

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

FILIPPO RICCI

**WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE:
A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF VIRAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS.**

São Paulo

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RESUMO

A era digital viu a ascensão da empresa focada no consumidor. Todos os dias, marcas e produtos são objeto de milhões de conversas em que os consumidores trocam pontos de vista, opiniões e informações antes de tomar a decisão de compra.

Os profissionais de marketing entenderam a importância do boca a boca como um novo canal de comunicação estratégica e começaram a ancorar técnicas de boca a boca à estratégia de marketing global. A propaganda tornou-se um negócio de conversa: o novo desafio do marketing é criar um conteúdo envolvente e compartilhável que possa expandir e ressoar dentro de redes de sociais de consumidores. Quanto mais as pessoas falam sobre a sua marca, mais a probabilidade de ganhar a competição dura e aumentar as vendas. Mas como o boca a boca funciona? O que faz uma campanha de marketing um sucesso viral? Este trabalho tem como objetivo fornecer uma análise abrangente da teoria de marketing de boca a boca e usa um modelo descritivo para investigar as variáveis-chave de campanhas bem-sucedidas de marketing viral, a fim de proporcionar insights e sugestões para as práticas de marketing viral.

Palavras Chave: boca a boca, marketing viral e mídias sociais

ABSTRACT

The digital age saw the rise of the consumer focused-enterprise. Every day brands and products are the subject of millions of conversations in which consumers exchange views, opinions and information before making the purchase decision.

Marketers understood the importance of word of mouth as a new strategic communication channel and started to anchor word of mouth techniques to the overall marketing strategy. Advertising has become a conversation business: the new marketing challenge is to create an engaging and sharable content that could expand and resonate within consumers' networks. The more people talk about your brand, the more the likelihood to win harsh competition and increase sales. But how word of mouth marketing works? What make a marketing campaign a viral success? This work aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of word of mouth marketing theory and further investigate the key variables of viral marketing. Following the research question "how companies design efficient viral campaigns?" the underlying dissertation adopts a descriptive model and a multiple case study approach (Coca Cola Zero and Dove) in order to provide insights and suggestions for viral marketing practices. Considering the findings of the research, a new framework is presented in order to show the most important stages that affect the creation, development and outcome of viral campaigns.

Key-words: word of mouth marketing, word of mouth, viral marketing, social media, international marketing practices, marketing campaigns.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS:

CDJ: Consumer Decision Journey

FMOT: First Moment of Truth

MOT: Moment of Truth

VC: Viral Campaign

WOM: Word of Mouth

WOMM: Word of Mouth Marketing

ZMOT: Zero Moment of Truth

1. INTRODUCTION

New technologies and devices have revolutionized the way consumers shop. Some years ago marketers' job was mainly focused on building brand awareness in order to be part of consumers' initial consideration set and then leveraging the variables of the traditional marketing mix to move the consumers from the large end down to the small end of the "funnel". Today the consumer decision-making process has changed and become a complex journey where shoppers actively 'pull out' the information they want before making the purchase (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009). The digital revolution created empowered consumers that stop just listening to corporations and started searching for trusted opinions online, read reviews, compare prices and engage conversations with other users (Carpenter 2013). They are overwhelmed with product choices and now more than ever they value other people's opinions.

For this reason, Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM) is gaining an ever-increasing attention. In the digital era word of mouth has changed from an intimate one-to-one conversation to a powerful one-to-many communication channel, as more and more product reviews are posted online and opinions disseminated through the social media (Lecinsky 2011). As online communities keep growing, messages are now resonating and expanding within and through networks, affecting brand perceptions. Technology has dramatically increased Word of Mouth (WOM) potential and marketers are now acting consequently, leveraging WOM as a marketing channel. The emphasis on sharing is today one of the main aspect that drives advertising campaigns. In order to win competition and gain customers attention, marketers have to create engaging and sharable content and study the way customers pass the message among themselves. Today the advertising profession discovers the connection between stimulating conversations and advertising effectiveness (Keller & Fay, 2012). Given the importance of WOM to the way consumers make decisions, marketers' objective became to create campaigns that spark conversation, which in turn persuades the prospect and leads to purchases.

1.1 Research Objective

The objective of the underlying study is to respond to the research question *how companies create and develop efficient viral campaigns?* As mentioned later in the dissertation, campaigns may have different objectives and goals (reach, awareness, brand equity...) and to the purpose of the research, an *efficient* campaign is the one that achieves the objectives set at the beginning.

The first part of the work is represented by a literature review that will explore what is known about word of mouth marketing and its techniques.

The second part of the dissertation will then focus on the analysis of different aspects of advertising campaigns – *Planning, Implementation, Consumer Engagement* and *Evaluation*, in order to investigate what drives virality and which techniques marketers use to encourage conversations and how they anchor them in the overall marketing strategy.

The third part will illustrate the findings of the case study. The research follows the *descriptive* case study model, since it studies a particular event or phenomenon on the basis of what is already known about it, the so-called descriptive theory. The subjects are then observed and the information gathered is compared to the pre-existing theory. The research will consider two cases (multiple case study approach). The first case study aims at understanding the process through which Coca Cola Zero created and conducted at the beginning of 2012 its “Quanto mais voce melhor” campaign in the Brazilian market. The second investigates the process behind the creation of Dove “Real Beauty Sketches” campaign, launched worldwide recently this year. The two campaigns present considerable differences in the way they have been implemented, and they were chosen appositely to compare the two distinct approaches and draw interesting parallels.

The fourth and final part will draw the conclusions of the research. It will compare and combine case study results with existing theory in order to provide insights and suggestions for viral marketing practices, and offer producer and campaign designers a framework of reference for viral campaigns creation.

2. CONTEXT

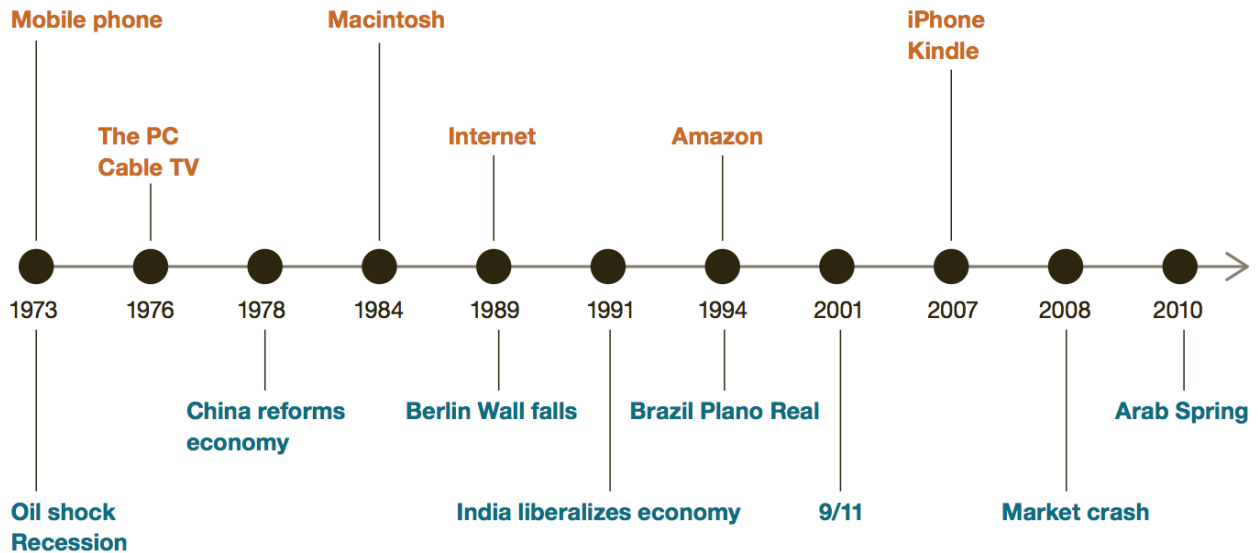
2.1 The digital revolution

In 1973, while the oil crisis was driving global markets to a harsh period of economic stagnation, a new piece of technology was just born: a primordial and unwieldy version of the cellular phone made his debut on the consumer market. “The Brick” - as it was called given its dimension and heft, had little immediate appeal, due also to an exorbitant price tag (\$4000) and less than an hour battery life.

