

# INTEGRATED MARKETING & PROMOTION



SAVE AS BOOKMARK



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MAKE A PURCHASE

## The Ultimate RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

BY ADAM KLEINER

**H**illary Jonas, 14, wears Nike soccer apparel. In a sweat-charged market of brands like Adidas, Umbro and Reebok, the Beaverton, Ore., company won the young competitor's share of mind by reaching her online.

This past February, Jonas signed on to a

**T**he Web is all about the ability to build transactions," says Cathy Tweedy, principal at Pickholz Tweedy Co., a Boston-based marketing communications agency. "The way to do that is by building relationships. If you look at direct marketing as the distribution mechanism of the information age, think of the Web as the distribution mechanism

of the electronic age. The Web is the ultimate relationship-building vehicle." Forrester Research, Cambridge, Mass., projects Internet business-to-consumer sales this year will reach \$4.8 billion; by the year 2001, the figure will be \$17.4 billion. What's more, by the end of this year, 29% of the United States population will be online. Still, companies have yet to record a profit from their online presence, making Web marketing a bit precarious. For example, amazon.com, hailed by many as a champion of Web transactions, posted losses of \$27 million in 1997. Score one for the cost of competition. "Ultimately, transactions are the goal of business," says Joe Nicholson, manager of Think New Ideas, a marketing communi-

Want proof that one-to-one marketing now rules the Web?

Check out the sites hosted by the likes of Nike, Clinique, and LifeSavers.

cations firm. "But building loyalty goes beyond a single transaction. It's really about how to build a relationship so that the customer will keep coming back," says Nicholson, who manages the Boston office of the New York-based company. "We try to get people to walk through the entire process and create two-way communication the entire way."

roster of sports-driven peers at Nike's "Play Like A Girl" website — [www.nike.com/girls](http://www.nike.com/girls). Since then, the maker of athletic gear has E-mailed Jonas periodic newsletters, written by the United States Women's National Soccer Team. The message: Nike means high-caliber soccer.

Score one for the World Wide Web. Nike's "Play Like A Girl" website demonstrates that the high-profile manufacturer has got Web marketing game. Forget the dated logic that corporate websites suffice as electronic brochures. Today, kicking out one-way promotional messages could actually do more harm than good. Indeed, maximum use of a corporate Web presence means providing customers a service. One-to-one marketing rules.

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While publishing a website allows companies to keep virtual storefronts open 24 hours a day seven days a week, the attention span of "Netizens" is on the order of seconds. Even rookie Web surfers know the medium offers unparalleled access to a vast universe of products, services and information. The sheer volume of what's available dictates a company's site had better deliver some sort of value – or at least the perception of value – in a hurry.

**C**onsider Clinique's approach at [www.clinique.com](http://www.clinique.com). Visitors curious to know exactly which Clinique products are right for them are welcomed to a point-and-click "personal consultation" by which the "Clinique Computer" will determine their skin type. Eight questions ranging from eye color to pore size yield a general skin type classification - Skin Type I, Skin Type II, Skin Type III - and product recommendations. That's service.

Moreover, the answers yield a golden nugget of customer information that the New-York based cosmetics maker could leverage to an online direct-market campaign - say a downloadable 20-percent-off coupon on soaps for people with Skin Type II. Whether or not the promotion applies to the entire Clinique brand matters little, so long as the customer goes to the department store determined to make a purchase.

"Content for the sake of just putting it up there is useless," says Fergus O'Daly,



Clinique promises a one-on-one consultation when you register.

the "Bubble Yum Home Run Derby."

"The whole site is built around promoting the LifeSavers brand," O'Daly says. "It's beautifully designed. It's packed with terrific games and fun contests and prizes and educational material."

Jeep has leveraged its rugged television campaign online at [www.jeepunpaved.com](http://www.jeepunpaved.com) by balancing news about its vehicles with information about Jeep-sponsored off-road driving adventures called "Jeep Jamborees." Visitors can learn about the

**"Publishing on the Internet has got to be about building community. Part of being interactive is listening," says V.A. Shiva, President and CEO of General Interactive, Inc., a Cambridge, Mass., interactive marketing consultant.**

regional manager of CKS Interactive, a New York-based marketing communications firm. O'Daly noted an exception in the case of news sites. "The key to all this is data-basing and understanding customers and their needs."

O'Daly believes that people go to specific sites with specific intentions. The service a site provides is what will keep visitors coming back. In the long run, each person will have some 30 sites book-marked as the places they'll go to get exactly what they're looking for, O'Daly continues. One bookmark for equities information. One bookmark for casual wear. One bookmark for music and videos.

**T**he question, then, is how to make the list?

Companies should begin to answer this question by determining exactly how their brand presence can be personalized online. The Web does not demand that a company reinvent its branding strategy. Rather, how can that established strategy be leveraged into a relationship with customers?

The LifeSavers Co., a unit of Nabisco Food Co., Parsippany, N.J., answered the question by packaging product logos and information with interactive games and contests. Visitors can compete in a "FruitStripe Skate Race," play "Snackwells Candy Chocolate Factory Pinball" or win a Ken Griffey Jr.-autographed baseball via

history of the vehicle, its corporate heritage, get quotes on Wagoneers, and read the thoughts of Jamboree veterans – all targeted at bringing Jeep owners and other visitors "closer to the brand."

"A huge potential of the Internet is the ability to attract like-minded individuals and build discussion over time," Nicholson says.

That's exactly what Nike has in mind with its "Play Like A Girl" site.

The company's idea was to build a branded community where female athletes could share their experiences. Aside from E-mailing newsletters to soccer lovers like Hillary Jonas, Nike creates a dialogue by featuring easy-to-relate-to story topics and welcoming responses from players in the community. Recent story topics included "What It Means to Play Like A Girl."

"Publishing on the Internet has got to be about building community," says V.A. Shiva, President and CEO of General Interactive, Inc., a Cambridge, Mass., interactive marketing consultant. The company's EchoMail technology is at the foundation of Nike's site. "If you can't appreciate that, and instead try to blurt out messages, you're going to get nailed."

"Part of being interactive," he adds pointedly, "is listening." **IMP**

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Just For The Girls, Nike's niche market site, is specially designed for female athletes.