elfing yourself" right into your friends' in-boxes, consumers have been going cuckoo for control.

Now more than ever, the life and death of your brand rests with consumers. Do? Don't? Will? Won't? Yes? No? Essentially, the questions to ask are: Does your

brand have an idea? Will Joe and Jane care enough to invite you into their lives? And can you deliver the interesting and intriguing content to the right place at the right time?



Ideas Are Our Everything

Take the Internet: Joe and Jane—and it's safe to say, most of their friends and their friends' friends—are no longer surfing the 'net. They're running familiar routes and following leads from trusted sources.

On a typical day, Jane gets to work and checks CNN. During lunch, she heads back to CNN to see what's changed, then checks *Entertainment Weekly* and that one TV blog with all the spoilers. She moves on to Adfreak, where she may stumble across something of interest and check that out before hopping on Amazon to see if they have the book she read about on *Entertainment Weekly*. When she gets home, she'll check her personal email, and if she feels like it, check out the site reco from her friend. Finally, she'll pop on Facebook and then, if it's been a while, browse J.Crew to see if they've got any good sales.

She's doing what she always does because what else is there worth viewing?

For her, most of these sites are merely stopping points along her own virtual cowpath. However, with the few chosen sites she found by recommendation, the content became more meaningful to her—more appealing, more intriguing. Like the people and sources who reco'd these cyberspots, Jane will remember them. She'll share them. She'll spend time with them. She'll engage.

So how do we get her to

engage (with or) without relying on the message being channeled through a friend? By seeding a big idea—that is, providing smart, relevant, desirable content she's willing to make a date with.

Meaning that in the future, it will no longer be enough to just measure awareness. Success will be defined by engagement. Will the target give a click (and then another click and then another and so on)? Is your content strong enough?

Engagement is huge. It's Joe and Jane inviting you into their lives.

LIVE

We interrupt this white paper to bring you...

Big Ideas About Big Ideas

Your Ideas Must Be Portable

The ideas behind your brand are the center of your marketing universe. They must work across any and every media. Better yet, all the different media—print, broadcast, digital, social—should interlock to reveal the different layers of your brand.

Because nowadays, it's not about creating ads. It's about stimulating engagement with relevant content. If your brand operates in terms of an ad here and an ad there, you can pretty much guarantee your target won't care to engage.

Leave Room for the Consumer

With the two-way power of digital media, not only are consumers able to determine when, how and why they interact with your brand—they also have the power to influence their peers with respect to your brand. They'll find a way to co-opt and re-engineer your content whether you intended them to or not.

The good news is: By leaving room for consumer participation in your idea, you are more likely to profit because you are engaging your consumers in a positive way. Now they, too, have a stake in your brand.

Design for the (Everyday) People

Bye-bye, exclusivity. In today's world, anybody and everybody has access to aesthetically appealing, functionally pleasing design. Consumers' expectations have skyrocketed. So whether it's your product, retail experience or communication development, design must be part of the idea.



An Iconic Example

Consider Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty. From simple, shapely packaging to a video exposing the true beauty of a woman behind the cover girl to print ads using real women as models and online resources instilling self-esteem in young girls, the idea was clear and refreshing: Give real women the confidence to feel beautiful just the way they are.



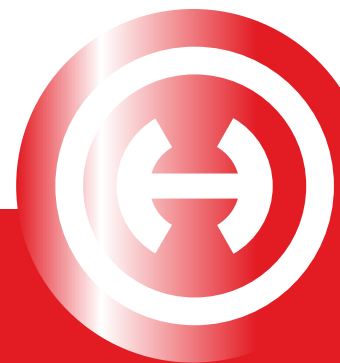
An Intriguing Example

Ever had a Jones Soda? Then you probably noticed that the bottles feature all different photos—photos sent in by fans of the brand. In fact, Jones Soda's Web site features over 678,000 different photos submitted by fans. It became so popular, they now let you order your favorite flavors with customizable labels. (Kind of makes you want to drink another bottle to see what turns up next, huh?)



A Stylish Example

Take Target's Design For All campaign. Through partnerships with well-known designers such as Michael Graves and Jonathan Saunders, Target is able to provide its customers with low-cost, high-style alternatives. A guy can get a teapot designed by a premier American architect whose work has been featured in the Museum of Modern Art for about \$25. A woman can buy a miniskirt for under \$30 that was created by the same designer who sells couture at boutiques for upward of \$1,500. By the storeful, consumers continue to appreciate the freedom to have chic things without blowing their budgets. They're expecting more and paying less, for real.



