



# *Viral* **MARKETING MADE EASY**

**THE SIMPLE FORMULA  
FOR VIRAL GROWTH AND  
MORE SALES**

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# **VIRAL MARKETING MADE EASY**

The Simple Formula For  
Viral Growth And More Sales

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Ever notice that some campaigns you thought would go viral in a big way actually end up flopping, while at other times you release something seemingly insignificant and it catches fire?

Sometimes it actually seems sort of random.

Indeed, marketers who specialize in creating viral content are sometimes surprised that their “surefire” campaign didn’t go viral. They tick off all the boxes, and yet it doesn’t catch fire like they had hoped. Here’s why...





**CREATING VIRAL IS A BIT OF  
AN ART AND SCIENCE**

If you get the science part down – that is, if you understand why people share content and then incorporate those factors into your campaigns – then you’ve just massively increased the chances that people are going to share your content.

And that’s why I’ve created this guide, which reveals to you the top factors that get people hitting the share buttons like crazy.

Here’s what you’re about to discover over the next several pages:

- You’ll discover the top six needs that drive human behavior in general (and viral campaigns specifically).

- Next, you'll learn about other important ingredients that go into cooking up a successful viral campaign.
- You'll also get six examples of real-life referral campaigns that were wildly successful – you'll find out how they did it so you can swipe a page from their playbooks!

*Let's jump in...*

# THE SIX SURPRISING FACTORS THAT DRIVE HUMAN BEHAVIOR

There are six needs that drive virtually all human behavior. People make choices (not necessarily good choices) in all parts of their lives based on these six needs.

If you look closely, you can see how these six needs drive behaviors in peoples' relationships, work, hobbies and more.

And you know what else?

These six needs also play into whether someone is going to share your viral content or not. If your content fulfills as many of these needs as possible, then more people are likely to share it.

Here are the six needs:

- **Certainty**
- **Variety (Uncertainty)**
- **Significance**
- **Love and Connection**
- **Growth**
- **Contribution**

Now here's the thing about these needs:

## **We humans are not all the same.**

So, while we all have the same basic needs as outlined above, we hold some of these needs as more important than others.

For example, I may primarily value love and growth, while you may think that certainty and significance are more important. Thus, you and I will make different decisions based on what's most important to us (even though we value all six of those needs to some degree).

That's why you need to include as many of these needs as possible in every viral campaign. The more needs you can skillfully incorporate, the more likely it is that people will send their friends to your website.

Now, inside this guide we're going to talk about how to motivate people to share your content by incorporating these six needs into your viral campaigns.

But first, you need to get a deeper understanding of the six core needs, and how they relate to various areas of your life.

Once you know how these needs drive people in all aspects of their life, then you can start using these needs to drive one specific behavior: **sharing content.**

So, let's start with the big picture of how these needs influence all sorts of behavior.

Take a look...

# CERTAINTY

The motivating force behind certainty is that we all crave a certain level of comfort, security and predictability. When certainty is our driving motivator, we will pick the familiarity of the known over the unpredictability of the unknown. This can be good or bad, depending on the circumstances.

Let me share with you a few examples of how certainty can drive behavior...

## **Example 1:**

If someone hates their job but stays anyway, usually that's due to certainty. The paycheck is certain, which alleviates stress and worry. And



in this case, the security and certainty outweigh the general dissatisfaction with the job.

Likewise, this also applies to people who want to start a new business. Some people feel that a job is more secure than a business (even if they don't have either at the time), so they'll put in applications for jobs rather than starting their own business. Since they've had a job before, it feels safe, predictable and secure.

### **Example 2:**

If you've ever watched a movie or a sitcom twice (or more) --- even though you know what's going to happen -- that's driven by your need for certainty. Sometimes the best way to relax and

unwind is watch something where you already know how it's going to end.

### **Example 3:**

If you've ever stayed too long in a relationship even though you knew it wasn't a good relationship for you (and/or there simply wasn't any long-term potential), that choice was driven, in part, by certainty. Sometimes it's easier to stay in a familiar relationship than it is to dip a toe into the uncertain dating pool.

### **Example 4:**

If you've ever shared a joke with a good friend, you were most likely driven at least in part by the certainty of your friend's reaction. If you know what your friend finds funny, then you

are more likely to share something on that same topic or with that same “flavor.” For example, if your friend loves attorney jokes, then you probably share those sorts of jokes with that friend every time you come across one.

As you can see, this is one example of how the need for certainty can play into a viral campaign.

We’ll be looking at this in more depth just a bit later, but first let’s look at the next one of the six core human needs that drive behavior...

## VARIETY (UNCERTAINTY)

You just learned that certainty drives human behavior. And now we're going to talk about how UNCERTAINTY drives behavior.

At this point you may be saying... wait, what?

Let me explain...

While humans crave a certain degree of certainty in their lives, if there is too much certainty then we get bored. Restless. And maybe we'll even get destructive (self-sabotaging) to provide some variety.

You see, here's the thing...

## **We humans love “new” things.**

When we encounter something we haven't seen before, the pleasure pathways of our brains actually light up. In other words, we get a rush of feel-good chemicals in our brain that rewards us every time we encounter variety (and especially novelty).

That's why we seek it out. And that's why variety can most definitely motivate our behavior (either for good or for bad).

Let me share with you some examples of how variety motivates behavior...

### **Example 1:**

Choosing to go into a horror house on Halloween. As you might expect, a horror

house is VERY unpredictable. While you know that people are going to be jumping out, chasing you, and generally trying to surprise you, there is a great deal of variety (and uncertainty) as to how this plays out. You never know what is lurking around the corner. And people who love horror houses love the adrenaline rush that comes with both fear and uncertainty.

*TIP: Ever seen those viral videos that scare the crap out of you? There you are just focusing on some serene video, and suddenly a monster jumps right into the frame and screams. Talk about variety! No wonder these sorts of videos get shared like crazy! (Not only because of the variety, but also because plenty of folks like scaring their friends!)*

## **Example 2:**

Quitting a good thing. If you've ever quit a good job or even a good relationship, you probably got some pushback from people in your life. Those folks (who undoubtedly value certainty) probably thought you were crazy for dumping the relationship or the job.

