



The New Cool Thing in Marketing: Control

A white paper that discusses an emerging technology that is enabling marketers to exert real-time control over the image and information they present to the public.

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mBLAST WHITE PAPER

For as impactful as the Internet has been on most corporations, it sure has taken a while for the Internet to catch up to the whole marketing process. The first real impact of the Internet on the marketing process was when we were able to move from the multi-month lead time required for printing and shipping product literature to the channels, to a great thing called a 'Website' where we could instantly post the latest information about products.

That happened some 10-odd years ago. Since then, marketers have been relatively left out of the major innovations happening to the rest of the corporation. Where finance, operations, sales and other departments have built intranets, extranets, virtual private networks (VPNs), supply chains, and all sorts of remote abilities to check in on partner systems, the market department has been thrilled to be able to lookup reporter names on line and blast out email to everyone coming to their Websites.

I've been a marketer for almost 25 years, and so I feel the ability to be a little critical of my own kind. Over those 25 years, I've been an analyst, editor, publisher, events organizer, keynote speaker, on-air commentator, book author, and who knows what else, and so I've been the recipient of a lot of the information being pushed out to the marketplace. What's surprised me is that over the time frame of the rampant period of change and restructuring brought on by the on-line world, how little the whole marketing function has improved upon itself.

In fact, some 10+ years after the Internet surge started, innovations in marketing are still scant. Sure, we now can add a logo to a press release (some endeavor to call this a 'smart release'...does that make the former nonlogoed releases dumb?). We can post white papers to white paper libraries on-line. We can track article mentions about our firm or its clients.

But what's decidedly lacking in marketing is what 'the other departments' have ... the efficiency, economy and control offered by the new on-line age.

See, I'm sort of old fashioned. I come from the camp that says Marketing is all about control – being able to control one's perception and positioning in the marketplace by concise, planned, and controlled marketing moves. Yet, there's still only one marketing process that the world agrees upon worldwide – the process of issuing a press release. We know that if we upload a release to PR Newswire, BusinessWire, MarketWire, or others, that it will end up being distributed to an albeit amorphous and ambiguous listing of destinations, but enough to make the process worthwhile. This process, however, is largely one-way, and validated only on one end. You don't really know all the people who looked at a release or all the places where it was evaluated and discarded. You can track only aspects of this, and the return response loop is fairly ill-defined.

Indeed, outside of that press release distribution process, there are no other agreed upon processes for marketing as it relates to all the external relations that marketers are involved in. There are no agreed-upon processes for:

- Issuing a new logo
- Changing out a CEO's information and pictures across the Web when a new person comes on board
- Setting up meetings at tradeshow
- Recalling an obsolete white paper
- Uploading and distributing new product information into databases
- Downloading speaker bio, picture, and company logo information for 200+ speakers at an event
- Updating information for associations to which a company may be a member
- And so on....

Indeed, the marketing world is somewhat in the Dark Ages as far as the online world is concerned. There is still a heavy reliance on manual, time-intensive processes, and everything is a bilateral, one-off experience. A product manager, for instance, might have dozens on relationships to maintain, with partners, associations, analysts, reporters, editors, Website publishers, event organizers, etc. – each one a different and unique experience, with no opportunities for efficiency or economy in the process.

Marketers are more likely to be in a constantly reactive mode when it comes to external requests for information, because there are no agreed-upon processes to make it otherwise. Information distribution tends to be more about 'throwing spaghetti against the wall'. Issuing a new logo tends to involve creating a lot of packages to mail out to the press and putting the new logo on the Website, and waiting for it to 'flow through' the Web. Setting up meetings at events is about hitting the phone and email, hard, and staying at it until there is a response. Listing one's company in Buyer's Guides, Yellow Pages and other directories across the Web tends to be more about rote Web surfing and filling out forms. All of these are throwing people and time at the problems – highly inefficient, and often ineffective.

