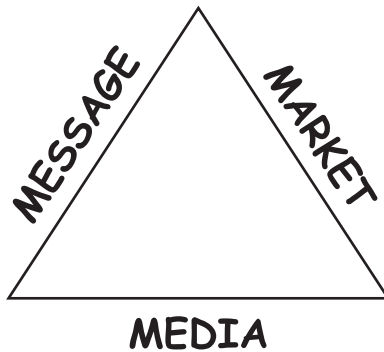


Malibuism—Becoming Hot



Shortly after moving to Arizona in 1978, I went through a divorce and found myself single and “in the market”—and at that time, the market was Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights at one place and one place only: an incredibly popular nightclub called Bogart’s. Anybody who was anybody frequented Bogart’s. All the beautiful people frequented Bogart’s. In a city of three-quarters of a million people, there might as well have been only one nightclub. The line to get in the front door was often a hundred

people long, but if you “knew somebody” you could be granted the great and glorious privilege of buying a \$100.00 membership card entitling you to enter via the line at the back door, which was often shorter.

I was there on a Thursday night when it was as I’ve just described. But that same Saturday, I returned to find a nearly empty Bogart’s. “What happened?” I asked the bartender. “Did they drop the bomb and forget to tell me?”

He shrugged his shoulders and said, “When you’re hot you’re hot, when you’re not you’re not.”

Bogart’s never got hot again. Only a short time later, it ceased to exist. You sure can go from hot to cold in a hurry.

ULTIMATE MARKETING SIN #3 Taking Your Customer’s Loyalty for Granted

Fads and Trends

The entire American automobile industry nearly put itself out of business by stubbornly, stupidly *assuming* that Americans wouldn’t buy Japanese cars. Network TV has lost one-third of its viewers and is now frantically trying to recover; the people who run it sat around and said, people will never pay to watch better TV programming.

Once upon a time there was buy-American loyalty. There was brand-name loyalty. There was neighborhood-merchant loyalty. Once upon a time. Today, you’ve got to keep getting hot all over again.

California may very well be the fad capital of America. Consider the rising and falling fortunes of EST and primal scream therapy . . . women’s underwear becoming outerwear . . . the Beverly Hills diet . . . injections of sheep sperm. Malibu-ites can afford to indulge their every whim—they have plenty of ’em—and some whim-satisfiers make fortunes for their creators.

But California has no exclusive on all this. Tragically, young boys in all the inner cities of America have been assaulted, mugged, and occasionally even killed by others desperate for their designer-name sneakers. Even in Kansas, Austin Powers was BIG. Malibu-ism invades even Tupelo.

The Father of the Fad Everybody Remembers

On April Fool's Day, 1975, advertising man Gary Dahl dropped into his favorite tavern for a beer, got involved with a group talking about their pets, and when asked if he had a pet, replied: "You bet, I've got a pet that's perfectly housebroken, cheap to feed, loyal, and easy to take care of and that knows tricks. In fact, he can roll over and play dead better than any other pet in the world."

"Yeah? What kind of pet is that?"

"My pet rock," Gary said, and the group broke into laughter. Pretty soon, the group was enthusiastically involved in coming up with all the best things about having a pet rock. Gary listened. Then he went home and spent a couple of weeks at the typewriter coming up with the funny owner's manual to go with the pet rock.

One year later, Gary was a bona fide millionaire.

Since then, thousands of people have sought fast wealth through inventing fads; few have been successful. But a surer path to wealth is to adopt the principles behind the incredible success of the pet rock to ordinary products, services, or businesses . . . over and over and over again.

The New, Short Product Life Cycles

Way back in 1996, Ken Hakuta, known as "Dr. Fad," raised the issue of short product life cycles—which I prefer to call "short customer interest cycles." Ken made his first fortune in 1982, with the sticky-footed, wall-climbing octopus toys called Wall Walkers. He sold nearly 150 million

of those goofy things. Ken has his M.B.A. from Harvard, but he's never been a traditional marketer. He advised, "Pretend you're marketing to kids. They get bored with products easily and outgrow them. A company must constantly develop new ideas and be agile enough to turn them into working products—fast."

Ken observed that today's adults are acting more like kids than they used to. He astutely recognized the marketplace impact of declining attention spans and abbreviated interest cycles. This is truer than ever. These days, people have the attention span of gnats.

