

How to create a successful viral campaign



There is no set recipe to create successful viral campaign. There are, however, definitely some ingredients you can include to improve the odds of creating a successful viral campaign.

So, here Claus Moseholm, Business Director UK at global digital media solutions provider GoViral, provides ten top tips for a successful viral campaign.



1. Great content

For a campaign to truly go viral, content is everything. Make sure your content breaks the consensus, surprises the audience in some way, is really funny or is just outstanding in some other way. The idea has to be genuinely creative and the content should be relevant to the target audience.

2. Create conversations

Make sure your campaign contains at least one element people would want to talk about. Creating conversations and topics to talk about is what it's all about. Without a reason to talk, the campaign won't spread and it will not generate value to your brand.

3. Social value

Consider content that has social value to people. You can experiment to tie the campaign to a holiday, some event, or free-ride on a current issue. Starting a discussion about a topic is a great way to create conversations.

4. Branding

Demonstrate why people should like you instead of telling them why. Content that is too commercial is often not passed on. Balance the branding element with quality of the content. Really good content can afford to have some more branding, and sometimes it even makes it better.

5. Length

Make sure your content is too long. The first 5-10 seconds should really captivate the user. Avoid long load times for games and applications.

Try to make the content interesting immediately, regardless if it is a video, a game or something else. In general, the longer it takes to get through the content, the lower the chance that someone will see the brand connection and also pass it on.

6. Brand integration

Try to integrate the brand with the story, either directly or indirectly, and make sure that users don't miss the connection between content and brand. The best virals often tie the brand, product or service very closely to the content, and are later known by their brand name. Then it is impossible for the user to forget who was behind the content.

7. Technical set-up

Make sure it is easy for people to spread the content. Try to optimize the viral spread by providing formats that everyone can use. Do not use formats that aren't common and do not require special plug-ins or software upgrades. Instead, provide several different common formats, and maximize the number of possible ways to forward or publish the content.

8. Seeding

Without exposing the material to a lot of users, only the very best material goes viral. To increase your chances, and create critical volume for the campaign, seed properly.

Do not seed only on well-known video sites, but try to geo-target by focusing on local sites in your target territories and to contextualize the seeding so that the content appears on sites which focus on the subject of your campaign.

You will get a much better effect and higher quality on the views. Once the seeding is done, if it is good material, the users take care of spreading the content. But, you can not start a big fire without initially igniting some of the wood.

9. Media plan

Don't start the campaign by placing the content everywhere at the same time with banners, buttons, pre-rolls etc. rather, consider in which environments it is most relevant and likely to get picked up voluntarily. Once the campaign goes mainstream and is published in traditional media, it loses momentum among the most important users. The novelty is lost. Plan the different phases of the campaign with this in mind, and start with the media where the users themselves choose to pick it up.

10. Gather information

Make sure you track the campaign properly to get a lot of data/feedback. This way you know who has interacted with the content and where. If you want even more information, like e-mail addresses, names, etc, be aware that gathering a lot of info raises the barriers to pass it on and can diminish the viral spread. But, it is possible to gather information without stopping the spread.

You just have to be a bit smarter to avoid the feeling that the user provides a lot of details without any clear reason. An excellent way to do this by integrating the actual data in the content, so that it becomes better by providing more information.

11. Evaluate and improve

Yes, you get a bonus one - as it is very important. Make sure to use the information you have gathered. Evaluate the campaign: What worked? What didn't work? How could content be better made? How could barriers to pass-on be lowered? How could we improve reach in our target audience? Make sure to use your learnings from this campaign and use it for the next one.