

The Impact Of Viral Marketing Through Instagram

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ABSTRACT

In this modern day, viral marketing is one of the trends for marketers to promote their product worldwide. Viral marketing has become a promotion tool for marketers in creating awareness of their products (Kusumadjaja, 2014). Viral marketing is a marketing technique whereby the information about the company goods or services is passed electronically from one internet use to another medium (Kusumadjaja, 2014). Apparently, the effectiveness of viral marketing in achieving its goals in promoting brand and products has become commonly used in Malaysia. This research was accomplished to study the impact of viral marketing through Instagram on consumer brand knowledge of fashion designer clothing line Maatin Shakir. The fashion designer himself, Maatin Shakir utilizes viral marketing through Instagram platforms to increase consumer brand knowledge regarding his latest clothing line. Therefore understanding the impact of viral marketing on consumer brand knowledge will help derive the most effective management approaches for the company. The different social media platforms examined is Facebook. Apart from that, this research goals also to determine which social media application that best for the company to apply this viral marketing. Most of marketers have turned to viral marketing to promote their brands and dive into reputation management as now the area is evolving rapidly (Kusumadjaja, 2014). Therefore, for this research 100 questionnaires have been distributed to the client of Maatin Shakir which at the same times also the users of social media. The results concluded that the company's viral marketing activities through social media really have impact on its consumer brand knowledge.

Keywords: Instagram, Facebook, Viral Marketing, Social Media, Consumer Brand Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

In early 1990 viral marketing focus more on tv-advertisement (Kusumadjaja, 2014) Social media is the new version of word of mouth marketing. This research is to investigate the effectiveness of viral marketing on Instagram in promoting sales of products Maatin Shakir's clothing line. This has been done to help establish the effectiveness of viral marketing outside a test environment. This will be explored through the use of a questionnaire.

Instagram is changing how brands and consumers interact in the 21st century. Instagram, which only captured the attention of 40% of top brands in 2014, but in 2015 the statistic boasts 71% of the most recognized brands in the world (Scissons, Vo, & sim, 2015). The popular app hosts profiles for 92% of well-known brands. As social networking sites have a significant impact on consumers' decision-making process and behaviours, these sites cannot be disregarded by brands of which the target audience actively uses digital channels.

In Malaysia, particularly for Maatin Shakir business, instagram really a positive turning point for his business. The exposure of his products based on viral marketing via Instagram really helps increasing the sales of his products. As a result to that, by repost his latest products via Instagram, it create the brand awareness among his clients, potential clients and target markets everywhere around the world which still can access through Internet.

Viral marketing is a type of word of mouth marketing technique used on Internet (Akyol, 2013). Viral marketing concept, which was first used by Steve Jurvetson and Tim Draper (Pelphs vd.), is defined as "a word of mouth marketing technique used in relation to a brand, product or service similar to the spread of viruses on social networks on electronic media" (Quoted from MindComet, 20062 by: Dahan,2012).

It is a part of electronic word of mouth marketing because it is a part of electronic media and the main reason of its separation is that the starting point of this activity is known or thought to be companies. Dialogues related to services or products started with individuals' own will are observed in viral marketing activities.

Viral marketing through Instagram is more efficient and effective. In addition to that, viral marketing via Instagram is free and it is good to create brand awareness. As a result to this research, Maatin Shakir brand has reach the effectiveness of brand awareness among his clients. Apart from that, instagram really helps in spreading news and latest updated information regarding Maatin Shakir fashion collection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a result of being a basic need for people, social media will reunite everyone around the globe and as a result this social media are adopted by millions of people in a very short period of time (Ellison & boyd, 2013). Most of these sites enabled the existing social relations and/or social networks to be transferred to Internet. Social media user socializing on world of digital and this trend has become a normal routine for the nation development.

As the most accessible networks in the same socio-economic group with similar interests, the contents transferred through digital social networks is spread in a targeted manner because the desire to get more information regarding about almost everything is one of the main reason of people frequently visiting digital social sites (Ellison & boyd, 2013). Creating social networks on online platforms has become very popular in this era.

Online networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn continue to add more than 100,000 users in a day (Scissons, Vo, & sim, 2015). The fastest growing group on Facebook, which has more than 500 million active users, is the group of people aging 35+. Globally, more than 11.7 million hours per month are spent on Facebook and more than 200 million users access Facebook by using their mobile devices. Social media has also become popular among big hospitals and pharmaceutical companies (Scissons, Vo, & sim, 2015).

There are nearly 1,100 hospitals nationwide on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn or blogs. Various information ranging from recent developments in health sector to ongoing organization events are transferred among hospitals through these sites. Pharmaceutical companies have developed many social networking sites including disease support pages and special product information (Akyol, 2013).

