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# Marketing Connections

a publication of the San Francisco Chapter of the American Marketing Association [www.sfama.org](http://www.sfama.org)

Summer 2009 Edition



## in this issue:

- Excellence in Marketing Awards ... p2
- SFAMA Board of Directors ... p2
- The Global Image Leader 2009 ... p3
- The BART Story ... p4
- Connecting the World ... p5
- ad:tech/SFAMA conference – what was the buzz? ... p6
- Special Thanks to our EIMA Sponsors ... p7
- Aberdeen Group ... p7



# EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING AWARDS

**San Francisco Chapter Of the American Marketing Association**

BY LOTIKA GULVADI

Each year, the San Francisco Chapter of the American Marketing Association (SFAMA) recognizes and awards five companies that have implemented outstanding marketing strategies and programs. The SFAMA gives this recognition to companies that are small businesses, non-profits and large corporations. This year, we awarded companies in the following categories: The Next Big Thing, Global Image Leader, Excellence in Non-Profit Marketing, Excellence in Digital Marketing and Excellence in Green Marketing. Nominations are either sent in by the companies themselves or by individuals who think a particular company deserves this award for their stellar marketing efforts.



Brian Fowler awards Serene Wong with the Richard Rands Award for her hard work and dedication to the SFAMA Board of Directors.

Photo: Tom Minczeski

Along with the Excellence in Marketing Awards, the SFAMA also gives students of the affiliated collegiate chapters - Golden Gate University (GGU), San Francisco State University (SFSU), St. Mary's College, and the University of San Francisco (USF) - an opportunity to evaluate the companies nominated for the Excellence in Marketing Awards. The selected student research analysts are assigned to a company and have an opportunity to meet and interact with the nominees during their research and evaluation process. The awards ceremony is a grand event where SFAMA members, sponsors, nominated companies and students gather to acknowledge and celebrate the winners and their hard work. This year, the awards ceremony took place at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Union Square which commenced with a silent auction. Michael Finney of ABC7, was the Master of Ceremonies and kept the audience in splits throughout the evening with his jokes.

The Excellence in Marketing Awards is an event both companies and students look forward to each year. It gives companies the opportunity to be recognized for all their hard work and gives students an excellent opportunity to interact with companies, build relationships and the the opportunity to compete with peers to win a scholarship through their research. Maria Gianotti, the winner of the Collegiate Excellence Award says:

"A lesson that I will never forget after being a student research analyst for the EIMA is that as a marketer you have to be able to do extensive research to find creative ways to measure the success of a marketing campaign. This is definitely an experience that I would not have been without, and that I will take with me in my future career."

Based on an extensive evaluation process the panel decided to give the following five companies the Excellence in Marketing Award:

Next Big Thing: SalesBrain

Global Image Leader: Cisco Systems, Inc.

Excellence in Non-Profit Marketing: Taproot Foundation

Excellence in Digital Marketing: Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)

Excellence in Green Marketing: Bite Communication

The following student research analysts showed outstanding contributions to the nominees of the Excellence in Marketing Awards:

Top honor: Maria Gianotti (Golden Gate University)

Runner-up: Blerina Dhimmo (Golden Gate University)

Runner-up: Andrew Shaffer (St. Mary's College)

Congratulations to the winners...you deserve it!



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[christina.lee@blueshieldca.com](mailto:christina.lee@blueshieldca.com)

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# THE GLOBAL IMAGE LEADER 2009

BY MARIA GIANOTTI, MS in Integrated Marketing Communications '09 Graduate, Golden Gate University



WINNER

## Economic and Competitive Challenges

Informatica Corporation, the leading independent global provider of enterprise data integration software and services, like many vendors today, faces challenges due to the difficulty of implementing effective sales strategies in a highly competitive software industry with large competitors such as IBM, SAP, and Oracle. Informatica's main challenge was to effectively implement a marketing strategy to increase penetration of its key target markets while focusing on product and service differentiation. The company needed to find a way to inform customers and prospects about its key differentiating platform-neutral software, adaptable to any organization without the data being owned by Informatica. Surveys conducted by analysts, such as Gartner and Forrester, showed that many executives expressed that keeping track of their data brought the most value to their companies. However, many corporations did not understand how investing in Informatica's software solutions could help them generate a higher return on investment (ROI).

