

# Viral Marketing -Analysis and its Implementation

Naveen G

MBA Financial Management, University of Madras, Chennai,  
Tamil Nadu, India

## Abstract—

**V**iral marketing has emerged as an important concept in India as in other parts of the developing and developed countries and has become a necessary tool for every organization. Although there is increasing popularity among viral marketing, factors influencing to such a new communication medium, remains largely unknown. Hotmail has become one of the first to exploit online viral marketing since its email service was launched in the late 1990s, when every outgoing email contained a short message at the bottom with a link for people to click and sign up. In 1996, Steve and Tim also took advantage of viral marketing as a new phenomenon to promote the adoption of Hotmail, a free web-based e-mail service provider, and viral marketing launched this e-mail system from zero to 12 million subscribers in only 18 months at very little cost (Shukla, 2010). Viral marketing has attained a large growth in popularity in last few years. This paper attempt to study the perception of the internet users on viral marketing and the role of social media on the growth of viral marketing Business firm have risen to occasion and have started responding to environmental challenge by practicing viral marketing strategies.

**Keywords—** cost, social network, marketing technique, internet and awareness.

## I. INTRODUCTION

On the Internet, viral marketing is any marketing technique that induces Web sites or users to pass on a marketing message to other sites or users, creating a potentially exponential growth in the message visibility and effect. One example of successful viral marketing is Hotmail, a company, now owned by Microsoft that promotes its service and its own advertisers, messages in every users e-mail notes.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To establish a theoretical framework for the topic/subject area. To define key terms, definitions and terminology. To identify studies, models, case studies etc supporting the topic. To define/establish the area of study. Hannah Diane Parker, Oxford May 2015“VIRAL MARKETING IN THENONPROFIT SECTOR: CRAFTING MESSAGES THAT CREATE AWARENESS AND CALL AN AUDIENCE TO ACTION”.

Viral Marketing in the Nonprofit Sector: Crafting Messages that Create Awareness and Call an Audience to Action (Under the direction of Dr. Hugh Sloan) the nonprofit (NPO) sector has seen immense growth in recent years. With this growth has come an increased need for any particular nonprofit to compete and differentiate itself from the vast number of other nonprofits also looking for clients, volunteers, and donors. Unfortunately, nonprofits often lack the resources needed to develop and execute a successful marketing campaign. The emergence of controlled viral marketing offers a number of possibilities for these NPOs looking to spread awareness and increase involvement. University of Amsterdam Amsterdam Business School Bram van Eck.“OPTIMAL VIRAL MARKETING IN THE FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS INDUSTRY”.

Viral marketing is a marketing tool growing in use. Many researchers have been done so far about different aspects of viral marketing. No academical research so far, to my knowledge, has shown how to use viral marketing optimally. In this research, the variables determining the optimal use are researched by examining the fast moving consumer goods industry. First, by reviewing literature from academical research as well as practice, eight variables are found that determine the optimal use in viral marketing. These eight variables already existed in literature, though scattered and defined differently through different literature.

## III. DEFINITION OF 'VIRAL MARKETING'

Internet advertising or marketing that spreads exponentially whenever a new user is added. Viral marketing assumes that as each new user starts using the service or product, the advertising will go to everyone with whom that user interacts.

## IV. MEANING OF VIRAL MARKETING

On the Internet, viral marketing is any marketing technique that induces Web sites or users to pass on a marketing message to other sites or users, creating a potentially exponential growth in the message's visibility and effect.

## V. KEY PRINCIPLES AND STRATAGIES OF VIRAL MARKETING

**Viral marketing is a form of promotion** based on the free circulation of ideas via a word of mouth process. When you like something, it feels second nature to share your discovery with someone you like. Be it friends, relatives or

colleagues, you get a kick out of sharing with someone else something cool that you have discovered. And in turn, those people you share something with, will do the same with their network of friends. That is what "going viral" is all about.

From a marketing standpoint, "going viral" is fascinating for a number of reasons:

- *Distribution:* Viral content spreads like virus, in an ever expanding loop which may never end. For an online marketer, spreading content endlessly from person to person represents a superior strategy to promote content at a fraction of the effort and costs required by traditional marketing techniques.
- *Reach:* A successful viral marketing campaign may exponentially increase the reach of your communications by placing you in touch with thousands of prospects which, with your traditional communication approach, you might not have ever intercepted.
- *Awareness:* The more people will see your content, the more people will know who you are, what you do, what can you offer customers. Not only: by sharing content on a specific topic you will make yourself an authority in that field and people will start naturally coming to you asking for advice and recommendations.
- *Cost:* Viral marketing is relatively inexpensive as you do not have to plan a huge budget to promote your products or start campaigns that meet the needs of all your potential customers. Once your content starts to go viral, your fans become your best marketing agents.

