



Introducing E-MARKPLAN: A practical methodology to plan e-marketing activities

Sandeep Krishnamurthy

University of Washington, Bothell, Box 358533, 18115 Campus Way NE, Room UW1-233, Bothell, WA 98011-8246, USA

KEYWORDS

Internet/Web/Online marketing;
E-marketing;
Case study

Abstract Although e-marketing is highly prevalent, no template currently exists for managers who wish to use the Internet/Web and related information technologies to market their products and services. This paper provides managers with a comprehensive, actionable, and practical methodology (E-MARKPLAN) to plan, enact, and analyze e-marketing activities. Five case studies are used to illustrate the diversity of e-marketing actions. E-MARKPLAN consists of five parts: goals, actors (i.e., those who take e-marketing actions), spaces (i.e., theaters of engagement), actions, and outcomes. The E-MARKPLAN methodology is versatile, and is not limited to companies which have e-commerce operations.

© 2005 Kelley School of Business, Indiana University. All rights reserved.

1. Got e-marketing?

The Internet and the World Wide Web have had a transformational impact on all functions of the corporation. The marketing function has, arguably, seen the greatest change. Companies now routinely use these information technologies to build brands, facilitate and track consumer communities, share pertinent information, disseminate messages, provide customer service, build promotional campaigns, and, in general, gain a competitive edge in the cluttered marketplace. Companies are even using online marketing techniques to bolster offline business components (see Case study # 1). In today's business climate, e-marketing is a signifi-

cant part of the marketing activity surrounding every important brand.

Before we discuss e-marketing in detail, it is useful to distinguish between three commonly used and sometimes confused terms: *e-business*, *e-commerce*, and *e-marketing*. *E-business* is an overarching term that describes how an organization uses the Internet/Web to transform organizational performance. Examples of e-business initiatives include Intranets, self-paced e-learning programs for employees, online payroll services, and knowledge management systems. *E-commerce* is transactional in nature and focuses entirely on the use of the Internet/Web to facilitate and accelerate commercial transactions. It is of three types: business-to-business (e.g., marketplaces, e-procurement), business-to-consumer (e.g., online

E-mail address: sandeep@u.washington.edu

retailing), and consumer-to-consumer (e.g., consumer auctions).

Our focus is on *e-marketing*, a term that refers to the use of the Internet/Web and related information technologies to conduct marketing activities. The World Wide Web is enormous: as of April 2005, Google's index contained over 8 billion Web pages. Unlike other media (e.g., TV, radio), where entry is mostly limited to corporations, the Web is a diverse medium. Since anyone can design and publish Web pages, we see them crafted by a wide range of agents, from corporations of all types to consumers, communities, universities, and non-profit agencies. The advent of blogs (short for Web logs) has created a new communication environment, with a multitude of voices joining the conversation. Readers unfamiliar with blogs may refer to Case study # 2, and may view <http://fastlane.gmblogs.com/>. Run by a leader of General Motors, this blog is dedicated to the promotion of the company's new car models. The explosion of Internet/Web-based information has led to ever-increasing levels of competition for users' attention. Establishing an online presence is useless if companies are not able to generate attention for their products and services. Thus, online, the proper application of e-marketing is a pre-requisite for success.

Too often, in an attempt to simplify the complex and diverse nature of the Web, managers equate e-marketing with two actions: Internet advertising and designing a website. Just as advertising is a part of the marketing mix of every corporation, Internet advertising and creating a persuasive site are significant elements of e-marketing. However, it would be wrong to assume these two activities constitute *all* of e-marketing, since that would preclude other actors (e.g., affiliates, consumer communities), other spaces (e.g., affiliate websites, consumer inboxes), and other actions (e.g., promotional e-mail, search

engine optimization). Astute e-marketers realize that, in order to succeed, online marketing efforts must match the properties of the medium. On TV, for example, marquee events such as the Super Bowl get disproportionate attention, making them prime advertising targets. Online, however, simply focusing on one action on one site does not work. There is no equivalent to the Super Bowl on the Web: traffic is too widely spread out (Adamic & Huberman, 2000; Huberman & Adamic, 1999). Similarly, companies used to communicating with consumers via broadcast media will find that permission-based e-mail can be used for diverse marketing purposes, such as alerting consumers to price drops or promotions, providing consumers first access to newly-designed sites, solving customer service problems, building brand affinity by promoting special events, and disseminating e-coupons (Krishnamurthy, 2001a). Other new technologies, such as blogs and mobile computing, allow for different marketing possibilities. In sum, marketers must adapt their marketing approach to the properties of the medium in order for e-marketing to succeed.

