

# "EARLY BIRDING"



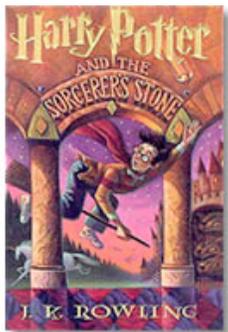
As if a trend like **NO-FRILLS CHIC** wasn't enough for marketers faced with a frenzy for more buzz, more discovery, more exclusivity, then how about the internet (read: **ONLINE OXYGEN**) increasingly enabling companies to capture early-stage demand for spanking new got-to-haves?

TRENDWATCHING.COM has dubbed this trend **EARLY BIRDING**: the proliferation of advance online bookings, early notifications and pre-ordering for a multitude of desirable and anticipated services and goods, attracting hundreds of thousands of early birds and/or early adopters around the world.

Basically, what was once a tool for seminar organizers, luxury car makers and a handful of book sellers, is now a marketing phenomenon across the board, enticing cash rich and not-so-cash rich consumers to pre-purchase, or at least reveal their purchase intentions for everything from DVDs to coffee machines to iPods.

And it's not just about getting a discount, as is the case with traditional early bird offers. This time, some customers may actually be willing to pay MORE, as long as they get what they want the moment it becomes available.

Want some **EARLY BIRDING** numbers and examples?



- **Amazon**, capitalizing on its massive online reach, is an **EARLY BIRDING** champion: most voluminous example so far was Amazon's 'Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix' pre-ordering stunt during Q2 of last year (2003). The company received more than 1.3 million advance orders for the book worldwide and delivered nearly 800,000 in the United States on the June 21 release date in conjunction with the U.S. Postal Service. The **EARLY BIRDING** coup netted

Amazon.com more than 250,000 new customers, or almost one out of every five pre-orders, turning it into a highly successful customer acquisition success as well (source: Lehman Brothers).

Get your Senseo today  
Exclusive pre-sales ▶  
**amazon.com.** 

In fact, these days, everything seems to be attuned to **EARLY BIRDING** on the Amazon site: from the Star Wars Trilogy (episodes IV-VI) to last month's introduction of the much hyped Philips/SARA LEE Senseo Coffee machine!



- The Nokia 7610 phone, with a built-in 1M pixel camera, is attracting **EARLY BIRDING** enthusiasts to **Carphone Warehouse**. And so are the Siemens CX 65, the Sony Ericsson S700, and the Nokia 7700. Carphone Warehouse's popular

**Coming Soon** section is yet one of the many examples in the early adaptor-driven market for cell phones, which, hype and anticipation-wise, are like new car models for Gen Y!



Need more input and inspiration?  
**trendwatching.com's 2008 Trend Report**  
covers 12 themes, 24 trends  
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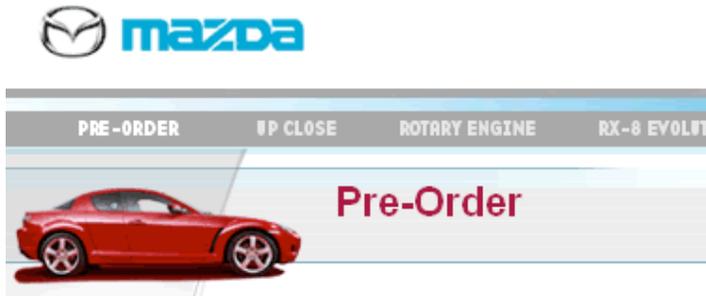
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• Speaking of which: buying cars over the internet is nothing new, but selling a car online that has yet to be seen 'in the metal', was a virtually new and untried concept. [Mazda](#) did it, by introducing an internet-based pre-order capability for its new Mazda RX-8 sports car. The pre-order site, which was closed in October 2003, allowed would-be Mazda RX-8 owners to take a virtual 360° tour of the interior and exterior.



It also enabled prospects to select, build and view their exact specification model and sign up to be one of the first to drive away the new car, by paying a EUR 1,500 (approximately USD 1,800) pre-order deposit online. Mazda also sought to keep those who placed pre-orders regularly informed on both the nationwide launch and the delivery status of their personal order. Which in the end drew a more than respectable 1,800 [EARLY BIRDING](#) enthusiasts.



• When introducing the now white-hot (pastel-hot?) iPod mini this February, [Apple Computer](#) announced it had already processed online orders for more than 100,000 units -- representing sales of \$25 million before the official launch. The 100,000 iPod minis sold by advance order represented about 2.6 percent of the 3.8 million digital music players sold during all of 2003. See [GENERATION C](#) below, for more on iPods!

#### Coming Soon: Clinton's Memoir



It's official! Former president Bill Clinton's long-awaited memoir, *My Life*--the most hotly anticipated book since *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*--will be published in late June. Pre-order your copy of what promises to be one of the most buzzed-about books of the summer--and the year.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

There are many more [EARLY BIRDING](#) examples, in many more industries (gaming, anyone?!), yet as a fully integrated marketing and customer relationship building tool, this trend still has plenty of

room to grow. The benefits can be juicy: [EARLY BIRDING](#) campaigns create buzz (especially if linked to limited availability), attract premium-paying early adopters, may generate pre-distribution cash-flow, enable companies to gauge levels of interest and bring in new customers.

Where to start? Well, a key ingredient needed is exposure: how to get consumers to register early? Obviously, this is where retail specialist Amazon, with its massive online reach, has a leg up on most other brands, so the online giant would make a good partner to get started. And if you run a well known brand yourself, with eager customers actually listening to you now and then, then [EARLY BIRDING](#) is a great excuse to finally fill those expensive customer relationship databases with customers trembling with anticipation! ;-) >> [Email this trend to a friend.](#)