ECONOMY & SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT

The analysis of the selected viral campaign

Radovan Bačík*
University of Prešov in Prešov
Department of marketing and international trade
Prešovská ul. 5, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia
radovan.bacik@unipo.sk

Igor Fedorko*
University of Prešov in Prešov
Department of marketing and international trade
Prešovská ul. 5, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia
igor.fedorko@unipo.sk

* corresponding author

Abstract: The essence of viral advertising is to get people involved in sharing content and have the opportunity to build awareness about a product or service provided. This type of advertising can be considered popular because such campaigns can reach a large number of people and can be run quickly and with relatively low cost. In the introduction we would like to focus on the essence of viral marketing and new trends in marketing. We will describe its origin, advantages and disadvantages, the structure and form of viral marketing, motivation behind sharing content, modern forms of web promotion. The analytical part deals with the analysis which aims was to find out how a certain viral campaign was perceived by people. Data were collected using a questionnaire containing 11 questions. At the end of the survey we propose solutions for improvements to viral campaigns/ ads.

Keywords: viral marketing, case study, youtube marketing

JEL Classification: C22; C51; Q11; Q13

ECONOMY & SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

The term "viral marketing" was probably first used by Jeffrey Rayport in "The Virus of Marketing" in the December issue of the magazine Fast Company in 1996. However, we do not claim that viral marketing campaigns did not existed before. Viral campaigns are closely related to the development of the Internet and electronic tools for communication of information. Word of mouth has existed since the creation of the mouth and words. In today's world of marketing, however, it is a significant phenomenon. Planning and measurement of word of mouth is difficult and unpredictable. While the comprehensive nature of the Internet makes it easier to disseminate and search for information, we can also see how can certian information become viral (Stokes 2008).

Hauerland (2012) sees viral marketing as "the phenomenon of today's Internet time. We are in contact with viral marketing campaigns more than we actually realize." Frey (2008, p. 39) states that "thanks to viral marketing we can get customers to talk about products, services or websites." Přikrylová and Jahodová (2014) state that "viral marketing is a form of communication when a message with advertising content appears to the recipient so interesting that he/ she spontaneously spreads it further. The message is thus exponentially distributed via media without checking the initiator, much like a a viral epidemic." "Viral message must be able to open itself upon one click." (Jambror 2008).

Frey (2008) distinguishes between two main forms:

- active - tries to influence customer behavior and increase sales of a product or brand awareness using viral messages.

- passive - relying on word of mouth and not trying in any way to influence customer behavior. It tries to elicit a positive response offering quality products or services.

According toa Vojtechovský(2012) we can divide the basic structure of viral marketing as follows:

- viral content - is an idea / information and its form a consumer is willing to promote/ share.

- motivation - includes all of the psychological incentives under which content is promoted – showing off, plain sharing, warning or to get something and the like. A viral medium is a propagator that displays viral content, for example an image, video, text in a document, etc.

- distribution channel - introduces means for spreading viral content, for example e-mail, text message, Facebook API tools such as like, publish, share, invite, etc..

- viral environment - part of the market within the range of a viral campaign like social networks, online apps or all Internet users and possibly beyond.

Viral marketing is similar to the word of mouth marketing, which is exponentially expanding. It is named after a virus due to the similarities that merchants seek to imitate: it is easy to pass on a large number of poeple who then become "infected". Viral marketing campaigns and viruses share also other similarities. Viruses are often spread without revealing their true intentions. Some viral marketing campaigns are similar to them in an effort to spread their hidden message. Viruses are dependent on the comprehensive nature of the people who disseminate information. This also applies on viral marketing campaigns. When planning a meeting, one can suggest "Let's try it and see what happens," – one's minds has already been infected by viral campaign (Stokes 2008).

ECONOMY & SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT

Rohrbacher (2000) in his article The Power of Viral Marketing defines five types of viral marketing from the point of view of users.

1. Value viral - consumers share the experience with the quality of products based on the positive experience. Products must be interesting to appeal to consumers. For example, we can mention the Harry Potter books.

2. Guile viral – the very basic notions is to "sell" and get a reward. Users must have the feeling that the reward is worth it, and that the products are good enough to risk the possibility that some people may not like them. Sometimes not even the reward can guarantee sales of the product if its quality is not good, like in the case of Tupperware.