What is needed from the e-marketer is an integrated view of the online marketing process, which involves a contemporaneous judgment of actors, spaces, actions, and outcomes in relationship with marketing goals. E-marketers should ask themselves questions such as: Which actions will we take in what space? Which actors do we expect to be involved in what space? How will these actions in multiple spaces help us achieve our goals? E-MARKPLAN guides e-marketers in this process to make better decisions.

No consolidated figures are available for e-marketing, as it is hard to track. However, as illustrated in Fig. 1, spending on Internet advertising has, after a brief dip, seen a resurgence. JupiterResearch has forecasted that e-mail mar-

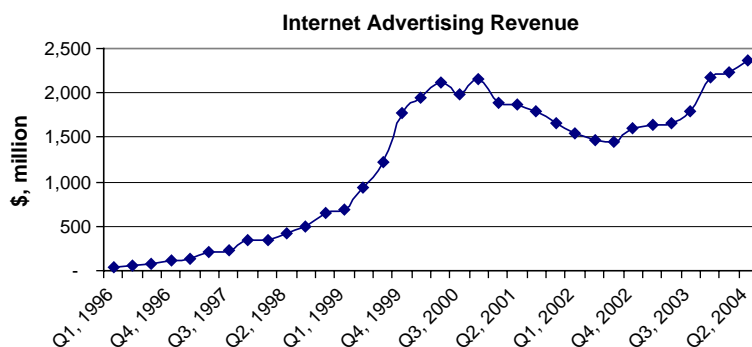


Figure 1 Quarterly internet advertising revenue [Source: <http://iab.net>].

keting spending will rise from \$2.1 billion in 2003 to \$6.1 billion in 2008 (Mooche, 2003). Companies are spending considerably on search engine optimization and website design, as well. Moreover, many activities are free to the company, such as consumers blogging about a new product.

In spite of the widespread use of the Internet as a marketing medium, managers who wish to employ e-marketing strategies do not have a clear template to plan, implement, and analyze their e-marketing activities. As a result, spending on e-marketing tends to be ad hoc in nature; often, managers are not evaluating their use of e-marketing techniques vis-à-vis marketing objectives. Many companies may not even be tracking how much they spend on e-marketing. The purpose of this paper is to provide managers with a comprehensive, actionable, and practical methodology (E-MARKPLAN) to plan, enact, and analyze e-marketing activities.

E-MARKPLAN is different from previous attempts to map e-marketing efforts (e.g., Kalyanam & McIntyre, 2002) in the following ways:

- (1) It is not limited to online retailers. It is a template that can be applied to a wide variety of e-marketing contexts; specifically, it can be used by marketers who do not have e-commerce operations, but are interested in using the Internet/Web to energize their marketing functions. It can be readily applied to the non-profit context, as well (see Case study # 5).
- (2) It does not assume that the referent corporation is the sole marketing agent. Rather, companies are encouraged to think of themselves as part of a larger ecosystem that involves small companies (e.g., Amazon.com's associates), large companies (e.g., partners), individual consumers (e.g., actors in the "viral marketing" process of rapid online message transfer (see Montgomery, 2001; Krishnamurthy, 2001b for more on viral marketing)), and consumer communities (e.g., Tide's Fabric Care Network (see Case study # 4)) as marketing agents.
- (3) It recognizes that online marketing cannot be limited to one space. Too often, we assume online marketing takes place on the company's website alone. While the website is an important theater of engagement, marketing often takes place in e-mail messages and blog postings. Similarly, a third-party (e.g., affiliate) can be crucial to e-marketing success. This is explicitly codified in E-MARKPLAN.

2. Show me the case studies

This section highlights five short case studies that describe specific e-marketing initiatives. These case studies illustrate the uniqueness and diversity of e-marketing programs.

2.1. Case study 1: Burger King's Subservient Chicken

To coincide with the April 2004 release of its Tender Crisp Chicken Sandwich, leading fast food chain Burger King introduced a website called the "Subservient Chicken" (www.subservientchicken.com). This use of the online medium to increase traffic and sales in Burger King's offline stores features a website on which a person in a chicken costume responds to typed user commands. Although it initially appears to the user that this is a live performance, it is not: approximately 400 commands have been chosen and programmed for their appropriateness, and the chicken responds to these commands only. For instance, if a visitor types the word "clap," the chicken claps. Similarly, visitors can ask the chicken to sleep, watch TV, jump, etc. The chicken even gives a "thumbs down" sign when a visitor types "go vegan." This gimmicky site became an instant hit on the Internet. For a few months after its launch, the site attracted more visitors than the main Burger King website (www.burgerking.com). Within a day of being released the site had a million hits, and within a week it had received 20 million hits (Anderson, 2005). By March 2005, 14 million unique visitors had viewed the site (Ives, 2005) and it had received 396 million hits (Anderson, 2005).

