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Viral Marketing — Pay It Forward?

Authors: Supervisor:
Mia Johansson   Sverre Spoelstra
Cecilia Ljung

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Cecilia Ljung   Mia Johansson

Abstract

Title	Viral Marketing— Pay It Forward
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Course	Master Thesis in Business Administration, (15 ECTS)
Authors	Mia Johansson, Cecilia Ljung
Advisor	Sverre Spoelstra
Key words	viral marketing, monetary awards, Internet, focus groups, youths.
Purpose	Our purpose is to investigate how a monetary award connected to viral marketing would affect youth's attitude towards viral marketing messages.
Methodology	Since our thesis investigates a new marketing tool which is not yet tested in Sweden; it is of an explorative nature and originates from an inductive approach. The methodology has been based on focus groups and qualitative, semi-structured interviews. The biggest focal point will be on the focus groups.
Frame of references	Here we will discuss different types of theories, starting of with a definition of different terms relevant to our thesis. The discussion continues with a theory concerning different types of Internet users and finishing with a theory of "Consumers' Responses and Motivations to Pass along Emails".
Empirical foundation	This chapter presents the empirical results which we have gathered through our three focus groups.
Analysis	In this section we will connect the theoretical framework with the empirical foundation and analyze their connection. The purpose of the thesis will be answered in this section.
Conclusions	In this section we summarize our conclusions. The end of this chapter will contain a discussion which connects our conclusions with the coming future.

Sammanfattning

Uppsatsens titel	Viral Marknadsföring— För det vidare genom betalning
Seminariedatum	2007-01-16
Ämne/Kurs	FEK 591, Magisterseminarium, 10 poäng
Författare	Mia Johansson, Cecilia Ljung
Handledare	Sverre Spoelstra
Nyckelord	Virusmarknadsföring, monetär belöning, Internet, fokusgrupper, ungdomar.
Syfte	Vårt syfte är att undersöka hur en betalning kopplad till viral marknadsföring skulle påverka ungdomars attityd gentemot en sådan kampanj.
Tillvägagångssätt	Eftersom vår uppsats undersöker ett nytt marknadsföringsredskap som ännu inte testats i Sverige, är den av en exploaterande natur och bottnar i en induktiv ansats. Metodens grund är baserat på fokusgrupper och kvalitativa, semistrukturerade intervjuer. Den största fokusen ligger på fokus grupperna.
Teori	Det här kapitlet i vår uppsats kommer att diskutera olika teorier, som börjar med en definition av olika termer som är relevanta för vår uppsats. Diskussionen kommer därefter att fortsätta med en teori om olika Internet användare och avslutas med en teori om konsumenters gensvar och motivation när det gäller kedjemail.
Empiri	Detta kapitel avser att presentera empirin som vi har samlat in genom våra fokusgrupper.
Analys	I denna del kommer vi att koppla ihop den teoretiska strukturen med den empiriska grunden och analysera kopplingen däremellan. Syftet med uppsatsen kommer att besvaras i denna del.
Slutsats	I denna del har vi för avsikt att sammanfatta våra slutsatser. Avslutningsvis i detta kapitel kommer en diskussion som kopplar våra slutsatser med den kommande framtiden.

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1. Introduction

In our first chapter we introduce the reader to our topic, viral marketing. This is done by providing the reader with background information on the subject followed by the problem description and purpose of this thesis. This chapter will additionally include a disposition of our thesis.

1.1 Background

During the first part of the 17th century the population of the Netherlands found themselves in a state described as "tulip mania". The story about this rare and beautiful flower which at that time represented luxury and wealth is often used to describe the mighty power of word-of-mouth. The cost for a single tulip bulb could during this time period amount to as much as a house in one of the nicest areas in Amsterdam. Word-of-mouth which was spread across Europe was the starting point of the tulip frenzy among Dutch nobility, which shows the power of the personal communication channels. But just as the tulip price had reached its peak, negative word-of-mouth triggered a significant crash in tulip prices (Garber, 1999).

Word-of-mouth still remains a powerful influence on people's consumption behavior three and a half centuries after the "tulip mania", but today it has evolved into more developed platforms such as the Internet and mobile phones. Viral marketing is sprung from word-of-mouth which involves passing on brand, product and services information from consumer to consumer by using social networks. The intention with viral marketing is to encourage a selection of people to self-replicate the marketing campaign and pass it forward to family and friends. These campaigns are usually presented in the shape of text messages, video clips or images. According to Kristofer Mencák, Digital Media Manager at GoViral (Personal communication, 28 December 2007), there are a lot of different measures to make towards optimizing the condition for a viral marketing campaign e.g. to make sure that the campaign receives the right exposure and to optimize the material of the campaign. A viral marketing campaign is however not viral until it has proven its spread ability. For a campaign to be able

to reach the viral status it should be easy to spread and contain good content (Kristofer Mencák, Personal communication, 28 December 2007).

Hotmail, a free web mail service, represents a classical example of a successful viral marketing campaign. The campaign offered free private e-mail and allowed the recipient of the message to forward it to acquaintances by including a simple tag which facilitated the spread of the message. Hotmail invested less than $500 000 on the campaign which attracted about 12 million subscribers within 18 months (Kotler, 2006).

For decades mass marketing techniques have dominated the marketing strategies implemented by companies' world wide. Media such as newspapers, television, radio, direct mail etc. have carried out the chosen mass message to the large audience. Progressively, new methods have been implemented which have allowed companies to reach each consumer on a personal basis (De Pelsmacker et al. 2004). The reason for the adoption of these new principles is based on the fact that mass media advertising is failing to reach out to the customer in the same way they did before. According to Kotler (2006) researcher have noticed a decline in effectiveness when it comes to mass marketing. The reason for this is the enhanced commercial clutter which we are experiencing on an everyday basis.

Since more and more people are rejecting unaddressed advertising by simply erasing emails from unknown senders, and through discarding any advertisement received by mail, companies must take new measures to reach their audience. People are in general more reluctant to delete messages from people they know. According to Kalle Nilsson (new media architect at Floyd, Malmö) it is becoming crucial for companies to accept and embrace Internet as a marketing tool. Otherwise they will encounter huge problems in the near future (Personal communication, 4 December 2007).

1.1.2 The Developed Viral Marketing Concept

Revver.com is a company which has embraced and developed the viral marketing technique. The company was launched late in year 2005 and was the first viral video network that paid both the makers and the sharers of the clips uploaded on the website. Revver's business idea is to empower makers and sharers by sharing the revenues with their members and through providing them with simple distribution tools which facilitates the distribution process. After

encouraging independent creators to publish their clips on Revver the network pairs up the different clip with suitable advertisements. The video is then spread across the web and the ad revenues are split between Revver, the creators and the sharers of the clip. The more people that view the clip the more money do the creator and sharers earn. The sharers of the clip receive 20% of the total ad revenue, the remaining revenue is split 50/50 between the creator and Revver (www.revver.com, accessed 12/12 2007).

Large companies such as Microsoft, Proctor and Gamble, and ABC have sponsored the content that the Revver network consists of. One of the most well-known clips uploaded on Revver.com is the *Diet Coke and Mentos Experiment* which according to Alex Black (community manager at Revver) earned Revver upwards of $30,000 since it was launched in 2006 (Personal communication, 21 December 2007).

According to Black "the onus to promote and market work is really on the creator of that work – creators know their audiences best, and we provide them with all the tools necessary to create a white-label environment where they can distribute that work, build an audience and community around their brand, and reap the benefits" (Personal communication, 21 December 2007). Is this developed viral concept adaptable in Sweden and could it evolve further in the future? Since this business idea does not exist in Sweden we found it interesting to investigate its possibilities.

1.2 Problem description

Marketers are beginning to realize that websites are not merely an information source for the customer but rather a marketing engine which is allowing the customer to actually interact with the brand. According to Burns (2006), a growing amount of advertisers are committing a part of their marketing budget to the web. Since the popularity for Internet marketing is and has increased during the last couple of years we found Internet as a marketing tool a very interesting topic for our thesis. We found however that there is a shortage of useful and interesting research material concerning peoples' perception of viral marketing.

Even though marketing guru Philip Kotler refers to the Internet as the newest channel for direct marketing which provides "marketers and consumers with opportunities for much

greater interaction and individualization" (Kotler 2006, p.612) we noticed a limitation of interesting literature concerning new Internet marketing techniques such as viral marketing and how it is perceived by the people in general. One of the reasons for this could be that a lot of researchers view viral marketing as a short lived phenomenon which will pass and therefore isn't worth the time and effort to investigate any further. The fact that viral campaigns are difficult to measure, in combination with the lack of control the marketers have over the campaign once it has been released, probably fuels this uncertainty among researchers.

1.3 Purpose

Since little is known about viral marketing and how such campaigns in combination with payment to sharers would be received by the viewer, we decided to take the first step towards filling this gap. The purpose with our thesis is therefore to investigate how a payment would affect young people's (18-29 year old) motivation to pass along a viral marketing message. By this we mean to study the varieties in attitudes towards viral marketing campaigns, when connected to payments.

Hence our thesis will examine youths attitude towards viral marketing campaigns after finding out that the sender of the viral message was receiving a payment for their actions. The research question will be as follow:

> **How would monetary awards affect youth's motivation to pass along a viral marketing message and how would the receiver respond to the campaign**?

1.4 Delimitations

Viral marketing campaigns are spread both through the Internet and mobile phones. We have however decided to solely investigate viral marketing campaigns performed on the Internet. Our decision is based on the fact that mobile marketing still represents a very small fraction of the Swedish advertising market. The cause behind this is that it is quite expensive to

download images to mobile phones, which is discouraging many people from downloading commercials through their cell phones. The lack of flat rates offered by mobile operators made us therefore exclude mobile phones from our study.

Since Sweden is too extensive to examine as a whole we decided to study the population of Lund. Furthermore, we decided to narrow down our thesis to an accessible amount of information by focusing on the youth. Youth will be defined by people in the ages between 18 and 29.

1.5 Disposition

Chapter 1. Introduction

Our thesis consists of six chapters, sources and appendices excluded. This introduction chapter has provided the reader with background information on the topic viral marketing. Furthermore, the chapter has introduced the reader to our thesis problem description and purpose followed by the chosen delimitations.

Chapter 2. Methodology

Our methodology chapter presents our selected approaches and the information collection procedure. This will be done by first introducing the reader to our research perspectives followed by data collection and criticism of method.

Chapter 3. Theory

The theory chapter contains essential theories which will be utilized during the analysis of our collected data. The chapter begins with a definition of the three terms word-of-mouth, buzz marketing and viral marketing, followed by theories concerning different types of Internet users. The theory chapter ends with a section relating to consumers' responses and motivations to pass along emails.

Chapter 4. Empirical study and result

We decided to unite the empirical study with our result to avoid repetition. This will be presented in our fourth chapter, empirical study and results. The chapter presents the outcome from our three focus groups by first introducing the reader to the performed experiment as

well as the different groups. Sections concerning the general opinion about advertisements on Internet, prior experiences of viral marketing, the pass-along effect, the responses to the viral message experiment, and the payment aspect are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 5. Analysis

The fifth chapter will present our analysis which is divided into three sections: Different types of Internet users, how would a payment affect youth's motivation to pass along a message, and how would the receiver respond to viral messages.

Chapter 6. Final discussion

Chapter six contains of our final discussion which is divided into our conclusions and Viral marketing connected to a payment – what could it lead to. In this chapter we will also discuss our thoughts concerning further research on the topic Viral Marketing.

2. Methodology

The methodology chapter gives a clear image of the research perspectives and methods used in this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to give the reader a better understanding of the thesis and its results. The following topics will be discussed; research perspectives, data collection, and finally criticism of method.

2.1 Research perspectives

2.1.1 An hermeneutic approach

This thesis is written with a hermeneutic approach. This approach looks for the whole picture and takes everything into account that may be relative and have an influence on the result. The positivistic approach attempts to give an explanation of how different variables affect each other and if they are related to one another. It uses the same kind of methods that are used within natural science which usually are built on some kind of mathematical structure. In contrary to the positivistic approach the hermeneutic approach searches to give an understanding and find purpose and meaning of the investigation (Andersson, 1981).

Our thesis wishes to investigate a new marketing tool and give an understanding of how it is perceived. Since the purpose of this paper is to investigate something new it is not possible to measure the outcome in a satisfying way through a positivistic approach. Such a result will not show a fair image of the reality. Instead, the more interesting research perspective will be to investigate the feelings and opinions of the potential target group of a viral marketing campaign with a monetary award connected to it. The aim of the thesis is to find an understanding of how the respondents think and react on such a campaign and what would be the best way to reach them.

The questionnaires used in this paper are also created through a hermeneutic perspective and do not search to give any isolated statistical result. The purpose of the questionnaires is to give an image of the Internet habits of the participants in the target groups. Therefore

everyone has written their names on these questionnaires. It is then possible to compare these profiles with the statements of the respondents which will contribute to a bigger picture.

The choice of focus groups, in this thesis, works well within the hermeneutic approach since the focus will be on an understanding rather than an explanation (Andersson, 1981). The focus groups reach for meanings and sense of the respondents feelings about the viral marketing campaign instead of further investigation of the actually reaction part of the campaign.

2.1.2 Inductive research

The methodology of this thesis is built on an inductive research approach. This statement is based on the fact that the theoretical conclusions have been drawn through focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The empirical interviews have been the ground on which the generalized theoretical conclusions have been built upon (Bryman & Bell 2003).

