

Springwise newsletter | 8 April 2009

Spotted for you this week: scar-based jewelry, free ad-sponsored coffee cups, consumers getting paid for promoting products they love, and more. Our next edition is due on 15 April 2009. In the meantime, check out our daily postings on www.springwise.com, send us your [tips](#), and please don't forget to [tell your friends](#) and colleagues about us. Much appreciated!



Rooftop beekeeping at Fortnum's

Over the past few years, there's been a surge of interest in urban beekeeping, mostly on a small scale by amateur beekeepers. [Fortnum & Mason](#) is now taking the practice to a new level—the famous London retailer has placed four hives on the roof of its 181 Piccadilly building. From where, as Fortnum's describes, the bees are able to "fly high above Mayfair, visiting the grounds, gardens and squares of the best addresses in London, gathering rather superior nectar." (The colony was previously housed by Fortnum's in Shropshire and Oxfordshire.)

Pollen from chestnut and lime trees, as well as a wide variety of other flowering plants, is expected to make for a delicate urban honey, which will be on sale from May 2009. A 227g jar of Piccadilly Honey will be priced at GBP 10. Completing the picture, Fortnum & Mason offers an upclose view of the palatial beehives via two webcams.

It's a wonderful example of a retailer and food brand taking an uber-local approach to food production, and creating a [still-made-here](#) story that consumers won't be able to resist ;-) (Related: [Honey without the mess](#) — [Sweet snobmoddity](#).)

Website: www.fortnumandmason.com/Fortnums-Bees/Home.aspx

Spotted by: [@ktmonkey](#)



Linking advertisers to consumers selling ad space

As the internet shifts communication from one-to-many to many-to-many, traditional advertising channels don't pack the punch they once did. Providing a new solution for a new media landscape is [Everyday Models](#), which invites anyone to get paid to rent out aspects of their daily life to advertisers: whether it's their clothes, car, house or online profile.

There's no approval process to be listed with Everyday Models: anyone can register in thirty seconds, helping the service attract its all-important army of advertising space. Once logged in, users list their vital stats and add headshots to their profile. Potential advertisers then use the system's search feature to pick out those with the desired attributes for a particular campaign. Although the service stands out for offering human advertising in everyday situations, its community can also be hired for more traditional activities such as runway modelling.

British student James Brookner developed the idea with photographer Matt Garcia. It's not the first time advertising has become this personal—Brookner and Garcia took their inspiration from someone who turned [his forehead](#) into premium ad space, with Jason of [I Wear Your Shirt](#) capturing media attention more recently. However, by becoming an intermediary—brokering human ad space rather than offering it themselves—Everyday Models is offering something new and something potentially powerful. Those of you who have read [trendwatching.com's](#) latest briefing will no doubt recognize that Everyday Models has jumped into the [sellsumers](#) arena, where ordinary consumers are finding innovative ways to bring in some extra cash.

Website: www.everydaymodels.co.uk

Contact: info@everydaymodels.co.uk

Spotted by: Jenna Ward



Free paper cups for office coffee drinkers

If free [notebooks](#) and [notepaper](#) are both effective ways to get a message in front of college students' eyes, what would be the closest equivalent for office workers? The ubiquitous coffee cup seems like a pretty good guess, and it's also precisely the medium used in the latest round of free love with advertising.

[FreePaperCups](#) provides just that to corporate customers across the US through an arrangement with both advertisers and suppliers. Specifically, operating through an exclusive national network of office coffee service providers, FreePaperCups works with advertisers to provide the cups to companies for free in exchange for branding them with sponsors' messages. The result? Advertisers get their brands in front of consumers and business decision makers in offices, conference rooms, break rooms and corporate dining facilities across the nation; companies get to eliminate the expense of buying the cups themselves; and participating coffee services get to offer more competitive pricing.

Once again, [free love](#) is a win-win-win for everyone involved. One to continue emulating whenever, wherever possible! ;-) (Related: [Free love at the food court](#) — [More free photocopying, this time for charity.](#))

Website: www.freepapercups.com

Contact: info@freepapercups.com

Spotted by: Susanna Haynie



InterContinental gets staff to share mates' rates

It goes without saying that higher sales and staff motivation have always been good for business. Currently merging the two is [InterContinental Hotels Group](#) with its new 'Friends and Family' programme, turning 330,000 staff members into customers, advocates and media outlets.

It's essentially a discount scheme for staff and their networks, which employees register for through IHG's intranet. They then receive a link to their own personalized booking page, which they are encouraged to forward to friends and family and publish on their social network profile. Anyone who makes a booking through the link before 31 May 2009 receives a 20%-50% discount on reservations made up to a year in advance.

