

Microsoft® Online Services
Customer Story:
Cingular (the new AT&T)

I don't buy
because you
tell me to.



Microsoft

Keeping an ear to the ground.

A billboard or a best friend: Which holds greater sway over our buying decisions? Is the power of suggestion even stronger when you combine the two? The Internet has enabled companies to reach consumers in previously unthinkable ways—but today's e-mailing, text-messaging, PDA-toting 30-something is constantly throwing challenging questions right back at the marketers.

The intersection between today's consumer and today's technology is a moving target—and e-mail users are a primary example of today's unpredictable Internet consumer. Online ads are everywhere, but trying to find the right way to successfully fit those ads into e-mail users' lifestyles is a constant challenge.

That's why in December 2006, Cingular Wireless, Microsoft® Digital Advertising Solutions, and MetrixLab teamed up for an experiment to discover just how effective a focused, single-product campaign in Windows™ Live Hotmail® could

be. The question they were asking: What's the payback for advertising just inches away from e-mail conversations?

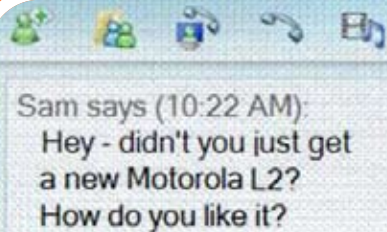
Based on research provided by Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions and MetrixLab, Cingular was betting the pay-back would be significant. According to the study, 66 percent of Windows Live Hotmail users and 83 percent of male users age 18 to 35 say they would discuss buying personal electronics, such as a new phone, via e-mail.

The Windows Live Hotmail platform reaches a U.S. audience of over 47 million people. And with more and more consumers spending more and more time online, Windows Live Hotmail was an ideal vehicle for Cingular to raise brand awareness and dynamically engage its audience.

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Cingular's goal was to do just that, as well as to increase purchase consideration for the Motorola L2 phone—and just in time for the holiday shopping season. The approach was quick and hard-hitting: Create a one-day "roadblock," or a complete buyout of all Windows Live Hotmail advertising, including the "Today" page, the sent-mail page, and the run-of-site banner to promote the Motorola L2.

The campaign was a success by every measure. By putting messaging right where people



Sam says (10:22 AM)
Hey - didn't you just get
a new Motorola L2?
How do you like it?

are debating their next major purchase, Cingular increased brand favorability by 3.2 percent, product/message association by 6.7 percent, and purchase consideration by 3.6 percent—all in one day.

Cingular's message resonated most strongly with cell phone owners and purchasers. For those in the market to buy a new phone within the next three months, unaided brand awareness improved by 23 percent—and by 9.1 percent among users of other cellular brands. The campaign outperformed similar wireless telecommunications campaigns, with a 6.7 percent increase in association between the Cingular brand and the Motorola L2.

What do all these statistics really say about the audience response

to the one-day Cingular campaign? It may be impossible to know for sure. But consumers love to own the next big thing just like companies love to sell it. And everyone's got an opinion about just what the next big thing is. So with an ad embedded in their e-mail conversations, Windows Live Hotmail users could quickly get opinions and seek advice about Cingular and the Motorola L2 from influential friends and family. Judging by the success of Cingular's campaign, it seems that's exactly what they did.

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