

IAAPA Attractions **EXPO**

**Your attraction in a Web 2.0
world**

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Your Attraction in a Web 2.0 World

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Jeff's background includes every major form of video (except film) and is probably best known in the amusement industry for CoasterBuzz.com, a portal for daily industry news.

Agenda

- Definitions
- Identifying the landscape
- Control (or lack of) over the message
- Viral is passe, conversation is in
- Reaching out to the right people
- The in-house blogger
- Forming an action plan
- Selling your ideas internally
- Paying for placement
- Case studies
- Q&A

Definitions

- Web 2.0
- Blog
- Social networking
- Viral
- Conversational marketing

- Web 2.0: Allegedly coined by O'Reilly Media for conference to describe the principles of the current generation of the Web. link: <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html>
- Blog: Web log, an online journal
- Social networking: The modern day version of meeting people who share common interests
- Viral: As in marketing. It's the manner in which your message spreads like a virus, and it's an over-hyped concept.
- Conversational marketing: Spreading the message between you, customers, other customers and letting it evolve.

The Players



Social networking, social linking and “wisdom of crowds” aggregation spread the word. More than half of all American teens use social networking sites. link: http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/198/report_display.asp

The Local Players

- Your local newspapers
- The TV stations
- Radio (especially morning shows)
- Most important: Your customers

The old guard media are still valuable, in different ways. They’re down but not out. Gannett papers are taking things to the Web, but the challenge is getting the right people who write for your audience. More and more, they’re the amateurs and not just the pros. link: http://www.wired.com/techbiz/media/magazine/15-08/ff_gannett
The TV stations are also important, but now they’re putting the stuff they don’t use on the air on their Web sites.

Radio still has a lot of appeal, and the obvious demographic data helps you target an audience. Talk to the promotions people, not sales people. Investigate what they do on the Web.

Your customers continue the conversation on and offline. Get that conversation started.

Control over the message

The old world:

- Press releases
- Brochures
- Well-rehearsed statements
- Talking at your customers

The old world gives you the illusion of being able to fine tune exactly what gets out about your business and its product. It’s one-way, and you live in a state of denial that your customers are just taking it as is, and without question.

Control over the message

The new world:

- Real-time discovery of your product
- “Now” content
- Customer speaking for you
- Having a conversation with the customer

The online world encourages conversation. The customer seeks you out, or hears about it from people he or she trusts. If the business responds to market conditions, the current message is the only one that matters. Instead of spoon-feeding the message, the customer spreads it for you (so get the product right). When something isn't right, they're going to let you know about it, directly or not.

Set the message free

- Let go of what you know
- Allow the customer to “own” your media
- Trust in your product
- If you don't trust in your product, it's not good enough

The problem with trying to tightly control the message is that it won't be repeated. Give away photos, logos, video and whatever you've got. Let it exist on YouTube or Flickr where it can be seen. If what you have is worth talking about, let people talk about it.

Viral



This video has been seen more than 61,000,000 times

“Evolution of Dance” is the most viewed video on YouTube ever. It was posted by the motivational speaker who performs it at various colleges. Clearly he'll work for a very long time.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMH0bHeiRNq>

Viral marketing is hard

- Great ideas aren't easy to come by
- Your product isn't likely that special
- Me-too = fake
- There is often cost (production, merchandise, etc.)
- Does a local attraction really need to be a global sensation? Of course not.

Conversational Marketing

I first heard the term in 2003:

“Conversational marketing is powerful. It can be used for good. It can be used for evil. And lots of things in between. But, there's no question in my mind today that those of us who engage in conversational marketing have a new-found power base that will only continue to get stronger.”

-Robert Scoble, then working for Microsoft

Robert Scoble, formerly of Microsoft, wrote this in October, 2003. He's also author of the book *Naked Conversations*. <http://scoble.weblogs.com/2003/10/30.html>
He was right, because this is no longer the exclusive domain of dot-coms. This style of communication, frank, open and transparent, gives your business a credibility and human feel. And isn't feeling what we used to sell our leisure product?

Who do you talk to?

