

Learning to be media-agnostic

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Erik Hauser is a media professional who doesn't really believe in media. He calls himself "media agnostic." The founder of Swivel Media, a San Francisco marketing agency, refuses to be constrained by traditional tactics and is paving his own path with his own theories.

"We're not confined to one medium like print, TV or radio," he said. "Sometimes we even create new mediums and create new impressions with the consumer. One of the great things for me is that we look at what we do as a lot more than marketing. It's kind of a kinetic art."

Hauser landed in advertising in a roundabout way. In his early 20s, he was involved in mobile promotion campaigns where he cut his teeth on unconventional marketing. He noticed several mistakes in the manner in which the campaigns were handled and believed he could do better.

"At the age of 26, I thought I couldn't possibly learn anything more so I decided to make a move on my own," he recalled sarcastically of the early days.

Now Hauser's company handles marketing efforts for marquee players such as Wells Fargo & Co. (WFC), Oracle Corp. (ORCL), Reebok, Yahoo Inc. (YHOO) and others. His most recent campaign for Wells Fargo is the perfect example of his out-of-the-box approach to getting attention.

Wells Fargo was hoping to target a younger generation and Hauser knew that a good portion of it was online, playing video games. Swivel Media developed a role-playing game called Stage Coach Island to get young peoples' attention and bring Wells Fargo to the forefront of their consciousness.

"We developed this game which allowed folks to interact online over the country and have a bunch of fun while learning about financial education," said Hauser. "It's been a great project and shows how we're developing new mediums as we go along."

In order to spread the word about his "media-agnostic" approach, Hauser developed the International Experience Marketing Association. He also travels the world giving talks to marketing professionals teaching them what he calls Experience Marketing.

"Essentially, it plays back to the world-is-our-canvas approach," he said. "It's not commercials in front of a movie. It's taking a brand and inserting it into the consumers' day-to-day lifestyle. We actually want to be behind the experience."

Erik Hauser

Age: 32

Family: Soon (with a grin)

Hometown: Atlanta, Ga.

Education: On a daily basis, University of Connecticut

Books reading: "Experience the Message" by Max Lenderman

Favorite quote: "A wise man is one that builds a firm foundation from the bricks that others throw at him."

Inspirational figures: My mom and stepdad for raising a creative-brained, overactive child, without missing a beat. My business partner, Aaron Lang, for being the engine that makes this whole thing work.



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