

Affiliate Classroom

The journal of affiliate marketing and management best practices

Viral Marketing

Tactics
Trends
Tips

Viral Video
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The Word

Social Search:
Hot New Traffic Tool

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Top 5 Affiliate Programs



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Featured Program - Reunion.com

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Top 5 Programs: November 2006

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There are few networks out there that can provide such a great opportunity. They offer numerous payment methods to make sure you are well taken care of. Find out more about Real Tech network and how they can help you reach your potential.

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http://www1.credit-card-offer.com/?a_aid=dir&a_bid=7dbefdc1

Having a hard time choosing from all of the credit card affiliate programs in your industry? Make it easier on yourself by promoting CreditCards.com. You can have the leading credit card offers on your website and earn up to \$90.00 per approved application.

The CreditCards.com Partnership Program features three options including text links and banner ads, a co-brand solution and a data feed solution. Their commissions can easily accumulate so you will be making a very steady income!

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http://www.golfnow.com/travel/cty.asp?ACT=4&IPN=affiliate_program

Do you own or operate a golf related website or blog? If you are looking to earn large amounts of money for referring your site's visitors then check out the GolfNow.com Affiliate Program because it may be just what you are looking for.

With the GolfNow.com Affiliate Program you can earn money two ways: When one of your visitors clicks a GolfNow.com link or banner on your website, they will pay you \$0.10 per click. When one of those visitors books a tee time on GolfNow.com they will pay you up to \$4.00 per reservation. Both of these ways will keep your visitor's coming back for more and increase your profits. Learn more about them and find out what they can do for you.

Revenue Allies

<http://www.revenueallies.com/?kbid=3475>

Have you heard of DISH Network, DIRECTV, and COMCAST? If you would like to earn up to \$145+ promoting companies like them and other well known consumer brands you should see what Revenue Allies Affiliate Program is all about.

They offer tracking on all web and phone sales, exclusive toll-free numbers and bi-weekly payments. They have a dedicated staff that is focused on catering especially to your needs! Check out an exceptional entertainment affiliate program that gives you complete access to all the best name brands.

Kaspersky Labs

<http://usa.kaspersky.com/partners/affiliate-partnerships.php>

Computer security is extremely important especially when it comes to your website. Kaspersky Labs is the world's most immediate protection against viruses, spyware, spam, and Internet crime. They have a variety of different virus protection products available such as: anti-virus, anti-spyware, anti-spam and personal firewall software that are specifically designed to protect. Their technology protects over 200 million machines worldwide. Simply promote their program and help protect webmasters from Internet crime.

Until next time...

Check us out in our [Industry Watch Newsletter](http://www.affiliateprograms.com/industry_newsletter/10-17.htm)
(http://www.affiliateprograms.com/industry_newsletter/10-17.htm)

In our newsletter you can find all the latest industry news, tips, and tools. Communicate with our team of experts through in-depth articles and free online resources. These resources will help you to dramatically, increase your knowledge of affiliate marketing. Here is a place where you can receive the guidance and support you need to reach your full potential.

COVER STORY

Viral Marketing: Tactics & Tips

by Evelyn Grazini

http://www.reawakener.com/free_gifts.htm



I have to admit – I hate the name of this type of marketing. I don't like to think about viruses in any shape or form. Not a computer virus. Not a cold or flu virus. Nothing! I'm sure you can relate.

Viral Isn't A Virus

Now, along comes viral marketing. It's called "viral" because it can spread just like any of the viruses I hate. However, this one is a good thing. It's good for the sender, it's good for the receiver. and, it doesn't do any damage. If used correctly it can greatly increase traffic, subscriber lists, and, most importantly, income.

Just a quick note. Not all viral marketing is created equal. My first attempt at creating a viral report was a complete failure. I thought I had everything figured out.

I wrote some great content on my niche subject. I added a lot of affiliate links. I wrote a reference section and put in more affiliate links. Then I asked other marketers to give it away to their customers. Most of them were not as excited as I was about my new report. The problem may have been all of those affiliate links that only benefited me.

When you make a viral report, be sure there's something in it to entice the recipient to pass it on.

