



Tap into the explosive traffic power of viral marketing

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Introduction

- Learn how to capitalise on the power of viral marketing
- See some of the most successful viral marketing messages of all time
- Discover different techniques you can profit from in your business
- Find out the do's and don'ts for creating a successful viral marketing campaign

Viral marketing explained

Thanks to the distribution and communications power of the internet, a new form of word-of-mouth marketing has emerged. It's called "Viral Marketing" and it has potentially explosive benefits on offer for businesses that tap into the power of it successfully. Like its name suggests, it creates a contagious wave of email forwarding between friends and colleagues.

It can drive thousands and even millions of visitors to your site in a 24 hour period if done correctly.

As a business owner or manager, you know the importance of "word of mouth" as a way of increasing your sales. Viral Marketing harnesses that power and increases it to the power of 10.

Viral marketing is where an interesting or entertaining message is passed from one person to many people.

And those many people pass it on to many others. And those many others pass it on to many others and so on. And before you know it, tens and hundreds of thousands of people have seen your message and viewed your site.

Here's an example...

When Hotmail started out they offered people free email addresses in exchange for adding a text message to the bottom of every email they sent. That message says "Get your private, free email at hotmail."

So – every time a Hotmail member sent an email to a non-Hotmail member that sales message was seen by them at the bottom of that email. Within months of starting their viral campaign, Hotmail got millions of subscribers as a result of this.

Here's another example ...

Remember the movie "Pay it Forward" with Helen Hunt and Kevin Spacey? It was the story of a little boy who was given a school project to come up with an idea that would make a difference in the world.

His idea was to do a massive favour for another person, with the rules being that it had to be something that really helped people. It also had to be something that they couldn't do for themselves. The next rule was that if he did a favour for that person, they would need to "pay it forward" to three other people.

The result was that a massive wave of good deeds started spreading across the community, all thanks to that one school project by a small boy.

The author of the book "Pay it Forward", from which the movie was made, has now developed the "Pay It Forward" Foundation, which uses that "pay it forward" concept in real life. She is using this viral marketing method to create a massive wave of people making a difference and it's working. Check out her site at www.payitforwardfoundation.org

How to run a successful viral marketing campaign

Different types of viral marketing campaigns

1. Inspirational powerpoints

Chances are you have received one or 100 from friends via email. You know the ones – a PowerPoint message with beautiful visuals, inspirational words and music.

People (women especially) love heartfelt, uplifting messages like these and will pass them on to at least one (if not dozens) of their friends.

If your business targets women from 18 – 40 and the nature of your product ties in with something inspirational, consider creating an inspirational PowerPoint or video.

2. FREE rebrandable e-books

Online information publishers often publish free eBooks that people can re-brand with their own name and details and forward to their clients and friends. These eBooks are designed to give interesting tips but also act as teasers to excite readers about finding out more about a \$50 or \$100 eBook they're selling on their website.

The people who rebrand the eBook can also include an affiliate link in their eBook. The importance of this is that if one of their customers or friends purchases the \$50 or \$100 eBook they get a commission on every sale.

Everybody wins. The person who re-brands your eBook gets valuable content they can add value to their customers with. It also gives them an opportunity to earn a commission on every referral they send your way. The people they send the eBook to get valuable ideas they can use. And of course, you increase your exposure on the internet, drive more traffic to your website and increase your sales.

3. Facebook, MySpace and other social bookmarking websites.

Facebook and similar sites exist thanks to the power of viral marketing. The minute you sign up you are asked to invite all your friends to join. With your permission, Facebook will send an email to all or select contacts in your Outlook address book. Because Facebook is about hanging out with your friends online most people do invite their



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Outlook contacts. That's an instant viral marketing wave with every new Facebook member. It's brilliant!

But the viral marketing doesn't stop there ...

Facebook members often send their friends videos, quizzes, cards and other bits-and-pieces. And when do the quizzes that they receive from other people they're often asked to send it on to 10 other friends before they can access the results of the quiz they've just done. The virus grows!

Here's an example of a "fun wall" posting which encourages subscribers to select some or all of their friends and pass the message on.

4. Taglines at the bottom of emails

Hotmail continue to use their members' emails as vehicles to promote their own or their advertisers' messages. Check it out below ...

You can do this too.

Create a "viral" email signature field - something that features a message or an offer that makes people want to pass it on.

It might simply be a message that encourages people to refer their friends in exchange for a special gift.

Or - it might be a free download of \$700 in profit boosting e-books to the first 100 people to visit your website.

5. Create a video and put it on Youtube

Youtube is the "poster child" for viral marketing. Get an interesting video on Youtube and you can have as many as 500,000 visits in 24 hours. Nothing else even compares with Youtube's viral power.

Have you heard about the "free hugs" guy who stands in Pitt Street Mall with a sign saying "free hugs"?

Well, a struggling band called "The Sick Puppies" decided to film the "free hugs" guy doing his thing and they put their music to the video and uploaded it to Youtube.

Within 24 hours the video had 500,000 visits and it featured on morning shows across the US and Australia too. Now it has received 50 times that amount in traffic.