This behavioral trend has been helped along by the little device known as the remote control. And the trend is most easily observed while watching anybody watching TV with a remote in hand. What does that person do? You bet: click up and down, up and down, station to station. Bore people for even a second and they're gone!

It might interest you to know that men zap about four times more than women, and, conversely, women are four times more likely to click to a program and then stay there until the end than are men. This may be wired in. It's possible that males are born with an attention deficit disorder gene women don't have. It is activated by wedding vows, then stimulated repeatedly by the insertion of any small object into the hand. To any women reading: The next time he dozes off in front of the tube, gently take the remote out of his hand, and gently replace it with a flashlight; when he awakes, he'll click away for five or ten minutes before figuring out the problem!

Actually, my theory is that this little clicker is the last thing we men have any control over in the household, so by God, we're gonna use it.

Anyway, that noise you hear in a quiet neighborhood at night ain't crickets. Research from various sources, averaged together, suggests the average TV viewer "zaps" every two to three minutes. Could there be any greater evidence of the disintegration of attention span? Now, DVR and TiVO are popular because they let people skip commercials, and advertisers are trying to find different ways to use TV. For example, paid product placements

in shows are way up. But whether you're presenting a TV infomercial or a direct-mail piece or a print ad long on copy, you have to be very conscious of the need to keep "re-interesting" the customer minute by minute.

This is sort of like the "pull 'em back in" factor I talk about in the companion book to this one (*The Ultimate Sales Letter*) with regard to printed marketing materials.

This extends from the living room and TV to the sales letter in the mail, to the Web site on the Internet, to the aisle in the store. Your customers are impatient, easily bored "zappers."

How Not to Get Zapped

Possibly the biggest underlying secret to Gary Dahl's Pet Rock was *fun*. Everybody had fun with it. It wasn't the rock; it was the idea—carried out in the owner's manual—that made it all fun.

Ken Hakuta said, "Colgate came out with a toothpaste pump first, and Crest had to play follow-the-leader. But who's to say that the pump is any better than the tube? The important thing is that it's different. In my fad marketing strategy, the pump would be only the first of many changes. A year later I might introduce different flavors; after that, toothpaste dispensed from an aerosol can; then a bubblegum toothpaste . . . well, you get the idea."

You bet. The idea is:

ULTIMATE MARKETING SECRET WEAPON #9 Constant Change

We are so interested in the new and different, we express it in vernacular. When we greet someone, we say, "What's *new*?" We *don't* ask, "Hey, what's old? What's the same as it was the last time I ran into you?" Why don't we ask that? Because we just don't care about what's old.

If you want to keep your customers, keep your customers interested, and keep getting your customers to tell others about you, you've got to keep coming up with good answers to the question, "What's new?"

During what insiders refer to as "the dark ages" after Walt's death, the Disney empire was crumbling—because there was nothing new going on. Eventually, Michael Eisner came in and re-created the magic of constant, almost frantic, certainly frenetic innovation, and the fortunes of the Disney business machine have never been brighter.

Probably the best example, though, is McDonald's. Hardly a two-week period passes without something new or something different going on at McDonald's: a new product, an incredible offer, a new game, a new free gift. "We can invent," Ray Kroc once said, "faster than the others can copy," and that they do. So should you.

Seven Ways to Get Hot and Keep Getting Hot All Over Again

Here are things you can do to make sure you're not left behind by quick-changing consumers.

1. Get Prestigious Recognition

Chances are, your local newspaper or entertainment magazine publishes an annual or semiannual "Best of (your city's name)" issue. You have publications with columnists, radio shows with hosts, TV shows with reporters that all need to be wooed by you—they do have influence in your market! Having well-known people patronize your business and having the media talking about your business makes everybody else want to join the "in crowd."

If you market within an industry niche, rather than to the general public, there's less media, but its publishers and editors tend to be more accessible. In 1997, my client Joe Polish of Piranha Marketing was named "CleanFax Man of the Year" and was featured on that carpet cleaning

industry trade journal's front cover in a striking double photo; Joe in a devil's cape with horns, and Joe as an angel with a halo, symbolizing his controversial reputation in the industry. The magazine featured a full-length, favorable profile. He has since made massive, profitable use of reprints of that article. In fact, a full eight years afterward, he is still getting mileage out of these reprints! But this didn't happen by happy accident. Over a couple years prior to this "recognition," Joe carefully and aggressively cultivated a very good relationship with the publisher of the magazine. He interviewed the publisher for his own monthly audiocassette series; he frequently mentioned the magazine in his own newsletter; he invited the publisher to his seminars; he even helped the publisher with a direct-mail campaign. He kept in constant touch with this publisher, occasionally calling just to swap ideas.

