



ANALYSING THE FACTOR BEHIND VIRAL MARKETING AND CONTENT FORWARDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

Viral Marketing is form of promotional tool which is used to spread awareness about the product in the market and among the customers. As the name depicts, how consumers unfurls the information about a product with other people in their social network, much in like manner the virus spread from one person to another. It can be spread through Word of Mouth (WOM) or by using internet, mobile networks and social media. Word of mouth is passing information in a social network by oral communication. In marketing it is related to a satisfied customer when he/she orally communicates or recommend product to the prospective customer it is considered to be the most best cost effective way of promotion. It can also be said that internet marketing is internet version of word of mouth. Content forwarding explains what factors are there on basis of which a customer's forwards the viral content on social media. The study looks into what theories, principles, techniques and tactics can be used in order to influence a consumer's decision-making to forward content online. The research aims to outline the key elements behind the viral spread of marketing messages in order to understand what measures are needed to create viral content

The objective of the paper is to identify and analyse the factor of viral marketing affecting the content forwarding on social media. In this study, the research methodology used is descriptive; the samples are collected with the help of questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of questions about the demographic profile as well as questions regarding viral marketing and about the factors motivating to forward viral content on social media.

The data has been collected from 170 respondents. During the analysis, various factors responsible for forwarding the viral content were discovered. And the factor discovered behind forwarding content was informational, humorous, entertaining and many more. The factor discovered or this whole study will contribute in creating more effective viral content in future.

Keywords: *Viral Marketing, Viral Content, Content Forwarding, Word of Mouth, Promotion.*

1. Introduction

Marketing starts with identifying the needs and wants of people, also converting their needs and wants in a product or giving physical form to their needs and ultimately delivering it to the customers. Marketing comprises of 4 P's i.e. Product, Place, Price and Promotion. First and foremost step in marketing is



identification of need and wants of customer. After that various other strategies are made that includes distribution strategies, pricing strategies and promotion strategies. Promotion is a form of communication and spreading awareness about the product. It is a persuasive communication to brief customers about product, persuade and convince them that the product is eligible to satisfy their needs and wants. There are various tools which comprises the promotional mix i.e. blend of the entire promotional tool. It includes advertising, sales promotion, publicity, personal selling, viral marketing etc.

Viral Marketing is form of promotional tool which is used to spread awareness about the product in the market and among the customers. Viral Marketing is evolution and innovation in field of marketing promotion. It is a business tactics that uses existing social networks to promote the goods and services. As the name depicts, how consumers unfurls the information about a product with other people in their social network, much in like manner the virus spread from one person to another. It can be spread through Word of Mouth (WOM) or by using internet, mobile networks and social media. A definitive objective of advertisers keen on making effective viral marketing programs is to make viral messages that intrigue to people with high social networking communication potential (SNP) and that has a high likelihood of being introduced and spread by these people and their rivals in their interchanges with others in a brief time of time. The expression "viral promoting" has likewise been utilized disparagingly to allude to stealth showcasing efforts—advertising techniques that publicize an item to individuals without them realizing they are being advertised to.

Why this new advertising procedure has been created? The reason for is that there are components or changes in promoting. This advancement is in light of the fact that modifications in advancing methodologies and these movements of publicizing frameworks are in light of the fact that customer is developing. Why customer is advancing? By virtue of the progress of correspondence development and web advancement made his life clear. Information of the thing is open on web. The present customer is all around instructed. Before going for purchase he gets a kick out of the opportunity to consider the thing. This data he may get it from the web or through his relational association. There is a piece of straightforwardness moreover in acquiring thing. At whatever point, from wherever he can obtained thing on the web.

As information advancement has included most of the life of individual. At workplace, at home he is using this development for his regular development. At office he is using PC for his authority work. At home he is using it for educational reason, or for his own use. The present customer is contributing most by far of the vitality in virtual world instead of in authentic world. Publicist needs to find a framework to reach to the customer in his virtual world. This accomplish is possible with the progress in correspondence advancement there is improvement of new electronic verbal (eWOM) which is called as a viral advertising.

1.1 Evolution of Viral marketing

The ascent of "viral promoting", as an approach to manage see, has been joined to the headway of the prospect that contemplations spread like contaminations. The field that made around this thought, memetics, peaked in reputation during the 1990s. As this by then affected advancing bosses, it took on its own special genuine presence in that new setting. The term viral strategy was first used in displaying in 1995, in a pre-automated



advancing period, by a framework gather at Chiat/Day publicizing in LA (by and by TBWA LA) for the dispatch of the essential PlayStation for Sony Computer Entertainment. Considered from a need to fight colossal target negativity the learning was that people reject things pushed at them anyway seek out things that escape them. Chiat/Day made a 'stealth' campaign to pursue influencers/end pioneers, using street bunches unprecedented for brand displaying and layered a staggering omni-channel web of information and intrigue. Insiders got on it and spread the news. Inside a half year PlayStation was number one in its order—Sony's best dispatch ever. (viral marketing)[1].