Instead of telling you everything I did wrong, I'll give you a few hints on what a viral report should include. Then I'll discuss some new ideas in viral marketing. I'll cover viral video and audio, white papers, press releases, and RSS marketing ideas you may not have considered before.

You will want to use a variety of these to keep up with the new social networking aspect of the web (also known as Web 2.0). Many marketers are now looking for something different to offer their subscribers. If you can supply it, your report will be the first one chosen to go out to another marketer's list!

Viral Reports

The viral report is what started it all, and it is still going strong today. There are a few things you'll need to get right in order to make it enticing to others. After all, you DO want it to be read. Most importantly, you want others to find it useful enough to send to their list.

The first are the basics for the report:

- Write a catchy title that will attract the potential readers attention and make them want to open the report.
- Give just enough good content to make them want more!

Write a catchy title that will attract the potential reader's attention and make them want to open the report.

Don't try to "hard sell" anything with the viral report. Again, the key is to give just enough information to make the reader want more. Then, promote your web URL. That way, when they want more, they will go to your full-page sales-letter for the promotion.

After you have all of these things in place, you can start asking others to give your report to their subscribers. And, here is the most important thing. They will be very receptive to giving your report away if they can see some profit potential for themselves.

So, first, if you're selling your *own* product with the report, make sure you have an affiliate program set up for it. If you're selling an affiliate product, the best thing to do is see if you can find a merchant that has a two-tier arrangement. That way, you will make a commission from the sales made through the other marketers.

Then, make the report brandable. This means that they can take your PDF file and brand it with their affiliate links. You'll need a good PDF Brander such as Viral PDF <http://www.viralpdf.com>. Unfortunately, this takes a little more effort your part, and on theirs. However, you will find that many more marketers will send out a brandable report, than one with just your links in it.

Make the report brandable. This means that they can take your PDF file and brand it with their affiliate links.

The reason I covered the basics of the viral report in a little more detail is because the basics will not change. No matter what type of media you are using for your viral marketing effort, the basics will stay the same. They should always be kept in mind when using any of the other viral marketing techniques discussed next.

Viral Audio

After viral reports came viral audio, which was fairly easy for most people to do. All that's needed is recording software (most people use Camtasia) and a pair of headphones.

It can take some time to create an audio recording due to editing challenges. It's almost like an electronic document. You can cut things out as needed, or re-record certain parts. If you're

really picky about things, it could take forever!

After it's recorded the rest is easy.

Since an audio file is too large for email, it is usually posted on a web-site. People are then invited through email to listen to it. This increases your traffic rank and "stickiness," since people tend to stay on the site longer when they are listening to audio.

You can also make an audio report brandable using special audio branding software (<http://www.market-soft.com/>) then ask other marketers to post it on their site. Hopefully it will soon start bringing in some profits for both parties.

Viral Video

Viral video is the new kid on the block. Maybe you've heard of YouTube, eh? You can post a video on their site for all to see, then you can send an email asking people to visit your YouTube video.

It has been said that YouTube is a "community" not just a platform for hosting videos. For this reason, you need to be careful what you put out there. If it's junk, it will be made fun of by other marketers.

Or, worse yet, by those in the community who have nothing better to do. They're just looking for their next video to spoof, so they can make another video of their own! It's fun, easy, and free for them to make a short video. But the end result may not be so fun for you.

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Don't worry too much about these people; they usually go after the larger brand names. For example: a couple of teenagers recently picked on a video made by Burger King. While this proves that people do watch the videos, it wasn't necessarily good publicity for Burger King.

If you make a good video, people will watch it and recommend it to their friends. Go to YouTube and see what others are doing successfully, then try to do the same.

It's the same as anything else. If you make a good video, people will watch it and recommend it to their friends. It can get around fast! Put plenty of good information into it, presented in an interesting way. Go to YouTube and see what others are doing successfully, then try to do the same.

It's true that the amateurs will always be out there publishing video clips for fun and notoriety. The marketers will always want to publish their videos to drive traffic to their sites in an attempt to sell more products and/or services. Each party can help the other by bringing in initial traffic to the hosting site.

