

## **Business management**

*Over the past decades, we have learnt so much about consumer judgements, rationales, and the processes that underlie specific brand-related phenomena. Using extant literatures, discuss critically how such consumer psychology or rationales have been aided by viral marketing.*

Viral marketing is a growing trend in modern day e-commerce, having garnered considerable attention in the trade press. Whilst the changing landscape of online marketing and e-commerce may in large part help explain the modern proliferation of viral marketing campaigns (Wilson, 2000, p. 232), relatively little research attention has been focused on the necessary overlap incurred between consumer psychology on the one hand and viral marketing considerations on the other. In viral marketing, the attitudes, and behaviours of the people – namely, consumers' choice to share a given advertisement (Phelps, Lewis, Mobilo, Perry and Raman, 2004 p. 333) – taken together comprise an instrumental step in the full realisation of the viral marketing process.

There is therefore a demonstrable conceptual overlap present between viral marketing and consumer psychology, if not in the motivations of passing on a given viral advertisement to others. In one paper explicitly focusing on these motivational considerations, Ho and Dempsey (2010, p. 1000) detailed the forwarding of online content as a special case of a more general communication behaviour, comprised of four discrete motivations: group membership, individualistic expression, the need to be altruistic, and the need for personal growth. There is therefore considerable scope for approaches adopting a socially-fluent psychological approach, in mutual considerations of consumer psychology and viral marketing. In this way, viral marketing is conceived as *post posteriori*: a research area taking place *after* the content has been marketed, and from the position of online consumers.

Whilst this distinction may prove useful in focussing attention on consumer psychology, a full and thorough treatment on the relation between viral marketing and consumer psychology would not be complete without adopting the alternative perspective the other side of the marketing fence (Schulze, Scholer and Skiera, 2014, p. 2). In this way, viral marketing is instead regarded *a priori* to consumer psychology, or before consumer exposure to viral marketing campaigns commences. In this way, debate benefits from discussions of company motivations in undertaking a viral marketing campaign. The company is instead the focal point here, replete with its own motivational profile which warrants research attention.

This essentially temporal distinction is both conceptually useful in such discussions, as well as demonstrating an awareness which questions the necessary *causal* role of viral marketing ON consumers. In this way, viral marketing may also be viewed from the motivations and perspective of Internet companies. Particularly in the case of newer companies in the electronic market, viral marketing has been discussed from

the point of necessity, in accumulating a broad customer base as rapidly as possible (Helm, 2010). Additional moderators of viral marketing activity may also be conceived from the position of respective company brand profile.

**\*\*\*\*\*Warning- this essay should not be copied-  
the copyright is that of Essayconsul\*\*\*\*\***