

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF VIRAL MARKETING FOR THE
COMPANIES AND THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF A GOOD VIRAL
CAMPAIGN

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to understand the Companies' objectives by launching viral campaigns but also discover what the key success factors of a good campaign are.

The secondary research provides learning about viral marketing as a marketing process with a case study that alarmed about the viral risk.

At present, there is no theory about the key success factors of a good viral campaign but some bribes of what is working or not in the current trend.

Viral campaigns are becoming important in the promotion of product or services and it was interesting to discover how Companies use this particular tool and how the consumer is reacting.

With theoretical framework, I analysed the results of my interview with a Community Manager who works for N°10 Agency, an agency specialized in communication 2.0 and specialized in new tools of communication like buzz and viral campaigns.

I explain the role, the tools and the actors of viral marketing as a communication strategy. However, I also cover the viral risk; an important part that could not be avoid anymore.

Thanks to the survey, I assessed the impact of viral marketing among the generation Y. The results show that people spread the word fast and spread it for the family circle and friends. This huge network of people is still the most relevant tool for marketers

The key success factors are more likely the funny and innovative campaigns that reach the attentions of the consumers. The success is also due to the actors like bloggers and buzz makers, which trigger the interest of the public.

Regardless, trends are evolving to fast and companies have to face with the disinterest of the consumer. We can also raise the issue of the future for viral marketing.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nowadays most of Companies use marketing methods in order to communicate their products or services. They use, what is call mass Medias like television, radio or newspaper to deliver their message through advertising. This way to communicate has been use since the beginning of advertising. Now, new tools are emerging and face with the new social environment expectation. One of them is the viral marketing.

Viral marketing is in the trend. This new concept of electronic word-of-mouth for commercial purpose emerged with the development on Internet in the beginning of the 21st century. It is based on a process of written communication via e-mails exchanges, forums, blogs, social media and website. Properly used, it can be an extremely effective tool for companies' communication, but also difficult to control.

As a recent phenomenon, viral marketing has given rise to any real theory of spread and conditions of its effectiveness. The most common approaches are the chain reaction and exponential growth. They insist on rapid transmission of rumours generated by voluntary action of viral marketing, its low cost, and commercial impact (Kapferer J. 2001).

Beyond the trendy looks of the concept, this is a revolution of communication that is taking place now. We have gone from a model where companies were shouting the loudest possible message bit interesting and no custom, to a model where these companies prefer to design a creative and interesting message, which could be spread by others, and effortless.

The internet media is democratized and the consumer takes ownership, platforms can easily publish it in turn. The consumer becomes a “consum’actor” with a power of speech, free to deliver his opinion to the world. In response, companies have been forced to review their communication in order to be more transparent and truer. (Llopis R, 2011).

The research allows discovering how companies use this new marketing tool for communicating their service or their product. Moreover, the research will highlights the key success factors of a good campaign thanks to primary research like an interview of a Community Manager and a survey about the generation Y for enhancing the consumer perception about viral marketing.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1) INTRODUCTION

Terms like “buzz marketing” or “word of mouth marketing” are used as synonyms for the term Viral Marketing in the literature. Viral marketing is defined as “*any type of marketing that propagates itself by encouraging people to pass the message on to others.*”(Jaelyn C., 2008). Viral marketing is not a new phenomenon, quite the contrary. It is in reality the system of mouth transposed to the Web through the modern tools of online dialogue (emails, chats, forums, instant messaging ...).

Its principle is simple: send a text message or video to users, and make them want to forward it to turn to other Internet users (Lefebvre J., 2002).

Beyond building entertaining ads, companies want to penetrate the mind of the consumers by using buzzword. The word and the way you say it in a commercial can have a strong impact on a consumer behavior. In business world, buzz marketing is very important and force the consumer to remember a product or a service without much effort. It permits also to create a visual idea in the mind of the consumer by using a typical buzzword. Therefore, the public never forgets what the business is about (Konior J. and Sirko, J. M., 2008).

We can take for example the famous ad of Budweiser created in 2000 “Wassup”. The commercial was based in a short film and the characters sat around talking on the phone and saying "Whassup!" to one another in a comical way. The campaign became a pop culture phenomenon and Budweiser will use this form of communication for all their advertising Campaign until 2008.

When the public think about Budweiser, they automatically think wassup! That is a good example of buzzword using for a campaign that become viral (Bellaar N., 2008).



Figure 1: Budweiser Viral Campaign

2.2) SOCIAL NETWORKING, COMMUNITIES AND BLOGGERS

According to a study published by Médiamétrie in France in March 2010 (Gotam S., 2010), 940 million of people use social media all around the world. Now a growing number of Companies use social media because they see this new communication platform as an avenue for marketing; in deed they realized that fans and followers could become potential customers. Industries discovered a new way of sharing their information with these new platforms of communication. Indeed the social media is seen as a long-term strategy because of the interactions between advertisers and marketing people and consumers (McKeough K., 2011). The social media market place is a huge potential place for a new audience and new customers but it still a dangerous platform because the company has now power to control what people tweets or what people post on their wall. The brand has to think about three different things before launching their product or service on a social network. The product or the service has to be remarkable enough to talk about, the information has to be forwarded by colleagues, people, and the product or service will maybe be adapted to the platform to win the attention (Chuck S., 2010).

Actually, the power in these new ways of communication is that it differs from the others in term of efficiency: the communication is most effective when she is interactive. Nevertheless, social media cannot be used as an only media for a communication, but in support for a global campaign. Then, doing business is all about

making connections and most of the company now integrates a social-media strategy in their campaign (Bednar J., 2010).

It is going well in term of blogs. Blogs, contrary to others social media have an economic impact on a product or a service. They are considered as the most reliable media behind the newspapers. Moreover, blogs are influencing purchasing decisions but can also avoid a purchase.



Figure 2: The influence of blogger.

We can also take for example the TACORI viral Campaign. Tacori enterprises are an internationally recognized as an innovator in the design, creation and marketing of fine jewellery. After that they received positive feedback after their “checkmate” commercial, the Company wanted to leverage the commercial theme song “Ooh la, mi cha cha cha” in an online buzz ad. Then the challenge was to find out how to use their current strengths in a social media based viral campaign. They also focus on the idea of the song and so run a viral online campaign surrounding the giveaway of the ringtone that could be downloaded on the web site of Tacori but also on Youtube. They also have been assisted by the press in order to incorporate a strong marketing message and create a promotional strategy by using Facebook and Twitter. The Campaign was a success and increased referring site traffic. The campaign was a success on Facebook, Twitter and in the Blogging community with a total of distribution around 22,000 people on social network (Tacori case study, 2011). This marketing campaign had a viral effect, which has reinforced the positive image of the brand.