White Papers

White papers have been used for a long time in marketing. The nice thing about white papers is they don't have to be fancy. They are not very different from a report. White papers are usually very plain (no graphics, etc.). They are just packed with useful information.

The best use for a white paper is on a squeeze page site where you are collecting names and email addresses. The web-site information is included in the paper and there is a statement in the document that allows it to be shared with others (as long as all links remain in place).

The hope is that the white paper is so beneficial to the reader that the people who receive it gladly pass it around to their friends and family, and quickly make it viral. These reports get passed around to people not currently on a newsletter list. For this reason, it's beneficial to have the web site information going to another squeeze page.

On the second squeeze page, give out a different free report. Or, another related white paper - perhaps Chapter 2. When the report goes viral, many more names will be added to your list. Make sure you have your autoresponder set up to give more information. Keep the reader receptive to future offers.

Press Releases

The nice thing about a press release is that it is almost immediately viral! You can submit a press release to a major distributor like PRWeb for free. For more exposure, it's worth paying a small fee to get into the major search engine listings. You'll reach many more readers this way.

Viral RSS

RSS is not a new thing. In fact, if you have a blog, you have an automatic RSS feed. The sad thing about this is that most people don't advertise the address of their RSS feed. It should be easy for others to copy and paste the feed address into their web pages or blogs.

COVER STORY CONCLUSION

A great and easy way to use RSS is to start a Squidoo site. They have an option to import an RSS blog feed. You can show up to five preview posts from your blog. This is an excellent way to get your blog to go viral because Squidoo (<http://www.squidoo.com>) is relatively new.

A great and easy way to use RSS is to start a Squidoo site.

This is an excellent way to get your blog to go viral because Squidoo (<http://www.squidoo.com>) is relatively new.

The advantage to being new is that they are advertising heavily. This can only benefit your site, and your blog! People will read your blog posts through Squidoo. If they are interesting enough, they'll click on one and end up at your blog.

As you can see, there are many ways that you can get your reports to become viral. Use more than one of these suggestions to get the best results. Some are easy; some will take a little more time. They will **all** be worth the effort!

About the author

Evelyn Grazini is an Affiliate Classroom student and the author of "Directed Dreaming, Success From The Subconscious." Her specialty is Self-Help information, including Dreaming, Hypnosis, and Stress Relief. Her writings effectively condense volumes of professional research into one succinct resource. Find free reports at: http://www.reawakener.com/free_gifts.htm

TIPS FROM A PRO

Viral Video... Spreading the Word

by Mark Thompson
<http://www.give-me-articles.com>



Viral marketing has been with us since the mid 1990's, originally conceived as a method of getting people to remember URLs. It has since grown into a multi-billion dollar industry with almost every major company devoting part of its annual advertising budget to viral marketing projects.

Since the beginning, viral marketing video has had its place at the forefront. Who doesn't remember the "Dancing Baby" videos that were originally spread via emails? The first dancing baby video was created in 1996 and even to this day they occasionally appear in Inboxes around the world.

Over the past couple of years, the emergence of sites like YouTube and Google Video has increased the prevalence of video as a major media format on the Internet. It has given the marketing departments a major weapon with which to grab the attention of the public.

What Is It?

As the name signifies, viral marketing spreads from one person to a few of his acquaintances. They then "infect" their friends, and so on until it's been passed onto and "infected" countless numbers of people.

The first major success for viral marketing was Hotmail. Within two years they had gained over 20,000,000 subscribers and were later bought by Microsoft for \$400 million.

The first major success for viral marketing was Hotmail. Hotmail was started by two friends who wanted an easy way to email each other and their friends without having to use their employers email. They came up with an idea, and from that idea they created Hotmail.

To every message that was sent through Hotmail they added a link with the message "get your own free email account." This simple message was added to the bottom of every email. Within two years they had gained over 20,000,000 subscribers and were later bought by Microsoft for \$400 million.

Follow The Big Guns

Many major corporations use outside agencies to produce controversial videos to promote their products, obviously believing in the mantra "there is no such thing as bad publicity."

TIPS CONTINUED...

Many times you will see a corporation issue a statement denying all knowledge of the video. Two famous examples come from Volkswagen and the Austrian motorcycle manufacturers KTM.

