

Viral Marketing: A Brief Study of Pre-Established Methods and Models for Understanding the Various Implications on the Corporate Sector

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores how viral marketing plays a major role for the companies in the present scenario. This paper gives an insight into the various models to provide an overview into the mathematical aspect associated with viral marketing. At the end the implications of viral marketing on various different industries is discussed. This manuscript elucidates how organizations can design their viral marketing campaigns targeting different types of customers.

Keywords: Process of VMC, Social CTA, Social Profile Gathering, Viral Marketing, VMC Evaluation Framework

1. INTRODUCTION

Wilson (2000:1) describes viral marketing to be a strategy that encourages the individuals to pass on the viral campaign message to others that creates potential exponential influence of the message. It is explained to spread in the same way as the viruses as per Viral Marketing Online (2001). The only difference is that viral marketing uses digital media. Therefore, the concept refers to a message that spreads to other people because the first recipient liked it and chose to send the message on to others, using what some people prefer to call 'word-of-mouth' communication (Hendrix, 1999).

Viral marketing is a new cutting edge marketing strategy and form of real time interaction to attract customers that potentially allows a business to reach to the customers they would never be able to connect with otherwise. It is generally driven by the content of the message and the target audience that pass on the message without any expectation from the sender for any rewards or returns. The content of the message should be made self explanatory that people pass it on in their social network without any outside force and pressures. People forward the messages to their friends for being the first one who knew about something upcoming in the market. This shows that people pass on business

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oriented viral messages for their social image and reputation. The firms need to influence the recipients by not only persuading content of the message that serves their purpose but also adding some fun or of interest and benefit to their customer.

There are three major factors that determine the success of the viral marketing campaign. It says sending the right message to the right people in the right environment:

1. **Recipients:** The message is tailored keeping in view the recipient's age, interests and expectations from us;
2. **Message:** The message should be appealing to such an extent that it attracts the recipients to pass it on voluntarily and not being forced to do so;
3. **Environment:** It talks about the time and context of the launch of the advertisement message.

Viral marketing utilizes the internet search engines, blogs, etc to reach the target recipients based on three important principles:

1. **Social profile gathering:** It is an amazing new technique that uses the various potential email addresses to gather information like profession, relationship status, schools etc from their profiles on all social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and many more. This wealth of important data can empower the marketing efforts of businesses to maximize their success. It can prove to be a monster advantage over any competitive opponent;
2. **Proximity market analysis:** Proximity marketing is the distribution of the local advertising content to the users via wireless channels like mobile devices. Only people who subscribe to these services receive these notifications in that particular area of operation. NFC enabled smart phones and tablets are required to transmit this sort of content. So by all this data analysis we

can come out with most important agents and people that make our content go viral;

3. **Real-time key word density analysis:** This is very crucial as is used to help search engines discover your web page with its main focus. Without focus your Web pages will do poorly in search engines. It can be even said that keyword phrases should be the prime consideration.

By keeping the above disciplines in mind while designing a viral advertisement we can reach the targeted customers having a cost advantage through the usage of internet as the platform to get the potential results. The primary platform for message to go viral can be through the use of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter where people remain in close proximity with most important and active people in their social networks. It can be done very easily by creating fan pages on the Facebook where we get responses and likes for specific products and services.

The influence of word-of-mouth is efficient and very high due to the credibility and perceived reliability on the source of information than personal selling and other advertising channels widely used. The market leaders speak out voluntarily after they have personal experience of the product or service. It plays a vital role in information dissemination and influencing the consumer buying behavior for the diffusion of the newly introduced products. It helps the consumers to take risk for trying with the new products but no control on the opinion of buying or not buying the product. The consumer feels close to the product after reading the opinion of other people with a perception "just like me".

But there is one major risk involved which is the fact that if a negative WORD-OF-MOUTH spreads about our product /service, it affects the purchasing decision of the customers and spreads faster than the positive WOM. Hence it is imperative for a firm to control the judgments about their message and advertisements passed around so that they do not spread throughout

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