Almost 40 years later, in 2010, the Arab World upraised against the long established totalitarian regimes and their on-going violation of human rights organizing demonstrations and protests mainly through the social media. New interacting platforms like Facebook or Twitter made a huge amount of information available to everyone and had been of key importance for the spread of a common dissatisfaction that eventually led to the first manifestations.

Figure 1 – The digital revolution

Figure 1 **The digital age: 40 years in the making**



Source: Carpenter (2013, p. 4)

From the 1973 mobile phone breakthrough, a real digital revolution occurred.

As a result of the many technological advancements and innovations that have revolutionized how individuals communicate, an abundance of information has become available to everyone. The combination of new media and mobile device not only allows to access new contents, but also enables consumers to share and exchange information, opinions and ideas.

The digital revolution together with important political reforms that unleashed the economic growth of emerging countries like China and Brazil shift the business environment to a global economy where the new emerging middle class is now offering an important counterbalance to the post World War II - dominant U.S market.

The twin forces of political reforms and digital technology not only shifted the balance of power from developed markets to developing world but also and more important from institutions to individuals, who exercise their new power as consumers to gain information to their advantage (Carpenter 2013). These forces brought the consumer to the fore. Marketers and corporations used to reach their customers through few standards communication channels in a one way flow of information. Marketing was “pushed” on consumers through traditional advertising, direct marketing, sponsorships and other channels. The consumer would see the ad in the television or in the newspaper and become aware of certain brands or products.

The digital era created empowered consumer. Consumers are now much more in control of the process than before. They know where information is and do not wait for corporations to reach out through old and high-controlled marketing channels. They communicate and share ideas on new digital platforms where at the same time engage unplanned and unscripted conversations with corporations. They rely on blog reviews and friends’ recommendations to evaluate products and brands. Consumers are now actively “pulling” helpful information out of their new available means. By 2011, approximately 2.5 billion people were on internet, with hundreds of million more using their smartphones to connect with people and information (Carpenter 2013).

The outreach of consumers to marketers has become dramatically more important than marketers’ outreach to consumers (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009). Traditional channels remain an important marketing tool, but digital era changed the way consumers make decisions and consequently marketers must adopt new strategies to talk to their customers and drive them to the purchase.

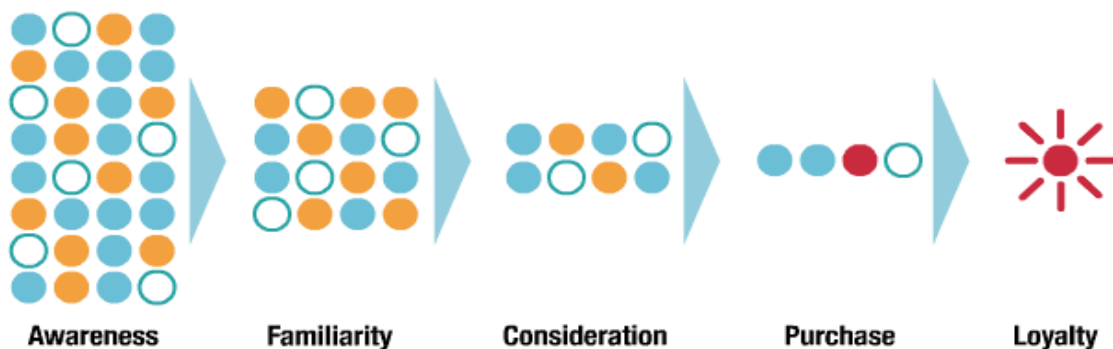
2.2 Rethinking the “funnel”

Marketing is all about understanding the way consumers shop and learn how to reach them at the moments that most influence their decisions, the so called touch-points.

In the past, marketers interpreted the consumer decision-making process with the metaphor of the “funnel”. Consumers started considering an extended range of different brands they already got acquainted with and, as they moved through the funnel, they were systematically reducing that number to emerge with the one brand they chose to purchase (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009). The marketer’s job was to move people from the large end down to the small end of the funnel and then offer optimal post-purchase services and maximize customer satisfaction in order to create loyalty and retain new users. Imagine the classical example of somebody about to buy a new car. Before he has even started looking for a car he is probably aware of some of the major car brands and may even have an idea of the model he is looking for. In this regard, marketing strategies focused a lot of efforts on building brand awareness in order to ensure they make the list of potential considerations.

Our buyer would then methodically pare down the available choices until he arrived at the one that best met his criteria. His experience with both the dealer and the manufacturer would determine his level of satisfaction and therefore the likelihood of a repurchase.

Figure 2 – The ‘funnel’ model



Source: McKinsey Quarterly (2009, p. 2)

Today evidence suggests that the process has changed considerably and new important variables emerged that the old funnel metaphor, with its simplicity and broad range - which were part of its appeal, is no longer able to represent. The funnel concept fails to capture all the touch points and

key buying factors resulting from the explosion of product choices and digital channels, coupled with the emergence of an increasingly well informed consumer (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009).

The old model is way too linear and do not prioritize those consumer's influences that play a fundamental role in the purchase decision, such as friends or family's suggestions.

In today's time, marketers no longer dictate the path people take, nor do they lead the dialogue.

The major weaknesses of the model are explained by the following points, result of a research conducted by Forrester Research group in 2007¹:

“1. Complexity reigns in the middle of the funnel: Awareness is still important; you need to know that a product or service exists in order to buy it. And the marketer's endpoint is still a transaction. But, in between, other factors such as recommendations from friends or family, product reviews, and competitive alternatives described by peers influence individuals. The funnel's consideration, preference, and action stages ignore these forces that marketers don't control. Rather than a clean linear path, the real process looks more like a complex network of detours, back alleys, alternate entry and exit points, external influences, and alternative resources.

2. The most valuable customer isn't necessarily someone who buys a lot: In this socially charged era in which peers influence each other as much as companies do, good customers can't be identified solely by their purchases. Companies also need to track individuals who influence others to buy. For example, a customer who buys very little from you but always rates and reviews what she buys can be just as valuable as someone who buys a lot — her reviews might influence 100 other people to buy your product. Tracking only transactions and loyalty at the end of the funnel misses this significant element of influence.

3. Traditional media channels are weakening: Marketers continue to use mainstream media messages to move consumers into a consideration frame of mind. But passive consumption of media is waning. Individuals dismiss or ignore marketing messages in lieu of information available from an ever-increasing number of resources, such as product review sites, message boards, and online video.

4. Consumers force brand transparency: Marketing and public relations teams used to have the influence to spin a message in their favor when something went wrong. But in these days of snoring cable technicians caught sleeping on a customer's couch, captured on video, and posted on YouTube or blogs blasting CompUSA for selling an empty box instead of a camera, spin is out of control. Online social tools, coupled with increasing social behavior online, make it easy for the truth to come out. When companies try to spin the message now, they get caught in the act, only making the problem worse.

