

# BRAND Bytes

High-Speed Marketing Innovation

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## Micromarketing in the Mini Cooper Age

by Bill Weger

**M**ass marketing and Model Ts are out. Micromarketing and Mini Coopers are in. Today, as the technology revolution rages on and mediums multiply, a new era in marketing and advertising is dawning.

A fundamental switch from mass to micromarketing is being driven by new technology, an overcrowded marketplace, fragmented media, and cluttered minds. Thousands of new products enter the U.S. market each year, joining a bulging portfolio of brands.

When television first exploded onto the American scene five decades ago, brands were built right in our living rooms. It was often Geritol, Kraft, and Coca-Cola in the single-sponsor era of the 1950s. Advertising switched to a mass-merchandising concept in the 1960s and brands, such as Tide, Crest, and Charmin, became household names in the golden age of television. In those days, a few brand names were the norm.

### Too Many Brands

Today, there are just too many messages and brands, and it has caused a traffic jam in our minds. TNS Intelligence/CMR, a world leading marketing information group, reports more than 1.9 million brands in its database. With such a proliferation of new brands, our brains are blocking out mass advertising.

Other complex factors are driving the micromarketing boom. America today is much more diverse and consumers are demanding customized products that fit particular needs and tastes. The one-size-fits-all product has lost its impact. Consumers in the micromarketing era want to be special.

### Narrowly Defined Markets

Enter micromarketing. Instead of focusing on a vast sea of consumers, micromarketing uses demographics and other research to target specific market segments. It is striking a responsive chord with a narrowly defined market segment.

For example, BMW's Mini Cooper aims to draw young affluent drivers aged 20-34, as well as older Mini enthusiasts. It latched on to the retro image— much like Volkswagen's New Beetle.

Hot technology brands, such as iPods, Blackberrys, and Bluetooth, are being promoted through effective micromarketing. There are even

iPods for Mini Coopers. Tomorrow, another wave of brands will become pop culture icons – thanks to micromarketing.

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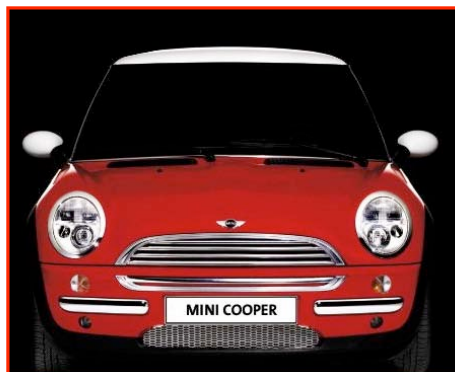
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Classic mass marketers, such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's, have embraced micromarketing, too. Last year, McDonald's introduced a new slogan: “i'm lovin it.” The giant fast food corporation hopes to connect with younger, hip-hop customers. Coca-Cola recently created Cokemusic.com that targets teens and younger consumers. The interactive website includes games, free downloads, and a studio.

### Economic Sense

In a noisy marketplace, whether you are a large corporation or a small business, it makes economic sense to spend more on micromarketing. There are so many new creative options today that provide marketers and advertisers with the right medium for their message.

There are more than 100 major cable channels, most of which target specific market segments, and more



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than 13,000 radio stations in the United States. Telemarketing, direct mail, e-mail, and display advertising are also effective micromarketing mediums as well.

Magazines remain a vital medium for micromessaging. The number of magazines in the United States has increased by more than 3,300 since 1991, according to the National Directory of Magazines. Most of the new magazines are geared toward readers with special interests.

Newspapers, the oldest mass medium, are adapting to micromarketing by publishing special sections and community editions that meet specific reader interests. During the past four decades, daily newspaper readership rates have fallen by more than 21 percent, according to Nielson Media Service data.

In the micromarketing era, no communication channel has more potential than digital media. The

World Wide Web has changed the media environment significantly with online versions of newspapers, magazines, and television and radio stations.

In July 2004, more than half of U.S. households connected to the Internet were via broadband connections, a 13 percent increase since July 2003, according to Nielson/Net Ratings. Increased broadband connectivity equals more exposure for micromarketing messages.

**Aggressive Sports Marketing**

Since 1990, micromarketers have bombarded sports arenas with digital billboards. Corporations spend outrageous sums to have their names put on sports stadiums – in what is both mass and micromarketing.

Instant messaging and cell phones, via text messages, are the next big micromarketing platforms, especially for targeting a generation of

youth who grew up in a high-tech world. These savvy consumers like to be in control and will zap unwanted marketing in a nano-second.

But Madison Avenue marketers have no fear. Mass marketing is declining, but it probably will not die.

For marketers seeking to build awareness quickly with a timely message, the mass media, particularly television, is still efficient in reaching large chunks of the country. The net is still wide, but so are its holes.

In the Mini Cooper age, the future looks bright for micromarketing. The horizon is filled with dynamic mediums that can reach educated consumers who want to be entertained. ■

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**The Tylenol Tragedy**

*Remembering a Classic in Crisis Management*

**T**wenty-two years ago, in September 1982, it was reported that seven people in the Chicago area died of cyanide-laced Tylenol tablets.

With the grim news of the tragedy spreading fast, Johnson and Johnson, a New Jersey-based pharmaceutical company, went to work fast.

Since the extent of the contamination was not immediately known, there was grave concern for the safety of the estimated 100 million Americans who were using Tylenol.

Johnson and Johnson immediately recognized the magnitude of the problem and assembled a team to make responsible decisions. A critical first decision was to work closely with the media to warn consumers about the potential danger.

The next key decision involved stopping all advertising of Tylenol and recalling millions of bottles of the medication nationwide. Then Johnson and Johnson developed a public awareness campaign that reached out to consumers to educate them about the dangerous situation.

The comeback officially began with a 30-city video press conference via satellite. The video conference and all other important decisions were discussed and debated by a seven-member strategy committee.

The committee dealt with every aspect of the problem from packaging to advertising. Since the crisis, sales for Tylenol have increased.

Later, Johnson and Johnson led efforts to get tamper-proof lids for medication bottles, such as Tylenol. ■



**Got a Message.  
Give it Power.**