



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Management**

**VIRAL MARKETING – A MODERN BUZZ USED BY INDIAN COMPANIES IN THIS 21ST CENTURY**

**KEY WORDS:** Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction, Viral Marketing.

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**ABSTRACT**

Viral Marketing is predominantly used to generate traffic through videos, text messages, Blogs, Community and Social Media Platforms. Hence in this 21st Century, companies are using a combination of Conventional Media like TV Commercials, Radio FM and Print Media. The Modern Media is through Social Media Platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube and Tweeter to name a few. Hence they are able to provide adequate information about product and services. This study explores how companies are using Viral Marketing as an Innovative Marketing Campaign. Does Viral Marketing enhances the Brand Image of the Marketers and leads to revenues. Keeping in the mind the research objectives of this study, this paper uses exploratory cum descriptive research design. A Survey Method is used by personal interaction. The Personal Interaction is limited to administration of questionnaires to collect data. The statistical tools like z-test were used for statistical analysis.

**1.0 Introduction**

Viral Marketing is used for creating a buzzword, where it generates attraction and connects worldwide. Viral Marketing uses Social Media by using videos, text messages to spread information about product or services. Hence they will not rely on conventional media like TV Commercials or Radio FM. The name suggests that 'Viral' it spreads information quickly where they use tools like Youtube, LinkedIn, Facebook & Tweeter. Hence the information will be spread through sharing videos, stories and images.

**2.0 Techniques Used in Viral Marketing**

The techniques used for successful Viral Marketing Campaign where the primary objective is to spread positive word-of-mouth to friends, peers, colleagues and superordinates about the company's products or services.

- **Giveaways** – The companies provide exciting offers where the people will spread the information to their dear ones.
- **Video** – The Video provides an opportunity for the people to get engaged, related to the company's products. Hence it provides quite a bit of fun and entertainment, which lasts as a fond memory.
- **Social Media** – The Viral Marketing uses Facebook, LinkedIn, Tweeter & YouTube is an ideal platform for sharing the information where it leads to increase the likes and will go viral instantly.
- **Reinforcement** – The idea is to reinforce the message in the minds of the customers, which leads to the effectiveness of the campaign.

**3.0 Key Principles of Viral Marketing**

Viral Marketing encourages the participants to pass on the message to individuals, community or the society. Hence it provides potential for the company for coming up with new Innovative Marketing Campaigns where the message can be spread quickly to millions of users.

Hence Viral Marketing is a right platform by using internet where it focuses on word-of-mouth, which creates a buzz in the market.

The companies come up with effective Marketing Strategy integrated to their campaigns. They are as follows:-

**3.1 Give away Products or Services**

The fundamental truth of Viral Marketing is that they provide free valuable products or services to gain attention. Examples can be free e-mail services. The idea behind the Viral Marketing is to

provide inexpensive products for the prospects where the company can inculcate interest in the minds of the prospects for the actual purchase.

**3.2 Viral Marketing transfers effortless message**

Any Marketing message can be transferred effectively through Viral Marketing. The medium used could be through mail, website, graphic which can be sent through internet where instant communication can be spread easily. Hence Viral Marketing is easy and can be inexpensive for spreading the information to the prospects.

**3.3 Viral Marketing utilizes the existing Communication Networks**

On an average each person has a network between 8 to 12 people who are friends, family or associates. Hence Viral Marketing, it tries to explore the existing networks so that any message which can be given to target audience and the information can be rapidly multiplied and it may go viral.

**4.0 Advantages of Viral Marketing**

Viral Marketing can be defined as word of mouth advertising where the message can be spread rapidly to the audience. The advantages of Viral Marketing have been mentioned below.

**4.1 It enhances Customer List**

Viral Marketing tries to spread valuable information to the target audience. But for that if the present customers who are totally satisfied with the product or services, they tend to be loyal for the company. Because of that they spread positive word of mouth for the new customers whether it is online marketing or offline marketing. Hence Viral Marketing enhances the customer list.

**4.2 Viral Marketing helps in remarkable growth in lesser time**

Viral Marketing is often coined as 'Viral' as the valuable information where it spreads rapidly to the audience. The Viral Marketing has got amazing potential for increasing the sales and profits. In the Online Marketing if the message is spread through free contests, free coupons and campaigns it leads to increase in traffic for the website.

**4.3 Viral Marketing leads to more credibility**

The valuable message is spread to the friends, Relatives and associates. Hence the positive word of mouth is shared by the recommended people; hence it leads to more credibility. The companies get benefitted as there is an increase in traffic and reliable comments will be posted in the website where the

companies will get benefitted in a positive note.

**4.4 Better Visibility**

Any valuable information shared to the target audience it goes Viral, and it will be shared, recommended and positive word of mouth will be recommended for the new audience. Hence it leads to greater visibility of their products and services online.