2.1.3 Qualitative approach

Qualitative research has been chosen as the strategy which the empirical collection is based on. Contrary to quantitative research the qualitative approach focuses more on words than quantity (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Since the aim of this paper is to investigate how would monetary awards affect youth's motivation to pass along a viral marketing message and how would the campaign be valued by the receiver, we argue that it is more interesting to investigate the deeper opinions and feelings of the youths through semi-structured interviews and focus groups then to make a quantitative investigation and put together a statistic result.

By applying semi-structured interviews and focus groups it will be easier to analyze the questions together with the participants and they are more likely to be understood in the right sense of the research. Since it is a new phenomenon a statistical result would not be representative in general and therefore the qualitative research will give more insight, depth and interpretation of the phenomena in general which can give an idea of how it will develop in the future. Since it is a new marketing tool it would not be possible to give a fair image of

the reality through statistic measures. The interesting aspect will be to investigate the deeper feelings and opinions of a potential target group, which will be done through focus groups.

2.2 Data collection

Throughout this thesis we have used the methodological methods semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The semi-structured interviews were held with experts in the field of marketing while the focus groups were conducted with non expert people between the ages of 18-29. We will however put most emphasis on the result received from our focus groups.

2.2.1 Focus groups

Since the subject of viral marketing campaigns connected with monetary award is still quite new, it is difficult to find someone with experience of this concept. This goes both for the customers as well as the promoters of it. Therefore, focus groups would be the most interesting way to investigate the thoughts and feelings of such a concept.

A Focus group is a type of group interview which is conducted by moderators in an unstructured and natural manner. The discussions from the sessions are then carefully analyzed (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). Focus groups are an appropriate research method if the purpose is to examine in what way people take action and what kind of motives they have to act in one way or another (Wibeck, 2000). Also the time limit, of ten weeks for this paper, makes this an efficient qualitative way of doing the research instead of for example observations which would have demanded a larger amount of time.

2.2.2 The experiment

In order to make the focus group discussions more efficient, an experiment has been made as preparation material. Because the subject of viral marketing campaigns with an underlying monetary award is so new, the experiment will give the participants of the focus groups some needed experience. The experiment will take the form of three different fictional viral marketing campaigns. Three different messages will be sent out to the contributors of the focus groups; one controversial message, one funny message and finally one "amateur" message. A more specific description of the clips will follow in the empirical chapter. These messages are chosen in order to give the focus group members a wide spread of viral content

and the clips are sent out to the respondents without them knowing that they will be a part of a focus group. The messages are also delivered in diverse ways, through both e-mail and through Facebook, in order to investigate supposable differences.

2.2.3 Preparation and helping material

A questionnaire and an interview guide were organized as preparation and helping material to the focus groups. Like in the case of the semi-structured interviews the guide will bring more focus and efficiency to the sessions (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The guide is divided into different themes which the discussions are aiming to touch upon. They are constructed in order to investigate the respondent's feelings and thoughts on viral marketing and what a difference a monetary award could play if connected to it (see appendix 8.1). The purpose of the questions is besides investigating the participants' feelings and thoughts also to enlighten us about the respondents' experience of viral marketing and habits connected to it. Altogether the discussions will try to find connections between the respondents' habits and their reactions towards viral marketing which is connected to monetary award.

The questionnaire was handed out before the actual discussion took part which allowed the respondent to fill it out before the discussion session started. The purpose of the survey is to get an image of each and every one of the participants' Internet habits and more particularly their habits concerning downloading and spreading video clips online. The aim is to get a clear image of their consumer profile in order to investigate more or less favored tendencies within the groups that may influence the result of this thesis. It will be important to take in to account their individual profiles which can affect the discussions and steer the directions of the acknowledgements of the groups (Wibeck, 2000).

The questions within the questionnaire is structured in a neutral (non-directive) way and the aim is to leave the questions open in order to avoid potential influences. The scales used in the answers of the question aims to help the participants to make a realistic appreciation of their habits without enclosing any possible answers (Malhotra & Birks, 2003).

2.2.4 The respondents

The chosen respondents are all between the ages of 18 to 29 which we consider as youths. The participants represent a scatter in age, occupation, background and gender. We choose

this age frame since it represents the group who utilize Internet to the highest extent. (Statistiska Centralbyrån 2007). We decided however to exclude participants younger than 18 since we wanted to expose the respondents to different viral messages with more or less controversial content.

The sampling method used in this study was a convenience sample in combination with snowball sampling i.e. we contacted our friends and friends of our friends. These participants are presented in appendix 8.2. The choice of our sampling method is based on our will to expose the participants to an experiment prior to the focus groups. We decided to divide our focus groups based on the participants' age. The reason for this was partly because we wanted the participants to know each other to create a more relaxed atmosphere, as well as for practical reasons, such as the availability of the participants. We therefore had to accept one group where the participants did not know each other from the beginning.

2.2.5 Semi-structured interviews

The choice of semi-structured interviews is based on the fact that we with this thesis wants to grasp the underlying feelings of the recipients behavior when it comes to viral marketing. Non-structured interviews give room for flexibility and access to people's world images. Some structure is however needed in order to catch the focus of the research as well as contributing to more efficient and less time consuming interviews. Furthermore some structure is needed for comparison between recipients (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Therefore the semi-structured interview approach is appropriate in this thesis.

2.2.6 The interview guide

During the semi-structured interviews an interview guide is used as a helping tool in order to give some structure and organizing to the sessions. The structure of the guide is first of all divided into large themes; "background", "viral marketing", "revver.com" and finally "future". The questions within the guide wishes to catch the expertise of people working with viral marketing and to investigate these people's thoughts and ideas about a potential monetary award behind the viral messages in the future. The questions have been formulated in a neutral way in order to avoid influencing the interview object.

2.2.7 The choice of personal interview respondents

Whilst choosing suitable people to interview for our thesis we considered the potential respondent's expertise within the field of viral marketing. Since the subject of the monetary award system in viral marketing campaigns is fairly new in Sweden, it is difficult to find someone with expertise in that particular field. We therefore chose to interview people working with viral marketing campaigns since they are the ones closest related to such knowledge. We conducted an in-office interview with Kalle Nilsson (new media architect) at Floyd a marketing firm in Malmö as well as an email interview with Kristofer Mencák (Digital Media Manager) at GoViral in Stockholm.

We also decided to conduct an email interview with Alex Black (Community Manager) at revver.com. Since Black is working with the first viral video network in the US that both pays the makers and the sharers of the clips uploaded on the website, we thought he could be a great source of wisdom when it came to the topic of our thesis.

The purpose of the interviews was to provide our thesis with some solid background information concerning viral marketing as well as examining the experts thoughts around the monetary award aspect connected to viral marketing.

2.3 Criticism of method

Focus groups as well as any other examination method offer several advantages as well as disadvantages. The disadvantages can be reduced as long as the researcher is aware of the different difficulties that might occur along the way. The possibility of a misrepresented focus group is one of the problems that a researcher has to take under consideration while implementing focus groups (Malhotra & Birks, 2003).

We were well aware of this fact when we chose the participants for our three focus groups. Since we wanted to make sure that the participants had earlier experiences from viral messages we decided to send out three messages to the participants in beforehand. The fact that we prioritized to send out messages prior to the sessions resulted in participants who were chosen based on the fact that they were acquaintances to either us or our friends. This was necessary in order to reassure the participants' experience of viral messages as well as their

future presence in our sessions. While choosing from the different potential participants we however considered their age, background and occupation to ensure that our focus groups would represent different backgrounds, occupations and our preferred age.

We decided to have two focus groups were the participants knew each other from before. The reason for this was that we wanted to create an environment where the participant could feel at ease with sharing their opinions and thoughts about the different topics discussed. We were well aware of the fact that the participants could have different roles in the groups before entering the sessions which could affect their actions during the session. We tried to counteract these behaviors' by acting as encouraging and involving moderators.

Another disadvantage with focus groups is the difficulty in getting the potential respondents to get together at the same time (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). One of our focus groups therefore contained both participants who knew each other and some who didn't. We tried to create a relaxed and open environment for all of the participants in this group by being sensitive to mood changes and by being encouraging towards all of the respondents.

3. Theory

Our theory chapter will consist of a description of the following concepts; connected marketing, word-of-mouth, buzz marketing and viral marketing. Since people are approaching the Internet in different ways we decided to include a section on different Internet users in this chapter. Furthermore, we will in addition discuss the typical pass along email episode.

3.1 Definition of the different terms

Since the terms word-of-mouth, buzz- and viral marketing will be frequently used throughout this thesis we could not exclude a definition chapter where we go into depth with the meaning of these terms. An additional reason for the inclusion of this chapter is that terms might be fairly unknown to many, especially the rather new strategy viral marketing. We also hope that the definitions will avoid any uncertainties that could occur. To give the reader a clearer picture of what the different concepts actually represents, we also decided to include various examples of word-of-mouth, buzz- and viral marketing campaigns.

3.1.1 Connected marketing

Connected marketing is an umbrella term for viral, buzz, and word of mouth marketing. According to the book *Connected Marketing* all these terms have one thing in common which is that they "help make the products they promote remarkable" (Kirby & Marsden, 2007, p. XXV). This is done by creating innovative campaigns containing humor, intrigues and surprising and chocking elements to encourage people to talk about the campaigns.

3.1.2 Word-of-Mouth

Nyilasy (2007, p. 164) defines word-of-mouth as, "Oral, person-to person communication between a receiver and communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, concerning a brand, a product or service." The management consultants company McKinsey & Co. estimates that two thirds of the US economy is determined by this concept (Marsden, 2007).

People are very susceptible to word-of-mouth since it is part of their day to day information search. Customers are more likely to seek out and listen to friends and relatives during times when they have to make a risky purchase decision, e.g. when buying an expensive or complex product. It is therefore impossible for companies to fully control this phenomenon or have access to it.

Word-of-mouth could, however, also have negative effects on a brand. According to Nyilasy (2007) the negative word-of-mouth is far more powerful than positive word-of-mouth. It is therefore very important to monitor what is spread among consumers since the effect of bad word-of-mouth could be devastating for any brand (Nyilasy, 2007). New movies at the cinema are often targets for positive as well as negative word-of-mouth. Many consumers are discussing recently released movies with friends and families or even with strangers on different Internet forums. The motion pictures, *Charlie's Angeles*, *the Hul*k and *2fast2furious* are some examples of the negative effect bad word-of-mouth can generate. The movies have in common that they all lost a large amount of potential viewers due to bad word-of-mouth. According to Allard, (2007) *the Hulk* lost 69.7% of its potential audience due to negative word-of-mouth within the first week of its release.

3.1.3 Buzz Marketing

Buzz marketing is a strategy aimed at creating word-of-mouth, as well as increasing the success of viral marketing. This could be done by making use of a happening or performance to generate an echo. A company could for example offer free products to customers which would encourage them to discuss the product with others (Foxton, 2007).

According to the strategy consultant Renée Dye (2000), the spread of buzz can be predicted by companies. This could be done by analyzing the interaction between different groups of customers and how they influence each other. Dye recommends companies to reject five common myths about buzz marketing as a move towards buzz marketing success.

Firstly, companies must overcome the misconception that "only outrageous or edgy products are buzz-worthy" (Dye, 2000, p. 139). Dye argues that only a few businesses these days are immune to buzz. The amount of American companies influenced by buzz is estimated to be as much as two thirds of the U.S. economy according to a study conducted by Dye. Furthermore,

Dye argues that even the most unlikely products such as prescription drugs; contraceptives etc. could produce tremendous amounts of buzz. Just look at the prescription drug Viagra which is one of the most talked about drugs so far.

Secondly, companies must realize that buzz does not just happen but are rather the result of carefully planned marketing programs. The brand, Hush Puppies is one example of a successful attempt to create buzz among consumers. By giving away freebies to celebrities who where spotted wearing the branded shoes created a massive buzz which increased the annual sales for the company. The clothing company Abercrombie and Fitch is another example of a company working successfully with creating buzz. By recruiting college students from popular social organizations and offering them jobs at the company's stores, Abercrombie and Fitch makes sure that the brand is talked about among their target group (Dye, 2000).

Thirdly, Dye argues that counterculture might have a better capacity to start buzz than the companies' best customers do. The reason for this statement is that Dye believes that the best buzz starter for a brand is not always the most evident consumer. When Absolut Vodka wanted to generate buzz for its lower-end alcohol they focused on the gay community instead of the more obvious target group, the middle aged men living in the suburbs. The buzz was then rapidly spread and the success was a fact (Dye, 2000).

Furthermore, Dye (2000) suggests that a company does not have to be first and act fast to profit from buzz marketing. Copycat companies could in reality also gain profits from buzz as long as they know when to get in on the action and when not to. This could be done by tuning in to what consumers are talking about through different "buzz-spotting mediums" such as the Internet. Finally, Dye states that media and advertising isn't essential in the creation of buzz. If media and advertising is used in abundance it could even kill the buzz before it starts to ignite. Instead Dye encourages company to focus on the consumer-to-consumer communications. "That's where the buzz is born" (Dye, 2000, p. 145).

