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Viral Marketing – Is It A Mirage or Reality?

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ABSTRACT

The goal of Viral Marketing programs is to identify people who can contribute to sales via quality social networking potential. The aim is to generate viral or easy to understand and replicate messages that appeal to the common man and generate a dedicated marketing environment. Extensive social networking helps to increase the probability of the product or service remaining within the community for a longer time. Viral marketing is a stealth marketing campaign that uses unscrupulous means of under-market advertising to generate an impression that the word of mouth enthusiasm actually springs from use of the product or service. With the help of Viral marketing, company can create brand awareness for their products or services among existing as well as potential customers. It is to be regarded as one of the most effective ways to attract customers with economy in time and cost.

Keywords : Viral Marketing, email, Social network

Introduction:

The concept of viral marketing has been doing round of late. Though it is to be considered as an advancement of “word-of-mouth” advertising which has been old-age way to promote brand or product of the company. In case of word-of-mouth advertising, influencers to generate peer to peer product recommendations or buzz. Prior to the advent of the Internet, however, this form of marketing was too disjointed to effectively benefit most advertisers. With the advancement in technology, marketing are growing techno-savvy. They found a new mantra to influence large number of prospective customers using social networking and other websites in almost no time. The effect of word-of-mouth was largely contained to specific geographic areas simply due to the lack of widespread social networks. Word of-mouth was generally limited by the ability of the influencer to physically speak to another prospective customer; hence the term “word-of-mouth”. It is interesting to note down over here that the internet has radically changed the concept of word-of-mouth, so much so that the term “viral marketing” was coined by venture capitalist Steve Jurvetson in 1997. The term was used to describe Hotmail’s email practice of appending advertising for themselves to outgoing mail from their users.

Conceptual Framework:

The term Viral Marketing means different things to different people, but essentially, viral marketing is the promotion of a business through “self-replicating” ideas, slogans and images. viral marketing comes from out-of-the-box thinking on how to use “contagious” ad campaigns to catapult a business or product into the public eye. It could also be defined as marketing techniques that seek to exploit pre-existing social networks to produce exponential increases in brand awareness, through viral processes similar to the spread of an epidemic. It is word-of-mouth delivered and enhanced online; it harnesses the network effect of the Internet and can be very useful in reaching a large number of people rapidly. Almost any business can benefit from using viral marketing techniques, but there are some kinds of businesses that may have a bigger interest in adopting these kinds of strategies through social networking, public event sponsorship, or just a lot of creative branding in mass media. Businesses with a narrow or defined target audience might have a better chance of generating the kinds of viral marketing ideas that will catch on like wild fire among their most probable customers. Businesses with a little-known product can get a lot more recognition for their nifty wares with a well-placed viral marketing campaign.

Advantages:

It is quite correct to state that viral marketing has become a very trendy way to promote brand, product or services of the company or organization. If the companies use it appropriately, viral marketing has to offer number of advantages which will certainly help them widening their margin of profit. Some of the important advantages are:

1. Mass Coverage

It is undoubtedly covers large number of customer across the world. It caters to larger audience through World Wide Web and emails. Numbers of people who are using internet across the world are increasing by leaps and bound. Viral marketing practices which use internet as the communication media can be accessed by large amount of people worldwide and it can be seen as an advantage over traditional advertising media.

2. Cost Effectiveness

Creating, updating and maintaining websites of the organization can no longer be considered an expensive affair. In fact, it is considered to be a cost effective advertising method when compared to traditional advertising modes. Posting a blog post or sending email potential customers does not cost as much cost of advertising in Television.

3. Speed Is The Name Of The Game

Traditional media may take considerable time to promote our product or service. Viral marketing is one of the fastest ways to reach the target group of customers. It also helps the company to build the reputation of the firm fast through increased sales and online promotions. The Viral marketing tool is the ideal tool to take your voice to the people in no time.

4. Sales Escalation

If you have enormous traffic, your chance of striking a sale is high. The more people browsing your products, the more sales you will have. Plus, a lot of people these days buy only from websites that are directly referred to them by families and friends. So if your website happens to be mentioned in a tightly knit community, all of the people who belong there are much more likely to buy from you than from your competition.

5. Value Addition

Viral marketing can virtually make the organization popular overnight through website. It is going to create brand value to the company. More customers can be allured to product or

services without incurring huge cost. These days, it is quite fashionable to put video or three dimensional images on the company's website which can give real feel the customers who access the websites of the company. These users further pass on the strong message to their friends and relatives which will resultantly add the value to the name of the company.

Strategies To Use Viral Marketing Writing Articles

Company should allow people to reprint articles on their web site, in their e- newsletter, magazine or e-books. Organization which can include resource box and the option for article reprints at the bottom of each article will get maximum benefits. Company uses Viral Marketing should ensure that the link in resource box is live so that all people that use company's article will link back to the site.

Creating Affiliate Program

It is most prudent exercise which company can use. Affiliating programs provide a financial incentive for other sites to link to company's website. Needless to say, as the number of affiliates increases, so do the visitors and sales for the company.

Using Viral Software

Offering a free download of a script, e-book, calendar, etc is an effective method for gaining of new subscribers. Company can also market their product by including logo or marketing message with an option to download the contents.

Create An e-Course

Giving our visitor numerous chances to respond to our offer by creating an email course or courses, will be one of the wise moves company can take. Company can accomplish this by writing a series of small articles outlining the benefits of the product, and then distribute them automatically over several days or weeks with an auto responder. This can be set up automatically for the product or services which company is promoting.

RSS Feeds

This is a relatively new Viral Marketing method. RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication". It was originally used by news organizations to syndicate their news stories. RSS Feeds are now used to automatically distribute content to blogs. They can also be used to distribute articles to web site owners throughout the web.

Uploading Live Images/Pictures

An interesting video can also be a powerful Viral Marketing method. An organization should make it interesting and enjoyable enough to catch the attention of viewers easily. If video which is promoting company's website or product is attention-grabbing and appealing, company can expect others to talk about it, which will end up leading others to become interested in viewing site – this simply means additional traffic for your site.

Conclusion:

The proliferation of marketing and advertising, coupled with the onslaught of millions of media channels in today's world, has given cause for consumers to tune out and effectively avoid a great deal of traditional supplier driven messaging. The creation of technologies such as satellite radio and Internet ad blocking software are driving a fundamental shift in the way the public consumes media and the advertising often tied to it. Television ads, radio spots, online ads and even emails are facing increasing competition for effectively capturing the viewer's attention and provide positive ROI for the marketer. Viral Marketing, like all marketing is hit or miss. However, Viral Marketing by nature is often more risky or controversial than traditional marketing. If done improperly viral marketing can backfire and create negative buzz.

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