

## BUZZ MARKETING

-Buzz marketing is a [viral marketing](#) technique that attempts to make each encounter with a consumer appear to be a unique, spontaneous personal exchange of information instead of a calculated marketing pitch choreographed by a professional advertiser. Historically, buzz marketing campaigns have been designed to be very theatrical in nature. The advertiser reveals information about the product or service to only a few "knowing" people in the target audience. By purposely seeking out on-on-one conversations with those who heavily influence their peers, buzz marketers create a sophisticated word-of-mouth campaign where consumers are flattered to be included in the elite group of those "in the know" and willingly spread the word to their friends and colleagues. Although buzz marketing is not new, Internet technology has changed the way it's being used. Buzz campaigns are now being initiated in chat rooms, where marketing representatives assume an identity appropriate to their target audience and pitch their product. Personal Web logs ([blogs](#)) are another popular media for electronic buzz marketing campaigns; advertisers seek out authors of the "right kind of blog" and trade product or currency for promotion. Instant messaging ([IM](#)) applications are also being looked at as a vehicle for carrying out buzz marketing campaigns with either humans or [IM bots](#) doing the pitching. As with all buzz campaigns, the power of the IM model relies on the influence an individual has in an established small network -- in this case, his [buddy list](#). As technology continues to facilitate the delivery of a electronic buzz marketing message easier, and software applications make message deliveries easier to quantify, some advertising experts predict that electronic buzz marketing techniques will become a standard component in all cross-media advertising campaigns. Others warn that abuse of this potentially powerful electronic marketing technique will be its downfall.

## WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Word-of-mouth marketing** is a term used in the [marketing](#) and [advertising](#) industry to describe activities that companies undertake to generate personal recommendations as well as referrals for brand names, products and services.

Word-of-mouth [promotion](#) is highly valued by advertisers. It is believed that this form of communication has valuable source credibility. Research points to individuals being more inclined to believe word-of-mouth promotion than more formal forms of promotion methods because the receiver of word-of-mouth referrals may believe that the communicator is unlikely to have an ulterior motive (ie.: they are not receiving an incentive for their referrals.) Also people tend to believe people who they know. In order to promote and manage word-of-mouth communications, marketers use [publicity techniques](#) as well as [viral marketing](#) methods to achieve desired behavioral response.

A very successful word-of-mouth promotion creates **buzz**. Buzz generates a highly intense and interactive form of word-of-mouth referral that occurs both online and

offline. Successful word-of-mouth initiatives do not follow a strictly **linear** process with information flowing from one individual to another rather successful models leverage subgroup connectivity and relationships by pursuing a **Reed's Law** hub approach to message distribution. A marketer has successfully created buzz when the interactions are so intense that the information moves in a matrix pattern rather than a linear one. The result is everyone is talking about or purchase the product or service.

### Examples

- **Gmail** - **Google** did no marketing, they spent no money. They created scarcity by giving out Gmail accounts only to a handful of "power users." Other users who aspired to be like these power users "lusted" for a Gmail account and this manifested itself in their bidding for Gmail invites on eBay. Demand was created by limited supply; the cachet of having a Gmail account caused the word of mouth, rather than any marketing activities by Google.
- **FreshDirect** - FreshDirect did no marketing to cause the word of mouth. They did exceed expectations of consumers who used their service. These consumers in turn raved about FreshDirect to their friends voluntarily and even spent time convincing them to try it. Word of mouth resulted from FreshDirect so far exceeding expectations that their customers naturally wanted to share, brag, or talk about it.
- **Chain e-mail** about certain product/service can be considered as word of mouth marketing.

### Contrast with (non-examples)

- **Hotmail** - Hotmail "piggybacked" on personal emails from one person to another to publicize their free email service. At a time when few people had email, the first and only free email service in the marketplace was appealing and novel -- hence their rapid adoption and spread. However, the same "piggybacking" technique currently employed by all free email providers (except gmail) no longer works. Furthermore, the Hotmail users did not voluntarily pass it on; they had no choice about Hotmail adding the "sign up" link at the end of their personal emails.
- Burger King's **Subservient Chicken** - Burger King's marketing program called Subservient Chicken did indeed generate a lot of word of mouth, but the word of mouth was about the marketing campaign instead of the product that was being marketed. Also, those marketing efforts which rely on being edgy or on some kind of stunt often fade quickly when the novelty or edge wears off. Finally, this type of marketing is not reproducible or sustainable since it won't be edgy the second time around.
- McDonald's LincolnFry - a fake blog was discovered, and it generated lots of negative word of mouth and little participation.
- American Express' billboard - a fake blog poster who told readers to check out a great Amex billboard was found to be an Ogilvy employee; this violation of trust resulted in massive negative word of mouth which spread around the world.