3.1.4 Viral Marketing

The term viral marketing was first used in 1996 by Jeffrey F. Rayport in his article 'The virus of marketing'. The fairly new phenomenon facilitates and encourages individuals to forward a

marketing message. This could be achieved by a company through creating functions and contents that motivates a person to pass along the marketing message to friends and family. Viral marketing has been described in many different ways, Sabrina Helm for example explains the term as:

> a communication and distribution concept that relies on customers to transmit digital products via electronic mail to other potential customers in their social sphere and to animate these contacts to also transmit the products (Helm, 2000, p. 159).

Many in the research community describe the technique as an electronic form of word-of-mouth. Howard represents this group by describing viral marketing in the following way:

> Viral is today's electronic equivalent of old-fashioned word of mouth. It's a marketing strategy that involves creating an online message that's novel or entertaining enough to prompt consumers to pass it on to others spreading the message across the Web like a virus at no cost to the advertiser (Howard, 2005, p. 6).

The expression "viral" refers to the potential rapid multiplication of the message, which is a desirable outcome for companies who are implementing the technique (Kirby, 2007). Like an actual virus, viral marketing can grow exponentially in the right environment. Another similarity between viruses and viral marketing is the advantage they both take from the rapid multiplication. The viral marketing strategy uses this multiplication to spread the message to thousands or even millions of people. Both real viruses and viral marketing piggybacks on other hosts they then use their resources to increase their power (Wilson, 2000).

According to the book *Marketing Communications a European Perspective,* viral marketing is usually spread by email, recommendation tools on Internet such as "tell a friend" buttons, or SMS (De Pelsmacker et al, 2004). Furthermore, the authors mention screensavers, e-cards, funny commercials, cartoons and pictures as different types of viral messages. The enhanced popularity of the viral marketing technique among companies is based on the fact that Internet users have increased tremendously. This allows company's to reach out to a large group of people by turning to the World Wide Web (ibid.).

One of the major advantages with the viral marketing strategy is that it is fairly inexpensive compared to other marketing campaigns such as ads in magazines and television spots during primetime. One of the reasons for the inexpensive feature that viral marketing possesses is that it's encouraging the recipient of the campaign to spread it further. Moreover, viral marketing could be very effective if it is carried out in the right way. It could in other words reach a large amount of people in a short period of time (De Pelsmacker et al, 2004). Another advantage with viral marketing is that the right message has the ability to cut through the advertising clutter which has increase during the last couple of years. The fact that these kinds of messages do not hold the same interruptive feature as television commercials has made them more welcomed by the receiver as well (Mindcomet, 2006).

 When the movie company Warner Brothers wanted to promote the new Batman movie, *The Dark Knight* (the movie premiers in 2008) they turned to viral marketing as a way of reaching out to their audience. This was done by simply creating a teaser webpage with nothing on it except a single graphic. Since the movie has an extensive fan base, merely the fact that Warner Brothers launched a website created a lot of buzz and anticipation. When the fans click on the image of the website they were redirected to another webpage which featured a character from the movie named *Harvey Dent*. This page allowed the viewer to interact with the campaign by encouraging them to enter their email address which would in exchange give them a code. The code would then allow the viewer to expose a couple of pixels of an image hidden underneath the picture of *Harvey Dent*. Since the viewer only was able to remove a couple of the pixels and since everyone was really eager to see what was hiding underneath it created a fast spread of the webpage and the campaign (Saleem, 2007).

One of the dangers with implementing viral marketing is that it might create negative buzz instead of positive buzz regarding the brand. A company which experienced the effects of a controversial viral marketing campaign turned bad was the company Volkswagen. The commercial showed a suicide bomber on a mission to kill a lot of people outside of a coffeehouse. When the bomb goes off however, the only one killed is the bomber himself due to the fact that the "small but tough" Volkswagen Polo contains the blast and remains unharmed. The campaign was the most downloaded campaign back in 2005 and the company did everything they could to distance themselves from the commercial (Whitehead, 2005). It

is still to this day unknown whether Volkswagen actually supported the making of the viral campaign or not.

The fact that the viral messages are difficult to control is another disadvantage with the technique. Once a marketing campaign is launched on the Internet it is impossible for the company to retrieve the message which could lead to a loss of brand control as Krishnamurthy (2000) argues. Furthermore, Krishnamurthy argues that the viral message could reach and be spread by a group of people that the company wishes not to be associated with. Lack of measurements is another problem which marketers are struggling with while implementing viral marketing. According to Krishnamurthy, a company can not always keep track of who received the viral message and what they did with it.

3.2 Different types of Internet users

Since there is a possibility that the Internet utilization differ between the participants in our focus group we decided to include a chapter about different Internet users in our study. We believe that it is important to be able to distinguish the different Internet users in our focus groups since we want to be able to see if there is a connection between the Internet user and their opinion about viral marketing.

3.2.1 Technology Adoption Life cycle

According to Kotler (2006), people can be arranged into different groups depending on their readiness to embrace new products. In figure 3-1 the five-adopter groups; the innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and the laggards are illustrated. The innovators are recognized to be technology enthusiasts. They are often happy to be part of the technological development of products in return for lower prices on the product. The early adopters are opinion leaders on a constant look for fresh technologies that might give them a competitive advantage. The early majority is usually utilizing the new technology after it has been proven beneficial to them. The late majority is fairly skeptical towards new technologies and is known to be price sensitive. Last but not least the laggards are described to be avoiding new technologies as long as it is possible.
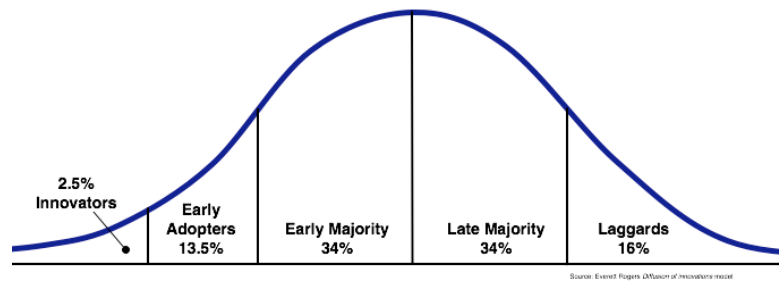
Figure 3-1 The Technology Adoption Life Cycle (www.wikipedia.com)

3.2.2 Hedonic surfers and Utilitarian searchers

The author of the book *Global Marketing: A Decision-Oriented Approach* splits Internet users into two different categories; the Hedonic surfers and the Utilitarian searchers (Hollensen, 2004). Hollensen suggests that the Hedonic surfers experience a website in the same manner as they experience sport events and movies. The Hedonic surfers are relatively unfocused while web surfing and their goal is to escape reality and to reach some sort of enjoyment with their web surfing. According to Hollensen an innovative website with exciting features is the most suitable site for these kinds of Internet users (Hollensen, 2004).

The Utilitarian searcher on the other hand has a mission while web surfing. This kind of Internet user usually is looking for some kind of information and is approaching the Internet with a working mentality. According to Hollensen (2004), a well organized website is most suitable for these kinds of Internet users.

3.2.3 The Influential Customer

In their article 'Market Mavens: Psychological Influence' Clark and Glodsmith (2005) mention three different types of influential customers; the innovator, the opinion leader and the market mavens. These three groups are according to the authors very attractive to marketers since they tend to spread brand awareness in the marketplace. Since the competition and the cost of promotion are increasing, Clark and Goldsmith argue that it is essential for companies to target the more valuable consumers since they tend to influence others through interpersonal communications.

The customers who are categorized to be innovators are as mentioned previously, the ones who tend to adopt new products earlier than others. The opinion leaders are customers with

the power to influence shopping behavior of other consumers in a particular product category. Both innovators and opinion leaders have a tendency to be experts within a particular product domain. The market mavens on the other hand are defined as "individuals who have information about many kinds of products, places to shop, and other facets of markets, and initiate discussions with consumers and respond to requests from consumers for market information" (Feick & Price, 1987, p. 85).

The distinction between innovators, opinion leaders and market mavens is that market mavens in contrast to the two other categories functions as an information source about the market place in general. The fact that market mavens spread word-of-mouth about a variety of products makes them particularly appealing for retailers who sell a wide range of products. Furthermore, market mavens are more likely to discuss store images and read ads more meticulously than nonmavens.

3.3 Consumers Responses and Motivations to Pass Along Emails

Given that viral marketing encourages consumer-to-consumer interactions which are most likely to take place via email we found it important to include a segment where this was discussed.

3.3.1 Typical Pass Along Email Episode

Figure 3-2 illustrates the different stages in a usual pass-along email episode. The model includes the four stages: receipt of pass-along email, decision point where the receiver decides whether to open the message or delete it, reading/decoding the pass-along email and last but not least the decision point where the receiver decides whether to forward the message or not. The receiver's response during one of the mentioned stages is indirectly affecting the other stages, this because a deletion of the message would lead to an end of the episode (Phelps et al, 2004).
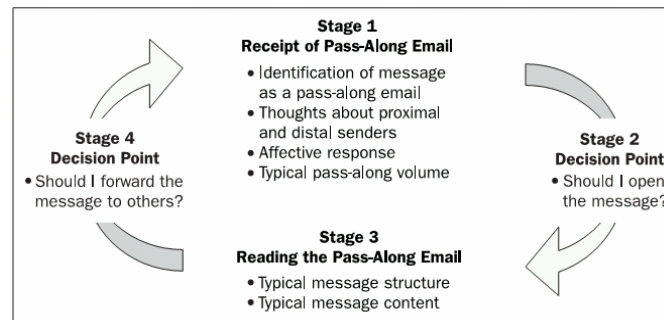
Figure 3-2 Typical Pass Along Email Episode (Phelps et al, 2004)

According to a study published in 2004, people are quite reluctant to open email messages sent by strangers. The study was conducted with 66 people in the cities, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Buffalo, and Los Angeles. Moreover, the study showed that the participants of the study dreaded viruses to such an extent that they on several occasions decided to delete emails containing attachments (Phelps et al, 2004).

When it came to the respondents feeling concerned receiving pass along email messages the respondents answered with a mix of both negative and positive emotions. What upset many of the participants were messages which were irrelevant or sent to a large amount of other people. Other upsetting aspects were if the message was sent more then once and when a certain person sent too many messages. The participants who had positive emotions about pass along emails often found the content as funny or inspiring (Phelps et al, 2004).

The research showed that the most common pass along message came in the shape of a text message (74.7 percent), followed by static pictures (10.1 percent), cartoons (6.1 percent), URLs (5 percent), animated cartoons (2.9 percent), movies (0.6 percent) and other (0.5 percent). When the participants were asked the question whether they passed along the messages they received during the study period the result showed that 40 % of the entire amount of messages received were passed along (Phelps et al, 2004).

4. Empirical Study and Result

This chapter will present the results from our conducted focus groups. We will start out by introducing the reader to the experiment which we exposed the focus group participants to, followed by a review of the questionnaire which the focus groups answered. Furthermore, this chapter will present the result from the four major discussion topics; the general opinion about commercials on Internet, earlier experience of viral marketing, the pass along effect, responses to the viral message experiment and the payment aspect which were discussed by the focus groups.

4.1 The Focus Groups

4.1.1 The Experiment

To assure the effectiveness of the focus group discussions we decided to expose the participant to different viral marketing campaigns before the actual discussions took place. The purpose of the experiment was to give the participants some experience of viral marketing campaigns which would be useful for the upcoming focus groups. This was done by sending three different campaigns to all the respondents. Two clips were sent through email and one clip was sent through Facebook (Facebook is a social network that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them).

A viral commercial promoting Volkswagen Polo represented the controversial aspect among the viral messages that we spread. The clip shows a suicide bomber parking outside of a coffee shop. While sitting inside of a Volkswagen Polo on the crowded street the man presses a detonator which is attached to a bomb strapped to the man's chest. The suicide bomber dies from the explosion but the car remains intact from the explosion. The Volkswagen symbol appears together with the slogan "Polo. Small but tough".

The funny viral message which was sent to our participants is promoting IKEA's storage products. The commercial shows a kid playing with his toys on the living room floor. Suddenly the boy picks up a dildo and plays with as if it was a truck. The dildo begins to

vibrate which makes the boy laugh. The commercial ends with some quick clips of IKEA's different storage products and the slogan "Tidy up".

Last but not least, we emailed an amateur clip which was produced by two young brothers. The two boys are lip syncing and dancing to the song *Crazy frog*. This clip was first added on Youtube.com in 2006 and has almost reached 7 million downloads since then. This clip does not have any commercial purpose but we decided to include this clip anyway since we wanted to expose our participants to an amateur clip as well. Furthermore, we thought it would be interesting to see how many of the participants who were familiar with this popular clip.

4.1.2 Focus Group I

Our first focus group took place on the 10th of December and lasted for approximately 90 minutes. The location for the session was in an apartment in Lund and the group addressed seven broad topics; advertisements on Internet, prior experiences of viral marketing, viral marketing success factors, advertisement on video sites, the opinion about the circulated clips, the payment aspect and future marketing predictions.

The six participants were between 18-19 years old and the discussions were directed equally by the moderators i.e. by us. The group consisted of an equal amount of women and men and the participants knew each other prior to this meeting which resulted in a relaxed and outspoken atmosphere. We could however notice a slightly higher participation level among the men in the group. We tried to counteract this fact by encouraging everyone to share their opinion about the different topics. The entire session was recorded to make sure that we as moderators could put all effort in steering the discussions and to make sure that we do not miss any important statements from the participants.