2.3) THE NEW TRENDS

This is a fact now, 81% of those who receive a viral message are more willing to follow the message to others (Penenberg A., 2009) .Indeed it can deliver amazing results in a very short period.

Viral marketers can pass ads for products and services through hyper-linked promotions, online newsletters, that is all e-commerce opportunity for the marketer's product, service or brand (Nucifora A., 2009).

However, a good viral campaign cannot be as effective as a traditional buzz campaign if there is no visual effect. Yes, the beginning was more images sharing by people involved but now this is a video culture encouraging by Youtube. Moreover, in order to be more competitive, companies use viral video campaign and most of the time this is a hilarious video. The most recent success still the “Old Spice guy” commercial. This satirical campaign has been viewed 40 million times in the first week and since the campaign launched, Old Spice Bodywash sales had grew up about 107% (Hepburn A., 2010). But the companies have to be careful about using humour in the ads; the audience must not be insulted by the video. The humour has to be done correctly in order to break out of the clutter (Doran R., 2009).

But the new trends are also to involve the consumer in a viral campaign. It was the case of Heineken. On the night of the October 21, the Real Madrid played Champions League match against AC Milan. Heineken convinced several university professors, girlfriends, and several bosses to convince their students, boyfriends and employees to go to a concert on that night. All of them could not say no and had to go to the classical concert. At the end of the masquerade, the game was shown on the big screen. It was unexpected and involved the consumers of Heineken (Beuker I., 2008).

2.4) THE POWER OF WORD OF MOUTH



Figure 3: word-of-mouth

This new way of communicate the brand as a marketing strategy let the consumers promote the brand by word-of-mouth. In order to reach the right target at the right time the basic medias like radio, television or newspapers are not considering as a good way of communicate because people avoid advertising and marketing easily, they just have to switch

Off. Then word-of-mouth is the solution for powerful brands because they understand something. Now the brand is not what the Company says it is...now it is what consumers say it is. So Companies have to create a product or a service that people love to talk about in order to begin the passionate link between the brand and the customers. Then if they love the brand, they will love to talk about it! (Manternach L., 2009).

People do not trust in advertising anymore and for the choice of a product or services they prefer ask to their pairs. They also rely on the information to others, also contribute to the brand awareness, and permit to determine if the company promise is truly delivering thanks to social networks. Word-of-mouth is a powerful communication and that is why it is a double edge sword; people can put a company over the top but can also ruin the brand reputation and make a company loosing sales. In order to avoid it there is 5 tips to take in account. First, the company has to be sure to deliver the promise. Secondly, the company must monitor what people say in the Medias like social networks and blogs. Thirdly the negative trends on the brand has to be cut in the bud, fourthly creating a community to permit people to talk, and then create opportunities to observe people using the product (Sellani S., 2009).

2.5) THE VIRAL MARKETING MIX

In a viral marketing strategy, marketers cannot think in a basic way. That is why for a viral marketing strategy, companies have to focus on 6 points:

- To propose valuable product or service: the attention has to be attracted by the “free” element. It generates a wave of interest and generates it faster in order to sell something.
- The product or service has to be provided for an effortless transfer to others: it’s easier when it’s easy to transmit. You have to work instantly because digital format is easy to copy. So the message has to be simplified.
- Use different types of scales: the transmission method has to be scalable from small to very large. Mail servers must be added very quickly in a viral model.
- Meet common motivations and behaviours: a viral campaign must be love and understand by people. The marketing strategy has to be designed and built on common motivations and behaviours for its transmission.
- Use existing communication networks: It’s not a secret anymore more people are social. The human network is powerful and thanks to that, the message will be multiply for its dispersion.
- Take advantage through other resource: By using links on website, give away free article on others web’s page etc. You can also multiply the view of the offer (Dr. Wilson R., 2005).

2.6) THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF A GOOD CAMPAIGN

A good viral and interactive campaign is thought and analysed before the start. There are five steps to consider in order conducting the framework of the viral campaign. It has to be easy: if the company wants to reach the largest number of people as possible, the message of the advertising has to be clear and easy to spread by the customers to their friends.

It must be unique: Nothing is going to matter if the content is boring and so for a specific campaign, the quality and the design has to reflect the spirit of the Company.

The Company has to know its audience: the target must be specified before launching the buzz... Are they able to use Facebook or Twitter? The Company has to understand the audience and provide easy way to interact with them.

They have to help customers to incorporate the brand: The consumer has to incorporate the brand easily for example with a recognisable logo, providing a creative tool kit etc.

They have to give a reason for the audience to touch it: There is a way to keep the customers attention on the brand with an interactive relationship. By the way, of games it is easy to enhance the brand awareness and then keep the customer loyal with creating transaction with him (Schwartz J., 2009).

2.7) CASE STUDY: VIRAL RISK



Figure 4: Nestlé Logo.

Nestlé had lived a bad moment on the social web. Attacked by Greenpeace for its use of palm oil at the expense of the natural forests preservation, they react in an authoritarian way on Facebook and so it was enough to trigger a riot on the social network.

The 22 mars 2011 more than 615 000 views for the Greenpeace video.

In reaction to Greenpeace Campaign, Internet user posts on the Facebook's fan page of Nestlé. Therefore, it takes a tragic turn because Nestlé decide to answer the posts. That was a bad idea... Nestlé did not manage the virulent comments and chose to close his fan page.

It was a very big mistake from the Nestlé Community Manager in charge of the Facebook page and it was the beginning of a new era; with a guerrilla web organized, planed and well executed.

