Challenges & Opportunities of Viral Marketing in India

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ABSTRACT

Viral Marketing is a marketing technique that uses pre-existing social networking services & other technologies to produce increases in brand awareness or to achieve other marketing objectives (such as product sales or marketing buzz) through self-replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of viruses or computer viruses. It can be delivered by word of mouth or enhanced by the network effects of the Internet & mobile networks. The ultimate goal of marketers interested in creating successful viral marketing programs is to create viral messages that appeal to individuals with high social networking potential (SNP) and that have a high probability of being presented and spread by these individuals and their competitors in their communications with others in a short period of time. The ultimate goal of marketers interested in creating successful viral marketing programs is to create viral messages that appeal to individuals with high social networking potential (SNP) and that have a high probability of being presented and spread by these individuals and their competitors in their communications with others in a short period of time. The term "viral marketing" has also been used pejoratively to refer to stealth marketing campaigns—marketing strategies that advertise a product to people without them knowing they are being marketed to. With the growth & evolution of the Internet, electronic peer-to-peer referrals have become an important phenomenon, & marketers have tried to exploit their potential through viral marketing campaign. Word-of-mouth publicity is a centuries-old marketing technique. Technology makes the spread of product knowledge from one person to another faster & more efficient. This paper only discuss over view of Viral marketing how it helps to aware of product & Services.

Key Words: Viral, Marketing, Word of mouth (WOM), Online Marketing, Social Networking Sites (SNS)Internet& Mobile Networks etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Viral marketing refers to an intense, online form of word-of-mouth sharing, almost always in an online community where it's possible for one person to share a piece of digital media with many people. That high pass-on rate, coupled with a high entertainment or interest value, results in exponential growth

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II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Study the Viral Marketing
2. To analyse the Opportunities & Challenges of Viral Marketing
3. To know the Elements of Viral marketing
4. To suggest some methods of viral Marketing

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive in nature. The study is based on secondary data which has been taken from case studies, books, journals, newspapers and online databases and websites Viral Marketing.

Concept of Viral Marketing

The emergence of "viral marketing", as an approach to advertisement, has been tied to the popularization of the notion that ideas spread like viruses. The field that developed around this notion, memetics, peaked in popularity in the 1990s.[7] As this then began to influence marketing gurus, it took on a life of its own in that new context.

The term viral strategy was first used in marketing in 1995, in a pre-digital marketing era, by a strategy team at Chiat/Day advertising in LA (now TBWA LA) for the launch of the first Playstation for Sony Computer Entertainment. Born from a need to combat huge target cynicism the insight was that people reject things pushed at them but seek out things that elude them. Chiat/Day created a 'stealth' campaign to go after influencers/opinion leaders, using street teams for the first time in br& marketing & layered an intricate omni-channel web of info & intrigue. Insiders picked up on it & spread the word. Within 6 months PlayStation was number one in its category—Sony's most successful launch in history.

There is debate on the origination & the popularization of the specific term *viral marketing*, though some of the earliest uses of the current term are attributed to the Harvard Business School graduate Tim Draper & faculty member Jeffrey Rayport. The term was later popularized by Rayport in the 1996 *Fast Company* article "The Virus of Marketing",[8] & Tim Draper & Steve Jurvetson of the venture capital firm Draper Fisher Jurvetson in 1997 to describe Hotmail's practice of appending advertising to outgoing mail from their users.[9] An earlier attestation of the term is found in *PC User* magazine in 1989, but with a somewhat differing meaning.

Bob Gerstley was among the first to write about algorithms designed to identify people with high "social networking potential."[13] Gerstley employed SNP algorithms in quantitative marketing research. In 2004, the concept of the *alpha user* was coined to indicate that it had now become possible to identify the focal members of any viral campaign, the "hubs" who were most influential. Alpha users could be targeted for advertising purposes most accurately in mobile phone networks, due to their personal nature.