An outside agency produced a viral video showing a terrorist who sat outside a busy restaurant in a Volkswagen Polo. He detonates the car bomb, but the car stays intact only killing himself. This "demonstrates" the strength of the VW Polo.

After the video became public and was viewed by millions of people, the two young producers got hired to make many more official adverts. VW, although naturally horrified at the video, got loads of free publicity.

When a video goes truly viral there is a massive effect on sales and brand awareness. A good viral video will be watched millions of times. The effect on sales and product awareness shouldn't be underestimated.

In the case of KTM, the company claimed that the video they produced was only for internal use and should never have been released to the public. The video in question showed a new model of motorcycle, due for release later in the year, being ridden around the streets of Lyon, France.

In the early morning a French stunt rider went through his full repertoire of stunts at speeds of up to 150 mph. Naturally KTM were also "horrified." However, the sales of

the new bike were excellent, so maybe they weren't too horrified!

Get Huge Traffic

When a video goes truly viral there is a massive effect on sales and brand awareness. A good viral video will be watched millions and millions of times and this effect on sales and product awareness shouldn't be underestimated.

The recent spate of Diet Coke and mentos videos have been estimated to have given the manufacturers of mentos over \$10,000,000 of free advertising which is 50% of their annual ad budget. To a small company the effect on product sales can be astounding, resulting in shortages and even more publicity.

You Can, Too!

However, it's not just major companies who can benefit from viral video. At the height of the Diet Coke and mentos craze a colleague of mine created his own series of Diet Coke and mentos videos and posted them on various sites.

Each video had a link to his website prominently displayed. These videos resulted in over 100,000 visitors to his site in a three week period. He has since used this momentum to create and monetize a video sharing site which uses a revenue sharing model. Very nice.

The videos took him a few hours to create and produce. He then uploaded every video to

Google Video, YouTube, and iFilm, including the experiments that failed. In fact, the most popular video (responsible for 30% of his traffic) was one of the failed experiments. The monetary cost of this traffic was \$0. Very nice.

Cheap and Easy, But Target Right

There are many benefits of using viral video to promote your sites. Videos are cheap to produce, easily passed on, and you can quickly make a name for yourself as a knowledgeable expert.

The whole point of a viral video is to attract traffic to your site. With a good video you can attract many thousands of targeted customers to your site. Target right.

The video doesn't need to be hilariously funny to achieve its task of getting targeted visitors to your sites. You can just as easily produce a PowerPoint presentation and record that using a video capture tool like Camtasia. Or, you can create a series of self help style videos on a similar theme to your site and release these for free with a link back to your site.

The viral videos need to be aimed at your target market. The whole point of a viral video is to attract traffic to your site. With a good video and production you can attract many thousands of targeted customers to your site. Note the word "targeted." It's pointless to get 100,000 visitors to your site if they don't have any interest in your product. (Also, be careful about attracting too many as your current hosting may not cope!)

How-To

Creating a viral video campaign is a relatively simple and cheap process. Let's look at how you would create and use a simple viral video campaign. In this example we'll assume that you're selling a product for the relief of back pain.

It really doesn't matter if you are selling an affiliate product or your own product. It can be a physical product like a pain relief gel or back support or a digital product like an eBook or indeed a video. The viral video promotion method will work for all types of products.

Step 1

Step one would be to create a video. For this exercise, I would suggest a simple self-help style video showing a series of exercises that would help relieve back pain or strengthen the back muscles. When you produce the video, create a "jump to" link at the end of the video. This should forward whoever watches the video to your sales page.

You can also add a watermark to the video containing your URL. The "jump to" link and watermark are easily added using your chosen video production software. There are many video creation tools available to suit every budget. Just make sure they produce the output in a flash format (.swf/.flv). They have to be able to be embedded or viewed in a web browser.

Step 2

Once you've created the video you can start the process of making it viral. The first thing to do is to post the video to a number of video hosting sites such as YouTube and Google Video. If it gets picked up and passed around then this should be all you need to do. However, I would recommend one extra step to ensure its success.

