



THE BETTER MAN
Through his new Web platform Betterific, Micha Weinblatt crowdsources a world of smart ideas.

It All Clicks

With Betterific, Micha Weinblatt is creating a community where you talk—and companies listen.

| By Jennifer Sergent | Photography by Greg Powers |

It happened when he was trying to make the bed one day. Micha Weinblatt thought: Wouldn't it be better if fitted bed sheets had length and width indicators, so they'd be easy to put on the mattress?

Thus was born the young DC entrepreneur's latest endeavor: A Web platform predicated on musings, innovations and dreams that begin with "Wouldn't it be better if. . ." Since Betterific went live this year, thousands of suggestions have been posted by visitors to the website that way, from the fantastical (Wouldn't it be better if Ewoks were real?) to the practical (if cereal bags were resealable?) to the highly detailed, directed at a specific brand or product (if Starbucks listed/sold the

song the store was playing in real time on its website, so when you're working [there], you can download it?) These posts are known as "betterifs" and they give voice to consumers who previously had no effective outlet to comment on brands where companies could see them—and respond. Essentially an interactive, digital suggestion box, Weinblatt also wants the website to provide a forum for ideas and products that don't yet exist; viewers can comment, or merely click up or down arrows, to express their yeas and nays.

"We really want the content to be compelling," Weinblatt says. People love to complain, but, he adds, "one of the cool things about Betterific is that the ideas are positive and actionable."

Weinblatt, 30, is already an expert at making ideas actionable. An entrepreneur since his days at the University of Maryland, where he began making

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witty T-shirts to sell in the dorms that eventually led to the launch of Crooked Monkey, a line of irreverently worded and designed shirts that are stocked at more than 500 retailers such as Nordstrom and Urban Outfitters and count celebs like Miley Cyrus and Ryan Seacrest as fans. His early success has been recognized: The World Economic Forum named him a young Global Shaper, and when he was 29, he joined the Sandbox Community, a worldwide group of under-30 thinkers and leaders.

Weinblatt sees Betterific as the next step in his ongoing entrepreneurial adventure. "There's a crossover between the wittiness of Crooked Monkey and the voice of Betterific," he says. People used to send him hundreds of emails with suggestions for new T-shirt phrases and designs. [But] "it wasn't crowdsourced. Now, you don't have to tell me; just post it [on Betterific]," he says.

Weinblatt, with partners Jonathan Schilit and Brad Cater, scored their first corporate collaborator in February, when Arby's posted its own page on the site, soliciting "betterifs" on its fast food, responding to questions, even asking customers to vote on a flavor for its new shake.

The ultimate goal, Weinblatt says, is to have Betterific streamed through company websites for product testing and consumer feedback. "Right now," he says, "we're building a community of innovators."