Brian Gies of Burger King described the rationale for using this approach:

"We wanted to launch the product and make a splash with a new product introduction in an unconventional way, but at the same time, staying true to the brand promise ['Have it your way']" (Anderson, 2005).

Andrew Keller, creative director at Burger King's lead agency, Crispin Porter and Bogusky, stated:

"We don't really believe in the TV spot. We wanted to help spread media out and try other things. It's something that we've been working on, and the BK account is one place we thought, 'Hey this could be very effective. We might as well give this a shot,' because it wasn't going to cost a lot of money. The bull's-eye target is the 18-to 45-year-old guy, who spends a lot of time on the Internet. We wanted to push the edge a bit more in media



Figure 2 Geico insurance's "The Gecko's Blog" [www.gecko.com/blog].

and be more controlled and more focused, more of an opt-in media vs. TV, which is kind of mass and everybody sees it" (Anderson, 2005).

2.2. Case study 2: The Geico gecko's blog

Geico Insurance's mascot is a popular figure: a gecko. The company took the unusual step of creating a blog for the gecko, which can be seen as a screenshot in Fig. 2 and on the Web at <http://www.geico.com/blog>. A blog can be equated to an online diary that is updated at regular intervals. The gecko posts frequently on the Geico blog, as well. Here is a sample posting:

Music for the Gecko — You'll Enjoy it Too!

"It seems my television exposure is making me into a bit of a celebrity. Well, no one was more surprised than me when I had a song composed for me. Check out the song "Asleep" or the artist, Candace Harrison, who composed it. The song is featured in one of my commercials. I hope all this fame doesn't go to my head!" (<http://www.geico.com/blog/blog16.htm>).

Website visitors can download copies of humorous TV commercials and free wallpapers for their computers; furthermore, they are encouraged to e-mail the gecko, thus deepening the customer's relationship with the brand. The company even offers a gecko store, which can be

shopped online at <http://geicostore.summitmg.com>. And, of course, Geico also makes it very easy for consumers to order insurance policies via the gecko blog website. The contact e-mail address and 1-800 number for purchasing are prominently displayed, thus melding brand building with commerce.

2.3. Case study 3: Amazon.com's affiliate program

Amazon pioneered the concept of the affiliate, or associates, program, which converts many small sites into traffic generators for the company. Operators of small websites earn a commission to refer traffic to Amazon.com and prominently display the company's logo.

Consider a tangible example. Imagine a site that has information about Egyptian antiques. To generate income, the site owner signs up for Amazon's associates program, and then posts a set of links to five books about Egyptian antiques that he/she recommends. Visitors to the site are encouraged to click on these links to buy the books from Amazon.com. When a visitor clicks on a link and purchases the product from Amazon.com, the affiliate earns a commission between 5% and 7.5% based on volume.

The affiliate program has been very successful for Amazon, and by mid-March 2005 the company

had signed up more than 900,000 associates. This e-marketing initiative helps [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) in two ways: traffic generation and branding. The small sites generate traffic for Amazon by placing links on their websites and encouraging users to click. As each link carries the Amazon logo, it enhances the online presence of the company, creating a powerful e-brand. Moreover, the company pays only when a customer buys something, as opposed to traditional advertising where companies pay ahead of time without knowing whether the campaign will be successful.

2.4. Case study 4: Tide.com's Fabric Care Network

[Tide.com](http://www.tide.com) is a website operated by Procter and Gamble, the makers of Tide detergent. Although the site boasts many good features, its most interesting aspect may be the community of users. In this space, people help solve each others' problems. Here is a sample exchange:

shannon19 wrote: 06/16 at 05:26 pm

"I just accidentally dropped Chocolate Ice Cream down the front of my white polo "golf" shirt. Any ideas on how to remove this?"

Comments 1—3 of 3:

marjoriawatkins wrote: 09/24 at 09:04 pm

"I don't know if you've heard of the new Clorox Bleach pen but it sure does work wonders. My son had stains on his shirt I couldn't get out. I tried the pen and it worked great."