Step 3

In this scenario, I would visit back pain-related forums and tell people that you have a free video. Let them know they are welcome to download and pass it on to anyone they think may benefit. You can help this process along by adding a "tell a friend" script onto your video download page. Using this script they can easily email the link to numerous friends.

Make two or three videos and give away the first video. The "jump to" link could be a squeeze page where people can sign up to download the next video. On the subsequent video the "jump to" link would be your sales page. This way you will also collect a mailing list of targeted customers.

Get Started

As you can see from the above example it's a relatively simple matter to create a "buzz" about a product. Viral video is big now, but it's going to get bigger in the future. So why not use it to your advantage? Many people are making a name for themselves and getting noticed in the film and TV world by creating viral videos.

Make two or three videos and give away the first video. The "jump to" link could be a squeeze page where people can sign up to download the next video.

Additionally, more and more TV shows are being commissioned around viral video and it's becoming a recognized way to break in to the Film and TV worlds. If you know a friend or relative who has aspirations to work in film or TV ask them to create you some videos. You never know. Not only might you sell an extra few hundred products, you might also get invited to the Oscars in a few years time.

About the author:

Mark Thompson spent many years working in IT consultancy in London. Following a re-evaluation of his goals and lifestyle in 2004 he sold everything he couldn't fit into the family car and moved to rural Spain where he now pursues a variety on online ventures. See: <http://www.give-me-articles.com>

AFFILIATES AND WEB 2.0

Social Search - Great Affiliate 2.0 Tool

by Katalin Torok
<http://mktg.idared.net>



If you have been following our series of articles on Web 2.0 and its main developments in recent months, you won't be surprised to hear that the search industry is now getting "social" as well. Bookmarks, networking, shopping, and now search, it seems like there isn't a corner of the web nowadays that still lacks the label.

In this month's article exploring Web 2.0 for affiliates, we look around the social search market to see what the buzz is about and what the latest developments are. We also look at ways affiliates can profit from social search engines.

Search With a Human Factor

Social search is a term used to describe human-influenced search engines or search behavior. Instead of machines and ranking algorithms being the sole determiners of search results, social search engines take into account additional human factors. A user's search patterns or recommendations by the search engine owner is an example. This approach builds a social search engine that is both more subjective and - thanks to the human touch - one that delivers more relevant results.

Of course the picture isn't entirely black and white. Search engines have been continuously evolving from purely mechanical methods through hybrid processes to the emerging social search discipline. In the early days, search engines simply spit out a list of pages containing a certain search term.

Then the era of algorithms dawned, where ranking methods (such as Google's PageRank) already involved some human filtering and input. (Google's ranking algorithm is a closely guarded secret, but of its key factors is linking behavior. That is essentially the result of human webmasters placing links on their websites.) In social search direct human input at the search results level is present, possible, and desirable.

With Web 2.0 trends taking over the tech headlines in the past two years, social search has been steadily building buzz. The first social search providers, such as Eurekster and Rollyo, were launched a little over a year ago, and mainstream search engines also started experimenting with social features. The social search concept really took off in the past couple of months, and now major players, such as Google and Yahoo! are getting in the game.

Search engines have been continuously evolving from purely mechanical methods through hybrid processes to the emerging social search discipline.

One more thought before we dive deeper into the details. Social search is not going to replace Google or Yahoo! entirely just yet. This is very much an evolving area with advantages and challenges to human-influenced search relevancy. So no need to stop your SEO or PPC efforts. But as the market is building up momentum it pays to pay attention to social search as well.

Varieties

Many things have been called "social search" and providers have many kinds of services under this label. Here is a rundown of some of the approaches to social search.

Tags

Many of the players add a social dimension by allowing users to add tags (descriptive labels) to results to categorize them. Those help other users refine search results, or find new related results by exploring a search index. Try some health related queries to see an example. A Google search for "headaches" brings up these community-added tags: "Treatment, Tests/diagnosis, For patients, From medical authorities, Symptoms, Causes/risk factors, For health professionals, Alternative medicine".

"Yahoo! provides the engine and Rollyo puts you behind the steering wheel." We couldn't have come up with a better one-liner explaining the concept.