## Turning the Economic Recession Into an Opportunity

Informatica sought to expand its marketing efforts and create a global marketing campaign around Operational Efficiency. The key message of the campaign was based on the concept "do more with less." With this message, Informatica could remind organizations about the importance of data and how using Informatica's software could help them gain efficiencies, ultimately saving them money, while also maintaining and strengthening the company's relationship with existing and prospective customers.



Maria Gianotti was the winner for the Excellence in Marketing Awards 2009.

Photo: Tom Minczeski.

the effectiveness of Informatica's product line. Reports including customer testimonials on Informatica's software and how it had added value to organizations were published.

## Stepping Into Uncharted Territory: Web 2.0

Informatica developed the 'Informatica Perspectives Blog' (Perspectives) to allow its executives to discuss company and industry issues with the general public. On a larger scale, Informatica revamped its technology network community, "The Informatica Technology Network" (TechNet), an online community for technology professionals around the globe to discuss and share their passion for technology and data integration software. Informatica wanted to reach people with blogs and a community that did not directly discuss its products, but rather issues in the technology industry that invites for dialog and discussion. Professionals, as well as Informatica employees, were encouraged to add content and comment on blogs, create links to each other, monitor activity and presence, and join sub-communities, thus creating interaction with other employees, customers, and the media. Informatica integrated the use of Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts into its marketing strategy to keep the company active in the social media community, thus informing participants on the latest tech innovations and company developments. Content from 'Perspectives' and TechNet were used to integrate its professional community with its social media community.

## Public and Media Relations

A mixture of these two cost-effective techniques has been critical when communicating the company's Web 2.0 focused marketing campaign to the general public. Press releases focused on the operational efficiency message were sent out to the media, including informing people about Informatica's Perspectives Blog and TechNet, which was a newsworthy addition to the technology industry. Media relations opportunities such as Webinars, events, symposiums, and panel speaking opportunities were a strategic decision in reaching out to the public.

## Execution: The Definition of Success

Despite the company's limited previous Web 2.0 experience, Informatica managed to make 'Perspectives' and TechNet two of the leading technology blogs created by an independent company. Informatica has gained tremendous media exposure through cost-effective Web 2.0 marketing strategies integrated with public and media relations efforts. The company has been very successful in creating buzz about a complex technology that is difficult to market, by engaging customers, employees, and the media. This has given the company a strategic advantage because it has been portrayed as experts in its field. More importantly, the Web 2.0 efforts have resulted in close relationships with customers and key media which has added value to the company's overall marketing efforts. All this has been possible with a small marketing budget incorporated into an innovative marketing approach. The Operational Efficiency campaign has adapted to the current economic times and served the company's overall strategy of increasing revenues, creating brand awareness, and lead generation, by introducing a long term marketing strategy that has broadened and enhanced its brand and corporate image.

# THE BART STORY

BY BLERINA DHIMO



**B**ay Area Rapid Transit (BART) is San Francisco's rapid transit system. It serves to connect San Francisco with routes in the East Bay and the San Mateo County. Since BART's conception in 1946, having emerged from a "post-war migration to the area and its consequent automobile boom", the organization has come a long way. Presently, it accommodates a daily ridership of 372,949 commuters throughout its 104 miles. This large number of commuters relies heavily on accurate and timely information which is disseminated daily through the organization's website, its email alerts, Twitter instant feeds, etc.