It's a global scheme, covering over 4,000 of the Group's hotels across the world, including the Holiday Inn and Crowne Plaza brands. Launched in February 2009, the programme's success could make it a major sales channel for the group in the future.

By being generous to its customers and their friends, the initiative taps into the [Generation G](#) trend, while pulling in extra business in times that are undeniably tough for hotels.

Website: www.ihg.com

Spotted by: Raymond Kollau



Half-price parking for half-sized cars

At 8.8 feet long, 5.1 feet tall and 5.1 feet wide, the [Smart fortwo](#) is small enough to fit two vehicles into a single parking space. So why should Smart car owners have to pay full price for a half-used spot?

To encourage the use of environmentally friendly and space-saving vehicles, parking companies are starting to offer discounts. Meyers Parking, Icon Parking Systems and AviStar Airport Parking already offer half-priced parking in Manhattan for Smart fortwo owners. Now [Central Parking System](#), in partnership with Smart USA, is joining them in offering half-price parking for Smart fortwo owners beyond Manhattan, expanding the opportunity to Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and New Jersey.

The Smart dealer network has sold more than 27,000 fortwos since January 2008, and there are about 4,000 current smart owners in the metropolitan New York market. With the customer base for small cars increasing rapidly, incentives that reward owners can add up to big business for parking companies. A [perk](#) to bring to owners of eco-friendlier cars around the world. (Related: [Parking operator launches car-sharing service](#) — [Airport offers free electricity for electric cars.](#))

Websites: www.centralparking.com — www.smartusa.com

Spotted by: [autobloggreen](#) via Raymond Kollau



Ultra-personal jewelry replicates a wearer's scar

Tattoos have become a mainstream way for people to create lasting marks of their personalities, style and obsessions. Now, a new company is offering a different type of skin-based memento: one-of-a-kind jewelry that replicates scars acquired in accidents and surgeries.


Launched earlier this year, [It's My Scar](http://www.itsmyscar.com) makes wax renderings based on photos sent in by customers, and creates their highly personal piece of jewelry in 6–8 weeks. Prices range from USD 200–1,500, depending on the metal used and the type of piece requested—bracelet, ring, earrings or necklace.

The idea is to celebrate the meaning that a scar holds for the wearer. It's My Scar's founder created her first piece of scar jewelry based on her own surgery scar, to commemorate surviving thyroid cancer. The company's motto is 'Claim your past and wear your story', and it encourages customers to share their own stories on the website. It's definitely one of the most meaningful examples of customization we've come across.

Website: www.itsmyscar.com

Contact: www.itsmyscar.com/contact

Spotted by: Carly Clark

An illustration featuring several cartoon characters with large eyes and spiky hair. One character on the left is holding a megaphone. In the center, three characters are shown in various expressions of excitement and surprise. On the right, a character is holding a large blue star with a white circle in the center, signifying a reward or achievement.

Paying consumers for promoting products they love

Consumers frustrated by products with problems already have [RedesignMe](#) to share—and get paid for—their ideas on improving them. Now, on the flip side of the coin, there's [Hollrr](#), a site that lets users help promote the products they love.

Currently in invitation-only beta, Seattle-based Hollrr aims to help small companies launch new products. Toward that end, it enables consumers to help spread the word about the ones they think deserve to succeed—even rewarding them for recruiting new customers. Fans of a particular product begin by joining its Tribe of Followers, as they're known on the site. If there isn't one yet for that product, they can be the first to suggest it for consideration; Hollrr's team will then talk to the product's owner to see if it's interested in participating. Either way, once there's a Tribe, fans can help promote the product by writing an endorsement, downloading a widget to their blog or Facebook page and sending a link to their friends via Twitter or email. Through Hollrr's partnerships with the companies behind the products, rewards are distributed to Tribe members in two ways. In cases where the maker's reward system allows Hollrr to track individual users, participants get directly rewarded for each person who clicks through from their endorsement to the product website; otherwise, rewards are split among the whole Tribe, with the greatest shares going to those who joined earliest. (When direct rewards are possible, Hollrr still contributes a separate Tribe reward among the group as well.) Each user is allowed a maximum of five products to promote, and payments are made through an Amazon Flexible Payment account.

Using technology that's easily integrated with vendors' existing affiliate programs, Hollrr is another lovely illustration of the fertile ground where [Generation C\(ontent\)](#) and [Generation C\(ash\)](#) meet. The crowds love to contribute, but only by rewarding them will you unleash their full potential. Currently, Hollrr rewards are available only to US-based consumers; one to adapt on a localized or niche basis? (For much more on consumers making money instead of just spending it, check out our sister-site [trendwatching.com](#)'s briefing on [sellsumers](#).)

