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The Rise of Cloud Marketing: Empowering Marketing Innovation and Creating Massive Efficiencies

by Jacques Hart

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In this article, you'll learn...

- The significant marketing benefits of cloud marketing
- The three platforms of cloud computing and how they can help marketers



Cloud computing is a transformative technology that is expected to have a revolutionary impact on the business of marketing. By mashing disparate technologies and content platforms, cloud marketing empowers marketers to (1) create unique campaigns, (2) efficiently scale to support viral campaigns, (3) lower marketing distribution costs, and (4) support their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Cloud computing breaks down and disseminates bits of information so they can be reassembled into more complete narratives. It delivers unprecedented cost efficiency, scalability, agility, independence, interoperability, reliability, and security.

It's made feasible through the deployment and interoperability of three platform types: software as a service (SAAS), platform as a service (PAAS), and infrastructure as a service (IAAS).

Brand marketers leveraging cloud marketing will derive significant benefit from those platforms and gain a competitive advantage. Here are some examples.

SAAS: Accelerating Content Distribution and Marketing Efficacy

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SAAS over the Internet eliminates the need to install and run applications on consumers' computers. This creates major implications for marketers as consumers move off their personal computers (PCs) and onto the portals of brands and software providers.

Hasbro teamed with Google to launch an online version of Monopoly. The game board leveraged Google Earth application programming interfaces (APIs) to provide users with unprecedented scale and interactivity: They can "own" any street in the world.

Instead of playing the popular game only on PCs, it is elevated to the cloud and becomes device-agnostic, enabling users to enjoy the game from their computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. In doing so, Hasbro can significantly expand its reach while reducing its distribution costs.

Advertisers should watch that trend as other traditional software providers move toward SAAS. For example, the Apple iPad's functionality will be powered in large part by its Internet connectivity rather than by its operating system and software. As consumers move online for their software needs, including desktop publishing, photo editing, and tax preparation, new models will emerge, enabling advertisers to target consumers via the software providers' sites.

While the Apple iAd looks compelling, so do future cloud computing ad-targeting services. Soon, even ad production, creative development, media planning, asset management, and marketing research will be moved to the cloud.

Channel marketing and B2B marketing are some of the biggest beneficiaries of cloud marketing. Cloud training sites and intranet portals will serve as conduits for disseminating video tutorials, whitepapers, marketing tips, and collateral.

Companies will manage their B2B communications with customer relationship management solutions such as Salesforce.com and email solutions such as Constant Contact—both popular SAAS solutions.

PAAS: Speeding Up Marketing Innovation and Collaboration

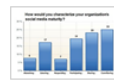
Many brands have embraced cloud marketing, which delivers content without walls. Cloud computing is platform-agnostic, and marketers can easily integrate unique content and technologies to create innovative mashable campaigns and applications.


For the launch of its Ford Fiesta, automaker Ford developed a microsite, [www.FiestaMovement.com](#), chronicling the adventures of 20 teams of agents to reimagine the way Fiesta gets advertised.

Those agents travel to major metros, stage events, create blogs and vlogs (video blogs), and tweet about their experiences and the car. The microsite serves as a platform to integrate those social-media channels.


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Via social APIs, it also mashes up Google Maps and Foursquare locations. Best of all, the platform promotes crowdsourcing by allowing consumers to vote for their favorite "agent missions" and campaigns. Serving as a PAAS, the microsite not only aggregates and enhances user-generated content but also disseminates it to all the other integrated social-media environments. In that sense, Ford has created a world of content without walls.

Pepsi fuses cloud marketing and CSR with its site RefreshEverything.com. Consumers, businesses, and nonprofits submit applications to secure funding for their ideas that will have a positive impact on society.

Applicants with the most votes are elevated to top section pages. The site demonstrates how crowdsourcing and mashable cloud technologies bring together apps from YouTube, Google Maps, Facebook, and blogs and comment plug-ins.

Similarly, services such as WebEx and GoToMeeting leverage the cloud to provision Web and video conferencing. Best of all, companies embracing those tools for their marketing and sales efforts are also supporting their CSR initiatives, because those services reduce the need to travel, the carbon footprint, and greenhouse gas emissions.

IAAS: Cutting Costs and Improving Efficiency

Enterprise cloud computing is the only logical computing infrastructure to support viral and large-scale marketing campaigns because of its pay-as-you-go cost structure, scalability, reliability, and security.

Without naming names, let's examine how it has played out in the real world.

A major consumer snack foods company launched a viral online promotion with coupons and a giveaway. The viral nature of the offer, combined with a generous giveaway, led to a wildly successful Internet branding campaign.

However, the success of the campaign took its toll on the client's traditional infrastructure. The dramatic increase in traffic caused the website to collapse and affected the performance of the client's corporate network.

The snack company could have avoided that debacle by developing the campaign's assets on on-demand cloud technologies. In fact, virtualized cloud resources can provide up to 95% percent cost savings compared with traditional data-center services.

* * *

Information technology and marketing are under siege by new ideas, technologies, and demands. Cloud marketing is disrupting traditional marketing models and creating unique opportunities and efficiencies. Marketers who leverage cloud marketing will become the new royalty of marketing.



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