There is talk on the start and the advancement of the specific term viral displaying, anyway most likely the soonest jobs of the present term are credited to the Harvard Business School graduate Tim Draper and worker Jeffrey Rayport. The term was later best in class by Rayport in the 1996 Fast Company article "The Virus of Marketing", and Tim Draper and Steve Jurvetson of the speculation firm Draper Fisher Jurvetson in 1997 to depict Hotmail's everyday practice concerning joining publicizing to dynamic mail from their customers.(viral marketing)[1]

When you hear the articulation "viral marketing", you likely don't get a warm and feathery tendency inside. That is, aside from in the event that you know the recorded setting of how it began and the impossible story of what it's advanced toward getting to be. For web publicists and business people alike, prominent showcasing has not quite recently woven its way into the advancing and advancing society of forefront instances of conquering affliction, anyway it is quickly getting the chance to be as imperative as sheets, flyers and standard mail campaigns were just 10 years earlier. Truth is advised, some may fight, it has quite recently beaten these out of date sorts of advancing and is as of now without a doubt the most monetarily clever, trustworthy and imperative way to deal with offer information while getting customers through a system that truly offers the most incentive for your cash. So how did this inventively decided publicizing approach get its start? Single word – Hotmail. By virtue of Hotmail, the first among free electronic email expert associations, viral promoting has taken on its own one of a kind genuine presence. Exactly when Hotmail at first began, they picked that the best way to deal with charm new customers is accomplished the partners, family and partners of each customer they had. Taking everything in account, in the footer of each and every email that was sent from a Hotmail account, the Hotmail aggregate set an association that read something like this: "Need a free email account? Consent to acknowledge Hotmail today!" And really, trust it or not, this method went, as we most likely am mindful call it, viral. Countless quickly consented to acknowledge their free email accounts and the rest is history. That Hotmail exhibit is the foundation for the viral advancing we think about today. From Facebook, to Twitter, to YouTube and LinkedIn, viral promoting takes various shapes and structures. It can vary in approach and advance inside every setup, anyway the principle concern is to share information and do thusly on a significant scale – in vain. Instead of consume thousands on expensive publicizing endeavors, associations (both tremendous and little) have come to see viral advancing as a monetarily adroit way to deal with convey as the need ought to emerge, yet to grow bargains and improve business by and large. It really is a marvel that continues getting vitality. Besides, the more associations that see viral advancing as a commendable and reliable kind of promoting, the moreover enthralling this approach pushes toward getting to be. Why? Since a consistently expanding number



of people and associations are joining the talk. Progressively more we are seeing the productive results of viral advancing and it doesn't seem to back off anytime soon. While Hotmail has persevered through the consequences of critical test, they are up 'til now a fundamental player in the email redirection, and a staggeringly enticing model in the domain of web advancing. As the granddad of viral publicizing, Hotmail will ceaselessly be seen as the organization that started everything. Because of them, we have all been eaten by the viral advancing bug and our associations are better for.(viral marketing)[1]

1.2 Relation between Word of Mouth and Viral Marketing

Word of mouth is passing information in a social network by oral communication. In marketing it is related to a satisfied customer when he/she orally communicates or recommend product to the prospective customer it is considered to be the most best cost effective way of promotion. It can also be said that internet marketing is internet version of word of mouth.

1.3 Content Forwarding

Content forwarding means what factors are there on basis of which a customer's forwards the viral content on social media. The research aims to outline the key elements behind the viral spread of marketing messages in order to understand what measures are needed to create viral content. The study looks into what theories, principles, techniques and tactics can be used in order to influence a consumer's decision-making to forward content online. Furthermore, the study presents theories discussing specific forwarding behaviour; what makes certain content interesting to a consumer and what does a consumer want to mediate with their content forwarding. The research also focuses on the qualities of marketing messages and if they can be shaped in a certain way to better achieves virality. To gain a deeper understanding in the topic, the researcher has decided to adapt a consumer perspective in the study to gain a solid qualitative view.

