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BrandAnimation: Devolving Evolution

By Erik Hauser



[Experiential marketing](#) is evolving along with the current "pull" advertising culture and leading the marketing world into stronger one-on-one relationships created *with* customers that last over time. This is in direct opposition to the "push" mass-marketing techniques that "targeted" customers with military language.

The evolving methodology of [relationship marketing](#) means that programs went from simply sending samples in the mail with a personal letter to meeting customers and potential customers face to face where they live, work, and play in order to animate brands and break through the increasing clutter. Marketing is now building on that evolution by forging interactive relationships between customers and brands.

Markets are conversations and give-and-take and two-way streets. We are now moving toward even more customer involvement in the creation and marketing of products and services. By working with customer-created content we are, in effect, "devolving" back to the original marketplace concept where "one on one" meant that you visited with the shop owners and told them what you wanted them to stock for you and, when they responded to your needs, you kept coming back as a customer. So...we are poised on the precipice of devolution while we evolve.

In this climate, where customers feel that so much is out of their control, it is important to bring them closer to your brand by giving them some control. It is important to create platforms that stimulate customer involvement without giving the customers the proverbial keys to the store. To this point, there will be a collaborative effort brought forth to allow brands to harness customer-generated media in an efficient and effective manner. I look forward to sharing this idea with everyone in my next column.

In the meantime, I invite all CHIEF MARKETER readers to join the [Experiential Marketing Forum](#) (EMF). The EMF has just been tapped to be the epicenter for the Global Consortium of

Experiential Experts. We will be setting up a survey software program (donations welcome for free international exposure!). There will also be many surveys to follow that will be displayed on www.ChiefMarketer.com and released to the press. If you would like to donate additional time/products/services to this effort please contact me at erik@swivelmedia.com

Erik Hauser is creative director/founder of San Francisco-based marketing firm [Swivel Media](#) and founder of [IXMA](#), the International Experiential Marketing Association. He also moderates the [Experiential Marketing Forum](#) and pens the biweekly BrandAnimation column for CHIEF MARKETER.

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