## VIRAL MARKETING

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Viral marketing** and **viral advertising** refer to [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 can often be [word-of-mouth](#) delivered and enhanced online; it can harness the network effect of the Internet and can be very useful in reaching a large number of people rapidly.

Viral marketing is sometimes used to describe some sorts of [Internet](#)-based [stealth marketing](#) campaigns, including the use of [blogs](#), seemingly amateur web sites, and other forms of [astroturfing](#) to create [word of mouth](#) for a new product or service. Often the ultimate goal of viral marketing campaigns is to generate media coverage via "offbeat" stories worth many times more than the campaigning company's advertising budget.

The term "viral advertising" refers to the idea that people will pass on and share interesting and entertaining content; this is often sponsored by a brand, which is looking to build awareness of a product or service. These viral commercials often take the form of funny video clips, or interactive [Flash](#) games, images, and even text.

Viral marketing is popular because of the ease of executing the marketing campaign, relative low-cost (compared to [direct mail](#)), good targeting, and the high and rapid response rate. The main strength of viral marketing is its ability to obtain a large number of interested people at a low cost.

The most difficult task for any company is to acquire and retain a large customer base. Through the use of the internet and the effects of e-mail advertising, the business-to-consumer (B2C) efforts have a greater impact than many other tools of marketing. Viral marketing is a technique that avoids the annoyance of spam mail; it encourages users of a specific product or service to tell a friend. This would be a positive word-of-mouth recommendation. One of the most successful perspectives found to achieve this customer base is the integrated marketing communication [IMC](#) perspective.

### History

Some argue the term *viral marketing* was originally coined by [venture capitalist Steve Jurvetson](#) in 1997 to describe [Hotmail's e-mail](#) practice of appending [advertising](#) for themselves to outgoing mail from their users. The first to write about viral marketing was [media critic Douglas Rushkoff](#) in his 1994 book "[Media Virus](#)." The assumption is that if such an advertisement reaches a "susceptible" user, that user will become "infected" (i.e., sign up for an account) and can then go on to infect other susceptible users. As long as each infected user sends mail to more than one susceptible user on average (i.e., the [basic reproductive rate](#) is greater than one), standard results in [epidemiology](#) imply that the number of infected users will grow according to a [logistic curve](#), whose initial segment appears exponential.

If each user sends mail to more than one susceptible user then the campaign will in theory continue forever, or at least until all susceptible users have already received the message. Even if the message is not forwarded quite that often, the message might still be forwarded many more times than it was initially sent. For example, consider a campaign

that starts out by mailing 100 users. Not all of them will forward the email, but some of them might. This 'some' would be tested using market research; say, for example, that it turns out to be 80% and that each forwards it to only one friend. In this case, 80 people would receive a "first generation" forwarded message. From there it would decline roughly exponentially, so that each generation would be smaller than the next, as 80, 64, 51.2, 40.96, 32.768, 26.214, 20.971, 16.777, 13.421, 10.737.

Eventually the campaign would fade out. Research must be carried out on the life expectancy of such a campaign. More complicated formulas can be generated, but this would be the easiest for most marketing departments to work out. So the final campaign would cost the original amount of funds needed to send the email to 100 users and the rest (357, in this case) would be users marketed by viral methods and normally for free.