3. Vital viral - people want to share their experiences and users must have the feeling that the experience and products are worthy to carry out certain changes and convince others to do the same. For example, we can state ICQ or eBay.

4. Spiral viral - people want to share their funny or interesting experience with others. Success in this category is hardly to achieve since such campaign are here only to make people laugh.

5. Vile viral – the idea behind this is that people warn others based on their negative experiences. This will create products that are of poor quality, not designed to the liking of the user or are marketed in secret.

1. Description of the surveyed subject

Ice Bucket Challenge is a challenge to get people pour a bucket of ice or cold water on themselves to help patients suffering from a disease. If they refuse to pour water on themselves, they should contribute by a small financial gift. The aim of this challenge is to raise awareness about ALS and support its research (Hospodárske noviny, 2014). The challenge goes as follows – a person pours a bucket of ice or cold water on themselves, says a few words and nominates three more people. All of this is recorded on a mobile phone or camera. Nominated people have 24 hours to take on the challenge. If they fail to do so, they should give the organization a small amount of money. Cold water shocks the body and creates a feeling similar to that people with this disability feel (Bastová 2014).

2. The aim of the research

The aim of the research is to explain the nature of viral marketing on the chosen viral campaign called Ice Bucket Challenge. The main objective of the research is to find out how the viral campaign Ice Bucket Challenge influenced recipients of the viral message. Partial goals included: explaining what to viral marketing is, carrying out the survey regarding the campaign using a questionnaire and then interpreting the survey results and suggest recommendations on how companies in Slovakia should use viral campaigns.

3. Methodology

The survey was conducted during April 2015 on a sample of 311 respondents. The first question, although not recorded, was whether a responded was aware of the viral campaign Ice Bucket Challenge. Those who did not know the viral campaign were not invited to fill out the questionnaire. The main criterions were age and sex. The questionnaire was sent through the social network Facebook and e-mail. Of all respondents, women accounted to 82% and 22% of all respondents and their age ranged between 11 to 47 years. Most respondents were aged between 21 and 25 years. Information that we needed was collected using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was anonymous. Our goal was to find out how was the Ice Bucket Challenge perceived, whether respondents heard about this viral campaign and whether they would like to see more similar viral campaigns. Data were processed in Excel (tables and figures). The main objective of our research was to find out how was the particular viral campaign perceived by its target audience.

ECONOMY & SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT

4. Results

This part of the research has focused on processing the survey results. On their basis we were able to formulate conclusions and propose recommendations to improve the design of viral campaigns. For this purpose we chose the specific viral caampaign Ice Bucket Challenge. Viral marketing is based on an unusual idea with a creative potential, in this case pouring water on one's head. The creators of this viral campaign chose video as a main format for this campaign. Using the results we have obtained through the questionnaire we can say that of 311 respondents 243 (78 %) knew the purpose of the viral campaign Ice Bucket Challenge - to raise awareness about ALS and support its research. The remaining 68 respondents (21%) did not know what was the objective of the viral campaign. The next question tried to find out whether respondents perceived the viral campaign as positive. Most of the respondents chose the answer with the value 111 (share of 35.7%). From this result we can state that people have no specific opinion (neither positive nor negative) on the viral campaign. The third question tried to find out whether respondents searched for related videos on the Internet (Facebook, Youtube, ...). We got positive answer from 251 respondents with a share of 80.7%. From this result we can conclude that the viral campaign grabbed attention of respondents because they searched for related videos on purpose. The aim of the fourth question was to determine whether respondents participated in the challenge. 294 respondents with a share of 94.5% chose the answer "no". We found that respondents watched the videos but did not actively participate. The fifth question aimed at whether respondents search for information about ALS. 278 respondents with a share of 89.4% answered positively. From the results we can conclude that despite the fact that the great majority of respondents did not participate in the challenge, they searched information about ALS, thus fueling their interest about the campaign. The sixth question tried to find out whether respondents nominated other people to take on the challenge. 290 respondents with a share of 93.2% did not send the nomination forward. Those who participated in the viral activity by pouring a bucket full of ice on their heads have all forwarded the nomination, thus helping to disseminate the viral campaigns and help raise awareness of ALS and support its research. The seventh question tried to find out whether the respondents liked the fact that celebrities also participated in the viral campaign. 278 respondents with a share of 89.4% said they liked it. We can conclude that the motivation of those who participated actively in the viral campaigns could also be fueled by the participation of people such as Slovak president Andrej Kiska, British Prime Minister David Cameron, US President Barack Obama and the like