- Start the conversation with your customers
- Use the techniques you know and trust
- Give them incentives and opportunities to talk back, and to others
- Let customers feel they have a stake in your business

Coupons, discounts, group offers, these are the tools to get you noticed, as they've always been. That starts the conversation.
Now think about how you can keep them thinking about you. Be creative. If you're an FEC, post DDR and mini-golf scores online. If you're an amusement park, post their photos online. Whatever you do, make them feel like they're part of what makes you tick.

Blog

- Welcome to the age of transparency
- Customers like to feel like a part of what you do
- Humanity trumps greedy business
- Use it as a jumping off point for other online pursuits

Secrets suck. Ask people who worked for Enron. The most simple thing, like showing the delivery of that new DDR machine or a few paragraphs about the guys fixing your go-karts makes you seem more like human beings. It's also a great place to point to other activities, gain "friends" or plug your events on social sites.

Take action

- Start a blog
- Talk to your own kids and their friends
- Explore social networking
- Spend time watching the usage trends, and skim tech news

Blogs are cheap and easy. Blogger.com, for example, is free. Find out what your kids are using to network. MySpace and Facebook have regional and socioeconomic differences (money users seem to prefer Facebook, link: <http://www.danah.org/papers/essays/ClassDivisions.html>). Tech news link: http://digg.com/tech_news

Action example

- You start a blog, and open an account on Facebook
- You blog about your Facebook account and invite friend requests
- You blog about your next mini-golf/laser tag tournament, and create an event in Facebook



Create an Event

Step 1: Event Info Step 2: Picture Step 3: Guest List

Event Name:

Where:

Tagline:

eg. "One night only" or "Because sht'll only last 21 years..."

Friends spread the word

- Your event appears in “the feed” for your friends

 Katie Reece is attending MONSTER BASH.

- Friends attend, and their friends see it in their feeds
- Rinse, lather, repeat

Selling your boss

- Fear of the unknown is the greatest objection, so anticipate those fears
- ROI is easy to pitch: say you’ll do it from home and the tech cost is almost nothing
- Explain conversational marketing, and how the old school way excludes you from it

Your boss is probably older than you, and less savvy, and popular media is always spreading fear about the online world. Compare some of the things in your action plan to the old way of doing things with standard marketing materials and expense. Show how a Google search of your attraction is going to reveal reviews, and how you’d rather get your own conversation higher on the pecking order.

Paying for placement

- The Internet is not free
- Sometimes it doesn’t hurt to spend a little to start the conversation
- Targeting and metrics are relatively precise

Someone has to pay for this stuff, and much of it is still paid for by advertising views (irrelevant ads, at that). Buying keyword searches or sponsorships on local media sites is cheap because it’s still treated as secondary line business. Stats measure ROI with vivid detail.

Case study:

Holiday World & Splashin' Safari

- 40,000 people read the "Holiblog"
- PR rep active in online enthusiast communities
- Being in the conversation helps shape the message
- Secondary blog is all guest comments

Case study:

Holiday World & Splashin' Safari

"A blog is an opportunity to pull back the curtain and tell some stories. Show the readers a fun peek at behind the scenes and also tell stories from our past. We've used the HoliBlog to further personify the park. The last thing you'd want for a park blog is to be stiffly PC and corporate. The operative word is fun."

- Paula Werne, Director of PR

<http://www.holidayworld.com/>

Case study:

Cedar Point

- Blog, video podcast and user consumable media part of cedarpoint.com
- Social media graphics available for download and unrestricted use
- Created entire MySpace theme for users with launch of new Maverick roller coaster

Case study:

Cedar Point

“With the success of networking websites like MySpace and online message forums on which users can create their own identity, we wanted to take advantage of that... Not only have we seen great download rates of these items, but we've seen the items everywhere - it's basically free advertising for the park.”

- Tony Clark, PR Representative

<http://www.cedarpoint.com/>

Case study:

Blendtec

- Not in the amusement industry, but combines product with topical items
- Blender videos make work of iPhones and Transformer toys, aligning product with trends and no marketing agreements
- Well-executed, out-of-the-box thinking that taps into the customers' consciousness

<http://www.willitblend.com/>

Q&A

- This presentation available on www.popw.com
- Contact Jeff@popw.com

