

"TRYVERTISING"



Mass advertising is dying. Experienced consumers couldn't care less about commercials, ads, banners and other fancy wording and imagery that is forced upon them, so let's move on to more interesting ways of igniting conversations between corporations and consumers. We recently spoke about [CUSTOMER MADE](#) and [NOUVEAU NICHE](#) as powerful alternatives to archaic marketing thinking, but those concepts don't necessarily *introduce* consumers to your brand or your new product. Sure, much has already been said about search-based advertising and initiating word of mouth as new (and certainly more relevant) ways to replace mass advertising, but TRENDWATCHING.COM wants to add a third alternative: **TRYVERTISING**, which is all about consumers becoming familiar with new products by actually trying them out.

Think of **TRYVERTISING** as a new breed of product placement* in the real world, integrating your goods and services into daily life in a relevant way, so that consumers can make up their minds based on their experience, not your messages.



* Mind you, this is not about increasingly sophisticated product placement in movies, TV series or games; no doubt an improvement on intrusive commercials, but it's still based on advertising,

not **TRYVERTISING**. Also, to prevent this newsletter becoming more voluminous than the old testament, we will primarily focus on direct **TRYVERTISING**, i.e. activities aimed directly at end users, as opposed to indirect, viral campaigns aimed at getting celebs or influencers to try out (and talk about) new products and brands: we'll save Star Jones, The Donald, Hillary Swank and Josh Rubin for the inevitable update ;-)



So what does **TRYVERTISING** incorporate? Think 'obvious' activities like handing out product samples, and more subtle, integrated product placements that are part of an experience or solution. It's everything from new-style [sachets](#) containing single servings of liquid products, to hotels partnering with luxury carmakers to offer high end model test drives to guests during their stay.

First, a bit more about the 'old' **TRYVERTISING** that we're all familiar with: think free shampoo samples in magazines, or a point of sale promotion stand in a supermarket.

The challenge here has always been a certain lack of relevance: there's no guarantee samples are tried out at the right time, in the right spot, and by the right target audience.

One clever solution to this distribution dilemma: [Tremor](#), P&G's gargantuan **TRYVERTISING** project. In only two years time, this focus group cum sample/coupon dispersing network signed up 280,000 US (!) teens, ages 13 to 19, who

actively promote new products to their peers, and may be asked to place coupons and product samples in living rooms, schools and any other relevant location. Next? [Tremor Moms](#), of course!





Another distribution shift within the world of old-school **TRYVERTISING**: websites that enable consumers to actively get their hands on free stuff: see TheFreeSite.com, www.startsampling.com, www.freechannel.net, www.freebielist.com, www.freebiesplanet.com, www.gratis.nl, www.alles-kostenlos.de, www.yes-its-free.com and so on. Here too, the opportunity to disperse samples to a slightly more relevant audience (based on recipients' profiles) is tempting, though the current emphasis on 'free' may limit diversity within the try-out audience.

So what about more targeted, more relevant new-style **TRYVERTISING**? Product placements that become part of the landscape, part of the real world where consumers hang out and certainly don't mind trying something as long as it makes sense to them? Check out the following **TRYVERTISERS**, and how they're integrating their wares into (semi) public domains like bars/cafes, waiting rooms, events, universities and hotels.

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HOTELS

Which companies are already seriously into **TRYVERTISING**? Let's start with hotels, which are rapidly turning into the number one spot for new-style product placement. No wonder, as guests' activities mirror their domestic lives, minus, one may hope, pilfering the mini-bar (another great **TRYVERTISING** spot by the way!). And it's no longer just the branded Aveda toiletries in Westin bathrooms; luxury automakers, for example, are teaming up with hoteliers to introduce guests to high-end cars during their stay.



Mercedes-Benz. The Ritz Carlton offers a [Key to Luxury](#) program in cooperation with Mercedes Benz, and recently added the CLS500 to the mix. The package includes deluxe guest room accommodations on The Ritz-Carlton Club Level; the use of a CLS500 with unlimited mileage for the duration of the guest's stay; full tank of gas each morning and overnight valet parking. According to Ritz Carlton, dozens of guests decided to buy a new Merc based on these integrated test-drives.

Maybach. Mercedes-Benz's super-luxury brand Maybach has placed specially built model 62s at unidentified high-end hotels in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington. Selected guests will be allowed to take the wheel of the USD 385,000 cars. A far cry from shampoo samples, but hey, "one generation's TRYVERTISING indulgence becomes the next generation's TRYVERTISING necessity" (loosely quoting [James Twitchell](#)).



