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Michael Jackson, Classic Marketing Blunders And Your Wallet!

By Dean Phillips

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You couldn't help but be captivated by the unbelievably cute kid with the amazingly controlled falsetto voice and electric dance moves. He was only 10 years old, when he exploded onto the music scene, along with his brothers as the lead singer of the Jackson 5, but he had the stage presence of a twenty year veteran. Before or since, I haven't seen a child that talented, that gifted, that dynamic, that charismatic!

I'm talking about Michael Jackson, of course. The whole world fell in love with Michael Jackson! In the early seventies, Michael along with his brothers, the Jackson 5, were the hottest musical act on the planet!

As an adult, he still had the magic that so captivated us when he was a child. And once again, he became the hottest musical act on the planet!

In fact, if Michael hadn't broken "a cardinal rule," there's little question, he'd be considered the greatest entertainer of all time.

So what "cardinal rule" did Michael Jackson break? He tried to reinvent the wheel. He took that handsome and familiar face that was loved by millions of people all around the world—and he destroyed it, along with his incredible career at the same time.

Businesses do the same thing every single day. They destroy what's familiar and successful. Instead of taking the path of least resistance, they try to reinvent the wheel—usually with disastrous results!

Here's a classic example of what I'm talking about:

For over a century now, Coca-Cola has been the number one soft drink company in the world. They have vast financial resources and some of the greatest marketing minds available at their disposal. Despite all of that, Coca-Cola failed miserably when it introduced New Coke to the public back in 1985. Why? What happened?

Well, there have been many theories floated over the years, as to why New Coke fizzled out. Like everyone else, I have my own theory. A very simple theory...

People didn't like New Coke.

It's as simple as that.

Despite all the research that was done, and despite the thousands of taste tests conducted; the buying public just didn't like the taste of New Coke. And absolutely nothing Coca-Cola said or did could change that one simple fact.

Unfortunately, that turned out to be a very costly lesson for Coca-Cola. They lost millions of customers to their bitter rival and number two soft drink giant, Pepsi.

They also took a bath financially.

Yes, Coca-Cola is still the number one soft drink. But the gap has been narrowed significantly.

Here's another example:

Burger King wanted desperately to be "French Fries King." For years, the No. 2 hamburger chain beat out McDonald's in taste tests of hamburgers, but the Golden Arches kept a lock on having the number one french fries. So, Burger King spent several years formulating a new french fry, a potato stick coated—unlike its predecessor—with a layer of starch designed to help retain heat and add crunch. Armed with a \$70 million marketing war chest, the company rolled out its biggest product launch ever in 1998.

So, what happened? Burger King's new french fries turned out to be a whopper of a flop! "Sales of fries are significantly down," stated a 1999 internal memo. "Double digit percent of consumers avoid Burger King because of our french fries."

Ouch! Fortunately, Coca-Cola and Burger King were able to survive near catastrophic miscalculations, because they had billions of dollars behind them.

But other companies that badly miscalculate that don't have those kind of financial resources, generally end up going out of business.

That's basically why so many dot-com companies are dropping like flies—and will continue to do so.

Don't try to reinvent the wheel. Instead, take the path of least resistance. Focus on what people are actually buying, and promote the daylights out of it, applying sound, proven advertising and marketing techniques.

In closing, you'll incur fewer risks and your wallet will be a lot fatter, if you just sell what people are buying!

Vincent Price's Ultimate Horror!

By Stephen Schochet

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Vincent Price was always of two minds about his horror movie career. On the one hand it was a way for an actor to age and keep working. But the gourmet cook and art collector often felt that these films were beneath him.

Always looking for extra publicity the Saint Louis born thespian pulled many stunts to get attention for his films. One time he went to the Hollywood Wax museum and disguised himself as his wax dummy likeness. Standing motionless with a hypodermic syringe he would wait patiently for unsuspecting people to watch by, and startle them by reaching out and squirting them with water.

Vincent 's ultimate horror involved the world's most famous pop star. He was thrilled to be hired by Michael Jackson to record the narration for the song Thriller. He agreed to do it for a small fee. But when Thriller became the greatest hit of all time he wanted more money. Michael Jackson refused to compensate him and Price was furious.

About 8 years later Vincent was sitting around his house quietly watching TV, not feeling well under a blanket to keep him warm. The TV show Hard Copy came on. There was a segment about Michael Jackson and a little boy. Vincent shocked the household suddenly shouting, " Oh my god! Oh my God!" His wife Coral came running into the living room, "Vincent, what's the matter?"

The Old man pointed at the TV, " He's doing to the little boy what he did to me!"

Stephen Schochet is the author and narrator of the audiobooks "Fascinating Walt Disney" and "Tales Of Hollywood". The Saint Louis Post Dispatch says, " these two elaborate productions are exceptionally entertaining." Hear realaudio samples of these great, unique gifts at www.hollywoodstories.com.



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