

17 Hacks for Creating Viral Content That Sweeps Across Your Niche Like a Prairie Fire

Referral traffic is all about getting members of your market to share your content and marketing messaging with their friends and contacts. This is a really powerful form of marketing, because people who are referred by their friends come to your site as a warm lead, which leads to higher conversions.

There are multiple ways to get this referral traffic. The first method is to set up a referral program, where you encourage your satisfied customers to refer their friends. The second method is to create viral content which people share within your market. Referral programs tend to create a higher-quality traffic, but viral-content campaigns can produce a lot more traffic. That's why you're about to learn about both of these methods.

Let's start with referral programs...

1. Choose: One-Way to Two Way Referral Program?

Many big companies – such as PayPal, Uber and DropBox – grew their business in the beginning with a referral program, where customers and users referred their friends. There are two ways to do this:

1. Create a one-way program, where the person who refers others gets an incentive for doing so.
2. Create a two-way referral program, where both the referral and the customer making the referral get rewarded.

You'll find that a two-way referral program is much more effective, because the referrals have an incentive to become paying customers. For example, you can offer both parties a generous coupon (such as 75% off) once the referral makes their first purchase.

2. 6 Idea for Referral Program Incentives

There are plenty of ways you can reward your referrals and customers. Check out these ideas:

- Cash incentives.
- Free products.
- Discount coupons.
- Points that can be exchanged for your free products/services.
- Points that can be exchanged for other peoples' products/services.
- Extra entries into a contest.

Which one will be most effective? It depends on your audience and niche. However, you'll attract higher quality traffic if you offer incentives that are directly related to your business (such as free products or coupons for your offers).

3. Use These Tools to Simplify a Referral Program

The good news is that you don't need to manually track referrals, as there are plenty of tools available to track referrals and unlock rewards. For example:

- Rafflecopter.com lets you award extra contest entries when people share your content.
- PerkZilla.com, which lets you award free products, coupons and other prizes for referrals.

If these tools don't do what you need, just search Google for terms "referral apps" or "referral program tools."

4. Give Customers Easy Ways to Make Referrals

Depending on the niche you're serving, most of your customers probably aren't marketers, so they're not used to writing "ads" to refer their friends. That's why you'll want to make it easy on them by providing copy-and-paste emails, social media blurbs and other content that they can use to refer their friends.

5. Create "Brand Ambassadors"

Keep in mind that you're not just looking for people to refer customers (as that would be little more than an affiliate). Instead, you're looking to identify and cultivate "brand ambassadors." These are the people who really LOVE your products, and they tend to talk about them even without incentives.

What you want to do is search for your product name in Google from time to time as well as on social media (using hashtags) to see what people are saying about your business. If you find people speaking positively about your business without any incentive, then approach them to offer incentives for their continued positive messaging. This makes the customer feel good and motivates them to talk about your business even more.

6. Where to Advertise Your Referral Program

The key to a good referral program is to make sure customers are well aware that your program exists. To that end, here's where to advertise your referral program:

- Inside customer onboarding emails.
- Within other follow up messaging that you send to customers.
- Inside products.
- In members-only areas.
- On download pages.

In short, whenever you communicate with customers, be sure to mention the referral program and what benefits they'll receive by participating in it.

Now let's switch gears and look at referral marketing that comes about when you create shareworthy content (e.g., viral content)...

7. Here's What Makes Content Go Viral

Not every piece of content you create – no matter how good you think it is – will go viral. However, you can increase the chances it will go viral by understanding what makes content go viral. Specifically:

It Creates an Emotional Response

People are more likely to share if the content makes them FEEL something. For example, people experience joy when watching cute kittens, which is why cat videos are so popular. (I'm not suggesting you create cat videos, UNLESS you are in a cat niche! I'm just explaining how arousing emotions helps spur viral content.)

It's Easy to Consume

Generally, this means the content is short, and takes anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes to read or watch. It should also be in a format that everyone can access, no matter what device or platform they're using.

It's Easy to Share

Sharing should be as easy as clicking a button, which is why social media is a great place to place viral content. In other words, don't put any hoops between consumers and your content (such as an opt-in form).

8. Offer Something Unique

People aren't going to share the same tired, rehashed content. Give them something new, something that makes them say "wow," and they'll pass it on. Novel content actually lights up the brain with pleasurable chemicals, so showing people something unique makes them feel good – and that feeling helps spur the viral effect.

9. Provide a Positive Message

Shocking people, offending people, and even creating disgust all tend to get attention. However, the content that tends to get shared the most is anything that creates a positive emotion. That's why you'll want to focus on creating content that creates joy, happiness, love, inspiration, delight, pleasant surprise, and similar positive emotion.

