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Viral Marketing by social networking sites with reference to Whatsapp & Facebook

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Abstract

In this contemporary era, social media has created new environment for marketing where not only company advertise its product as well customer share his or her views about product with others. Marketers adopt various marketing strategies to conduct their business activities in profitable manner such as internet. The internet has become more and more important in today's technology addicted society. Consumers of today use the internet as a tool to communicate, do shopping and search for information. Hence, the internet has become a convenient way for organizations to reach out to consumers in an easy and cheap way, especially through the tool viral marketing. Newcomers to electronic markets are forced to accumulate customers as rapidly as possible. One strategy to fulfill this aim is so called viral marketing, which seems an appropriate term for describing the pattern in which Internet companies spread by making use of customer referrals. The aim of this article is to describe and explain common features of viral marketing strategies and to outline chances and risks associated with using Internet word-of-mouth in consumer settings.

Key words: Viral marketing, Word-of-mouth, social media, internet

Introduction

While the underlying principle of word-of-mouth marketing is well-established and acknowledged, the Internet fosters new marketing strategies, one of which is viral marketing.

Marketing of today is a science, where knowledge of consumer behavior is becoming more essential when it comes to reaching people, together with the ability to make your brand noticed among the masses of message. Meanwhile, knowledge of

marketing channels is even more complex, from the first rumors spreading to newspaper, radio and television. Even the newest channel of marketing, the internet, is evolving into new channels within itself. Among these internet channels we find new names and words like Facebook, Twitter, blogging and YouTube. These are all names of different social-communities or networks where people meet, exchange information and receive

marketed messages every day. Marketers now learn how to use new trends in marketing such as viral marketing also known as buzz marketing and word-of-mouth to mention some. Since people spend more time on the internet, they take time from traditional media like television, radio and newspaper, thus, changing marketers' probability to reach target groups or build campaigns. However, since the internet today is filled with different marketing campaigns trying to reach as many as possible, customers' behavior of reacting to marketing has changed. Through the community forums, where participants exchange information, customers have become more selective toward adverts since product comparison and brand awareness have increased thanks to the word-of-mouth. Viral marketing is of importance for brand awareness and to make the consumers aware of the product. This brand awareness is, together with brand image and brand association, the most essential part of brand equity, which relates to the advertising of a product or service. Without awareness of a brand, it will be hard for the customer to recognize and relate to the product or service and react to possible adverts.

Meaning of viral marketing

The short history of viral marketing is generally agreed to have been launched by Hotmail's tag line "Get your private, free e-mail from Hotmail" at <http://www.hotmail.com> (Helm, 2000, Porter & Golan, 2006) and the resulting successful widespread diffusion of Hotmail. This tag line, added automatically to every email sent from a Hotmail account, was passed on from existing

Hotmail users to the recipients of their email messages in the way that viruses spread, hence the term viral marketing. While for Welker, viral marketing is nothing more than "a new interpretation of the good old word-of-mouth-paradigm", the use of the Internet for spreading the message clearly is a new concept that would not have been possible without the widespread diffusion of information and communication technologies. For the purposes of this study we will consider viral marketing as a technique which utilizes the Internet to transmit and spread messages among individuals who will filter and forward the messages to their peers, who may be potentially interested in the message's content. The communication style used for transmission is usually informal. Messages are spread through different channels such as email, chat rooms and discussion forums. They may contain various types of content ranging from text and images, to MS PowerPoint files, Adobe's Flash animations and so on. Recently, users found an additional channel to distribute and share their video clips online via services like YouTube. One significant benefit of web-based viral channels when compared to other informal channels is that they often provide mechanisms for measuring the popularity and success of a campaign. For example, YouTube measures the number of times a clip was viewed and the viewers' ratings, while it allows qualitative feedback through the viewers' comments.

Objectives of the study:

1. To know the behavior of customer towards whatsapp marketing.
2. To understand the preference of use of whatsapp marketing by companies

Who Uses Viral Marketing?

Viral marketing is useful as a stand-alone marketing tool or as a part of a larger campaign that uses multiple kinds of marketing. It is especially attractive to smaller businesses or companies because viral marketing can be a cheaper alternative to traditional marketing efforts.

A new energy drink company, for example, could create an Internet video featuring a person who consumes the energy drink before performing a seemingly impossible bicycle jump. If the video is made to look real, it may encourage people who see it to share it with others. After the video receives enough views, the company could reveal its true purpose, convincing its viewers to seek out more information about the drink without ever using a traditional advertisement

Viral marketing is often used in conjunction with other methods of marketing, such as in the case of the Blair Witch Project. The viral aspect of the campaign generated buzz about the story long before the release of commercials, trailers, posters, and other forms of traditional marketing. This caused many people to already talk about the movie before it was officially announced to the public.