NEWS ALERT

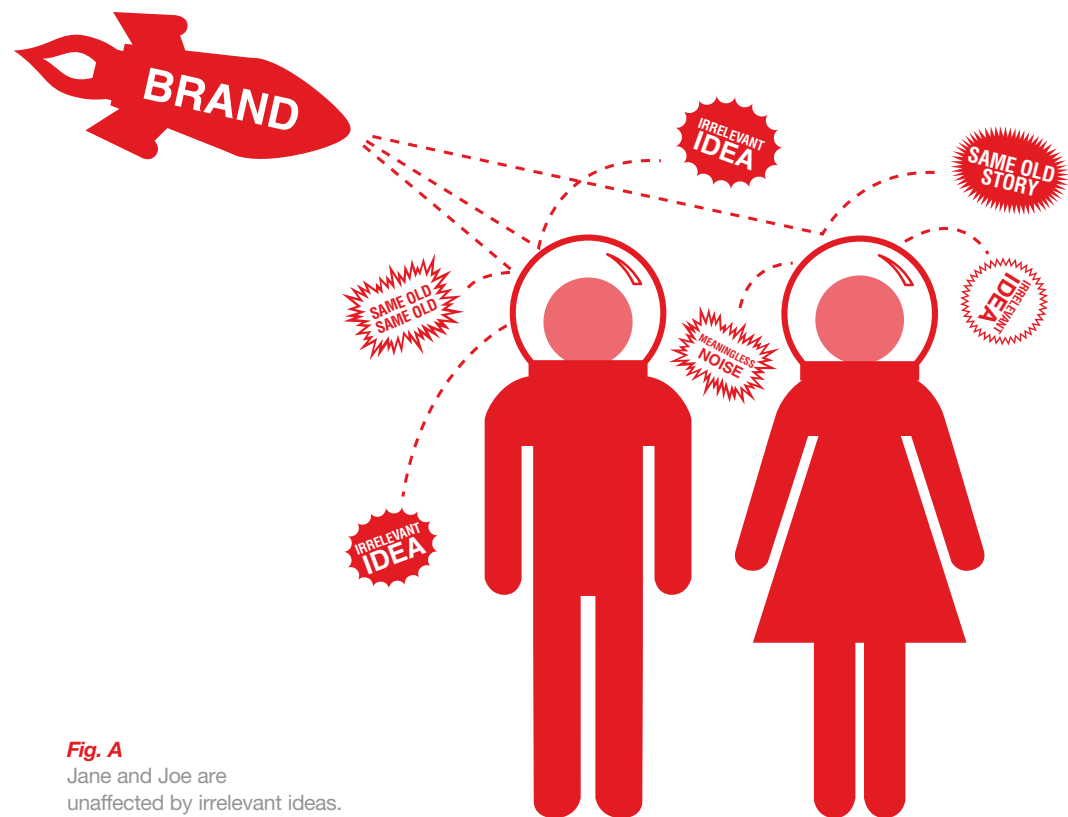
BREAKING NEWS BIG IDEAS ABOUT BIG

Big Ideas About Big Ideas.



Securing your invitation, technologically speaking.

OK, assuming your brand is orbiting a big idea, you still need to get it in front of your target in a way that is interesting and relevant. Moreover, your brand better be ready to live up to its promise at any given time. Because the reality is: There's too much happening too fast to count on your target still caring enough to engage with you once the moment has passed.