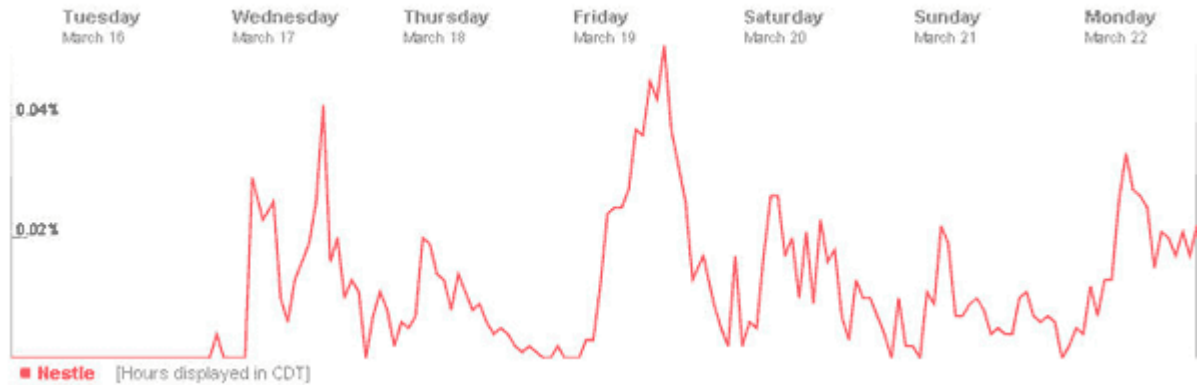


Table 1: Table 1: People present in the twitter page of Nestlé between the 16 and the 22 of March.
 Available at: readwriteweb.com/2010/03/30/a-la-une/greenpeace-nestl-sur-facebook-lart-de-guerre.

We can properly see the beginning of the campaign on Wednesday the 17, and the repeated attacks of the web user on Friday March 19. It was a really huge wave of rage against Nestlé's fan page.

The lost was huge for Nestlé in term of media coverage and bad publicity (Epelboin F., 2010).

However, the fact is that people talk about this story and the buzz, even if it is bad, is still a buzz.

2.8) CONCLUSION

In term of Viral Marketing, many tools are use like buzz marketing, word of mouth marketing and guerrilla. The principle is simple; spread the word and encourage people to pass the message. This new form of communication is encouraging by new trends in internet users' life. Social Networking is the main example of social media where communicate through pages with friends or followers become a real avenue for marketers. Information goes fast, people shares and interacts about what they do, they experience, they discover. It is a real support for Companies' campaigns for launching a product, a service or a brand.

Social media is a key media for a viral campaign and meets the consumers' trends. People want information now and experience it through visual effects; this is the video culture. Now the consumer wants to be involved and taking part of the process by encouraging the buzz but also by being closer from their favourite brand.

Moreover, marketers understand a key point; the power of word of mouth. With this powerful communication, a company can reach the top or going down in a finger slam. This is why Companies have to be careful about going viral, they must take really care about consumers by creating community or fan pages where consumers can talk about their experience, share ideas and can compare.

Then, the success key factors are not clearly defining but there are some tools to use:

- Take the audience in consideration.
- Keep the consumers' attention.
- Use visual tools.
- Reach peoples' feelings.
- Let the consumer express himself.

Companies are not safe for a badbuzz if they do not listen to the consumer. He is the central point of the viral Campaign.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

3.1) RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since the year 2000, the viral marketing has become the more popular tool used by Companies and advertisers in order to enhance a brand, a service or a product. This new way of communication is a counterpart of a traditional communication and year after year it becomes the new trend for most of famous brand. And most of them have made their pillar of communication through viral marketing (Meerman Scott David, 2007).

This study needs many approaches in the field of Viral Marketing. Indeed an advertisement that become Viral is a good advertisement and well conducted. But the aim is to understand why those campaigns are working, thanks to what? This study necessitates an analysis of this trend through professional's opinions like marketers and advertisers to obtain their realization keys of a viral campaign but also a non-professional opinion in order to raise consumer's behaviours and motivations face to Viral Campaigns.

In facts, analyze the work of on-line marketers and consumer behavior allows to determine the success tools of a Viral Campaigns.

3.2) RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question about the field "viral marketing and communication" is:

"How Companies use Viral Marketing for their communication and what are the key success factors of a good Campaign?"

To established research methodology and the research approach, it is vital to employ the adequate research objectives to collect better information. It involves to find how a viral campaign is conducted, on what is based a viral campaign, who are the main targets, who are the principal actors in this process.

3.3) RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Through objectives, they allow to answer the main question but also the elements around the subject like the actors, the processes, the target and so on.

The topic is centralised around the viral marketing process and how this communication is established by Companies. The main tool used on-line is the Buzz Marketing, which look for objectives that could answer the main topic.

The objectives are:

- To show benefits and potential risks of a viral Campaign.
- To identify Companies objectives through viral Campaigns.
- To know why Companies use viral and buzz campaigns compare to “normal” Campaigns.
- To identify the success key factors of a buzz campaign.
- To interview a buzz marketing manager.
- To conduct a survey for highlighting the consumers’ expectation and behaviour.

Those objectives could be a mean of dealing with the subject. Each of them permits to answer the main question by steps. To answer the first part of the main question, researches focus on the advertisers and companies’ strategies by conducting a Viral Campaign, what are the risks, how do they proceed and the interview of a buzz marketing manager is the right tool to understand the specific actions managed by Companies. On the other hand the primary research achieve the objectives and the interview and the survey will highlight quantitative and qualitative data.

3.4) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For developing the objective’s concepts, primary and secondary research answers the two parts of the main question. The subject lean on new tools; especially moving fast and growing new way of communicate a brand, a product or a service. So the research

is based on these new trends exploring by the most recent databases. Moreover my field study needs to investigate among Professionals and consumers.

First, secondary researches are based on electronic databases, books and case study to looking for theories and previous work on Viral Marketing since the year 2000 in order to stay in the trend of this type of marketing. Previous works on viral and buzz marketing highlight the way the buzz works from the conception to the realization. Electronic resources are the more relevant resources in this case because it is the main media for Viral Campaigns. Then the use of Internet as a secondary research media allows finding articles on the subject, but also on-line report, to keep abreast of news, blogs for comparing different ideas and opinions, and books for theories.

Secondly, primary researches provide qualitative and quantitative data.

On the one hand there is the Interview of Renée Băni, the Buzz Marketing Manager and the Community Manager of N°10, marketing and communication agency based in Bern, Switzerland. The interview allows enhancing the most relevant information for the subject through professional opinion and point of view. And this part represents the qualitative data of the research.