In the beginning of our focus group we asked the participants to fill out a questionnaire which was produced with the purpose to provide us with useful background information about the participants Internet habits. The result from this survey showed that the participant's occupations varied in the group, two were currently students while the rest were working. Furthermore, the survey showed that the men utilized Internet to a higher extent than the women in the group. We could distinguish three frequent Internet users in group one based on the fact that they all web surf 16 or more hours per week. Out of the six participants, two of

them did most of their Internet usage at work while the rest of the group did most of their web surfing at home.

Each of the participants frequently visits video-clip sites such as youtube.com and bubblare.se but according to the survey it was only the men in the group who had received video clips intended for them. Furthermore, the men in the group differed from the women since they all have experience from sending video clips to friends or family. The survey also revealed that among the six participants merely one had uploaded own video clips.

4.1.4 Focus group II

The second focus group was conducted on the 17th of December with seven participants between the ages 18-21. This session was held at the same location as the earlier focus group and the topics addressed were the same. The group consisted of four women and three men, one of whom was a student. The rest of the participants had various occupations. A few members of the group knew each other from before while some had never met each other before this session.

This group distinguished themselves from the other two groups since we could notice a slight discomfort among the participants in the beginning of the session. One of the reasons for this could be the fact that the group members weren't that familiar with each other. After a while the group began to warm up to the subject and to each other which resulted in good discussions and a high participations level among all the contributors.

The result from the survey showed that the men use the Internet to a higher extent than the women in the group do. In group II we could distinguish four frequent Internet users. All of the group members do however most of their Internet web surfing at the comfort of their own homes. Every one of the participants frequently browses trough Internet sites such as youtube.com and bubblare.se and six out of the seven participants receives clips on a regular basis. Two of the men in the focus group have experience from uploading clips while none of the women in the group have any experience from uploading. All of the participants have experience from forwarding messages to friends and family but the frequency level of doing so was fairly low among the group.

4.1.3 Focus group III

The third focus group was carried out on the 12th of December and consisted of five women and three men aged 24-29. This session was held at the same location as the two other focus groups and the participants addressed the same seven topics as the prior groups. The atmosphere during the one and a half hour session was relaxed and everyone got a chance to share their view on the discussed topics. We could however notice that the men in the group shared similar thoughts about the topics discussed while the women often supported each others statements. We implemented the same technique as in the first focus group when it came to directing the discussions among the respondents i.e. we made sure that all of the participants had a chance to utter their opinion. The discussions were recorded.

The same questionnaire procedure was conducted with the third focus group which showed that six of the eight participants had graduated and were currently working while the other two were students at the University. The survey showed that the three working women did most of their Internet usage at work while both of the two female students utilized Internet at home. The focus group discussions revealed that one of the female students tended to utilize Internet with the purpose to while away the time which made her distinguish herself from the other women in the group. All the men did their Internet usage both at home and at work, they did most of their leisure web surfing at home and the work related web surfing at work. In group III we could distinguish four frequent Internet users since they all web surfed more than 16 hours per week.

All of the participants in the third focus group had experience from video-clip sites but the frequency of the usage of these sites wasn't as high as in the first focus group. Six of the participants had received clips prior to the focus group session and five of them had experience from forwarding clips to family and friends. One of the men in the group had experience from uploading clips of their own.

4.2 The General Opinion about Advertisement on Internet

Most of the respondents in our three groups found Internet advertisements, in most cases, as being tedious and annoying. The men in the third group had however a more positive attitude towards the Internet advertisement and found it a good financial source for several sites. The

participants in the first focus group found the ads misleading and they had the perception that it's only the bad products which are marketed on the Internet. Sofia (19 years) mentioned "I always believe that I will be deceived by the advertisements."

According to many of the participants, the most annoying forms of advertisements were ads containing loud music and flashing light. Agnes (19 years) described sites where loud music appears as soon as the mouse pointer happens to point at a certain place at the website as extremely annoying. Henrik (19 years) thought that sites with a lot of movement just resulted in him ignoring the ads more. Pop-ups were mentioned by Sabine (24 years) as terrible which the other participants in group III agreed upon.

Websites containing an abundance of ads and little interesting content was stated by Jon (20 years) as irritating. David (19 years) on the other hand believed that it could be ok with those kinds of websites "if the ads financed the site", this thought was also supported by the men in the third group. Agnes (19 years) thought that some advertisements actually could have a relaxing effect on her. As an example she mentioned fun games which all contained different types of advertising.

An Internet advertisement which is related to the website is more accepted among the participants. Frida (24 years) believed that advertising is more annoying and "macabre" on websites with work related content compared to websites such as Facebook were everything is less serious. A successful advertisement according to Andreas (19 years) is when the viewer is searching for a product and the search engine succeeds in provides the viewer with the best option. Some of the participants mentioned that they have reached a state where they cut themselves off from all the advertisement clutter on Internet. Simon (19 years) declared "I do not get annoyed by it anymore, I do not notice it anymore, it only exists."

When we asked the contributors whether they thought that the advertisements had any affect on them, the common opinion in all three groups was that they believed they were influenced by the advertisements they were exposed to. Emma (18 years) described a feeling of security while choosing a familiar product in the store. Leon (21 years) on the other hand thought that bad ads and commercials could have a negative effect on brands. It could discourage people to buy the products.

When we asked the participants to describe their attitude towards Internet advertisements compared to television, magazine and billboard advertisements the common opinion was that it was less accepted with advertisements on the Internet. The men in group III had a different opinion and actually preferred Internet advertisement before other types of advertising. Group III agreed on that it's very irritating with Internet advertising which is addressed to their email accounts. Sabine (24 years) mentioned an event where she stopped buying products from a website as a result from the large amount of emails she received from the company promoting their products. Emma (18 years) mentioned that "It is more intrusive with advertisement on the Internet compared to ads on billboards."

According to Simon (19 years), the ads on Internet aren't as suited since they are less adapted to the viewer. Billboards are often tailored to the area in which they appear hence it's more interesting to view.

4.3 Prior Experience of Viral Marketing

When we asked the groups whether they knew of the concept viral marketing none of them had heard of it before. After providing the groups with a description of viral marketing they all felt very familiar with the concept. Johanna (25 years) mentioned that she started receiving viral messages when she started working and Helena (24 years) agreed on the fact that the amount of viral messages had increased since she started working. Emma (25 years) on the other hand had noticed a growing amount of viral messages on her Superwall (an application which allows the Facebook user to share content such as video clips with friends), "It is an abundance of viral messages on the Superwall application, and it is just too much". Fredrik (29 years) agreed on the fact that the amount of videos has increased since he joined Facebook and that it is annoying with too many messages. Frida (24 years) agreed on this overload on Facebook and thought the email is far more personal when it comes to receiving messages.

Leon's (21 years) spontaneous opinion about viral marketing was that "it feels as if the companies are deceiving the customers." He felt that viral marketing is a sneaky way of exposing the customer to advertisements by using friends as the intermediary of the message.

Furthermore, Leon mentioned that he would find it more acceptable if the messages solely were sent out by the company in question.

4.4 The pass Along Effect

Fifteen of the respondents had forwarded a viral message prior to the sessions. All the respondents agreed upon the fact that they would forward a video when they thought it was funny and worth seeing. All the respondents also agreed upon that they wouldn't choose to forward a video if it wasn't worth seeing. If the clip is not funny they simply could not be bothered passing it forward, as Fredrik (29 years) mentioned "You do not forward boring videos, because you simply do not want to bother your friends with it".

When it came to the controversial message (Volkswagen clip) the older respondents were more critical towards the commercial compared to the two younger groups in general. Thirteen of the respondents found the commercial tasteless and some believed that the clip could damage the Volkswagen brand. Karolina (19 years) distinguishes advertisements for a specific brand and advertisements for a specific product by mentioning: "If it was a commercial for just the product, the car, it would be so much about the product and therefore you would not repulse it just because of a bad commercial".

Simon (19 years) made the difference between controversial messages that might be "a little bit too sexy" and controversial messages like the suicide bomber in the Volkswagen clip. He believed that "a little bit too sexy" does not matter but the suicide bomber was not funny at all, just horrifying.

The positive aspect of viral marketing was, according to the respondents, that the funniest commercials were the ones that got through to them, since videos would not be forwarded if they weren't funny. Emma (25 years) mentioned that "You could get angry with a friend if she/he sends bad commercials to you".

The participants in group III also pointed out the fact that a message which comes from a friend carried a stronger validity and trustworthiness. Helena (24 years) believed that she would watch a clip if her friend would ask her to do so since she puts a lot of trust in her

friends. The general opinion among the respondents in group I was that they felt that they always have the choice to open or forward a message which contributed to the respondents' positive attitude towards viral marketing.

Some negative aspects with viral marketing were also given some attention by the respondents during the sessions. The fact that it could get out of control since viral marketing lacks the general control feature which other advertisement tools contains (i.e. ads in magazines) was discussed. Andreas (19 years) believed that the schools should teach the younger children to think critically when it comes to advertisement since they are more receptive then youths of his age. Andreas was not too worried for his own sake. If he would get deceived by an advertisement it would not be the end of the world, but for the younger children he thought it was worse since they are more sensitive and vulnerable.

4.5 Responses to the Viral Message Experiment

No one of the 20 respondents had actually forwarded any of the messages involved in the experiment. The video that received the most attention among the three clips was the Volkswagen commercial. Some of the participants enjoyed it but most of the participants found it too controversial to send it forward. Only three of the participants could consider sending this video forward. Emma (25 years) said "I think in general it depends on how much you think about it. I do not think that much when I watch commercial, I believe you see so much. If I get a funny moment I believe the commercial is good. Of course this video was a bit strong, but I do not think so much of that when I see it".

All of the men in group III, Daniel (28 years), Carl (28 years) and Fredrik (29 years) thought this video was too controversial and a little bit repulsive and none of them had sent this clip forward. Fredrik (29 years) described his feelings towards the clip, "I think this video is on the edge. I find it a bit repulsive".

Group III was the only group who enjoyed the IKEA clip, but none of them considered it to measure up to send forward criteria. The other two groups though the IKEA clip was too ordinary and not funny at all.

The amateur video was appreciated by group I and II, but they still thought it was too long and not funny enough to be sent forward. The critic from group III also concerned the length of the clip, they thought it was too long and contained the same thing over and over again. The two younger groups (group I and II) had generally a more negative view concerning all the experimental clips. The Volkswagen clip was specifically criticized for its' controversial message by group III.

4.6 The Payment Aspect

When we asked the groups whether their perception of the message would change if they knew that we got paid for sending the message, none of them believed that it would change their mind about the clip. The older group (group III) were however more negative towards the payment aspect compared to the two younger groups (I and II). David (19 years) from group II thought of the effect the payment aspect might have and mentioned that he thought it could lead to more customized advertisement which he viewed as positive.

Anna (18 years) from group II saw the payment aspect as a win-win situation since the sender would provide her with good clips and receive money for the service. All the members in group II agreed upon that the payment aspect would be a winning concept in Sweden but Leon (21 years) was however a bit worried about the spam effect the payment could result in. Emma (18 years) from group I didn't think it was anything wrong with it since you have the choice of not sending it forward.

Andreas (19 years) started a career discussion when he said that he would congratulate his friend for succeeded in supporting himself by creating and spreading viral messages, "If someone sent me a video, it has been forwarded because people found it a good clip and because they thought it was funny. You often look at it even though it might not be your thing and if the sender got paid for forwarding the clip it's just great since then they have really succeeded in earning a living by doing something fun". The other participants in group I concurred with Andrea's statement and thought it was a smart and good way of earning one's living.

The participants in group I and III agreed on the importance of the message being sent from a friend, because of the virus risk. The participants in group I also made a difference on where you are most likely to open such a message. Emma (18 years) said that the e-mail feels so private and more selective, which made her more susceptive toward messages from unfamiliar senders. Facebook on the other hand feels more secure and on this site Emma (18 years) felt more open towards unfamiliar messages. Henrik (19 years) agreed with Emma's statement and said that Hotmail consist of hundreds of mail per month which results in that you just go in there to delete everything. Andreas (19 years) said that the best way to receive a viral message would be through MSN messenger since you know what to look for in a safe link, "If you can see that the link is from youtube.com then you know it is ok. If you do not know what it is you do not click, it does not get harder then that". All the others in group I agreed that MSN messenger would be the best way to receive a viral message.

Sabine (24 years) described how she prefers a more personal message and she knows she responds better to it, compared to a message which you know is sent to a lot of people. She also gave an example of this personal factor, which she finds important, when she sent out invitations for her work and she started with cc-emails to all the guests without receiving any replies. Once she had to do it again and this time sent a personal invitation to everyone she got replies almost straight away.

The respondents in group III were most critical towards the payment factor. They thought the payment was ok if it was a close friend who sent the video, they would then gladly help forwarding the message. They mentioned however that a"beggar syndrome" could appear which could make it awkward between friends. Carl (28 years) said that he would choose not to forward the viral message just to mock the person sending it if the sender was not a close friend.

The participants in group III made the resemblance with a close friend asking for money. Sabine (24 years) drew the connection between the payment aspect and "Tupperware parties" (Tupperware is a line of home products which is mostly sold through a party plan, where the host is rewarded). Frida (24 years) compared the payment aspect to the next door neighbor's children selling cookies in order to provide for the family (in an ironic tone). She thought the payment could create a awkward situation,"Money can be a sensitive issue between friends. It

would be a bit awkward if a friend would send you lots of messages that you knew you had to forward in order for her to get paid".