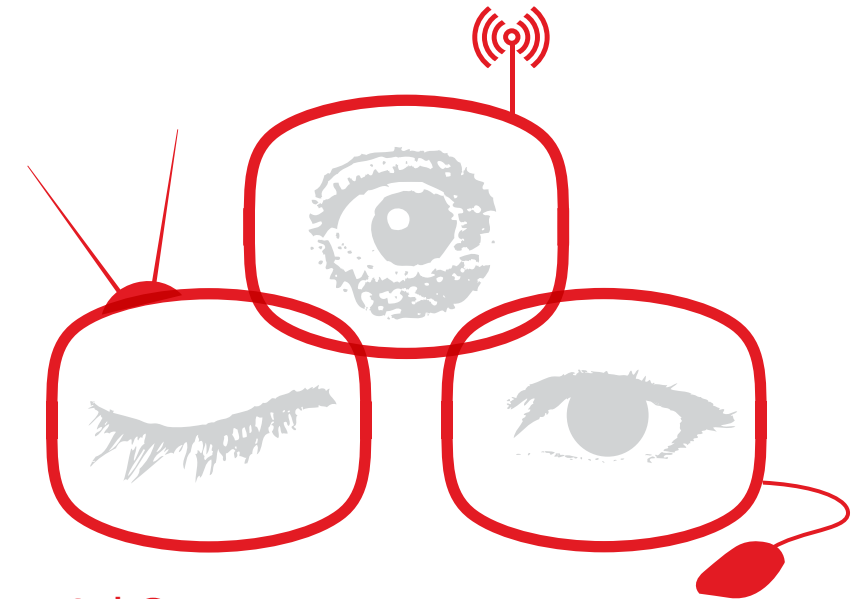
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Fig. A
Jane and Joe are unaffected by irrelevant ideas.



Brands that are ready to adapt the way they use technology to communicate with consumers will ultimately come out ahead. Remember: Consumers have control.

So, here are some thoughts on how to leverage the right place and the right time:



First: The 3rd Screen

First came TV, and then the PC. Today, Joe and Jane pull their mobile devices out of their pockets to get directions, check Twitter, find a restaurant, cash in on a coupon, listen to music—you name it.

Of course, just as PCs didn't result in the demise of TV, mobile devices won't cause the demise of the PC. Nevertheless, take note. Because once again, a greater amount of control is being put directly into consumers' hands, thanks to technologies like Snaptell and Shoptext. And this control comes in the form of a choice:

Do Joe and Jane care to connect *now*?

And just as importantly, is your brand ready to respond to their requests for information *now*? (Here's a hint: The answer better be "yes.") Because the more information Joe and Jane have, the more confident they feel pulling out their wallets.



Imagine: Jane is paging through *US Weekly* and sees an ad for Crest whitening toothpaste. Interested, she responds by texting "whiter" to "smiles (764537)" to receive her free sample—and later, coupons for other Crest products.

Without the opportunities their mobile devices afford them, Joe and Jane would have to make a note or

save your ad. What's more, your brand would have to hope Joe and Jane still care by the time they get back to their computers or make a trip to the store.

However, when presented with ideas they find irresistibly engaging, consumers are more likely to deepen their connections with brands beyond mass media—potentially, shortening the purchase funnel.



Simply put: Don't make the consumer work. Ninety-nine out of a hundred times, Joe and Jane will have something better to do. It's up to you to provide easy access to desirable information to facilitate an effective experience.



And looking forward, who knows? Maybe you'll be able to walk down the street, see a sweet Harley-Davidson, send in a picture from your smart phone and receive in return: the model number, MSRP and name of the nearest dealer (who'll be calling you shortly to set up a test drive).

It's not so far-fetched when you consider that by 2011, companies will invest \$11 billion in marketing via this 3rd screen (Informa Telecoms & Media).

Seems the closer you get to your target, the more relevant relevancy becomes.



CLICK HERE CLICK HERE

CLICK

Second: Rich(er) Media

When is the last time you paid attention to a banner ad? Yes, you remember banner ads. They're those marketing messages that clutter up the edges of your favorite Web sites—the ads you've so masterfully learned to ignore.

Well, it's a new day in the world of rich media. Banner ads are commanding middle-of-the-page attention. With technologies made possible by companies such as Pointroll and Rovion, banner ads are better able to take advantage of truly out-of-the-box thinking.

And it's happening more and more as:

Content becomes smart(er). Interesting ideas capture Joe's and Jane's attention and allow them to engage with your brand without leaving the page.

The experience becomes complete(r). Joe and Jane don't need to click through—you can show them more right there. And since you're saving their time, they're more likely to give a little time.

Interaction becomes dynamic(er). Banners will still target users based on online behavior, but going forward, Joe and Jane may be able to identify which marketing messages they see. Maybe they're interested in cars, movies and investment? OK, then. Until further notice, it'll be ads for Nissan, Dreamworks and Charles Schwab.