10. 3 Questions to Ask to Uncover Ideas

A good starting point is to look at what type of content your audience is already responding to on Facebook, Twitter or other social media. Look for high engagement in the form of likes, shares, and comments.

Here are the questions to ask yourself:

- What content format does your audience respond to? E.G., videos, infographics, memes, etc.
- What topics does your audience respond to?
- What emotional messaging seems to get the best response?

For example, maybe you notice that people in your niche really respond to short videos (30 seconds) that share inspirational messages about not giving up. You can then create something entirely unique, yet it has these characteristics that your audience responds to.

11. Launch Content at the Right Time

Another factor to take into consideration is when to launch your content. You need to find a time when your audience is not only online, but they have a few minutes to consume your content and then share it.

Here are ways to come up with a starting point:

- See when your competitors are launching content, and gauge the response at different times and on different days.
- Look at your traffic logs to see when your audience is online (paying particular attention to when they have time to take action, such as when they join your list or buy your products).

Again, these are just starting points, because you ultimately you need to test and track your campaigns to determine the absolute best time.

12. Boost the Viral Effect

You can't drop your viral content on your blog and expect it to light itself on fire. Instead, you need to jump start the viral effect by promoting it in much

the same way as you'd promote your paid products or anything else. Here's where to promote it:

- Your blog.
- Via guest blogging opportunities.
- Your social media pages.
- To your mailing lists.
- Ask joint venture partners to promote it.
- Via paid advertising, such as Facebook Ads.

Next...

13. Get Your Viral Content in Front of Influencers

There are some people in your niche who are known for helping boost viral content, products, ideas and similar. Your job is to identify these influencers – who often have big social media platforms – build relationships with them, and then invite them to consume and share your viral campaigns.

14. Focus on Creating Compelling Titles

One of the keys to a viral content campaign is to create titles for your videos, articles, infographics and other content that's sure to get your viewer's attention.

To get a feel for what works, check out viral content on your competitors' sites. You can also check out sites that curate viral content, such as Upworthy.com, as these types of sites often give new titles and headlines to content (which is then what kicks off the viral effect).

Be sure to also check the YouTube for inspiration, especially the "Popular on YouTube" section, which lists the videos that have received a lot of views and engagement.

For example, there's a video called "4 Microwave Hacks You Need to Know." Chances are, this video wouldn't have been as popular if it was simply called "Tips for Using Your Microwave."

Another example: “Women Try One Size Fits All Clothes,” which has over 1 million views. Most women who see that title know instantly the video is going to be funny, because they’ve had their own humorous experiences trying on “one size fits all” clothing.

This likely wouldn’t have had near that many views if it was titled something like, “Clothing Manufacturers Offer Inadequate Sizing Options.” Boring, right?

15. Make Your Content Mobile Friendly

Many of your audience members are going to be viewing your content on their phones, which is why you need to make 100% certain it’s mobile friendly. For example, if your content is on your blog, then be sure you’re using a responsive theme.

16. Create Something Visually Appealing

Many people prefer visual content, which is why videos tend to be so popular. However, if you don’t want to create a video, then look at other options for making your content visually appealing. For example, you can create:

- Infographics.
- Memes.
- Illustrated articles.
- Comics.

And finally...

17. Offer Practical Information

In general, people don’t get excited about generic ideas, and they certainly don’t get excited about ideas they’ve heard dozens of times before. That’s why you want to provide novel, practical ideas. Ideally, this should be content that you’ve simplified by breaking down into small, easy steps. When your viewers act on this information, they should get a quick win.

Let me give you an example...

There are plenty of lists floating around that show people new ways to use common items. For example, you can easily find a list of clever ways to use coffee filters (e.g., they work really well to clean glass without streaking). And these sorts of lists tend to go viral on social media, because they provide practical information that people can use instantly.

Now, obviously you don't want to create a list about how to use coffee filters. However, you can create a practical list of new ideas for your own niche. Take a look at these similar examples, which arouse curiosity too:

- 7 Ways to Use Facebook That You Never Thought About Before
- 57 Niches You've Never Heard Of
- 17 New Ways to Use CBD Oil

Now let's wrap things up...

Conclusion

As mentioned at the top of this guide, referral traffic generates some of the warmest traffic. This is especially true of referral programs. However, viral-content campaigns are also really effective in getting traffic to your site. Just be sure to capture this traffic on your mailing list so that you can then start building a relationship with these prospects via follow up mailings. (Note: don't force people to join your list to view the viral content. Instead, entice them to join by offering them a related video, report or other valuable offer.)



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