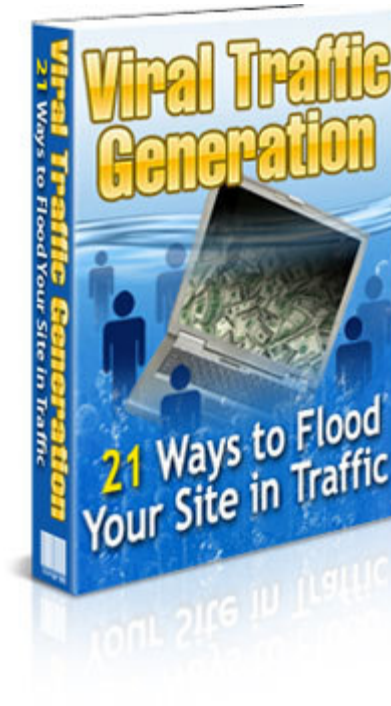


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Viral Traffic Generation

21 Ways to Flood Your Site in Traffic



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What is Viral Traffic Generation?

In recent years there has been more and more written about Viral Marketing and why you should be using it to drive traffic to your site. So, what is viral marketing, and why should you care? Is this just another fad that will soon fade away?

In short, viral marketing involves getting other people to willingly spread your message for you. People who like what you have done tell other people, and the message spreads from person to person like a virus. When that happens, it is referred to as your message "going viral."



It relies heavily on word of mouth advertising; someone sees or reads what you have to offer and tells a couple of their friends. Their friends see or read your message and they tell a couple of their friends, and they tell a couple of their friends, and so on. The number of people who are aware of you and your message increases exponentially. The more people hear about your site, the faster your traffic grows. How large will it grow? There is really no way to tell. The only real limit to the amount of traffic possible is how many people your site host can handle.

Just think about how quickly it could spread. If one person saw your message and told 2 people, who told 2 people, who told 2 people, and it continued, your message would very quickly be in front of thousands of people. If each person just told two other people, look how quickly it can grow.

$1 \times 2 = 2$
 $2 \times 2 = 4$
 $4 \times 2 = 8$
 $8 \times 2 = 16$
 $16 \times 2 = 32$
 $32 \times 2 = 64$
 $64 \times 2 = 128$
 $128 \times 2 = 256$
 $256 \times 2 = 512$
 $512 \times 2 = 1024$



Now just imagine if you started with 100 people spreading your message, or 1,000 people. You can see that it doesn't take long before hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people are aware of who you are, and better still, are visiting your web site and buying your products or services.

Viral marketing effectively taps into pre-existing social networks that your customers are already using. By creating something that is worth talking about and passing along, you create a "buzz" that spreads across the internet, and traffic floods to your site to see what the buzz is about. Once they are there, if

they like what they see, they pass the information along, and the buzz continues to grow.

Word of mouth marketing is by far the most effective way to get word out about your site. People will listen to others that they already know and trust much more readily than they will listen to you. These people do not know you, so why should they trust what you are telling them? After all, you might be likely to say anything in order to make a sale. However, they will listen to a friend or family member, especially if the person spreading the word does not have anything to gain by telling them. It is just a friend passing along a great deal they found, or some useful or interesting information.

Why should I use Viral Traffic Generation?

You may be thinking that viral marketing techniques are only for the major players with big budgets, and that it can not work for small businesses with small budgets. If that is your thinking, I can assure you, you are wrong. You might not be able to afford to produce the highly polished ads like the big companies, but there are still a lot of opportunities for success. Any business or individual with a message to get out or a service or product to sell can benefit from a well crafted marketing campaign.

There are several reasons that you should be using viral traffic generation techniques to build your business and attract customers to your website.

1.) It is a fast, effective way to drive traffic to your site.

Like I mentioned above, once the word starts to spread, it can spread very quickly, and there is really no limit to how many people can hear your message. Because your message often comes to someone from a person they already know, it has more credibility than if the message showed up uninvited in an email from someone they do not know.

Once the message starts to spread it picks up size and speed as it goes, like a snowball rolling down a hill. You may start out thinking that your efforts were not very effective, then one morning you open your email to find it full of new orders. When it works, it can work very fast.

2.) It can be very inexpensive.

Once the word starts to spread, there is not much additional cost. The biggest cost you will face is paying for all the additional traffic to your site. All of the cost and effort of spreading the word about what you have to offer is taken care of by the people spreading the word. More than likely, the biggest expense will be the upfront set up or production costs. Depending on which technique you decide to use. After that initial expense, the cost remaining costs are nominal.

3.) It can help shield you from negative comments

One thing to remember is that a negative message can go viral, too. Unfortunately, you are not going to be able to please everyone. If you do enough business, eventually you are going to have someone who is unhappy with you and your business. It only takes one customer that is dissatisfied to put a shadow of doubt in your customer's minds about whether they should do business with you or not. Once that doubt is there, it is hard to remove it. If people are not happy with the service they received, they are more likely to tell people about it than if they are happy customers.