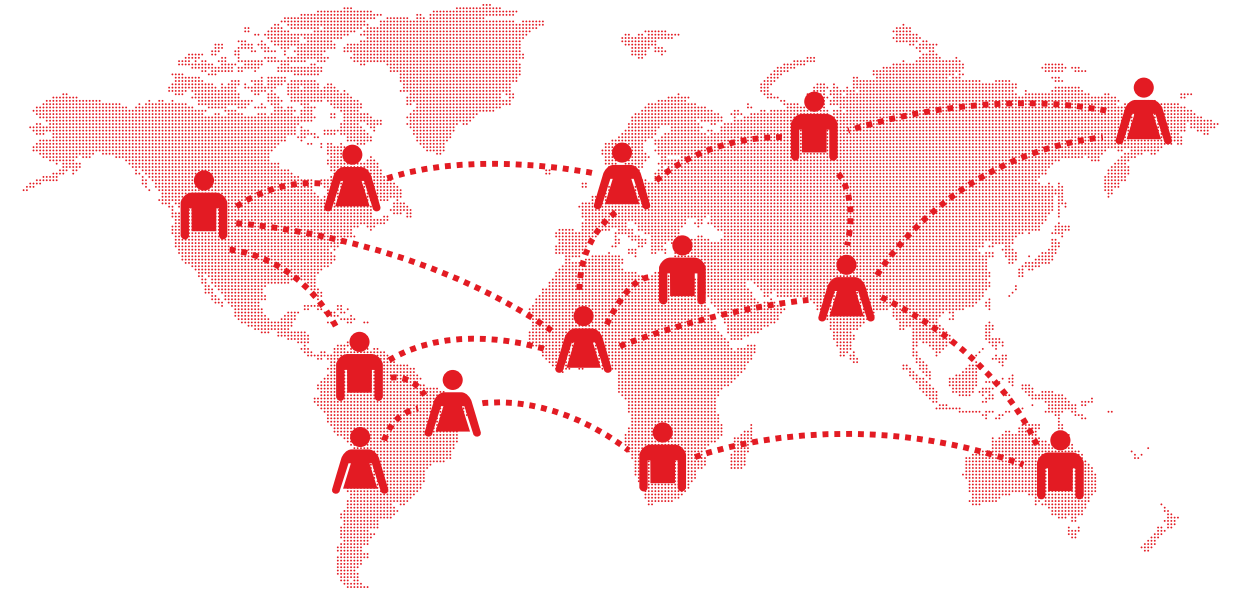
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Picture this: Joe read an online article about gardening during lunch. Next time he visits the news site, he notices an obnoxious weed on the side of his screen. He rolls over and the banner extends, asking him to select a weapon from a variety of lawn tools available at Sears. He scrolls through the options, sees the features and watches his tool of choice take down the weed. The demonstration finishes with a link to Sears' lawn and garden site. All this and he never had to leave the page he came for.

HERE CLICK



Third: "Social" Social Networks

Today when Joe got to work, he logged in to Facebook and let his 147 friends know that "Joe is back at it." He also added Mike as a friend and became a fan of "The Pointer Sisters." Across town, Jane saw Joe's activity and commented that she's "so excited she just can't hide it." And that was that.

Whether it's Facebook, LinkedIn, Classmates, Plaxo or any number of other social media networks, the reality is they're all great at connecting users with users. But they're not so great at connecting people with brands, because communication generally happens outside of any context where products and services are available or actually used.

Social networks have yet to really figure out how to deliver measurable results and create brand value within the social webs they create.

Mobile social networks, on the other hand, appear to be more promising. Take apps like Apple's Loopt for iPhone. With it, Joe can pull up a map and see where his friends are and what they're up to. Say he's running errands on Saturday and sees that Jane is getting her hair cut nearby. He can text her and suggest they meet for coffee—right then and there.

Better yet, why doesn't the Starbucks that is two blocks from Joe notify him that his friend Jane is nearby, suggest he invite her for coffee and offer him a free biscotti with the purchase of two coffees?

Social networks going social: Sounds like a plan, doesn't it?



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Fig. B
Relevant content has infiltrated Joe and Jane's lives, creating a love between them and your brand.



In the End, There's Always a Little Irony

Flashback to 1984. Globalization foes and future seers predicted a world of sameness. But it seems that as technology advances, consumers gain more and more control and we find ourselves headed for a world of mass customization instead.