On the other hand there are some information not given in books, like the consumer's perception and behavior. The subject needs also quantitative data that can be measured and compared thanks to the survey method. The same questions asking in the same way and collected can provide more realistic and relevant answers.

Then the study needs a pluralistic approach; quantitative and qualitative for describing the phenomenon asked in this particular topic.

3.5) RESEARCH APPROACH

In this case there are no theories that answer the main question. The research is more an exploratory research, looking for evidences, finding out answers about the key success factors of a good Viral Campaign. Because there is a link between the fact that a buzz campaign is good and the way that consumers' perceive it and the way it works.

This research will follow the two approaches: inductive and deductive that can be combined.

This approach is first in the induction for understanding Companies objectives and the mains actors on viral marketing, there is no sufficient understanding of the topic for doing hypothesis.

“Inductive approach is a research approach involving the development of a theory as a result of the observation of empirical data.” (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2009).

The aim is to answer the mains question, so the primary research with the interview and the secondary researches permit to build some empirical data that the inductive approach will follow those data collected.

After the inductive approach there is the deductive approach.

“Deductive approach is a research approach involving the testing of a theoretical proposition by the employment of a research strategy, specifically designed for the purpose of its testing.”

(Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2009).

Then, the primary data collected in the Interview allows enhancing some theories that the survey will answer.

The interview will be conducted on-line through e-mail. Because using Internet offer many advantages (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2009). First, because my Interviewee is geographically far, secondly the interviewee has the time to prepare the questions and to think about it before answering, thirdly it is the better way to contact her again if there are some information missing. The interview is semi-structured in order to collect the most of qualitative data.

What is the aim of the Interview?

This interview reach specifics information needed to answer the objectives. In the aim to know more about the companies' strategies, the benefits of a viral campaign, to understand why Viral Campaigns are more and more used for an advertising strategy and what are the key actors in this process. These are my qualitative data.

On the other hand it's relevant to conduct a Survey in order to find what the consumers' expectations are and so, find the key success factors of a campaign, what sort of buzz works or not, why does it go viral? The survey contains 10 questions including sex and age. It is a self-administered questionnaire delivered by hand to each respondent and collected. The survey has been conducting in the Dublin Business School and the respondents are all student from this School. Students are relevant samples for the study because they are from the generation Y.

Why choosing Generation Y as a sample?

The GenY is the main target of Viral Campaign; follows trends on internet, uses social networks more than others internet users, engaged in what they believe in. They all know the concept of "viral" and so are more likely to answer the questionnaire. They are the most representative sample for the study.

What type of questionnaire?

Thanks to the information collected by interview and secondary research, the survey is more likely a study that confirms empirical data.

The questions are closed ended and include all possible answers/prewritten response categories, and respondents are asked to choose among them (multiple-choice question).

This type of questions is using to generate statistics in quantitative research. It's an approach most suited for gathering descriptive information.

This is a list of 10 questions, which answer the objectives:

- To indentify the key success factors of a buzz campaign.
- To analyze the consumers' behaviour through Viral Campaigns.

Indeed qualitative data are not sufficient for the objectives. The study needs quantitative data that support the elements finding in the qualitative data.

The survey reach different field.

The two first questions are related to what is the perception of the consumer about Viral Marketing.

The question 3 want answer the impact of a Viral Campaign on the consumer.

The question 4 is to know what kind of campaign are the most popular.

Questions 5 aims the most relevant media in term of buzz campaigns.

Questions 6 and 7 highlight how the buzz is spreading. Is it by sharing with families or friends? Who are the second targets of a Buzz Campaign?

The last question answers what is the future for viral campaigns. How consumers feel about it?

3.6) CONCLUSION

This research is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative aspects. It seeks to look into the process of viral marketing using by Companies. Additionally, it also examines some consumer information and perception about the “viral” concept. By combining these two aspects, we have a holistic analysis done qualitatively while at the same time the qualitative data offering suitable figures to explain the viral trends and key points to focus.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1) QUALITATIVE DATA

The first step of the raise of the primary data is the interview. The interview allows supporting and answering objectives of the research in a qualitative way through a professional opinion and point of view. The goal is to find what are the benefits and potential risks of a viral campaign. Also, identify the companies' objectives through viral campaigns. Moreover, at term, understand the trend of viral campaign compare to “normal” way of communication. These are parts of the research objectives.

The person interviewed is Renée Băni, the Buzz Marketing Manager and the Community Manager of N°10, an advertising Agency based in the capital of Switzerland, Bern. N°10 is a Branding, Communication Buzz, Viral and Social Media Agency, providing services that the customer need in term of communication.

The interview has been conducting by e-mail. It was the best choice for the questionnaire because Ms Băni lives in Switzerland and the communication is easier by e-mail. First asked in a French language, the interview has been translating into English.

This is the Diary of the correspondence with Renée Băni.

23 April 2011	Contact request for Renée Băni by e-mail.
25 April 2011	Ms Băni answers positively
4 May 2011	Implementation of the interview
6 May 2011	Sending of the questionnaire
9 May 2011	Answer of the questionnaire

Table 2: Diary of the correspondence with Renée Băni.

The interviewee was asking to answer the following questions:

1. What is your role in your Company?
2. How could you explain this infatuation from Companies for Viral Marketing?
3. How works a viral idea?
4. What are your main tools and visual aids in order to conduct a viral campaign?
5. Up to you, what are the key success factors of a viral campaign?
6. How evaluate the efficiency of a viral campaign?
7. Why are social networks becoming incontrovertible and what are their roles in a buzz campaign?
8. What is the bloggers' role and which bloggers are incontrovertible?
9. Could you talk about the badbuzz? Have you ever faces with a badbuzz? In this case what could you do?

There are nine questions in the questionnaire and the nine questions have been well answering. There is no response error, Ms Băni was very cooperative and involve in the interview.

4.2) DATA ANALYSIS : THE INTERVIEW

4.2.1) Viral campaign versus “normal” campaign

The new trends depend of the evolution of the society and viral campaign ride on the new consumer trends. Moreover, classical communications have less impact on the consumer because the consumer now is aware of the ads' goal. Now in order to purchase a product, people asks their pairs or friends to have an objective opinion and not an opinion given by the brand that is obviously subjective. Moreover, the gain of popularity is stronger than with a “normal” campaign.

The following quotation relate to what Renée Băni said:

“We know that 14% of people don’t trusts ads and that 78% of consumers trust friends recommendation.”