Now assuming the relationship or job was largely good for you, why did you quit it? Chances are, you were bored. You needed variety.

Maybe you even tried to create that variety within the framework of the job or the relationship.

For example, if you tried to get a promotion with more responsibility, that's one way to create variety within a job. If you felt yourself trying to create some tension or conflict with your boss or coworkers, that's an example of a negative way that the search for variety manifests.

Likewise, in a relationship you may seek out variety in both positive or negative ways. You might simply ask your significant other to get out of the house and do things you have never done before. That's positive.

On the negative end, you might confront them about something, knowing that the resulting tension will create variety and thus alleviate boredom.



### **Example 3:**

Taking off on a road trip. Some people plan a road trip out in great detail. They start at Point A and plan to drive to Point B. All tourist stops (if any) are planned in advance. This provides certainty.

As you know by now, some people are motivated by uncertainty. These folks jump in the car with a loose intention to get to Point B. But along the way, they stop at every tourist spot, scenic overlook, restaurant or other roadside stop that catches their eye.

The uncertainty of it all is what makes it fun. And they may never even get to Point B before they need to turn around and drive home.

This is driven by a craving for variety.

**Example 4:**

Sharing something controversial. There are certain topics that we know will provide some variety and uncertainty in our interactions with people. These topics tend to be controversial, such as religion and politics... but they can take the form of any topic that's controversial.

Why do we share things on Facebook, Twitter and other platforms that we know are going to “blow up” our page with comments? Simple reason: variety and uncertainty. If we've been a bit bored lately, then introducing a controversial topic can break the monotony and entertain us.

Again, this is an example of how this basic need motivates people to share content.

We'll examine this in more detail just a bit later, but first let's look at the next factor that motivates behavior...

## SIGNIFICANCE

We live in a world with over seven billion other people. And that means it's pretty easy to feel like we're invisible and insignificant.

But most people don't want to feel that way. They WANT to feel worthy, special and unique. They want to feel significant. And that's why this need to feel significant motivates behavior (either positively or negatively).

If you think back on your life, you can probably pinpoint times when you felt significant. Those are times that others looked at you and said things like, “Wow, you did an amazing job.” Maybe you felt special, because others said things such as, “I wish I could do something like that.” And yes, maybe others even outright envied you.

How does it feel when others envy you? It feels good. You get that swelling of pride when others recognize that you’re special in some way. And you seek out ways to continue being significant and special.

Let me share with you a few examples of how the need for significance drives behavior...

## **Example 1:**

Getting fit. A lot of people talk about losing weight. And quite a few of these people start down the path to fitness. They tighten up their diet, they start exercising, and they lose a few pounds. But then they go back to their old habits (perhaps due to the need for certainty), and soon the weight comes right back.

But then there are those who stay on the path to fitness. And in some cases, they get very, very serious about it. They eat a very clean diet where they balance their macronutrients precisely. They lift weights. They do high-intensity interval training. And not only do they

shed the pounds; they develop the sort of bodies that are extremely rare.

End result? They feel significant. They feel special. When a serious weightlifter takes his shirt off at the beach, he's going to know almost no one will have abs like him (because it's too much work). And that makes him feel like part of a very special, elite group.

So, what does he do? He makes a big deal of drinking a whey protein shake in the office, while everyone else eats their potato chips and chocolate chip cookies. He makes a point of turning down cake at a birthday party, just because very few people do it. The fact that he

possesses this tremendous willpower (and amazingly fit body) makes him feel significant.

### **Example 2:**

Writing a novel. If you tell people you've written a novel, their eyes widen and you get that "Wow!" response that creates that pleasurable feeling of superiority and specialness. If you even tell people that you're *thinking* of writing a novel, they're going to be impressed. End result? You're going to feel significant.

### **Example 3:**

Taking up a unique hobby. There are plenty of ways for people to spend their leisure time, but often people tend to gravitate towards the same types of hobbies. This includes hobbies such as

golfing, fishing, running, restoring classic cars, painting, gardening and other similar hobbies.

So now imagine what happens if you take up a unique hobby that requires something others don't have, such as money (collecting expensive pieces of art), skill (building a log cabin by hand from the ground up), or even just bravery (such as base jumping).

When you tell people you have a hobby like that, you're going to feel significant and special, since your friends are likely to be very impressed.

#### **Example 4:**

Being the first to share something in your circle of friends. If you share something that others in



your circle haven't seen yet, they're going to be rewarded with the whole novelty factor (as discussed above). If you consistently share things your friends haven't seen before, they're going to take notice. And they're going to make you feel special and significant by saying things like, "Wow, you always find the coolest things to share!"

That's one-way significance can motivate people to share your content.

We'll talk about other ways later in this guide.

But first, let's take a look at the next factor that can influence behavior (one which can run opposite of our need for significance).

## LOVE AND CONNECTION

As you just learned, our need for significance can motivate us to do things that make us feel superior, special and worthy. However, this drive for significance can also drive us AWAY from others. And since one of our needs is love and connection, as humans we tend to have to balance our need for significance with our need for love and connection.

Our need for love and connection is what motivates us to seek out attachments, approval and communication. We don't want to feel lonely nor alone. In fact, our need for love and connection is so strong that we can actually

suffer from depression if we don't maintain these needs.

Here then are the “big picture” examples of the ways we strive to meet this need...

**Example 1:**

Getting married. We date because we crave love and connection. And then we get married, in part, to solidify that connection. We actually bind ourselves legally to other people, in part to raise families, to have companionship, and to have someone with whom to grow old.

**Example 2:**

Doing the “right thing.” As mentioned above, part of love and connection is seeking approval

from others. And in order to get that approval, we do the “right thing.”

But here’s the catch: there is no singular right or wrong thing to do. It largely depends on your social circle.