## **VI. TECHNIQUES IN VIRAL MARKETING**

Following are 7 highly effective viral marketing techniques that should be part of overall marketing strategy:

1. *Videos.* Upload an interesting, educational and/or entertaining video to YouTube, Metacafe and other video-share sites that captures the imagination of viewers, and anything is possible.
2. *Social Media.* Although Hotmail achieved viral marketing success before the advent of social media, it's hard to imagine a business having that same level of success today without participating in social media networks like face book, twitter, LinkedIn and others. Simply put, social media marketing, if executed properly, can put your more viral marketing efforts on steroids.
3. *Article Marketing.* Write articles and allow them to be syndicated, it's not out of the realm of possibility that one or more of articles could go viral – provided, of course, they are well-written, interesting, educational and/or entertaining, and offer good value. Articles in e-mail box all the time from friends and colleagues who think the content is something might be interested in reading. More often than not, they're right.
4. *Tweet Button.* The Tweet Button is pretty much everywhere these days. This useful widget allows users to post a tweet to their Twitter profile from any website. Here's how it works: Tweets posted using the Tweet Button are pre-populated with a shortened link to the webpage from which the message was sent (for example, users website). Users have the option of customizing the tweet's content before posting it. This is an excellent way to give visitors to user's site the ability to spread your content via Twitter.
5. *Share Widget.* Share widgets give the visitors the ability to easily share and bookmark the website through popular social network websites. Users can get a share widget from ShareThis.com.
6. *E-Books.* E-Books have long been one of the most effective methods of viral marketing because they're easy to produce and have the ability to reach a large audience. If the e-book contains content that is interesting, entertaining and/or educational, and offers good value, readers will enthusiastically pass it along to others.
7. *Newsletters.* Newsletters are not only an excellent way to keep the name of the business in front of the subscribers; it also has excellent viral potential. To take full advantage of this potential, at the end of the newsletter, always encourage readers to pass the newsletter along to others. Users should be surprised how many actually will – if users simply prompt them to do so. It can create a newsletter quickly, easily and inexpensively through services like ConstantContact.com and VerticalResponse.com.

## **VII. SOCIAL NETWORKS AND WORD OF MOUTH**

### *Viral Marketing to Specific Market Segments*

MySpace, Facebook, Second Life, YouTube, etc. These websites have rocketed to the top of the most visited website list in a very short time and continue to increase in popularity. The great advantage of social networks to marketing is their tendency to propagate information virally. But social networks are not for everybody, and must be handled with care. The bulk of users on those websites are teens and young adults. And they are web savvy. Trying to take advantage of them with regular marketing techniques will not work, and may even backfire with a negative backlash.

## **VIII. CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOCIAL SHARING MECHANISMS**

### *Strangers vs. Friends*

In social networks, most information sharing occurs between direct friends. On Facebook, consumers can also reach second-degree contacts with whom they have no direct connection through comments posted on their friends' timelines. When designing a social sharing mechanism, managers must decide whether it should be targeted at friends or second-degree contacts who may be strangers. Whether recommendations from direct friends are always more influential than recommendations from strangers is an open question. However, of the Facebook campaigns we observed in our study, only 7% were aimed at strangers.

#### *Push vs. Pull*

Social media users receive many recommendations without explicitly asking for them through, for example, unsolicited direct or broadcast “push” messages. Other social sharing mechanisms that rely on “pull” messages that consumers seek out — such as when a consumer actively searches for information about things his or her friends “like” on their profile pages — are rare in comparison. In traditional company-to-consumer communication, unsolicited messages are often referred to as spam, and their reduced effectiveness compared to solicited messages is well documented; in social sharing, the verdict on unsolicited messages is still out. Still, almost two-thirds (64%) of the Facebook campaigns we studied were willing to take the risk of relying on unsolicited messages pushed to consumers.

#### *No incentives vs. Incentives*

In 11% of the campaigns we studied, social recommendations came with an incentive to use the product. Incentives may be in the form of virtual or in-app goodies, coupons or rebates for physical products, or free premium services. Most of the time, incentives come at a cost to the company; however, whether incentives always provide a measurable benefit is unclear.