Furthermore, Companies can have a new positioning and another brand image by using viral communication. Indeed, by using viral process, the Company could position itself as an innovative competitor. Because internet is the future of the Company, use viral before competitors is a real competitive advantage and a way to give a sympathetic image.

Companies can also create a link with the consumer by providing new experience and make him laugh.

4.2.2) The actors of a viral campaign

To start a buzz now, advertisers need people that are influential in the web.

First, the bloggers become incontrovertible in the viral process because

- They influence many people because more and more people read them.
- They have an expertise in a particular field that allows them a huge credibility.
- The journalists often read blogs and could enhance media fallout.

Secondly, there are now some lambda persons, which take part in the viral process. They have some influence and have a huge network of contacts. We call them the “buzzmakers”. They are very interesting because they are people talking to other people with objective opinions. Moreover, because the buzzmakers has a huge network, his credibility is always increasing.

Indeed Renée Băni said that:

“Someone who has 2000 friends on Facebook could be more interesting than a blogger.”

Thirdly, the social networks are incontrovertible in order to go viral. Before social networks, consumers shared the information in an old way, face to face, with pairs. Now Facebook or twitter makes the consumer enter in the instantly sharing. It is a

world of fast sharing in a very simple way because one click is enough. Moreover, the social networks allow advertisers to be in contact with more people. This is a new dimension given to the buzz; the word is spread instantly and faster than ever.

Finally, the consumer is one of the main parts of the viral process. Nevertheless, to share a viral idea, people must desire to share it. That is why advertisers have focus on key tools.

4.2.3) The key success factors of a viral campaign

There is no miracle recipe but some tools are using in order to reach the consumer feeling. Moreover, many of these tools are use by many brands. The information are raised in the board below.

Tools	Brand
Funny or quirky	Skittles
Bounced on news	T-Mobile royal wedding
Innovative process	Tipex on Youtube
Be cute	Evian with the roller babies
Use the personalization	Old spice videos
Use the fake	Web user do that

Table 3: The key success factors of a good campaign for different brands.

But advertisers need also more resources and purchase media space on webpage with high flow of audience.

4.3) CONCLUSION OF THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Thanks to the interview, the research highlights many points about the key success factors of a good viral campaign and the way the Companies use viral marketing for their communication. The viral and web campaign become more and more extensive

due to a lack of trust in TV, radio or newspaper advertisement. People ask now to their pairs for the purchase of a good. They depend and turn on the opinion leaders like bloggers or buzz makers whose have credibility in the eyes of consumers.

Moreover, some tools are used in order to reach the consumers' feeling for keeping his attention. Make him laugh, use the news, be innovative, the stars, the babies for example; make always a campaign works. Advertisers have the use of ingeniousness to be more innovative in the viral process and so, be the most competitive Company in the market.

4.4) QUANTITATIVE DATA

In order to collect the quantitative data, a survey has been conducting. The survey support the elements finding in the Interview conducted previously. The aim of the survey is to understand the consumer behavior face to viral and buzz campaigns. The consumer is a key point of the process because he is the starting point and the network of viral campaigns. Indeed, in order to know and understand the key success factors of a good viral campaign, we need to know what the consumer expects in term of communication, with whom and from where does he take the information. Therefore, we can determine what is effective or not in term of viral communication. Thanks to that, the research will highlight the key point to focus on.

- The population

The population is a group of 50 people.

- The sample

The population chosen in this study is people who belong to the generation Y. Indeed people have between 18 and 26 years old and are all from the Dublin Business School. The population rate in this study is 50 people. For a total parity, there are 25 men and 25 women that have been questioning for the study.

The questionnaire has been giving during lunchtime on Tuesday the 17 and Wednesday 18 May 2011 in the common room of the DBS (Castle House) on the 4th floor at the address South Great Georges Street Dublin 2. The process took 1h per session.

The sample was not disturbed and did not talk with each other during the process.

- Response rate

On 50 persons questioned, there are 50 responses so it is a complete success. This rate is also high considering the ration of 100% answers.

- Response error

There are no unanswered or answered wrong questions. People all follows the indication written at the beginning “Just tick one answer per question”. In addition, when people had some questions, I was here to answer.

- Limitations to the research

The process chosen is a limitation in term of data collection. The survey was administered and delivered by hand to each respondent. Therefore, it was a long process of data collecting when all questionnaires were done.

Secondly, the data collection has been made on Ethnos. Ethnos is a complete professional survey software, allowing the user to design and analyze easily all types of questionnaires. The data on Ethnos was complicated due to a lack of knowledge in term of survey software.

The entire questionnaire is based on the Interview conducted before. All the questions are related to the information given by Renée Băni.

4.4.1) Data Analysis: the survey

Question

1: Q1 : Do you know the term " Viral Marketing "?

	Effectifs	%
Yes	49	98,00%
No	1	2,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 4: Consumers who know the term "viral marketing".

The question one demonstrates the large scope of the viral concept in the mind of people. The generation Y knows the term "viral marketing"; it shows that they already heard about, learn about or face about viral marketing already. There are 49 persons on 50, which mean 98%, to know about viral marketing.

Nevertheless, it is still one person who does not know the term "viral marketing". It does not mean that he or she does not know the concept.

➔ Limits: People, which answer the questionnaire, are for the most of them in marketing class. Therefore, it is not necessarily a concept that they learn from themselves.

Question 2 :

Q2 : For you, what is a Viral Campaign?

	Effectifs	%
A new way to communicate	24	48,00%
A campaign that reached thousands of people in a short time	18	36,00%
A good way to communicate their product or service	8	16,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 5: What is a viral campaign for consumers?

In this question, the perception of the consumer is highlighting. For them, what is a viral campaign? Is it more view as a commercial way, a technical way or a new way to communicate? Most of people answered “a new way to communicate” (48%), which means that viral campaign is still seen as a trend and another tool for communicating.

But people are also aware of the capability of a viral campaign; reach a thousand of people in a short time.

So viral campaign are first a new way to communicate, but also a communication which could reach many people in a short period.

Anybody ticks the answer “A preventive campaign against disease”. It was a trap because the term “viral” could be relate to “disease”.

