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Bill Gates - Shoe
Circus Clown Club
Microsoft

[Microsoft: Windows, Windows, Windows](#)

Bringing Windows back with \$300 million

The Windows marketing earthquake is coming, with Windows Vista, Windows Mobile and Windows Live at the epicenter. Just because Microsoft is on a brand rebuilding mission, a mission involving telling the real Windows story and the truth about the Redmond company's flagship brand and product. As early as the start of July 2008, Brad Brooks, corporate vice president, Windows Consumer Product Marketing, promised that Microsoft would start to "free the people." The recipe? Just a \$300 million Windows campaign, preceded by the [Mojave experiment](#). It's not about Windows XP Service Pack 3 and it's not about Windows 7, but at the same time it's only in part about Windows Vista, Service Pack 1 or not, as Windows Live and Windows Mobile also come into focus. The \$300 million marketing campaign designed to bring Windows back has just debuted with a [Bill Gates - Jerry Seinfeld video advertisement](#), which, according to criticism, made people want to buy... shoes. "Since it first launched nearly 25 years ago, Windows has been one of the most successful products in the history of the high tech industry. As we set our sights on the next 25 years, it is essential that we deliver incredible offerings on a great platform. We must also tell the story of how Windows enables a billion people around the globe to do more with their lives today. We must inspire consumers with the promise of what Windows uniquely makes possible across the PC, phone and web," stated Bill Veghte, senior vice president, Online Services & Windows Business Group, in an internal email to all Microsoft employees, as cited by [Digital Daily](#). Off to a Slow Start The Gates and Seinfeld video ad was designed as just a teaser, an icebreaker as Microsoft has put it, promising that there is more to come. Well, the fact of the matter is that if the ad's purpose was to raise attention and to get people talking, then it was dead on. But one thing that the Gates and Seinfeld pair failed to do was to drive home any sort of concrete idea or message. The advertisement was lost on many, even though it was awarded with a few timid smiles, but just as Windows Vista, it left "tasters" perplexed, wanting more and criticizing Microsoft for its failure to deliver the whole [Windows revelation](#) in a single TV and Internet spot. "We are kicking off a highly visible advertising campaign. The first phase of this campaign is designed to engage consumers and spark a new conversation about Windows - a conversation that will evolve as the campaign progresses, but will always be marked by humor and humanity. The first in this series of television ads airs initially in the U.S., and it aims to re-ignite consumer excitement about the broader value of Windows," Veghte added. Nothing Microsoft itself acknowledged that there is nothing connecting the Gates/Seinfeld ad with software. And yet, the first taste of the campaign produced by Crispin, Porter + Bogusky is designed to re-connect Windows with consumers. Of course there is the Windows logo at the end just after "the future - delicious" slogan, but only after over a minute of Gates buying discount shoes in a scenario involving Seinfeld-branded comedy. Coincidentally or not, commenters, even on the official [Windows Vista Blog](#), indicated that nothing is exactly what they got from this first example of Microsoft's largest consumer marketing campaign in history. "Telling our story means making significant investments to improve the way consumers experience Windows. To that end, we are focused on making improvements at practically every consumer touch point, from the moment they hear about the Windows brand in our advertising to how they learn more about Windows products online; from how they view Windows and try it at retail to how they use the entire range of Windows offerings-Windows Vista, Windows Mobile and Windows Live-across their whole life," Veghte explained. Your World Through Windows

Microsoft is spot on emphasizing that the install base for Windows has long passed the 1 billion milestone. In this context, the company's claim that its technology fits the entire life of the customers is also accurate. Windows is not only about the desktop or laptop computers. In fact, the software giant has yet another slogan to serve to potential consumers: "You live life beyond your PC. So do we." Well, Microsoft has a lot more to prove than what it delivered with the first Delicious Windows ad, which many viewers failed to find to their taste. This first set of ads features Bill Gates and comedian Jerry Seinfeld. Think of these ads as an icebreaker to reintroduce Microsoft to viewers in a consumer context. Later this month, as the campaign moves into its next phase, we'll go much deeper in telling the Windows story and celebrating what it can do for consumers at work, at play and on-the-go. At that time, I'll be back to share more information about our plans to further strengthen the bond between consumers and Windows-one of the most amazing products, businesses and brands of all time, and, with the right tenacity, passion and agility from all of us, a story that has many great chapters to come," Veghte promised.

Windows Killing Time

Microsoft is struggling to keep Windows not at the center-stage, but in the hearts of consumers. This is in fact what the \$300 million Windows campaign is all about. The biggest challenge for the Redmond giant are not competitive products, but rival brands such as Google, Linux and Apple. While harsh criticism, disapproval, and immediate dismissal are never spared on Microsoft, Google, Apple and the members of the open source community can do nothing wrong, all the while cooking Windows killers. Linux and Mac OS X have not displaced Windows from its dominant position on the operating system market, but are slowly eroding its install base. But when it comes down to platforms, Google, now with the availability of [Chrome](#), is also a challenger to Windows. Although there is still a feeling of anticipation for the Google Operating System, the Google Browser is all that the Mountain View-based search engine needs. A Google OS would be redundant; Chrome is more than sufficient when it comes down to connecting users with Cloud-based services and products. And although the future might be delicious for Windows, the fact is that Chrome, or any browser for that matter, can be tweaked not to require an operating system, but to boot straight on top of the hardware and connect to the Internet and to the RIA universe. In the end, just as it threw Windows XP against Windows Vista in the same arena until the summer of 2008, letting consumers decide what they want, Microsoft proves to be its worst enemy. The work the Redmond giant is pouring into non-Windows operating systems such as Singularity and [Midori](#) is certainly not helping the public perception of Windows, no matter how much Gates will jiggle his shorts.

Audience vs. Consumers

For all the criticism of the Gates - Seinfeld ad, the truth is that this time around Microsoft is not talking to the tech savvy audience but to the general consumers. The ad is wasted on people with lives already revolving exclusively around the PC or the Internet. Microsoft is pushing Windows as a consumer brand on the subjects of the Mojave experiment, meaning the vast majority of consumers, the people who can't tell the difference between Windows Vista and Windows Vista masquerading as Windows Mojave. "That is where this campaign comes in. We are talking to the large consumer audience," revealed [David Isbitski](#), developer evangelist with Microsoft. "Believe it or not - this is the consumer audience. These are the people who make up a large portion of that 90%+ market share Windows has. More importantly they don't have to be technical to have their perceptions changed. Apple has proven this. Want proof? Look no further than the Mojave Experiment. We are at a point now where your average person's perception of Vista is not based on use but on what they saw on TV or heard from someone who heard from someone who saw it on TV. You get the idea."