2. Seek Out New Products

Voraciously read trade magazines, business magazines, and newspapers—and frequently attend conventions, expos, and trade shows in search of interesting, exciting new products you can offer to your customers.

3. Develop New Services

Find new, different, and better ways to be of service to your customers.

4. Tie into Trends and News Events

Get involved with what people are thinking and talking about. One of the great direct-response copywriters of all time, Robert Collier, talked about "entering the conversation already taking place in the prospect's mind." This is a powerful strategy, requiring considerable insight and understanding of your market, awareness of what's going on in their lives and in the news, and opportunistic action.

When Bill Gates came under attack by the government for monopolistic, unfair business practices, and every day's news was reporting on that, one of my clients alertly added copy to his ads, sales letters, and faxes talking about how using his product would give your business such an unfair advantage you'd destroy and dominate your competitors just like Bill Gates did, but without having to testify or pay huge fines. Response to his advertising went up by nearly 50 percent.

Shortly after the first election of Bill Clinton, when Hillary was put in charge of the national health-care scheme, it was easy to demonize her amongst conservatives. In one client's full-page magazine ad for a financial opportunity, I added a "P.S." paragraph just mentioning Hillary coming to take away a lot of your money to pay for everybody else's cradle-to-grave health care, and suggested that you needed to get rich fast, before it was too late. The response to the ad increased significantly.

When the first Iraq war, Desert Storm, was ending, I noticed an article in a trade journal reporting on a surge in Frederick's of Hollywood's sales, apparently stimulated by the wives and girlfriends of soldiers preparing for homecoming celebrations. I clipped it and sent it to an acquaintance of mine who owns two lingerie stores in a "military town." She did a quick welcome-home theme mailing, announcing a special sale, to her customer list as well as to a rented list of military households. She got huge response.

5. Tie into Seasons and Holidays

Again, get involved with what people are thinking and talking about! Here's a partial list of seasons and special days you might tie a promotion to:

January/Week 1	New Year
January/Week 3	Martin Luther King Day
January/Week 4	Australia Day
February/Week 1	Start promoting for Valentine's Day
February/Week 2	Lincoln's Birthday
February/Week 3	Washington's Birthday

March/Weeks 1 to 3	St. Patrick's Day
March/Week 3 or 4	Spring officially begins
April/Week 1	April Fool's Day
April/Weeks 2 and 3	Easter
April/Week 4	Italian Liberation Week
May/Weeks 1 to 3	Mother's Day
May/Week 3	Armed Forces Day
May/Week 5	Memorial Day
June/Week 3	Flag Day
June/Week 4	Summer officially begins
	Father's Day
July/Week 1	Fourth of July
July/Weeks 2 to 4	Peak of summer—all summer activities
August/Weeks 3, 4, and 5	Back-to-School readiness
September/Week 1	Labor Day
September/Weeks 4 and 5	Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur
September/Week 5	Autumn officially begins
October/Week 2	Columbus Day
October/Weeks 3, 4, and 5	Halloween
November/Weeks 1 and 2	Election Day
November/Week 3	Veteran's Day
November/Weeks 1, 2, and 3	Thanksgiving
November/Weeks 3 and 4	Inauguration of holiday shopping season
December/All Weeks	Christmas and Hanukkah
December/All Weeks	Winter activities
December/Weeks 3 and 4	New Year's Eve

As you can see, there's hardly a week that goes by that you can't be starting, in the throes of, or winding up, a seasonal or holiday-related promotion for your business. You can also find lists of obscure holidays in books at the library or bookstore, if a lighter, humorous touch is appropriate for your business.

6. Tie into Movies and Entertainment Events

An awful lot of water-cooler and coffee-klatch conversation has to do with the TV shows of the night before, the movies seen over the weekend, and gossip about celebrities. As I was writing this edition of this book, ABC's *Desperate Housewives* was the hottest of the hottest of the things on TV. Everybody watching, everybody talking about it. In my *No B.S. Marketing Letter*, I took a massage therapy clinic's coupon-flyer and gave it a complete makeover with a *Desperate Housewives* theme. (If you'd like to see it, enroll in the 12-Week Ultimate Marketing Plan Course, free, at www.UltimateMarketingPlan.com.)

