

You suggest a link –companies cheer

The customers do the advertisement for the companies, that's the idea when modern campaigns spread like wild fires on the Internet.

The fact that video clips attract millions of viewers is not a coincidence – it's well planned marketing.

Commercials from last weekend's Super bowl final in the USA have been revived via the Internet. In just a few days Etrades funny TV-clip has got 1.8 million clicks.

In Sweden we find the same marketing phenomenon. A dancing baby eating cheese has become hugely popular on the video site Youtube. In two weeks the clip has been viewed roughly 110.000 times.

- We thought the clip was good, but we're a bit surprised that it's that enthralling to people, says Philip Junghahn, marketing executive at Kavli.

But it's not that strange. In the advertising business there's a lot of talk about viral marketing, the one that the viewers themselves help spread. And when commercials get an enormous breakthrough there's a certain reason for it.

- Getting a big spread on Youtube is not something that just happens. It's a myth that it's free advertising. There are consultants working with that, says Peter Arnesson, strategist at the media firm Bizkit.

Consultants are viral marketers spreading the commercials like a virus with the help of Internet users. The task for the consultants is in the initial phase of a campaign making sure the commercials get as big a spread as possible.

The consultants make it happen by planting the commercials in social meeting places on the Internet and get the talk going. Then, the users take care of the rest –if the movie "is right". - There's got to be some humor or something that engage people to pass the movie clip on to their buddies, says Peter Arnesson.

Everything can't become a viral campaign. That fact is causing the company GoViral to say no to several assignments. The company has existed for many years but in Sweden it's one of a few players. GoViral only work with spreading commercials and then trace how well the spread goes.

One example of a GoViral-campaign is Sprite Zero that was marketed with "Jackass" –inspired movies last year in June. The target was to reach 135,000 views of the clip that was put out on 240 Swedish, Finnish and Danish youth and lifestyle sites. The result was nearly 3 million views as the movies spread enormously fast.

- If the clip is a success there's no telling how big it can get. But you have to have a brilliant idea, says Per Rosvall, CEO of Swedish Media firms.

What he is meaning, just as many with him, the value of the commercial is huge when the distribution is among friends. Not least if it creates a buzz outside of Internet.

- If I send a fun clip of Ronaldinho from Nike, and you call me up and find it funny – well, then both you and me has become more Nike-friendly, says Per Rosvall.

How did the dancing baby from Kavli end up on Youtube? Well, the media firm Mediaedge:cia wanted to try how big a spread it would get and the effect of it.

- We are very happy to get 110,000 views, says Joel Nyrén, advisor for user-generated content.

*Mikael Kulle, DN 2008-02-12
(Translation, Ola Jönsson)*

Mouth to mouth – huge on the net

Viral marketing is based on ancient mouth-to-mouth advertisement, that's been revived on the Internet. The thought is that ordinary people talk about, and by them selves spread the commercials.

Some companies specialize in giving the commercial clips on the Internet a boost. They make sure the clips are posted on sites where people share material for free, and thereby help get the buzz going so other people start spreading the commercial clips.