¹ http://www.adobe.com/engagement/pdfs/marketing_new_key_metric_engagement.pdf, p. 2

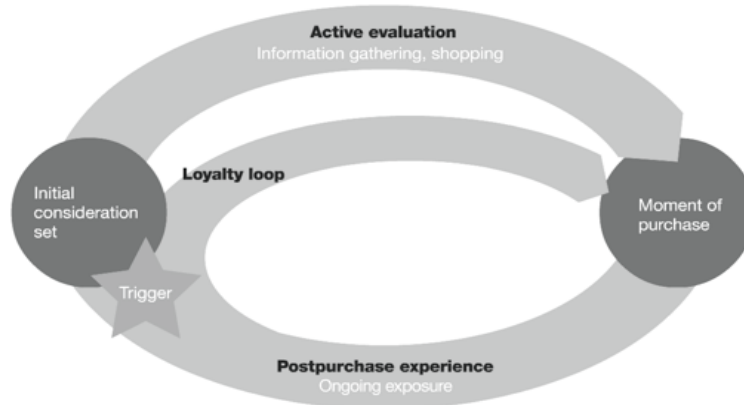
5. Marketing complexity means that traditional metrics fail to capture the whole story: Online metrics like unique visitors to a Web site, number of pages viewed, and time spent per page mimic offline media metrics of reach and frequency. But these measurements don't indicate the engagement of an individual; they fail to capture the sentiment, opinion, and affinity a person has toward a brand as manifested in ratings, reviews, comments in blogs or discussion forums, or likelihood to recommend to a friend".

2.3 The consumer decision journey

In this regard, recent times have seen a lot of research attempting to find a new model that could properly describe the consumer decision-making process in the digital era.

In 2009, after examining the purchase decisions of almost 20,000 consumers across five industries and three continents, McKinsey came up with a new model, "the consumer decision journey" (CDJ).

Figure 3 – The consumer decision journey



Source:McKinsey Quarterly (2009, p. 3)

The CDJ model divides the decision making process in four different phases:

1. Everyday people are subjected to different stimulus (advertising, news reports, peers recommendations...) that shape their impressions of products and brands. When something triggers their impulse to buy, that previous exposure is crucial to form their *initial-consideration set*: a small number of brands they regard as potential purchasing options. The huge amount of choices often confuses the consumer that consequently tends to reduce the initial set to the few brands he is more familiar with.

2. Contrary to the funnel metaphor, where the consumer was systematically narrowing down the number of options, McKinsey suggests that from the very moment consumers become active shoppers, they gather information to evaluate the different options and add or subtract brands to their initial consideration set according to what they found. In most of the cases, in this second phase the number of brands grows rather than decreasing, as consumers learn more and their criteria selection shift. They seek input from peers, reviewers, brands and their competitors and are much less likely to be persuaded by marketers’ “pushes”.

3. Eventually the consumers head to the point of sale and ultimately select a brand at the moment of purchase. They don’t make the purchase decision until they are actually in a store, where they may be easily dissuaded. For this reason, the point of sale becomes an even more powerful touch point for marketers, which should focus resources on packaging, placement, availability, pricing and sales interactions.

4. When consumers reach a decision and buy the product, marketer’s work has just begun (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009). It begins now the moment when consumers interact with the products and compare their expectations with the actual experience. Evidence shows that more and more consumers are nowadays conducting online research about the products *after* the purchase, a touch point that the funnel model was completely missing.

The overall satisfaction determines consumer’s bond with the brand. All marketing efforts are now concentrated on providing an after-sales experience that inspires loyalty and therefore repeat purchases.

Figure 4 – The Loyalty Loop



Source: Edelman, Harvard Business Review (2010, p. 4)

If the bond becomes strong enough, the consumer enters an enjoy-advocate-buy loop that entirely skips the consider and evaluate stages (Edelman, 2010).

A loyal customer is important not only for repeating the purchase, but especially for his advocacy role. Having analyzed how consumers form impressions and gather information, it is easy to understand how a positive word of mouth can invigorate a brand's potential and thus foster sales. On the other hand, a disappointed consumer is a real danger for marketers

According to McKinsey research, of consumers that profess loyalty to a brand, it is possible to distinguish between *active* loyalists and *passive* loyalists. The first are those consumers who not only stick with the brand but also recommend it, while the latter are those who stay with the brand without being too committed to it. Despite their claim of allegiance, passive consumers are open to message from competitors, who give them a reason to switch (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009).

2.4 A new mental model: The Zero Moment of Truth

In 2011, Jim Lecinski, Vice President US Sales & Service at Google, published an ebook called 'ZMOT - *Winning the Zero Moment of Truth*' in which he introduced a new fundamental step in the consumer decision-making process, called the Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT).

What is the ZMOT? *"It's a new decision-making moment that takes place a hundred million times a day on mobile phones, laptops and wired devices of all kinds. It's a moment where marketing happens, where information happens, and where consumers make choices that affect the success and failure of nearly every brand in the world"* (LECINSKI, 2011, p.9).

In short words, it's the real moment when consumers learn and decide.

In order to better understand the ZMOT, let's go back to 1985, when Jon Carlzon wrote a book titled Moments of Truth. At the time, Carlzon was the CEO of Scandinavian Airlines Systems (SAS) and had helped the company reorient itself to become more customer-driven. Carlzon had been one of the first executives to understand the importance and the value of satisfied customers and revolutionized the airline industry introducing the world's first separate cabin for Business Class while at the same time doing away with First Class on its European routes.

Carlzon turned the airline around by focusing on what he later called "moments of truth" (MOT), every opportunity to make a difference when in contact with customers (Carlzon 1987).

From then on, companies started concentrating efforts in order to understand their most critical MOT and how to succeed in gaining customers' attention and loyalty.

In 2005 the Wall Street Journal published a story about the critical importance of those three to seven seconds after the shopper encounters the products he was looking for in a store shelf³. That's the average time it takes the customer to compare the different options and choose one. Procter & Gamble, the consumer-products giant, called that moment the First Moment of Truth (FMOT) and defined it as one of its most important marketing opportunities, so important that they even create a position titled Director of FMOT. Back in 2005, P&G had a 15-person FMOT department in its headquarters in Cincinnati as well as 50 FMOT leaders stationed around the world.

At that time, the same company that almost one century before popularized the concept of mass marketing advertising, after the fragmentation of television and prints ads shift the focus to where consumers were most likely to be influenced: the store.

The same year, in his foreword to Kevin Roberts' remarkable book Lovemarks, Procter & Gamble CEO A.G. Lafley says:

"The best brands consistently win two moments of truth. The first moment occurs at the store shelf, when a consumer decides whether to buy one brand or another. The second occurs at home, when she uses the brand — and is delighted, or isn't."

Figure 5 – The Old Mental Model



Source: Google Insights, 2011.

³ <http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,SB112725891535046751,00.html>

These three steps introduced by P&G had been the mental model of marketing for an era.

Think about a classical example: somebody is watching his favourite TV show when an ad tell him about the new version of a mobile phone (*stimulus*) and get interested. He goes to his favourite electronics store where he physically sees that product for the first time (*FMOT - shelf*) and a young sales guy is ready to answer to all his questions. He likes the shape, the packaging and the functionality and decides to buy the product. When he gets home, he switches it on and starts getting familiar with all its features (*SMOT - experience*). If the product will meet his expectation, he won't regret the purchase and suggest the same mobile phone to some of his friends.

