

## SearchINSIDER THE INSIDE LINE ON SEARCH MARKETING

### The Power And The Glory Of Facebook Commerce

Kaila Colbin, Oct 05, 2010 10:30 AM

Holy moley, I've been writing for MediaPost for a long time! Well, long in online terms, anyway. I had an idea for this week's column, and it reminded me of another column I remembered I had written, so I dug through the archives in order to reference it properly, and turns out it was from *September 2007*. That's *three whole years ago!*

Okay, enough with the nostalgia; thank you for your indulgence. Back to the topic at hand. The column in question was called "[When Search Turns Cannibal](#)," and in it I discussed the difference between the passers and the catchers of search. Passers, like Google, are set up to quickly hand the user off to another site, if they're lucky collecting 50 cents along the way. Catchers, like eBay, are set up for people to arrive at their site and never leave.

The problem with being a passer, as Google knows, is that you walk a fine line if you want to sell anything yourself. There is an inherent conflict of interest between providing the most "objectively" relevant content and providing content that makes you money. The beauty, on the other hand, is that you can provide infinite answers.

The problem with being a catcher, as eBay knows, is that you are limited to folks specifically shopping in your store -- and, no matter how much variety is in your store, you still might not be a shopper's first choice of destination. The beauty, on the other hand, is that you make money off the sale.

But the power and the glory of Facebook, if they play their cards right, is an incredible opportunity to do both: to send people on their merry way for a dollar cost per click, or to sell them some Pampers and (though they're not doing this yet) collect a tidy referral fee.

My MediaPost colleague Laurie Sullivan published a piece yesterday about the new [Pampers store on Facebook](#). The graphic on the Shop Now tab reads, "Shop your Pampers favorites, without leaving Facebook." It's brilliant.

Think about it. You're a busy mom. You would love to be socializing with your friends, but you also have to run errands. If you could shop via Facebook with a couple of clicks, wouldn't you? You'd feel a bit more connected while you were doing it and you're only a click or two back to finding out what Janice wrote on Justine's Wall.

Since I moved to New Zealand, there's one cultural difference that has really stood out: how darn good American companies are at making it easy to spend money. "Just sit where you are," is the mantra. "I'll bring you that cocktail, those books, and that Diamonique bracelet." As marketers, we want to remove every trace of friction in the purchase process and, until now, I thought we could not elevate it to any finer art.

But Facebook commerce offers an unprecedented opportunity to simultaneously slack off, gossip, play games, and spy on your friends, all while shopping for diapers. Soon, no doubt, it will offer an unprecedented opportunity to do all that while shopping for almost anything. *That* is frictionless. Unlike on eBay, however, if you don't happen to be shopping for anything, you'll still be hanging out there, and at that point, who knows? They may just serve up an ad (targeted, of course, and tagged with all your bestest buddies) that passes you off to another website. Either way, they win.

Nice play, Facebook. The ability to be both a catcher and a passer? Priceless.