For example, if someone joins a gang (which is a negative way to connect with others), they may seek approval by shoplifting or dealing drugs. In this particular circle, doing the “right thing” isn’t even legal, but it does win approval from other gang members.

Another example of doing the right thing is when a young adult goes to college to major in a lucrative field, rather than trying to make a living by joining a band. In this case, the young

adult may be seeking the approval or parents, of a significant other, or even as society as a whole.

**Example 3:**

Getting a dog. In some cases, the need for love and connection doesn't need to come from another human. A person can get love from a dog. And, in turn, they can develop a connection with other dog owners, which further satisfies that need for love and connection.

**Example 4:**

Sharing content. Social media platforms (such as Facebook) exploded because people are so driven by their need to connect with others. And

every time you share something on one of these platforms, you are seeking to connect with others. In some cases, you may also be seeking approval, which is why we sometimes share things that we think will generate a lot of likes.

As you can see, a need for love, connection (and approval) can motivate people to share your content.

We'll examine this in a little more detail very soon, but first let's get an understanding of the next need that motivates behavior...

## **Growth**

Another thing motivates our behavior is our need for growth. This includes growth on

different levels, including intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual.

Simply put, we don't like to stagnate.

Sure, sometimes we say that we don't like change (and those who say that may have placed a lower importance on growth), but most of us have the need to grow in some ways in our lives.

Let me share with you a few examples of how the need for growth can motivate behavior...

**Example 1:**

Getting to know yourself. Whether you just start thinking about the mistakes you've made in the past (and what you learned from them), or you even start going to counseling to get a third-party's professional view on what makes

you tick, learning about yourself is very rewarding. And when we confront our long-held beliefs and change them, then we grow as a person (intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually).

*TIP: Ever notice that self-data-collection devices like the FitBit are extremely popular? This popularity is driven by people's desire to learn, grow and change.*

## **Example 2:**

Looking up something online. Have you ever been sitting around with friends, and suddenly one of you wondered about some fact? For example, how are birds able to migrate hundreds of miles without getting lost? Or how



many licks does it truly take to get to the center  
or a Tootsie Pop?

Next thing you know, you've all whipped out  
your phones and you're looking it up online.

That motivation to hit up Google is all part of  
our need for growth (which can be fed by an  
underlying need to satisfy our curiosity).

Point is, there is a certain satisfaction in  
learning and growing.

### **Example 3:**

Going to the gym. Ever looked in the mirror one  
day and decided it was time to make a change?

You start eating better, you go to the gym, and  
you develop healthier habits. All of these  
changes can be driven by a desire to grow

physically (i.e., to get fit – to create the best and healthiest body you can).

#### **Example 4:**

Watching a TED Talk. You know that when you watch a TED talk, inevitably you're going to learn something new. You're going to get a new perspective. You're going to "stretch" the way you think about something. And that's why we watch TED Talks, because we want to grow intellectually... and/or spiritually and emotionally.

Point is, if you can present content that promises prospective viewers they'll learn something new (even something about themselves), they'll be motivated to watch.

# CONTRIBUTION

You can think of the previous need (growth) as being a bit selfish because it tends to be focused on our own emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical needs. That's in contrast to contribution, which is where we seek to contribute to the greater good.

This is more about helping others than helping ourselves.

That's not to say that contributing to something greater than ourselves is purely altruistic. After all, we DO get something out of it. It feels good, right? Our brain rewards us with those pleasurable chemicals again.

**So, even when we're helping others we're still helping ourselves.**

This need for contribution can be so great that people can actually go through a crisis if they don't feel like they're contributing. Take the classic mid-life crisis as an example.

In some cases, a need for variety fuels this crisis. In other cases, a need to contribute fuels it. If someone has been just meandering along in life for a few decades, they may suddenly wake up one morning and ask, "What am I doing with my life?" And the reason they ask is because they don't feel like they've contributed something meaningful, something for the greater good.

So, let me share with you now examples of how the need to contribute can motivate behavior...

**Example 1:**

Teaching someone how to do something. You might teach a child how to do something (like tie their shoelaces). Or you might teach other adults how to do something, such as how to enjoy better communication with their spouse. Whomever and whatever you're teaching, the need is all about contributing.

**Example 2:**

Volunteering. Another way that we contribute to the greater good is by volunteering. We may volunteer for a charitable organization (such as

the local soup kitchen), or we may volunteer to coach Little League or do roadside clean up.

### **Example 3:**

Writing a book. Oftentimes, writing and publishing a book is done to teach others how to do something. But what's different about a book is that it can leave a lasting legacy. A person may feel good not only about making a contribution to the greater good, but they'll also feel good about the fact that their contribution will continue long after they're gone.

### **Example 4:**

Sharing content online. That's right, every time you share content online (especially useful content), you're contributing to the overall

conversation. And if you share something for the greater good (such as sharing information about how to stop human traffickers), then you'll feel doubly good about your contribution.

### ***Quick Recap***

Now that you have a good overview of the six core needs – and you've received a sneak peek at how these needs can motivate people to share content – *let's take a closer look at the factors that drive viral content...*



## **SIX INGREDIENTS TO ADD TO YOUR VIRAL RECIPE**



As you just discovered, the six core human needs motivate people across many areas of their life. To recap, these six needs include:

- Certainty
- Variety
- Significance
- Love and connection
- Growth
- Contribution

Now, if you've studied viral content to any degree, then you've probably heard about some of the ingredients that go into getting people to click the "share" button.

*Guess what?*

Just about ALL of those factors tie back into the six human needs that you just learned about. And the more of these factors you can use to drive your viral campaigns, the more likely it is that your viral campaigns will sweep across your niche like a wind-blown prairie fire.

So, let's take a look at some of the specific ingredients that go into creating viral content, and how those factors tie into your audience's six core human needs...

## NOVELTY

People love sharing anything that is new.

That's why copycat viral campaigns don't work.

If you try to do the same thing as someone else,

people are going to yawn and scroll to the next thing in their feed or hit the back button.