Because there's never been a better way. Until now. Enter mBLAST. We feel mBLAST is the biggest revolution to hit Marketing in the last decade. mBLAST is a huge and comprehensive effort that looks at the issues of external marketing relationship management in a holistic manner, not just focused on one aspect like white papers or press releases, but rather on as much/many of the content, relationships, and workflows that steal most of our collective time during the day.

mBLAST is a lot of things to a lot of people, but it's founded in one quiet revolution – that there needs to be a 'supply chain' of marketing information for the industry. The concept of supply chains, and all the efficiencies and benefits thereof, is well founded in many vertical industries and horizontal layers of corporations. Competitors, industry participants, standards bodies – all are willing to partake in development of supply chains because they simple make sense. They are a win/win/win for all involved.

A marketing information supply chain makes tons of sense too. Information needs to be retracted as much as it is disseminated. The more accessible information is, the broader its reach. Information relationships are more about computers talking to computers, and creating information flows that can weather mergers, acquisitions, hirings, firings, product changes, changes in strategic direction, etc.

Information flows need to be open, standards-based, accessible, reliable, predictable, and economical. Creating supply chains for information enables greater distribution of data, because there is now a focal point that people can count on. Remember life when stock symbols were only on Bloomberg terminals and in Times Square? Open, easy-to-use interfaces made this form of information a common occurrence all over the Web.

Marketing is about getting the word out. It's about controlling the message. It's about tracking your success.

It's not about making 100 phone calls in a row, or sending out 200 emails, or sending 50 faxes – all to schlog through the manual rote processes of getting something done. No, today's ultra-competitive, resource-poor environment calls for having to do more with less, and mBLAST and its 70+ marketing information processes are all about cutting back on that time wasted on rote efforts, and building efficiency gains and economic return into the whole marketing function.

With mBLAST, you can do things like:

- Post your personal information so that event organizers can easily find and download it for their events
- Post and retract white papers to/from the leading Web destinations
- Maintain product information online so that analyst firms and publishers collecting product data can access those databases first for their survey requests
- Instantly classify your firm in dozens of online databases and directories
- Be notified of new editorial opportunities as they come up
- Find the reporter at a publication by beat for a particular story

- Gather all the info you need on a particular topic, including latest articles, press releases, case studies, white papers, etc.
- And so on.

mBLAST allows you to maintain your information in one place, and have it flow through the Web. It lets you manage your Web presence, by enabling posting and retraction of information. It gives you the means to track your presence, and compare it to competitors.

It puts you back in control. Control of your message. Control of your brand. Control of your future.

mBLAST is unique. The nearest competition has less than five percent of mBLAST's functionality. mBLAST covers the full information chain, from deep in marketing processes all the way through to publisher, analyst, event organizer, etc., databases, Websites, and other destinations. It's a full end-to-end solution, that you can hop onto wherever you'd like. You can deploy a little or a lot, it's up to you.

mBLAST works because it has the backing of the largest and leading influencers in the markets that mBLAST is attacking. mBLAST enters an industry when it has such a compelling lineup of editorial and analyst users that it's a 'no-brainer' for marketers to take part.

And why not? It's a focal point for all participants in the marketing process. It saves time and money, increases exposure, and gives unprecedented control over one's message. It finally applies the wealth of benefit of the Internet to marketing.

And that's been a long time coming.

Danny Briere has been CEO of TeleChoice, a telecommunications industry consultancy that helped design market entry and strategic marketing plans for nearly 100 companies to market since 1985. He is a contributing editor for such publications as Network World, Broadband Edge, and others, and has written more than 1000 articles on various topics. He is well known for this coauthorship (with Pat Hurley) of the Digital Home Series for ...For Dummies (Wiley), including such titles as Home Theater for Dummies, HDTV for Dummies, Wireless Home Networking for Dummies, Smart Homes for Dummies, and more. He is a frequent speaker at conferences, on-air commentator for such networks as CNN and CNBC, and reference expert for editorial copy. As such, he is familiar with all aspects of the marketing process from the "marketer" and "marketee" sides of the equation, and used that extensive background to design and bring to market mBLAST. Today he serves as CEO of mBLAST.