After the first part of our research, we note that the authors have risen the awareness about the subject of the viral campaign. The respondents have viewed videos searched for information on ALS. The fact that the campaign features also celebrities was also perceived very positively. The fact that respondents did not form any particular opinion on the campaign and the fact that they did not participate on it actively was perceived as a negative aspect. In the second part of the questionnaire in the eighth question we tried to find out whether respondents would like to see more such campaigns. The most people (87 respondents with a share of 28%) chose the response no. 3. The second in popularity was the response no. 4 - 83 respondents with a share of 26.7%. The ninth question tried to find out whether this form of advertising would encourage them to buy a product or to use a service. The response "I do not know" was chosen by 105 respondents with a share of 33.8%. The second most popular answer was "certainly not" chosen by 75 respondents with a share of 24.1%. The tenth question tried to find out what reward would respondets expect if they were to share viral video or picture. 186 respondents with a share of 59.8% stated they would like to receive money for sharing videos / images. The second most popular answer was "some form of discount" chosen by 61 respondents with a share of 19.6%. The final question tried to find out whether the respondents think that the companies should use viral campaign to raise awareness about their brand or product or service. The answer "yes" was chosen by 106 respondents, representing s share of 34.1%. The second most popular answer chosen by 82 respondents was "definitely yes" with a share of 26.4%.

Based on the survey we would suggest the following:

- The biggest age group participating in our survey was people aged between 20-24 years. Based on this fact we suggest that when creating a viral campaign marketers should focus on current topics and age group of people aged between 20 and 24 year and what they need or want.

- Videos or images should be easily shared using the Internet for example social network Facebook

ECONOMY & SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT

- Name of a viral video or image should be clear, it could be a phrase for example. Platforms like YouTube and Facebook use hashtags and tags that help the audience to search for content they want to see.

- It is necessary to motivate young people. The best way is to get a celebrity to promote your case by sharing videos / pictures. It is a very difficult task, because celebrities are hard to reach, however, marketers can ask a young person aged 20-24 years. If the cause of the viral campaign is meaningful, even celebrities would be happy to participate.

- Contests and the opportunity to win something for paying nothing is a very powerful tool to grab attention of the selected age group of people. Our survey found out that the majority of respondents would like to choose money as a form of reward. Also popular was the choice of various discounts. Marketers can offer their target audience various discounts on their product or services for sharing their content.

- Young people want to have fun. Marketers should use humor and anecdotes in their campaigns. Young people like to share videos and pictures. As we can see in the picture the singing nun surprised especially young people but amused all.

- Young people love controversy. Use something so original and surprising that would be watched and shared despite controversy.

References

Frey, P. 2005. Marketingová komunikace, Praha: Tiskárny Havlíčkuv Brod, ISBN 80-7261-129-1

Hauerland, I. 2012. Virálny marketing. In: Digitalmag [online]. [cit. 12. marca 2015]. ISSN: 1339-3782. Dostupné z: http://digitalmag.sk/viralny- marketing/

Jambor, T. 2008. Virálny marketing: reklama zadarmo. In: Hospodárske noviny [online]. http://hn.hnonline.sk/new-wave-713/viralny-marketing-reklama-zadarmo-280001

Rohrbacher, B. 2000, Sila marketingu [online]. Dostupné z:
http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/1697970/the-power-viral-marketing

Stokes R. 2008. eMarketing: The Essential Guide to online marketing [online]. Quirk eMarketing (Pty) Ltd. ISBN: 978-0-620-41135-6. Dostupné z: http://florida.theorangegrove.org/og/file/0e4789b8-320c-3cf5-8ea8-332611afe119/1/quirk_emarketingtextbook.pdf

Vojtechovský J. 2008. Architektúra virálneho marketingu. In: Digitalmag [online]. ISSN: 1339-3782. Dostupné z: http://digitalmag.sk/architektura-viralneho- marketingu/