

# Keeping Reviews Fresh

## User feedback on Priceline has 14-month shelf life

**Stale Reviews.** Priceline believes up-to-date reviews are key to selling more services, which is why it deletes all comments and reviews after 14 months. Still, it posts everything submitted by users, except for strong language and individual names.

**Game-Changing Pringles.** In 2000, 70 percent of Kellogg's sales were in cereal and 20 percent were in convenience foods, such as Nutri-Grain bars. Now, 40-45 percent of sales are in cereal, the same in snacks, and the rest in frozen foods. Pringles changed the game for the company, executives say, allowing the company to diversify in strong categories. Still, Eggo is the second strongest brand the Kellogg Company has, second only to Kellogg brand itself.

**On-The-Go Meds.** WebMD is launching a new mobile app for the iPhone that incorporates biometric data such as glucometers and wireless scales. This app is designed to capitalize on the wearable technology trend. WebMD users evenly split between visiting the site via a



**Larissa Faw**

The Business Roundup

computer (33 percent) or smartphone (31 percent), while 8 percent of views come from tablets.

**Cable Jumpers.** Dish Network says one of the most effective ways it loses customers is by competitors packaging broadband with cable and DirecTV's NFL Sunday Ticket package. Those who just want cable and video are a losing proposition for cable and satellite providers. When subscriptions are just \$80-\$100 a month,

executives say their ROI is basically zero.

**Google Voice.** Digital marketing agency Isobar has developed Tilt Control, a voice-controlled app for Google Glass that lets users use their voice instead of hands to use the device, including swiping or taking pictures. Although the app is designed for everyone, it has particular promise for the physically disabled, Isobar developers say.

**Fresh Eggs.** Omelet, a Los Angeles-based branding, marketing, and entertainment agency, hopes to receive attention during the annual SXSW Interactive conference in Austin, Texas, by whipping up a batch of pancakes. As part of its "Rise and Shine" promotion, all 2014 SXSW attendees are invited to tweet at @ThisIsOmelet for the chance to have an amateur chef cook them breakfast during this year's event. Then, each day between March 7-11, Omelet will visit a different house and provide fresh eggs, crispy toast and coffee.

**Toy Buy.** Mattel acquired Mega Brands, best known for its Mega

Bloks construction sets, for \$460 million in cash. The construction category is one of the fastest growing in the toy industry, and Mattel expects this deal will help it expand Barbie and Hot Wheels into this segment.

**Private Sales.** Grocery chain Safeway introduced 774 new private-brand food and beverage items in 2013; 28 percent of total sales are of private label goods. Now, the company is focusing on private label organic and natural foods and is introducing more products aimed at Hispanic and Asian shoppers.

**Omni-Shoppers.** Half of Gap shoppers initially start their interaction with the retailer online or via mobile devices. The franchise is rolling out Reserve in Store to all Gap locations in 2014. This online tool lets shoppers purchase an item online and pick it up at their closest store.

Executives actually want shoppers to engage with their smartphones while in store, saying that they want seamless omni-channel experiences.

**Getting Real.** Banana Republic is showing truth in advertising by featuring real-life couples and families in its spring 2014 campaign.

Real life isn't necessarily the traditional one man and one woman with 2.5 kids household. Indeed, Banana Republic's campaign features multiracial families and same-sex couple Nate Berkus and Jeremiah Brent.

**Custom Drink.** Coca-Cola is pushing its freestyle system, saying it is a game-changer. The custom fountain machine, popular in movie theaters, is already in 16,000 locations, and each serves over 100 beverages.

**Cut Flights.** For an airplane to be "operationally reliable," no more than one flight out of every 100 is delayed by more than 15 minutes because of technical reasons, Airbus reports.

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Larissa Faw covers business trends for Forbes, The Motley Fool and other outlets. Contact her at [larissafaw@gmail.com](mailto:larissafaw@gmail.com).

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