Tea4CJ wrote: 06/17 at 05:16 pm

"Try Cascade dishwasher powder with a small amount of water – enough to make a thin paste, but not runny. Put the mixture on the stain and wash as usual. DO NOT use the liquid Cascade or any other brand. The liquid type of dishwasher detergent will leave a yellow stain on your white clothes. I use this on all of my stains on white clothes. It works! Even on baby formula stains. BTW – only make enough of the mixture to use immediately. Happy stain removing. Tea4CJ"

woofnmew wrote: 06/17 at 02:11 am

"Getting out chocolate can be a real problem, depending on the type of material used for your shirt. You might want to try rubbing it with a paste made of of (sic) baking soda and a small amount of water. If that doesn't work, Oxyclean usually does a good job if you soak the shirt in Oxyclean and hot water. Other ideas are to use a Clorox Bleach Stain Pen, which allows you to bleach an area with pinpoint accuracy, or Zout stain remover. The latter is expensive, but it

usually works wonders, especially the gel type." (<http://www.tide.com/messageboard/readcomment.jhtml?messageId=482007>)

Encouraging consumers to share solutions helps the company in many ways:

- (1) It reveals to the company the major problems being faced by consumers; thus, it provides an authentic form of marketing research.
- (2) It helps the company benchmark itself against competitive products; for instance, in the exchange above, many competitors' products are mentioned by consumers. This is an indication of areas in which the company might be weak.
- (3) It reduces the customer service load on the company. When consumers help each other, the frequency of calls to the company lessens.

2.5. Case study 5: The Consumer Union's prescription for change

The Consumer Union is a trusted, independent, non-profit, pro-consumer agency that is well known for its objectivity and rigorous test methodology. It publishes a highly-regarded magazine called *Consumer Reports* that rates products as diverse as shampoos, batteries, cell phones, Internet services, and cars.

The Consumer Union has created a campaign titled "Prescription for Change," which features a humorous video about the dizzying array of side-effects of certain drugs. The campaign website (www.prescriptionforchange.org), a screenshot of which can be seen in Fig. 3, is designed to help in a lobbying effort in Congress. There is a clear "call to action": visitors are encouraged to send a letter to Congress supporting a specific bill. While such lobbying efforts are common online, the use of a humorous message that could be easily shared with other online users made this campaign different. Rob Schneider, the person who spearheaded the effort, said:

"We're looking for new ways to spread the message about problems in the prescription drug marketplace. We've seen the success of things that have virally circulated through the Internet. While there are people who are interested in reading serious treatises about the need for reform – and we have that stuff on our site – there's a whole different audience who will be interested in hearing the message if it's done in a way that's almost like entertainment...I think there was concern that we were using humor on something that was a very serious subject – that we were making light of problems in the prescription drug marketplace that have resulted in people's deaths.

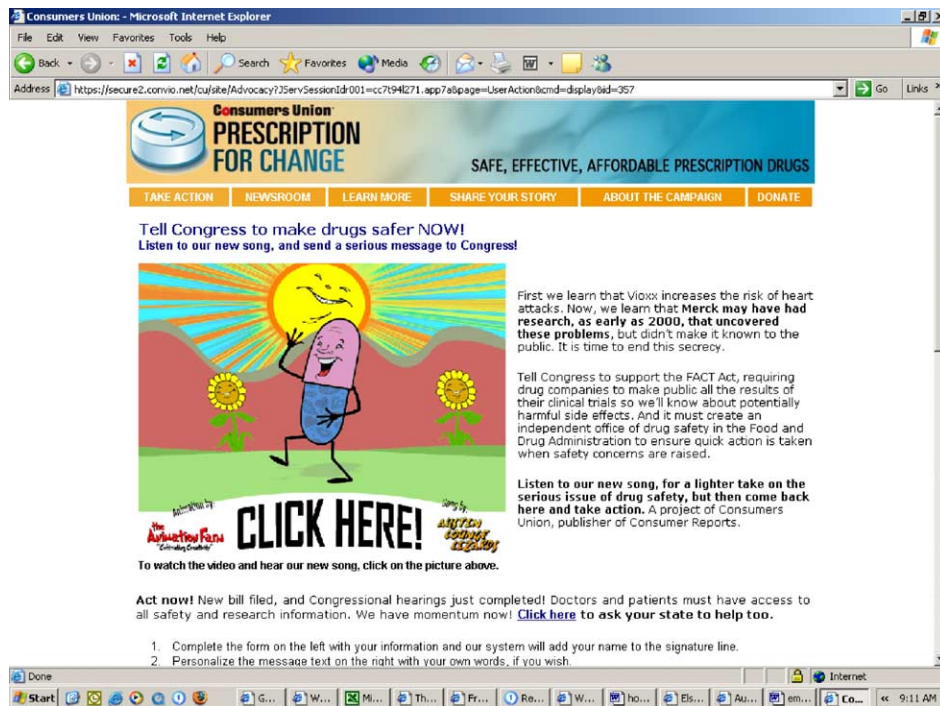


Figure 3 Consumer union's prescription for change website [<http://www.prescriptionforchange.org>].