What Techniques Are Used in Viral Marketing?

The whole point of viral marketing is to get people talking about a product or company. If you're the marketing manager at a company and are responsible for creating a viral marketing campaign, there are some ideas that can help get your product out there and on everyone's mind:

Giveaways: These offer something exciting or fun. People love to talk about what they got for free and will tell others how to get it for themselves.

Videos: A video can offer a viewer a chance to engage in the product and experience it. It can be very fun and entertaining. The more memorable, funny, or shocking your video is, the more likely it is to go viral.

Social Media: It's pretty much impossible to engage in broad-scale viral marketing without using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or any other sources. These media allow people to easily share your message and greatly increase the likelihood that it will go viral.

Reinforcement: A one-time viral message can be quickly forgotten. However, having a series of viral messages will strengthen the effectiveness of campaign. Think about Progressive Insurance and their long-running ads with Flo, their spokesperson. The familiarity of the campaign keeps the message in consumers' minds. They may not have needed insurance the first time they saw the Progressive ad, but after seeing five or ten versions of the same message, they will remember Progressive when they need.

1. Facebook as a Viral Marketing Platform

Facebook has a massive number of active users who can easily and instantly like, comment and share. This makes it one of the most prominent platforms for viral marketing. Businesses all around the globe have exploited it to a greater degree to carry out their viral marketing campaigns and achieved their goals. Facebook has almost 550,000 apps and majority of them are used for business promotions. Though there are premium apps, there are a lot of apps which you can use for no cost. The great benefit of Facebook apps is that they are used for **viral marketing** campaigns and seen as an essential to be successful. And not only this, apps have been considered a necessary feature for fan engagement. They interest your fans and make them interactive with you and retain them for long

2. WhatsApp as a Viral Marketing Platform

In this web-based WhatsApp marketing tool which is used to send WhatsApp messages in multiple formats like audio, video, text, GPS Hotspot, Contact card to an infinite number of WhatsApp users.

According to the studies performed by Pew Research Center in 2015

Text messaging has been a crucial part of all successful marketing campaigns. For these years, businessmen have already been convinced of the situation that messaging really helps in getting connected to the users more effectively. Almost 50 billion messages are exchanged on a single day through WhatsApp every day offering an extensive user engaging experience much required

for a sustainable sales process. Due to usage of broadband and internet services, viral marketing increases at high level. Online and availability of social media presence is considered as an essential branding strategy in these days. In addition to it, as smart phone have become popular for instant messaging as compared to traditionally messaging. Mobile applications help users by connecting them to internet more accessed on mobile, notebook, computer or facilitating them by making convenient to use internet on their portable device. WhatsApp provides facilities to small scale business and local business at large extent.

Small Businesses and WhatsApp:

Social messaging services for mobile phones which is valuable application for marketer to send texting, images, audio and movies to contact people who find themselves in their own phones. Marketing having WhatsApp is usually an effective way to connect with your potential consumers and promote the online business. Local businesses can use WhatsApp like a communication tool to connect users in real-time. Messaging App enables marketers to do group targeting and also allows the creation of groups according to similar interests and start discussions with users of the group. This helps targeting clients with similar interests and demands. It also increases the chance of going viral thanks to the sharing of content by participants of the group amongst their contacts.

Local Businesses and WhatsApp:

A business or company that provides its services in a specific geographical area is called a Local business. Whatsapp helps the organizer to conduct business activities and boost up campaign performance and profits. This Application can also be a very helpful tool for customer support. Customer always prefer to phone contact rather than emails, letters .Marketer can solve customer problems or provide product or service information and advice through this medium. Since a large number of people use WhatsApp regularly, it is easier for marketers to approach their prospective clients.

In these days the users of whatsApp are increasingly at fast speed which creates favorable environment for companies. The response chart shows the interest of society in social media.

Benefits of Whatsapp marketing:

Instant Messaging:

It is as simple way that is known as instant messaging application which includes less effort to get the message across. Nowadays, marketers had used emails and social networks to communicate with their customers and this app is applicable in smart phones which is convenient for society.

Less cost:

Whatsapp Marketing has valuable for small businesses which aim is cutting costs at every step and adopt frugal practices. Whatsapp offer this campaigning platform to them to advertise the product at large scale.

