



## **Beware of Shiny Marketing Toys**

By Laura Patterson

Many marketers can't resist a shiny toy. Whether pay-per-click in the mid 1990s, Web 2.0 in the early 2000s or mobile marketing in the late 2000s, we want it—and we want it now. "But at what price?" asks Laura Patterson at MarketingProfs. "I'd suggest at the price of our credibility and the opportunity to be perceived as a strategic player."

"When our enthusiasm (or that of our colleagues) convinces an organization to experiment with the next shiny toy without understanding the strategic implications," she continues, "as marketers we are doing a disservice to the organizations we support and we're presenting marketing as a primarily tactical function." To ensure a shiny toy also makes strategic sense, be sure to ask questions like these:

- Has our target audience adopted this new channel, or will we get there before they do? "Being first on the block may be irrelevant if the markets you serve or want to serve aren't ready," explains Patterson.
- Does our company have the wherewithal to exploit the new channel? "If a successful implementation requires complex new skills, and if it is too time-consuming or costly to acquire that level of competence, it may be too soon for your organization to tackle the new channel."
- Will we see a return on our investment? "The adoption of a new channel may require configuring systems, upgrading technology, or even adding new systems and training employees," she notes. In other words, you need to be reasonably sure that it's worth it.

**The Point:** A shiny toy can quickly lose its luster if it fails to boost your bottom line—so refrain from what amount to impulse buys.

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