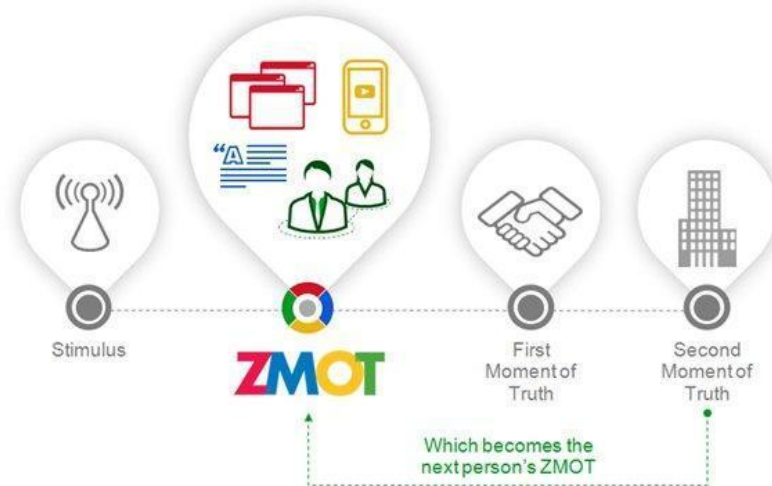
In this mental model, the FMOT was the very moment in which the consumer decided whether to buy or not. In order to win the FMOT, every corporation should focus on:

- Availability: Consumer didn't have to struggle to find the product. Products available in as many points of sales as possible.
- Visibility: Obtain the best positioning inside the point of sale to be easily spotted by the consumers.
- Persuasion: Provide an experienced and knowledgeable sales team inside the store; arrange an attractive packaging to ultimately convince the shopper.

However, time passed, new technologies emerged and they way consumers shop had changed consequently.

Mr. Lafley was right then and he's right now. Those first and second moments of truth are just as vital today as they were some years ago, but now there's a new critical moment of decision that happens before consumers get to the store (Lecinsky, 2011), the moment that Google called the Zero Moment of Truth.

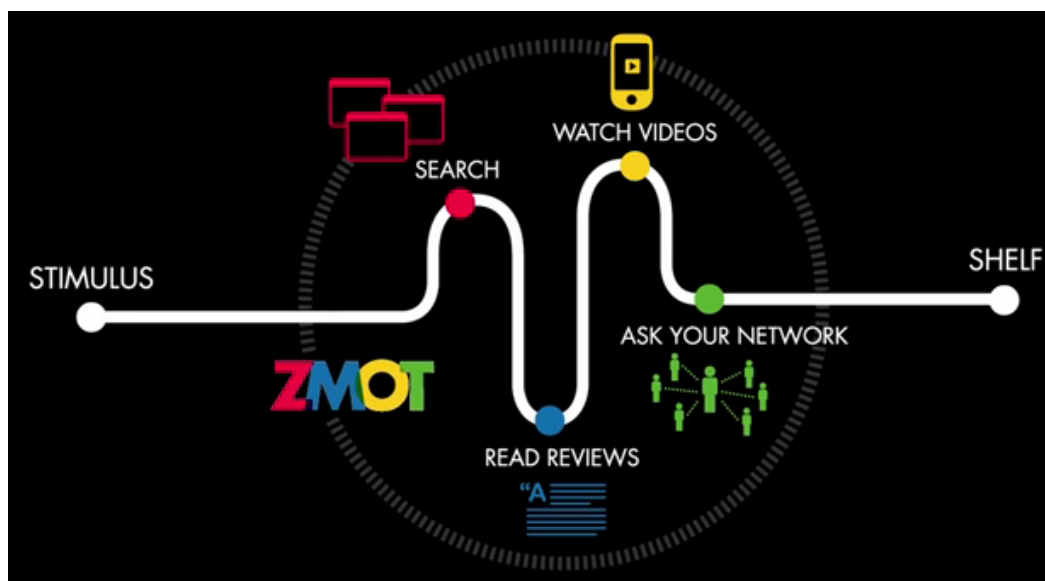
Figure 6A – The Zero Moment of Truth



Source: Google Insights, 2011

Imagine the same example in today's world: somebody would still see the mobile phone ad on television but rather than go directly to the store, he would grab his laptop or smart phone and immediately search for "mobile phone reviews". He would look at the comments on a couple of websites, head to his social media profiles to ask his friends and followers what they think about the product, then watch a video demonstration on YouTube. Before going to the store shelf, he has already formed an impression and he's ready to make a decision.

Figure 6B – The Zero Moments Of Truth



Google partnered with Shopper Sciences - a full-service shopper marketing consultancy, in order to find out how really important was ZMOT in driving shoppers' decisions. They conducted a comprehensive study of 5,000 shoppers across 12 categories, from groceries to cars to financial products to investigate "where influence takes place as shoppers move from undecided to decided".

The research showed that 84% of decision makers used online resources to guide them. Moreover, the data revealed that the average shopper used 10.4 sources of information to make a decision in 2011, up from 5.3 sources in 2010.2 Those 10.4 sources range from TV commercials and magazine articles, to recommendations from friends and family, to websites, ratings and blogs online⁴.

2.5 Join the conversation

The huge amount of information available today has dramatically altered the balance of power between companies and consumers (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). Internet is today the place where consumers seek and actively pull out all the information they want. Brands are the daily subjects of millions of conversations engaged on the social platforms; blogs writes about products, users create explanatory videos on YouTube.

New technologies and devices have revolutionized the way consumers shop. Some years ago marketers' job was mainly focused on building brand awareness in order to be part of consumers' initial consideration set, leveraging the variables of the traditional marketing mix in order to move the consumers from the large end down to the small end of the "funnel".

Today, McCarthy's (1960) "four P's" - Product, Price, Promotion, Point of Sale, seems to lack one key ingredient that has been made apparent by the "consumer revolution" - the consumer's involvement in the process (Meiners, Schwaritng, Seeberger, 2010). Fetherstonhaugh (2009) observes "We need a new framework. And a new toolkit. For starters, we need to throw away the Four P's"⁵. Navel (2009) suggests adding new P's to the marketing mix - People, Process, and Participation. Consumers have seized control of the process and companies must listen to what they're saying rather than just talk to them. The way consumers form impressions and decide

⁴ Source: Winning the Zero Moment of Truth - Jim Lecinski

⁵ http://quaero.csgi.com/internal/files/news/048_SEPT08/TheirView.htm

which product to buy has changed and marketers have to understand where the new touch points stand and be sure to be there. As we have seen, during the active-evaluation phase consumers tend now to increase the number of brands under consideration as they gather new information and share opinions with other people. This change in behavior creates opportunities for marketers by adding touch points when brands can make an impact. Brands already under consideration can no longer take that status for granted (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009). When the funnel metaphor reigned, communication was one way, and corporations' marketing strategies were mainly built around *paid* media, such as television ads, billboards or newspapers. Today this no longer makes sense. Now marketers must also consider *owned* media (the channels a brand control, such as websites) and especially *earned* media (customer-created channels, such as communities of brand enthusiasts). Internet has changed the way consumers engage with brands. It is transforming the economics of marketing and making obsolete many of the function's traditional strategies and structures (Edelman 2010). Understanding the new touch points at which consumers are best influenced is important in order to efficiently allocate the resources. The analysis of dozen of marketing budgets conducted by McKinsey reveals that 70% to 90% of spend is still allocated across media - television, radio, online and too little on driving advocacy. As we have seen, a big part of consumer's final decision takes place at the Zero Moment of Truth, when he searches for trusted opinions online, read reviews, compare prices, engage conversations with other users. Traditional media used to be adopted to hit the consumer at the *consider* and *buy* stage (see Figure 4). Now the most important touch points can be found during the *evaluation* and *enjoy-advocate-bond* ones. In many categories the most powerful impetus is someone else's advocacy. The coolest banner ads, best search buys, and hottest viral videos may win consideration for a brand, but if the product gets weak reviews - or even worse, is not even discussed online - it's unlikely to survive the winnowing process (Edelman 2013). It is important that marketers realign spending with the new needs of the consumers and target the most influential touch points. The increasing complexity of consumer's decision journey requires companies to adopt new ways of measuring the effectiveness of marketing strategies and allocate resources consequently. In some cases, efforts should focus on developing Internet properties that help consumers gain a better understanding of the product. Other marketers may have to rethink their loyalty programs in order to increase the number of active loyalists and brand advocates, spend on in store activities or word of mouth programs.