Porsche. Fairmont Hotels in the US has a partnership with Porsche to provide high-flying guests with Tour de Fairmont packages, available at The Fairmont San Francisco and The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa. Guests can choose from a Porsche Boxster or Cayenne to explore San Francisco in style, and to try out the pleasures of a 500 horsepower engine. (Source: USA TODAY.)



Mini Cooper. The [Mosaic Hotel](#) in Beverly Hills offers a Mini Cooper for USD 10 a night more than the USD 269 regular room rate. TRENDWATCHING.COM encourages European hotels to follow suit.

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Needless to say, **TRYVERTISING** in hotels doesn't only work for cars: furniture deals are equally popular. Witness Swedish **IKEA** and French **Etap** Hotels partnering to equip all 60 Etap budget hotels in Germany with an IKEA room and a public quiet space, also furnished by IKEA. And Radisson's deal last year with Select Comfort Corporation will mean that [SLEEP NUMBER](#) beds will be available in all Radisson resorts and hotels in the US, Canada and the Caribbean.

Other examples of hotel **TRYVERTISING** include the Playstation bar in Brighton's Hotel Pelirocco and the Heineken room in The Winston in Amsterdam, as featured in last month's [BRANDED BRANDS](#) update.



Next step for hotels that already operate as stylish curators of other companies' products? More and more establishments are selling their OWN wares in a natural **TRYVERTISING** setting, from Kimpton Hotels' in-room catalogue, to Sofitel's [SoBoutique](#) collection, listing the 180 most-requested items from its 180 hotels. Why does TRENDWATCHING.COM feel we haven't seen anything yet?

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BARS AND RESTAURANTS

Our sister publication Springwise New Business Ideas recently reported on Swedish [Vinotek](#) and San Francisco based [VinoVenue](#). Both combine the concepts of a wine tasting bar and self dispensing machines (basically, wine jukeboxes) in a cool setting, enticing consumers to buy a chargeable smart card which will give them access to dozens of bottles of wine including elaborate information. The machines dispense a glass of the chosen wine for a couple of bucks/euros. It's all about choice and trying before you buy: VInoVenue's automated wine stations offer more than 100 wines from around the world, all available per glass and bottle. Smart cards are not only used for payment, they also track which wines have been tasted, facilitating future purchasing decisions. Paid-for **TRYVERTISING**: what more could you wish for?



FROM CRUISE SHIPS TO SKI RESORTS

Can you say 'captive audience'? One thing most semi-public spaces have in common is a captive audience, often there by their own free will. Which is where [Vacations Connections](#) comes in, peddling an organized approach to in-hut, in-room product placement of samples targeted at vacationers. In their own words: "Give your target your product sample when they are most likely to try it, and associate unforgettable memories to the experience. Your target consumer is greeted with your product sample on the first day of their vacation. At a time when they are without their "stuff" from home and will have up to 7 days to form a new habit with your brand." Carnival Cruise is a client, as is Absolut, Colgate-Palmolive, Kraft Foods and Unilever Group. Planes, trains and rental cars to follow?

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EVENTS

Move over event-based advertising and sponsoring and make way for empathy & relevance-inspired **EVENT-TRYVERTISING**? Check out Nike's [Runner Lounge](#) in Vancouver (see also our [POP-UP RETAIL](#) update below) where runners preparing for the Vancouver half marathon can rendezvous for a run, get free massages, drinks and snacks and perhaps most significantly, test-drive Nike's line of running shoes.

Or consider the **TRYVERTISING** circus that descended upon this year's Sundance Film Festival: Starbucks sent employees up and down Main Street with brewing coffee kegs, HP had a photo bar at their Main Street lounge where cameras and printers were set up for visitors to be photographed against a selection of faux Sundance backgrounds, and all of the services, screenings and parties around town made it very convenient for VW, Mercedes-Benz and Cadillac to showcase their newest models by offering a free shuttle service for festival VIPs to the Sundance location of their choice. (Source: TrendCentral.)

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WAITING AREAS

Who likes to wait? Help consumers overcome boredom and throw in some empathy as well! Last year, Senseo Coffee Machines installed coffee machines at a number of Dutch bus and tram stops, offering waiting passengers a cup of fresh brewed coffee. Perhaps not the most spectacular **TRYVERTISING** stunt ever, but ten times more relevant to consumers than a billboard trying to *show* the aromas.

