



on: VIRAL MARKETING

In today's world, consumers have built a wall around themselves that resists traditional marketing. That's why we need to stop marketing AT people, and start creating a world where consumers can market to one another. A product or service with a message that moves, grows, and infects everyone it touches becomes a virus.

Not only is this white paper and its online version about viral marketing, but it's striving to become a virus! If this paper changes your mind about marketing and the transfer of ideas, maybe you'll share it with a friend. Or with two. Or with your entire company. If that happens, this white paper becomes viral and I'll look like a guy who knows his stuff. People are gonna contact me to help make their company's message a virus. Yes! We will have successfully launched a viral campaign. Marketing that encourages the exchange of a message or idea between people that serves to promote a service or brand. It encourages the recipient of the idea to also spread the concept to other participants.

Word of mouse beats word of mouth. Word of mouth tends to spread more slowly and dies off because the number of people involved is smaller. It doesn't take many people who don't participate for each generation to be smaller than the one before it. Today, we have dramatically more friends and more friends of friends, and we connect with them faster and more frequently than ever before. Today I got an email from someone who is married to some goober I went to Scout camp with 20 years ago who got my email address from a friend of a friend. Next week he'll probably be including me in his list of buddies when sending around some cool new interactive or entertaining promo on the Internet.

It's hard for me to imagine this person contacting me if he had to bang on my door or if he had to pick up a phone and call me. But the moment any of us connects to the Internet, we all connect to each other. And those connections make ideas travel. Fast.

Viral campaigns take on several forms. A survey or questionnaire. A competition or promotion with an incentive. A humorous creative execution or an interactive game or test. They all have many of the same elements:

- They offer an online experience that stands out from the norm, offering benefits to users.
- They include a mechanism that enables the idea to spread to other participants ("send to a friend").
- The target audience has a perceived interest in the message. You look to them

to spread the virus (often referred to as a "sneezer").

- The consumer is a friend among friends of a community with the same shared interest (often referred to as a "hive").

There's a right way and a wrong way to create a viral campaign. More importantly, the care and feeding of your virus can dramatically affect its ability to spread. One of the key elements in launching such a campaign is creating a powerful message. As hot as this new medium is, you still need to let the professionals create the ideas. Focusing obsessively on a core target audience and its wants and needs still applies. Determining what makes your product unique and communicating it creatively will always reign supreme in ALL marketing. Whether you're creating a flyer for lawn services or unleashing a viral message for a Fortune 500 company, the creative needs to be hot, topical and easy to spread.

*Let your
customers spread
your message.
It's much cheaper.*