Without such realignment of spending, marketers are likely to waste money on inefficient activities and worse, they could seem out of touch, trying to push products on customers rather than providing them with information and support (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik; 2009).

The Zero Moment of Truth differs from category to category, products or brands. Companies have to know what their own ZMOT are and be ready to answer to the questions that consumers are asking. Marketers have to create engaging and sharable content and study the way customers pass the message among themselves. Tailor the content, invest in consumer-driven marketing, analyze what's being said and join the conversation.

Traditional marketing remains important, but the change in the way consumers make decisions means that marketers must move aggressively beyond purely push-style communication and learn to influence consumer-driven touch points, such as word-of-mouth and Internet information sites (Meiners, Schwaritng, Seeberger, 2010).

Now more than ever, marketing has to engage consumers, make them able to identify with the brand and tell their own story, impress their peers. Marketers have to understand the dynamic of the conversation, listen and respond. They should act as storyteller, create a story that could be interpreted, embellished and endorsed by customers. To create powerful stories means relinquishing control, sharing creation, fuelling word of mouth (Miller 2007).

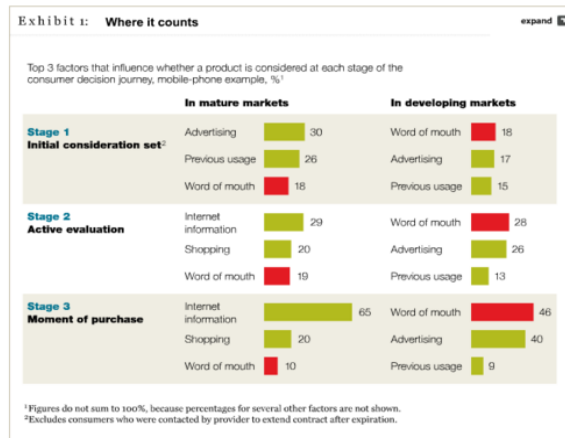
2.6 Understanding Word of Mouth potential

In this regard, Word of Mouth Marketing is gaining an ever increasing attention. Consumers are today overwhelmed with product choices and for this reason now more than ever they value other people's opinions. According to a study by the Private Institute for Marketing and Communication (IMK), consumers are now being bombarded daily by up to 6,000 promotional messages (Thinius, 2004). They became increasingly skeptical about traditional company-driven advertising and make their decision independently of what companies tell them about their products. No matter how elaborated and accurate is the advertising campaign, what really influence consumers' mind is a word of mouth recommendation from a trusted one (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010).

According to a Mckinsey research, WOM is the primary factor behind 20 to 50% of all purchase decisions. While its influence on consumers varies according to the stage of the consumer decision journey, it's the only factor that ranks among the top three consumer influencers for

every step (Figure 7). Moreover, evidence shows that its influence grows when consumers deal with expensive products or they are buying something for the first time.

Figure 7 – Top 3 factors that influence whether a product is considered at each stage of the consumer decision journey (mobile-phone example, %)



Source: McKinsey Quarterly (2010, p. 3)

Digital revolution has transformed WOM from an intimate one-to-one conversation to a powerful one-to-many communication channel, as more and more product reviews are posted online and opinions disseminated through the social media. As online communities keep growing, messages are now resonating and expanding within and through networks, affecting brand perceptions. Technology has dramatically increased WOM potential and marketers are now acting consequently, leveraging WOM as a marketing channel. The emphasis on sharing is today one of the main aspect that drives advertising campaigns. Marketers are interested in delivering brand-related content to be shared by consumers and trigger conversations.

Joe Tripodi, the Coca-Cola Co. chief marketing officer, summarized the change in marketing thinking, calling for more emphasis on consumers’ “expressions” in addition to consumers’ “impressions” (Keller, Fay, 2012): “Expressions reflect active engagement with content, whereas impression, or mere exposure to content, are passive. Impressions give us no real sense of engagement, and consumer engagement with our brands is ultimately what we are trying to achieve” (Tripodi,2011, p. 2).

Today the advertising profession discovers the connection between stimulating conversations and advertising effectiveness. Given the importance of WOM to the way consumers make

decisions, marketers' objective became to create campaigns that spark conversation, which in turn persuades the prospect, which leads to a purchase (Keller, Fay, 2012).

A literature review is presented in the next section, exploring what is known about Word of Mouth Marketing and its techniques and how campaigns should be designed accordingly.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM)

“Digital word of mouth is one-to-millions. If you have a good experience, it’s shared and re-shared with millions. You post it and suddenly, it’s flying.”

Dave Reibstein, William Stewart Woodside Professor at The Wharton School

The phenomenon of WOM is a naturally occurring phenomenon in which marketers and sociologists recognized a huge potential in order to spark brand awareness and improve product adoption. Researches started investigating this concept more than half a century ago, proposing that WOM implies that informal, ad hoc communication between individuals concerning products and services is taking place (Bayus, 1985) and it affects the majority of all purchase decisions (Brooks 1957; Dichter 1966). Arndt (1967) defines WOM as “face to face communication about a brand, product or service between people who are not perceived as not having connections to a commercial entity. This communication can be positive as well as negative, depending on the satisfaction levels of the individuals (Evans et al, 2006).

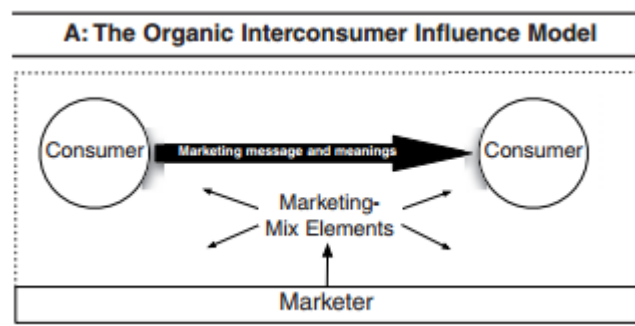
Soon marketers understood WOM commercial potential and started adopting WOM techniques to rapidly disseminate information among individuals. Word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) has been defined as the intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communications by professional marketing techniques (Kozinets et al. 2010). According to the American Word of Mouth Association (WOMMA), founded in 2005, word -of-mouth marketing is not about generating conversations between consumers (that already exist), but rather to encourage these conversations and anchor them in the overall marketing strategies.

The word-of-mouth field has been developed over forty years, with many research papers published in books and academic periodicals. Here, a brief review of the development of WOM theory and practice is explained through three different models that historically characterized WOM’ techniques’ adoption. It is important to note that although they are presented as three different evolutionary shifts, considerably historical overlap has occurred and they all currently coexist, each pertaining to different circumstances (Kozinets et al. 2010).

3.1.1 The Organic Interconsumer Influence Model

Since the 1940's, early scholarship identified WOM as a significant social force. A diffusion study by Ryan and Gross (1943) suggested that conversations among buyers were more important than traditional marketing techniques in driving product adoption. In this model, WOM is defined as "organic" since is the natural buyer-to-buyer conversation that occurs between consumers without direct influence of the marketer. It is motivated by the desire to help, inform or warn other users about certain products or brands in response to marketers' advertising and promotions (Arndt 1967). In this model, the marketer reaches the consumers leveraging the traditional variables of the marketing mix. He knows that his action will stimulate a conversation between consumers but he does nothing to prompt, influence or measure it (Kozinets et al. 2010).