As mentioned previously, our brains actually reward us when we encounter something novel.

As such, people share novel content to create this good feeling in others too.

And in the process, sharing novel content fulfills our core needs for:

- **Making a connection** with others, because people love when their friends introduce them to something new.
- **Significance**, because we feel important when we share something so new that no one else in our circle has seen it yet.

Of course, the novel content provides variety for both the sharer and the recipients. And, depending on what the content is about, it may provide for growth and contribution. For example, a new way to grow tomatoes may surprise people (there's the variety) and contribute to both growth (intellectual learning) and contribution in the niche.

Next...

## CONTROVERSIAL

Another factor that often goes into creating viral content is when the content is controversial. Because whether the audience agrees with it or not, they're going to share it.

E.G.,

“I can’t believe what this disgusting comedian said about women! Look at this! Can you believe it?!”

vs.

“Listen what this comedian says about women...hilarious!”

Depending on the context, sharing controversial content can satisfy the following core values:

- **Connection**, especially if the person sharing the information is sure the audience will approve. Take the example above of someone sharing a “disgusting” comedian – if the person is sure his or

her friends will feel the same way, then he/she will share to foster connection and develop deeper bonds.

- **Variety.** Most people go out of their way to AVOID being offensive/controversial. However, someone who is seeking some variety may post something controversial just to see the responses it brings.

Next...

## HUMOR/ENTERTAINMENT

If you look around at what's popular online, you're likely to see plenty of humorous things being shared like crazy, or anything that's entertaining in other ways.

The need to humor and entertain people by sharing content primarily fulfills the following needs:

- **Connection.** Making people laugh is a great way to create a deeper connection and get approval from others.
- **Contribution.** This is particularly true if someone is sharing for the “greater good.” For example, if I know you’re having a bad day and I pass along a funny video to you to cheer you up, then I’m not only making a connection, I’m also thinking about your needs (i.e., making a contribution).

- **Variety.** Often what makes something funny is that we don't expect it, such as the punchline to a witty joke or a video or a cat epically failing when it's trying to jump. These unexpected moments create variety.



*HERE'S ANOTHER  
REASON PEOPLE  
SHARE CONTENT...*

SUPPORTS WORLDVIEW/DEFINES  
SHARER

We want people to know who we are. And yet it would be pretty weird if we wrote long Facebook posts about ourselves or posted monologue videos on YouTube. Because let's face it, we'd look like raging narcissists.

Instead, people get to know us over time. And one way that we let people get a sneak peek into our lives is by sharing content that supports our worldview or in some way defines us.

For example, if you share political content of a particular slant, your visitors and followers are going to quickly realize where you fall on the political spectrum. Or if you share content on specific causes (such as dog rescue videos), your followers will learn more about how you like dogs.

As such, sharing “defining” information can satisfy a variety of the core needs, including:

- **Connection.** Not only does it help people better understand us (which deepens relationships), it helps us get approval from those who are similar to us.
- **Significance.** We may share something because it makes us feel superior or special. An example is a vegan who shares a video about the treatment of farm animals.
- **Growth.** Sometimes, we share something in an area where we recently grew. For example, someone who just got out of a bad relationship may share quotes about how to avoid toxic relationships. In this case, they're making sure their strength (not the toxic relationship) defines them.

# *HERE'S THE NEXT FACTOR THAT MAKES CONTENT GO VIRAL...*

## THE “COOL” OR “WEIRD” FACTOR

This is content that makes you or your audience stop in their tracks and say, “Whoa, that’s cool!” or “Whoa, that’s weird.” Here’s what core needs this sort of content fulfills:

- **Connection.** By now, you’re starting to see a pattern, right? People almost always share as a means of reaching out and connecting with others.

- **Variety.** Obviously, this is the big factor. If something is “weird,” then it taps into that need for variety.
- **Significance.** People who like “weird” things often feel special or even superior to others. And people who like “cool” things also feel significant, because everyone wants to be one of the cool kids. 😊

Next...

## EDUCATIONAL/VALUABLE “SECRETS”

If you can create something that’s extraordinarily valuable because it teaches people a new way to do something (or just

delivers the information in a new way), then you're going to have a campaign that goes viral because it taps into the following:

- **Connection.** (You knew that was coming!)
- **Growth.** People have a desire to grow intellectually, and learning new information definitely fulfills that desire.
- **Variety.** Naturally, if people are learning new ways to do things, their desire for variety and a sense of adventure will be fulfilled.
- **Significance.** If people are learning "secrets," then they're going to feel superior to those who don't know these secrets.
- **Contribution.** When people share new ways of doing things, they're getting a need met by contributing to the ongoing discussions in that particular niche.

This sort of campaign may even tap into a desire for certainty, IF the information is something that is focused on proving security for people (such as information about how to grow one's money).

**But heads up:** in order for this sort of campaign to work, the information needs to be truly new to users. If you don't kick in that novelty factor, then the whole thing is going to fall apart.

As you can see, most of the key "ingredients" that you see in successful viral campaigns tend to tap into those six core needs. But those aren't the only factors that can help your campaign.

Take a look...

# BOOST SHARES WITH THESE TIPS AND TRICKS

Tapping into as many of the six core needs is important when it comes to creating viral campaigns. But as the saying goes, the devil is in the details.

That's why you'll also want to check that your campaign also includes as many of the following elements as possible...

## OFFER AN ENTICING INCENTIVE

Sure, there are plenty of viral campaigns that go viral because users can't wait to share the



content with their friends. As an example, look at all those funny cat videos online. People share them to give their friends a laugh. If you create unique content that evokes emotion, you're likely to get plenty of shares too.

### ***But here's the thing...***

Not every viral campaign you create is going to have that built-in urgency. People aren't always going to rush out to refer their friends (even if they think your products, content and business are awesome). Sometimes you need to give users a little extra nudge to get them sharing.

What kind of "nudge" are we talking about?