Customize

In the Rollyo (<http://www.rollyo.com>) FAQs you'll find: "Yahoo! provides the engine and Rollyo puts you behind the steering wheel." We couldn't have come up with a better one-liner explaining the concept. Most "build your own search engine"-type services use one of the main search APIs and provide a way to customize the inner workings of the search engine.

You get to choose which sites to search, which sites to give priority ranking to, what keywords to add to all queries, and so on to ensure maximum relevancy. Google rolled out its own custom search engine service late last month called Google Co-Op (<http://www.google.com/coop/cse>).

User controls

Another approach to customizing search results is allowing the audience to rate and rearrange results to better tweak search relevance. For example, Eurekster's (<http://www.eurekster.com>) application allows users to promote or delete a page from the search results. But you have the final say in accepting or declining the suggestion.

Most products allow users to recommend or directly add new sites to the original application, making the process truly collaborative or "social". The level of access varies, though. At

some providers users can freely add new sites that appear immediately in the custom engine's index.

At others, the moderator has to approve the addition, or authorize the recommender as a new trusted editor of the custom search engine. At Rollyo, you can take any custom search engine built by any user, immediately tweak it according to your preferences, and save it as a new one.

Wink

With Wink (<http://www.wink.com>) you can see tagging integration, rating and tweaking of results, and suggested terms based on previous user searches. You'll see tagging search results and aggregating tagged information from other social sites. There is even social bookmarking in the mix.

For Affiliate Marketers

How can affiliates profit from this new trend?

1. Get your site into the social search marketplace

Social search applications use existing search engines, such as Google and Yahoo! for their initial indexes, so you don't have to do anything specific to be included in the social search marketplace.

Social search applications use existing search engines, such as Google and Yahoo! for their initial indexes, so you don't have to do anything specific to be included in the social search marketplace. However, to be picked out as a "social search worthy" site by those building custom engines there is a golden rule: build a quality site.

However, to be picked out as a "social search worthy" site by those building custom engines there is a golden rule: build a quality site. This may sound like a useless piece of advice, considering that quality is very subjective. To be specific, build a sticky and bookmark-worthy site that users will feel compelled to save and add to custom engines, or tag as useful on social search sites.

Many aspects of the web and search engines are increasingly getting "social". This means that more and more it will be human beings who determine your site's perceived quality and have a direct impact on your traffic sources. Traditionally it's been page rank values or similar objective methods.

As social search sites gain momentum, it will be increasingly important to explore those

relevant to your business and niche and submit your site to them. If you find a custom engine that covers your topic, suggest your site to be included.

Finally, adopt tagging if you haven't already. Social search sites are frequently bundled with social bookmarking and aggregate tagged websites from similar services. By being present in social bookmarking sites and having your content properly tagged, you increase your chances of being picked up by these search engines and their users.

2. Build your own search engine

If you are ready to dive deeper into social search, consider enriching your site with a custom search engine. Choose from one of the providers mentioned earlier in this article, or the other players on the market and build a search engine for your niche. A custom search engine has the potential to make your site the definitive authority on a topic if you carefully tweak an

A custom search engine has the potential to make your site the definitive authority on a topic if you carefully tweak an engine to cover your niche area.

engine to cover your niche area.

Build a list of the best sites on the web covering your topic, add tagging, and customize down to the tiniest details possible. If you do it well, your "perfect" search engine will help make your site "sticky" and it will find its way into the bookmarks of your target market. Search is now a major part of online life, so a good custom search engine on a popular topic can be an instant hit with web users.

Some of the providers allow users to monetize the custom engines they build with the service. Eurekster allows Google AdSense and Chitika ads to be placed on the search results pages, but takes a 50% cut of the advertising revenue. Google's Co-Op can be integrated with your AdSense account and allows you to earn AdSense revenue just like you do from your regular website ads.

Increase your traffic by using the latest Web 2.0 tool to capture targeted traffic: social search.

About the author

Katalin Torok is an independent marketing consultant with a focus on Web 2.0. Her website and blog contains many helpful tips at: <http://mktg.idared.net>

Thanks for reading! Next month... We've got some holiday surprises in store. Don't miss out on the great ideas you get in every issue. <http://www.AffiliateClassroom.com/magazine.php>