



Don't Advertise!

Let your customers do the plogging

Advertising is *so* last century!
Advertising doesn't work any more.
Instead, customers talk – like *never* before.

It used to be the case that the advertiser was in control of the message. That was when the advertiser had more power than customers and could control the message. Nowadays, customers are in control. Customers have always talked, of course, and word of mouth has always been a factor. But in this century the power balance has switched. Customers don't just talk, they communicate big-time. Using email, text messaging and various dimensions of the internet (websites, forums, blogs) customers are connected and word of mouth is mega.

The marketplace has gone global – we can now reach more customer than ever before. But that goes for customers too. Customers can talk to other customers like never before. Customer power is awesome. Word of mouth – both positive and negative – can spread like wildfire, and will.

Would you dare to hand over the management of your advertising campaign to a bunch of the most talkative of your customers? Does this idea make you nervous – or excited? The reality is that these talkative customers will control your marketing messages anyway. The truth about your products and services will be found out and customers will talk – and talk, and talk. So why not accept that the customers are in charge of your communications and help them a little? You won't get away with telling lies – you'll be found out and punished. But the truth should be good enough. (If it's not, your business is in big trouble anyway.) Tell your customers your story and let them talk. Tell it directly to the gossips because they talk more and more

people listen to them. And make the story interesting – interesting – for the gossips, that is, not for you.

Word of mouth advertising is back – and it's more powerful than ever. The combination of people's timeless need to talk, combined with the timely arrival of new digital communication media, means that word of mouth is back at the top of the marketing agenda.

Professionals talk about 'viral marketing', 'buzz marketing' or 'community marketing' etc. Whatever term you want to use, it's all based on the recognition that our customers are better connected and better respected than we are.

The best marketing never was about talking at customers (monologue) but talking with customers (dialogue). We've progressed from monologue to dialogue but now that customers are talking with each other as never before, we need a third word for it. Based on the Greek, we should call it 'poly-logue'. It's hard to say but could be shortened to 'plog'. Let's call it 'plogging'. Yes, customers talk – and are talking like never before. Marketing has moved from monologue to dialogue to plog. Word of mouth has just gone global. Talkative customers + the internet = Plogging.

Customers are in control of the messages about your business, not you. Work with them not on them. Don't advertise. Don't shout your slogan. Instead, tell customers your story.

Let your customers do the plogging.

They will anyway. So help them.

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