

GOING VIRAL

EXPLODE YOUR FAN BASE &
SALES WITH VIRAL MARKETING!



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An Overview of Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a marketing tactic that depends on people instead of paid advertising campaigns to relay information to others. Like the biological virus where the term was derived, viral marketing relies on “carriers” to transmit the message quickly.

Viral marketing first got noticed when email provider Hotmail.com used it in their marketing campaign. When the company went live online, each email message that was sent contained an ad for Hotmail along with a link to its website. Each time someone sent an email to relatives and friends, they were also sending messages that promoted the Hotmail service. Anyone who clicked on the link could easily sign up for a free Hotmail account. Then, as the new users sent more emails using their Hotmail account, the advertisement spread throughout the world in a short time with very little effort from the email provider.

This example shows how the primary elements of viral marketing are put into play.

- The advertising cost is minimal.
- It uses common tasks to its advantage, such as sending emails.
- It capitalizes on existing resources (i.e. people) to boost awareness of their products or services.
- Each person who uses the product becomes its endorser or spokesperson.

When a company’s ad campaign goes viral, their brand recognition increases and their sales sky rocket, resulting in a better payday. Any business could benefit greatly from a successful viral marketing campaign. If you’re ready to take your music career to the next level, you must think of it like a business.

What Viral Marketing is Not

Many people mistakenly believe that viral marketing requires a huge budget to be successful. Not even close.

A traditional marketing campaign promotes a band, singing high praises about its merits, and giving it a lot of paid exposure and expensive endorsements. If you have the budget and resources to do this and compete with the major record labels throwing millions of dollars at a single artist, then this report is not for you.

The Basic Principles of Viral Marketing

Viral marketing takes advantage of existing communications channels such as radio and television. Other strategies rely on blogs, banner ads, as well as social networks like Facebook and Twitter. Hotmail, in its case, used endorsement from other people. While there are various platforms that can be used to launch your viral marketing campaign, they all use one or more of the following basic principles.

- *Incentive-driven opt-in pages* that offer free items for providing an email address
- *Pass-along messages* can come in the form of interesting emails, songs, photos or funny video clips which people share and forward to others
- *Buzz marketing or gossip* which creates controversies about something which get people to start talking
- *Undercover viral marketing* spawned by strange or false news items and spread by word-of-mouth

Transmitting the Virus

Like an uncontrolled epidemic, many individuals have used viral marketing effectively by transmitting their message within Facebook and other social networking sites. It is a great leap forward from the word-of-mouth concept as it uses the power of lightning-fast Internet to get the message out.

Viral marketing has recently been in the crosshairs of consumers, marketing experts and privacy rights defenders due to spam emails. However, those who have mastered the game use this strategy prudently to avoid drawing fire and ensure that the message will travel far, wide and fast.

Don't assume that a viral marketing campaign needs to reach tens of millions of people. You have probably heard of the massively successful campaigns of [Blendtec's "Will It Blend?" YouTube series](#) or [ALS Association's Ice bucket challenge](#) that has raised \$100 million and counting for ALS research and awareness, but don't assume you need to have those same results. A viral marketing campaign could reach only a few thousand people and it could still be considered successful. Any time you add a hundred fans to your fan base, it's a success!

The Goal of Viral Marketing

The first goal of viral marketing is to get your band in front of potential fans with a message that they feel compelled to share with others. The message will NOT be “buy my album” or “listen to my song”. That will have almost 0 chance of going viral unless you’re giving away a million bucks to one lucky listener. Even if you had that money to give out, it wouldn’t satisfy the secondary and more important goal of turning prospective fans into loyal fans who can’t wait to see your next show or buy your album.

The Benefits of Viral Marketing

For an independent artist or band to survive and make a living in today's competitive environment, you must be able to stand out from your competition and adapt to the constantly changing landscape. If you can master viral marketing to promote your music, you'll truly be able to make a difference in this world with your music. Online or offline, it is essential in order to reach your fans faster and it doesn't require a lot of money.

Here are some reasons why viral marketing is important for you.

1. Viral marketing creates a buzz

Creating a buzz about your band brings awareness and a sense of connection for your potential fans. The louder the buzz, the farther the campaign will spread. Messages that are of great public interest, attention-grabbing and easy to pass along will increase the speed and effectiveness.