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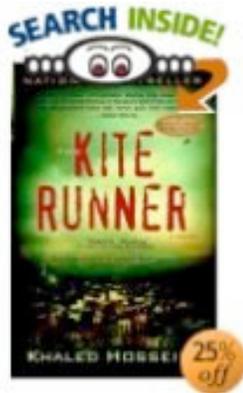
SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

More Nike and **TRYVERTISING**: this February, the Nike Fitness Academy set up shop in the fitness room of the General William Lyon University Center for the third time, offering a series of free workout classes. The event is taught by certified instructors from the Nike Fitness Team and features classes such as Xtreme Step, Nike Rockstar Workout and Cardio Striptease. Needless to say, participants can try on the latest models and styles of shoes while they work out. (Source: Daily Trojan News.)

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

We could go on and on: **TRYVERTISING** is starting to take off in the real world, and yet we haven't even addressed **TRYVERTISING** developments in the online world, where millions of consumers are telling other consumers about their real, tried and true experiences with goods and services, helping would-be customers to vicariously try out anything from kitchen appliances to financial services.

Related to this is the rise in 'preview before you buy': from iTunes 30 sec clips to Amazon.com's 'Search Inside' feature letting customers read a book's first page (before they move on to scan dozens of customer reviews). Or how about the new crop of rental firms, that let consumers enjoy, experience and thus try out everything from [designer bags](#) to Segways? Marketers operating in a **TRYVERTISING** mindset will find completely new 'conversation channels' for their products, if not the most unexpected partners and alliances.



OPPORTUNITIES

As you can tell from the above, **TRYVERTISING** is more about mindset than science: will you continue to spend the majority of your marketing budget on disliked, message-based advertising, or will you shift considerable amounts of money to a more relevant, empathic, try-out approach? If you feel particularly creative this month, why not scan www.trendwatching.com/trends and make a case for a truly original **TRYVERTISING** campaign? Incorporate mega-consumer trends like [GENERATION C](#), [READY-TO-KNOW](#), [CUSTOMER MADE](#), and pick the best **TRYVERTISING** examples from the above and from closely related marketing trends like [BRANDED BRANDS](#), [INSPIERENCES](#), and [POP-UP RETAIL](#).

Then leave your desk or home office, bring a notepad/PDA and camera, and find your own new-style product placement locations that will surprise your potential customers with relevance and empathy: may we suggest that you cover (at least) bars/cafes, clubs, holiday resorts, cruise ships, events, sporting events, parks, public transport (buses, trams, subways, trains, taxis, ferries, waiting rooms), airports, lounges, cinemas, theaters, theme parks, concerts, beaches, parks, planes, shops, supermarkets, shopping malls, hospitals, schools, universities, office spaces, gyms, conference venues, restaurants, and hotels. Don't forget: if YOU won't do it, someone else will, and customer expectations are easily set. So just give it a try?;-) >> [Email this trend to a friend.](#)

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Let's face it: most traditional advertising is white noise. So enabling jaded, saturated, experienced, demanding consumers to try before they buy, in innovative and above all RELEVANT ways, is gaining in popularity. Which is why we dedicated an entire newsletter to this advertising trend in April. Since then, we have received so many new spottings that an update made sense. So please re-read our initial **TRYVERTISING** [report](#), then peruse the below:

Some additional **TRYVERTISING** insights:

- When it comes to **TRYVERTISING**, products that can be offered as an integrated experience will do well. Remember Nike's [Runner Lounge](#) in Vancouver, where runners preparing for the Vancouver half marathon could rendezvous for a run, get free massages, drinks and snacks and perhaps most significantly, test-drive Nike's line of running shoes? The moment you push your try-out product to a broad audience at a non-relevant moment, and/or as a stand-alone item, not much will happen. The moment you solve a problem or add to an experience, making trying-out about empathy, not about pushing sales, you're in.

- As **TRYVERTISING** is not about old-school sampling, but about relevance, about real-world product placements, the most ideal audience is an audience with some time on his/her hands, or one that is actually looking for something to read, listen to, master, or figure out. This works especially well for complicated products that need some time to be understood or appreciated, or expensive products where a fear of spending big on a dud needs to be overcome. This is why hotels, planes, cruise ships, buses, trains, waiting lounges all make for great **TRYVERTISING** spaces.