As unhappy customers start spreading negative messages about you, the word will start to spread, and there is not much you can do to stop it. The more it spreads, the more untrustworthy your business appears. All you can do is have enough of a buffer in place that the negative messages do not overpower the positive messages.

If your message goes viral, not only will it send a flood of traffic to your site, but other sites will link to you, and your site will rank higher in the search engines. Your name will also appear on other high ranking sites. If a negative message does start to go around, it will have a much harder time getting out, because your positive message is already so highly ranked that the negative messages can not find their way to the top of the search engine listings.

4.) It can find hidden customers.

Despite the time and money you spend trying to narrowly define your customers, figuring out who they are, and more importantly, where they are, there will always be people that you have missed. Once your message goes viral, there is

no telling where it will end up, or who will see it. Because of the widespread coverage that can occur, people that you had not even considered to be your customers will get a chance to see your message. They will decide whether they are potential customers or not.

As word continues to spread about what you are offering, you do not have to worry about finding all the possible niches your customers might be hiding. You do not have to go find them, they will find you.

How much does Viral Traffic Generation cost?

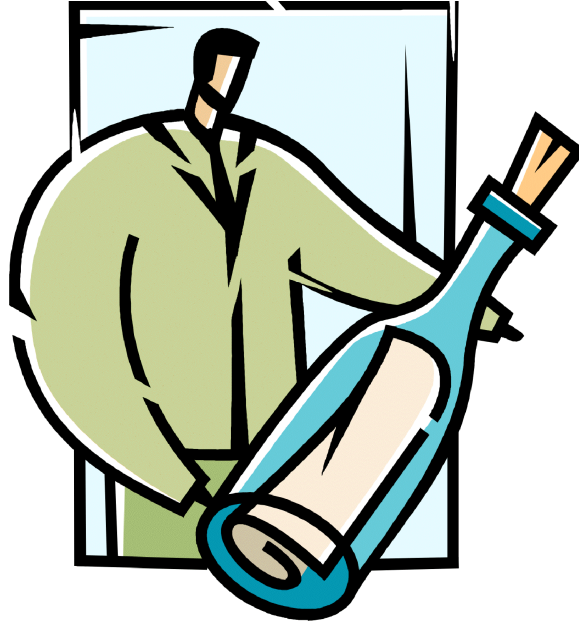
The cost of viral marketing really depends on the type of marketing campaign you decide to use. With the 21 Viral Traffic Generation Techniques listed below, there are many that are free, or very low cost. Some may cost a little more to produce and get started, while others could become quite expensive. How much you spend is entirely up to you and the how you want to use the different methods.

One of the greatest things about viral traffic generation is, once you get the initial message out, it really doesn't cost you any more once it goes viral. Your customers bear all of the time and expense of spreading the word. All you have to do is be prepared to handle the traffic when it comes. Depending on your website hosting service, there may be some costs for additional bandwidth as more customers flood your site, but if your sales increase because of the traffic it is worth the additional cost.

How can I make my message go Viral?

This is an often asked question, and there has been a lot of time and money spent to find the answer. The truth is, there is no guaranteed way to make your message go viral. There are some things you can do to increase the chances that it will take off, but you can not "make" it happen.

Successful viral traffic generation is part skill, part creativity, part timing and circumstances, and part luck. You may try dozens of things with no real success, and then strike gold in a completely unexpected place.



There is a quote that says “Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.” If you continue to market your site, and continue to lay the groundwork for success, you greatly increase the odds that you will be “lucky”. For some sites it takes a long time to become an overnight success.

By presenting your message in a useful, unique or entertaining way, it encourages people to spread the word. It requires creating a message with a wide appeal, and has a high potential of getting passed along. Once it begins, there is no telling where it will go, how far it will spread, or who it will reach.

If you happen to be one of the fortunate ones who have several messages going viral, you could easily reach millions of people. It does not happen for everyone, but it could happen for you.

21 Viral Traffic Generation Techniques

Below are 21 techniques that you can use to bring traffic to your website. Whether there is a flood or a trickle really depends on your ability to give your visitors something they can use or enjoy. It is important to remember that your customers are not stupid. They will know whether what you are offering is something they want, or if it is a cheap advertising ploy. If it is, they will pass the word along. If it is not useful, they will leave your site and say nothing to others about you.

The key to all of these techniques is to give something that adds to the user's experience. This can be by offering useful information, telling them about something new and exciting, or something that is entertaining or humorous, but the key is to make it the highest quality possible.

With so much information on the internet that is just a click away, what you are offering has to be unique. This can mean being completely new, or it could mean looking at something old from a different and unique point of view. If your message does not touch them in some way, your message will not go viral. You may still get some traffic out of it, but that traffic will come the old fashioned way, through hard work, search engine optimization, and daily on-going marketing efforts.