2. It builds credibility

As more people talk about, share, and recommend your music, more credibility and awareness is built. The social engagement can be measured by Facebook likes/shares, Twitter retweets, YouTube views, etc.

3. It is inexpensive

Viral marketing costs a lot less to launch but is very fast and effective in getting your message out to prospective fans. It is the least expensive way to market your work because it doesn't require a large advertising budget. Videos, blogging, newsletters, and email marketing are some of the ways to get your message to go viral inexpensively.

4. It will create your global fan base

Through viral marketing, you can gain global awareness for your music and can reach fans around the world.

5. Viral messages are easy to share

Viral messages are easy to share. Memorable, attention-grabbing images or videos can be easily added to blog posts, web pages and social networking sites.

The 5 Rules of Viral Marketing

One of the most amazing things about viral marketing is the moment when a brilliant idea takes off, it can launch a band into fame and financial success – inexpensively and practically overnight. People who are compelled to pass on your message will drive others to action. One person shares the story to another, which they pass on to yet another, and so on. This is harnessing the power of the buzz, the word-of-mouth, or viral marketing.

Ingredients for Viral Marketing Success

The key here is to create an interesting viral message that will appeal to your audience. You will naturally want to include your work here, but just don't make it too obvious. Be creative and craft a message that your potential fans would find valuable and want to share.

Your viral message should be relevant, funny, and/or solve a problem so that people are inclined to share it so they can be one of the first people in their networks who to tell everyone about you.

Success in this strategy depends on how you throw the right ingredients into the mix:

- Free content which could include videos, song downloads, bonus songs, unreleased tracks.
- Attention-grabbing information. The best campaigns are funny, innovative, bizarre, controversial or amusing.
- A fan base to start the fire.
- A way for potential fans to find out more about you. This is very important if you want to add to your fan base. If they just something great from you, give them a way to connect with you and ask them for their email address or at least make it easy for them to subscribe to your newsletter so you can build your email list.

Viral marketing doesn't have to be difficult. The more engaging and simple your message is, the more widespread its reach will be. Here are some basic rules to follow.

1. Make Your Offer Appealing

Giveaways can spur you fans to take up your offer and pass the message on to others, increasing the chances of making it viral. Here's one idea to get your creative juices flowing:

- Host a 2-week giveaway on your favorite social media platform (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

- Make the prize something awesome (i.e. Feature one of your lucky fans in your next music video).
- Make it super easy to enter your giveaway (i.e. share your post, tweet your message, like your fan page, etc.).
- Choose a winner at random and announce it publicly

2. Make Your Message Easy to Share

Be sure that your message, whether it's a video, an audio recording, an e-book, or any other media, can be efficiently and smoothly passed along to other people with a single click. Make your music available in as many different places as possible.

3. Take Advantage of Existing Communications Networks

Familiarize yourself with the popular and immensely effective social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+ and any other places where you can interact with potential fans. Collect email addresses from your fans and send them regular newsletters.

4. Know Your Ideal Fan

Who are your current fans? Who are your current SUPER fans? Super fans are the raving, fanatical, true fans who can't wait till your next release or show and tell their friends about you every chance they get. Ask these fans what their passions are and look for places where you can connect with more people who share the same interests. Connecting with potential super fans involves developing an emotional connection based on a meaningful relationship. If you can properly nurture these relationships to create lifelong fanatics, you will have successful viral marketing campaigns and the fame and fortune you deserve. The best part is that these fanatics will spread the word about your passions and your music to their friends any chance they get.

5. Keep It Short and Simple

As was mentioned earlier, the easier your message is to understand, the greater the chances of it going viral. Keep your message free from fluff and go straight to the point. If people are not engaged in the first 30 seconds, they aren't going to stick around to see the rest of your message.

Know your audience and how they are going to respond to a particular message. Don't try to appeal to every single person out there. If you try to please everyone, you will end up pleasing no one. One of the keys to capturing people's attention is to know what they want and over-deliver. So target and engage your niche market, give them something of value, and be someone they can admire. If people are compelled to share your message to friends and family, then your viral campaign will be successful.

The Most Effective Viral Marketing Vehicles

For a message to go viral, that is, to spread and replicate like a virus, it has to be easy enough to share, using as very little effort as possible, such as clicking on a link. The message should also be able to stand out effectively and capture the attention of readers. What's more, it should have some value to users but not necessarily in monetary terms. What is important is it has entertainment or educational value.