Question 3:

Q3 : A viral Campaign

	Effectifs	%
Allows you to discover a brand or a product	19	38,00%
Confort you in the idea of a brand or product	1	2,00%
Makes you consume more often a brand or a product	4	8,00%
Makes you talk about it around you	26	52,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 6: The consumers' perception about viral campaign.

The question 3 analyses the consumer behavior. In this case, how reacts the consumer after seen or faced a viral campaign.

For the majority (52%), a viral campaign makes them talk about it. They see the campaign and share the experience with others. This is a key example of word-of-mouth described in this question.

Furthermore, for 38% of the sample, a viral campaign allows them to discover a brand or a product. That is why a lot of brand uses this viral communication: to be known abroad by the way of buzz and viral effects.

Question 4:

Q4 : Why can a buzz Campaign reach your attention ?

	Effectifs	%
Because of its humour	14	28,00%
Because of its visual impact	10	20,00%
Because of its design	2	4,00%
Because of its popularity	18	36,00%
Because someone told you about it	6	12,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 7: How can a viral campaign reach the attention of a consumer?

In this question, we want to know the feeling of the consumer about these campaigns. Which kind of advertisement reaches the emotion of people? Is it visual or emotional? The answers are based on the information given in the interview.

Opinions are divided but we can see a value scale in the answers and people like the ads for many reasons.

- The first cause is the popularity of the campaign for 36%.

We can explain that by the fact that we all belong to a group of consumer and if the group agree that, the ad is good, so the ad become more and more popular in the eyes of the consumer. And the number of views, or “like” or share of a campaign define its popularity. The consumer thinks that if the ad is popular, it could be a good ad.

- Secondly, the humour is a key point for 28% of the sample.

As Renée said in the interview, funny works! And advertisements that make people laugh obviously touch deeply the consumer.

- And then, the visual impact is important. By using innovative process, marketers can attract the consumers’ attention.

Question 5:

Q5 : How did you discover these viral Campaigns?

	Effectifs	%
Web sites	4	8,00%
Social network	21	42,00%
E-mail	3	6,00%
Video Platform	10	20,00%
By someone	12	24,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 8: How the consumers discover the campaigns?

The internet Platform is the most popular. Now go viral means spread the word by using internet. If we add up all the answers related to internet, it concerns 76% of the sample.

The most using tool is Social Network.

Question 6:

Q6 : Do you usually share these Campaigns?

	Effectifs	%
Yes	39	78,00%
No	11	22,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 9: Does the consumer share the campaigns?

This question highlights the fact that people are in the middle of the viral concept. If a person does not share the campaign, there is no viral effect. Therefore, it is the case for 78% of the sample.

Question 7:

Q7 : With whom do you share these Campaigns?

	Effectifs	%
Family	8	16,00%
Friends	26	52,00%
Colleagues	4	8,00%
Community	1	2,00%
Non concerné	11	22,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 10: With whom the consumer share the campaigns?

The question 7 highlights the “share’s network” of people. For most of them, friends are the most popular network for sharing buzz campaign. It is so a friendly link between each other. People like the campaign so they want to share it with friends. In the second position, there is the family. The family circle is the second network for consumers. So friends and family are the main network for 68% of them.

Question 8:

Q8 : For you, the buzz is...

	Effectifs	%
Entertaining and ephemeral	29	58,00%
In the trend and the novelty	21	42,00%
Total	50	100%

Table 11: What is the buzz for the consumer?

This question answers the concept of the perception again but more for a future state of viral campaign. Is there a future for viral and buzz? Then for 58% of the sample, the buzz is entertaining and ephemeral. This means that in the mind of the consumer, it is just a short time entertainment without long effects.

On the other hands for 42% of the sample, buzz is in the trend and the novelty so there is a time before people loose interest on it.

4.4) CONCLUSION OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The survey supports outstandingly the information given in the qualitative analysis. Indeed, it gives figures and highlights they key success factors of a good campaign. Opinions leader are more the family circle and friends for the consumer and the popularity of a viral campaign keep the attention in order to share the campaign. The humour is an effective tool too.

Social networks give a huge dimension to the campaigns.

Moreover, viral campaigns have a great future because they are still maintain the link with the consumer because it's entertaining and in the novelty.

Viral is more a process to make talk about it, the word of mouth in viral campaign is also a new way to do an old thing.

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1) CONCLUSION

In the literature, viral marketing describes strategies that encourage people to pass a marketing message to others in order to create an exponential growth in the message given by the advertiser. This process is based on the basic principle of word-of-mouth, transposed to the web. Word of mouth allows some Companies to become very powerful thanks to the consumers and their supporting acts on the web.

Websites give the opportunity to spread the word faster than ever by using the rights tools at the right moment through the right persons.

The growth of social networks and blogs in the five past years has provided ideals platforms of communication for advertisers and marketers. These new communities of web users now, share and spread the word to the other members; the key word is also “interactivity”. People want to interact with others, give opinions, share the experience and ask others before buying. That is the principle of the viral phenomenon.

Marketers also try to find other way to communicate in order to be more and more innovative for keeping the consumers’ attention. That is why the new trend is in the visual impact and effect of the communication. The flashmobs’ video of T-Mobile is the perfect example of the visual impact on the brand for sharing. The ad was entertaining, innovative and funny, three key success factors of a good campaign.

Nevertheless, marketers have to be careful about viral campaign; because sometimes it could trigger disasters on the web, which carry away a bad brand image and could cause the ruin of a brand. That is the viral risk for some badbuzz like Nestlé for Kitkat.

The research problem is base on the way that companies conduct viral campaign for their communication but also understand the key point we have to focus on in order to conduct a good viral campaign. All is about understanding why is this new communication working so much in the current society.

All the research allows answering the question: *“How Companies use Viral marketing for their communication and what are the key success factors of a good Campaign?”*

Two of the objectives were to interview a buzz marketing manager and conduct a survey that supports the elements finding in the interview. The interview gave another dimension to the study because Renée Băni is in the trend of the Viral concept, she knows what works or not and highlights the followings points that was the objectives of the study. The survey was a support in order to understand the consumer behaviour face to viral campaigns. Therefore, the objectives given answered the current viral concept questions.

To show benefits and potential risks of a viral Campaign.

