

## Torment Your Customers (They'll Love It)

By Stephen Brown

In the past decade, marketing gurus have emphasised customer care, customer focus, and customer centricity. But according to Stephen Brown, the customer craze has gone too far. In this article, he makes the case for "retromarketing"- a return to the days when marketing succeeded by tormenting customers rather than pandering to them. Brown argues that many recent consumer marketing coups have decidedly not been customer-driven. They've relied instead on five basic retromarketing principles:

**Exclusivity.** Retromarketing holds back supplies and delays gratification.

**Secrecy.** Whereas modern marketing is up-front and transparent, retromarketing revels in mystery, intrigue, and covert operation.

**Amplification.** In a world of incessant commercial chatter, amplification is vital, and it can be induced in many ways, from mystery to affront to surprise.

**Entertainment.** Marketing must divert, engage, and amuse. The lack of entertainment is modern marketing's greatest failure.

**Tricksterism.** Customers love to be teased. The tricks don't have to be elaborate to be effective; they can come cheap. But the rewards can be great if the brand is embraced, even briefly, by the crowd.