

TCMG Product Launch Solution

Remember the amazing success of the Blair Witch Project?

It wasn't too amazing that it was made on an ultra-low budget. Other money making movies have done that - movies such as El Mariachi, THX 1138 and Dark Star.

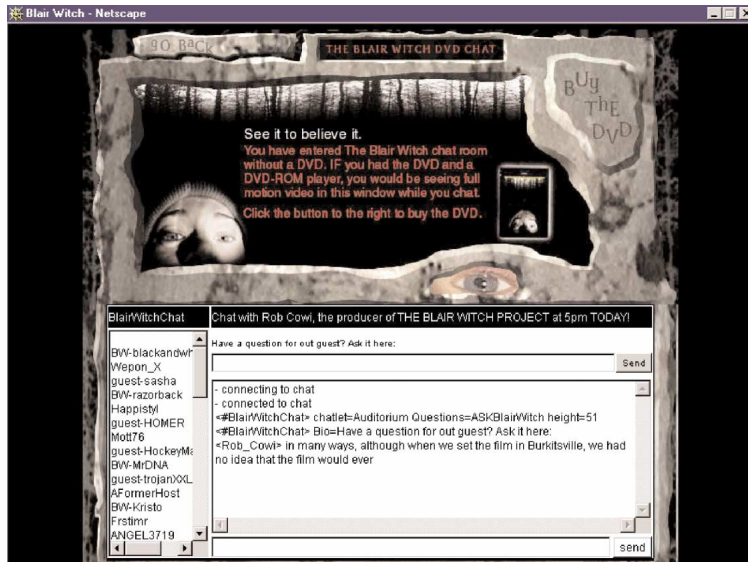
The Blair Witch Project's first weekend grossed \$29 Million, more than Eyes Wide Shut, South Park, or American Pie

What was amazing that it was *marketed* on an ultra-low budget. During its first year release, The Blair Witch Project made \$140 million dollars, putting it into the top one hundred biggest-grossing movies of all time. A typical Hollywood movie of that year spent \$24 million in marketing. The Blair Witch marketing ran much less than half that, and only spent \$1 million in pre-release marketing costs.

The secret, as we now know, was in using the Internet to generate buzz. The Blair Witch marketing team succeeded because they utilized the ability of the internet to amplify individual consumer's enthusiasm to thousands of others. Before the movie started, they had people talking to other people - broadcasting tips and notifying friends of this interesting-looking movie.

And what did those viewers do after the movie? They went back to their chat rooms and discussion boards and convinced others to go the next weekend.

The result was a tidal wave of publicity that spilled over into the mainstream. Newspapers, TV and magazines rushed to report on the movie that everyone was already talking about. Online community drove offline news - and sent traditional media scrambling to catch up.



Overall, it was an astonishing demonstration of the power of the network marketing model. Hundreds of thousands of people, talking directly to each other, proved that the Internet could be the most cost-effective marketing instrument of the modern era.

What counts in Internet Marketing?

Obviously, there are a lot of ways to leverage the Internet when you launch a new product: whether it is a movie, a new car, or a new financial service. What is the best way to accomplish your marketing objectives – how to draw new customers, how to keep them, and how to get them to buy?

To be Web-effective, you need to move beyond the normal static web page and the staid banner ad.

Many of the most used marketing techniques on the web do little to take advantage of the Internet's unique advantages. Most marketing dollars go to build static store fronts (web pages) or invest in clones of off-line advertising (banner ads).

Canny new-media marketers build Internet product launch campaigns around the key concepts of Involvement and Interactivity. Bring a person into the marketing process, and let him or her talk and interact with others, and you have a new customer. And more than just a customer, an evangelist who will go out and convert others to your cause.

It has been known for ages that asking for a person's input is the surest way to get them involved and turn them into a believer and a customer. The Internet has finally made it possible to effectively use this technique on a broad level.

How do you do it?

Understand your customer

And understand how to communicate. You've always known the value of traditional Market Research focus groups and surveys, but it is increasingly hard to implement a thorough research project given the compressed time of the Internet market and the need for quick turn-arounds. Fortunately, you can use the immediacy of the Internet to your advantage by conducting **online focus groups** and surveys. These new media research techniques can be implemented on a dime and give you an idea of what people are thinking about today, not last month.

Let people in

Open the doors and let people start talking about your product even while you are developing it. You will gain invaluable ideas for improving features, and your contributors will feel the involvement and ownership that hooks them into becoming an extension of your salesforce. It is easy to do, too. Establish some **discussion boards**, seed the conversations with suggestions, ideas and comments, gather your target contributors and watch them design your product for you.

Launch with a boom

Use an online, live **Event** to reach out to thousands of people around the world. Online events let your customers, including press and analysts, have real-time direct access to the highest levels of your company. They can ask questions, talk with one another, and see what other customers think. This gives your company a human face, and allows your audience to develop a connection with you on a personal level. They will learn how they can use your product and its value proposition. Your event is also a publicity tool in itself. They are one of the most cost-effective ways to drive targeted traffic to your site.

Fuel their excitement

Users find **chat** rooms unparalleled in generating exciting, dynamic personal interchanges. Chat is one of the most popular of all web tools with 39% of adults and 72% of teens participating. For these users, the ability to speak and respond immediately and personally to other users and ideas makes chat one of the most compelling reasons to come to your site and talk about your products.

Sustain their interest

For some types of products, folks will want to interact in their own areas. They will create an interest group, or **club**, around a particular, quirky topic and build a community to discuss just that subject. With a TCMG Club tool, your customers can have their own discussion boards, chat rooms, photo galleries and calendar for talking to each other and exploring the complexities of your product and their own personal views.



Palm Computer used Talk City for the launch of its low-cost m100 handheld computer.

Over 2500 people attended an online event where they could ask questions directly to the product managers and view live audio and video. By personally answering individual's concerns, Palm's product managers were able to turn regular users into evangelists.

To follow up, Palm launched a set of branded discussion boards where users of the m100 and other Palm products can continue to advise each other and develop new uses for their new purchase.

Summary

The Internet has the potential to be the most cost-effective component of your product launch. With the proper system in place, you can pitch your message directly to thousands of individuals and listen to their ideas. What's more, you will multiply your marketing force by turning everyone in this virtual community into an advocate or evangelist for your new product.

Many brand-savvy companies have used Talk City to help launch products: Palm Computing's m100 handheld computer, Chrysler's *Car of the Year* PT Cruiser, and Lucasfilm's Star Wars Episode 1. TCMG's expertise and robust applications make us an excellent choice to converse with your customers and to communicate your messages effectively in Internet time.

Parts of a complete TCMG Internet Product Launch Package

- Online Focus Groups: Focus groups of press, consumers or other targeted groups to test the public attitude.
- Online Surveys: Targeted surveys to track changes in customer attitudes.
- Discussion Boards: Publicly accessible bulletin boards with unlimited folders and conversations.
- WebCast Event: Audio-enabled presentations for up to thousands of attendees.
- Chat room: 24x7 chat rooms. Hosted to facilitate conversation and protect civil discourse.
- Custom Clubs: Gathering places for people to build their own communities with discussion boards, chat, calendars, photo galleries, file sharing, and email administration.
- Consulting: Strategic direction on design of site and using dialogue marketing for spreading your message.

More on Blair Witch Marketing:

Blair Witch Casts Strong Spell: <http://www.wirednews.com/news/print/0,1294,21045,00.html>

Web Buzz Helped Blair Witch: <http://www.usatoday.com/life/cyber/tech/ctf867.htm>

How "The Blair Witch Project" Cast Online Marketing Magic: <http://www.chazaustin.com/blair.html>