This information is wide and varied; it includes alerts on route changes, holiday schedules, construction alerts, real-time arrivals, etc. Given the importance and significance of this material, it is necessary that the whole information system supporting the organization functions as a living and breathing mechanism which is updated and maintained constantly, with virtually minimal down time. Needless to say, the web team at BART.gov has a very daunting task at hand: providing a constant and updated flow of information to the BART riders at all times. As this article points out, the webmasters at BART.gov are doing a great job in this front, and they are taking a number of steps and measures to create a sense of community and ownership around BART.

## What sets BART Apart ?

In order to provide timely and accurate information to all BART commuters in real time, BART.gov is using the following information-dissemination means: BART email alerts, BART online blog community, BART fan pages on social networks, BART Twitter feeds, and the BART developer community.

As of April 2nd, the email alerts attracted a total of 109,154 active subscribers. While the range of subjects is numerous, the main alerts to the commuters include: BART service advisories, BART news, BART schedule changes; etc.

The BART Online Blog on the other hand is maintained by Melissa Jordan, BART's Senior Web Producer. During an interview together, Melissa mentioned that she maintains and writes the blog, "which has a strong focus on rider-shared materials (such as photographs), and on answering questions from riders in an interactive way". The Blog's attractiveness becomes immediately apparent when one sees the number of page views per post, varying from 1000 page views to 2045 page views per post.

The BART Twitter feeds, on the other hand, attract over 2,800 followers. When asked about whether or not the feeds are useful to commuters, Melissa pointed out: "You would have to ask commuters how useful it is for them, but we hear a lot of great positive feedback. It's not only the practical information, such as a tweet when we have special holiday hours, for example, or when there is a delay in service, but BART riders also seem to really enjoy the community-building aspect, such as sharing

or "re-tweeting" messages about the daily rhythm of the commuting life". Additionally the weekly feature called "Seen and Heard on BART" allows the web team to collect and share anecdotes that BART commuters contribute to the Twitter Feed.

When it comes to the creation of a community, the BART web team recognizes also the importance of a digital community. In order to reach fans in social networks, BART has created a fan page on the most popular of them all: Facebook. The BART Facebook page has a total of 321 fans and it supports live RSS feeds.



Blerina Dhimo was a runner up for the Excellence in Marketing Awards 2009.

Photo: Tom Minczeski.

## BART 2.0

While fostering the creation of a community around BART and the organization's website, the web team also believes that commuters have much to contribute, not only by sharing their experiences while riding BART, but also by contributing via their creativity. To that extent, BART has opened up its Application Program Interface to the wide community of developers. To these developers, the BART website promotes: "Build your killer app with the same real time data we use on the BART website, hot off the griddle from BART Central". When asked why the organization is doing this, the web team points out that it is a means through which it is fostering the creation of innovative new applications

meant to reach a broader audience "and encourage more people to choose BART".

Indeed these efforts have been rewarded from the developer community. The most popular third-party application is currently the iBART application for iPhone. Its creator, David Hodge proudly points out: "iBART is now the top regional transit app on the App Store".

As is evident from all of the above, BART has very successfully utilized multi-channel communications, and has in this way, very successfully reached its target audience- the East Bay and San Mateo County commuters. The multipurpose channels that BART has effectively utilized make its site very user-friendly and have contributed to the creation of an increased sense of loyalty to the organization in general. BART's functional and clean-look website accurately portrays the organization's dedication and commitment to providing up-to-date and accurate information to all BART users and commuters. Indubitably, BART's digital marketing efforts set a great example to be followed by both governmental as well as non-governmental organizations.

