



Smiling

As seen at Stella McCartney's Paris fashion week show. Is a smile this season's must-have accessory?



De Nada, Nasa!

4 Spanish students, a £56 camera, a balloon and Google Earth give us photos from 20 miles above the earth's surface. Proof that a little can go a long way...

Tata Nano

A new family car that will take motoring to the masses in India, and all for the price of a pair of Jimmy Choos.



Obama Fingers

A German "homage to the American lifestyle and the new U.S. president", apparently. With BBQ dip.

Bus-stop Scales

This Fitness First ad is a fine example of media and creative working together – but is it just a bit too cruel?



Coca-Cola 'Conservation'

The drinks giant has donated £1.8m to Venetian conservation projects in exchange for the right to place 60 vending machines around the city.

Large Eggs

Which comes first, the chicken or the egg? S/M is the egg size of choice for the considerate consumer.



Alex Kirk, Account Director, asks you to be honest...

In the middle of a frivolous and gleefully insulting bit of mischief directed at humdrum pop act The Script, music blog Popjustice inadvertently pointed out the elephant in the room of almost every meeting ever held in the history of marketing, namely that the vast majority of all products on sale today are actually pretty dull.

This is in stark contrast to the language of advertising, a flurry of superlatives, hyperbole and giddy, wide-eyed teenage enthusiasm. Instead, suggest Popjustice, why not use inherent dullness, safety or reliability as a positive rather than hiding it like the marketing equivalent of a comb over?

A quick and entirely unrepresentative flick through a copy of the Metro sees the following hyperbole:

A gym is 'totally exciting'

As opposed to 'a bit whiffy, underused after the first year but you'll join because you know you'll only feel guilty about cake otherwise'.

Some mobile phones are 'amazing'

You know what, we're pretty much used to them now. Thanks.

An ISA is 'nice'

My gran is 'nice', my dog is 'nice', biscuits are 'nice'... but ISAs? Not so much.

A wireless internet connection is 'unbeatable'

Again, compared to say, Superman, not so much.

Mobile broadband will apparently make you say 'wow'

The last person to say 'wow' out loud reached adulthood in the late 1950s. And probably wrote this ad.

All of these claims are patent nonsense, but such is the lexicon of communication between brand and consumer.

Which is why a bit of honesty in communications can be so refreshing. In these tough times, let's hope that the seemingly old-fashioned values of common sense, honesty and realism make a comeback.

Ailsa Scott, Trainee Planner/Buyer, takes a “virtual-walk” with Google...



This week saw Google launch its controversial new mapping service – StreetView (aka NeighbourSpy).

This new online application allows users to access ‘tens of millions’ of seamless images giving 360-degree views around 25 British cities, including photographs of residential addresses, people and cars. First thoughts are of the advantages of checking out a hotel before you book or a new house before you buy, all from the comfort of your computer screen.

Sophisticated technology has been developed to automatically obscure the faces of people featured in Street View photographs, and car registration plates have been blurred. Well, mostly. In true British style, let the moaning commence. We were already under frequent surveillance (caught an average of 300 times per day) by CCTV *before* Streetview was introduced, but now it’s accessible to everyone. There has been an avalanche of complaints about violation of privacy, including one married man’s right to exit an adult shop in peace and another’s to be arrested in private. Google has dealt with these complaints by removing the offending frames (but if you move one click down the street and look back...voila!).

Sure, anyone who has time to scour the myriad of images for scandal will probably come across some unsavoury sights, but you might see similar things from a bus window in the real world. The common theme of online discussions is that users are primarily looking for a location and take as much notice of people in the images as of pedestrians when driving.

And despite objections, early statistics show that the public is already captivated. Google Maps UK received one in every 250 UK Internet visits on Friday, with onsite traffic rising by 41% (Hitwise). Google Maps US also posted an 84% increase in visits as British web users began checking out views in America.

The service launched in partnership with Visit Britain, FancyaPint.com, The London Mayor and the Tate art galleries and several new businesses have sprouted as a result. Within 45 minutes, one person had reportedly created a helpful driving route tool and FindaProperty.com is set to become the next fully integrated business application for house-hunters.

Postar, the outdoor media measurement system, has become the first commercial media operation to utilise Streetview. Media planners can now view 360-degree images of roadside panels and the environment around them before planning and buying outdoor space. Clearly, the commercial potential of StreetView is huge and, if Google’s track record is anything to go by, it’s here to stay. Just remember to close your curtains!

Five ways to spend your time or money this month:

- **Lego Business Cards** Ever have Patrick Bateman-style business card envy? Stay away from Lego employees; they now have their contact details on a mini, personalised Lego version of themselves.
- **Cassette Art** Who says cassettes are obsolete? Try doing this with an MP3 file →
- **Extreme Comedy** The Meribel Altitude Festival is comedy set on top of a mountain. World-class skiing *and* world-class comedy? We’re in!
- **Rememberthemilk.com** A sophisticated to-do list for the absent-minded yet techno-savvy.
- **Make your own Album Cover** Perfect procrastination. The title of a randomly selected Wiki article and the last 5 words of the final quote on the ‘random quotations’ page give you your band name and album title. The third picture along on Flickr’s ‘explore the last seven days’ creates your album cover. Has been known to produce such gems as: Plan Rubber’s “The anniversary of some perfectly uninteresting event.”

