



# 1. Why Social Network Marketing Misses Out: Playing Solitaire at a Party

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If you work at an interactive agency or at a brand that's interested in marketing at social networks, this post is for you.

## Agencies and Brands unsure what to do

I can see the deal now, and I'm sure many of you have been in these meetings (client or agency side). The agency knows the brand manager is familiar, comfortable, with traditional interactive marketing campaigns in the past. So, the agency comes to the table repurposing a successful microsite now to meet a "Facebook strategy". The brand manager nods, signs off, and the agency gets to work. Weeks to months later, the campaign launches on Facebook, with many of the computer-to-human features that you'd see on a microsite but it doesn't allow self-expression or the ability to share. As such, only a few folks show up, and it's written off as a 'learning experiment' (corporate translation: *fail*)

**[When it comes to social network marketing, many brands are deploying "computer-to-human" efforts, and therefore missing out on the true community features of self-expression and sharing that "member-to-member" activities provide]**

## Fail: many brands repurposing microsite strategies

[The best and worst of social network marketing](#)" most brands are doing it wrong. In fact, I'm hearing of more and more cases where interactive agencies are repurposing interactive marketing (human to computer) and go to brands (who don't know what to do) and present a 6-7 digit proposal for a Facebook strategy. Unfortunately, many brands are spending a tremendous amount of resources and missing the most important opportunities. ([Deloitte research also backs this up -WSJ](#))

## Solitaire, a *terrible*

Have you noticed that the card game solitaire doesn't make for a good party game? It's the same thing when it comes to social networks. Social networks are about self expression, communication, and networking and sharing with others –it's more akin to social card games like poker, gin, or even mah jong. The core elements of these games encourage sharing, trading, communicating with other players of the party.

Many brands are deploying solitaire games at a party, where everyone is already playing poker. The same concept applies to marketing efforts on social networks. In our research, many were developing efforts that was two-way between the brand and a *single*



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### **Socialization, the missing link**

What does this opportunity look like? Getting the members to self-express on your behalf, communicate to each other, and spread the brand values to their own network at a rapid pace. Social networking tools allow for rapid spread of information to ones network –providing they choose to participate in this behavior.

It's interesting to note that the agency that delivered the only passing grade was Federated Media, who doesn't come from the traditional interactive agency realm, but instead first with a blog advertising networks, and is slowly expanding into social marketing. Unfortunately, I've heard concerns from some that they may not be able to scale to meet enterprise needs that other large existing firms offer, so we'll have to see if they can grow –while maintaining flexibility.

So, as you start to shop around for ideas to meet your objectives for your social marketing activities, remember that repurposing the traditional microsites is missing out on the social behaviors that are native to social networks.

## **2. Why Most Online Communities Fail**

<http://blogs.wsj.com/biztech/2008/07/16/why-most-online-communities-fail/>

One of the hot investments for businesses these days is online communities that help customers feel connected to a brand. But most of these efforts produce fancy Web sites that few people ever visit. The problem: Businesses are focusing on the value an online community can provide to themselves, not the community.

That's according to Ed Moran, a Deloitte consultant who just completed a study of more than 100 businesses with online communities. Not surprisingly, these sites failed to gain traction with customers. Thirty-five percent of the online communities studied have less than 100 members; less than 25% have more than 1,000 members – 6% of these businesses spent over \$1 million on their community projects. "A disturbingly high number of these sites fail," Moran tells us.

Businesses launching online communities repeat a series of blunders. First, they have a tendency to get seduced by bells and whistles and blow their online-community budget on technology. Moran suggests that businesses spend resources identifying and reaching out to potential community members instead of investing in software that makes predictions, or even social-networking technology.

Moran also recommends that businesses put someone who has experience running an online community in charge of the project. This doesn't sound particularly earth-shattering, but consider that about 30% of the businesses Deloitte studied have only one part-time worker in charge of their communities. Most other businesses put a single marketing pro in charge of their sites.



The third problem with online communities is how businesses go about measuring the success of their communities. Businesses say that their primary objectives are generating word-of-mouth marketing and increasing customer loyalty. Yet the metric that businesses use most often to measure success is the number of visits to the site. Moran points out that there isn't much of a connection between what businesses want and what they're measuring. Better metrics might be rankings in Google or the number of inbound links.

This doesn't change the fact that most of online communities fail. But at least they're less expensive failures.

-Ben Worthen

### 3. Excerpt about and link to Forrester report on Social Networks (includes score card)

*Report available for purchase at Forrester for \$279*

<http://www.forrester.com/Research/Document/Excerpt/0.7211.44911.00.html>

"In this latest report, we created a scorecard (which you can use to checklist your own efforts) which amplifies the real opportunities of social network; the community themselves. This report is great for anyone brand deploying a social network marketing effort, or for agencies that are trying to enter this new world. Marketing efforts did best when the control was turned over to the hands of the community.

**[We tested marketing efforts on Social Networks using 'Social' criteria (rather than traditional marketing tactics) that meets the needs of the community, sadly, only 1 out of 16 brands passed]**

We took a multi-industry approach, and reviewed 16 firms from four industries: automotive, media, technology, and consumer products. Sadly, out of these 16 contenders that were appropriate, only the BMW Series 1 received a passing grade, and half of the firms scored a zero or lower. We also tried to find examples in many social networks including Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Imeem, and Microsoft's Windows Live Spaces. I was already asked on Twitter if there were B2B examples, unfortunately, we only found one that made the report, Microsoft Live Server.

Despite these dismal scores, there were some great examples such as the The Dell/Microsoft (Red) program provided a rich media theme that was easily sharable, Sony's BMG page for Alicia Keys was personable and interactive, and Kraft's DiGiorno Pizza delivered a unique interactive experience with its members. To improve social network marketing, brands must develop community-centered content and activities, measure success based on new criteria, and be prepared to participate.



## Collection of articles on Social Networking/Brand

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### **16 social network marketing efforts are:**

Note: A passing score is a minimum of 8.

#### **Automotive**

BMW 1 Series scores a 9 (Pass) [read more](#)

Mazda3 scores a -1

Chevy scores a 3 (who sponsored the effort at the time)

Ford scores a -4

#### **Media**

HBO's Entourage scores a 2

FOX News scores a -4

Disney: Enchanted Movie scores a -4

Sony BMG's Alicia Keys scores a 7

#### **Technology**

Dell/Microsoft (RED) scores a 6

Samsung's Blast scores a -3

Microsoft's Windows Server Live scores a 6

Intel scores a -5

#### **Consumer Products**

Nike scores a 2

Kraft's DiGiorno Pizza scores a 5

Pepsi's Aquafina scores a -2

Mars: Skittles & Starburst scores a 0