Simple: we're referring to incentive in the form of some sort of gift you offer in exchange for

shares. You can even set up milestone rewards, where users get increasingly more valuable gifts for every person they refer to your business.

Now, these incentives could take many forms.

***Common examples include:***

- **Free digital products.** This includes reports, videos, access to membership sites, apps and similar items. These may be digital products you've created exclusively to use as incentives, or you may offer some of your existing products for free.
- **Free swag.** This is generally branded merchandise such as t-shirts, hoodies, caps, mugs and similar. Using branded

merchandise is most effective if you've already built brand awareness and a "tribe" around your brand (otherwise, no one is going to wear your brand if it means nothing to them).

- **Credits or discounts.** Here's where you offer credits for people to use on their future purchases through your business. For example, you might offer a \$10 credit for every referral, which can only be applied towards your products.

As you figure out what sort of incentive to offer those who refer their friends, keep these points in mind:

- **The incentive should be something niche relevant.** Let me put it to you this way – if you offer cash in exchange for referrals, then you’re going to have a HUGE number of referrals. But in the end, you’re going to have a very untargeted list. That’s because your list is going to be full of people who are interested in cash (and who isn’t interested in money?), but they’re unlikely to be interested in what you’re selling.

To avoid this, be sure the incentive you’re offering is of direct interest to your niche. For example, if you want to attract golfers, then offer a video that

shows golfers how to improve their game.

- **The incentive should be desirable.** In other words, it needs to be something that your market really wants. If you're not sure what it is that they want, then you need to do your market research.
- **The incentive should be valuable.** This is obvious, right? Just because you're giving this item away for free doesn't mean it should be worth \$0. On the contrary, it should be something valuable, so that users feel motivated to refer their friends.

***Also, take note...***

It's a good idea to offer an incentive that leads users towards making a purchase with you.

One obvious example is when you offer credits that can only be used to purchase your products. Some people will gather enough credits to get your products completely for free. If they like what they see, you can bet they'll buy more. And some people will accumulate enough credits to effectively get discounts (meaning they'll need to purchase a product in order to receive their discount).

Another way to create an incentive that leads to a purchase is to offer a "lite" version or even a trial version of your offer. For example, if you sell some sort of apps, you can offer the "lite"

version of the app for free to those who refer their friends. Or if you sell a traffic-generation guide, you might offer a report full of traffic-generation tips.

Still one more way to create an incentive that leads to a purchase is by creating a free offer that enhances the use or enjoyment of your paid offer. For example, if you sell meal-planning apps, then you might offer a weight-loss guide as a free incentive to anyone who refers their friends.

Now let's look at another factor that can really influence the success of your referral campaign...

## CONSIDER A TWO-SIDED REFERRAL

As mentioned above, giving people an incentive to refer their friends is a great way to boost referrals.

Now here's something else: to further boost referrals, you may install a two-sided referral program. That means that not only do people get a reward for referring their friends, but the friend gets a reward too. This means you can offer both the referral and the person who referred them credits, free products, or other rewards.

For example, let's suppose you have a software as a service offer, which users must pay \$10 per month to access.



You might set up a two-sided referral that looks like this:

When someone refers a friend who then signs up, the person making the referral gets one free month of service (i.e., a \$10 credit). In addition, the person receiving the referral also gets one free month of service.

Here's the catch that makes this strategy so powerful:

**THE INCENTIVE SHOULD ONLY BE  
AVAILABLE VIA A DIRECT  
REFERRAL/INVITATION.**

For example, if Joe Blow stumbles on your website through some other means (such as a Facebook ad), he doesn't get a free month of service. He can only receive this incentive if someone personally invites him using a referral link.

In other words, you need to make the incentive exclusive and special, so that both the referral and the person making the referral are motivated to take advantage of the offer. If they

can get the incentive in some other way, then you've diluted the power of that particular incentive.

Now the next factor...

## PROVIDE EASY ACCESS

The key here is to create a low barrier to entry.

In other words, you need to make it really easy for people to get the perceived benefits of what you're offering. No hoops, no obstacles, no uphill climb in order to get the benefit.

Let me explain what I mean.

Here are some of the more common obstacles that can slow down the viral effect:

- **Making it unnecessarily difficult to get the reward.** If you create a referral campaign where people need to refer dozens of people before they're even able to unlock one reward, few people are going to attempt it.

Instead (and you'll see this in the examples that are coming up), you should make it easy to earn rewards.

For example, you might offer a reward for EACH referral (such as by offering credits). Or you might offer a reward once someone has made five referrals, which is an easily obtainable number.

- **Putting hoops between the user and the benefit.** The more hoops (or the bigger hoops) you put between your user and the benefit they want, the less likely it is that they're going to jump through those hoops.

For example, the best way to create viral content is to offer unfettered access to it. That is, anyone can visit your blog or other platform and freely view or download it.

However, to build a mailing list, you obviously need to collect email addresses – so you do need to put one “hoop” (an opt-in form) between your users and the benefit. This is

acceptable. Just don't start putting other unnecessary hoops, such as making people do a market research quiz before being able to access the benefit.

- **Creating content that takes a long time to consume.** People want instant gratification. So, if you create a video that's 90 minutes long, people may not take the time to watch it – especially if they don't know you. They may not want to “risk” their time (which is their most valuable resource). That's why you'll want to create content and campaigns that give people the benefit as quickly as

possible, especially if you're dealing with an audience who doesn't know you.

- **Putting the content in “rare” format.**

You want as many people as possible to be able to access the content. As such, make it accessible across platforms. For example, don't deliver content in a format that people using Apple products can't access (e.g., if you're offering an app, offer versions for both iPhones and Androids).



*WHICH  
BRINGS  
US TO  
THE NEXT  
FACTOR...*



## USE AN OWNED PLATFORM

In recent times, people have touted the value of using platforms like Facebook – because users (especially young users) tend to be on Facebook multiple times per day, but they’re not checking their email quite as regularly.