While for many people, going viral is a one-time accomplishment, others manage to see repeated success. When one of your messages goes viral, not only does it drive a flood of traffic to your site on a short term, but many of those people will become subscribers, which increases your daily traffic. If you can continue to write unique, compelling material, those people will be more than likely to return to your site, and to tell others. The more eyes that see you message, the better your chances of repeating your viral success.

Viral traffic generation should not be used as a stand alone technique. It needs to be a part of a larger marketing strategy. Many of the techniques by

themselves may only send a small stream of traffic to your site. That is why you need to use more than one marketing method. One stream may not amount to much traffic, but several streams could be significant. As your message starts to go viral, these several streams could quickly become a flood.

Look though the list of items listed and think about which ones will work for you. Chances are, not all of them will work for everyone. Some of them will naturally go together, others will not.

The list is not meant to be a comprehensive list of everything possible. It is meant to be a tool; an example of things that have worked for others. As you read through the different techniques, keep thinking about your own business. It may help you to come up with other ideas on your own. Be creative. Modify some of the ideas listed and come up with something new that is unique to you and your business. The only limit to what is possible is your imagination.

1. Provide quality content, products, or service

Providing quality content, products, or service is by far the best way to build your reputation, and build repeat traffic to your site. Research has shown that on average, when someone has a positive experience they will tell two other people about that experience. On the other hand, if they have had a bad experience, they will tell seven other people. That act of telling others is how the viral traffic generation techniques start. If your customers never tell anyone else about you and your site, you are back to doing all of the marketing on your own.

To build returning customers to your site, you need to establish a reputation as an expert in your field, very entertaining, or someone who has unique insights. That does not happen if all you are offering is cheap, recycled drivel that you found on someone else's website. Make sure that what you offer is your own work, and something that is different from what can be found on every other website.

What made hotmail successful was one of the early successes of viral traffic building on the internet. At the bottom of every email that was sent through one of the free Hotmail accounts was a message telling others how they could get a free Hotmail account. Every time a Hotmail user sent a message, they were helping spread the name of Hotmail.

How did Hotmail make any money off of free accounts? They did it by offering premium services to their customers such as additional storage space, and the ability to send emails without any advertising attached.

Hotmail became successful enough that in 1997, less than 2 years after it was created, it boasted over 8 million users and was purchased by Microsoft. It is still one of the top web based email services in the world.

While you may not be able to achieve the same amount of buzz that Hotmail was able to generate, it does demonstrate the power of getting your message out by attaching it to something that people are willing to share with their friends, family, and co-workers.

Do not discount the fact that people love to get things for free. If it looks interesting, and it is free, people are more than happy to give it a try. While it is easy to get them to try your offer initially, it is a different challenge to get them to continue using it once the novelty has worn off.



Repeated use is critical for your success because multiple exposures will cement your companies name in your customer's minds. People are more likely to buy something from a company they have heard of than from one they have not heard of. They might not even know how or why they know the name, but that sense of familiarity will make them more susceptible to your message.

What ever you are offering has to be functional, easy to use, and add value to the user. You customers have to feel that it is worth their time and effort to pass the information along. Then, and only then, will they be willing to tell their friends and family what they have found.

3. Require a referral

An added twist to the idea of giving something away for free to your customers is to require them to refer someone to you in exchange for what you are giving away. Simply provide a space where they can enter the email address of one or more people that they have to fill out before receiving the item you are offering. This is especially effective when your free item is something the person can download instantly.

This technique not only puts your message in front of the eyes of potential customers, it also helps you build your own mailing list. You can send an email the people that were referred saying "Your friend (name) saw this, and would like to share it with you. By having the ability to use the friend's name, it helps to establish your credibility. This will decrease the possibility of person receiving the invitation tagging your message as spam.



Like many of the techniques listed, this will only work if your visitor thinks what you are offering is of enough value to make it worth giving you information

about a friend or family member. Friendships are built on trust, and most people will not be willing to risk that trust on a worthless gadget.

Do not expect an instant flood with this method. It usually starts as more of a trickle, but that trickle increases the longer it flows. Over time, the referrals will add up. If each person that takes advantage of your free offer refers two or more friends, it will not take long to have quite a list of potential customers, all at no additional cost.

4. Create a Viral Video Clip

Have you heard of YouTube? If you spend any time online, it is hard not to have heard of it. Millions of people every day view video clips that are stored in the YouTube library. YouTube and Google Videos take advantage of the fact that people are now spending more time in recreational internet surfing than in watching television. It is another example of not only how people want to be entertained, but also that people want choices. The public has gotten used to being able to choose the entertainment they want, and not be forced to take what is pushed at them.

If you are creative enough, or cutting edge, or wacky enough, you could quickly be the next hot video. The videos that have the most chance of going viral are ones that deal with current events, especially if you can beat the major news outlets, videos dealing with business issues, and humorous videos.

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