**4.5 Viral Marketing reduces Promotional Costs**

Unlike Traditional Media like TV Commercials, Radio FM or Print Media where the costs required are vast. Hence most of the Online Marketers they tend to opt for Social Media Platforms where the costs are relatively less. Any campaign which creates a buzz with the audience, automatically the products or the services is able to have visibility in internet. Hence the companies, they are not needed to spend more money for promotion.

**5.0 Disadvantages of Viral Marketing**

**5.1 Nuisance Factor**

Major disadvantages of the Viral Marketing are "Nuisance Factor", because most of the online marketers they tend to send message through e-mail for increasing the traffic to their website. There is a threat that the mail sent by the company can be perceived as spam and the message sent either will be delayed or ignored instead of being passed to their friends, Family and associates.

**5.2 Negative Buzz**

The main objective of Viral Marketing is to create a Positive Buzz and it should generate positive word of mouth for the audience. However sometimes it leads to the other way round as the people, if they don't like the information they might not share this information to their Friends, Family and Associates. In the website if the people who post their comments in blogs which are negative, then it will be a huge loss for the online marketers as most of the people they don't investigate about the negative buzz, instead they will think it is true.

**5.3 Ethical Issues**

Many people have concern on privacy issues. Whether it is Offline or Online. Most of the companies to create awareness of their products or services they tend to come up with Innovative Campaigns. Viral Marketing tries to generate personal information from the audience as a participation in the campaign. As the audience or the prospects they fear that the company will tend to send e-mail as a spam.

**5.4 Difficult to Measure**

Any Innovative Campaign can be measurable, so that e-Marketers can determine the effectiveness of the Campaign. But the most challenging job for the Viral Marketing is to evaluate the Campaign. Because Buzz can lead to extreme positive or it can lead to extreme negative, hence for evaluating the Campaign the experts have to handle it. They also have to decide whether they have to continue or withdraw from the existing Campaign.

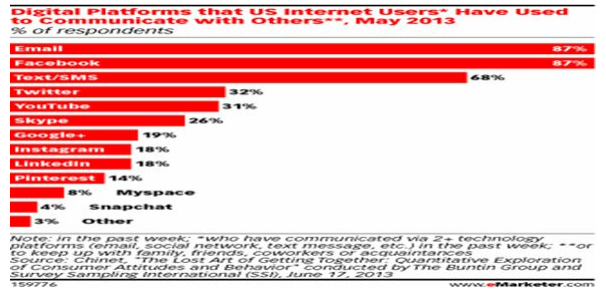


Figure 2 clearly indicates that Viral Marketing, if they use Social Media Platforms the effectiveness of the Campaign can be expected more from Facebook followed by e-mails.

**Increase in No. of Users**

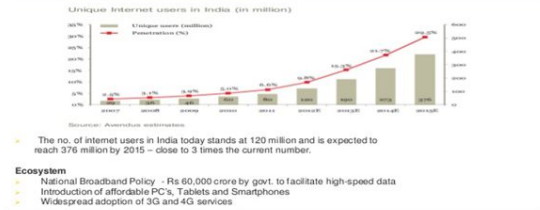


Figure 3 clearly indicates that due to increase in users in recent times for the initiative taken by the Government of India, which led to increased high speed data for PC's, Tablets and Smartphones through 3G and 4G services, have provided more opportunities for Viral Marketers.

**6.0 Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify techniques used in Viral Marketing.
2. To analyze the Key Principles of Viral Marketing.
3. To assess the advantages of Viral Marketing.
4. To identify the disadvantages of Viral Marketing.
5. To analyze the perception of the customers towards Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction for Innovative Marketing Campaigns through Viral Marketing.
6. To ascertain whether Viral Marketing helps online Marketers to understand the needs and preferences of the consumers by coming up with Innovative Marketing Campaigns.

**7.0 Methodology of the Study**

**Research Design:** Exploratory and Descriptive Research Design.

**Data Sources**

Primary data has been used by administering questionnaire to the customers. Secondary data has been used through appropriate websites, Magazines, E-Journals, Newspaper articles.

**Procedure:** The questionnaire was administered to 100 customers who are actively involved in online purchases of Products/Services in and around Mysuru, Karnataka region during August, 2017 and the information was collected back.

**Questionnaire:** Self structured questionnaire was prepared with the help of the experts to analyze the perception of the customers towards Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction with the Products/Services offered by online Marketers who are implementing Innovative Marketing Campaigns through Viral Marketing.