So - that humble video reached an audience of many millions within 48 hours. With that, "The Sick Puppies" got a lot of airplay as well.

Check out the number of "views" in the screenshot below.

And then there's the parody of Tom Cruise's Scientology video. It appeared on Youtube and got picked up by talk shows and nobody knew who the Tom Cruise impersonator was. It turned out it was a clip from the Superhero Movie.

Submit all your videos to Youtube.com and you could be surprised by the traffic they get. Even if you only get 100

or so visitors that are generated from Youtube itself, that's 100 more than you had in the past!

Of course, only a small percentage of videos get massive traffic. But with the right concept and the right application anyone can hit viral marketing pay dirt. It doesn't need to be a big production. It just needs to be creative and funny or heartwarming!

6. Viral websites

Viral websites are sites that have something that is so interesting, so educational, so emotional or so funny that people feel compelled to tell their friends about it.

Here are some examples to give you some ideas ...

Go to 180ogotjunk.com and click on "junk genie" and you'll see an intriguing game designed to baffle users. In fact, it does such a great job of baffling users that it has attracted a lot of traffic for this rubbish removal business.

Here's something else that's interesting ...

The vitamin company Blackmores has come up with a humorous idea to promote its Executive Stress formula at <http://www.beatstress.com.au/email/stressreminder.asp?id=2>

7. Article syndication

You could write articles, feature them on your website, and at the bottom of that article give permission to other publishers to use your article on theirs. That way other webmasters can then use your article on their website where their visitors will see it. If their website visitors like what they see they can then click on the link at the bottom of your article and visit your site. This is an excellent way to get free traffic to your site.

You can expand on this further by posting your articles to article sites such as www.ezinearticles.com or submit your articles to article newsgroups such as articleannounce@groups.yahoo.com. There are literally thousands of sites and groups like these ones.

With a little effort you can find your articles on many hundreds (even thousands) of websites with each of those sites driving significant traffic your way.

8. Games

Featuring games on your site is a great way of creating a viral wave of interest. If it's the kind of game they like to play again and again they'll visit the site again quite often. More significantly though, if it's a really "cool" game they'll tell their friends about it and send a stack of website traffic your way.



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4 Keys to Viral Marketing Success

Your viral marketing message or device doesn't need to be funny although funny helps. Instead, it might be SUPER informative and offer so much value that potential customers are absolutely blown away by what you're giving away! So much so that they're keen to pass it on to their friends too so they can benefit.

1. Call to action

Wherever the viral message is displayed (whether it's in an email, in a video or on your site) ensure that you feature a call to action that encourages visitors to visit your site by giving them a reason to do that eg. For even more funny videos visit www.mywebsite.com.

After all, the point of the viral marketing message is to at the very least, generate traffic to your website.

2. Capture emails

Traffic by itself isn't very powerful if you don't capture the email addresses of the website visitors. So give visitors an incentive to leave their email address – either by featuring a facility where they can pass that viral message on to their friends or by offering them an inviting freebie by leaving their email details.

3. Think about your target audience

Think about your target audience, their age, their wants and needs and so on. What kind of message would entertain them and at the same time appeal to their needs? And – what kind of message is likely to be so impactful that people pass it on to everyone they know?

4. Explode your virus by capitalizing on existing viral marketing media

Step number 1 is obviously to share your viral marketing message with your customers and subscribers.

Next, spread the word by using social book marketing sites like MySpace, Facebook, StumbleUpon, Squidoo, and Friendster. These sites can be amazing for revving up your results.

A final word ... some of the most successful viral marketing campaigns of all time were very inexpensive to develop. Start with the most inexpensive and least time consuming efforts first.

Key Points Summarised

- Post videos on Youtube.com
- Test different viral messages in your email signature field eg. Free downloads for 100 people or refer a friend and get Y free, and so on. This is a very inexpensive way to start.
- Ensure your message is something that is of interest to your target market.
- Ensure that you have facilities to capture email addresses.
- Ensure your viral marketing message has a purpose. That it coincides with a promotion you're running.

Don't just do it as a pure traffic generation exercise.



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Action plan

| What | Why | Who | When |
|--|---|-------------------------|------|
| Be clear on the objective of your viral marketing campaign. Make sure that it is linked to a specific marketing campaign you are running | Ensure that there is a tangible \$\$ result and not just a brandawareness exercise | You | |
| Identify who your target audience is | Make sure your message hits the mark with the people who are likely to buy from you | You and your key people | |
| Spend some time browsing Youtube.com looking at the most popular videos and see what ideas you can generate | See what is working | You | |
| Brainstorm ideas on how to create a buzz with that target audience and pick the top five ideas | | You and your team | |
| Get costing for those ideas and start with the most inexpensive first | Get a feel for what works | Your key people | |
| Create and run your viral marketing campaign | Increase website traffic and sales | | |
| Ensure there are email capture or call to action devices on the website and on the viral marketing message | Maximise the number of leads generated | You and your team | |
| Measure results and adjust where necessary | Constant and neverending improvement | You and your team | |
| Ask your 10X Coach | Impartial advice on the best viral marketing approach to maximise your results | You and your 10x coach | |

See Also

- Web 2.0
- Attract Referrals