Website: www.hollrr.com

Contact: hello@hollrr.com



Eco-bus offers luxury commute

Photo by [Mike Kepka, San Francisco Chronicle](#)

As cities around the world try to get cars off the roads, there's been increasing emphasis on public transportation, [ride-sharing](#), [telecommuting](#) and [bicycling](#) as eco-minded alternatives. One we hadn't yet seen, however, is a luxury eco-bus used to give commuters a high-end ride to work.

San Francisco now requires that all employers with 20 workers or more offer a transit benefit program to support greener commuting. With that in mind, Bauer's Worldwide Transportation recently launched [Wi-Drive](#), a green, weekday bus service that offers high-end transportation for commuters. Targeting professionals who wouldn't normally consider public transportation, Wi-Drive aims to emulate the comfort of a limousine or company shuttle. Padded leatherette seats, wifi, LCD screens, ports for phones and iPods, and work tables at each prereserved seat are among the amenities Wi-Drive commuters can enjoy, as well as the availability of food and beverages and an attendant on duty. The 52-seat vehicles themselves, meanwhile, run on CNG, propane or bio-fuel, and most stops on their routes are close to major companies or transit hubs. Bauer's will also work with companies or groups of commuters to build custom routes, and it has partnered with pre-tax transit programs Commuter Checks and WageWorks to integrate their offerings as well. One-way prices on Wi-Drive are USD 8.20 for most trips among Marin County, San Francisco and San Jose, according to an article in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#), with discounts for preloading the service's swipe card by the month. A loyalty program, meanwhile, rewards users with points to spend toward future commutes, and Bauer's allows companies to add their own custom incentives as well.

With all the many reasons to reduce driving, there's no doubt it needs to happen, and a first-class alternative may be just what it will take to get high-end commuters out of their BMWs. One to emulate on the roads near you? (Related: [Rewarding consumers who drive less.](#))

Website: www.bauerswi-drive.org

Contact: customerservice@bauerswi-drive.org

Spotted by: [Treehugger](#) via Raymond Kollau



Free video lectures by top scholars

Video instruction is something we've recently seen applied to [music](#), [golf](#) and [cricket](#). Now, through Academic Earth, it's being brought—for free—to virtually every scholarly topic under the sun.

New York-based Academic Earth aims to make a world-class education available to everyone on the planet. Toward that end, it is building a user-friendly ecosystem that gives internet users around the globe the ability to find, interact with and learn from full video courses and lectures from the world's leading scholars. More than 1,500 video lectures are currently available on the site, covering economics, entrepreneurship, history, law, medicine, religion and the sciences, among many other topics. A series of thematic collections, meanwhile, combine lectures to create courses such as "Understanding the Financial Crisis" and "Social Entrepreneurship 101." Faculty for Academic Earth's lectures are drawn from Berkeley, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford and Yale, and courses are offered under a Creative Commons license through open course programs at the universities. Associated materials include lecture transcripts, handouts, reading assignments, tests and problem sets; some classes are also available as podcasts.

Academic Earth's courses cannot be used to get real academic credit, but they can be saved, rated and shared as favourites; they can also be used to gain [status skills](#) aplenty. The next step, it seems to us, will be to provide translations or variations that open it up to non-English speakers around the planet—and indeed, the site is actively seeking additional partners to expand its offerings. Educators, academic representatives and experts around the globe: one to get involved in?

Website: www.academicearth.org

Contact: hello@academicearth.org

Spotted by: Judy McRae



Premium concert tickets come with free love

Two years ago Prince shook the music industry when he gave away free CDs to fans who purchased either the UK's Mail on Sunday newspaper or tickets to one of his shows. Picking up on that idea, American band [No Doubt](#) is doing something similar for those who buy top-tier tickets to one of the concerts in its summer tour.

Rather than just a single CD, however, No Doubt is giving away a free download of its entire digital audio catalogue, comprising more than 80 songs from the band's seven studio albums. Tickets for the tour, which kicks off May 2 in Atlantic City, went on sale earlier this month, and pricing varies with the venue. The free download offer applies only to top-ticket price levels, however—those priced higher than USD 42.50 before applicable ticketing-related fees. In addition to the band's past songs, the download will also include "Stand and Deliver," a brand-new song that will be performed for the first time in May.

There's no doubt the music industry is in transition, as it struggles to find a sustainable new model for the digital-music era. By zeroing in on premium-priced tickets, No Doubt takes Prince's model a notch higher and turns the music into a perk for top-paying fans. [Free love](#) is always good, but when it's reserved for your best customers, it can inspire brand love and come right back at you again! (Related: [Travel company invites clients on planning trips](#) — [Hotel perks for Mercedes drivers](#) — [More luxury loos, now for members only](#) — [A layaway option for buying festival tickets.](#))

Website: www.nodoubt.com/news/default.aspx?nid=20646

Spotted by: Lieke Voermans