But, our intentions are only good. The laws governing how we regulate prescription drugs must be reformed, and we need more people involved. If this is the way we can reach them, then that's what we are going to do" (Alterio, 2005).

The Prescription for Change campaign has been a stunning success. As a result of this effort, Congress received at least 75,000 letters in March 2005 (Alterio, 2005). Spurred by the success of this campaign, the Consumer Union has launched several advocacy sites: StopHospitalInfections.org, FinancialPrivacyNow.org, EscapeCellHell.org, and SafeCarsForKids.org. An umbrella site, <http://www.hearusnow.org/>, helps direct consumers to the appropriate action.

3. E-MARKPLAN: An overview and application

E-MARKPLAN has five components: goals, actors, spaces, actions, and outcomes. Managers must plan their e-marketing activities by considering these components sequentially:

- Goals: What do we wish to achieve through e-marketing?
- Actors: Who are the marketing actors in the e-marketing process?
- Spaces: Where will our e-marketing take place online?

- Actions: What specific e-marketing actions should we take?
- Outcomes: What outcomes should we expect from our e-marketing activities?

To apply E-MARKPLAN, the appropriate management team must first establish proper short-term and long-term goals. These goals must be clearly stated and measurable, so they can be matched up and evaluated against outcomes. The team must then identify the most suitable actors for the process. Some actors will be cooperative or neutral in orientation, and these actors will have to be nurtured and supported. Others will be hostile in nature, and the actions of these will have to be calibrated and dealt with. Identifying the applicable spaces in which online e-marketing will take place is the most important step in E-MARKPLAN. Managers must identify the spaces in which they would like to dominate, and others in which they would like to have a presence. The e-marketing team must then identify actions that need to be taken in different spaces. Finally, outcomes are measured on a regular basis and must be judged in relationship to goals. Table 1 provides an overview of the application of E-MARKPLAN to the five case studies presented above.

As an example, consider a more detailed application of E-MARKPLAN to one of the case studies: the Prescription for Change campaign. The long-term goal of the Consumer Union is to mount an

Table 1 Applying E-MARKPLAN to five case studies-an overview

Case study	Company name	Goals	Actors	Spaces	Actions	Outcomes
1	Subservient chicken Burger King	Launch Tender Crisp Chicken Sandwich; build brand affinity	Company; consumers	Special website; blogs; consumer inboxes	Creating an unprecedented interactive site where consumers could command a chicken to do things. Creating an interactive brand blog.	Site obtained more traffic than Burgerking.com for first month. Sales, ad downloads, screensaver downloads, brand attitude
2	Gecko's blog Geico Insurance	Brand affinity; sales	Blogs; company	Blog		Sales, brand attitude, brand awareness
3	Affiliate program Amazon.com	Sales; brand presence	Affiliates; company	Affiliate websites	Creating a network of marketing agents who refer sales to Amazon.com for commission.	
4	Tide fabric care network Procter & Gamble	Build consumer community; encourage consumer-to-consumer support	Company; consumer community	Community website	Creating a community of users committed to fabric care.	Active community that refers products, provides feedback, and solves problems.
5	Prescription for change Consumer Union	Lobby Congress to support legislation	Consumer Union; consumers; media; blogs	Special website; consumer inboxes	Designing web content, consumer-led message dissemination	75,000 letters to Congress in one month.

effective lobbying effort in the arena of prescription drugs and their harmful side-effects. The short-term goal of the agency was to engage consumers and convince them to send letters to Congress. This campaign involved multiple actors: the Consumer Union, media that reported the story (e.g., *The New York Times*), and consumers who shared the message and sent letters to Congress. The theaters of engagement (i.e., spaces) were the main website (www.prescriptionforchange.org), consumers' e-mail inboxes, and blogs (see <http://consumerworld.blogspot.com/2005/03/consumer-unions-prescription-for.html> for a typical supporting blog posting). E-marketing actions taken by the marketer in this case included designing appropriate content and publicizing the video through the media (e.g., the *New York Times* featured this site in a story). Consumers participated vigorously in a viral marketing campaign, which was judged on one key outcome: letters to Congress. By this metric, the campaign was a grand success: over 75,000 letters were sent to Congress in one month, a considerably high volume by lobbying standards.

