

'Lost' Prototypes

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San Francisco police enlist in the greatest guerilla marketing ploy of 2011.

Looking for some marketplace heat on the product you're working on right now? Drop everything in the office and head to the local watering hole, prototype in hand. Drub up conversation with a few regulars and point out the revolutionary manner in which this prototype, that you hold in your hands, will change the [insert industry here].

Remember that presentation is the key to success in this situation. Before entering said watering hole, place the prototype in a steel briefcase featuring either thumbprint recognition entry or a remote-controlled shock alarm. The benefit of the shock alarm is your ability to gain peer interest by daring a regular to grab your briefcase before you hit him/her with 30,000 volts. (For aspiring private investigators and fans of HBO's *Bored to Death* alike, this briefcase actually exists at www.pimall.com [1]. The site is good for evoking a guttural chuckle, swiftly followed by a whispered, "Cool.")

Next, get drunk or pretend to get drunk — whatever your pleasure given your gastrointestinal limitations — and proceed to slink out of the bar in a swaying two-step. Before you leave, lock your case and make sure you have it in tow. Be sure to leave the prototype in a prominently lit area with your business card not too far away. Personally, I prefer illustrating a grassy knoll-level conspiracy theory on the business card during a previous conversation to draw the eye.

The following day, make a hurried call to the local police department. Enhance your desperation by rubbing a grain of sand in each eye and storming the station with Howard-Beale-like lunacy.

As you're filling out the police report, make sure the apologetic email that you

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composed to your project manager — and 'accidentally' blind copied every media outlet in the seven surrounding states — simultaneously deploys and voila, instant heat. Ranging from like-minded guerilla marketers to industrial espionage enthusiasts blaming Rohypnol and the Chinese, your product will be surrounded by intrigue and debate before anyone knows what it is, what it does, or if it's real. Rest assured, for the demand to see your product is shortly followed by the need to own it — or find a pirated comp overseas.

Turn the tables on Apple and vaguely note how your product will permanently gain market share over the global leader, and a slew of cyber-sleuths will rush to your aide, theoretically. Of course, the blogosphere is merely in a footrace to find your prototype and sell it to the highest bidding news service.

The game plan suits the befitting marketing genius who was able to serve up enough hype over the [second missing iPhone prototype](#) [2] in as many years that the San Francisco police department heeded Apple's call. After an unreleased smartphone was left in a city restaurant, Apple could've had every dining establishment in the greater San Francisco area bidding to be the setting for such reckless abandon.

Though Apple officials have declined to comment on the case, I'd like to take this time to applaud its efforts as the company continues to engage and mystify the masses. Whether recklessness or premeditation is to blame, we can't stop ourselves from imagining the whereabouts and design of that "unreleased" smartphone.

What's your take? Email david.mantey@advantagemedia.com [3].

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Links:

[1] <http://www.pimall.com/>

[2] <http://www.pddnet.com/news-ap-san-francisco-police-help-look-for-lost-iphone-090511/>

[3] <mailto:david.mantey@advantagemedia.com>