To investigate the effect of these four design decisions on the promotion of fun and useful products, we carried out an empirical study based on 751 Facebook apps from 22 product categories, including games, entertainment, business and money. In each category, our sample included the top 20 apps, as well as a random selection of remaining apps. To analyze success, we relied on daily information about the number of installations for each app, but we also replicated our results with alternative success measures, such as the number of daily active users. As part of our study, human raters looked at each app and manually coded information about its social media campaign, including information about app quality (in the form of number of fans and reviews) and whether the usefulness of the app increases if friends also use it.

### **IX. ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN VIRAL MARKETING**

As companies begin to realize the value of the Internet as a primary component of their communications platform, they are correspondingly beginning to leverage alternative marketing practices that are more cost-effective and more efficient at actively engaging with consumers, than traditional advertising channels. While the use of social media, guerilla tactics, and experiential campaigns are becoming more prevalent, best practices surrounding the strategic execution of these ever-evolving marketing tools and their incorporation into an integrated marketing communications (IMC) approach has not yet been robustly identified. The effective use of alternative marketing practices can be especially advantageous for smaller to medium sized firms in the consumer products and services industry, which oftentimes lack the resources that are necessary for employing traditional forms of advertising. When integrated through a social media platform, viral, guerilla, and events-based marketing are cost-effective promotional options that can also deliver measurable business results. When developed in accordance with a company’s overall strategic objectives, a smaller firm not only has the ability to communicate its message to its target audience, but also the ability to begin to cultivate meaningful relationships with its consumers.

### **X. ADVANTAGES**

The advantages of viral marketing service are high credibility, low costs, great reach, high efficiency and the opportunity to continuous promotion adjustments. The time and resources are easily available. Viral marketing uses the network effect of the Internet so that the marketing messages can be reached mass audience rapidly and effectively. It is an effective online form since word-of-mouth communication is also known as ‘buzz marketing’. Once a buzz is created, even there are some incentives that are value-added for the audiences, so that they are more willing to forward the message to the others. They contacted more and more people and the chain goes on.

### **XI. CONCLUSION**

Viral marketing has emerged as the electronic form of Word of mouth and involves passing on or referring news, information or entertainment to other individuals. WOM embraces all interpersonal communications and now also includes new media marketing communication channels such as the internet. It is vital to understand that viral marketing has developed as a result of advancements in digital technology and is regarded as a *critical electronic extension* of Word of communication, not a mere development of WOM .

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Nina Ghane<sup>1</sup> Hamid Reza Shokrizadeh<sup>2</sup> Maryam Omidvar<sup>3</sup> Hasan Kamyab<sup>3</sup>, European Journal of Business and Management Vol.6, No.34, 2014” Investigating the Effective Factors on Electronic Trade by Viral Marketing “.
- [2] IRJC International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research Vol.1 Issue 7, July 2012, VIVEK BAJPAI; DR. SANJAY PANDEY Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Commerce & Management, Dr. C. V. Raman University, Kargi Road, Kota, Bilaspur, C.G. “VIRAL MARKETING THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF FACEBOOK”.
- [3] Andreas M. Kaplan, Michael Heinlein ESCP Europe, 79 Avenue de la Re´publique, F-75011 Paris, France. “Two hearts in three-quarter time: How to waltz the social media/viral marketing dance”.

- [4] Bettina Lis, Johannes Gutenberg University, Germany Jonathan Schulz, Johannes Gutenberg University, Germany.” Determinants of Passing on Viral Messages Empirical Analysis of a Viral Marketing Campaign on Facebook”.
- [5] Dr K R Kumar<sup>1</sup>, Dr V P Thirulogasundaram<sup>2</sup> , R Murugesan International Journal of Science, Technology & Management www.ijstm.com Volume No.04, Issue No. 02, February 2015 “CUSTOMERS CLUTCH DECISIONS THROUGH WOM/ VIRAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION”.
- [6] Klaus Heine Technical University of Berlin, Germany. The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods Volume 8 Issue 2 2010. “Identification and Motivation of Participants for Luxury Consumer Surveys through Viral Participant Acquisition “.
- [7] Arnaud De Bruyn <sup>a</sup>, Gary L. Lilien <sup>b</sup> <sup>a</sup> ESSEC Business School, Avenue Bernard Hirsch, 95000 Cergy, France <sup>b</sup> The Pennsylvania State University, United States First received in February 6, 2005. “A multi-stage model of word-of-mouth influence through viral marketing”.