When we asked the participants whether they would be willing to work as viral marketers for a payment some of the participants were positive towards creating and spreading viral messages while some were not. In group I Sofia (19 years) said, "It feels as if you have better alternatives to earn money". Simon (19 years) on the other hand stated that, "If I would receive a payment for the effort I would probably do it. It depends on the amount of the payment".

The general opinion in group I was that they weren't that interested in creating viral messages since many of the participants didn't find it as an interesting work task. The majority were however more positive toward the spreading of viral campaigns for a payment. Group III were less interested in working as spreaders and creators of viral campaigns. Two of the men in group III could however consider creating clips and spreading them for a payment as long as the payment was reasonable. Daniel (28 years) stated, "It totally depends on the payment, if it's reasonable I would do it. It depends on the situation".

5. Analysis

Our analysis chapter will present the different types of Internet users we could discover among the participants in our three focus groups. This will then be connected to the participants' attitude towards the payment aspect. This chapter will also discuss how a payment would affect youth's motivation to pass along a message and how they respond to viral campaigns.

5.1 Different types of Internet users

5.1.1 The classification of the Hedonic surfers and the Utilitarian searchers

After we conducted our focus groups we could notice a difference between the different groups way of approaching Internet. Group III had a more goal-oriented way of approaching the Internet compared to the participants in groups I and II who often turned to the Internet for enjoyment. We would like to argue that the reason for this is that most of the participants in group III had to utilize Internet at work to a higher extent than the participants in group I and II. Our survey showed that 75% of the participants in group III compared to 33% in group I and 0 % in group II did a greater part of their web surfing at work.

Statements from group III supports our thoughts about their Internet habits, Sabine (24) for example explains her reluctance to join Facebook due to the fact that she spends a lot of time on the Internet while being at work. "I do not have the energy to sit in front of the computer when I get home. That's why I do not web surf that much at home", Sabine (24 years).

Group III dissatisfaction with advertisements on work related websites and their will to keep their working environment free from spam and other time consuming mails suggests that the majority of the group tends to be Utilitarian searchers. According to Hollensen (2004) this would imply that the majority of group III had a mission with their web surfing and approached the Internet with a working mentality which we found in line with our result.

Emma (25 years) in the group tended to be more of a Hedonic surfer which would suggest that her goal while web surfing was to escape reality and to reach some kind of enjoyment with her surfing. Emma was the single female in the group who described on various occasions during the session how she on frequent basis visits websites such as Youtube, Facebook and TV4's website to keep updated on the Idol contestants (Idol is an annual televised song contest held in Sweden and many other Western countries). Some of the other women in group III found this remarkable while the men in the group tended to have the same enjoyment goals with their Internet usage while web surfing at home. We would therefore like to suggest that the classification which Hollensen coined should not be taken too strictly since we think that an Internet user could fulfill both the criteria of a Utilitarian searcher as well as a Hedonic surfer.

Our study showed that the participants in group I and II lean towards the Hedonic surfer category. All of the participants in group I did the greater part of their Internet usage at home and most of the participants in the group visited entertainments sites such as Youtube on weekly basis. Leon (21 years) and David (19 years) in group II mentioned how they on frequent basis take guitar lessons through various sites on Internet and Agnes (19 years) mentioned that she often plays fun games on the Internet.

Another fact that supports our categorization of the participants in group I and II was the participants' occupation. The majority of the working participants in the two groups didn't perform any of their web surfing while being at work which would suggest that the participants did less work related web surfing compared to the participants in group III.

5.1.2 The up loaders

When we asked all of the respondents whether they ever uploaded any clips on their own, our survey showed that four out of the twenty participants had experience from uploading. The four participants were all male and considered to be frequent Internet users, i.e. using the Internet more then sixteen hours per week. Three of the men are considered to be Hedonic surfers while the older of the participant is on the borderline between being a Hedonic surfer and Utilitarian searcher. The purpose with the uploading was according to all of the respondents to receive acknowledgement as well as sharing fun experiences with their friends.

According to Kotler (2006), people could be categorized into different groups depending on how they embrace new products and technologies. We suggest that all of the four respondents who had experience from uploading clips would be considered to be early majority which would suggest that they utilize new technology after it has been proven to be beneficial to them. This is based on the fact that all of the participants explained their uploading activities with the benefits they received from the acknowledgements and enjoyment.

Clark and Goldsmith (2005) describe three different types of influential customers which according to the authors are very attractive to the marketers since they tend to spread brand awareness in the marketplace. The innovator tends to adopt products earlier than other consumers which could suggest that the four participants with experience form uploading clips could be categorized as innovators.

5.2 How would a payment affect youths' motivation to pass along a message?

5.2.1 The Utilitarian searcher vs. the Hedonic surfers' view of the payment aspect

We noticed a similarity between groups I and II where the majority of the participants in both groups had a positive view of a potential payment received for spreading a viral marketing campaign. The participants didn't have any objections concerning their friends receiving a payment for sending them viral messages. Focus group I even connected it to a successful career as they concurred with Andreas (19 years) when he said: "Congratulations you have succeeded". Emma (18 years) also represented the positive attitude towards the payment aspect by saying that she didn't think it was anything wrong with it since each and everyone have a choice of not sending the message forward.

Our study showed a resemblance between the different Internet users which were mentioned in chapter 5.1 and their attitude towards the payment aspect. We would therefore like to argue that the positive view among groups I and II depends on their way of approaching the Internet. The majority of the respondents in group I and II belong to the Hedonic surfer category which as mentioned before suggests that their goal is to reach some kind of enjoyment with their web surfing. Agnes (19 years) represents both the Hedonic surfer

category as well as a participant with a positive view of the payment aspect. Agnes web surfing habits indicates that most of her web surfing revolves around enjoyment sites where she spends a lot of her time playing games. She couldn't see any drawbacks with her friends receiving a payment for sending her clips as long as they were fun. She didn't think the payment her friend received would affect her decision concerning passing the messages forward to other friends.

Group III on the other hand had a more skeptical view of a payment connected to the spreading of viral marketing campaigns. The participants associated the payment aspect with a burden since they would feel obliged to pass the message forward to do their friend a favor. Sabine (24 years) related the payment aspect to Tupperware parties which she was not a big fan of. She thought it resembled a close friend receiving benefits on her expense, kind of in the same fashion as Tupperware parties. The other participants in group III also discussed a "beggar syndrome" which could occur with such payments involved. Our study shows that the most negative participants in group III all possessed the qualities of a Utilitarian searcher. This result supports our earlier statement concerning the connection between the participants' way of approaching Internet and their attitude towards the payment aspect. The four people who did not possess clear Utilitarian characteristics tended to be less negative towards the payment aspect which further supports our conclusion.

We believe that the distinction between the Hedonic surfers, the Utilitarian searchers and their view of the payment aspect is based on the emotional connections the participants have towards the Internet. The Utilitarian searcher views the Internet as a work tool and therefore connects it to work related tasks hence less joyful events. The Hedonic surfers on the other hand utilize Internet merely for fun activities which would indicate that they connect Internet with pleasure and positive emotions. These two dissimilar mind states could be the reason for our results since the participants with the positive association to Internet might find the payment aspect as additional contribution to their source of fun, while the participants who associate Internet with work might link the payment aspect with work and additional strain.

5.2.2 Frequent users

Our study also shows a connection between the amount of hours the participants spent on the Internet and their attitudes towards receiving viral marketing campaigns which were spread

with monetary incentives. Our study showed that the acceptance level of the payment aspect is higher among the more frequent Internet users in our focus groups. As mentioned earlier a frequent Internet user is considered to be a person who spends 16 hours or more per week on the Internet.

The reason for this was in many cases that the receivers appreciate the effort the sender had made to provide them with good clips, since this effort diminishes the time they spend on finding the good clips by themselves. We therefore argue that frequent users are more positive towards viral marketing connected to a payment since it brings them more efficient pleasure. The participants in group I resembled the paid sender with a film critic. Since it was a friend sending the clips the participants believed that the clips would be of higher quality since the clip would have been screened by the friend first.

Our study showed a less negative view of the concept among the more frequent users in group III. Emma (25 years old) for example made the following statement: "I think in general it depends on how much you think about it. I do not think that much when I watch commercial, I believe you see so much. If I get a funny moment I believe the commercial is good. Of course this video was a bit strong, but I do not think so much of that when I see it".

This suggests that Emma does not put that much emphasis on analyzing the content of the advertisement she is being exposed to. We argue that this state might occur among frequent users who learn how to shut out the advertisement clutter. This tendency is also noticeable among the three men in group III who also used Internet on a more frequent basis.

Since the more frequent user spent a lot of time on the Internet we would additionally like to argue that they are less impressed by the various clips and advertisement on the web. The reason for this would be that they have viewed a lot of clips and been exposed to a lot of advertisement which has resulted in a jaded state. This state could contribute to a more positive view towards the payment aspect since that would provide them with the best clips out there.

Furthermore, the frequent users typically have more knowledge about how a website is financed and its dependency of advertisement proceeds. This knowledge might provide them with a higher acceptance level towards advertisements in general since they know that this

contribute to the quality of the website. The financial aspect was well known among the men in group III which we believed made them less negative towards the payment aspect compared to the women in the same group. David (19 years) who we categorize as a frequent user also mentioned the positive aspect with ads as long as they financed the site. David was positive towards the payment aspect since he believed that it would made the viral messages more customized hence more efficient.

5.2.3 The Influential Customer

As mentioned in the chapter 5.1 the fact that four of our participants had uploaded clips could suggest that these respondents could be considered to be early majority as well as innovators. We however feel that our result isn't sufficient enough to show that these four participants would be more useful in spreading viral marketing campaigns than any other of our participants. The success of a viral marketing campaign could depend on the buzz the campaign creates (Foxton, 2007). This suggests that the other participants could play equal important roles in the spreading of the campaign, even if the campaign isn't spread directly trough the Internet. A participant could easily evoke interest for a viral marketing campaign by simple word-of-mouth. By verbally telling friends about a campaign, the participants could increase the amount of downloads of that specific clip, if it's available to download. In other words a viral marketing campaign does not only spread through a chain on the Internet. It could also be spread through a chain of word-of-mouth, where each person downloads the video by themselves.

5.2.4 Two different Internet generations

Our study also shows that the younger participants in our focus groups were more excepting towards the payment aspect compared to the older participants. This could depend on the fact that the participants in the different age groups are in a different stages of their lives. Most of the participants in the older group recently received their University degree and had just started their careers while the participants in group I and II were about to finish their high school studies or had just received their first jobs. This could result in a lower level of acceptance among the older participants when it comes to how to make a living compared to the younger respondents' acceptance level. The fact that the younger participants found spreading viral messages as a successful way of earning money while the older participants

found it as an awkward way of making money of your friends supports our thought about the different levels of acceptance.

The fact that the younger participants' were more accepting towards the payment aspect could also depend on that they have grown up with computer technology as a commonplace and do not know a life without it. The older participants on the other hand have a memory of a pre-Internet time which could have provided them with a more restrained view of the Internet. This could suggest that the younger participants accept the utility of services the Internet provides on a much higher level that the older participants do. Our study showed that the younger participants tended to be plugged in at all time while the older participants were more restrictive toward spending too much time on the Internet. The fact that the younger participants grew up with Internet in a different way than the older respondents might have had an influence on their acceptance level towards new Internet services.

5.3 How would the receiver respond to viral messages

As the prior study conducted in 2004 described, the feelings from the receivers of pass along emails could both be negative and positive which we also noticed among our respondents. The negative aspects in our focus groups concerned deceiving messages, irrelevant messages, and too many messages. The positive aspect on the other hand involved funny messages with a good punch line.

5.3.1 The deceiving factor

The study conducted by Phelps et al (2004) suggests reluctance among people to open email messages from strangers. We came to the same conclusion as the study conducted in the U.S. which was that the participants in our focus groups were reluctant to open unknown messages due to their fright of viruses. Henrik (19 years) described how he will just go in to Hotmail and delete everything. Leon's (21 years) spontaneous opinion about viral marketing was that he felt a bit deceived by the companies applying this technique. We found this suspiciousness against viral marketing campaigns and advertisement in general as a factor which made the respondents reluctant towards marketing messages.

If the advertisement was perceived as relevant to our respondents they acknowledge it as a good thing. Therefore we argue that the companies behind viral marketing campaigns should be clear with the fact that it is a commercial. It should not be something that needs to be hidden, since it could give a backlash if the customers feel deceived. Some secrecy involved in campaigns could make it more exciting and be positive but at the same time the companies should not underestimate the fact that their transparency could give them more trustworthiness.

There was a noticeable difference between the younger respondents (in group I and II) and the older respondents (in group III), when it comes to the acknowledgement of the deceitfulness in advertising. Some of the younger respondents discussed product placements, but also viral marketing videos without any logos, as a deceiving way of advertising products. The older respondents on the other hand put the focus in discussing deceiving journalism. They mentioned papers who publish articles with the purpose of promoting certain products, commissioned by the same company who carries the products. The older respondents were not that worried for their own sake, but instead worried about the younger persons who might not acknowledge the occurrence of deceiving journalism. The younger respondents were however not too worried about being deceived themselves but worried instead about children who might be deceived.

