

## AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRAL VIDEO ADVERTISEMENTS

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*In modern times, consumers are increasingly resistant to traditional interruption marketing and other techniques of advertising and media cluttering. While facing such problems, companies are compelled to think of new ways to communicate with their target audience. In such a situation, viral marketing can play a vital role. This paper provides knowledge and research significant for the organisations to design their viral videos in a creative manner that optimizes their chance of viral success. Since, the effectiveness of viral video advertisements designed on the basis of hierarchy of effects model i.e. AIDA has been significantly less explored so experimentation was conducted on these lines. The results of the present study reveals that creative viral video advertisements positively affect the recall, attention, interest and intentions of the viewers to purchase products and spread positive word-of-mouth for products & advertisements. Hence, viral video advertisements are establishing itself as the most effective tool for marketing and advertising the companies' products.*

### Introduction

In the past, advertising and marketing communications went to work only for the purpose to increase sales, but today advertising is being considered as one of the important elements of customer service. With the development of communication technology advertising is creating value for customers (Gharibi, Danesh and Shahrodi, 2012). Moreover, the emergence of internet has changed the total scenario of advertising and marketing. It has vastly altered the ways in which people view, use and interact with media and this has in some way changed the effectiveness of traditional marketing techniques while creating new marketing opportunities (Andrew, 2010). Traditional advertising is all about interruption and it disrupts the people and draws their attention to itself when they are concentrating on, like a TV program, newspaper or magazine article. People have become so inundated with advertising messages that they have started

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ignoring these messages (Eley and Tilley, 2009). An advertiser communicates the advertising message to the people without knowing their willingness to receive the message that interrupts people's activities. Therefore, in modern times, consumers are increasingly resistant to traditional interruption marketing (Brottet and Curau, 2007).

While facing these problems, companies are also compelled to think of new ways to communicate with their target audience, which are more effective with regard to budget/brand recognition ratio (Brottet and Curau, 2007). In such situations, viral marketing can play a vital role. The idea of viral marketing is to use pre-existing social networks to produce increase in brand awareness or to achieve other marketing objectives such as product sales through self-replicating viral processes (Wikipedia, 2010). If a good product speaks for itself, viral marketing helps in building a virus and make it spread, from one consumer to another, making a cascading effect.

In other words, viral marketing describes a marketing strategy that facilitates and encourages people to pass along a marketing message voluntarily via e-mail, blog, website or other internet space, in the forms of video clips, interactive flash games, advergames, e-books, branded software images or even text messages. Like viruses, such strategies take advantage of rapid multiplication to explode the message from thousands to millions of people ([www.oppapers.com](http://www.oppapers.com)). Hence, viral marketing is a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes several (viral) components in it (Golan and Zaidner, 2008).

However, the information does spread like a virus but viral marketing campaign has no connection to spam or other destructive sorts of digital content. Rather, a viral marketing campaign seeks to use the cost-effective forces of spreading information and content exponentially, using social networks online (Rune and Vinberg, 2009). Further, viral marketing campaign has the power to reach thousands and millions of people at shortest possible time with an aim to increase brand awareness and sales at minimal cost. A well-drafted viral marketing campaign has five to ten times more impact than regular advertisement ([www.voteorus.com/viralmarketingcampaign.html](http://www.voteorus.com/viralmarketingcampaign.html)).

The term viral advertising, on other hand refers to a specific online advertising practice. It is an advertising technique in which video advertisements are distributed from one user to another via e-mail or through online social networking (Golan & Zaidner, 2008). In actual, viral advertising relies on provocative content to motivate rapid peer-to-peer communication of persuasive messages from identified sponsors (Porter and Golan, 2006).

Unlike the traditional marketing process, viral video advertisement has become more popular in today's scenario through the process of internet sharing. A viral video spreads through online sharing such as blogs, forums, emails and sharing websites ([www.hyperdictionary.com](http://www.hyperdictionary.com)). However, to spread like wildfire, the video needs to appeal the audience. For this viral video needs to be effective and this is possible only if it meets the four objectives of Hierarchy of Effects model i.e. AIDA (attracting attention, generating interest, stimulating desire and action). Gholamzadeh and Jakobsson (2011) are also of the view that AIDA a well-known advertising model plays a significant role in consumers' buying process. Hence, a viral message developed in accordance to AIDA has a good chance to take the consumer from the awareness level to his detriment i.e. purchase decision.

Working on the similar front, Cudmore (2010) opined that there is a need for advertising companies to use AIDA(S) parameters to convert hard won visitors into customers. The five parameters are:

- a) **Attention:** - A good message with the product in the centre grabs visitor's attention.
- b) **Interest:** - A strong headline with details of all benefits and advantages that customer would enjoy after purchasing the product or service and making them aware that they can afford it, create interest in the minds of viewers.
- c) **Desire:** - Telling the customers how the product will solve their problems and will make their life satisfied.
- d) **Action:** - Telling the customers how easily they can purchase that product.
- e) **Satisfaction:** - Make the customers satisfied and happy so that they will recommend and pass along the message to their family members or friends etc.

According to AIDA model, most of what advertising should do is to create awareness in the viewers. People should know who they are and what they produce, what distinguishes them from other companies and how they can have access (As quoted by Gharibi, Danesh and Shahrodi (2012) from the study of Velz and Muryani, 1382).

Some previous research studies indicate the use of viral marketing as important promotional strategy effecting consumer-buying process. White and Smith (2001) opined that effectiveness of advertisement depends upon the creativity involved in advertising content. So creativity is assumed as pre-requisite of advertising

