

Curbside Marketing: Blu Dot to Drop Free Chairs on Sidewalk and Track the Takers

BY MICHAEL CANNELL Thu Oct 29, 2009

Here's one for the annals of experimental marketing: On Wednesday and Thursday a white van carrying a stack of powder-coated [Real Good](#) chairs by [Blu Dot](#), a Minneapolis design firm started by three college friends, will patrol Manhattan neighborhoods dropping the chairs one-by-one on the street. No promotional material or sales pitch will accompany the drop-offs. The chairs will be free for the taking. But what the adoptive owners won't know is that Blu Dot will be watching them.



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When Dixon handed over his goods they vanished forever into the world. By contrast, Blu Dot will be tracking its chairs as avidly as air traffic controllers. A [video crew](#) stashed in the van--the design world's version of [Candid Camera](#)--will capture passersby as they circle and inspect. Each chair will be equipped with GPS, so as soon as they're claimed the Blu Dot crew can begin tracking their whereabouts. The location of each chair will be shown in real time on a [Web site](#). (It may also be projected on to the wall of the Soho store.) As if that weren't enough documentation, each chair will have its own [twitter feed](#) updating its movements.