Our study showed that the older participants had a more critical and analytical view of deceiving advertisement. The younger participants on the other hand did not reach as deep in their discussions on the topic. All the participants had the same worries concerning the younger ones, which would show that the respondents think of them selves as critical receivers of advertisement. This might not always be the case though, if the deceiving level is above their acknowledgement. Therefore companies need to be careful when it comes to misleading advertisements. They should be aware of the fact that what does not deceive some customers could be deceiving to others. The awareness could decrease the risk of a potential backlash which could occur if the viewer would feel deceived.

5.3.2 Criticism of the "Typical Pass along Email Episode" model

Our study shows that the actions of the participants after receiving a viral message could be simplified into two stages instead of four, as the model of Phelps et al (2004) shows. We

argue that it is wrong to separate the analyzing parts "Receipt of pass-along email" and "Reading the pass-along email" from the two action stages (the decision points). The decision points are not relevant without the connection to the underlying analysis. The action of pushing the opening or forward button or not, is not interesting itself. The crucial part is what affects us into making specific choices that leads to certain actions. In the following analysis we therefore only discuss two crucial stages when it comes to investigate the decisions involved in forwarding a viral marketing message or not. We will call these two stages opening- and pass-forward criteria.

5.3.3 The opening and pass forward criteria

The study conducted by Phelps et al (2004), showed that the participants were upset by receiving messages which were sent to a large amount of other people. This is something which is confirmed by Sabine (24 years) who explained what a difference she believes it makes if the message feels personal. When it comes to her reaction of a message, she will more likely respond to something personal. She gave an example of when she sent out invitations at work. She started with cc-emails to all the guests without receiving any replies. Ones she had to do it again and this time sent a personal invitation to everyone she received replies almost straight away. We believe that this personal factor is an important aspect of viral marketing when it comes to the choice of opening a message or not.

Our study also showed that if a message is sent to a large amount of people it would also affect the receivers' willingness to forward the message to other friends. The result might imply that the receiver would feel less obligated to pass on a message since they perceive it as a less personal message and more of a spam mail. It is however more likely that the receiver would care more about the message if it has a personal connection, since the person would feel obligated to respond to it. Messages containing internal jokes could make the messages more interesting to forward to other friends with the same humor.

A lot of viral marketing campaigns do not even have a message which tells you to send it forward; instead the purpose is the advertisement itself which will be passed on because of its quality. This is also confirmed by the respondents in our focus groups who reassure that if the message is funny enough they will forward it. Still we believe that the personal aspect also is

an important factor in these cases, since this would probably play a difference in the way you would perceive a message.

The respondents in group I and III discussed the differences between Facebook and email when it comes to where they are most likely to open strange messages. Emma (18 years) described how she felt more open towards unfamiliar messages on Facebook. Both Emma (25 years) and Fredrik (29 years) agrees on a growing amount of viral messages on the Superwall application (an application which allows the Facebook user to share content such as video clips with friends) which they think is annoying and too much. We believe that viral messages could have a good potential to spread on Facebook. Our experiment however showed that viral messages would not reach the receivers if they do not have the Superwall application. We also found a risk with viral messages getting lost in the increased mass of messages.

Facebook does on one hand have the personal aspect since it is all about your friends, but on the other hand it can get lost in the fact that you could have four hundred friends. Our experiment showed that emails were perceived as more private than Facebook when it comes to receiving viral messages. Frida (24 years) thinks that the email is far more private than Facebook. Still the email account was blamed for receiving to many irrelevant commercials. Our conclusion was that the personal connection played a crucial role in the choice of whether to open a viral message or not. Whether it is sent through Facebook or mail the receiver looks for something which is specifically addressed to him in order to give it attention.

Our focus groups showed that too many irrelevant messages sent from the same person could acknowledge her/him as a "spamfriend". The trustworthiness of this person and the attention of her/his emails could be lost due to this overload. For the Utilitarian searcher, who surfs online with a purpose and a limited amount of time, this overload of irrelevant messages, can be very time consuming and annoying. This opinion was very common in group number III. We argue that a "spamfriend" can have a negative affect when it comes to the decision of opening a message. The reason for this is that the receiver connects the sender's name with irrelevant messages which will not be prioritized when it comes to the receiver's inbox.

6. Final discussion

This chapter will summarize our conclusions drawn from the analysis. It will also include a discussion about the future effect viral marketing connected to a payment could have on a societal level.

6.1 Conclusion

Viral marketing is a marketing tool which has not been fully explored yet. Kalle Nilsson (Personal communication, 4 December 2007) from the advertising agency Floyd, stated that most of their customers are not ready to try this new approach of marketing. One advantage with viral marketing is that it could spread in diverse ways. It can expand through emails, video uploading sites like Youtube and it can flourish on network communities such as Facebook. In the two previous chapters we have discussed and analyzed the results from our three focus groups in order to answer our purpose: How would monetary awards affect youth's motivation to pass along a viral marketing message and how would the receiver respond to the campaign? Our main findings are as follows:

The Internet users with the characteristics of a Hedonic surfer (enjoyment surfer) tend to have a more positive view of the payment aspect while the Internet users who tend to apply Internet for work related purposes (Utilitarian searcher) have a more negative and restrictive view of it. We believe that this conclusion could be of importance for viral marketers when it comes to finding the most efficient senders of their campaigns. As long as the content of the message is good our conclusion would clarify who to target in order to maximize the spread of viral campaigns.

The more frequent Internet users (a person who utilizes the Internet sixteen hours or more per week) have a more positive attitude towards the payment aspect. Through our analysis we came to the conclusion that this depends on the frequent users' deeper knowledge about the Internet and how websites are financed. The frequent users are more positive towards a

payment connected to viral campaigns, simply because they understand the benefits they can gain from it.

Frequent Internet users have a tendency to become jaded by all the advertisement clutter on the Internet. This state makes them shut out the advertisement they are being exposed to. The frequent users viewed the payment aspect as a way of receiving the best possible clips out there since the paid sender was being viewed as a critic and a clip screener. For the frequent users this would mean that they would receive the best clips for a smaller amount of effort, since the screening would be done by the spreader.

Our study showed that the younger youth in general were more accepting towards the payment aspect compared to the older participants. We argued that this depends on the fact that the respondents are in different stages of their lives. Our study showed that the younger respondents are more accepting towards alternative ways of earning money compared to the older participants, which would influence their acceptance level of a payment connected to viral marketing. Further we argued that the older generation remembers a pre-Internet time which has made them more restrained in the way they perceive the Internet and hence the payment aspect.

Customized advertisement is perceived as a positive aspect of viral marketing. The fact that the sender has a lot of knowledge about his friends i.e. the target group it is a bigger probability that the message reaches the right audience. The result is that the recipient receives a higher amount of customized advertisement. We argue that the customized effect viral marketing has is an advantage for both the receiver and the sender, since the recipient receives advertisement which they more likely would have an interest in.

Our focus group participant's feared viruses to such an extent that they would delete unknown messages which could contain attachments. On communities such as Facebook, the participants felt more secure with opening unknown messages. Our study shows that it is important to be clear with the fact that a viral message is an advertisement. This could make the company gain trustworthiness among the viewers and diminish the suspiciousness which could occur when the viewers do not know what they are being exposed to.

Our findings showed that the personal aspect (receiving mails sent from a friend) could prevent the message from being removed straight to the trash bin. Our observations also showed that cc-emails (emails sent to a large amount of people at the same time) have a larger chance of being ignored by the receiver. Moreover, our findings showed that cc-emails have a lesser chance of being forwarded than personal emails. Our conclusion was that the personal aspect played a crucial role in the choice of whether to opening or forwarding a viral message.

6.2 Viral marketing connected to a payment – what could it lead to?

Our study showed that a lot of the advertisement on Internet is viewed in an automatic way by the surfer which suggests that the viewer isn't aware of the advertisements they are being exposed to. Marketing tools such as banners and pop-ups are so common that the viewer often doesn't notice them or purposely avoids them since the surfer often knows were these advertisements happen to appear. Viral marketing would be a good way of reaching out to the attention deficit world in which we are living, but to what extent would the success be welcomed?

In many workplaces today the employers have found issues with the amount of time their employees spend in web communities and other enjoyment sites. This leisure web surfing is a waist of resources and costs the companies a lot of money, which has made the executives to take action against it. Sites like Facebook, MySpace and other leisure related sites are often blocked and unavailable at many workplaces.

Viral marketing on the other hand is not as easy to block out since the messages could find their way to the employees' work mail. Since the time spent on watching viral messages constitutes a waist of the company's resources, we raise the question; what kind of measures is the company allowed to take? If viral marketing connected to a payment results in a higher amount of viral messages sent to work places, would that justify the employer's increased authority to control the employees' mail flow? We find the relation between viral marketing and time consumption as a very interesting topic to further investigate in future research.

We believe that the outcome could even have an effect on a societal level since the increased time spent on watching viral clips would make our society more inefficient. The worst case

scenario would be that you as a consumer would receive less for your money since you would be paying for peoples leisure web surfing and not for their efficient time.

An increased amount of spam could be another negative result of viral marketing with a payment connected to it. The worst case scenario would be that the sender of viral messages would use the payment as an incentive to focus on quantity instead of quality. This could then result in spam which would make the receiver resent viral messages. On the other hand, a payment could increase the quality of the viral clips since the bad campaigns would be eliminated due to the higher amount of clips. The increased competition among the viral messages would therefore increase the quality of the content.

On the other hand the success of viral marketing connected with a payment could contribute to a more efficient way of consuming advertisement. The customized concept of viral marketing suggests that the advertisement is targeted in a correct way which would diminish the time and effort of the viewer. The fact that viral messages does not hold the same interruptive feature as television commercials makes it more attractive to the consumer since they can choose when to be exposed to the advertisement.

Another positive effect would be that companies could lower their advertisement budgets, since they could avoid mass marketing and concentrate on targeting. Viral marketing would also help the companies to reach customers who are less susceptible. Since downloading is getting more and more common it is getting difficult for companies to reach customers through television commercials and papers. Viral marketing could therefore become a gateway to reach these customers. Business ideas such as Revver's are a good way of making viral marketing campaigns more efficient.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Interview guide for the focus groups

Reklam på Internet

- Vad är din spontana åsikt om reklam på Internet generellt? Negativt eller positivt inställd?
- Vart ser du reklamen på Internet?
- När vi säger reklam på internet, vad tänker du på då? Vilka olika typer av reklam och vad väcker det för känslor? Hur reagerar du på reklamen när du ser den?

- Tror du att du påverkas av reklamen? Varför/varför inte?
- Hur påverkar reklamen ditt surfande? Är det ett störande eller avkopplande inslag?
- Uppfattar du reklamen på Internet på samma sätt som annan reklam i till exempel tidningar, tv och på reklampelare? Förklara?

- Hur påverkar avsändaren till reklamen din inställning till den?

Tidigare erfarenhet av viral marketing

- Har du hört begreppet viral marketing tidigare? I vilket sammanhang?
- Vad är din spontana åsikt om viral marketing?
- Har du någonsin fått ett viral marketing meddelande skickat till dig? I så fall berätta om det?

Successfactors inom viral marketing

- Har du skickat vidare ett viral marketing meddelande och i så fall varför?
- Vad tror du påverkar dig till att skicka vidare ett meddelande?
- När har du valt att inte skicka vidare ett meddelande? Vad har påverkat dig att ta det beslutet i så fall?

- Vilka är "successfactors" bakom viral marketing enligt dig?
- Vilka "pitfalls" finns när det gäller viral marketing enligt dig?

Reklam på videosajter

- Har ni tidigare uppmärksammat reklam på videosajter och i videoklipp?
- Hur påverkar ett dåligt/bra videoklipp er inställning till ett varumärke?

Uppfattningar av utskickade meddelanden

- Har du tagit del av följande meddelanden? Hur och när?
- Vad var din första tanke när du såg detta meddelande… och detta… och slutligen detta…?
- Var det tydligt att det var reklam?

- Skickade du vidare följande meddelande? Varför/Varför inte?
- Vad hade gjort att du handlade annorlunda? Att du inte skulle ha skickat iväg det/skulle ha skickat iväg det?
- Vad tycker du att det finns för fördelar/nackdelar med den här typen av reklam?

Betalningsaspekten

- Om vi nu berättar att vi får betalt varje gång det här meddelandet skickas vidare, hur känns det? Tycker du att det är ok eller inte? Varför, motivera?
- Tror du att du hade handlat annorlunda om du visste om betalningen innan du bestämde dig för att skicka meddelandet vidare eller inte? Varför?
- Tror du att du hade tittat på videoklippet om du visste att det var reklam och att din kompis fick betalt för att skicka det till dig?
- Hade det känts annorlunda om du inte kände/kände personen som skickade meddelandet? På vilket sätt?
- När hade du förlorat förtroendet för en kompis i detta fallet?

- Har du råkat ut för en "spam kompis"? När blir det för mycket?

- Skulle en betalning motivera er till att sprida vidare videoklipp i en större utsträckning än idag?

- Skulle en betalning inspirera dig till att lägga upp fler videoklipp på sajter som Revver än vad du har gjort tidigare?

- Har du några synpunkter ur ett etiskt perspektiv eller inte?

- Gör reklamen videosajterna mindre attraktiva?

Spådom om framtiden

- Vad tror du om utvecklingen av det här konceptet i framtiden? Varför?

- Vad anser du är för mycket videoklipps reklam? (Facebook effekt)

- Vilken betydelse har själva betalningen för resultatet?