## TYPES, METHODS, AND BARRIERS

### Types of viral campaigns

- **Pass-along:** A message which encourages the user to send the message to others. The crudest form of this is [chain letters](#) where a message at the bottom of the e-mail prompts the reader to forward the message. More effective are short, funny clips of video which people spontaneously forward. Many of these, such as the [Cog \(television commercial\)](#) from Honda began life as TV commercials and have since circulated on the web by word of mouth. The number of people reached in this way is often much greater than the number who viewed the original ad.
- **Incentivised viral:** A reward is offered for either passing a message along or providing someone else's address. This can dramatically increase referrals. However, this is most effective when the offer requires another person to take action. Most online contests offer more chances of winning for each referral given; but when the referral must also participate in order for the first person to obtain that extra chance of winning, the chance that the referral participates is much greater.
- **Undercover:** A viral message presented as a cool or unusual page, activity, or piece of news, without obvious incitements to link or *pass along*. In Undercover Marketing, it is not immediately apparent that anything is being marketed. Particular effort is made to make the discovery of the item seem spontaneous and informal, to encourage natural [memetic](#) behavior. Outside world "clues", such as [graffiti](#) appearing in cities with key viral words, is often used to direct people to search out the presented "mystery". Because of the large amount of unusual and entertaining content on the internet, this can be the hardest type of viral to spot, especially as companies try to imitate the style and content of amateur websites and authentic underground movements.
- **"Edgy Gossip/Buzz marketing"** ads or messages that create controversy by challenging the borders of taste or appropriateness. Discussion of the resulting controversy can be considered to generate [buzz](#) and [word of mouth](#) advertising. Prior to releasing a movie, some [Hollywood movie stars](#) get married, get divorced, or get arrested, or become involved in some controversy that directs conversational attention to them. An alleged example is the publicity campaign

about the dubious love affair between [Tom Cruise](#) and [Katie Holmes](#) that came out just before each of them released a movie. [1] [2]

- **User-managed database:** Users create and manage their own lists of contacts using a database provided by an online service provider. By inviting other members to participate in their community, users create a viral, self-propagating chain of contacts that naturally grows and encourages others to sign up as well. Examples of such services include [anonymous matching](#) services like [eCrush](#), business contact management services like [Plaxo](#), and other social databases like [Evite](#) and [Classmates.com](#).

## Methods of transmission

Transmission of viral marketing can occur in various ways:

- **Word of Web:** Typing into a web-based form that converts that information into an e-mail, sends to recipients. An example of this is any article at [MSNBC.com](#). In the article, there are links that encourage readers to send the article to a friend; this brings them to a web-based form to be filled out. This form converts all of the information to the recipient in an e-mail.
- **Word of E-Mail:** A very common type: forwarding e-mails, such as jokes, quizzes and 'compromising' pictures.
- **Word of mouth**
- **Word of IM:** Perhaps the fastest-growing mode of transmission, hyperlinks are sent over [instant messaging](#) servers such as [Jabber](#), [AIM](#), [ICQ](#), [MSN](#), [Yahoo!](#), or [Google Talk](#). This method is popular with many young people who are arguably more likely to trust a link sent by a friend via IM than by that same friend through e-mail.
- **Reward for Referrals:** Sometimes, the marketing company offers a reward for referring customers, encouraging them to use any of the above methods.
- **Communications Protocol:** In [amateur radio](#), the ham operators on each end of a conversation generally exchange [QSL](#) cards. The communication protocol generally expects each person to transmit their QSL information to the other person. If that QSL information refers to an electronic QSL card exchange, then the subscriber base of the exchange will grow exponentially.
- **Bluetooth:** The widespread use of mobile phones which support free [Bluetoothing](#) has enabled promotional videos to be distributed virally between handsets.

## Barriers to viral marketing

- **Size:** If viral content is a video clip or streaming video, it may be too large for the recipient to receive. However, newer technologies are eliminating this problem, as internet connections grow faster and e-mail inboxes become more capable of receiving large files.
- **Media Format:** A viral marketing campaign will be unsuccessful if the message is in a format that most people can't use; for example if particular [software](#) is needed that is not widely used, then people will not be able to open or view the

message.

- **E-mail attachment:** Many people receive viral marketing messages while at the office, and company **anti-virus software** or **firewalls** can prevent people from receiving or viewing such attachments.
- **Cumbersome Referral Mechanism:** For a viral marketing campaign to be successful, it must be easy to use. For example, if the promotion is some sort of game or contest, then asking for referrals should be an option immediately after the game, not as a condition to play.
- **Sabotage:** Especially in the case of *Undercover* style marketing campaigns, the discovery of the marketing nature of a popular campaign may cause the same social networks to inform people of the commercial intent of the meme, and promote a formal or informal **boycott** of the company or product in question.