
Editorial

Many sceptics are probably sitting back smiling smugly, as recently not a week goes by without another dot.com disappearing into oblivion. In reality, however, this represents a minor structural change, as we continue relentlessly moving into the digital world.

The game has moved from a land rush to a more defensive position, where the dot.coms or e-tailers that have taken a pre-emptive strike and have sound business models are beginning the long haul of consolidation and move to profitability.

If business failures lead to business sanity, this is a positive move. If the chances of becoming a dot.com billionaire overnight are disappearing as venture capitalists harden their stance, this equally is positive. With the current climate for many 'get-rich entrepreneurs', the terms 'B2C' and 'B2B' have taken on a new lighthearted meaning — 'back to consulting' and 'back to banking'.

Our contention is we are still at the beginning of the digital revolution. Companies are still grappling with legacy systems that need to integrate into a new systems architecture, where any customer can access a company at any touchpoint (via mail, mobile, telephone, branch, fax etc) and be treated in the same way. Customers should not be pigeonholed into separate channels, but allowed to traverse channels as they please, at their convenience and at any moment in time.

In this issue of *Interactive Marketing*, we are delighted to have the opinion of Alan Rosenspan on the subject of permission marketing. Alan makes some very salient points about the danger of exploiting this so-called technique, and the damage it can do to the brand. We would also point you to Victor Ross's incisive review of Seth Godin's *Permission Marketing* — a book which is in danger of achieving almost cult status.

The first of our papers is the first part of James Woudhuysen's paper on e-fulfilment, which takes a broad overview of the potential issues involved in this increasingly important area. We continue the issue with Dick Stroud's paper on the human resources facet of interactive marketing. Our final paper is by Lisa O'Malley and Caroline Tynan, and tackles the reframing of relationship marketing for consumer markets.

For our new technology update, Brian Pennington answers our questions on what a 'cookie' really is.

The two examples of best practice also deserve reading. The NSPCC won the Gold Award in the IDM/Experian Business Performance award scheme. This paper contains many sound lessons for good strategic direct marketing. Meanwhile, Kevin Cody's exploration of OgilvyOne's intranet 'Truffles' is a model example of how a corporate intranet can benefit by knowledge sharing in any business.

As editors, we would encourage you to write, call, e-mail or fax us with any subjects you feel we should be covering. You have our *permission* to do so.

Derek Holder and Robin Fairlie