Fortis Turkey has realized its first brand application on Facebook, which is a social networking site. 4.500 users in the first three days and 20.000 users in the first month joined "Fortis Turkey Cup Guessing Game". The application was started before group matching and users were allowed to guess game scores according to the league table. Those making the best score guess were listed at the end of each game week.

Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace have started to change companies' product marketing methods and ways of communication with consumers (Akyol, 2013). The viral marketing concept suggest that marketers should continue to use the power of interpersonal networks to promote a product or service (Bruyn & Lilien, 2008). This form of customer-to-customer communication is an effective means of influencing potential target market to buy the products (Lekhanya, 2014). Viral marketing exploits existing social networks by encouraging customers to share product information with their friends (Leskovec, Adamic, & Huberman, 2008).

It is evident that the viral nature of the Internet means that a negative comment about the company can spread easily and it is always very difficult to undo the damage done (Larson, 2009). According to a Mindcomet Corporation white paper (2008), the Internet has radically changed the concept of word-of-mouth. The term 'Viral marketing' was address by venture capitalist Steve Jurvetson in 1997 and was used to describe Hotmail's email practice of appending advertising of them to outgoing user mail. The research found out that if such an advertisement reaches 'susceptible' users, the same users will become 'infected' (i.e., sign up for an account) and then go on to infect other susceptible users.

However according to Klooper, this researcher quoted indicates that the viral marketing concept enables consumers to spread the information regarding the products and services through on-line or through other digital media, which overshadow the traditional marketing practices (Klopper, 2012). Viral marking is the new generation of word-of-mouth (Lekhanya, 2014). The key driver in viral marketing is the effectiveness of unsolicited, electronic referrals to create awareness, trigger interest, and generate sales or product adoption (Bruyn & Lilien, 2008). Successful viral marketing campaigns are comprised of an

engaging message that involves imagination, fun and intrigue, encourages ease of use and visibility, targets credible sources, and leverages combinations of technology (Dobele, Beverland, Lindgreen, & Wijk, 2016).

Traditionally, word of mouth marketing has been proven to be most effective and obtaining a customer base and bolstering sales (DATTA, JOSHI, LI, & WANG, 2008). Apart from that viral marketing has become the defining marketing trend of the decade (Larson, 2009). Viral marketing is easily spread around the globe because it takes on the trend of spreading the virus at an exponential fashion and portrays this spread as a positive sharing of information to others within a network. “The key difference between a viral and a TV ad is that a viral is something you will seek out, take pleasure in finding, and send on for someone else to enjoy” (Larson, 2009). Viral marketing takes the traditional roots of word of mouth marketing and exponentially expanded the reach through social networks, blogs, and other technological mediums (DATTA, JOSHI, LI, & WANG, 2008).

Word of mouth (WOM) marketing is such a successful marketing strategy because it create the “familiarity, personal connection, care and trust” between the consumer and the translator of the information (Datta, et al., 2005, p. 70). Viral marketing reflects the basic premise of traditional words of mouth marketing, only on a significantly larger scale. Companies have been trying for years to get a handle on WOM advertising to make it work to the advantage of the company (Jenkins, 2004). The rise of the internet and subsequent technologies and online platforms has resulted in a truly attainable way for corporations to positively benefit from online WOM advertising strategies (Jenkins, 2004).

Companies must now employ a new focus strategy to continue to engage consumers (Jenkins, 2004). Employing a “holistic marketing framework” in order to move from a company-driven to a customer-driven strategy that resonates with the consumer and allows for “the capacity to offer customized products, services, programs, and messages” (Jenkins, 2004). Viral marketing provides one of those mediums to achieve this new objective. Through blogs and other viral formats “customized online communities of opinion leaders enable brands to build deep relationships with their target audience, thereby providing a unique opportunity to increase the brand awareness (DATTA, JOSHI, LI, & WANG, 2008).

Another example of a successful viral marketing campaign was the “Let’s Say Thanks” campaign by Xerox (Klopper, 2012) whereby the campaign results were viral more than 1.5 million messages sent from their company web site in the first month alone. The viral marketing campaign developed by Xerox allowed consumers to create and send a heart-felt message to military personnel globally (Klopper, 2012). Additional coverage provided to the company at no-cost from this viral marketing campaign was achieved from the news media coverage by Fox News and CNN of the campaign and its positive impact on the military (Klopper, 2012). Gillette implemented a viral marketing campaign to boost sales of the company’s new three-blade Venus razor. The company sent a truck around Florida during spring break, and combined the billboard style truck panel advertising with a sweepstakes and an opportunity to share information about the sweepstakes with friends through a digital greeting card. The digital greeting card included photos of the contestant at the beach (Ellison & boyd , 2013). The result of their digital campaign was that more than 20% of the sweepstakes entries came from the receivers of viral e-cards (Ellison & boyd , 2013). This shows the reach increase potential that viral marketing activities can bring to a promotion.