A very successful fundraising event that a friend and I helped develop for a local chapter of the Arthritis Foundation was an Oscars party, held at Planet Hollywood the night the Oscar Awards are televised. For as long as I can remember, bars have used Monday Night Football as an event. In my travels, I saw an Italian restaurant advertising a Sunday night Sopranos event, with dinner, live music, and the *Sopranos* TV show on big screen TVs.

TV Guide may hold the clues to your next event, too.

7. Piggyback on Others' Fads, Even If They Are Unrelated

I don't know about you, but if they had come to me and invited me to invest in a movie about giant turtles who lived in the sewers, ate pizza, sang rock music, and were martial arts experts, I would have whipped my checkbook right out. Sure. Nevertheless, the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* were big, big, big! And Pizza Hut astutely latched onto their coattails—uh, shells.

But Pizza Hut didn't own this opportunity. A dentist I know went out and bought some stuffed Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, displayed them in his office, and mailed all his patients this offer: bring in any child for a special \$9.95 exam and he or she can take home the turtle of his or her choice—while supplies last—free!

If I had owned a pet store—or a record store, a toy store, or a kids' shoe store—I can guarantee you that I would have run some kind of green promotion the year the Turtles got hot.

Fortunately, there's some kind of comparable fad every few months or so. Before the ink is dry on the pages of this book, whatever examples I might mention could be distant memory, but another opportunity will have presented itself for astute marketers to capitalize on.

Fantastic Examples

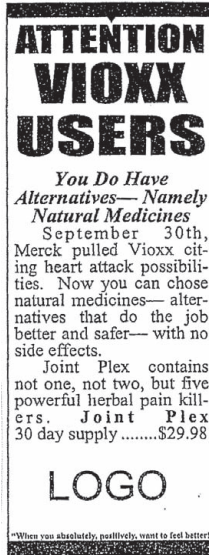
I want to tell you about three great examples from 2004.

First up is the Ketchup Wars promotion, developed by my client Rory Fatt at Restaurant Marketing Systems, and used by restaurant owners nationwide.

Piggybacking on Teresa Heinz Kerry and the U.S. presidential election, an entrepreneur began marketing a brand of ketchup labeled “W,” for Republicans who couldn't bear to put Heinz ketchup on their Freedom Fries! Rory piggybacked on that product, helping restaurant owners use the two brands as a means of polling customers. Customers indicated their presidential choice by choice of ketchup, the restaurants reported the results to ketchupwars.com, and news releases were sent to media outlets. Hundreds of restaurant owners got publicity in their local newspapers and on radio and TV programs. One restaurant was the subject of a report during prime-time TV news, with promotional plugs all night long, including during the season premiere of the popular show *Law and Order*.

Second, my Gold/VIP Member Lester Nathan, an advertising and business consultant to independent pharmacy owners, gets kudos for rapid response to a timely news event. His ad, shown as Exhibit #11, was prepared for his pharmacy clients and running in newspapers within thirty-six hours of the first news of the arthritis drug Vioxx being pulled from the marketplace by the FDA.

Exhibit #11



**ATTENTION
VIOXX
USERS**

*You Do Have
Alternatives— Namely
Natural Medicines*

September 30th,
Merck pulled Vioxx cit-
ing heart attack possibili-
ties. Now you can chose
natural medicines— alter-
natives that do the job
better and safer— with no
side effects.

Joint Plex contains
not one, not two, but five
powerful herbal pain kill-
ers. **Joint Plex**
30 day supply\$29.98

LOGO

“When you absolutely, positively, want to feel better!”

Third, Platinum Member Chauncey Hutter Jr., a marketing advisor for tax preparers and accountants, did a little pro bono work for his church, and wrote a sales letter headlined:

**“WHO ELSE WANTS ANSWERS ABOUT GOD
AFTER SEEING THE PASSION OF CHRIST?”**

**Local Business Owner Speaks Out
about Controversial Movie**

You can see his entire letter in one of the installments of the free 12-Week Ultimate Sales Letter Course delivered by e-mail, available at www.UltimateMarketingPlan.com.

Because news events are shorter-lived today than ever before, many opportunities that occur require very rapid response on your part. Fortunately, you have access to fast-response media, which will be discussed in Step 12.