



Happy Birthday Ebay

The site has now been serving UK bargain-hunters for 10 years. To think it all began with a 3-track CD by German rockers The Scorpions...

Flower Power

Solar powered Wi-Fi plants promoting the Toyota Prius have proven a hit with US city dwellers



Twitter the Mediator?

Age-old rivals Coke and Pepsi have buried the hatchet on Twitter. Is there nothing that tweeting can't accomplish?

Sumo in the Park

Fightclub for girls; The yoga and herbal tea warm-up are optional!



House-Swapping

The latest version of the 'Staycation' - holidaying in someone else's home

Unbranded Starbucks

A chance for Starbucks to return to its local coffeehouse roots, or a cynical move by a corporate wolf in sheep's clothing?



The Knives Are Out

Fast-food culture strikes another blow as stats show the humble knife is now surplus to our eating requirements

Crocs

Maxim once named them one of the '10 Worst Things to Happen to Men in 2007', and now Crocs have become the latest victims of the recession. See you later, alligator...



Laura Phillips, Trainee Planner/Buyer, wonders if we're ready for the next stage of the recession... optimism!



The latest ad from Volkswagen features a man leaving his office carrying his possessions in a cardboard box, strolling through a landscape littered with 'Final Sale' and 'To Let' signs, before driving away in his trusty Passat. The ad, which is accompanied by the Morecambe and Wise song 'Positive Thinking', culminates with the car heading towards the light at the end of a tunnel. Very subtle!

Industry experts have suggested that this kind of advertising signals a swing in consumer attitudes. When the recession first hit, we were inundated with nostalgic ads, reminiscing about a better time – the Milky Bar kid, and a rather tenuous 122-year anniversary for the Hovis brown loaf, to name just a couple.

Following this initial escapism, cold reality hit as price-crunch supermarket ads left us plagued with guilt at the thought of spending a penny more than necessary on our weekly shop. The next step has been slightly more positive; T-Mobile's 'Life's for Sharing' sing-along ads are both a call for camaraderie and a cheery reminder that the best things in life are still free (or on a favourable tariff, at least).

Love them or loathe them, T-Mobile's ads are a move in the right direction. Now we just need a return to some level of pre-credit crunch creativity. Am I the only one to feel a little let down by Cadbury's, which first bucked the trend with its contentious (and highly successful) gorilla ad, for jumping on the nostalgic bandwagon with this month's return to retro packaging?

If it's courage in the face of adversity that we're looking for, then surely an injection of humour by some of our best-loved brands is just what's needed?

Virgin Active's recent ad successfully married politics and humour, with Gordon Brown waving from atop an exercise bike and the strapline 'Lighten Up'. Maybe it's time we did just that.

Becci Wilson, TV Account Manager, warns us not to write off TV just yet...



TV-bashing seems to be all the rage these days. Not in the context of Keith Moon's TV-out-the-bedroom-window hotel trashing, but in the doom-mongering 'TV is dead' sense.

The Guardian recently ran a piece which included the headline 'With all this online, why watch TV?' As Thinkbox Chief Executive Tess Alps later blogged, it might as well have read "With all this internet shopping, why shop?"

The article only served to highlight a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between TV and the internet. TV is about creating content; the internet is one of the ways we can now deliver it to anything with a glass screen. One absolutely complements the other; they are not on two separate sides of a fence.

There's no doubt that viewers are choosing to access more and more TV content online these days. However, when TV content crosses into cyberspace, it doesn't magically stop being TV. In fact, simple, free catch-up TV online is stopping viewers falling out of the broadcast stream by allowing them to catch up on missed episodes. STV's catch-up service recorded its highest ever number of views following the Susan Boyle episode of Britain's Got Talent. But let's not forget that the programme was made for and broadcast on TV and this is what created the hype in the first place.

What is crucial now is getting on-demand to TV sets. For most people, watching on a computer screen is still a bit of a compromise. Especially when they have a large, shiny 37-inch flat-screen TV set in the other corner of their living room.

Virgin Media and BT Vision have started the ball rolling by allowing access to BBC i-Player, ITV Player and 4-OD, and the BBC have launched a consultation known as Project Canvas to help enable Internet Protocol TV on all sets. Once the technology is in place it is estimated that in the future around 15-25% of all TV viewing will be on demand, but that total time spent watching TV will go up around 15% as a result.

TV is not dead. Like Susan Boyle, it's just going through an extreme makeover.

Five ways to spend your time or money this month:

The Hypermax NFW 2015 'McFly' Back to the Future style icon Marty McFly has inspired Nike to create these beauties. Now we're just waiting on that hoverboard...



'Things Marketing People Love' A blog full of foibles and buzzwords that will raise a self-aware grin from even the most earnest of marketers. Follow it on Twitter (of course).

Cheetos Lipbalm Forget Juicy Tubes or Blistex, the latest solution to chapped lips has arrived, and it tastes like Cheetos...



Make A Friend Famous Try this *Entourage* app on Facebook that simulates a client/manager relationship; Manage your friend's profile and increase their 'fame' potential to win a real-life Hollywood experience

Meat Rubik's Cube After years of being told not to play with his food, one sandwich-maker extraordinaire has fought back with the Rubik's Cube sandwich. Puts your own egg-salad to shame.