Viral loop steps are see, click, and desire to share the content forward and then finally share it. So, to develop a desire or to analyse what the factors which devlope a desire in mind of customer to forward the content is the ultimate aim of this study.

The research is focused on viral marketing and content forwarding in social media. Social Media is place which leverages its users to share and create content or to participate in social networking. It is the collection of online communication channels dedicated to community based inputs, interactions, content sharing and collaboration. Data sharing tools and applications primarily based on the Internet or cellular phones. Social media include popular websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.

Different Types of Social Media Networks

- Social Networks: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.
- Media Sharing Networks: Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube.
- Discussion Forums: Reddit, Quora, Digg.
- Bookmarking and Content Creation Networks: Pinterest, Flipboard.
- Consumer Review Networks: Yelp, Zomato, TripAdvisor.



2. Objectives of the Study

The objective the research is to study about the new marketing strategy i.e. viral marketing and to find and analyse that what the factors on basis of which the customers forwards the viral content on the social media to the prospective customers. Motivation to study is basically, the fact that viral advertising is a innovational promoting device with undiscovered potential. Viral Marketing Communication can realize advantages to advertisers with its points of interest, for example, minimal effort, high achieve, high validity, responsibility, quick speed, simplicity of use and capacity to contact a worldwide crowd. With the expanded utilization of broadband and web administrations like YouTube, Hotmail and Facebook, we feel that there will be an expanding pattern for Viral Marketing to be embraced by organizations as a component of their special blend later on, along these lines fuelling enthusiasm for this point. Restricted research has been done on drivers of viral promoting and reaction to such promotional methods. The main objective is:

- To identify and analyse the factor of viral marketing effecting the content forwarding on social media.

3. Literature Review

The enthusiasm for new promoting systems and strategies has been rapidly creating starting late after the mechanical advances and the growing need to fathom and target clients on the web.(Leskovec, 2008)[2].There has been a gigantic change in how customers are presented to advancing messages, to be explicit in view of the way that buyers nowadays see when they are being displayed to, and intentionally neglect those publicizing messages.(Scott, 2011)[3]

Moreover, the development of Internet and Web 2.0 has significantly influenced the exchanging of information between clients. Web based life stages have engaged buyers to viably propel their sentiments through posts, tweets, comments and reviews on the web, which has braced the interdependency between the publicist and the customer.(Darwish, 2011)[4].In any case, this change has exhibited challenges for publicists, especially while directing brand reputation and the spread of negative messages. The present sponsors face the unavoidable reality that if they can't keep up and foresee the acts of clients on the web; they will finally disregard to alter in web base exhibiting conditions.(Leeflang, 2014)[5]

Viral Marketing = An advertising system that centers around web promoting and the exponential spread of showcasing messages at whatever point another buyer is included. As the new purchaser collaborates with different shoppers, the person will intentionally or accidentally forward the promoting message to another gathering of people.(viral marketing, 2017).[6]

Word of Mouth = A promotion technique that depends on the social cooperation (for example exchanges) between purchasers who express their suppositions and advance an organization's item or an administration. (word of mouth, 2017)[7]

Viral content = Any piece of media(for example a content, tweet, post, picture, video, announcement or connection) that makes viral progress on the web. (breakthroughcontent, 2017)[8]

Before the major mechanical advances in broad communications, organizations and associations needed to depend on pulling in shoppers by using conventional advertising mediums, for example, paper, radio and TV.



Nonetheless, by the turn of the 21st century and with the rise of the Internet and Web 2.0, organizations and associations before long understood that customary promoting systems were not as powerful as previously, and something must be done so as to achieve potential purchasers on a bigger scale.(Scott, 2011)[3]

Soon enough, advertisers understood the potential that verbal exchange had in an online environment, and began adding to the early rise of viral marketing.(justin, 2004)[9]

Viral marketing is basically a promoting system that uses prior social net-works, for example, informal communication locales, video sharing destinations, email suppliers, online gatherings and sites. Viral marketing regularly gives something for nothing out of pocket and significant to shoppers, which urges them to advance and spread the promoting message to others. Viral content commonly accepts its structure as a notice in the arrangement of a viral video, tune, picture, image or a message.(Chaffey, 2013)[10]. It likewise regularly draws in littler associations and organizations since it has a notoriety of being powerful and it is a generally shabby option in contrast to traditional marketing mediums.