***But here’s the thing...***

**If you don’t own the platform, then you don’t make the rules.**

And it’s really easy to lose access to “your” followers on social media. And you may even have to pay to access them.

Take Facebook as an example. They’ve nearly always made it difficult for Page owners to reach

all of their followers. But in 2018 they made it even more difficult by showing Page content to just a tiny subset of a Page's total followers, and then encouraging the Page owner to use paid advertising to "boost" the post in order to reach all of the followers.

***Think about it...***

The Page owner has already done all the work to find the follower (often using paid advertising to initially reach them), and now they can't access those followers without placing more paid ads.

And who knows what will happen in the future.

Facebook could decide to hold ALL followers hostage (only accessible if you pay Facebook money), or they may change their business

model entirely and you could lose access to these followers.

The solution? **Use media that you own.**

This means creating your own email list.

Yes, use Facebook and other social media platforms to find your audience and engage with them. But you should also be working hard to drive these visitors back to your site, getting them on your mailing list, and encouraging them to refer their friends to your site.

Which brings us to another factor that's going to boost your chances of success...

## FOLLOW UP

When you get a new subscriber, you need to follow up with them. Specifically, you need to remind them to share with their friends. And you need to show them how close they are to getting the rewards. (E.G., “You are just one referral away from unlocking this reward...”)

Yes, some people are going to share your campaign immediately in order to get a reward. But some people are going to wait. That’s because they want to check out your company and content before they start sharing it with their friends.

## **That's where the follow up comes in.**

A good follow-up campaign builds value for your company, your content and your offers. As your subscriber starts seeing the value of your business, they'll be more likely to share with their friends. That's why a follow up campaign that reminds people to share is so effective.

In fact, if you want your campaign to be super-effective, then make "sharing" part of the onboarding process.

For example, let's suppose you have four main steps you want your new members/subscribers to complete and/or four pieces of information you want them to absorb in order to get the most from your business. You can send out a

series of four emails, with each email sharing one of the steps or pieces of information. You can then send a fifth email whose sole focus is to get people to refer their friends. (And they will, because at this point they are really seeing the value of your business.)

Now here's the next factor...

## CREATE      COMPELLING      SALES COPY

As mentioned above, you need to make it easy to get the benefit. One way is to make sure there aren't obstacles between the user and the benefit. The second way to get people taking

action is by using compelling copy that makes it seem easy to earn rewards or other benefits.

***Let me give you an example...***

Let's suppose you've set up a milestone rewards program, where your users need to only refer five people in order to get the reward.

***Here's one way to state it:***

**“Refer five friends and you'll unlock a free weight-loss app!”**

That's okay, but we can do better.

Here's another way to state it, which focuses on how easy it is to get the reward.

**“Do you know five people who'd love to lose weight? Of course you do! I bet you're thinking**

of five friends' names right now. And that's why it's so easy to get yourself a FREE weight-loss app. All you have to do is refer those five friends that you're thinking of right now, and you'll get a meal planning app to help you shed the fat fast! It's easy, so click here to get started now..."

### ***See the difference?***

The first example tells them what they need to do to get the reward. The second example tells them how EASY it is to get the reward, which will motivate more people to refer their friends.



*AND NOW LET'S TURN  
OUR ATTENTION TO  
THE NEXT FACTOR...*

## GENERATE FOMO

Yep, it's true – fear is a powerful motivator. And when it comes to marketing, **fear of missing out** (FOMO) is particularly powerful.

So, if you can find a way to create FOMO in your campaigns, you can generate even more referrals.

For example: one way to create a fear of missing out is to offer a really, REALLY awesome incentive. This should be something exclusively available to those who refer their friends. And it should be something very valuable and desirable to your particular audience.

Then here's the catch: ***you only make this referral program available for a limited time.*** So if people don't refer their friends now, they could very well miss out on getting themselves an awesome reward.

Here's another example: create a pre-launch where subscribers will gain access to the product on a first come, first served basis. Then offer a chance for people to jump higher in the

queue by referring their friends. For many people, the fear of missing out will get them referring others. (And in this case, the fear is largely based on not getting access to the product for a long time after others have had it – i.e., they’ll miss out on the benefits for weeks or months while they await their turn.)

## *QUICK RECAP*

As you can see, there are a lot of factors that go into creating successful referral campaigns. So, now let’s take a look at how real-world businesses have put these components together to create wildly successful campaigns.

***Take a look...***

# SWIPE IDEAS FROM THESE SIX WILDLY SUCCESSFUL REFERRAL CAMPAIGNS

You've been learning about the different components that make up a successful viral campaign.

Now let's take a look at six real-life examples, and how they used these components to create massive success in terms of sharing and building their subscriber lists.

***Take a look...***

## **Example 1: The Hustle**

Imagine getting **300,000** new subscribers in just a few months.

Sounds like a dream come true, right?

Well, it's not a pipedream, because this is what The Hustle (which largely curates tech news) did to gain hundreds of thousands of new subscribers in a very short amount of time.

### ***Here's how they did it...***

First, they created content that people really wanted to read. Plenty of sites curate content, but The Hustle created content with a certain engaging, likeable, and sometimes cocky vibe.

This vibe directly appealed to their target

market, which is largely made up of young males.

So at this point, The Hustle created a community of subscribers who really loved their content. The subscribers felt like part of the tribe. And The Hustle then tapped into this feeling of community by offering existing members a chance to win cool swag for referring members.

The swag included access to special content (in which only four referrals were needed), as well as branded merchandise such as socks, caps, t-shirts, hoodies and more.

Plus, community members could also win the ultimate reward, which was a ticket to San Francisco to hang out with The Hustle team.

HERE ARE THE CORE NEEDS THAT THE HUSTLE TAPPED INTO TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL REFERRAL CAMPAIGN:

- **Connection.** The Hustle created a sense of community among subscribers. Those who joined felt like part of the “family” or the “tribe.” They felt connected. And getting branded merchandise further fostered this connection.

At the same time, The Hustle also tapped into this next core need...

