

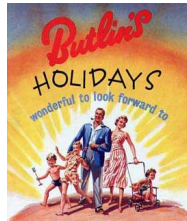


Susan Boyle

The top spot has to go to Blackburn's 'Hairy Angel' – the Britain's Got Talent phenomenon who's single-handedly driven a 770% yoy growth on ITV.com

Holiday Camps

Redcoats are back! 10% of British adults will visit a holiday camp such as Butlins rather than go abroad this year.



Scalextric

The iconic toy brand joins the 21st century in style, with a blog, YouTube channel and a virtual garage for Facebook fans.



Google Logos

Do not adjust your screen! Google marked Samuel Morse's birthday this month with its most outlandish logo to date.



Sun-In

Superdrug's decision to restock the 70s hair colourant will ensure that the shade of the summer is 'Credit Crunch Blonde'.



Doner Kebab Pot Noodle

Fitness campaigners fear that the latest offering from Pot Noodle glorifies the fat-laden Doner. Surely begs the question, how can a Pot Noodle glorify *anything*?



Tom MySpace

Co-Founder Tom has left the company. Will millions of MySpacers now lose their default friend?



Communications Strategist Nikki Gilmour follows up on her call for kindness...



In January I wrote about how a little goodwill can go a long way in these straitened times.

Here are some nice examples of brands putting this into action:

Kraft has been offering literal warmth and fuzziness in the form of heating bus shelters and giving away free soup samples in the Windy City.

Also in the US, FedEx has made the grand gesture of allowing customers to print off up to 25 copies of their CVs for free - at any of its 1,600 stores across the US.

Hyundai US has bucked the trend for car manufacturers to lure in new custom by offering 0% finance deals (i.e. what got us into this mess in the first place!) with its aptly-named 'Assurance' programme. The promise? If you lose your job after buying a new Hyundai, you can simply walk away from your loan or lease and return the car to Hyundai. The programme launched in January and so far, Hyundai has recorded an increase of nearly 5% YOY (versus overall US car sales which are down 40% YOY).

Meanwhile in the UK, Tango has shown that manners cost nothing by launching a limited edition can replacing their "Tango" logo with the word "Thanks". Why? Simply to "thank the public for saving the brand" by responding to the "Save Tango" campaign in their droves and boosting sales by 8%.



So this month please ask yourselves, what could **your** brand be doing to shore up a little goodwill?

Account Manager Neil Watson asks, can Twitter's march to global domination be turned into cold hard cash?



The growth of Twitter has been staggering, with some 7 million people 'tweeting' globally as of last week. Most likely a couple of hundred more will have begun reading the musings of A- to Z-listers by the time you've finished the musings of, well, me.

With the almost exponential growth of users and endless targeting possibilities, the money men have been circling Twitter like gulls around a trawler. They're waiting for the final piece of the alchemist's puzzle - the successful monetisation of the Twitter user base.

As yet, Twitter's owners have resisted the big money offers; \$500 million from the Facebook family was turned down earlier this month. Is this an indication of their belief that one day soon the site will start to generate its own income?

One idea that has been mooted is to transform Twitter into the next generation of search engine, a resource for users to answer one another's questions. But the difficulty remains, as it has for a number of networking sites, in turning social into financial capital.

The daily exchange on Twitter of huge quantities of information on all aspects of people's interests, beliefs and behaviour is leaving advertisers drooling. The possibilities are endless when it comes to obtaining and correlating trend data for popular keywords, or targeting users according to the topics they are discussing. For example, someone proclaiming their need for new trainers may soon find themselves the recipient of a 'tweet' from Nike.

For Twitter, as for many of the sites that came before it, the challenge will be in striking a balance between its users and advertisers. Rest assured that any company seen to be intruding into what has become a space for personal expression will soon feel the power of the 'tweeple'.

Whether or not Twitter becomes the cash cow that it should, it has limitless potential and cannot be viewed as just a fad. The last time we saw something like this in the making, Google was only a silly word.

Four ways to spend your time or money this month:

Vanity URLs Facebook is asking users whether they would be prepared to pay for a personalised URL. Just imagine the kudos of having, for example, 'facebook.com/Stan' attached to your profile instead of the usual string of characters.

Magic Mountain Hotel Holiday Inn no longer floating your boat? Why not try the Magic Mountain Hotel in Chile, built into a waterfall and featuring aerial walkways between the tree-tops.

Shed of the Year 2009 Sheddies, don't forget to get your entry in by May 3rd! (readershed.co.uk)

The One-Star Haters A collection of one-star Amazon reviews for classic films, books and records (<http://www.cynical-c.com/?cat=85>).



A personal favourite, on Jimi Hendrix's Are You Experienced: *"This guy is a HACK. All songs sound exactly the same, the drummer is weak, does the bassist even exist? Listen to some REAL music that actually requires talent- like Nickelback!"*

