



## MARKETING STAR



## Tammy Michalek: Director of Marketing for Guava, Free Style Collective, and Nice Spots

[By Anique Gonzalez]

In an age in which technology has blurred the lines between when, where, and how consumers receive brand messages, consumers are becoming increasingly turned off as they are deluged with marketing messages that invade their personal zones. “Excessive inundation in our personal spheres I think is a line to be drawn,” Tammy Michalek says.

“I feel like there’s so much messaging going on right now and I think [marketers] are logo slapping galore. Anytime we walk outside bombardment of messaging and what people will put their logos on and what they’re trying to do it seems excessive,” she adds. Yes, that’s right; a marketer sounding off against — marketing.

Of course, this is not to say that Michalek is against using technology to interact with consumers. On the contrary, she believes that technology has increased the number of options available to marketers in terms of the messages they send and the variety of existing mediums. In fact, some ads that she has encountered in her personal sphere she has enjoyed, such as the Heineken ad that appeared when she was taking money out of an ATM while in South America. The key, however, is discovering the appropriate time and place for it.

Michalek, director of marketing for three sister companies of Nice Shoes, the premier post-production and new media company, began her foray into the world of marketing when she decided to change her major from chemistry to Spanish while attending college. Although her original goal was to become a pharmacist, she quickly realized that what she enjoyed most was speaking to and working with people.

After graduating from college she took jobs with Berlitz teaching English as a second language. She soon discovered that there were more business-minded aspects of communicating to people, which could

**Q: Throughout your lifetime, what movie have you watched the most?**

**A:** There are a couple of things that come to mind. I would have to say, I’m a little bit embarrassed about my answer ... what do I watch on my Saturdays that I love? You know what, I love it when *Overboard* is on Saturday afternoon. I have to say if *Overboard* is on, I have to watch it. I’m not going to say it’s my all time favorite movie, but I’ve definitely watched it many times.

**Q: What was the last thing that you ate?**

**A:** The last thing that I ate was vegetable udon. It’s like a Japanese soup.

**Q: What is your favorite TV show?**

**A:** Does it have to be running right now? My favorite television show was the HBO show *Carnival*. It was on a couple of seasons ago.

**Q: What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?**

**A:** Black raspberry.

**Q: What was the last piece of music that you listened to?**

**A:** I’m listening to U2 right now. It’s on shuffle on my iTunes and *All I Want Is You* is playing right now.}

**Q: If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you spend it doing?**

**A:** I would spend it outside. I would spend it like somewhere green and wooded, and I would just be walking around and enjoying the sights and sounds and smells of nature.

be done on a global scale. And with that she began working in Berlitz’s sales and marketing department.

“That was my first foray into what is marketing and how to get a message to a broad group of people around the world,” she says. “That was the first time I realized this is it — this is how I can work with a large number of people and hopefully create some positive influence on what is happening in the marketplace.”

Creating a positive influence in the marketplace, either by saving consumers time or money, or by providing a product or service that in some way does good is exactly how Michalek chooses her projects. Ultimately, “doing good” is achieved by understanding consumers’ needs, desires, and what is best for them. Showing them that the product being offered is good for them, and not a pollutant, is key.

“It’s not about us,” she explains. “We’re fulfilling the need for something else. I think that’s always something important to keep in mind.”

Since her first venture into the field, Michalek has been a consultant to the marketing departments of several start-up companies by helping them to get established in the marketplace — a career choice, and path, she finds highly rewarding.

“I feel like start-ups really capture what I love to call the chaotic stage of creation. I think ... when people are at that stage of the



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game, there's a lot of passion for what they do. I'm just addicted to that stage of really figuring out all of the bells and whistles of a product, or right now, service, and saying how does this help people?" Michalek states.

Although with that intensified passion, enthusiasm, and motivation comes some constraints, particularly in terms of budget size. Working with start-ups means that there isn't a huge monetary reserve from which to draw when attempting to target consumers.

"So it's not like dealing with a Pepsi or a name brand that has a multi-million dollar

budget." Subsequently, to offset their lack of funds, these start ups must develop creative campaigns that effectively promote their message, define themselves in the marketplace, and allow room for growth.

Such are the challenges that Michalek is encountering in her present position with Guava, Freestyle Collective, and Nice Spots. Here, she is tasked with developing and implementing a strategy that will serve to unite the three companies, creating a prominent role for them in the marketplace, and educating consumers about the brand. While at first glance, it may seem like a trying task, but what the company may

lack in monetary breadth is made up for in passion.

And with passion and ingenuity comes success.

### ON THE NET

Nice Shoes  
[www.niceshoes.com/dev/index.php?ct=2&pg=2](http://www.niceshoes.com/dev/index.php?ct=2&pg=2)

Berlitz  
[www.berlitz.com](http://www.berlitz.com)

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