Week 3: Viral Marketing

From Spam to Viral Marketing from John Cleese

One B2B marketer used a lot of silliness to increase its Web traffic tenfold and generate thousands of sales leads starting a viral phenomenon which went from a wacky idea to revenue-generating success. This is one of the first examples of a successful viral marketing campaign.

http://www.backuptrauma.com/video/default2.aspx

On the discussion board answer the following:

1) Why is the Internet such an attractive marketing arena for businesses?

2) If you owned a business how would you use the Internet to attract customers?

As always, you are encourage to respond to other's postings.

Why is the Internet such an attractive marketing arena for businesses?

Low cost, total control over how you present yourself, and the capability present as much information as possible to customers are just some features the Internet has over traditional media. Accessibility is another key feature, newspapers are hemoraging their readership to online news sources, google is easier than a phone book to use, and web addresses are easy to remember.

Billboards, commercials, and newspaper ads all broadcast a message, but only if the potential customer doesn't flip the channel or their eyes scan elsewhere. Many online advertisments use the promise of free information, like "Free Credit Report," to entice users to visit their site. Once at the site, the user has been drawn into a more in-depth advertisement, but also an advertisement that will provide free information or services.

Traditional media are also "flat," lacking in interactivity. Online ads use the web's interactivity to draw customers in. Many Flash advertisements online coax websurfers to click on their ad by presenting a mini game, like duck hunting or bowling.

Traditional media use push strategies to get their messages out, versus the Web's pull strategy of drawing customers in. Amazon and Google cater themselves to the visitor's interests, advertising similar items to what the user is searching for and allowing users to customize their experience through options.

If you owned a business how would you use the Internet to attract customers?

At the very minimum, every business should have a basic brochure website that potential customers will find when they google them. Optimally, I would want to use the Web's potential for community building to my advantage, offer free online resources that people who were interested in my product or service would find useful.

While offering such free services would increase traffic to my site, a proactive approach would generate even more interest. I would have myself or my employees spend some time on online forums related to my services. For instance, if I were a provider of information systems, I might want to offer free coding and software advice to users who post questions on forums, including my web address in my signature. This could generate some great word-of-mouth online.