- **Significance.** This company also made people feel special and unique. Those who decided to refer others were even known by a special name: ambassadors. And getting cool swag (like a branded t-shirt) made the members feel even more special and perhaps superior to those who weren't familiar with The Hustle.
- **Variety.** The Hustle's engaging writing style naturally meets the need for variety, as the emails provide a sense of adventure and unpredictability. In short, readers don't get bored with their subscription.



The Hustle's referral campaign also created low barrier to entry, as people could start getting rewards with as few as four referrals.

Now let's look at another really successful referral campaign...

### **Example 2: The ALS “Ice Bucket” Challenge**

The ALS ice bucket challenge was different from these others examples we're referring to, as it was a campaign for a charitable organization.

But it was an extremely profitable campaign, in that it raised \$115 million dollars for the organization, and engaged millions of people (including celebrities).

The challenge started in 2014 with this simple premise: you either pour a bucket of cold water

over your head, film it, and post it on social media... OR you make a donation to the ALS Association (which is centered around doing research for those with Lou Gehrig's Disease, AKA amyotrophic lateral sclerosis). Take note that one of the reasons the organization raised so much money is because many participants both took the ice bucket challenge AND made a donation to the ALS Association.

Participants then "nominated" at least one other person to take the challenge, and they made their nomination public by tagging friends on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

As mentioned, the campaign was a massive success.

On Facebook alone, there were over 2.4 million videos with the ice bucket challenge hashtag.

So, what factors led to \$115 million being raised to combat ALS?

*LET'S START BY LOOKING AT THE CORE NEEDS THAT THIS CAMPAIGN TAPPED:*

- **Connection.** One of the keys to this campaign is that it evoked “peer pressure.” People directly and publicly challenged their friends take part in the campaign. Shunning or ignoring those

public challenges creates an uncomfortable feeling for many people, as it makes them feel like an outsider. Taking part in the challenge, however, fosters a connection with others and makes people feel like they're part of the "tribe."

- **Variety.** The ice bucket portion of the challenge definitely added variety to both viewers and those who were actually taking part in the challenge. Most people enjoyed watching their friends' shocked reactions as they poured ice water over their heads. And the videos of celebrities doing the same thing tended to go viral because it was

fun to see a “put together” celebrity squeal in shock when the water hit them. As these videos got shared, both awareness and donations grew quickly.

- **Contribution.** Another big factor is that people were raising both money and awareness for the ALS Association. This, in turn, made participants feel like they were contributing to the greater good, as they were taking part in something bigger than themselves. Which leads us to the next point...
- **Significance.** As mentioned, taking part in this challenge fostered a sense of community. But it also made people feel special and significant. This is

particularly true of those who both took the ice bucket challenge AND made a donation, as they felt superior to their friends who did neither.

As you can see, the campaign tapped into multiple core human needs. It also had other factors going for it, such as a low barrier to entry.

All someone needed to participate was a bucket, some ice water, a way to film the event, and a way to share the video (such as on social media) – all things that most people in the United States have access to.

*NOW LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE  
NEXT EXAMPLE...*

### **Example 3: DropBox's Referral Program**

This is one of our older examples, but it's worth talking about here because it's still widely used as a benchmark of just how successful a referral program can be.

That's because back in 2008, DropBox was able to use viral marketing to **expand their customer base from about 100,000 users to 4,000,000 users in less than a year and a half.**

## ***How did they do it?***

Simple: they used a referral program that rewarded both the referral and the person making the referral. The reward came in the form of free extra storage space (e.g., 500 MB of extra space per referral).

This was a perfect reward, because those who had already started using the service and seeing its value naturally wanted more space. One option was to simply upgrade to a paid account.

**This put a specific monetary value on the space.** Plenty of people took this option, of course. But plenty of others referred their friends to rack up 32 GB of free space.



There are a couple factors that made this referral program extremely successful.

The first, of course, is that the program offered an enticing reward.

## *HERE ARE THE OTHER FACTORS:*

- **DropBox made the referral part of their onboarding process.** How this works is that DropBox sent a series of emails to new users to help them become acquainted with the service and make the most out of it. This spurred people to use the service. Once they started using it, then the user's thoughts naturally turned to wanting more space. That's why it worked so well

for this onboarding autoresponder series to include a way for users to get more free space.

In short, DropBox followed up with users, got them to use the service, and then offered them something they really wanted (more space). Which brings us to the next point...

- **DropBox used an enticing frame to spur referrals.** DropBox didn't frame their referral program solely based on "Invite Your Friends." Sure, some people will do this out of the goodness of their hearts. Instead, DropBox framed the program in terms of "Get Free Storage." This simple framing was effective in

keeping people focused on the benefits they'll receive by referring others.

And finally...

- **DropBox made it easy to keep track of referrals.** Users had a dashboard that showed them how many referrals they had made, and how much more free space they were still eligible for if they referred more friends.

So, what core needs did this referral program tap into?

Check them out:

- **Connection.** Friends referring friends definitely fosters a connection and sense

of kinship and community. Need I say more?

- **Contribution.** The genius of the DropBox campaign is that the referral also received free storage space. As such, the person making the referrals received a sense of contribution, as they were directly responsible for helping their friends get a really useful service for free.
- **Certainty.** Sure, cloud storage has no effect on a person's security in the greater sense (not in the same way as someone feels secure when they have a good job). Nonetheless, the certainty that comes with having a lot of cloud

storage does reduce stress. For example, a person might feel safer about having all their most important pictures in the cloud, safe from natural disasters such as floods or fires.

*NOW LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT ANOTHER EXAMPLE...*

#### **Example 4: Harry's**

Harry's is a company that provides grooming accessories for men, such as razors and shaving lotions. Nothing spectacular about their offering, right?

**And yet here's a company that ran a referral campaign that had them racking up 100,000 emails in ONE week.**

That's quite an accomplishment for any company.

So, how did they do it?

First off, the company decided the best way to grow their business was through referrals. That's because the "warmest" leads come when friends refer their friends. That's why Harry's decided to put a lot of thought into creating their referral program.

