



Drew Neisser is the CEO of New York City-based Renegade Marketing Group, an agency that emphasizes connecting with the target audience and using whatever means necessary to make them respond.

Features

[Comment](#) [Printer Friendly](#) [Email](#) [Permalink](#)

Exploring The D'S Of Word-Of-Mouth: Why Any Marketers Needs To Discover, Deliver And Diversify

February 27th 2006- by [Drew Neisser](#) [XML Feed](#)

We have all had it happen. A friend tells you about a great new restaurant, promising unbelievable food, atmosphere and service. The place is so hot you can't get in for four weeks. You finally show up breathless with anticipation and it falls so short of expectations; you vow never to return and not to trust that friend again (on restaurants at least). Later that week, you happen to try a new place on your own; the receptionist is charming, the waiter entertaining, the food delicious and the bathroom fixtures are worth stealing.

You, of course, tell all your friends about this discovery including special instructions on what to order and encourage them to browse the WC. They report back a more than satisfactory experience. A month later you read a review and this reminds you it is time to go back. You enjoy another high quality performance and tell a couple more friends. If you examine this everyday word of mouth (WOM) scenario, you will find the 3D tenets of smart WOM: Discover, Deliver, Diversify.

1D: Discover

How you find out about something new is often as important as the new thing itself. This is part of what makes word of mouth so powerful in the first place. A friend's recommendation is like a little gift especially when compared to ads that are often like little jabs to the chin. We trust our friends, or at least we trust our trustworthy friends, a lot more than we do a billboard or TV commercial. I like learning about new restaurants from my connoisseur friends more than from New York Magazine or Crain's. It's the personal connection, being part of the chain of those "in the know".

For marketers, thinking about the moment of discovery can be a helpful addition to the planning process particularly with new products or product news. Consider the impact of learning about a new song for the first time at Wal-Mart. This environment will undoubtedly shape perceptions of style, value and innovation for just about any product but especially for something as ephemeral as popular music. Compare that to the experience of learning about that same song at Disneyland. Suddenly the tune takes on notes of fun, wholesomeness and teenybopper. Now imagine you're online at home, receiving a new song your friend the DJ just wrangled from his friend in the music business. Suddenly, you've literally got the inside track to something cooler than cool. You open your ears wanting desperately to discover a great new artist, someone you can then tell your friends about.

An important subset of discovery is disclosure. If your friend the DJ ends up being a secret shill for a record company, then your confidence in his recommendations will fade faster than a one hit wonder. The Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) has rightfully made a big deal about WOM ethics and strongly recommends full disclosure. If your friend the DJ honestly identifies his connection with the label, then you are sufficiently informed to assess his recommendation accordingly. The discovery will only be tainted if the music ends up being mediocre, providing a perfect segue to the next D.

2D: Deliver

Word of mouth is a wonderful thing, but it can't help a product that doesn't deliver on its promise. Your product or service must live up to the hype you want to surround it with. If it doesn't, bad things will happen. Consider the under-delivering restaurant in my first example. With expectations fueled by friendly raves, I expected the best and was stunned by the reality. There is an old expression in the ad business that there is nothing like a great ad to kill a bad product. The same is true in WOM—over-hype your product/service and you are sure to not only disappoint but also create detractors faster than Donald Trump can say "you're fired!"

During a recent panel discussion on WOM at Toy Fair, Tina Wells of Buzz Marketing Group told an apocryphal story of a new record launch that bombed bigtime. Despite lining up a couple hundred thousand kids to spread the word, arranging for a number of other clever cross promotions, the album was a bust. Why? Turns out the songs stunk more than a barnyard after feeding time. No amount of WOM could turn this gilded cow pie into platinum.

On the other hand, products that do deliver can accelerate their success with WOM. Renegade Marketing Group recently worked with Panasonic to launch Oxyride batteries, a new and more powerful battery. As part of the launch effort, Oxyride sponsored 15 performances of last fall's Jason Mraz concert tour. Once the sponsorship papers were signed, Panasonic gave Jason's crew a pile of Oxyride batteries that they elected to use in all their wireless microphones. After a couple of nights, his equipment manager figured out that they were getting twice as many performances out of the Oxyride batteries. This info found its way to Jason who proceeded to enlighten 13 different audiences across the country about the power of Oxyrides. Suddenly a sponsorship was transformed into a love fest of positive WOM, built upon the simple truth that the product delivered.

3D: Diversify

As terrific as WOM can be, it is but one of many potentially beneficial marketing channels. In my restaurant story, WOM got me to try a new place while the PR coverage reminded me to try it again. An email or postcard later from that same restaurant would also keep it top of mind, encouraging another visit. The point is that it is important to diversify, engage, remind and cajol your audience to revisit your product or service.

Dave Balter, founder and president of BzzAgent, discussed with deserved pride the extensive reach of his network at the recent Toy Fair WOM panel. With over 130,000 agents nationwide, marketers can tap into an extensive communications channel that can reach up to ten times more people depending on that particular buzz-generating program. Dave would also be the first to admit that BzzAgent is rarely the only communications channel marketers, especially mass marketers, should include in their marketing plans. According to Dave, BzzAgent activity is most effective when integrated with online, events, PR and more traditional advertising vehicles.

For the Oxyride launch I mentioned earlier, Panasonic elected to include WOM among a broad range of communication channels to reach their youthful target. Event marketing activities on college campuses and at the Jason Mraz concerts created wonderful moments of discovery and a memorable sampling experience. Irreverent commercials running exclusively on late-night TV complimented online outreach via an urban nightlife blog, Yahoo IM skins and Tickle quizzes. A quirky microsite, OxyrideMe.com, containing fun amusements and amusing facts, reinforced the reality that the product actually delivered more power than conventional alkalines. Fueled by the 3D's, discover, deliver and diversify, it should be no surprise that Panasonic batteries enjoyed unprecedented sales increases in 2005.

Pages: [< previous page](#) [1](#) [2](#)

Tags: [word of mouth](#)

[Comment](#) [Printer Friendly](#) [Email](#) [Permalink](#)

[Article Sponsor](#)

Contextual advertising with Media Traffic is one of the most effective ways to market your product or services. That's why many advertising agencies choose us to deliver their clients' marketing messages. Now with our new and improved interface, starting your first campaign is easier than ever. [Visit us today](#) and see how you can get more effective traffic.

More Features

- [The New Creativity: How the Interactive World is Redefining the Ad in All its Forms](#)
- [Johnson & Johnson Assists Young Nurses with Interactive Advergaming Tutorial](#)
- [The Proactive Interactive Agency: Deep Focus Fans the Future of Entertainment Marketing](#)
- [Warner Bros. Maps '16 Blocks' and Beyond with Google](#)
- [The RAVE-ing Wake-Up Call: How to Lure the 18-34 Market](#)

Reader Comments.

No comments yet

Leave a Comment

Name
Email Address
URL

Comment

[Print friendly version](#) [Send this page to a friend](#)