Figure 8 – The organic interconsumer influence model

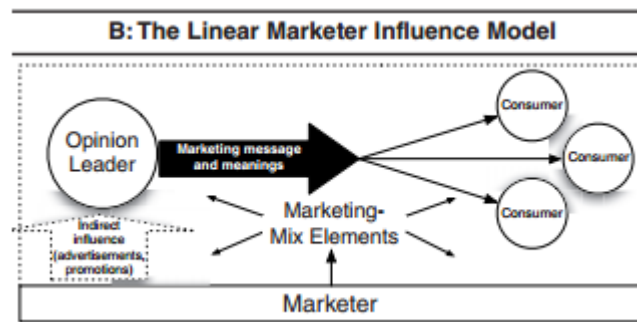


Source: Kozinets et al. (2010, pag.72)

3.1.2 The Linear Marketer Influence Model

As marketing researches and practices evolved, theories of WOM began focusing the attention on a particular category of consumers believed to be more influential than others, the so called "opinion leaders" (e.g. Feick & Price 1987; King & Summers 1976). Marketers' efforts were focused on identify and actively influence these WOM-spreading consumers through the use of traditional means, such as advertising and promotions. Therefore Kozinets (2010) refers to this stage as a model of linear influence. Marketers would now be able to work through "the friend who recommend a tried and trusted product" rather than the "salesman that who tries to get rid of merchandise" (Ditcher 1966, p;165).

Figure 9 – The Linear Marketer Influence Model



Source: Source: Kozinets et al. (2010, pag.72)

3.1.3 The Network Corporation Model

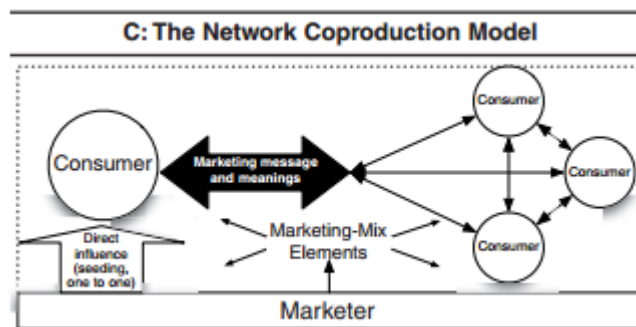
The last model is the most recent and coincides with the development and recognition of the importance of Internet in marketing practices. The Internet's accessibility, reach, and transparency have empowered marketers who became interested in influencing and monitoring WOM as never before (Kozinets et al. 2010). Internet 'word of mouth' communication is a far more effective, penetrating and faster medium compared to the traditional word of mouth communication (Helm, 2000). An advantage of this new kind of WOM communication is that consumers can seek information at home (Meiners, Schwaritng, Seeberger, 2010). Writing communication may also appear more formal and transmit information in a more intact manner (Brown, Broderik & Lee, 2007). Moreover, online communications tend to be more willing to disclose personal information and more honest and forthcoming about their point of view (Roed, 2003).

With the introduction of Internet, marketers have started engaging in targeted one-to-one seeding and communication programs. The new medium allowed unprecedented levels of management and measurement of WOM campaigns. In the internet era, the consumer is seen as active co-producer of value and meaning (Brown, Broderik & Lee, 2007) and increasing importance is placed on studying consumers' networks and the way messages are passed along. In fact, the new media technology has changed the form of classical interpersonal communication (sender - message - receiver) by introducing a new form of communicator, the forwarder or transmitter (Gumpert and Cathcart, 1986).

Through consumers' networks corporations could reach a wider audience and maximize their presence not only within the local community, as it was the case for traditional WOM, but also at a global level.

The new model differs from the previous one for two distinguish aspects. First is marketers' use of techniques to directly target and influence the consumer or opinion leader. Secondly, marketers acknowledge that messages are exchanged among members of consumer network and they interpret and share them rather than just taking marketers' meanings (Brown, Broderik & Lee, 2007).

Figure 10 – The Network Coproduction Model



Source: Kozinets et al. (2010, pag.72)

3.2 Experiential, Consequential and Intentional Word of Mouth

Bughin, Doogan and Vetvik (2010) have identified three different forms of word-of-mouth: experiential, consequential and intentional.

Experiential WOM is the most common and powerful form (50% to 80% of WOM activity in any given product category⁷). It results from direct consumer's experience with a product or service. According to his level of satisfaction, the consumer will share his experience with other members of his network, recommending or discouraging the adoption of the product.

Experiential WOM occurs in fact when customer experience differs significantly from his expectations, either in a positive or negative way (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010).

A consistent body of literature investigates the relationship between WOM and customer satisfaction, with a particular focus on the correlation of dissatisfaction and negative word-of-mouth (Richins, 1983). In his studies Richins (1983 & 1987) found that customers dissatisfied

⁷ "A new way to measure word-of-mouth marketing", McKinsey Quarterly

with a product spread negative word of mouth to eleven acquaintances, whereas satisfied consumers may report it to only three. More recent researches reported similar findings, that is negative word of mouth communication tends to be weighted more heavily by consumers than positive communication (Solomon, 2004). 90% of dissatisfied consumers do not purchase products or services of the company involved in the negative word-of-mouth communication (Solomon, 2003). Equally importantly, these consumers will communicate their dissatisfaction to at least nine other people and 13% of these dissatisfied consumers will communicate their negative view to more than thirty people (Kozinets et al. 2010).

Marketers' risk is therefore to build too high expectations and then deliver a low end product. In this case negative WOM would spread more rapidly and have a terrific impact on product adoption. As a matter of fact, positive WOM comes with satisfied consumers. Most companies actively use consumer satisfaction insights when developing new products and services. "Yet a satisfied consumer base may not be enough to create buzz. To create positive word-of-mouth that actually has impact, the customer experience must not only deviate significantly from expectations but also deviate on the dimensions that matter to the customer and that he or she is likely to talk about" (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). For example, in the mobile phones market battery life is among the most important drivers of consumer satisfaction. However consumers talk more about other features, such as design and usability. It's thus important for companies to identify those attributes that have the highest intrinsic WOM potential and outperform on them.

Some companies such as Lego and Miele involve consumers in the process of product development in order to create early influential adopters and build buzz around new products before launch. Moreover, evidence shows that consumers are more likely to talk about a product early in its life cycle (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). . For this reason it is important to consistently refreshing the product experience and deliver effective product launches or enhancements.

Consequential word-of-mouth occurs when consumers are directly exposed to marketing campaigns and pass on messages they publicize. According to a McKinsey research (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). in the skincare and mobile phone markets, marketing induced consumer-to-consumer word of mouth generates more than twice the sales of paid advertising. The impact of passed-along messages is stronger than direct advertising because campaigns that trigger

positive word-of-mouth have comparatively a higher influence and reach than traditional direct marketing campaigns (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). In order to maximize the potential of consequential word of mouth, campaigns should be built around interactivity and creativity, two interrelated variables that help companies gaining consumers attention. In this regard, an increasing attention is focused on creating viral content. The difference between viral marketing and WOM is of cause and effect (Ferguson 2008). Through viral videos or street-level guerrilla campaigns, marketers build awareness and create buzz. Positive WOM, which potentially will lead to trial and purchase, is the effect of such an action.

One of the most well know example of a viral marketing campaign is the UK confectioner Cadbury “Glass and a Half Full”. This advertising campaign used creative, thoughtful and integrated online and traditional marketing to spur consumer interaction and sale (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). “The campaign began with a television commercial featuring a gorilla playing drums to an iconic Phil Collins song. The bizarre juxtaposition was an immediate hit. The concept so engaged consumers that they were willing to go online, view the commercial and create amateur versions of their own, triggering a torrent of YouTube imitations. Within three months of the advertisement’s appearance, the video had been viewed more than six millions time online, year-on-year sales of Cadbury’s Dairy Milk chocolate had increased by more than 9 percent, and the brand’s positive perception among consumer had improved by about 20 percent”.(Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010, p.8).