The strategy marketing through Viral Marketing uses various tools on internet platform in order to generate word of mouth for a product or a service. The benefits of a viral campaign are huge for the Company in term of brand awareness, brand image and for economics and Medias fallout. The strength of this new communication lies in the fact that consumers spread the word fast and the message goes viral like a virus. People on social networks and blogs are more willing to share the information with their friends or their family. Indeed consumers are actors in a good viral campaign but there are other actors involved in the process.

Bloggers, for examples are opinion leaders and have credibility toward consumers. They have an economic impact on a product or a service because they have credibility for the purchase process of the consumer. The strength of viral campaign lies, in the other hand, in the fact that everything goes instantly by one click. The effort is really reduce at the minimum and sharing information is easier and faster than ever.

However, a viral communication can destroy a Company or a man reputation. We can take for example the case “Dominique Strauss-Kahn” that became the more relevant new badbuzz for a politician or the fight between Nestlé and green peace that was a huge bad buzz fur the Nestlé Company.

To identify Companies objectives through viral Campaigns, and to know why Companies use viral and buzz campaigns compare to “normal” Campaigns.

The Companies’ objectives are manifold and Companies use viral campaign for many reasons:

- Companies are always in the innovation in term of communication and they always want to be the most competitive one in the market. An innovative company gives an image of dynamism in phase with the trend.
- The habits of consumption evolve with the trends and now consumers wants to be more involve in the buying process. They ask to others, want to experience, and wants evidence and more objectivity for a product or a service. By using viral or buzz campaigns, Companies can show the values and the culture that they belong. Because people do not trust anymore the traditional campaigns and prefer ask to their pairs, viral is the most objective way to transmit a strong message.
- Use viral campaign compare to normal campaign allows the Companies to get directly the feedbacks of the consumers on blogs or social networks and give the opportunity for the consumer to express himself about the product or the service. The consumer is satisfied about the attention paid, and the Company has instantly feedbacks from the customers and sees what is wrong or not.
- Compare to “normal campaign”, viral generate word-of-mouth that means a huge network, more influence and more brand awareness. But there is also an economic goal; go viral on web cost less than a traditional campaign and could enhance the economics fallouts.

To identify the success key factors of a buzz campaign.

Actually, there is no specific answer in term of key success factors for a good campaign. All is about the trends and the Company expectations. However, the study highlights some tools that always work:

- Be funny and quirky. The Company has to differentiate by reaching the consumers’ feelings. By using humour, advertisers and marketers are sure to make a buzz. Humour is a universal language that marketers understand that fast.

- Be innovative. The ad can be innovative in many ways. By the method it was registered like 3D images or HD the ad can give the wow effect. However, innovation can also be used by the way of communicate. There is no matter to show the product and give all the characteristics, since many years, flashmobs and freezes were a virus all around the planet.
- Comply with the trends and the consumers' expectation. Because the consumer is in the heart of the word-of-mouth process, the consumer is directly tie to the success of the campaign.

5.2) RECOMMENDATIONS

Viral marketing has much strength as describe before, and some Companies faced badbuzzes due to a lack of social media management.

The example of Nestlé is impressive. Indeed they faced with the anger of Greenpeace' members on Facebook due to the use of palm oil in their chocolate bare Kitkat. The problem could easily been solved with the help of community manager that talk to consumers and reassure them when it is necessary. That was a big mistake from Nestlé. They were overwhelm by the attacks and could not face it, so they closed and cancelled their fan page.

The recommendation in this case is to not panic. Take every complaint and take the time to answer for everyone. The consumer is too important for not taking in account his opinion.

When Companies launch a viral campaign, they have to consider every risk, and take the social factor in account. They have to open discussion pages where professionals can answer them. There is no "one" solution to avoid the viral risk; that is why some precautions have to be taken. The priority is to manage the flow on social networks and keep the fame and the image clean during the process.

On the other hand, there is a certain disinterest for viral communication from the web users. The "wow" effect is powerless than the beginning five years ago. People are fed up to see another flashmob or another freeze on websites. Moreover, people begin to parody this kind of communication.

Companies have to find another way to give a strong message to the consumer in a corporate strategy. Another trend could be a possible way to communicate; the back to

basics is quite the contrary of the viral concept very 2.0 but it could be a new way to do an old thing with some old fashion viral campaigns. For example, the old brand could revisit their old advertisement and turn it in a new way. People want innovation but also want authentic feelings. That could be a solution of diversification.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW OF RENEE BÄNI

What is your role in your company?

My role is twofold. On one hand I am the Community Manager of the Agency, it means that I lead our community (via our Facebook page, our Twitter account, relationships with bloggers and blog of the agency whose I am the editor).

On the other hand, I develop Viral Marketing strategies for our customers. For this part of my work, I have to propose new ideas for our customers in order to position them as innovative competitors and then monitoring their strategy project.

How could you explain this infatuation from Companies for Viral marketing?

This is the evolution of the society that makes that we are interested in Viral Marketing today. We know that classical communication Campaigns have less impact, there is a certain way of advertisement. The Viral Marketing works differently; we do not use mass media but word of mouth. We know that 14% of people don't trust ads and that 78% of consumers trust friends' recommendations. Considering this, the assessment is quickly done.

A buzz campaign costs less than a classic campaign and if this is well conducted it enhances media and blogs fallout.

Choosing to conduct a buzz will also position the advertisers; it gives a sympathetic image. We create a link with the consumer, either because we can make him live a totally new experience, but also because we make him laugh. The popularity gain is stronger than with a press campaign for example.

How works a viral idea?

For an idea to become viral, people must desire to share it. There must have that "wow effect", we have to surprise them. There are plenty of tools to make it work.

One can, for example, be very funny or quirky (Skittles uses this a lot), bounce on news (like T-Mobile royal Wedding). They can also use an innovative process (the

interactive campaign Tipex on Youtube), be “cute” (the roller babies of Evian), use the personalization (Old Spices video’s answers), challenge friends, use the “fake” (then the web user is wondering if it’s real or not and share with friends to have their opinions)... There are many things working and this is with the experience that we learn what works or not.

What are your main tools and visual aids in order to conduct a viral campaign?

Things are changing continuously, and go Viral today is harder than one year ago. One year ago, conduct a “seeding” campaign was enough to start a buzz. That consists to contact influential bloggers for sharing the campaign, now bloggers are constantly contacted and Viral Campaigns are more numerous. We therefore need more resources. We can certainly contact influential bloggers but we must also purchasing media space or sponsored space for spreading to a larger audience.

