

## Microsoft Corporation: Microsoft Windows 7 Launch Parties

Source: DMA (US), Bronze, ECHO Awards, 2010

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Microsoft wanted to reach tech enthusiasts and influencers to help promote Windows 7. Since a key component of the marketing message was that the wishes of regular users everywhere were taken into consideration, the company wanted Windows 7 to be explored and shared by friends and family. The campaign focused on bringing people together through launch parties hosted in homes across the world. Through the more than 40,000 parties worldwide, more than 470,000 people experienced Windows 7 firsthand, and millions more heard raves through social media and other word-of-mouth channels, both online and off.

### House Party

## ENTRY INFORMATION

**Category:** Information Technologies

**Country where program ran:** Internationally

**Date program started/ended:** June to November 2009

**Product Description:** Microsoft Windows 7 operating system

**Advertiser/Client Name:** Microsoft Corporation

**Media Channels:** Email

Social Networking

Web Development

Website: <http://houseparty.com/webby>

## STRATEGY

## Marketplace Challenge:

Microsoft was preparing for one of the largest and most important initiatives in its history - the worldwide launch of its Windows 7 operating system. Key to the marketing strategy was the message that Microsoft, in designing this operating system, had taken to heart the wishes of everyday consumers like never before. To emphasize this message, and to activate its passionate brand advocates, Microsoft asked House Party to put its pioneering fusion of in-home, online, word-of-mouth, and social media marketing at the center of the launch. With House Party's help, Microsoft enlisted over 40,000 consumers around the world to host parties in their homes to debut, demonstrate and celebrate Microsoft's new software.

**Target audience:** Consumer

Consumers worldwide, influencers, core brand advocates, tech enthusiasts

**Size of target audience:** 50,000-999,999

## Marketing strategy:

Microsoft partnered with House Party, Inc. to engage consumers worldwide in the launch and celebration of its landmark Windows® 7 operating system through a series of in-home House Party" events - called "Launch Parties" - of unprecedented scale and impact. The key objectives were to:

- Demonstrate the Windows® 7 operating system to consumers
- Create Windows® 7 brand advocates
- Acknowledge the consumer as an integral part of the development of the product and show that Microsoft listened

## Marketing Tactics:

More than 470,000 consumers, through more than 40,000 launch parties worldwide, celebrated the launch of Windows 7®, learned about the operating system firsthand, and shared their insights and enthusiasm in a fun party setting. To date, this event is the largest in House Party's history and first global event. House Party engages thousands of qualified consumer advocates to host in-home parties - thousands of parties on a single day across the country or the world - built around a brand, product or element of entertainment programming. House Party hosts meet a profile defined by the marketer, and are passionate advocates of the marketer's brand. Parties are attended by the host's friends and family, and their experiences are shared by millions more via the custom branded website deployed in the weeks before each event, as well as on Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks. Each unique House Party event is a measurable, turnkey marketing program that enhances and spreads brand passion through in-person endorsements and viral online sharing. The Windows 7 Launch Party events consisted of a Microsoft Employee Event, primarily in the U.S. and some non-U.S. countries and a major Global Consumer Event, hosted by tech enthusiasts around the world. The Employee and Consumer Events featured Launch Parties in seven languages and 12 locations, including: the USA, Canada, Mexico, Australia, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Hong Kong and Japan. To recruit hosts for the parties,

employees were sent an internal email, and consumers were likewise recruited to apply for host slots. These consumers were tech enthusiasts who had previewed the product prior to the market release. They were screened on criteria selected by Microsoft to align with requirements for effectively demonstrating the capabilities of the system. Hosts, who were asked to gather 10+ friends and family in their homes, could choose one of four themes, including: "Family Friendly Fun," "PhotoPalooza," "Media Mania" or "Setting up with Ease" in an effort to highlight the new system's key features. To thank hosts for their leadership and equip them to showcase the product, they were each provided with a free Limited Signature Edition Windows® 7 Ultimate OS as well as other party pack elements like a party poster, playing cards, a puzzle and totes for the guests, all featuring the original Windows 7® desktop artwork. Through the custom branded Website where hosts blogged, uploaded photos and videos, hosts also used party favor downloads.