When marketers design the marketing strategy, they have to think about both the direct and the pass-on effects on consumers. Sometimes company created content is reinterpreted by the consumer and may generate unexpected consequences that marketers must be able to handle. In 2012 Coca Cola Zero adopted for the Brazilian market the marketing campaign with the names on the can first launched in Australia. In collaboration with IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística), the company chose the 150 most popular names within young Brazilian adults. “Share a Coke with...” began “Quanto mais...melhor” and it turned to be an incredible marketing success. The campaign triggered conversations among consumers and went viral on the social networks. It registered more than a million visualizations on YouTube and a tenfold increase of Google searches for the product. Few months after the launch, when consumer excitement was slowly diminishing, a popular comedian group - Porta dos Fundos, created a video that ironized about weird names excluded from the campaign. The video became a hit,

with more than 11 millions visualizations⁹. Coca Cola decided that content was not damaging the company and posted on its fan page some episode-related content such as “Quanto mais Uélerson melhor”, “Quanto mais Kellen melhor” e “Quanto mais Porta dos Fundos melhor”. “ It was like we were saying: ‘We saw the video and we liked it’ “, commented the Product Marketing Director for Coca Cola Zero Brazil.¹⁰

Intentional word-of-mouth campaigns are based on formal corporate efforts of hiring influentials such as celebrities that become brand or product advocates. One company that efficiently performs this kind of marketing is Red Bull. The energy drink company identifies influentials among its different target segments and ensures that these celebrities or opinion makers seed the right message among consumers. They often do it through events. Launching specific events, Red Bull summon exactly the public it wants to talk to and it works to create a positive message that consumers will share each other on social networks, generating a superior return for its marketing investment.

3.3 Building a Word of Mouth Campaign

Word of mouth and social media have been heralded as the future of marketing. Compared to traditional media it is seen as cheaper, more effective, and more likely to increase customer engagement (Berger & Milkan 2010). Word of Mouth Marketing can lead to remarkable benefits and deliver a sustainable and significant competitive edge few other marketing approaches can match (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). However, given the difficulty of efficiently manage and measure WOMM, yet many marketers are avoiding it.

In this section, the underlying dissertation presents an analysis of the most important aspects that marketers should consider to build an efficient WOM advertising campaign.

These insights allow marketers to manage the art of effective word-of-mouth campaigning and are essential for companies that want to harness the potential of WOM and to realize higher returns on their marketing investments (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010).

⁹ Porta Dos Fundos, Na Lata - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZb0XKHgtjo>

¹⁰ Acham - Campanha que imprimiu nomes próprios nas latinhas reposicionou a Coca-Cola Zero no Brasil (2013)

3.3.1 Planning – Objectives and Target

The definition of the objective is one of the most important parts of the whole framework, since the campaign will be implemented consequently.

In this regard, what are the key criteria used by companies to evaluate viral marketing campaign (VMC)? Literature review shows that several academics proposed different ideas concerning the measurement and evaluation of VMC. Helm (2000) suggests that the most important objective of any marketing campaign is to maximize reach and marketers should use such criterion to measure the effectiveness of a campaign. Welker (2002) suggests that viral messages should be measured by velocity (speed of transmission), persistence (how long it stays around) and transmission convenience (simplicity in regard to mental barriers, costs and handling). Porter and Golan (2006) instead focused the attention on attitudinal criteria, namely cognitive and behavioural changes.

However, the most complete and up to date work seems the one carried out by Cruz and Fill (2008). They collected data from semi-structured, face to face interviews with viral marketing professionals and built an objective evaluation model. This model suggests that a viral campaign may present three different goals: *cognitive* - when the main aim of the campaign is to maximize reach, build awareness and brand knowledge; *behavioural* - when the campaign is evaluated according to the number of hits or downloads and the rate at which the message is passed; and finally *financial* – when the evaluation criteria is mainly the return on investment (ROI) and the developments in brand equity arising from the campaign.

Figure 11 – Viral Marketing Campaign evaluative criteria

Objective	Evaluative criteria
Cognitive goals	Reach, awareness and knowledge
Behavioural goals	The number of hits or downloads and rate at which creatives are passed on or transferred
Financial goals	Principally ROI and developments in brand equity arising from the campaign

Source: Cruz and Fill (2008, p. 754)

Once defined the objective, marketers should define which category of individuals they want to talk to and decide whether to target a niche audience or target the masses (Cruz and Fill, 2008).

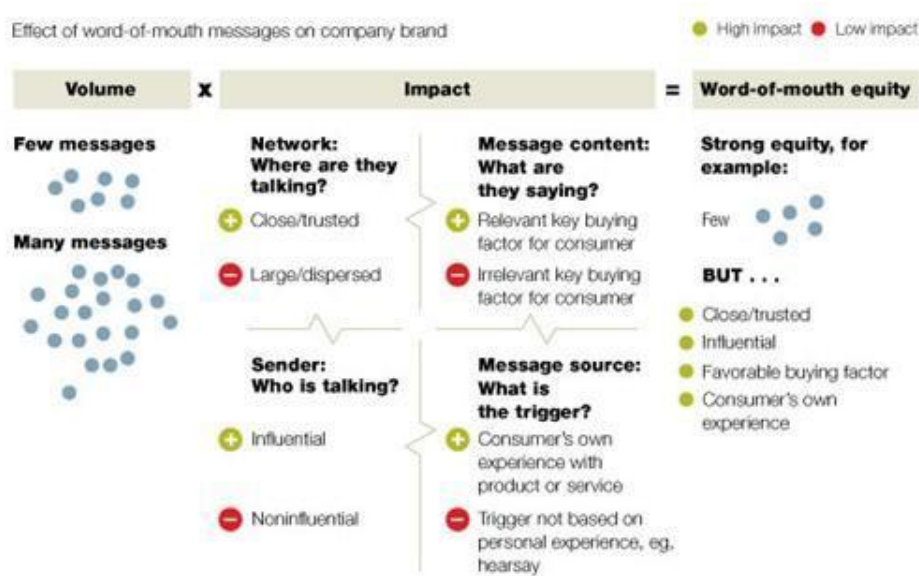
According to Grifoni *et al.* (2012), consumers may be classifying to the following classes:

- Profile: It involves demographic, life-stage and geographic characteristics.
- Psychological: it involves lifestyle (interests, activities, opinions...) and benefits sought (motivations that lead consumers to the purchase).
- Behavioural: it involves individuals with the same purchase patterns or product or media usage.

3.3.2 Implementation

In order to help companies to build a word-of-mouth campaign, Bughin, Doogan and Vetvik (2010) developed a model that assess the impact of the three different forms of WOM and calculate what they called the *word-of-mouth equity*.

Figure 12 – The word-of-mouth equity



Source: "A new way to measure word-of-mouth marketing", McKinsey Quarterly (2010)

According to this model, the impact of a word of mouth on sales is a function of the volume (few or many messages) and the characteristics of the message itself (who, where and what).