# CONNECTING THE WORLD —A qualitative and quantitative analysis of why Cisco Systems deserves the 2009 Global Image Award for its excellence in marketing TelePresence Technology

BY ANDREW SHAFFER, Undergraduate degree from Saint Mary's College of California



**A** man sits in his black leather chair, gazing out at the busy street below. The sounds on the street blend together into one noise, a muddled song filled with a mixture of simultaneous sounds. As his mind slips into reverie, he receives a page over his intercom from his frantic boss saying that the huge international merger is in trouble. Instantly he falls back into reality, and calls his potential partner who happens to be thousands of miles away. He sets up a time when they will meet later that afternoon. Instead of making his way through a congested airport, sitting for twenty hours on a plane behind a screaming child, and staying two days away from his family, he simply enters a Cisco TelePresence room. With the press of a button a video surveillance of his possible partner appears. After a brief conversation, the deal is salvaged. He has just made millions for his company, all without leaving the office. There is no denying that the world is shrinking, as it is possible to reach and have contact with destinations thousands of miles away. Many companies, through hard work and innovation, have created technologies that have linked individuals across the world. Cisco Systems has led the way in this area with one of the most exciting and innovative products: Cisco TelePresence. Through an excellent marketing strategy, Cisco Systems deserves the "Global Image Leader Award" for the 2009 Excellence in Marketing Awards.

Introduced in October, 2006, TelePresence is a technology that creates the illusion of being in the same conference room with people in distant locations. Cisco makes this technology available through TelePresence sites run by Cisco or through installation in company offices. Cisco TelePresence can range anywhere from \$33,000 to \$340,000 depending on room features and upgrades, while it is roughly \$40 an hour to rent a room. Through a creative marketing strategy, Cisco has extended its presence not only within its industry but has also improved the business and the social environment. Cisco's marketing department set out to teach the business world about the unique experience of TelePresence and to educate about the advantages of Telepresence versus traditional lower-priced video conference services. Through meticulous strategic marketing, Cisco has demonstrated how TelePresence changes human interaction, whether in the business or residential arena.



Andrew Shaffer was a runner up for the Excellence in Marketing Awards 2009.

Photo: Tom Minczeski.

quantitative analysis increased investment in research and development has paid off as the company is continuing to be profitable. Within the newly established \$1.6 billion dollar industry of video conferencing technology, Cisco has grown to become the market leader with over 300 companies as customers, as well as over 2,000 rooms ordered for

offices. This is superior to competitors such as PolyCom, HP, and Skype. Every year Cisco has seen an increase in demand for TelePresence systems, which is believed to be attributable to the overall awareness of Cisco as a company, as well as the marketing of its brand.

When determining the success of a product it is essential to weigh the ratio of marketing that a company invests in the new product with the market share growth. Although Cisco has traditionally relied on brand equity and reputation in lieu of marketing investments, Cisco has invested heavily in the marketing of Cisco TelePresence. TelePresence has been marketed through a number of channels, including television commercials, YouTube videos, and an interactive website with videos. Because of these marketing investments, Cisco has become the market share leader within the video-conferencing industry, adding to its position as one of the top tier companies within the technology industry.

Cisco recognizes roughly four different sectors as its target market for TelePresence products. These target markets are top domestic and international enterprises, commercial businesses, small to medium size companies, and individual consumers. The main focus of marketing efforts is aimed at large enterprises, both domestic and international, due to the cost of TelePresence products and the likelihood that smaller companies and individual consumers will not be able to spend thousands of dollars for these products. Because of their strategic marketing plan Cisco has been able to increase their penetration with Enterprises, which can be seen with its alliances with several prominent enterprises.

The technology industry is a cut-throat sector driven by innovation and product differentiation. Cisco has striven to stay ahead of the competition by constantly creating new innovative products that make people's lives easier and more efficient. Cisco's steady increase of sales is believed to be attributed to the new wave of innovative technology products, the anchor being TelePresence.

It is essential to establish strategic alliances when building global brand awareness. These partnerships allow a company to broaden and enhance its overall brand image. Cisco Systems has done just that, as they have created alliances with many of the top enterprises not just domestically, but abroad as well. Cisco has TelePresence alliances with AT&T, IBM, Proctor and Gamble, Wal-Mart, and many other large reputable companies. Cisco has also formed alliances with hundreds of foreign companies, including TATA India.

