

Marketing to Create a Buzz

The need to create a market buzz is greater now than perhaps ever before. The high cost of traditional advertising, the waning efficacy of standard advertising, and the mere clutter of all the advertising means that those companies that succeed in creating a buzz will be the victors in the race for customer attention. The good news is that, while not exactly easy to accomplish, the creation of buzz is now easier than it ever was. The introduction of new technologies serves to accelerate word of mouth marketing and provide new tactical options for marketers.

There are a number of technology driven opportunities the buzz marketer can take advantage of in order to get the message spreading from person to person. The use of the internet and email, electronic newsletters and bulletin boards, and even cellular telephones all give marketers the chance to light the chat wildfire. The non-traditional channels for buzz creation, such as event sponsorships and influencer focused activities, are also quite effective when executed properly.

The execution of a buzz marketing campaign is highly dependent on the strategy used. Like branding, a buzz marketing campaign is most successful when it owns an idea in the marketplace and capitalizes on the idea to generate interest, excitement, a sense of ownership, a feeling of exclusivity, or another type of special sensation. Once this is achieved, the desire to demonstrate the special nature of the product (and by extension the people who use it) serves to ignite the buzz and keep it glowing.

Tudog has identified 6 strategies for effective buzz marketing and each one revolves around a specific focus the campaign takes. They are:

1. Hint at Sex – nothing gets the buzz buzzing more than a little bit of sexual innuendo. The urge to tell others about the innuendo, as well as identify with the slightly naughty appeal, drives talk. An excellent example of this is overstock.com and their “Big O” campaign. The use of an attractive woman discussing how much she enjoys the Big O was enough to get people discussing which Big O she means.
2. Break an Advertising Rule – there are some pretty fundamental steps in advertising that traditional advertisers are intimidated into maintaining. One of these, for example, is never use a competitor’s product in your commercial unless you are going to make a direct comparison (favorable, of course to your product). Pepsi recently broke this rule big time when they featured Coke machines in their commercials. Rather than make a direct comparison, or focus on quality or taste differences, the commercials merely showed someone choosing Pepsi over Coke. The fact that the rule was broken and the intelligence with which it was broken were all cause for discussion – getting the buzz going.
3. Be Outrageous – the use of the outrageous, as long as the connection can be made to the product, is an effective buzz stimulating approach. In Europe, for example, there was a television commercial that had a father and his son shopping in a supermarket. Once in the candy aisle the child puts a bag of candy into the shopping cart, and the father removes it. At this, the child has a temper tantrum and knocks things off shelves, cries, and screams and makes a complete mess, embarrassing his father. The ad is for a condom company. The outrageous suggestion that condom use is preferable to fatherhood was enough to get the ad sent around the world via the Internet.

4. Show Yourself to Be Remarkable – people like to marvel and if you can make them see that your product is in some way remarkable they will talk about it to others. The drug companies are good at using this strategy as they show themselves to be quite literally the miracle cure for certain disorders.
5. Use Mystery – people get caught up in mystery. If you have a secret that you need people to keep or tell you will be able to generate buzz as everyone discusses the secret. Years ago Miramax pictures created tremendous buzz for one of their movies by advertising that there was a surprise ending and asking people who had seen the movie not to tell others the secret. Naturally everyone was talking about the secret, people who have not seen it trying to get those who did to reveal the secret, and those who saw it talking among themselves about the secret they knew. The movie, a low budget film, became a huge hit.
6. Be Funny – people like humor. If you can make people laugh you can also make them talk about you. With humor you need to make sure that your effort is genuinely funny, and you also need to be careful not to wear out the joke. A good example of humor that created a buzz is GEICO insurance, which places people in uncomfortable situations and has one person talking about the good news they have – that they saved money using GEICO. The commercials worked and people not only talked about them, but used the line in the course of their own conversations.

Creating a buzz can be an extremely cost effective way to market. Achieving a genuine buzz is not simple, but when achieved can lead to a product or company taking off. The strategies described in this article are designed to produce buzz provided they are executed properly and given the proper exposure. So tell everyone you know about this article and create a buzz about creating a buzz.