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IMA

Conclusions Paper

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**SECRETS IN VIRAL VIDEO
MARKETING**

*In conversation with Aashish Chopra, Vice President –
Content Marketing at ixigo*

SECRETS IN VIRAL VIDEO MARKETING

By 2020, India's 400-million strong internet user base is set to grow exponentially to 730 million users while the smartphones in use are estimated to be 702 million. 75% of these new users are expected to consume data in local languages. Consequently, the go-to-market strategy for gaining new users will have to be different as these customers will consume more audio and video content than text. With all this excitement, though, there is a massive challenge too. Overwhelming 'content density' means consumers are seeing chaotic newsfeeds, there is excessive competition between brands – everyone can and is creating content – consumers have lost the trust of brands, and attention spans are decreasing. Viral has become a bigger buzz word, and cracking the viral code seems to be the holy grail of content marketing. IMA India invited Aashish Chopra, an award-winning viral video marketer, who shared the method in the madness behind viral videos, offering learnings from the trenches of content marketing, of how experiments became best practices for multi-million view viral videos.

Creating compelling content can increase the chances of achieving virality

SUCCESS AT VIRAL VIDEO MARKETING: THE SEVEN RULES

Virality is often misunderstood as something that can be controlled. Instead, viral is an outcome and one has control over only the performance (action or creation). It is actually the consumers, not the content creators, that make something go viral. There are, however, seven secrets to creating compelling content which can increase the chances of achieving virality.

Making share-worthy videos is a tall order...

Is it share-worthy?

In today's digital age, anyone can buy advertising space or boost their content; but getting someone to share your content is a tall order. This requires someone to agree with a concept or brand so much that they want the message on their timeline. That cannot be bought. The share-worthiness of the video comes from the fact that it is inspirational, useful (addresses pain points), celebrates a culture or a language, topical (relates to current or trending topics), and aims to make the world a better place. For instance, ixigo's videos on 'How to Speak Bengali/Punjabi/Tamil in a Minute', saw 1,82,000 comments, because it was a short, sharp, humorous video that celebrated a culture while making it easier for people to love as they could relate to it. With over 24 million views and a reach of 51.5 million, it is a video that is evidently share-worthy and was shared 3,25,000 times with Indians all over the world.

...which can be achieved by creating videos that are inspiring, topical, celebratory, and focused on changing the world

Move fast and engage

The exciting part of the video should be made the video's thumbnail...

Audiences make up their mind about the content within the first three seconds of seeing it. Depending on the storyline, anywhere between 30 seconds to one and a half minutes is the perfect amount of time to get the message across and keep the attention of the audience. Further, to make an impactful first impression one should put the 'aha moment' or the exciting part as the video's thumbnail. Once audiences are watching, the second chance at first impression depends on the quality or 'stickiness' of content, which ultimately leads to shares.

... the content should be able to grab attention in the first 3-6 seconds

The art of storytelling is the most important element of viral videos

Storytelling beats production value

There is no need to spend millions on production costs anymore, because videos are mostly watched on small screens. The art of ‘storytelling’ has taken over in importance. What is interesting about ixigo’s video, ‘What’s inside the bag of an Indian student travelling abroad?’ is that it cost a total of Rs 3,500 and was produced 100% in-house. The video got 1 million views in its first week but then plateaued. Interestingly, today, it has 8 million views.

Viral videos should be optimised for mobiles

Make for mobile

With mobile phones taking the centre stage in content consumption it is critical to take into consideration the size of the screen – shooting videos in horizontal view, vertical view or square size, the optimal pixels, and the front and centre screen ratio to ensure a clutter-free experience.

Having a video distribution strategy in place boosts the chances of virality

Distribution strategy

To achieve virality, it is important to plan for how to distribute video content. A few points to consider:

- Day/Time: Why would Monday lunchtime be better than Tuesday evening?
- Multiple versions: Create different versions for YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp.
- Initial seeding: Incentivise your friends, colleagues and associates to share your content as soon as it is released.
- Paid boosts: Boost after an organic peak, when you see shares organically increasing. If you are not getting organic shares, then spending money on it will be wasted.
- Push: The best content should be pushed out as mailers and notifications.
- Outreach: Reach out to news sites and content bloggers (e.g. BuzzFeed) as they are hungry for great content.

Viral marketing should aim to create brand evangelists out of people

Do not make an ad

Unlike conventional marketing where the brand takes the centre stage, viral marketing focuses on the target audience, their pain points and challenges. The aim is to make an impact, through content, in their lives and create brand evangelists out of people.

Brands should act as a facilitator of authentic conversations

Think conversations, not campaigns

Traditional marketing thinks in terms of campaigns. Viral marketing, on the other hand, is focused on driving conversations instead. If a brand becomes a conduit that facilitates *authentic* conversations and people start tagging their friends – that is the sweet spot to be in.

The contents of this paper are based on discussions of The India CMO Forum in Mumbai with Aashish Chopra, Vice President - Content Marketing at ixigo, in January 2019. The views expressed may not be those of IMA India. Please visit www.ima-india.com to view current papers and our full archive of content in the IMA members' Knowledge Centre. IMA Forum members have personalised website access codes.