- Hur kan man enligt dig göra viral marketing konceptet mer effektivt och lönsamt?

- Hur skulle man kunna mäta spridningen och lönsamheten av en viral marketing kampanj?

8.2 The focus group participants

Focus group I

Name:	*Age:*
Emma	18
Simon	19
Andreas	19
Carolina	19
Sofia	19
Henrik	19

Focus group II

Name:	*Age:*
Agnes	19
Anna	18
David	19
Martina	19
Leon	21
Jon	20
Madelene	19

Focus group III

Name:	*Age:*
Johanna	25
Sabine	24
Emma	25
Helena	24
Frida	24
Fredrik	29
Carl	28
Daniel	28

8.3 Interview I

This interview was conducted with Kalle Nilsson at Floyd's office in Malmö.

M: Vi hade tänkt att börja med lite bakgrunds frågor kring Floyd och dig.
Hur länge har Floyd funnits?
K: I lite mer än ett år. Vi startade i augusti förra året.

M: Företaget är inte så gammalt då?
K: Nej det är det inte.

M: Hur många anställda har ni?
K: Jag tror vi är åtta anställda men vi brukar säga att vi är elva när vi har firmafest då vi brukar räkna med våra frilansare.

M: Var ni åtta från första början också?
K: Nej från början var vi fem. Vi var fem stycken som kom från Grey. Vi är en ny byrå men ändå inte liksom. Vi hade med oss kunder och allt från Grey. Kunder som vi hade arbetat med i upp till 15 år. Så det är en lite nyare konstilation men ingen ny byrå.

M: Eran kund krets, hur stor är den? Det kanske är lite svårt att svara på....
K: Ja alltstå, hur många kunder kan vi ha...ett tiotal ungefär.

M: Som ni jobbar med kontinuerligt?
K: Ja precis.

M: Er omsättning, är det något du kan svara på?
K: Det har jag ingen aning om. Det får ni fråga mannen där utanför om.

M: Har ni gjort några kända kampanjer? Vi var inne och tittade på er hemsida och såg några. Har ni gjort några fler förutom dom?
K: Vi har lagt ut det mesta där. Vi har ju bland annat den här som har gått upp nu i dagarna. (Kalle refererar till ett uppslag i en tidning) Det är skandinaviens största mäklar-byrå som ska starta upp här i Malmö nu som vi ska lansera. Det har bara gått ut en annons än så länge.

M: Jag tror det stod om det på eran hemsida, gjorde det inte det?
K: Jo det kan nog stämma, bland nyheterna.

M: Vad är din arbetsuppgift här?
K: Min roll kallas för new media arkitekt. Framför allt är jag ansvarig för nya medier primärt web grejer.

M: Så då arbetar du mycket med internet marknadsföring?
K: Ja vi försöker så mycket som möjligt. Vi försöker nästan ha med det i alla kampanjeförslag som vi kommer med men tyvärr så är det inte alltid som kunden nappar på det. Många är ju lite fega och vill köra på annonser

M: Är det just annonser som de flesta företagen använder sig av?

K: Ja det är det, men man märker stor skillnad bara det senare året då det har börjat bli mer web. Men det är fortfarande väldig traditionell webreklam.

M: Som banners och popups eller?
K: Ja mycket banners och nån kampanj sida eller så.

M: Vad har du jobbat med tidigare?
K: Jag hade samma roll på det förra företaget Grey. Det var min första anställning inom denna här branchen.

M: Hur skulle du definera Viral marknadsföring?
K: Det är en jättesvår fråga. Jag tycker det kan vara nästan vad som helst. För mig började det med de här roliga klippen som man är beredd att skicka vidare. Det var så jag kom i kontakt med och lärde känna begreppet viral marknadsföring först. Nu så har det mer gått över till Facebook applicationer. Spel är en annan viral grej, spel och tävlingar.
M: Ja det är var så jag kom i kontakt med det för första gången. Den här monster kampanjen som fanns för några år sedan.

M: Hur ofta använder ni er av viral marknadsföring?
K: Inte så ofta som vi vill, vi har väl gjort två stycken riktiga virala grejer. Vi har en kampanj som är under tillverkning som tenderar till det virala.

M: Brukar era kunder efterfråga virala kampanjer eller är det mer så att ni föreslår dem?
K: Det är mer vi som föreslår det.

C: Får man en känsla av att det är väldigt nytt fortfarande?
K: Jojo, vi diskuterar det med våra kunden och de tycker det är spännande men de är fortfarande lite fega. Jag förstår inte riktigt varför för oftast kan det vara väldigt billigt att göra något viralt i jämförelse med vad en hel sida i Sydsvenskan kostar. Man kan ofta ha en hel viral kampanj för den kostnaden.

M: Tror du att det beror på att de inte har så mycket kunskap om det ännu eller är de bara fega?
K: Jag tror det är en kombination. Sen tror jag att visa är lite fega då man måste skoja med sitt varumärke. Man måste ha något riktigt roligt där man skojar med sitt varumärke. Man måste dra det lite längre än vad man behöver i en annons för att någon skall vara beredd att skicka det här vidare. Det måste ju vara riktigt roligt. Sen har man ju det inte i sina egna händer. Man har ingen kontroll över det man kommunicerar. Jag tror att det är det de är rädda för.

C: Ja man känner väl sig tryggare med annonser och att det ger mer.
K: Ja ja. Sen är det många som tycker det är jobbigt med allt det här som skickas runt, spam och så. De vill inte ha sitt varumärke i något som förknippas med spam.

M: Sedan är det väl också väldigt svårt att mäta hur framgångsrik en kampanj har varit.
K: Ja visst är det så.

M: Hur går ni tillväga när ni skapar de här kampanjerna? Har ni något speciellt tillvägagångsätt?
K: Vi utgår alltid från vår grundkampanj idé. Vi vill inte ha en massa sprettiga saker bara för att det är kul. Det ger liksom ingen effekt för kunden. Vi försöker hitta saker som är rätt för

kampanjen och rätt för varumärket. Jag vet inte om ni har sett det vi gjort för hockey laget Red Hawks.

M: Ja vi försökte men vi hade inte rätt spelare.
K: Ja de har lagt ut en ny länk till den. Den var lite lättare att göra då det är en kund som inte betalar oss i rena pengar utan vi får lite event och sånt så då hade de inte så mycket att säga till om. Vi kunde skoja till det lite mer. Där gjorde vi en kampanj, ja dom hade ju precis åk ur elitserien och vi ville inte bara göra den klassiska "nu kommer vi tillbaka" utan vi skapade en kampanj som hette "På fel plats". Då var det enkelt att skapa något mer och hitta rätt plats för kampanjen. Ja, kampanjen har faktiskt blivit väldigt populär. Det har bloggats om det på Expressen och massor av supporter bloggar. Det var 25000 spel bara på en och en halv månad. Vi har ju inte haft en banner eller något heller, eller förresten vi hade en banner på deras hemsida.

M: Hur viktigt tror ni att det är att den produkten som marknadsförs har någon anknytning till klippet?
K: Jag tror det är viktigt, annars blir det något helt annat än reklam, det blir mer underhållning. Det kan ju vara ett problem om man har för tydliga avseenden då folk kanske inte är beredda på att skicka det vidare heller på samma sätt. Om det är uppenbart att det är reklam alltså.

C: Det finns vissa kampanjer där hela grejen är att man väntar med att lägga ut vem som ligger bakom reklamen. Vad tror du om det?
K: Jo jag tror det är jättebra. Absolut, men då måste man verkligen lyckas så att det inte blir så att när man väl avslöjar det så är det ingen som hör. Lyckas man med det är det ännu bättre.

M: Hur brukar ni sprida era kampanjer?
K: Ja nu har vi inte gjort så våldsamt många. Vi gjorde en för ett bokförlag som är en kund, en liten då dom inte har så mycket pengar. Det var för en boklansering, vi samlade in en massa adresser till kända människor inom kulturvärlden men det var inga tunga människor som skriver för DN ledarsida utan det var liksom Alex Schulman och så. Då gjorde vi utskick till dessa personer, alltså till person som vi tyckte passade.

M: Brukar ni använda er av sajter så som Facebook?
K: Ja, vi har inte gjort någon kampanj där det har lämpat sig ännu. Vi har en som är på gång. Vi är inte säkra på hur vi ska sprida den ännu men absolut sajter som Facebook är perfekta att använda sig av.

M: Hur ser ni på det här med Facebook. Vi har diskuterat det lite och det känns som det kan bli ett överflöd. Det känns som om man inte riktigt orkar kolla på det.
K: Ja, jag tror ju att det håller på att komma till en gräns. Samma sak med att det är en hel del företag som skapar en massa egna applicationer. Alltså man orkar snart inte ta del av alla applicationer och man hittar inte alla även om man har lagt till dem.

M: Det börjar helt enkelt bli lite för mycket?
K: Ja det börjar bli lite för mycket.

M: Vi pratade lite om det här med målgrupp tidigare, hur ni spred ut den där kampanjen för bokförlaget som du nämnde. Hur brukar ni fundera kring att hitta rätt målgrupp? Har ni någon direkt taktik?

K: Nej, någon direkt taktik har vi inte. Det gäller väl att försöka med hela arbetsgruppen och kunden , hitta vem som skulle vara värda och vem man vill ska dela med sig. Det är även viktigt vem som får den först. Någon superbloggare tex. det är inte så himla roligt för dem att blogga om de får det från sin kusin på landet utan de vill gärna vara först. Jag tror att det är viktigt att nå rätt människor först och därifrån får det ta spridning.

M: Tror du att det är vanligt att man använder sig utav bloggar?
K: Jag tror att det börjar bli mer vanligt.

M: Började inte Alex Schulman som bloggare?
K: Jo det gjorde han.

M: Har du hört talas om hemsidan som heter Revver.com?
K: Vad hette den sa du?
M: Revver.com.
K: Nej det har jag faktiskt inte.
M: Det är en Internet sida där de betalar de som skapar ett viralt klipp. I slutet av det här klippet lägger de in reklam och så får man betalt för att både sprida de här klippen och för att ladda upp dem. Vad tycker du om det här konceptet? Tror du att det kan vara ett sätt att vidarutveckla det här med virala kampanjer?
K: Jag kan alltså gå in och skapa vad som helst? Vad är det för företag som hängs på där? Kan det vara vad som helst?

C: Ja dom brukar koppla ihop passande reklam med klippen.
K: Görs detta automatiskt eller är det någon som har kontroll över det här?
M: Det är någon som sitter och har kontroll över det. Det är ett amerikanskt företag så det finns ingen svensk motsvarighet ännu. Men det känns rätt intressant.
K: Ja jag tror det är jättebra där människor får hjälp att engagera sig. Det är jätteviktigt att folk kan skapa sina egna filmer och så vidare. Jag menar så länge man har någon form av kontroll av det så tror jag det är jättebra. Det får ju liksom inte bara skickas iväg eller att man tillåts skicka iväg vad som helst som kopplas till ett varumärke.

M: Hur tror du mottagare uppfattar ett sådant här meddelande om det vet att kompisen får betalt för att skicka iväg det?
K: Jag tror inte det spelar någon roll så länge det inte blir i spam alltså i stora mängder. Jag skulle nog inte bry mig om en kompis har fått betalt för det.

M: Tror du det finns andra risker med det förrutom spam effekten?
K: Ja risken är väl att kvaliteten går ner och att många tror att de kan tjäna jättemycket pengar på det så att de börjar massproducera. Så länge det är kvalitet på grejerna så tror jag inte att det behöver spela någon roll.

M: Tror du att ni på Floyd skulle vilja sprida er kunders kampanjer på detta viset?
K: Ja, det är vi nog inte så främmande till.

M: Tror du att era kunder skulle vara intresserade av det?
K: Ja jag vet inte faktiskt, alltså det är svårt att svara på. I och med att jag inte har full koll på vad den här sidan är så har jag svårt att svara på det. Det är inte omöjligt.

M: Hur tror ni att den här virala tekniken kommer att utvecklas i framtiden, eller tror du att det fortfarande är så pass nytt att det kan dröja innan någon händer?

K: Nej alltså så himla nytt känns det inte längre för det har ju ändå hållt på i ett antal år. Jag tror att det kommer utvecklas mycket. Sudda ut alla de här gränserna för vad som är viral marknadsföring och vad som inte är det. Jag tror att det kommer bli mer och mer av det absolut.

M: Brukar ni titta på såna här grejer själva?

K: Ja alltså vi är ganska så intresserade av det här så vi försöker ju att hitta bra grejer och då skickar vi det vidare sinsemellan.

M: När vi letade efter reklambyråer i Malmö som höll på med viral marknadsföring så kändes det inte som om det var så värst många, men det är ju ändå rätt många kända företag som Ikea som har använt sig av det.

C: Ja, det känns som det inte är så många som känner till det heller, alltså bland våra vänner och familjer.

K: Nej precis, det kan vara rätt många som känner till klippen men att de känner till att det är viral marknadsföring tror jag inte det är så många som gör.

M: Nä precis. Det känns även som det inte är så många som ens uppfattar att det är reklam de tittar på.

K: Ja det är ju igentligen där man ska hamna också. Om folk sitter och tänker på att det här är reklam för ett företag så tror jag att en del i alla fall kommer bli mindre benägna att sprida dom.

M: Hur tror du trenderna kommer att bli inom marknadsföringen i framtiden? Tror du man kommer använda sig mer av Internet än vad man har gjort tidigare?