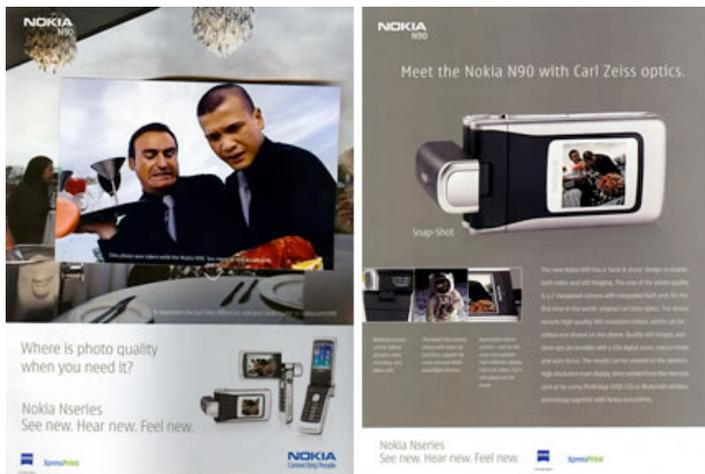
- **TRYVERTISING** and the internet: vicariously trying out products through online reviews (written by other consumers) will get much more sophisticated: it's where **TRYVERTISING** meets Word of Mouth. Keep an eye on Buzz companies like www.buzzoodle.com, www.bzzagent.com, and buzzer.nl. Add some [TWINSUMERISM](#), and you may end up with WORM: Word of Relevant Mouth!

As the Kodak camera is equipped with e-mail and online picture sharing, Hyatt guests, using resorts' T-Mobile HotSpots, don't need a computer to report back to friends and family back home. So they'll literally be spreading the news, which gives the whole campaign a nice additional viral buzz.



And as a follow-up to the very smart 'rent a Mini Cooper for the weekend for only 10 USD per night' scheme at Beverly Hill's Mosaic Hotel, The **Crowne Plaza** hotel in Parramatta (Sydney) now offers corporate travelers an **Audi TT** or one of the new Audi A-series as part of the room rate. In general, test-drives consistently occupy the number one spot for consumers' favorite try-out activities, so offering test-drives as an integrated experience is a guaranteed winner. Time to partner with a hotel chain, to **TRYVERTISE** your products to vacationing consumers, or moneyed business travelers.

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How about ogling the quality of cameraphone pics and DIY photo prints? To convince sceptical consumers that their cameraphones (with Carl Zeiss optics) can deliver top quality pics, **Nokia** recently attached hundreds of thousands of real, shiny picture **TRYVERTISING** prints, shot with a Nokia N-series camphone, in publications like Newsweek and BusinessWeek.

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Meanwhile, for more than two years, **Canon** has been **inviting** anyone in the EU to upload a digital picture to their website, pick a Canon printer they would like to try out, and fill in their address; a real photo print will then arrive in the mail the following day. Canon-owned online photo service Fotango fulfils and delivers. Due to on-going success, the service has recently been expanded, increasing the range of Canon printers on trial. Seeing IS believing.

TRYVERTISING BILLBOARDS, KIOSKS AND POP-UP EVENTS

New Try-Out billboards and kiosks: **remember** the Senseo coffee machine in Dutch bus stops? There's more...



- Position a **Bose Try&Buy** retail kiosk in crowded airports, where frequent flyers about to embark on a noisy flight are most likely to give Bose's noise-cancelling headphones a try, if not buy them straight away.
- Place a larger-than-life, working version of an **SonyEricsson** walkman phone (like the one above, in London) in a bus stop, playing actual videos, so that bored to death people waiting for their bus have something to watch. (Source: digital-examples.blogspot.com.)
- **Dell** is rolling out kiosks in GameStop stores nationwide, letting gamers try out what Dell bills as a "deluxe gaming" platform, consisting of an XPS 600 with a massive LCD display. (Source: Engadget.)

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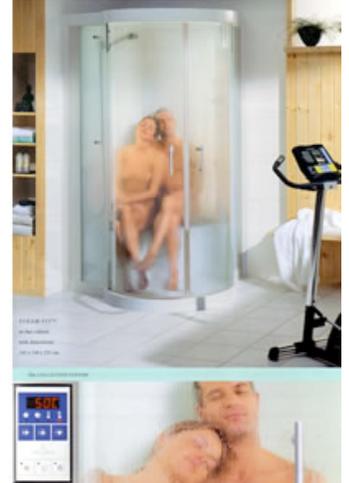
This summer, [Best Buy](#) teamed up with 10 universities around the United States to show off the latest in technology for dorm rooms, at special campus demonstrations. Along with a back-to-school promotion, Best Buy emphasized different products tailored for college students through a mock residence hall built inside mobile vehicles. Think chairs, lamps, rugs and thousands of dollars worth of electronics, with sales people encouraging shoppers to kick off their shoes and watch satellite TV on wide-screen plasma monitors.