Customer relationship:

In competition period, companies focused on customer relationship and brand awareness. These applications are enabled to access in Smartphone which helps company to make healthy relationship with customer through continue communication and Whatsapp offers 24/7 communication. Such as a valid example, in Kazakhstan a rumor had spread that 3 of its top banks are on the verge of bankruptcy and the situation was tensed with customers running around to withdraw money. Whatsapp came in real handy to inform their customers that all is fine. Such is the power of Whatsapp in spreading a message at the right time.

Brand Positioning:

By social media, company can get information about customer behavior and response towards product. This more personalized interaction helps marketer to judge the market environment and its positioning. For example: Home shop 18 used Whatsapp to change customer's perception about the brand as a TV shopping network.

Marketing communications:

Whatsapp can be used for a various marketing activities. It is the best way to visualize a product image, a video explaining the product features, discount coupons and festive offers. Whatsapp makes it easy to invite customer feedback and for grievance redressal. For example, the store managers of various brands like Cartier, Armani and Diesel are effectively using Whatsapp to communicate offers and promotions according to an article by Economic Times.

Immediately and sure benefits:

The harder a product could be quickly assessed as practical, interesting along with beneficial carries a significant influence on both the variety of users that could adopt it along with the number that could share the idea. Sharing idea in groups enhance the product publicity.

Example of the companies which use the whatsapp marketing:

- Colgate invited people to send their self images of their smile via WhatsApp, to a phone number displayed on the toothpaste pack. It became an instant hit as this was viral with the teenagers who are glued to WhatsApp during their free time.
- Absolute Vodka's South American advertising agency conduct campaign to celebrate the launch of their Limited Edition Absolute Unique collection. This marketing campaign effectively engaged and built buzz in the community.
- During the 2014 parliament elections in India, WhatsApp was aggressively used as a campaigning tool by few political parties. The impact was huge and effective, as the parties could deliver their message to public overnight at a low cost.
- Vishal Chinchankar, digital leader (India) agrees that WhatsApp is a viable call-to-action tool. "But to me, WhatsApp is not a 'medium' to push brand messaging on. It is just a response mechanism platform.
- Times of India's recent 'Great Indian Litterbug' campaign, created by content

portal 101India and digital agency MSL Digital used Whatsapp as a supplementary medium.

- Homeshop 18 used Whatsapp to change customer's perception about the brand as a TV shopping network.

6R's Characteristics of Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is an online tool which plants the seed of an idea, product or service which later on spreads virally through social networks.

The authors have intentionally chosen to use the word *seed*. In fact the terminology for beginning a viral marketing is also called *seeding*. Most people have the questions as where do we go to post our content? Who will follow us on this idea and how do we create the viral effect?

A seed idea which is a corollary to a "meme" has to have the 6 "R" characteristics which the authors call it the 6R

- **Replication ability:** It has to have an inherent quality of being able to copy itself and fast. Something on the lines of the latest fashion trends in the physical world, a seed idea has to become a rage online.
- **Reach:** This will address your million dollar question *how do I make people follow me?* There has to be an analysis the social platforms you are currently using and your strategy. Does a You Tube upload create more excitement or do you create a blog which receives rave

comments? The idea has to start spreading instantly.

- **Regular audience:** This is your own on-line popularity chart counter! How many of your friends, relatives and colleagues are a member of your social community online and how many of them like you enough to spread the message?
- **Resilience:** The idea has to have some type of resilience to be a continued discussion point. It cannot have a short life span. It has to tease, excite and provoke people to talk about it.
- **Reliance:** Since the whole concept of viral marketing is on the basis of social networks, we need to rely on the source and the seed idea. The originator has to have a reliability factor which encourages the people to move this idea forward.
- **Response:** Nothing makes an idea more popular than feedback. The more conversations and the more the arguments the better. At least there is enough interest created around the seed to grow it.

Conclusion

The study shows that social media is popular way which offer several ways to company for connecting their customers such as whatsapp and facebook that refers to mobile messaging .young age group frequently use this application and through this app company convey its message towards product easily and in interesting manner. it is new medium which allows a viral idea to spread among million of people at low cost. The

whatsapp is most used app which makes contact the customer every time and more efficient from traditional marketing tools.

Successful viral marketing depends on consumers perceiving value in the transmission and deeming it worthy of passing on to others without feeling as though they are being used in the process. It is a difficult balance, but on the bright side, let us faces it, people talk. The challenge for marketers is harnessing this natural will to communicate through an almost tailor-made tool, the Internet. It makes talking easier for customers, and its low-cost, minimal response time, and potential market impact make it attractive for businesses willing to put in the effort to create and implement thoughtful viral marketing designs and campaigns.

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