Viral Marketing has competitive advantage because of its fast adoption by Word of Mouth systems. It encourages people to pass on an email message to other people, consequently making exponential development in the spread of data in the interpersonal organization.(Lazar, 2010)[11]

The variables are mindfulness, premium and experience of viral showcasing. Last factor is understanding. Mindfulness about the viral promoting makes enthusiasm for item about which client gets data through viral showcasing. Hence, mindfulness and premium prompts the experience of the viral advertising technique embraced by the business. Over this succession additional characteristic is added which is access to distinguish whether get to have any noteworthy effect on the experience or not.(DABHOLKAR, 2011)[12]

The success of the viral marketing lies in the propagation of viral messages. Therefore it was very essential to identify the factors and validate them.(DABHOLKAR, 2011)[12]

There's such a great amount of content on the Internet that it very well may be difficult to go after even essential mindfulness in a buyers mind. Having solid substance like consideration with the Old Spice guy, gushing TV shows, and Internet Chats are crucial for making consideration and intrigue. .(Nigam, 2012)[13]

The key elements of viral content creation boils down to what the content mediates (what emotions they hit), how its formatted (type of content) and how easy it is to spread (simple picture versus personal recommendations).(Hirvijärvi, 2017)[14]



The most effective ways for marketers to channel viral content on social media is by understanding the forwarding behaviour of the target audience, as well as, identify the online key communities and their influencers in order to expose the message to the largest audience possible.(Hirvijärvi, 2017)[14]

The three key components of viral substance creation;

1. To incorporate impetuses and triggers into the substance that rouses shoppers to advance substance.
2. To incorporate an enthusiastic part that produces reaction and activity from purchasers
3. To distinguish the key online networks and their influencers via web-based networking media, therefore improving the substance's shareability. (Hirvijärvi, 2017)[14]

4. Research Methodology

Viral Marketing and content forwarding are the topics, which need to explore as they are the marketing tactics to promote the products. The main aim of this research study is to find the main factors behind viral content forwarding. The focus is how an individual or consumer forward content on social media regarding product, services or companies. It is very essential for marketer to know the factors that are behind content forwarding, as it will help a marketer to design an effective viral content to promote its goods and services. The paper will help in discovering factors that act as motivator in viral content forwarding and will help in creating more effective content in coming future.

The research design is 'Descriptive' i.e. it deals with question 'What'. The whole study revolves around what are the factors behind viral content forwarding.

Data Collection: The primary source of data is questionnaire which includes close ended questions. The total number of questions asked were 27 out of which 4 question were regarding their demographic profile. The questionnaire was designed to know the main motivating factors behind the viral content forwarding. The respondent are students, professionals etc. related to age group of less than 25 and above 55. The respondents were user of social media sites and application. Questionnaire also included a viral video of flipkart, respondent were asked to watch the video and answer question thereon.

In addition to primary data, various secondary sources of data such as journals articles, articles from periodicals, websites, books etc. from various authors were reviewed in order to get clarity over the topic of study and to see what factors have been previously identified.

5. Finding and Interpretation

A survey was conducted for 170 respondents through questionnaire (drafted with the help of Google forms).Further the findings are tabulated and interpreted with the help of Google forms and excel. And the survey is analysed to outline the main characteristics of data.

The survey was initiated with a question to know the awareness of viral marketing among people, which resulted that 74.4% were aware of viral marketing and 25.6% were not aware. The other findings were that 95.9% respondent said that they use social media. The 87.6% of population said that they notice advertisement on social media. The respondent included 64.1% of people below age group of 25 and 1.8 % were above age of



55. The most respondent were postgraduate i.e. 45.9% and 56.5% respondent occupation was student. The question about the type of content people prefer to forward was asked to which 44.7% of respondent answered photo rest followed by new/blogs, videos and personal recommendation. The mostly preferred channel or medium used by respondent to forward viral content was whatsapp followed by facebook & instagram.

A video was attached in questionnaire and question was asked on basis of the video. The video was a viral video of Flipkart new digital campaign which was conveying the message that girls and boys are equal and it was titled as 'Generation for Equals'. Respondent were asked to watch the video and after watching, whether will they forward the video or not, to which 71.8% respondent gave favourable answer and 28.2 gave unfavourable answer or no as an answer. The second question was asked that why they will forward the video, to which 41.2% of respondent answered awareness, 19.4% other, 15.9% emotional appeal, 15.3% informational factor behind forwarding, 4.1% socially connected and 4.1% held self-image as forwarding factor.

To find the factors behind viral content forwarding 13 questions were asked on likert scale and to which the findings are mentioned in below table:

Table: Findings of factors of forwarding viral content on likert scale.

