



By Brad Beiermann Ph.D.

Organizations Struggle To Manage The Intersection Between IT and Web 2.0 Marketing

The technology driving Web 2.0 has outpaced many marketing professionals ability to stay ahead of the curve. This has left many organizations playing to the script of an outdated marketing strategy. The possibility of failure is now higher than ever...or is it?

As the U.S. continues shifts from an industrial economy to a services oriented economy, the need for businesses to leverage online Web services continues to grow. As a result, the opportunity for innovation exists in creating an experience that allows greater interactivity between a corporate website and the customer. Unfortunately, many companies are still behind the eight ball with static Web 1.0 websites. Customers have millions of channels to surf today on the Web. A site that has no interaction will have a difficult time competing. Corporate websites that allow potential customers to express themselves and experience an emotional bond will be online leaders. Sites such as mySpace, Twitter, and YouTube have allowed Web users to easily express a topic near and dear to their hearts: Themselves. CMO's not working closely with their technology groups to create an enhanced online interactive customer experience, may find soon find themselves without a job. Their biggest challenge is getting the right mix of people to innovate and combine Web 2.0 technologies with a sticky marketing strategy. On the other side of the coin, there are very few resources in corporate IT departments who have the background in creating business models to enable online value driven customer interaction. This leads us to one of the most pressing hurdles in today's U.S. labor market...an impending brain drain in the leadership ranks.

The Talent Search

Interactive marketing has created a real drain on labor resources having the right skills. In the dot com boom there was a dire need for individuals who had basic business skills combined with technical computer skills. A worker with an undergraduate degree in computer science combined with an MBA was the diamond sought by every corporate recruiter. In today's labor market, the skills needed are a little more refined and targeted towards the real goal: Attracting customers and keeping their loyalty. As a result, the need is in individuals who understand the essence of sticky marketing combined with an understanding of web technologies used to create an experience. The implosion of the dot com bubble created a void in graduates with technical backgrounds. College enrollment in computer science and engineering plunged after the dot com bust. Combined with the

outsourcing movement and de-industrialization of the U.S. manufacturing base, the labor market faces a shortage of qualified technologists. Especially technologists and leaders who understand online customer interaction, and the technologies driving customer experience. Those with the skills and understanding have gone towards entrepreneurial paths to create their own businesses as the risk and cost of entry is extremely low. The rewards of such efforts often surpass the level of corporate compensation being offered in the market. Corporations will need to be more creative in luring the talent as the brain drain will continue in the coming years.

Relationships Between IT and Marketing

The relationship between IT and marketing has been traditionally driven by the need for customer data. Many marketing departments rely on their IT groups to generate the data obtained from online surveys, polls, and buying patterns. As organizations build their Web 2.0 strategy and infrastructures, data related to viral videos, forums, personalization, and blogs will be the biggest need by marketers. Individuals, particularly in senior leadership, who have an in-depth working knowledge with these technologies and channels, will be highly sought and low in supply. Ultimately, individuals will be needed to leverage the technologies, understand customer interactions, and develop a process to innovate tailor made online customer experiences. Leadership will face the duties of integrating these new capabilities into their business and marketing strategy. In addition, they will need to keep a clear vision and direction with regards to adapting the changes brought on by new technology. The relationship between IT and marketing will continue to draw closer. The client base has become much more virtual with peer-to-peer customer relationships happening daily.

Spekenzy Geek?

Technology has created a completely new world for marketers. Traditional marketing channels have become less effective as the number of communication channels has grown dramatically. In the new marketing world, clients now have a million channels to view and participate in. Yet many organizations are still playing to the script of a marketing strategy from 1967. Why? Look no further than the culture. Staying abreast of the latest geek-speak and technology has not been in the core job description of the traditional marketing role. Traditional marketing is long gone. A cultural shift from old marketing to new marketing is lagging. The technology train left town with all the Web 2.0 customers collaborating with each other. Their digital dollars will follow wherever their mouse or wireless device takes them. In so many words, technology has created a disruption in the marketing world. Disruptions are often a genesis for new thinking, innovation, and paradigm changes. The opportunity is to now leverage new ways of thinking about marketing and branding.

Interactive online marketing is here to stay and will only grow larger in the foreseeable future. Getting the marriage between IT and marketing to meet the needs of online interactivity will be a key ingredient for many organizations. At the heart of this marriage will be the need to integrate the IT resources into the marketing creativity process. Marketing groups need to adapt their technology counter parts or risk being stuck with the marketing strategy and channels of yester year. Once this adoption between the two occurs, steps towards innovative Web 2.0 marketing can become a reality.

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