There are over one hundred cities around the world where Cisco TelePresence is being used. Because Cisco TelePresence is still in its introduction/growth phase in the product-life cycle, it is crucial that Cisco continues to build on these alliances, while striving daily to obtain new alliances with elite enterprises. These partnerships have helped strengthen Cisco's brand equity throughout the world.

The unique platform of TelePresence began as an idea, and flourished into a product which has the potential to change modern business relations. It is one thing to create the next best technological innovation, but it is another to market that device in a way in which it not only promotes the product, but improves the overall image of the company. Companies nominated for the "Global Image Leader" have marketed their products, services, and overall company to become an image leader around the world, and Cisco has done just that. Cisco TelePresence not only is a tool that makes business relations easier it has the potential to connect the world.

## AD:TECH/SFAMA CONFERENCE – WHAT WAS THE BUZZ?

BY TOM TAULLI — Tom Taulli writes for a variety of publications, including *BusinessWeek Online* and the *NYTimes*. He also has a blog at [taulli.com](http://taulli.com)



While the online advertising world has come under pressure from the global recession, there was still an upbeat feel to April's ad:tech/SFAMA conference (perhaps it helped that the weather was perfect in San Francisco). Some of the hot topics included social media, social networking, online video and of course, Twitter. Hey, it seemed like everyone talked – or tweeted – about Twitter.



With my trusty laptop – and yes, I still use a notepad – I had a chance to interview top people in the online ad space. One was Aseem Chandra, the senior vp of product marketing at Omniture. His company announced a new product to measure viral video campaigns.

No doubt, it's a big challenge – but it's vitally important. A study from eMarketer.com predicts that by 2013 about 190 million people in the US will view online video at least once. Oh, and video advertising is expected to go from \$734 million in 2008 to \$4.1 billion in five years.

So, with Omniture, you can now use a dashboard to track things like: on which site is a video getting traction? What's the conversion rate? Is a video going viral?

It's powerful information – and is likely to help improve video performance and monetization.

I also had a chance to meet up with Peter Hutto, who is the vp of sales and business development at Local.com. His firm operates local online directories and marketing tools for small businesses.

"With the decline in newspapers and yellow pages," said Hutto, "there is a shift to local online advertising. I think we're at an inflection point."

But, in order to cater to the small business category, the business model needs to be flexible. To this end, Local.com has a flat-rate subscription

approach. The upshot is that business owners can have some comfort in terms of budgeting and expectations.

So far, the program has 30,000 subscribers. "It's still in the early stages," said Hutto, "but things are very encouraging."

I also met up with Russ Fradin, the president of Adify, which is a large ad network (he sold the company to Cox Enterprises last year for \$300 million). The firm targets on large vertical networks, which include names like Warner and FT.com.



"We focus on quality," said Fradin. "It is also important to be transparent with pricing."

Such differentiation is critical in the crowded ad network industry. And yes, I was somewhat overwhelmed with the large number that attended the conference.

In other words, it should be no surprise that Fradin thinks there will be lots of M&A (at least when Wall Street begins to warm up again).

I had another good conversation with Jim Calhoun, who is the CEO and co-founder of PopularMedia. His firm combines standard online display ad units with social media, allowing users to share their experiences with friends. It's a cool – and timely – offering.

Let's face it, display and text ads can be fairly boring. Thus, why not add some social media?

"We think of our ads as a social calls to action," said Calhoun. "It goes beyond just an ad, but a way to spread the conversation. It's important to get people to talk."

And in light of the surge in social properties like Twitter and Facebook, PopularMedia is certainly focused on something where marketers need to be.

*"It goes beyond just an ad,  
but a way to spread the  
conversation. It's important to  
get people to talk."*



## EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING AWARDS

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Next Big Thing



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Non-Profit Marketing



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