3.1. E-marketing goals

The e-marketing planning effort begins with establishing goals. The importance of goal-setting in managerial decision making is well documented in the literature (Locke & Latham, 1990). Managers must think carefully about what they wish to achieve in both the short-term and the long-run. Goals must be clearly stated and measurable. Outcomes chosen for tracking are closely related to initial goals.

For the purpose of this article, the focus is on the company/brand website when expressing goals and outcomes. Goals for the site can be expressed in terms of the number of consumer visits in a defined time period, the amount of time spent on the site, the number of downloads of a target document (e.g., an application form), and the number of links clicked on the page. For example, a short-term goal may be to attract 100,000 visitors to the page in one week, and a long-term goal might be to log 3,000,000 visits and 50,000 downloads of application forms for new accounts in a one year period.

In Case study # 5, the Consumer Union's Prescription for Change campaign, the organization had a well-defined and specific goal. It wanted to build public support for one bill: the Fair Access to Clinical Trials (FACT) Act sponsored by Senators Dodd and Grassly. The campaign was to be judged on the basis of this one goal. As stated on the website, the long-term aim of the campaign is to "give all consumers access to safe, effective, and affordable

prescription drugs” (<http://www.consumersunion.org/campaigns/prescription/about.html>).

3.2. E-marketing actors

E-MARKPLAN recognizes that the e-marketing process involves many actors and that companies should not try to perform all e-marketing activities themselves; rather, they should view themselves as being connected to a larger ecosystem of small and large corporations, individual consumers, and consumer communities. This is consistent with the “n-to-n communication model” (Hoffman, Novak, & Chatterjee, 1995), which suggests multiple agents participate in a multiple-way communication process. After establishing the ecosystem viewpoint, the company must then identify a set of actions that are suitable for the actors involved. Considering the diversity of the Web, the list of actors should include consumers who can act as advocates (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004), as well as brand and other consumer communities (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2001; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; O’Guinn & Muniz, 2005).

As illustrated in Table 2, E-MARKPLAN classifies actors on two dimensions: orientation toward the company and nature of impact. Actors are seen as being friendly, agnostic, or hostile to the company’s interests. Actors are also classified as either primary or secondary. Primary actors take actions that directly impact the company; for example, a consumer may set up a hate website such as www.untied.com, impacting the company directly. Secondary actors take actions that indirectly impact the company, in that they influence the general environment in which the company operates; for example, an affiliate of Amazon.com affects Barnesandnoble.com indirectly, and is classified as an indirect actor.

In the Consumer Union’s Prescription for Change campaign, the actors were the agency, the consumers, and, to a lesser extent, the media. The agency took the bold step of introducing a viral marketing campaign in the context of a non-profit

organization. Consumers participated by taking the expected action; i.e., forwarding letters to the organization. In addition, consumers helped create a buzz by passing the site link to friends and by featuring the site on their individual blogs. The media, by covering their campaign, rewarded the Consumer Union for taking such an unconventional step. The campaign was covered in outlets such as the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the *Washington Post*. Moreover, the website was publicized by the popular www.jibjab.com, which features sites with high potential for viral marketing.

3.3. Marketing spaces online

The notion of spaces is relatively new in the business literature. Rayport and Sviokla (1994) first used the term “marketspace” and distinguished it from a marketplace. In E-MARKPLAN, the term space is used to connote a theater of engagement between the company and the consumer. E-marketing does not always take place on the brand or company’s website; rather, it occurs on multiple online spaces. Many important spaces in the e-marketing process will not be owned by the company, but by outsiders. In such cases, the manager can try to influence the space indirectly, but will not control the space entirely. Managers who are used to dictating the message in a space will have to learn they cannot always dictate the terms and control the message. Vigorously fighting this slippage in control may not be wise, as it overextends the company on too many flanks. In order to succeed, managers must learn to use new techniques to manage diverse spaces and revisit some of the principles of public relations. Importantly, the company will learn that some spaces are operated and controlled by consumers or consumer groups. These spaces can be positive (e.g., fan websites and brand communities) or negative (e.g., hate websites such as <http://www.kbhomesucks.com/>). Managing both types of sites requires tact and a focus on the bigger picture.