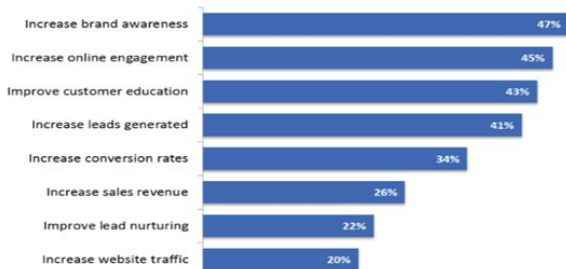
The questionnaire consisting of 15 questions of which 5 questions each is used for 3 parameters.

**Parameters:** Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction, Viral Marketing.

**Definition of Terms:**

- Brand Image:
- Customer Satisfaction:

What are the MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES of an effective video marketing strategy?



Ascend2

Video Marketing Strategy Survey, N=280  
Ascend2 and Research Partners, Published September 2015

**Source: Ascend2 and Research Partners – September 2015**

Figure 1 clearly indicates that Viral Marketing leads to better Brand Awareness among prospects through video as a Campaign.

**Statistical Tool:** To fulfill the objectives of the study z-test was used.

**8.0 Limitations**

The study had to be completed in a short span. The study is restricted to Innovative Marketing Campaigns as a Modern Buzz through Viral Marketing for online Marketers to showcase their company's products or services.

**Analysis:**

To fulfill the objective of the study following statistical hypothesis was constructed and tested subsequently.

**Statistical Hypothesis:**

H<sub>0</sub>: P = 0.5 The proportion of customers who prefers equally for Customer Satisfaction and Brand Image.

H<sub>1</sub>: P ≠ 0.5 The proportion of customers does not prefers equally for Customer Satisfaction and Brand Image.

Where P = Proportion of customers, who prefers Brand Image.  
To test above hypothesis, z-test was used and

$$z = \frac{p - P}{\sqrt{\frac{PQ}{N}}}$$

Where  $p = \frac{X}{N} = \frac{63}{100} = 0.63$

X = Number of customers who preferred Brand Image  
N = Total number of Respondents

Therefore, **z = 2.6**

Since calculated z-value was greater than 1.96, the test was significant at 5% levels i.e. Brand Image has a significant impact on consumers than Customer Satisfaction while purchasing the product/services offered by Marketers implementing Viral Marketing Campaigns (at 5% levels).

**9.0 Innovative Campaigns used by Online Marketers using Viral Marketing as a Best Campaign for Promotion; Few Cases**

**9.1 Vodafone**

Vodafone celebrated the ZooZoo for the 10 Million Likes which they got from Facebook Page and they decided to celebrate through animated Facebook app by coming up series of videos and they thank their fans for their support in this occasion.

**9.2 Pepsi**

Pepsi came out with a campaign 'Oh Yes Abhi' for the youth where the campaign was endorsed by Ranbir Kapoor, MS Dhoni and Priyanka Chopra. They tried to encourage people to grab a Pepsi where they can submit online videos on Music Abhi which was promoted on Facebook Page.

**9.3 Gurudev Motors**

Gurudev Motors is Authorized Dealer from SKODA in Madurai, Trichy, Vellore and Chennai, where they created video for their employees and they were dancing to the tune of "Chennai Super Kings" Whistle Podu Anthem. This video was posted in Facebook and gained huge popularity and visibility with 6000 Likes, 2500 Shares and 400 comments.

**10.0 Conclusions**

Figure 1 clearly indicates that the most important Viral Marketing objective for any effective Video Marketing Strategy, ensures 47% increase among the prospects for creating Brand Awareness.

Figure 2 clearly indicates that 87% of Facebook and 87% through e-mail will be more engaged and it is more effective in implementing the Innovative Marketing Campaign using Viral Marketing.

Figure 3 clearly indicates that due to increase in users who are

constantly using internet due to Government Initiative provided for the 3G and 4G Service Providers which has been extended to PC's, Tablets and Smartphones. Hence there are more opportunities for the e-Marketers to come up with Innovative Campaigns using Viral Marketing.

In this 21st Century Viral Marketing is growing extensively for all the Individuals, Small Businesses, and Online Marketers for generating revenues.

Now a day the customers are very Techno Savvy and also due to the fact that there is a increase in sales of Smart Phones where the next generation have a better Connectivity.

Thanks to the initiative taken by Government of India as Digital India, where 15,00,000 villages will be connected. Due to this urban, semi-urban and rural areas will get benefitted.

Hence there is a tremendous opportunity for the e-marketers to come up with innovative Marketing Campaigns where the information will spread across the globe as a Buzz and the companies can take an advantage of this phenomenon, where they can promote their products and services online. The main objective of any Viral Marketing Campaign is to create brand awareness. Hence Viral Marketing enhances the Brand Image in the minds of the customers where it engages the customers to provide their likes, comments in any of the Social Media Platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube, Tweeter, Blogs and Communities or interactive videos.

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