III. CHALLENGES FACED IN VIRAL MARKETING

1.   On one hand Viral Marketing is a very effective way to make any brand or business popular but on the other and it very hard to apply viral marketing strategies.
2.   Plan: We can't say surely that our viral strategy will work or plan will goingviral. It's incredibly difficult to actually '*Plan*' a viral marketing campaign.
3.   Crowd: most of the time it is just impossible to predict what 'the crowd' like and will spread automatically.
4.   Low Penetration of Internet Access: A low penetration of Internet access in some sectors greatly reduces the potential for viral marketing. Viral Marketing talks about only spreading the message to potential consumers through online means but spreading the message is does not benefit the firm.
5.   Short term Success: Viral Marketing focuses more on short term success rather than building differentiation to gain long term advantage.
6.   Promote of Product very tough by using viral marketing: If you wanna viral your product or wanna get promote by people, then you should make people feel like they are part of something, rather than being used for promotion. And this is really very tough thing. We can't force anyone. Never forget that you:

IV. OPPRTUNITIES IN VIRAL MARKETING - HOW HOTMAIL BECAME HOT

The term "Viral Marketing", probably don"t get a warm and fuzzy feeling inside. unless know the history of how it began and the incredible story of what it"s become. For internet marketers and business owners alike, viral marketing has not only woven its way into the advertising and marketing culture of modern-day success stories, but it is quickly becoming as necessary as billboards, newsletters and direct mail campaigns were just a decade ago. In fact, some may argue, it has already surpassed these archaic forms of marketing and is now the single most cost-effective, reliable and strategic way to share information while gaining customers. This technologically-driven marketing approach get its start One word - Hotmail, the first among free web-based email service providers, viral marketing has taken on a life of its own. When Hotmail first began, they decided that the best way to entire new customers would be to reach the friends, family and colleagues of each user. So, in the footer of each and every email that was sent from a Hotmail account, the Hotmail team placed a link that read something .Believe it or not, this strategy went, as we know call it, viral. Hundreds of thousands of users hurriedly signed up for their free email accounts.

The Hotmail model is the foundation for the viral marketing we are familiar with today. From Facebook, to Twitter, to YouTube and LinkedIn, viral marketing takes many shapes and forms. It can vary in approach and evolve within each format, but the bottom line is to share information and do so on a large-scale – for free. Rather than spend thousands on expensive advertising campaigns, businesses (both large and small) have come to recognize viral marketing as a cost-effective way to not only get their message across, but to increase sales and improve business overall. Its truly is a phenomenon that continues to gain momentum. And the more businesses that recognize viral marketing as an

acceptable and reliable form of marketing, the more intriguing this approach becomes.Because more and more people and businesses are joining the conversation. More and more we are seeing the positive effects of viral marketing and it doesn"t seem to be slowing down any time soon.

Viral Marketing Using through Technology Based
It caters to larger audience through world wide web and emails.

It uses existing communication among friends and other associations to spread the message. Helps to build the reputation of the firm fast through increased sales and online promotions. Customizing the message based on use Preference and local interest is also possible in viral marketing through data mining techniques.

V. ELEMENTS OF A VIRAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

1. Gives Away Valuable Products or Services

"Free" is the most powerful word in a marketer's vocabulary. Most viral marketing programs give away valuable products or services to attract attention. Free email services, free information, free "cool" buttons, free software programs that perform powerful functions but not as much as you get in the "pro" version. Wilson's Second Law of Web Marketing is "The Law of Giving and Selling". "Cheap" or "inexpensive" may generate a wave of interest, but "free" will usually do it much faster. Viral marketers practice delayed gratification. They may not profit today, or tomorrow, but if they can generate a groundswell of interest from something free, they know they will profit "soon and for the rest of their lives" (with apologies to "Casablanca"). Patience, my friends. Free attracts eyeballs. Eyeballs then see other desirable things that you are selling, and, presto! you earn money. Eyeballs bring valuable email addresses, advertising revenue, and ecommerce sales opportunities. Give away something, sell something.