The role of e-marketers in these spaces is varied, and is categorized as *direct*, *indirect*, and *reflective*. In some spaces that are comparable to other media, e-marketers can participate directly. In these cases, the e-marketer can take specific actions to affect outcomes and has full control over the result. For instance, an e-marketer can use Google’s AdSense program to place text ads on different pages with search results and track their performance. In some spaces, e-marketers can participate indirectly. This is true in third-party online communities, for instance, where another party controls the space

Table 2 Different types of marketing actors in E-MARKPLAN

	Primary	Secondary
Friendly	Satisfied consumer, brand community	Affiliate, distributor/broker/service, provider, partner
Agnostic	Media	Retailer, promotion intermediary
Hostile	Competitor, dissatisfied consumer	Competitor’s Affiliates, competitor’s partners, competitor’s distributors

and the e-marketer can be just one of the voices. Finally, in some spaces, actions taken by e-marketers are observed by others and are reflected to the consumer. In these cases, no explicit action is taken by the e-marketer. A good example of this is found in the promotional space where deal aggregators aggregate promotional codes across retailers (e.g., www.findsavings.com).

E-MARKPLAN categorizes spaces into *advertising*, *content*, *community*, and *promotional spaces*. The nature of action in advertising spaces is direct, and is either indirect or reflective in the other three categories.

Advertising spaces are online areas where advertisements may be bought by e-marketers for display to consumers. The only actions e-marketers can take in these spaces are advertising-related. These spaces include brand websites, partner websites, affiliate websites, media websites (e.g., nytimes.com, espn.go.com), consumer websites, search engines/portals, blogs, and consumer e-mail inboxes (e.g., gmail.google.com, permission e-mail).

Content spaces are online areas that content occupies. The e-marketer can generate some of the content, or it could be created by other parties. These spaces include the e-marketer's own website, partner websites, media websites, blogs, consumer e-mail inboxes, search engines (e.g., www.google.com), and portals/directories (e.g., www.yahoo.com). Many e-marketing actors may be involved in this space (e.g., consumers, media, associates).

Community spaces are areas where groups of consumers congregate not just to observe, but also to participate. Examples include blogs (e.g., Captain Morgan's blog, www.thecaptainsblog.com), company-led brand communities (e.g., Tide's Fabric Care Network), consumer-led brand communities, discussion forums, and hate websites.

Finally, *promotional spaces* are devoted to the act of promotion. From the marketing literature, we know that promotion includes both incentives and communication. Online, some promotional spaces are devoted exclusively to communication (e.g., brand sites such as www.tide.com), while others focus on providing consumer financial incentives to shop (e.g., deal aggregators such as www.findsavings.com and product comparison sites such as www.froogle.com and www.mysimon.com).

The Consumer Union's Prescription for Change campaign was waged in multiple spaces. The main theater of engagement was the website, www.prescriptionforchange.org. In addition, consumers were involved in forwarding the site link to others, making e-mail inboxes important

spaces. Consumer blogs that supported the campaign and www.jibjab.com formed the third important space.

3.4. E-marketing actions

E-marketing actions are classified into three broad categories: *communication actions*, *analytics*, and *customer relationship management*.

Communication actions include advertising (e.g., text ads, immersive advertising, banner ads, pop-up ads, pop-under ads, advergames), direct message dissemination (e.g., permission-based e-mail, e-mail newsletters, viral e-mail), and content creation and management (e.g., frequently asked questions, product information, downloadables).

The biggest part of *analytics* is search engine optimization: the art of tweaking the content on a website to increase the rank in search results on major search engines. For many websites, the biggest referrers are search engines; hence, enhancing one's position there could lead to dramatic results.

Customer relationship management actions can be broken down into two categories: those focusing on individual consumers, and those focusing on groups of customers. Actions focusing on individual customers include enhanced online customer service, personalization, and privacy assurance (e.g., privacy policy, third-party seal programs). Actions focusing on groups of customers include viral campaigns, which encourage individuals to disseminate messages to their friends, and community management (i.e., creation, facilitation, monitoring, and participation of community spaces).

In the Prescription for Change campaign, the main action taken by the agency was the creation of the website, which centerpieced a humorous video and provided detailed legislative information about the issue. The agency publicized the site through a press release.