This way, students could not only see the individual products, but get a feeling of how these would fit and work in cramped dorms. Additionally, Best Buy's newest team member, Geek Squad, was on hand offering students help with their laptops, digital cameras, MP3 players, and much more.

NEW BREED OF TRY-OUT STORES

Also of interest: a new breed of try-out stores popping up around the world. They differ from experience and lifestyle stores (think Apple, Nike, Prada) in that they try to mirror consumers' domestic settings. Even though they don't fully fit the **TRYVERTISING** bill, since consumers actually have to go to these stores instead of the store and try-out products coming to them, they do explore interesting 'post-advertising' models. Check out the following spottings from the world of cooking, cleaning and bathing:

In the Netherlands, [Villeroy Boch](#) Bubble Shops let consumers experience bubble bath sessions in two secluded luxury rooms, and one private outdoor area for open air spas, so they can try out the various Aqua & Air systems or steam shower cabins first hand. Free, no strings attached try-out sessions in the Utrecht store can last up to an hour. The store can currently handle four to six appointments a day, running at 80% occupancy. Expansion is planned for the HQ store in Mettlach, Germany, and possibly other countries where Villeroy has experience stores. (spotted by Hermieke Lorwa, [Springspotter Network](#).)



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[Zanussi Turkey](#) recently launched the Zanussi Culinary Event Center in Istanbul, where visitors can test Zanussi products and scrutinize kitchen equipment. (Spotted by Ozgur Alaz, [Springspotter Network](#).)

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[Maytag](#), the American appliance manufacturer, is beckoning consumers to literally test-drive products before making a choice. Try-out stores, owned by independent dealers, display Maytag merchandise in "vignettes" of home kitchens and laundry rooms. Potential buyers of washers and dryers can do a load of laundry, bake a sheet of cookies, or listen to a dishwasher in action to see whether it really is quiet.



The stores are about the size of a department store appliance section (on average 6,000 square foot), but the atmosphere is more like a mom-and-pop shop. Maytag says the "try-before-you-buy" concept is helping to close sales, and plans call for 60 Maytag stores by year's end, and another 30 to 40 locations next year. (Source: Denver Post, Appliance Magazine.)

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And on it goes: situated in the heart of Buckhead in Atlanta, **Whirlpool's** 12,000 square foot **Inspirence Store** offers visitors fully equipped kitchens and family studios, so they can try out the latest Whirlpool and KitchenAid brand home appliances. Shoppers spend an average of two hours "smelling the fresh scent of delicate clothing kept ready-to-wear in the Personal Valet Clothes Vitalizing System", "touching the chilled interior of a Polara range, feeling how it will keep food cool up to 24 hours until a preset cooking time" and "turning up the heat on a high-powered cooktop". According to the company, 90 percent of visitors buy a Whirlpool appliance (source: Washington Post).



OPPORTUNITIES

If old advertising is about slogans and pretty pictures, including the shallowness that automatically comes with it, the new 'advertising', targeting wary consumers, will increasingly revolve around honesty and performance. And what could be more honest than introducing oneself and one's products by letting people experience and try them out first, just to get the conversation started, at a relevant moment?

Next? As always, the biggest impact will come from how something like **TRYVERTISING** will change consumer expectations. Ask yourself what will soon be expected from YOU, as **TRYVERTISING**-trained consumers will increasingly demand extensive product information, sampling, and the opportunity to first try out *ANYTHING*.

Which brings us to another opportunity: exploiting commercially operated try-out stores that host true **TRYVERTISING** campaigns from a multitude of brands, partners and vendors. Basically, stores that let consumers sample *every* new product in a specific sector, from groceries to cars? Or how about intermediaries 'selling' and coordinating try-out placements in hotel rooms, planes, waiting lounges etc? Time to get creative, and to give it a try.

Need even more input and inspiration?
trendwatching.com's 2008 Trend Report
 covers 12 themes, 24 trends
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