That being said, the next question would probably be – what technique should you use for viral marketing? There is no best answer for that question. Below are 6 very effective and proven viral marketing techniques that should be part of your marketing arsenal.

1. Videos

Videos are the best method of delivering a viral campaign. You've probably heard of YouTube videos that have reached millions of views within a week of being uploaded. Can you imagine how many new fans you would get if you had a million views on one of your videos? If you can create a video that is hilarious, bizarre, controversial, educational, or simply grabs the attention of viewers and makes them want to share it with everyone they know, you could be the next YouTube sensation.

2. Social Media Networks

Social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and LinkedIn are places where you can find, engage and build lasting relationships with fans. Share images and videos of what you're up to and keep your fans up to date. Be creative and incentivize them to share with their networks and you'll grow your fan base.

3. Article Marketing

Content is king. It was then, it still is. If you enjoy writing or know someone who does, start a blog or contact other blogs and ask them if they accept guest posts. The more places you have your contact information and links back to your music, the more chances you'll have to add to your fan base. Your articles don't have to be about your music at all, just write about what you're interested in and include an "about the author" blurb at the bottom of the article that includes that you're also a musician and a link to check out your songs.

4. Ebooks

Ebooks are similar to article marketing in that they don't have to have anything to do with your music. Write about your interests and passions, or find a ghost writer (or good friend) to write it for you. If the ebook you've written is educational and/or entertaining, original, and a hard-to-put-down page-turner, then people will gladly share it with others.

5. Email Newsletters

Email newsletters are not just a great way to keep your subscribers up-to-date with your band's latest happenings, they also have a strong potential to go viral. You can grab this wonderful opportunity and not leave money on the table. Here's how. Always write a note at the end of your newsletter which encourages the reader to share the newsletter with other people. Surprisingly, many of them will. All they need is a little encouragement and incentive to take action.

6. Like, Tweet and Share buttons

These buttons provide an excellent and convenient way for your site visitors to broadcast your content via the social networking sites.

There are other forms of content you can use for viral marketing, but in some cases, real success comes from the way you promote your content to your target audience. However, it is truly possible, provided you have an amazing story that you can put in front of your audience, that they will respond positively and willingly share your content.

The Most Effective Viral Marketing Videos

Social media has become every business' dream marketing tool and there are more and more viral marketing videos coming up every day because of the proven effect that viral marketing, and videos in particular, has had on consumers over the past five years.

YouTube, for instance, has revolutionized the way of discovering new talents (think Charice or Gangnam style dancing), espousing causes (think PETA's anti-fur campaigns showing how animals are methodically slaughtered, without anesthesia, for their skins) and providing blow-by-blow news coverage (think hostage situations, natural disasters like Katrina, fires and sniper battles). Fans go to YouTube to consume content. Did you know that 29 out of the top 30 most viewed videos on YouTube are music videos? If you haven't made any yet, it's time to seriously think about putting one together.

Here are a few examples of the most successful marketing videos.

1. [Dove's "Real Beauty Sketches"](#) – With over 64 million views and counting on YouTube, this video turned a brilliantly simple idea into an emotional impact and connection with the audience.
2. [Evian's Dancing Babies](#) – With over 92 million views and counting, this also creates that emotional connection with the audience.
3. [Pepsi Max Uncle Drew](#) – This series has over 50 million views. A basketball player disguised as an old man stars in this entertaining series targeted at the younger male demographic.
4. [Dumb Ways to Die](#) – With over 88 million views and counting, this uses a catchy tune and humor to get viewers to share and share and share.

And the top three most viewed music videos -

1. [Psy - Gangnam Style](#) – The most viewed video on YouTube with over 2 BILLION views.
2. [Justin Bieber – Baby](#) – Over 1 billion views
3. [J.Lo - On the Floor](#) – Over 750 million views

Final Thoughts

Now that you know the key ingredients to make create a viral message that your audience can't wait to share, take some time to sit down and brainstorm some ideas so you can start massively increasing your fan base.

Write down your answers to these questions –

What am I passionate about?

What interests do I have that my fans share?

Who is my ideal fan?

What inspires them?

How do I want to make my fans feel?

Which marketing vehicle besides videos would be best in terms of being relevant to my ideal fans?

What videos can I create that my fans would share? (It doesn't have to be a mega production, low budget videos can and do go viral all the time)

Review your answers and look for themes that you could turn into an idea for your viral message.