3.5. E-marketing outcomes

Outcomes represent the ultimate test for all e-marketing actions. No matter how flashy, a campaign that does not lead to expected results is of little use. Outcomes need to be compared with appropriate goals, and corrective action must be taken if outcomes do not meet expectations or seem to be serving end goals. Imagine, for example, a campaign with a goal of 100,000 website hits in one week. If, on day 2 of the campaign, managers find they have only attracted 2000 hits, corrective action might be needed. Perhaps more money might be infused into the campaign, or ineffective actions may be triaged. Whatever the

reaction, it is important that managers stay abreast of what is happening in the relevant spaces, and track the actions taken by relevant actors.

The Subservient Chicken case provides us with a tangible example of outcomes. As mentioned earlier, the campaign led to significantly high traffic: 396 million individuals visited the site by March 2005 (Anderson, 2005). Importantly, the campaign led to a noticeable bump in sales of the marketed product, the Tender Crisp Chicken Sandwich:

“About a month after the TenderCrisp sandwich debuted, BK reported that sales had steadily increased an average of 9% a week. Since then, [Burger King VP of marketing impact Brian] Gies says the company has seen “double-digit” growth of awareness of the TenderCrisp Chicken Sandwich and “significantly increased” chicken sandwich sales. *And the TenderCrisp does sell better than the Original Chicken Sandwich*” [italics added] (Anderson, 2005).

The Consumer Union’s Prescription for Change campaign produced 75,000 letters to Congress in support of the FACT bill within a month, a very high number by lobbying standards. It was, therefore, pronounced a success.

4. The bottom line

The Internet and the World Wide Web provide managers with a wonderful opportunity to bolster their marketing function. E-MARKPLAN is designed to provide managers interested in using these technologies to market their products and services with a comprehensive methodology to plan, enact, and analyze their e-marketing campaigns. Using E-MARKPLAN will help managers by:

- (1) Ensuring a comprehensive approach to plan e-marketing activities;
- (2) Minimizing the chances of missing out on key actors and spaces;
- (3) Helping them consider the multiplicative effects of actors, spaces, and actions;
- (4) Linking actions in various spaces to outcomes that can be measured against goals;
- (5) Providing a versatile methodology that can be applied in a variety of contexts;
- (6) Calibrating e-marketing performance, allowing for rapid corrective action; and
- (7) Maximizing the chances of e-marketing success.

References

- Adamic, L., & Huberman, B. (2000). The nature of markets in the world wide web. *Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 1(1), 5-12.
- Alterio, J. M. (2005, April 2). Consumer union turns to blogs for advocacy. *Marshfield News*. Retrieved April 25, 2005, from <http://www.wisinfo.com/newsherald/mnhbusiness/285350397507010.shtml>
- Anderson, M. (2005, March 7). Dissecting subservient chicken. *Ad Week*. Retrieved April 25, 2005, from http://www.adweek.com/aw/national/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000828049
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(1), 38-52.
- Hoffman, D. L., Novak, T. P., & Chatterjee, P. (1995). Commercial scenarios for the web: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 1(3), 1-20.
- Huberman, B., & Adamic, L. (1999). Growth dynamics of the world wide web. *Nature*, 401, 131.
- Ives, N. (2005). Catching the online cartoon virus. *New York Times*. Retrieved March 14, 2005, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Kalyanam, K., & McIntyre, S. (2002). The e-marketing mix: A contribution of the e-tailing wars. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(4), 487-499.
- Krishnamurthy, S. (2001a). A comprehensive analysis of permission marketing. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. Retrieved April 25, 2005, from <http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol6/issue2/krishnamurthy.html>
- Krishnamurthy, S. (2001b). Understanding online message dissemination: An empirical analysis of send-this-message-to-your-friend data. *First Monday*, 6(5). Retrieved April 25, 2005, from http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6_5/krishnamurthy/index.html
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). A theory of goal-setting and task performance. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- McAlexander, J. H., Schouten, J. W., & Koenig, H. F. (2001). Building brand community. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1), 38-54.
- Mooche, F. (2003, March 29). E-mail marketing spending on the rise, according to JupiterResearch. *Acess News*. Retrieved April 25, 2005, from http://www.accessnews.com/technology_032904a.shtml
- Montgomery, A. L. (2001). Applying quantitative marketing techniques to the internet. *Interfaces*, 31(2), 90-108.
- Muniz, A. M., & Oguinn, T. C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(4), 412-432.
- O’Guinen, C. T., & Muniz, A. M. (2005). Communal consumption and the brand. In D. G. Mick, & S. Ratneshwar (Eds.), *Inside consumption: Frontiers of research on consumer motives, goals, and desires*. London: Routledge.
- Rayport, J. F., & Sviokla, J. J. (1994). Managing in the market-space. *Harvard Business Review*, 72(6), 141-151.