ONLINE BRAND BOSS
METHODS FOR CONTROLLING THE MESSAGE

by **Michael** Weissman

Companies make huge investments in brand marketing – nearly $500 billion globally each year – to communicate as effectively and beautifully as possible. But as soon as they distribute their brand content to resellers, blogs, social media and other online outlets, the content becomes out-of-date, old content gets reused and/or new content gets mis-used. In other words, it's one hot mess.

Why is this happening? Managing distributed content is expensive. It can costs 10 times more to manage and update content than it costs to create it. As a result, marketers operate more like brand "launchers" that lose control over their content once it's "launched" or sent to others. That is, until now. A new technology has been created that allows digital marketers to reclaim control over their brands online – even when sharing content on Web sites they don't own.

To date, tools for controlling distributed content haven't been available. Without automated tools, when a marketer wants to update content across 1,000 reseller Web sites, each reseller has to manually receive an update and then make modifications to their site. For companies with a broad product line – this could mean more than 100,000 updates per year or more. What tools do marketers have to automate the distribution, updating and compliance tracking of this content? Not many.

This problem isn't isolated. Most companies suffer from problems with online brand consistency. One survey said that most marketers see consistency getting worse, not better. Delivering online brand consistency is difficult for even the largest brands to achieve. A recent test showed that only 37 percent of Pepsi logos online are correct and only 8 percent of Dolby logos are correct – even though the logos were redesigned more than 5 years ago. This is definitely a big issue everyone needs to address.

Equally frustrating, not controlling the online brand presence has ripple effects on other areas of marketing and business operations. Productivity suffers when partners have to be convinced to update content manually, and trustworthiness drops when an inconsistent brand image sends the wrong message, especially when partners are becoming more important than ever. Search often gets clutters as old content gets in the way of marketer's new messages and out-of-date content often gets ranked higher than new, more relevant messages.

What's more, expired promotional or regulated content that still exists on partner sites can put companies in legal jeopardy or force the company to honor out-of-date offers, while brand messages that get delivered in fragments force the customer to "connect the dots" for a bigger brand story on their own, resulting in "poor story telling." Finally, real content tracking and ROI remains elusive, with little usable data on where and how the brand is available to marketers. Clearly, marketers have been set up to fail in this regard.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE

Brand managers can thank technology for giving them back the "Remote." New solutions are emerging that help brands distribute content and still keep control – even when sharing branded content on third-party sites the brand doesn't own. No more wasted time. No more manual updates. No more out-of-date content. No more running blind. Technology can help put an end to the pain points of syndicating brand content.

Full-time remote brand management, real-time updates, complete tracking and the dream capability to "set it and forget it" eliminate the need to constantly be monitoring the Web for outdated logos, images and offers. A few examples of new technologies making this happen include SYNQY (pronounced sync ee), a service that integrates and syndicates brand content such as logos, images, PDFs, HTML and videos in a way that can be shared, updated and tracked in real time, and Dlvr.it (pronounced deliver it), which syndicates social media content. Think of Dlvr.it like a wire service but to the social media outlets.

For decades the only way to ensure brand control and deliver the desired high-quality consumer experience was to centralize the engagement on the company Web site and do everything possible to drive traffic to that place. Today, this model is turned upside-down, bringing high-quality, controlled and consistent content to anywhere that brand exists online today.

This finally puts the brand manager back in the driver's seat and helps realize the impact and performance that they desire: content and messaging that properly reflects the brand 24/7 no matter where it goes.

With 25 years of high technology marketing experience with large companies and start-ups—and 15 of those years in senior executive positions, Michael Weissman is currently chairman and CEO of SYNQY Corporation (SYNQY.com).