Up to you what are the key success factors of a viral campaign?

This ties the question 3; there is no miracle recipe, but we know that some things work better than other does. For example, the babies, the “lol cats”, sex and celebrities work a lot.

How evaluate the efficiency of a viral campaign?

We can evaluate with the number of fallout in blogs, in medias, the number of sharing on Facebook and Twitter, the number of views on Youtube, the ranking on Google... Parodies are also evidences that a campaign worked. This is the case of the Old Spices’ video, which enhanced many parodies.

Why are social networks becoming incontrovertible and what are their roles in a buzz campaign?

Social Networks give a new dimension to the buzz. Before that, we just shared the buzz with pairs, face to face. Then e-mail is arrived and permitted to share instantly, but with

our close circle. With Social Networks, we are in contact with many more people that they are in contact with more people. Not only we spread information to many people but also we do that in a simple way, with one click.

What is the Bloggers' role and which bloggers are incontrovertible?

Bloggers are influential because they are reading by many people. They are often firsts to speak about a novelty and because they have an expertise in their fields, readers allow them certain credibility. They allow launching the buzz. But they are not the only one option. Now with the purchase of strategic media space or with editorial credit on websites with high flow, we can reach a community larger than the blog's one. We also use the "buzz makers", they are these people who have some influence and a huge network of contacts. Someone who has 2000 friends on Facebook, could be more interesting than a blogger, even more they are often saturated by the brands' "request" on Facebook.

About the key bloggers, it depends on the field. In marketing, the Publigeekaire is hugely read. Get a job on lepubligeekaire allows to reach principally a community of communicators. We are not yet in the "mainstream". The advantage is that often, journalist read blogs and it could enhance media fallout.

Could you talk about the badbuzz? Have you ever faced with a badbuzz? In this case what could you do?

No we've never had to face with a bad buzz (we should cross the fingers), but we faced some criticism yes. I think that in any cases, we should not be alarmed; a bad buzz causes a lot of noise in the instant but falls quickly. It involves often very specific communities but not the broader public. We can take for example the Nestlé badbuzz with Greenpeace. Even if now every communicator is aware of the story, I have doubts that Mister and Madam "everybody" have ever heard of that. We have to face with it but not trigger a controversy.

The only drawback is that a badbuzz stills remain indexed in Google. People who talk about that on internet are often dissatisfied and so satisfied one does not bother to speak; so we can feel that it take enormous proportions when in fact it only affects a small community.

APPENDIX 2: THE SURVEY

Viral Marketing Survey

Please just tick one answer per question

1. Do you know the term "Viral Marketing"?

- Yes
- No

2. For you, what is a Viral Campaign?

- A preventive Campaign against disease
- A new way to communicate
- A campaign that reached thousands of people in a short time
- A good way to communicate their product or service

3. A viral Campaign

- Allows you to discover a brand or a product
- Confort you in the idea of a brand or product
- Makes you consume more often a brand or a product
- Makes you talk about it around you

4. Why can a buzz Campaign reach your attention ?

- Because of its humour
- Because of its visual impact
- Because of its design
- Because of its popularity
- Because someone told you about it

5. How did you dicover these viral Campaigns?

- Web sites
- Social network
- E-mail
- Video Plateform
- By someone

6. Do you usually share these Campaigns?

- Yes
- No ↔ 8

7. With whom do you share these Campaigns?

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Community
- Bloggers

8. For you, the buzz is...

- Entertaining and ephemeral
- In the trend and the novelty
- Out of date and without interests

9. Are you

- A male
- A female

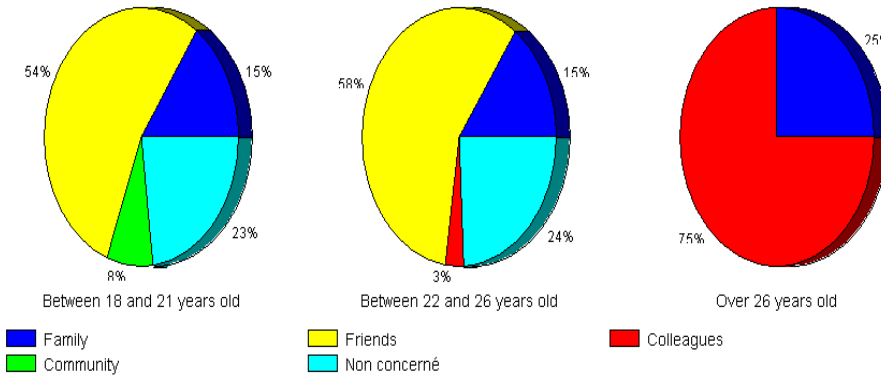
10. Your age

- Between 18 and 21 years old
- Between 22 and 26 years old
- Over 26 years old

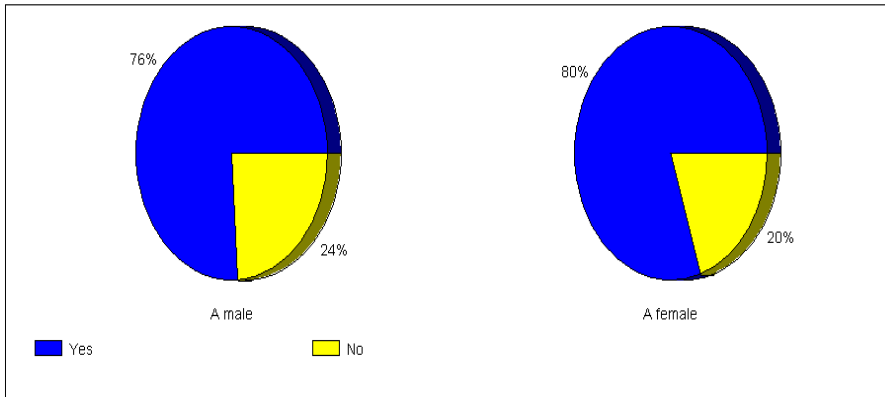
Thank you

APPENDIX 4: PIE CHARTS, CROSS FINDING, BAR CHARTS

Q7 : With whom do you share these Campaigns?
Q10 : Your age



Tri croisé
Q6 : Do you usually share these Campaigns?
Q9 : Are you



Q7 : With whom do you share these Campaigns?
Q5 : How did you discover these viral Campaigns?