RESEARCH METHOD

In lines with the scope of the research, the questionnaires will be distributed to the focus of 100 respondents of Instagram and Facebook users which are also the client of Maatin Shakir clothing line through structured questionnaires. The data thus collected are tabulated and analyzed through a statistical software package (SPSS) and results are shown in the following slides.

As a result, questionnaires only distribute to instagram followers which already purchased Maatin Shakir clothing line. Therefore, the instagram followers that already purchase Maatin Shakir collection will follow Maatin’s official instagram for his latest products update. Maatin Shakir’s instagram followers are man or woman from the ages of 17-40 years, (working professionals/student).

Additionally to the sample being part of the study, the individuals had to be exposed to the instagram application and had experienced preview the promotion for Maatin Shakir’s products. There are 100 questionnaires that will be distributed to this research based on Krejcie Morgan table of population.

Theoretical and Practitioner Implications

From the data collection, this research found out that

- a) 89 respondents mostly prefer Instagram rather than Facebook.
From this the respondents agree to choose Instagram on sharing all the latest and updated information regarding Maatin Shakir clothing lines. In addition to that Maatin Shakir's has more followers on Instagram which consist of 4750 followers compare to Facebook following fanpage of Maatin Shakir Official Fanpage that consist of 913 followers (likes fanpage).
- b) 90 respondents agree that viral marketing gives customers freedom to talk about Maatin Shakir's company
Based on this, the respondents mentioned that through viral marketing, it is easy for them to critics regarding the products and this can help to improve more on the quality of the products. It shows that, it is not only focus on the negative comments to viral the product, but it also can help to improve the product. This will be a bad situation if the negative comments or bad comments did not monitor by Maatin himself.
- c) 46 of the respondents agree that Maatin Shakir's companies gain more popularity through the use of a viral marketing platform via Instagram repost.
For this particular section, it shows that most of the respondents aware about the existing of this product from the viral of the post via Instagram. One of the post was viral in the early year of 2014 once this brand was gradually exposed through Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week. It became hits till then.
- d) 85 respondents agree that Viral Marketing on Instagram helps them to know the latest product/collections by Maatin Shakir company

In this section, the respondent mentioned that Instagram can help them know more about Maatin's latest design. In addition to that, viral marketing via Instagram help to expose more

The implications of this study include issues related to viral marketing practice. In order to identify a better company marketing communication strategy, with specific reference to Maatin Shakir's company need to obtain a clear understanding of the relevant theories that can help to solve complex problems faced by corporate brand managers. New concepts and theories in viral marketing campaigns and strategies for companies should be proposed and implemented. The important elements for viral marketing practices in Malaysia should be further emphasized. This means that Malaysia company owners/managers need to implement viral marketing and understand its concept. This is essentially an applied viral marketing study related to marketing strategy, limiting the contribution to marketing theory.

This study intends to establish an understanding and knowledge with regard to the impact of viral marketing on corporate brand reputation within the company, with specific reference to Maatin Shakir clothing line. Further studies on the benefits of viral marketing strategies in Malaysian companies should be encouraged as this has the potential of increasing company brand awareness, popularity, image, trust, and ensuring long-term company and customer relationships.

Based on the findings of this study, further research could include similar studies in other Malaysia's fashion designer in this fashion industry and provinces with a large sample in order to assess whether these findings are typical of all provinces. In-depth qualitative research would assist in better understanding the nature of viral marketing problems experienced by Malaysian companies and their attitudes to viral marketing and the expenditure of financial resources on viral marketing activities.

A study by the various Malaysian company managers into the attitudes toward, and knowledge of, viral marketing would be helpful with regard to identifying ways to improve the use of viral marketing by Malaysia companies. Company marketing managers must notify target customers/users about the company social network websites' terms and conditions in place, which govern the use of the company website, to minimize negative comments. Company newsletters should also be supplied to communities in order to teach them about good communications ethics, including communicating through websites.

Limitations

In order to enable Maatin Shakir clothing line products can spread the info regarding latest update, this product brand should improve their use of viral marketing as a promotional tool, it is recommended that this company should polish on how to do promotion via Instagram and polish online entrepreneurial knowledge skills.

Maatin Shakir's marketing managers must have very well knowledge based on the market environment that consist of target markets and which collection they purchase the most and when they decide to purchase it.

It is recommended that Maatin Shakir should fully utilize viral marketing with the aid of social networking website like Instagram to create brand awareness and help to increase the sales of his products.

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