S.No.	Question asked on Likert Scale	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I forward all information received from family and friends.	22	43	62	27	16
2.	I forward all the information received on social media.	14	39	64	36	17
3.	I forward content related to product and services which is informational.	33	81	38	10	8
4.	I forward content related to product and services which defines my image to others.	24	69	49	16	12
5.	I forward content to spread awareness about certain topic.	60	74	28	5	3
6.	I forward content to keep my social connection updated about my life.	24	38	62	31	15
7.	I forward content for personal gain.(like share and win something)	23	47	49	33	18
8.	I forward content which is about sale, discounts or offers related to product and services.	20	61	53	18	18
9.	I forward content or messages regarding product because I am satisfied with the product or service.	29	80	41	12	8
10.	I forward information about product because my experience had been bad and I want to warn others about it.	25	86	38	13	8
11.	I forward content which is humorous.	34	75	45	9	7

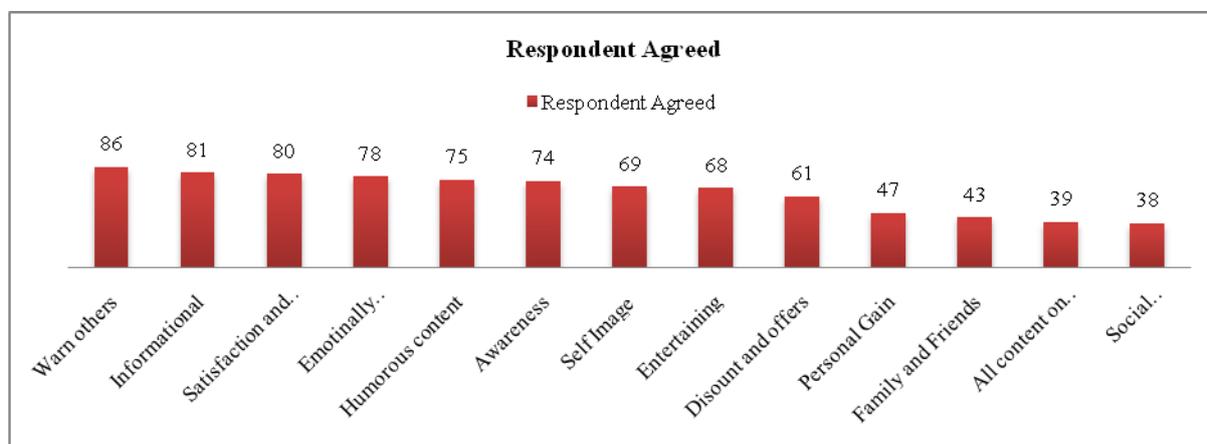


12.	I forward content which emotionally appealing to me.	37	78	34	13	8
13.	I forward content regarding product and services which is entertaining.	39	68	50	9	4

The objective of finding various factors behind viral content forwarding was discovered with the help of the survey conducted with help of questionnaire.

1. The first factor found was that most people forward the content to aware and warn other about their bad experience with the product, 86 people agreed to this.
2. Second factor was people forward informational content and 81 respondent agreed this factor.
3. Third comes, satisfaction and positive experience, 80 respondent agreed that they forward because of this factor.
4. According to 78 people they forwarded the content as they emotionally connected with it.
5. The next factor found was that people like to forward humorous content and 75 agreed to this factor.
6. According to 74 respondents, awareness was motivating factor behind viral content forwarding.
7. According to 69 respondents, they held self-image as motivating factor behind viral content forwarding.
8. 68 respondents agreed that they forward content as it is entertaining.
9. 61 people agree that they forward the content regarding discounts and offers,
10. 47 agreed that the factor behind content forwarding is personal gain.
11. According to 43 people they forward all the content received from family and friends.
12. The 39 respondent agreed that they forward all the viral content received on social media.
13. And 38 people agreed that they forward content to keep their social connection updated about their life.

So as it depicts that the strongest factor behind viral content forwarding is warning, informational, satisfaction etc. Also, it was found that people tend to forward viral content which is humorous and entertaining.





6. Conclusion

Viral marketing and content forwarding are the new and efficient tools that can be used to effectively to achieve the marketing as well as organisational goals. The factors found can be considered while developing a viral content. As these are the important factor behind viral content forwarding by consumers. It will help in designing the viral content which will motivate a consumer to forward it. The factors are found are significant but there is definitely more to be discovered regarding viral marketing and content forwarding. The sample size could be expanded in further future research to know the more factors of viral content forwarding. Viral marketing is vast area which needed to be explored more in coming future, as it can be prove to be a strong and effective to tool of promotion, resulting in increasing the profit of organisation.

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