2. Provides for Effortless Transfer to Others

Public health nurses offer sage advice at flu season: Stay away from people who cough, wash your hands often, and don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Viruses only spread when they're easy to transmit. The medium that carries your marketing message must be easy to transfer and replicate: email, website, graphic, software download. Viral marketing works famously on the Internet because instant communication is easy and inexpensive. The digital format makes copying simple. From a marketing standpoint, you must simplify your marketing message so it can be transmitted easily and without degradation. Short is better. The classic is: "Get your private, free email at http://www.hotmail.com." The message is compelling, compressed, and copied at the bottom of every free email message.

3. Scales Easily from Small to Very Large

To spread like wildfire, the transmission method must be rapidly scalable from small to very large. The weakness of the Hotmail model is that a free email service requires its own mail servers to transmit the message. If the strategy is wildly successful, mail servers must be added very quickly or the rapid growth will bog down and die. If the virus multiplies only to kill the host before spreading, nothing is accomplished. So long as you have planned ahead of time how you can add mail servers rapidly you're okay. You must build in scalability to your viral model.

4. Exploits Common Motivations and Behaviors

Clever viral marketing plans take advantage of common human motivations. What proliferated "Netscape Now" buttons in the early days of the web? The desire to be cool. Greed drives people. So does the hunger to be popular, loved, and understood. The resulting urge to communicate produces millions of websites and billions of email messages. Design a marketing strategy that builds on common motivations and behaviors for its transmission, and you have a winner.

5. Utilizes Existing Communication Networks

Most people are social. Nerdy, basement-dwelling computer science graduate students are the exception. Social scientists tell us that each person has a network of 8 to 12 people in his or her network of friends, family, and associates. A person's broader network may consist of scores, hundreds, or thousands of people, depending upon his or her position in society. A waitress, for example, may communicate regularly with hundreds of customers in a given week. Network marketers have long understood the power of these human networks, both the strong, close networks as well as the weaker networked relationships. People on the Internet develop networks of relationships, too. They collect email addresses and favorite website URLs. Affiliate programs exploit such networks, as do permission email lists. Learn to place your message into existing communications between people, and you rapidly multiply its dispersion.

6. Takes Advantage of Others' Resources

The most creative viral marketing plans use others' resources to get the word out. Affiliate programs, for example, place text or graphic links on others' websites. Authors who give away free articles, seek to position their articles on others' webpages. A news release can be picked up by hundreds of periodicals and form the basis of articles seen by

hundreds of thousands of readers. Now someone else's newsprint or webpage is relaying your marketing message. Someone else's resources are depleted rather than your own.

VI. METHODS OF ALTERNATIVE OF VIRAL MARKETING

According to marketing professors Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, to make viral marketing work, three basic criteria must be met, giving the right message to the right messengers in the right environment.

1.   Messenger: Three specific types of messengers are required to ensure the transformation of an ordinary message into a viral one: market mavens, social hubs, and sales people. Market mavens are individuals who are continuously „on the pulse" of things (information specialists); they are usually among the first to get exposed to the message and who transmit it to their immediate social network. Social hubs are people with an exceptionally large number of social connections; they often know hundreds of different people and have the ability to serve as connectors or bridges between different subcultures. Salespeople might be needed who receive the message from the market maven, amplify it by making it more relevant and persuasive, and then transmit it to the social hub for further distribution. Market mavens may not be particularly convincing in transmitting the information.

2.   Message: Only messages that are both memorable and sufficiently interesting to be passed on to others have the potential to spur a viral marketing phenomenon. Making a message more memorable and interesting or simply more infectious, is often not a matter of major changes but minor adjustments.

3.   Environment: The environment is curcial in the rise of successful viral marketing – small changes in the environment lead to huge results, and people are much more sensitive to environment. The timing and context of the campaign launch must be right.

The ultimate goal of marketers interested in creating successful viral marketing programs is to creative viral messages that appeal to individuals with high social networking potential (SNP) and that have a high probability of being presented and spread by these individuals and their competitors in their communications with others in a short period of time. The term "VRL marketing" has also been used pejoratively to refer to stealth marketing campaigns-the unscrupulous use of astroturfing online combined with under market advertising in shopping centers to create the impression of spontaneous word of mouth enthusiasm.

