

Marketers should get on the Net and interact

By [On the Net](#)

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"Marketing is either something you get or you don't. You either love it or you don't." Joseph Jaffe, who clearly gets it, is talking from London. This South African-born marketing guru and sought-after consultant, speaker and thought leader on 'new marketing' is on a whirlwind 'seven cities in 14 days' tour talking to the industry. It's midnight in the UK and Jaffe, who's lived in America for years now, is talking into a microphone, doing an audio commentary for Bizcommunity.com.

A few hours earlier he was on a Virgin Atlantic plane to London joining the mile-high club... the podcasters' mile-high club, that is, when he did a podcast 35 000 feet in the air.

It's quite clear from blogging, to skypeing, to podcasting, that Jaffe is someone who not only talks the talk, but also walks the walk. And he urges other marketers to get on the Net and interact.

Make it part of your life

He says that people who aren't investing on the Net will be out of a job in the future - "the indicators are through the roof that it is the number one medium for young consumers. You need to know the medium and make it part of your life.

"It's a second world for people. They're recording, they're downloading music, they're skypeing, blogging, creating videos, actualising things, interacting, socialising and generating content. It is where the customer is and that is part of the reason business needs to invest on the Net."

Twenty percent of all consumer time is online today, says Jaffe, yet you only have 2 - 3% of the dollar chasing it. "This gap has to be bridged," he says.

"In fact, it is not a matter of should you invest but how much you should invest. You need to be experimenting, trying things you've never tried before - inventing yourself to the consumer so as to be relevant. The number one benefit here is interactivity.

Permission marketing

"You're not just talking to the customer but listening and letting them talk back. It is time for a new marketing. Seth Godin spoke of permission marketing and that is what it is - where consumers allow marketers to join their lives. Gone are the days of intruding with irrelevant mediocre advertising.

"It's no use tweaking the old model or retro-fitting a solution so small to such a big problem - you need to let customers talk back, participate."

Today's young consumers only know life with the Web, he says. "If you want to get into their head space you have to be on the Web. Life on the Web has been an ad-free existence so far - "it is a dry bone when it comes to advertising. The web is as ubiquitous as a dial tone.

"Consumers use it as a means to connect, build, actualise and participate. It's up to brands to now figure out how to join this conversation as opposed to controlling or intruding in it," says Jaffe.

Changing the face of marketing

He believes that the Web represents the wisdom of crowds - and has the ability for all to participate. "In the past with classic marketing if a consumer was pleased he would tell five to seven of his closest friends; if displeased he would tell 15 to 20. Today, because of the Net, if a consumer is disappointed he can tell one million of his closest strangers on the Net." This changes the whole face of marketing.

The Web, he says, is untouched by marketers' 'grubby paws'. "It leads by example and we are lucky enough to ride the train as opposed to contriving it and forcing it into something it has never been.

"I hope it lives up to the promise of being the chameleon of modern day marketing."

Advertising online is where it is least liked, perhaps "because the standard of creativity has been so low".

Starving the life blood

"I look at the state of advertising in the world today and America, in particular, and ad agencies aren't run by creatives anymore. It's supposed to be an ideas business but you have giant holding companies that control the agendas. They're starving the very life blood out of the ad industry. Which brings me back to the premise - you either get it or you don't; you either live it or you don't."

"I fear that good people have lost their edge, that they've lost their hunger to reinvent selves and think out of the box. We're seeing some of the worst practices associated with television on the Net but also some of the best case studies like subservientchicken.com.

Terms like web 2.0 irritate Jaffe. "I just don't get. Why create something that that creates another hurdle for traditional marketers?"

As far as the Net goes, says Jaffe, "Where we are now is nowhere compared to where we are going to be".

- Jaffe is president and founder of jaffe, LLC (www.getthejuice.com), a new marketing consulting practice. His clients include MSN, Google, Reuters, CNET Networks, ESPN and the AAAA's. His book, *Life After the 30 Second Spot*, was a best seller and is being translated into a number of languages and his blogsite www.jaffejuice.com has a loyal following, as has his podcasting. In the early '90s, when Jaffe completed a Bachelor of Marketing Science at UCT, he joined Nando's in its marketing department for five years. "Today I often tell people that 99% of what I need to be successful as a marketer I learnt at there." He then went to America where he was director of interactive media at TBWA/Chiat/Day and OMD USA. He has worked with clients including Kmart, ABSOLUT Vodka, Embassy Suites and Samsonite. He started jaffe, LLC, four years ago.

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