



Marketing Messages

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Vital viral marketing tips for fun and profit

While just 5 years old, Youtube has in a short time, changed the way we communicate and share information as global citizens. Acquired by Google in 2006, Youtube quickly has become THE vehicle for sharing online video with mass audiences. It has also quickly become a major social media tool for viral advertising messages; essentially content created with the intent that consumers will share it with others and help spread the message. This 'consumer to consumer' model rather than 'business to consumer' is a key to the success of social media.

You're likely familiar with some of the most widely viewed shared viral spots: Dove's 'Evolution', one of the first truly viral campaigns featuring the girl next door turning into a fashion beauty through makeup and photo retouching. Launched in 2006, it has garnered over 11 million views. You may have been one of the 25 million who viewed the Evian 'Roller Babies', featuring digitally manipulated roller skating infants. While most online commercials were created for TV and then garnered a second life online, the Evian spot was created exclusively for online sharing. Make no mistake, the costs they saved in a TV media buy were easily exceeded in the production of the spot, but it is one of the first commercials created for online that, due to its success, is now being aired on TV. We could go on: 'Charlie bit my finger' a piece of home movie featuring two British toddlers, now at 299 million views; Susan Boyle, the frumpy singing sensation on Britain's Got Talent, now at 95 million views. It becomes quickly evident that pieces that are shared by email, Twitter, Facebook, or linked to and blogged about have a number of things in common. For those who would like to use social media, and Youtube in particular, as a marketing driver, here is a list of 5 things you should consider to increase the likelihood of your video going viral.

1. **Humour works.** Let's face it, there's enough disaster and drama in the world. If we can view something that brightens our day, and better yet, share it with other, the chances are good that we will.
2. **Stir emotions.** If you can't make them laugh, then make them cry. Or at least tear up long enough to feel compelled to share it with others who need a good emotional outburst. Women love to share online content with other women. Emotional content can be a major touch point.
3. **Keep it short.** Although your online video needn't be limited to the traditional 30 second or one minute commercial length, many successful videos are, simply because that is the medium they were originally created for. This has programmed us as to what we will sit through before seeking the next bit of entertainment. Call it the plague of a severely attention deficit disordered generation.
4. **Headlines matter.** Make your title catchy. The sound bite generation wants entertainment to grab their attention. A play-on-words, a sensationalized promise, or anything that begs "I have to see this" response is what you're after.
5. **Keep it simple.** One single and simple message will create maximum impact.

Finally, understand that parodies can be both good and bad. If you can create your own parody of a well-known spot to somehow profile your own brand, you can springboard off the popularity of the original. Specsavers in the UK did a very successful parody of an Axe ad for men's' deodorant featuring bikini-clad women flocking to a guy spraying himself with Axe on the beach. Only when he dons some cheesy glasses and sees the ultimate male fantasy unfolding before him, is he revealed as the geek who should have visited Specsavers. If you somehow become the object of a parody, make sure you have people monitoring the online world, and respond selectively if at all. The way you handle this public relations challenge will be critical. Motrin learned this the hard way with their ad aimed at Mom's with backaches that carry their children in baby slings.

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