

This Lent, give up products that are inferior to our product

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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I try not to get too worked up about the commercialization of church holidays. It seems inevitable in our culture, in which most people are at least nominally Christian yet the real national faith is capitalism. The Christmas shopping season is annoying and [the Easter candy aisles are dangerous](#), but it's futile to rail against things that are more symptom than illness.

It is pretty perplexing, however, when marketers try to capitalize on Lent. It'd be bad enough if they latched onto multiple aspects of the season, including the more positively defined ones we Protestants tend to emphasize: let our renewing facial cream invigorate you as you seek spiritual renewal! With these new walking shoes, you can walk with Jesus in comfort and style! Turn from sin on a dime in the best-handling car in its class!

Instead, the only keyphrase people come up with is "give up." Lent = the time you give stuff up. Just ask [Twitter](#), where yesterday people were giving up stuff—in earnest and in jest—left and right. And some marketers saw an opportunity:

Give up spreadsheet and in-house billing for lent and use [#Fusebill](#)'s 30-day free trial instead! <http://t.co/fcPo75Dyn3>

— Fusebill (@fusebill) [March 5, 2014](#)

If u really want to suffer for Lent, give up ur sense of taste for sweetness with gymnemic acid <http://t.co/htTf6p538l> [#punishment](#)

— Doc Ricky (@drricky) [March 5, 2014](#)

We're giving up overpriced vintage for [#lent](#)...join us and visit one of our [#affordable](#) vintage fairs this Spring <http://t.co/39RlZrVpmx>

— Judy's Vintage (@JudyVintageFair) [March 5, 2014](#)

That quick sample doesn't even include any of the many tweets advertising seafood/meatless entrees, or resources on Lent itself.

Then, [via Laura Stampler](#), there's the strange case of [@PretzelCrisps](#), which was cold-tweeting people who mentioned Lent on Twitter to tell them *not* to give up Pretzel Crisps—apparently some sort of pretzel-chip hybrid—for Lent:

The [@PretzelCrisps](#) account just tweeted me and beg that I not given up Pretzel Crisps for Lent. The hell is a pretzel crisp?

— Saeed Jones (@theferocity) [March 5, 2014](#)

The pretzel people [offered to send Jones a sample pack](#). Pretty bizarre: our snack is so tasty that you should really sacrifice something else instead. Even if Lent were entirely about sacrifice, this is a pretty crass way of looking at sacrifice.

But you know, no crasser—and no more consumption-obsessed—than a lot of the other crap turned up by [a Twitter search for "Lent."](#) Again, it's hard to blame individual marketers for the problem of our thoroughly commercialized culture.

In other news, if you were hoping not to give up Chipotle guacamole for Lent, you're in luck: [rumors of its demise were premature](#). Though I can't resist mentioning that if Chipotle does end up with an avocado shortage, they could always review my [three menu suggestions for using less meat](#) (which I'm sure they studied carefully back when I posted them). Two of the three—a cheaper veggie burrito with guacamole optional instead of included, and a smaller burrito option generally—would help here, too.