

When brands troll brands

 By Louise Marsland

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Today I have to thank the internet for my weekly trends column. It produced a veritable fruit salad of social media memes this week: apples and bananas specifically. And much merriment was had by all, including relevant brands.

Yes, it is Apple again and #bendgate. I mean seriously, #bendgate?! An apparent product design flaw in the new Apple iPhone 6 is hardly comparable to the original political 'gate' scandal #Watergate, that brought down a President, but every meme needs a catchphrase I suppose!

What is interesting is how opposing mobile brands trolled Apple too as the story broke this week about Apple's new iPhone 6 being so thin that it bends in your hands or in your pocket when you sit down on it - logic anyone? But TV news ran stories, Twitter salivated at the news and suddenly there were bendy bananas instead of apples in my timeline and pithy comments from Samsung, et al.

TheNextWeb.com carried a round-up ['The Internet's hilarious reaction to #bendgate'](#) (iPhone Dali Edition is my favourite). The comedians on Twitter make my day, every single day.



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And it seems that once the trolling starts, it's too good for the brands to miss out on either. Clever and witty comebacks seem to bolster brand cred these days, even while you're hammering your competitor over their faux pas.

[Samsung tweeted](#) a pic of their Galaxy Note @SamsungMobile with the words "Curved. Not bent." Brilliant in its execution.

Other mobile brands [weighed in](#), with @HTCUSA tweeting: "Designed to withstand the most demanding environments. Like your pockets. [#HTCOneM8](#)".

But is this a good thing? Do you as a brand, jump into the fray and add your funny comments to make the internet laugh today. What about tomorrow when your brand screws up, as it inevitably might? Nothing will stop your competitors from their turn at a pot shot.



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Does brand dominance equal arrogance - such as that associated with the Apple brand? Or is it just that when you reach the top of the brand league tables, that you become fair game and deserve the 'take down' should the opportunity present itself.

How Apple reacts is key. Nothing is perfect, including brand perfection. Being able to laugh at yourself is necessary in this transparent, authentic, everything is on the internet, nothing is secret or sacred, 'brazen new world' (with apologies to Aldous Huxley).

We all screw up in real life and if brands want us to associate human personality traits with them, then they have to be prepared for when we associate failure and mock them for their foibles too.

It is how you handle the inevitable criticism that counts. With grace or candour or humour seems to be the workable formula.

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

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