K: Ja helt klart.

M: Ja och det ser ni nu också eller?

K: Ja det tycker jag man ser väldigt klart och tydligt. Dom som fortfarande står och undrar och tvekar kommer nog ligga risigt till.

M: Men just nu är det mest banners och sånt som man använder sig av ?

K: Ja det är mest kampanj sidor.

C: Vi funderade lite på med här med nätverksgrejen inom reklam, förutom virala kampanjer är det ett sätt som man arbetar på? Word-of-mouth och så.

K: Alltså i kampanjer och så?

C: Ja

K: Ja det är det bästa sättet att marknadsförar sig på, word-of-mouth det är ofta med i tankarna men det är väldigt svårt att säga att nu ska man skapa en kampanj som ska sprida via word-of-mouth.

C: Det är ett så himla nytt koncept det här så det känns som det inte är så många som jobbar med det här i Malmö. Vi kollar ju lite extra på det här med betalningen och så.

K: Ja hade ni kollat uppe i Stockholm hade det nog varit betydligt lättare för er. Det finns tom byrårer som enbart sysslar med virala kampanjer. Det beror mycket på kunderna också. Självklart är de lite mer framme där uppe. Dom häftigaste kunderna söker sig också till Stockholm. Så är det tyvärr.

C: Det kanske är en övergångsfas nu också. Det har börjat komma igång. Alla kunderna måste ju påverka varandra också.

K: Ja samtidigt som du hela tiden vill vara före dina konkurreter så kan det vara tryggt att se att de har vågat och att det gick bra då kanske vi också ska.

M: Det kommer bli väldigt intressant att se hur det kommer att utvecklas. Speciellt det här med Revver konceptet.

K: Ja jag kan tänka mig att en del vill ha kontroll över det själva. Utveckla det med sin marknadsgrupp och byrå.

M: Vilka kampanjer tror du är de som lyckast bäst? Ja alltså ska de vara roliga, kontroversiella eller spela på något annat.

K: Jag tror det är de mest smarta på något sätt. Jag gillar den Nokia gjorde för några år sedan. De la ut några cd skivor på ett antal caféen och torg, där det stod att de innehöll konfidentiellt matrial. Det var när de skulle lansera ny telefoner. Det tog bara någon timme innan det låg ute på nätet,det var bilder och information om telefonerna. Nokia låtsades alltså att någon hade tappat de här skivorna. Det var riktigt smart tycker jag. Ja såna här kampanjer kräver ju mycket mod.

8.4 Interview II

Backgrundsfrågor

Namn och titel:
Kristofer Mencák – Digital Media Manager

När startade Go Viral?
Startat 2003
Hur många anställda har Go Viral?
20-30 anställda
Hur ser er kundkrets ut?
Kunder allt ifrån Sprite/Coca Cola, GoodYear, Nissan, Axe, T-mobile, Playstation, Dove, Björn Borg, MTV, Nokia, Barilla, Adidas,
Vad är företagets omsättning?
Omsättning 2007 ca. 28-29 miljoner.
Kända kampanjer?
Dynamite Surfing, Qashqai Car Games, Dove Onslaught, Speedbandits, Bad day 2

Vad är Din arbetsuppgift på Go Viral?
Jag har arbetat med det mesta, eftersom jag kom in som tredje person i företaget. De sista åren har jag huvudsakligen arbetat med att lansera kampanjer, ofta via kommersiella avtal med en mängd olika sajter världen över, varifrån kampanjerna fått spridning.

Vad är Din arbetsbakgrund?
Egenföretagare på Nephila Consulting – arbete med marknadsföring på Internet och webbdesign.
Startade på GoViral 2005.

Viral marknadsföring

Vad anser Ni viral/virus marknadsföring betyder?
Först tror jag det är viktigt att klargöra att en viral kampanj är inte något man "gör". Om en kampanj är viral eller inte är ett resultat. Man kan gissa om en kampanj kan bli viral eller inte och man kan optimera förutsättningarna för det, men en kampanj är inte viral förrän den har bevisat sig själv genom spridning.

I grund och botten skall en kampanj, för att kunna kallas viral, ha så bra innehåll och vara så enkel att sprida att den får en viral spridning, från sajt till sajt, och från person till person. Det är en slags word of mouth som tack vare digitala kanaler inte begränsas av tid och rum.

Hur arbetar ni med virala kampanjer?
Vi har huvudsakligen arbetat med att skapa spridningen. Vi har optimerat materialet för att få så god spridning som möjligt och sedan sett till att det fått en viss exponering. Vi har "tänt gnistan" om man säger så. Om det sedan "tar eld" är mycket upp till materialet självt.

Hur stor är efterfrågan på virala kampanjer?
Just nu ganska stor, och växande. Vi får ständigt fler förfrågningar och fler och större projekt.

Hur stor är kunskapen om viral marknadsföring bland era kunder?
Det beror lite på. Är det en kund vi har haft ett tag så är den ok. Många nya kunder har inte så mycket koll, utan tror att nästan vilket klipp som helst kan sprida sig.

Hur viktigt är det att den produkt som marknadsförs har någon anknytning till marknadskanalen? Hur sprider Ni era virala kampanjer? Vilka Internet sajter använder Ni er av?
För egen del anser jag att man skall försöka skapa någon slags koppling mellan produkt och budskap. Att bara skapa en galen kampanj gör inte alltid så mycket för varumärket, men kan såklart vara bra för spridningen. Bäst är om man vågar kombinera dessa och på ett intelligent sätt kopplar en bra idé med varumärket.

Våra kampanjer sprider vi huvudsakligen genom olika sajter eller tjänster på Internet. Vi använder inte e-mailutskick eller något sådant. De sajter som används är både med fokus på video eller humor och sajter som är mer kontextuella, som passar kundens produkt, och kan intressera de användare som är intresserade av produktkategorin.

Hur hittar Ni rätt målgrupp? Hur når Ni ut till rätt målgrupp?
Inför varje kampanj genomför vi i stort sett alltid research på nya sajter, som skall passa kundens målgrupp för kampanjen. Dessa sajter försöker vi sedan få ut materialet på.

Revver.com (Revver är en internetsida där man får betalt för att sprida virala meddelanden)

Har Ni hört talas om Revver tidigare?
Ja, vi har varit i kontakt med dem angående placering av videos där.

Vad tycker Ni om Revvers koncept? Tror Ni detta är ett vinnande koncept?
Jag tror att Revver, liksom många andra videosajter, har ett bra koncept. Dock agerar de på en marknad som är hårt konkurrensutsatt. Då behövs en modell som skiljer sig mer markant ifrån andra sajter. Som det är nu så finns det många andra sajter som har liknande modeller och för tillfället verkar Revver tappa användare.
http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details/revver.com

Hur tror Ni en sådan kampanj skulle uppfattas av mottagaren? Mindre attraktiv/ mer attraktiv om mottagaren fick reda på att det låg en betalning bakom?
Jag tror att det generellt är negativt att betala användare för att sprida budskap. Dels för att det minskar trovärdigheten från mottagarens sida, och dels för att det faktiskt påverkar användarens åsikt om varför de skickar det vidare.

Fördelar och nackdelar enligt er med videoklipp som sprids på detta sätt?
Fördelen kanske skulle kunna vara att det sprids till fler människor. Men, jag tror ändå att det på det stora hela är negativt. Se ovan.

Skulle Ni på Go Viral kunna tänka er att sprida era kunders kampanjer på detta sätt (eller sprider Ni kampanjer redan på detta sättet)?
Vi betalar ofta för placeringar på sajter, för att få en viss exponering och få spridning därifrån, men vi betalar inte enskilda användare. Jag är själv emot att betala enskilda användare av de anledningar som nämnts ovan.

Tror Ni detta skulle kunna vara något som era kunder skulle vara intresserade av?
Mycket möjligt. Fortfarande handlar mycket, även inom viral marketingkampanjer, om kvantitet. Kunder vill ofta att så många som möjligt skall se budskapet. Det handlar lite för lite om kvalitet, att rätt personer ser budskapet, och att de verkligen vill se det. Och för mycket om "eye-balls" fortfarande.

På vilket sätt tror Ni det skulle vara användbart att använda sig av Revver konceptet?
Självklart går det att ladda upp filmer på Revver och få visningar där, och eventuellt också spridning för bra filmer. Ju mer exponering, desto större chans till spridning.

Framtid

Tror Ni att sajter så som Facebook bidrar negativt eller positivt då det gäller virala kampanjer?
Positivt. Facebook är ytterligare en möjlighet att få spridning på kampanjer. Där kan man också dra nytta av nätverk människor emellan, i flera olika former. Vän-nätverk, professionella nätverk, intressenätverk etc.

Tror Ni det kan bli ett överflöd av virala kampanjer?
Det kommer fler och fler kampanjer, där tanken är att de skall bli virala. Det blir ett större och större "klutter" på Internet, där företag också måste konkurrera med användare som skapar egna filmer. Detta gör att det blir högre och högre krav på innehållet. Bara det absolut bästa får riktigt viral spridning.

Hur tror Ni viral marknadsföring kommer att utvecklas?
Jag tror att det kommer att bli svårare och svårare att slå igenom, och därför tvingas det fram en högre kvalitet. Fortfarande kommer det lanseras många sämre kampanjer också, men dessa kommer inte lyckas. Jag tror också att det kommer att skapas fler och fler avancerade kampanjer, som inte bara bygger på en "sjuk reklamfilm" eller liknande. Hela koncept, där virala element kombineras med övriga delar av marknadsföringsmixen.

Vilka trender förutspår Ni inom marknadsföring den närmaste tiden?
Jag tror att fler och fler marknadsförare kommer att få upp ögonen för vad man kan få ut av konversationen på Internet. Att först lyssna, och förstå vad som händer, vad folk pratar om, och sedan mer och mer delta i konversationen, hjälpa användare, ta emot feedback och också driva produktutveckling utifrån vad användare kommer med för feedback. Jag tror att marknadsföring mer och mer kommer att ses som något som företag gör hela tiden, i all kundkontakt. Kundservice är marknadsföring, sälj är marknadsföring etc. I korthet tror jag att marknadsföring kommer att bli (är redan) mer dialog och mindre monolog, som det var förut.

8.5 Interview III

Who are you?

What is your name?

Alex Black

What is your title at Revver?

Community Manager

How long have you been working at Revver? What have you been working with before?

1.5 years, before I was working in the Anthropology Department at UCLA as an ethnographic assistant for cultural anthropology case studies.

Background Revver

Which year was Revver.com first launched?

Late 2005

How many people are currently working with Revver.com?

20-30

How many independent creators' works for Revver?

We have many relationships within our creator community but most of them do not actually work for us in a traditional sense. We do have a few in-house creators that produce content for the company.

How many people are actively working on spreading the video clips created for Revver?

All of Revver's employees are actively engaged in promoting and sharing content, but the onus is really on the users to market and promote their content. It is in every user's best interest to share and spread their own content, because that's how they earn. Many of our users are very good at online and viral marketing, and know their target audiences well and are able to promote themselves pretty efficiently

What is Revver's yearly turnover?

I do not currently have this information

How many viewers does Revver have approximately per week?

I don't currently have this information

What kind of companies is sponsoring Revver.com?

Companies don't really sponsor Revver, they sponsor the content that makes up the Revver network, which is made by our creator community – so they really sponsor creators. Large companies such as Proctor & Gamble, Microsoft, ABC have sponsored Revver content as well as many medium-sized and smaller companies.

How did your sponsors get to know about Revver? Do you market yourself in any way?

We have an in-house ad sales team that actively pitches the Revver Library to ad agencies.

How much money have Revver earned this far on one single clip? Which clip is the most well-known clip uploaded on Revver.com?

Probably the biggest earning single clip is the "Diet Coke and Mentos Experiment" by Eepybird (eepybird.com) – they've earned upwards of $30,000 for that clip since it was published in 2006.

Can independent creators make a living by publishing their creations on Revver.com?

A select few can and do earn a living from a combination of Revver and other online video sponsorship, but for many income from Revver constitutes a nice supplemental income in addition to another primary source of income.

What is your definition of viral marketing?

Anything that will generate buzz around a name or brand and help drive traffic and interest to that name or brand

How do you make sure that the content on Revver reaches the right target group?

As I said, the onus to promote and market work is really on the creator of that work – creators know their audiences best, and we provide them with all the tools necessary to create a white-label environment where they can distribute that work, build an audience and community around their brand, and reap the benefits.

How important is it to connect the clip with a suitable sponsor?

It's pretty important. We've found that optimized pairings bring genuinely interested customers to sponsors, generate more money for creators, and increase the efficiency and profitability of the Revver network

Future

What kind of effect do you think websites such as Facebook has on viral marketing? Positive/negative and why? Can they generate an abundance of viral video clips?

Social networking sites like Facebook are currently very important for viral marketing, as these are the sites that creators are turning to build their brands and their communities, but think that these sites will be less integral in the future as creators start building their OWN environments (not owned by Facebook or myspace) where they can build their brand and grow their audience. Rather than have all your traffic and viewers access your content via social networking sites, we feel that in the long run it's more beneficial to creators and their brands if they have their own site to distribute their content and interact with their community on their own terms.

A good example of a self contained site with built in social networking and community tools is http://www.abigailsxratedteendiary.com/. See the front page of Revver.com for other example sites.