The campaign ended up being very simple (and yet powerfully effective). In order to participate in the referral program, visitors needed to hand

over their email addresses. They then were given a unique link to use to refer their friends. When they hit any of four referral milestones, they won shaving-related prizes.

These milestones included referring five friends, ten friends, twenty-five friends, and fifty friends. The prizes for these milestones, respectively, included shaving cream, a razor, a premium razor, and free shaving for a year.

As you can see, **the barriers to entry were really low**. Just about anyone can refer five or ten people to receive the first two milestone prizes. And even the top prize (free shaving for a year) was fairly accessible, so plenty of people

were making referrals to try to obtain that highly sought-after prize.

End result? Not only did Harry rack up 100,000 emails in one week, but it also let a whole lot of people try their product out for free. And you can bet quite a few of these men went on to become loyal customers!

As mentioned, the campaign was successful, in part, because it had a low barrier to entry and attractive prizes.



*NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE CORE  
HUMAN NEEDS THIS CAMPAIGN  
TAPPED INTO:*

- **Variety.** Every man who's been shaving for some time already has a favorite razor and shaving cream. This campaign offered variety by giving participants a chance to try out a new product.
- **Connection.** Harry's isn't just selling grooming products – they're also building a tribe of men. Subscribers even receive a newsletter called, "Five O'Clock." This newsletter offers news and insights that are of interest to their

target market (often on topics of what it means to be a man).

- **Growth.** The Five O’Clock newsletter is specifically geared towards men who want to grow intellectually. Their slogan is: “Share candidly. Discuss openly. Engage freely. Act thoughtfully.”
- **Contribution.** As tribe members begin to see the value that Harry’s offers not only in terms of products, but also intellectually and culturally via the newsletter, these members will refer their friends. While primarily they’re making referrals for the free products, there’s also a sense of contributing by sharing this information with friends.

As you can see, Harry's tapped into several of the core human needs via one campaign, which is a reason why this campaign was so successful.

*NOW LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE NEXT EXAMPLE...*

### **Example 5: Robinhood**

This company created an investing app that was designed "for the rest of us." The idea was to make investing easy for newcomers and beginners, and also make it more affordable (by cutting out commissions from "fat cat" brokerages).

As the founder of the company said, the goal was to make investing “frictionless.”

You can bet this positioning was extremely attractive to their target market of beginning investors. And that’s why Robinhood was able to build a pre-launch base of 1,000,000 users!

### ***How did they do it?***

#### ***Simple:***

- They used strong sales copy to make their pre-launch offer as enticing as possible.
- They let people get on a “waiting list” to try the app.
- They let people jump higher on the waiting list by referring their friends.

The more people you referred, the more quickly you'd get your hands on the app.

Very simple, but very powerful.

*HERE ARE THE CORE HUMAN NEEDS THIS CAMPAIGNED TAPED INTO:*

- **Certainty.** This company is all about providing information and products for investors to grow their money. As such, this company is focused on providing certainty, growth and security for its base.

- **Variety.** While the company provides certainty, it also provides variety by offering people a “new” way to invest. In addition...
- **Growth.** Learning about new ways to invest also contributes to the need for people to grow intellectually.
- **Significance.** One of the driving forces behind the campaign is that people feel significant and special when they get access to something (the Robinhood) app before others. This need to feel superior by being first (plus the fear of missing out) is what created the huge surge in referrals.

## *AND NOW OUR FINAL EXAMPLE...*

### **Example 6: MailChimp**

If you've been doing any email marketing at all, then you're probably well aware of the email service provider called MailChimp.

They're well-known in marketing circles not only for their email services, but the referral campaign that helped them grow to over **14 million users in about 15 years** (i.e., almost one million new users per year).

Currently, MailChimp has a referral program running that offers "MonkeyRewards" to current customers who refer other cash-paying customers to the service.

This is an effective campaign, because it offers users \$30 in MailChimp credits for every paid referral. (This is somewhat similar to some of the examples above, such as DropBox offering free extra space for referrals.)

However, some years back MailChimp ran rather another clever referral campaign, where they offered MailChimp swag in exchange for referrals.

Now, a lot of companies who offer branded merchandise tend to offer the same sorts of items – t-shirts, pens, wall calendars, and the like.

MailChimp decided to be a little different, and they offered some really cool and unusual



merchandise... such as MailChimp hats for cats, a MailChimp pen holder, a MailChimp coloring book, and other cool products. (Naturally, they did offer some of the more standard items, such as t-shirts and windbreakers.)

What happened is that some of the photos of people using their merchandise (such as photos of cats wearing the cute hats) went viral, which raised awareness of their campaign. What's more, users started collecting MailChimp merchandise. And that means even more people were making referrals just to complete their collections.

So, let's look at the core needs this campaign tapped into:

- **Variety.** MailChimp's swag was so unusual (what other email service provider gives away hats for cats?) that it definitely satisfied the need for variety.
- **Connection.** MailChimp's branded merchandise helped foster a sense of connection and being a part of the "tribe." Once a customer starts using branded merchandise – especially if they post about it publicly, such as on their Facebook page – then they develop a sense of loyalty to the company. (Which in turn generates more revenue and referrals the company.)
- **Significance.** People who were able to collect some of the more unique pieces of merchandise felt significant and special, as relatively very few people in the world were possess such items.

The point is, while MailChimp has used more traditional rewards programs (such as credits for referrals), their branded merchandise referral program generated a significant number of referrals, plus brand awareness and brand loyalty.

*Now let's wrap things up...*

# Conclusion

Every day, there are a whole lot of marketers planning and executing viral campaigns. And every day, there a whole of these campaigns that are completely and utterly bombing.

## ***You know why?***

Because these marketers don't understand what all ingredients are needed to create the perfect recipe for viral success.

And what separates these other marketers from you is that you now know them!

## ***So, what's your next move?***

Simple: start planning your next viral campaign today using the amazing tips and tricks you just learned inside this guide.