BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Opportunities, obstacles and best practices

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BUILDING COMMUNITIES

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Election 2008

Product Innovation

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CRUISES
CRUISE LOG with Gene Sloan

Travel firm plans cruise to mark anniversary of Titanic disaster
How should the world commemorate the upcoming 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic? At least one British company has decided that -- yes -- a cruise is in order.

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Complaints prompt Royal Caribbean to reverse course on cutbacks
The world’s second largest cruise line is restoring some perks for frequent cruisers after some of its most loyal customers complained strongly to the line.

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Very obese fliers on United may have to buy 2nd seat
By Marilyn Adams, USA TODAY

United Airlines is requiring extremely obese passengers who can’t fit in their seats to pay for a second seat when there is no other way to accommodate their girth.

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Southwest reports 'surprisingly large' loss
By Ben Mutzabaugh, USA TODAY

Southwest Airlines this morning announced that it lost $91 million in the first quarter of 2009. The Associated Press describes the result as a "surprisingly large loss," adding that the carrier’s "traffic fell in what the CEO called the carrier’s..."
Finding inspiration -- in reality TV

Religion and spirituality blogs today are buzzing about the “inspirational” performance of Susan Boyle, an ordinary-looking 47-year-old Scottish woman whose anything-but-ordinary voice stopped would-be snarky commenters in their tracks on the reality TV show Britain’s Got Talent. The show is hosted by, among others, American Idol judge Simon Cowell, known for his cutting remarks.

In Beliefnet’s religion and pop culture blog, Douglas Howe comments on the transformation of the skeptical audience the moment Boyle opened her mouth and began to sing:

An audience ready to laugh and ridicule became synchronized in their amazement, applause, cheers, and instant respect for the gifted woman singing before them. That is why I was inspired not only by her song, but by the crowd’s reaction. Everyone loved it! They loved her! They were touched by her raw talent, her beautiful voice, and became instant fans. The part about each of us that is quick
Obama: Assault weapons ban would be hard to reinstate

President Obama and Mexican President Felipe Calderon have finished their meeting and are holding a joint news conference.

Obama said the two leaders had "a productive and wide-ranging conversation" and took important steps toward "a new era of cooperation and partnership." They include a new partnership on climate change and renewed commitment to overhauling immigration policy.

Asked if he still supports reinstatement of a U.S. ban on assault weapons, Obama said he and Calderon discussed that issue extensively. "I have not backed off at all from my belief that the assault weapons ban made sense," he said. He said assault weapons have helped fuel "extraordinary violence" in Mexico and the USA.

"None of us are under any illusion that reinstating that ban would be easy," Obama said, so the focus is on how to improve enforcement of laws such as those that ban bringing weapons across the border. He said it will be possible to develop consensus on issues such as ballistics tracing.

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March video game sales down; NPD: sky not falling

Video game sales in March fell more sharply than analysts expected, but observers remain optimistic about the industry's strength.

Consumers bought more than 1.5 million copies of Capcom's Resident Evil 5, a record mark for the franchise. The Xbox 360 version, with 938,000 sold, was the top-selling game of the month; the PS3 version sold 585,000 for No. 4, according to The NPD Group's monthly report.

And Nintendo sold more than 3.1 million game systems -- 601,000 WIs and 563,000 DS handhelds -- along with 805,000 copies of the No. 2 title Pokemon Platinum.

Microsoft sold 639,000 copies of No. 3 game Halo Wars, along with 339,000 Xbox 360s, up 25% from March 2008. While Sony had two exclusive games in the top 10, MLB '09: The Show (No. 6, 305,000, 45% more than last year's version, Sony says) and Killzone 2 (206,000) -- not to mention 218,000 P3s.

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That's more like it, Cy

Cliff Lee didn’t yield to the pressure of both an 0-2 start and pitching in the first game at the new Yankee Stadium. Instead the reignining AL Cy Young Award winner calmed his (and his fantasy owners’) nerves by tossing six strong innings Thursday as the Indians spoiled the Yankees’ party with a 10-2 win. (Photo by Jim McIsaac, Getty Images)

Lee entered the game with a 9.90 ERA, but he allowed only one run -- on Jorge Posada homer -- over six innings to get the win.

However, Lee walked three and is still nowhere close to the dominant pitcher he was last season, when he went 22-9.

PhotoExperts suggests that Lee’s lackluster control and his heavy workload last season are the most likely causes of his

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Starwood sues Hilton Hotels over alleged corporate espionage

Hotel giant Starwood Hotels late tonight filed suit against rival Hilton Hotels, accusing it of stealing trade secrets to help it launch a rival luxury chain quickly and cheaply. The Wall Street Journal was the first news outlet to run a story about the filing.

Filed in federal court in New York, Starwood’s suit alleges that Hilton stole more than 100,000 electronic and hard copy files containing trade secrets to help it expand its luxury hotel offerings. “The large volume of confidential information taken is extraordinary,” the filing says.

Hilton last month announced the launch of Denizen, a chic, upscale chain that would rival Starwood’s offerings. The brains behind Denizen include two executives who until last year ran Starwood’s luxury hotels unit.

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Mercedes-Benz GL not good enough for Real Housewives of New York City

Open Road is slightly embarrassed to admit this, but colleague Sharon Silke Carty happened to be watching Real Housewives of New York City (view here) this week and actually empathized with housewife Jill, whose husband surprised her with a new Mercedes-Benz GL-class SUV (can you spot which one, astute reader?).

Jill coos and gushes and even praises her husband for not getting one with a TV ("You know it’s hard to watch TV and drive at the same time," she says.)

But then Jill gets in and discovers it won’t work with her...
Dana White: UFC 97 could be Liddell’s last

The president of the Ultimate Fighting Championship says former light-heavyweight champion Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell could be at the end of his career.

“He’s one of my best friends, but this could be it,” UFC President Dana White told Sacramento radio host Dave Carmichael. “He helped build this business, but this might be his last fight ever.”

Read more »

WAMMA exec leaves

The World Alliance of Mixed Martial Arts has a new chief operating officer.

Mike Lynch has resigned as COO of the fledgling sanctioning group.

About Sergio Non

Sergio Non became interested in mixed martial arts in the late 1990s but didn’t become a fan until the Pride 2000 Grand Prix. He believes knees to the head and grappling pants should be allowed; think wrestling shirts and wrestling shoes should be required; and still hopes to see a vertical super pullover on a real professional fighter.

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The Old Model
The New Model

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The Threats

Another expert wants to unseat you.

The critics are ever-present.

The farewell is only a click away.
DO

• 1. Always develop, expand the community.

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DO

2. Ask for input, hear input, act on input. And then talk about it – transparently.
DO

• 3. Engage communities outside your walls.

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DON’T

1. Don’t try to be all things for all people.
DON’T

• 2. Don’t think it belongs to you.
DON’T

• 3. Don’t treat it as just a community… it’s an information-delivery-device.

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The business side must consider editorial.
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We are moving from a "talk-at" model to a "talk-with" model.

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The author is now fully in control.

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Communities rise or fall on the strength of content, curation and promotion.
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