Viral Marketing powerfully compounds the benefits of a first-mover advantage. In its first one and half years, hotmail web power over 12 million subscribers, which was sharply high in comparison to any other traditional forms of media. Internet is the largest email provider in Sweden and India despite the fact that they have done no marketing of any these countries. Amazon encourages its customers to send a book as a gift to a friend. When the recipient receives the gift book, the packaging contains a flyer for the amazon.com service. Similarly, whenever someone iship.com to send a package, the recipient will learn about how iship.com can save money on his or her shipping needs. There are million of examples of the websites deploying viral marketing as their core . Some of the notable examples of viral marketing some of these are Blog. Worm, ilovebees.com – BMW"s Cooper r50 robot campaign, Burger King"s The Subservient Chicken and Cop Roq, Carlton Draught: Big Ad campaign Ford Motor Company"s Evil Twin campaign, Giantology.net – viral marketing for Shadow of the Colossus, mail promoted largely by links at the bottoms of emails sent by its users, viral marketing example, Jamie Kane sponsored online game , Microsoft"s XBOX 360 campaign called Our Colony, Ravenstoke Alaska - viral marketing for Lynx deodorant, Orkut.com a networking site.

Viral Marketing captures the essence of multi-level-marketing and applies it to all the customers through word- of-mouth and acting as fastest means of transference in comparison to any other formal means of communication in social network. Viral marketing can be creatively applied through a variety of products, such as web-hosted e-books, calendars, list servers and the concerns. In all of these viral business, the balance between customer value provided by the network and the concerns surrounding privacy is a critical issue which has to be with sensitively otherwise it would be major failure for the firms involved in viral marketing.

VII. MARKETER'S MOTIVATION FOR VIRAL MARKETING

Good viral marketing campaign focuses on profile hosts and tie to their high-frequency social interactions. It enhances most effective when it taps into the breadth of its customers social connections to others. Viral marketing strategy has wide applicability in e-commerce, groupware, community, messaging promotions businesses. The strategy helps to minimize the friction of market entry of new business houses and proliferation with an eye brands building, brand loyalty among the switchers. If the service is trying to blatantly monetize its subscriber base way imaginable, new users will be reluctant to spread the word.

Through the use of the Internet and the effects of e-mail advertising, the business-to-consumer has a greater impact than many other tools of marketing. Viral marketing is a technique that avoids the advance of spam mail. It encourages

users of a specific product or service to tell about it in their social network most successful perspectives found to achieve this customer base is through the integrated marketing communication between website holsters and the customer accessing the message

VIII. MODES OF VIRAL MARKETING

- ➢ Word of Web
- ➢ Instant Messaging Services
- ➢ online Games
- ➢ Advertising the contest

IX. STRATEGIES FOR VIRAL MARKETING

1. Disguise The Brand Message

   Sell
   Serve
   Speak
   Save
   Sizzle
2. Offer an Incentive
3. Customize the Content
4. Track and Generate Feedback of Customers

CONCLUSION

So finally, the internet makes it possible for a campaign to go viral very fast. These are the challenges, opportunities and threats viral marketing in online shopping The internet and in particular social media technologies to not make a brand viral, they just enable people to tell other people faster. The internet can, so to speak, make a brand famous overnight. Viral Marketing subsumes Internet-based stealth marketing campaigns, including the use of blogs, seemingly amateur web sites, and other forms of highly attractive campaigns which are designed to create word of mouth for a new product or service. Often the goal of Viral Marketing Campaigns is to generate media coverage via unusual stores worth many times more than the campaigning company's advertising budget. Globalization continues to expand the universe of the trendsetter and make viral marketing more exportable the border for the promotion of products and services. Advancement in mobile telephony, PC Networking communication bandwidth would open more forums and avenues for the marketers doing viral marketing.

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