

# Viral marketing

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Starting in 2005 Unilever's Dove made a unique marketing campaign and is a representative how to include customers in their new market positioning. The idea was to introduce " a global brand unit for each Masterband, entrusted with the responsibility for creating its global vision and charged with inspiring cooperation from all geographic markets" to " winnow its more than 1, 600 brands down to 400" (Deighton, 2007, p. 2).

Several consultations with experts and market researches summed up to " The Campaign For Real Beauty", whereby the outcome of the survey with 3000 women in 10 countries showing that only 2% of respondents worldwide chose to describe themselves as beauty, might have been a crucial reason, for this decision (Deighton, 2007, p. 3). The first campaign, the so-called Tick-Box campaign, showed ordinary people on billboards in supermodel contexts. Viewers were asked to call and decide whether a woman was " outstanding" or

" outsized." Interestingly as " outsized" first raced ahead, the campaign, through the eWOM and WOM, found massive public interest and already showed Dove's idea of a customer-integrated marketing strategy. The second series of ads showed six " average" women in white underwear, Kathy O'Brien, Dove's marketing director said they wanted the ads to " provoke discussion and debate about real beauty"(Deighton, 2007, p. 4).

Next step was first a movie, but then turned into an ad, however no product was mentioned. One small girl is shown she " hates her freckles", and an young Asian who " wishes she were blonde."

It ran in 2006 broadcast of the Superbowl. Stage four of the Real Beauty campaign involved a movie named " Evolution". In October 2006 it was posted on YouTube, and within three months, it had been viewed three million times. The movie never ran on television, except in the context of news. This movie went viral through the social communities and, thus the marketing strategy encompassed two worlds the " real" and the " electronic" world. Finally in late 2006 the last step was announced.

The contest " Real Ads by Real Women", where consumers created their own ads for a new product, and winning commercials would air in the commercial break on the annual Academy Awards in February 2007. This final chapter perfectly integrates consumers in their marketing concept to use them as a marketing vehicle. But was it successful? Philippe Harousseau, Unilever's former Marketing Director for the Dove Skin and Masterband, knew that their campaign is effective as Dove's firming girls were shown 16 minutes on the Today Show.

Moreover through the ad " Hates her freckles" aired during the Superbowl, news programs echoed the message, Oprah Winfrey dedicated a show to self-esteem, with the ad as a centerpiece. Jay Leno ran a parody and Wal-Mart created their version of the ad featuring its employees (Deighton, 2007, p. 1-6). This concept as a perfect example for viral marketing strategies, therefore I will sum up this campaign shortly: First, the Tick-Box campaign, which involved consumers through telephone calls and online votes. Second, the ad broadcasted during the Superbowl, to endorse the already huge public discussion.

Third the movie " Evolution", which only aired on Youtube and went viral through the social networks, and the final contest to create an own ad for Dove Cream Oil Body Wash, which clearly shows the idea of a consumer-integrated marketing strategy, combining online (create an ad ) and offline (billboards) advertising. In 2005 1. 5 million+ visits to the CFRB. com (Campaign for Real Beauty) site were generated and 1. 7 million voted on the CFRB site across Europe, resulting in 65% net recognition for print and outdoor.(average 15-24%) (www. wpp. com, 2007). Unilever's marketing campaign, which started in 2005 for their Masterband Dove can be seen as a representative for many following marketing strategies of other organizations using crowdsourcing platforms. Examples for crowdsourcing platforms are Facebook, Wikipedia, Youtube, Flickr or World of Warcraft, just to name a few.

Doan et al.(2011) defines " that a system is a CS system if it enlists a crowd of humans to help solve a problem defined by the system owners", but in this survey they consider the systems (applications) and not the crowdsourcing platforms themselves (Doan et al., 2011, p. 87). Unilever's idea to use crowdsourcing platforms for their marketing concept was at that time unique, but followers did not wait long. In the following passage I will describe some other interesting campaigns.

First PepsiCo's Mountain Dew, a social media marketing strategy titled " DEWmocracy." DEWmocracy 1, the most recent project has been DEWmocracy 2, relied on a story based online game and let participants collaborate and collect points through various worlds, with the final objective

to create all facets of a new Dew drink. According to this strategy Mountain Dew's marketing manager said " Some of the trends that we were trying to tap into specifically with this program were consumer need for self-expression, collaboration, social networking, and obviously, consumers in control" (Creativity, 2008). The consumers developed the new soda drink Mountain Dew Voltage which since its launch in July 2007 has sold more than 11 million cases, and moreover has driven growth across the Mountain Dew portfolio (PR Newswire [New York], 2009).

Altogether Unilever's and Pepsico's marketing campaigns were successful, whereby both companies did not use social media networks, such as Facebook itself. Burger King changed that in 2008. In December 2008 Burger King released an application on Facebook where users were encouraged to delete 10 people from their friends list in order to earn a free Whopper sandwich coupon. More than 82, 000 users downloaded it, resulting in 233, 906 sacrificed friends and more than 20, 000 Whopper coupons, whereby after 10 days Facebook disabled the application.

The viral element was that every 'defriended' person got a notification 'toss your friend before they toss you' and that they had just been sacrificed for a 10% share of a Whopper. This campaign generated about 35 million media impressions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Until now, I have only shown positive outcomes of new marketing campaigns using eWOM, viral marketing ideas and crowdsourcing systems, but obviously there are also some negative representatives.

First, the musician Dave Carroll experienced a negative incident with United Airlines breaking his guitar at Chicago's O'Hare airport. After nine months of frustration without compensation, he posted the song "United Breaks Guitars" on Youtube with now more than 10 million clicks and nearly 28, 000 comments, which obviously has had a negative result on United Airlines' reputation (Harvey, 2009).

He used the eWOM through a crowdsourcing system. Second, Gap unveiled a new logo for its brand Tropicana in 2010. After realizing a cartoon wherein the old iconic Tropicana logo got eliminated, a movement went throughout the internet communities commenting on the new logo as "ugly" and "resembling a store brand." After six weeks with sales going down by 20%, Tropicana North America announced the company was going back to the old design (Lipman et al., 2010).

Gap tried to use the internet, especially crowdsourcing systems, to successfully implement the new logo, but failed. Finally, Boeing got a lot of criticism after opening a pseudo-blog named Randy's Journal from Boeing's Vice President Randy Beseler to the public. However, major blog characteristics were missing. Bloggers were not able to comment on blog-entries and furthermore there were neither trackbacks nor RSS feeds. Beseler comments on the criticism "I didn't realize that the blogosphere had such a rule. Sorry, that's just not what we're about. Sure, we're going to post some of your comments. Even critical ones. But it's not a free-for-all" (Holtz, 2005). This example in particular also shows the risk that companies, and

private persons are facing through social media. Especially being depicted in a negative context can have severe aftereffects on sales and reputation.