## **CREATIVE**

### **Creative strategy:**

Again, key to the marketing strategy was the message that Microsoft, in designing this operating system, had taken to heart the wishes of everyday consumers like never before. Microsoft partnered with a company like House Party, which specializes in activating a brand's key advocates. Microsoft wanted their brand advocates to experience the new product and share it with their friends and family. What better way to do that than in an authentic and fun party atmosphere.



## Windows 7 Launch Party

### Be part of Windows® history. Host a Windows® 7 Launch Party.

**Have Fun. Help Your Friends.**

**Receive a Signature Edition of Windows® 7 Ultimate.**

**You host the party. We'll bring the favors.**

Apply online to host a Launch Party. Choose a day from October 22-29 and if you're selected, you'll not only receive a special Signature Edition of Windows® 7 Ultimate but your very own Windows® 7 Party Pack.

#### **Let's Party!**

Just choose one of our Windows® 7 Party Themes:

- > PhotoPalooza
- > Media Mania
- > Setting Up With Ease
- > Family Friendly Fun

**Apply now ▶**

### Hosting a Windows® 7 Launch Party is easy.

You'll be assisted by House Party, the world's leading party organizer. Pick a theme, then upload photos and videos, chat with other hosts, blog your experience, and download fun favors all from your personal House Party page.

**Host spaces are very limited so apply now at House Party.**



ENTRY IN THE "WINDOWS® 7 LAUNCH PARTY HOST SWEEPSTAKES" IS LIMITED TO UNITED STATES RESIDENTS ONLY AS DESCRIBED BELOW AND IN THE OFFICIAL RULES.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. The "Windows® 7 Launch Party Host Sweepstakes" is subject in all respects to the complete Official Rules available at [www.houseparty.com/windows7](http://www.houseparty.com/windows7) at the Sweepstakes section of the website, or by sending a S.A.S.E. to "Windows 7 Launch Party Host Sweepstakes/Consumer - Rules Request", c/o House Party, Inc., One Bridge Street, Suite 105, Irvington, NY 10533. Sweepstakes is only open to entrants who, as of the entry date, (a) are permanent legal residents of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia, (b) are at least 18 years old, and (c) have been selected by House Party, Inc. ("HPI") to be a host of a "Windows® 7 Launch Party" on the national HPI party date of October 22, 2009 (a "House Party"), have received email notification from HPI of such host selection, and have logged into the House Party website hosted by HPI (located at [www.houseparty.com/windows7](http://www.houseparty.com/windows7)) and completed the initial online House Party start-up process. Sweepstakes is void outside the 50 United States and the District of Columbia, and where prohibited or restricted by law. Entry period begins at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time ("ET") on September 17, 2009 and ends at 11:59 p.m. ET on October 1, 2009. Eligibility, entry method and limits, and prize information and restrictions, are set forth in the Official Rules. LIMIT: 1 entry per person in this sweepstakes. Sponsor: House Party, Inc., One Bridge Street, Suite 105, Irvington, NY 10533.

[Click here to view complete Official Rules.](#)



## RESULTS

The Microsoft Windows 7 Launch Party was a great success, as measured by demonstrated results and feedback, both quantitative and qualitative, directly addressing the project's stated objectives. The promotion succeeded in engaging tech enthusiasts across the globe to host parties where the new operating system would be highlighted. Through the over 40,000 hosts who had parties worldwide, more than 470,000 partygoers experienced Windows 7 first-hand; millions more heard raves through social media and other word-of-mouth channels, both online and off. Microsoft saw deep engagement, mass reach, and enormous lifts in awareness, favorability, advocacy, purchase-intent and other brand metrics. In addition, there was 1.5 million hours

worldwide of engagement, and over 25 million unique Conversation Partners worldwide (16 million in U.S.) were reached. Over 400,000 in-home demonstrations of Windows 7 took place.

**Total Cost:** Rollout -

## ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR RECOGNITION

This campaign was breakthrough because of the immense amount of buzz built around Windows 7 through the Launch Parties. It also the first time that Microsoft had utilized a unique non-traditional marketing platform like House Party to connect with its brand advocates and also helped them to truly stand by their advertising message of "Windows 7 was my idea." For House Party, it was the largest event in the company's history. House Party conducts thousands of parties for brands every day in the United States. This was the first event where we conducted more than 40,000 parties globally.

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