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Skittles Favorites Facebook Over Twitter

Laurie Sullivan, Mar 04, 2009 05:00 AM

Skittles' Web site redesign on Twitter put the colorful coated candy in the spotlight on Monday, but the tweets quickly silenced the following day when the company's marketers pulled the campaign* in favor of favorites and followers on Facebook.

The blogosphere started buzzing. Some wondered whether Skittles' marketers had gone too far in turning the brand's home page into a snapshot of what people were writing about them. Most Twitter users did not tweet about grape and lemon flavors, or buying the candy--but rather how Skittles, the Mars candy brand, got consumers talking about the treat.

By Tuesday the conversation had soured on Twitter. The buzz quickly spread from creativity behind the brand and digital marketing to pranksters writing negative and unrelated comments. By trusting consumers with the content on the home page, Skittles opened up the brand to a wrath of backlash by losing control of the conversation.

Brand Keys President Robert Passikoff said the fiasco demonstrates the power of consumers. "If we had any doubt that the consumer is in control, this is the perfect case study that proves it," he said. "It's also additional proof that brands need a resonating authenticity among the community they want to serve."

Passikoff said the campaign also brought to light consumer sentiment about the brand based on freedom of speech on the Internet. "The good news is there is freedom of speech, and the bad news is there is freedom of speech," he said. People want brands they can relate with and feel comfortable about. It shows Skittles may still have work to do."

** Editor's note: Twitter can now be found under the "Chatter" section of Skittles' Web site.*