But why? Maybe because people are exchanging cultures and ideas far faster, and thus, far more often. Maybe because the tools that allow us to be creative—whether we're brand gurus or average Joes/Janes—no longer require a large capital or time investment. Maybe because breakthrough design is actually breaking through to consumers.



It doesn't matter what you say
if it doesn't matter to your target. Relevant
content is the force that will ground your
brand in consumers' minds.



***The point of it all is this:* Technology will come and go. The need for ideas—show-stopping content that binds consumers to brands in relevant ways—has never been more important.**

We can't assume we have a consumer's attention. We need to give them a meaningful glimpse of your whole brand experience if we're going to get them interested enough to:

Engage!



Dave Florin President/Partner



Dave's job is to see that our clients are served by the latest and best practices in our tried-and-true area of expertise: target-market-driven communications. So he has continued to attract top talent from around the country, add new areas of knowledge and set new standards

of performance across all communication disciplines. Dave's passion is his proven commitment to client service, creative quality and brand strategy. He has been an invited speaker for organizations like the National Retail Federation, the Retail Advertising and Marketing Association, the International Institute for Research and the Investment Council Institute. His client experience includes Nestlé, Famous Footwear, Coca-Cola, General Motors, Northwestern Mutual Life, Coors, PerkinElmer and JanSport. Dave is married and has three daughters. He is an avid reader who enjoys the great outdoors and anything Wisconsin Badger-related.

Sean Mullen Creative Director/Partner



Sean Mullen's creative work has been recognized by nearly every important advertising magazine and award show, including *Adweek*, *Ad Age*, *Archive*, *Communication Arts*, *Print's Regional Design Annual*, *Creativity Annual* and the Clio Shortlist. He has won more

Addy Awards than you can shake a marker at. Providing a unique blend of verbal and visual thinking, Sean is as comfortable with a research deck as he is with a Pantone book. He has done effective, award-winning work for clients like Toyota, Famous Footwear, Fiskars Craft and Garden Tools, Montana Gourmet Knives, JanSport and Nestlé. In his spare time, he's been known to guest lecture at Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin. If he's not at home with his wife and two children, check the garage. His bicycle won't be there either.

Barry Edison Touchpoint Planning Director



Barry Edison owns a well-deserved reputation for using the most engaging environments to connect brands with their chosen targets. For nearly two decades, he's honed his craft of media insight, planning, buying and research on brands as diverse as Mazda, Cranium, Six Flags, Sirius Satellite Radio, HGTV and Food

Network, U.S. Cellular, AutoTrader.com, ADT and Outback. So what exactly is a media insight? Ask Barry, but you may want to specify if you'd like the condensed or unabridged answer. When he's not working, you'll find Barry at an ice arena, either on the ice himself or in the stands watching one of his three children.

Barb Hernandez PR Director/Partner



Over the course of 30 years, Barb has developed hundreds of successful programs for clients in some of America's most challenging industries. She has helped them improve relationships with a variety of targets: industry, community, media, customers, investors, employees,

franchise members, voters and politicians. Barb and her team have created story placements worth millions of dollars in equivalent paid media at all levels: local, regional, national and international. A partial list of her clients past and present includes: Schneider National, The Swiss Colony, The American College of Veterinary Pathology, Orkin, Kennecott Corporation, Hillshire Farms, Kinetico, Everpure, RainSoft, Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association, Wisconsin Public Service, Marcus Corporation, Monona Terrace and Convention Center, Raynor Garage Doors, AnchorBank, Culver's, Dean Health Systems, St. Mary's Hospital, Foley & Lardner and ThedaCare. In addition to receiving numerous public relations awards, Barb is an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America. Barb attributes her ability to keep cool in a crisis to being married with three kids, and to having been caught in the middle of four tornadoes.



Drop us a line.

If you have been looking for better results out of the same old plans and would like to evolve your planning process, give us a call. Hiebing has helped hundreds of clients find, design and deliver powerful communications that have increased brands' impact and bottom line. As a brand development and marketing firm, Hiebing delivers fresh insights into the dynamic linkages between targets and brands, and creates vibrant communications to improve brands' relevancy and value in consumers' lives.

To learn more, call 608.256.6357 and ask for Dave or visit Hiebing.com.