What is said is the primary driver of WOM impact. The *what* is the content of the message that marketers create and consumers hopefully will share and pass along. In order to achieve a viral success, marketers should focus on building campaigns around emotional positioning or product features that consumers value the most and generate the biggest buzz. Research into advertising creative strategies identified two different approaches: informational or transformational (Golan,

2008). The former refers to those ads whose content inform consumers about product features and appeals to their cognition or logic, while the latter refers to ads that appeal to consumers' emotions or senses (Puto and Wells, 1984). Porter and Golan (2006) suggest that the majority of viral ads are designed for branding rather than calling for action or disseminate product information. In their research, they analyzed 266 viral advertisement and 235 television advertisement and found that viral ads are more likely to include sex, nudity and violence than TV ads. The research concluded that viral ads rely on provocative content to trigger unpaid receivers to pass it along. Moreover Berger (2010) demonstrated that positive content is more likely to be shared than negative content but more importantly his research demonstrated that virality is driven by more than pure content valence but rather by the arousal the content evokes. "Positive and negative emotions characterized by high arousal (i.e., awe, anxiety, and anger) were positively linked to virality, while emotions characterized by low arousal (i.e., sadness) are negatively linked to virality [...]. In sum, our findings indicate that emotions drive social transmission, in part, due to the level of arousal they evoke" (Berger and Milkman, 2010, p.29)

The *who* is definitely another critical driver. In order for the WOM message to have a relevant impact on consumer decisions, the receiver must trust the sender and believe he or she really knows the product or brand in questions. In this regard, companies should specifically target influentials, which are those individuals who feature both trust and competence for a specific product category in their network. According to Mckinsey, these individuals typically generate three times more word-of-mouth messages than noninfluentials do and each message has four times more impact on a recipient's purchasing decisions. About 1 percent of these people are digital influentials like bloggers, with a disproportionate power (Bughin, Doogan, Vetvik, 2010). Marketers started creating effective communication channels to opinion leaders to encourage and facilitate creation of positive word of mouth (Lyons & Henderson 2005) and foster revenues. This practice is also known as 'seeding', defined by Hollensen (2007) as "the act of planting the campaign with the initial group who will then go on to spread the campaign to others".

Finally, the *where* is represented by the environment in which word-of-mouth circulates. Evidence shows that messages passed within tight and trusted network have less reach but higher

impact. Consumers value the most the opinion of trusted friends in their small, close-knit network rather than the one passed among members of dispersed communities.

In this regard it is interesting to study how companies leverage owned, earned and paid media to trigger word of mouth, which form of communication they prefer (picture, video, text, advergame) and how they combine on-line and off-line actions. In particular, the off-line work may be a crucial factor to complement the viral action on the web and boost both reach and frequency of exposure, reinforce the message or introduce an element of shock value (Cruz and Fill, 2008). Cruz and Fill's research (2008) showed that different schools of thought exist about viral content and paid media: "One view therefore is that viral creatives should be commercial-free, that is, not required to include a call-to-action, or bound by corporate control. This perspective holds that the focus should be on the entertainment and engagement generated by the quality of the viral creative. We refer to these as *Random Virals*. The other view that emerged is that virals are just online paid-for advertising in a different guise. Through careful and expensive media placement and planning, management gains a certain degree of control and is subsequently in a better position to develop a more accurate evaluation of a campaign's success. We refer to these as *Placed Virals*".

Companies have to planning their campaign start asking themselves which dimensions of word-of-mouth equity are most important for their business: the who, the what or the where. Equipped with these insights, marketers can leverage different forms of WOM - experiential, consequential and intentional, to generate positive word-of-mouth.

3.3.3 Consumer Engagement

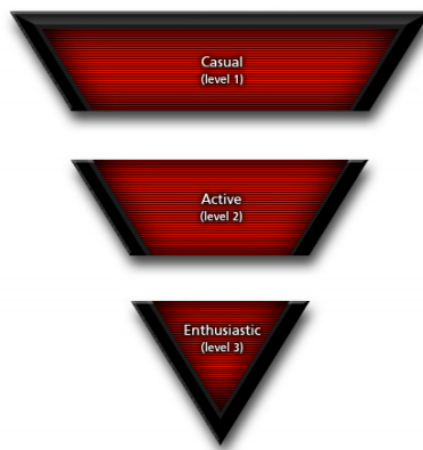
It is important that a campaign has the ability to light a spark of emotion (Phelps et al. 2004).

In order to success, viral campaigns must catch consumers' attention. Engagement is measured not only by the amount of time consumers spend on the viral content, but also by their level of participation with the campaign. Marketers should create contents that give the audience an opportunity to interact and affect the campaign. Helm (2001) talks about consumer integration in the marketing process and distinguish low integration from high integration. The former may be represented by a user that simply forwards an email to a friend or like a product or brand

Facebook page. On the other hand, high integration occurs when consumers spend a lot of time on the campaign and give their own interpretation of the content.

42 Entertainment, an American company which specializes in creating and producing alternate reality games, classify their users as *casual*, *active* or *enthusiastic* according to the extent they engage in their campaigns.

Figure 13 – Consumer engagement



Source: Oden and Larsson (2011, p 4)

“The *casual* participant represents the broadest audience which they engage mainly online through forums and social media. They offer little to the community and often only want to see how the campaign unfolds.

The *active* participant represents the middle segment of the model. They interact with the campaign and the community both online and offline and they are engaging in their own pace.

The third segment is the *enthusiastic* participant. These participants are smallest in numbers but they engage with the campaign very intensely through both online and offline means. The enthusiastic participant is so deeply immersed and engaged in the campaign that they provide the rest of the community with their own content and help spread information about the campaign through WOM”¹²

¹² Oden and Larsson (2011, p 4)

Enthusiastic consumers are real gold mines for companies not only because they most likely repeat the purchase in the future, but also because they serve as product advocates and influence the rest of the community.

Berger and Stephan (2009) suggest that enthusiasm is the fundamental variable that marketers must manage in order to move consumers from product *adoption* to *ongoing consumption*.

After consumers try and purchase the product, companies must adopt mechanisms of enthusiasm reinforcement in order to sustain consumption. According to the authors, conversations can provide such reinforcements but enthusiasm not only has to flow outwards from initiators, but also has to flow back to them to keep their enthusiasm high (which then allows for them to reinforce non initiators' enthusiasm and so on) (Berger and Stephan, 2009).

How can companies quickly and effectively reinforce enthusiasm? Berger and Stephan (2009) propose two possibilities. The first one is to increase transmission frequency through for example “blitz” advertising campaigns after the launch of the first one. The second is to increase the amount of enthusiasm passed along in each transmission. The second option is more difficult to implement due to the natural enthusiasm decay over time, so that the longer the delay between transmissions, the less enthusiasm there will be left to transmit. In this regard, authors suggest that it is better for marketers to target influentials and initiators that are “close” – interpret as the average “degrees of separation”, to everyone else in the network and not those who present the highest number of connections.

3.3.4 Evaluating against campaign objectives

At the end of the process, companies evaluate the effects of their viral campaigns. Literature shows that some discordance exists over the criteria to measure campaign effectiveness, in particular about the use of financial metrics.

Lusch and Harvey (1984) cited by Rust et al. (2004, p.78) emphasize the need for non-financial measures. According to the authors, it is not proper to evaluate a campaign according to its return on investment since marketing expenditures pay out over the long-term. ROI does not reflect the short-term impacts that a marketing campaign is likely to produce.

However, when Cruz and Fill (2008) asked viral marketing practitioners how they viewed the evaluation issue, “all respondents were agreed that these campaigns should be measured from a

financial perspective and that the return on the investment generated was of prime concern. Reference was also made to the impact a campaign might have on brand equity although it was recognized that measuring these changes might be technically problematic”.¹³

The same respondents also introduced other extremely important criteria, such as the turnout at advertising events or the attitudinal shift towards the brand.

Cruz and Fill (2008) believe that there is no single metric that can be applied indiscriminately to different types of campaigns. If for example a company adopts a *Placed Virals* strategy, it is more likely to be concerned with financial returns rather than companies that engage with *Random Virals* techniques. A product launch campaign is likely to be evaluated in terms of its eventual reach; in the same way, conversion and sales objectives may be more important for another type of campaign. They suggest that companies have to measure campaign effectiveness according to the objectives they set at the beginning of the planning stage. As mentioned, companies may pursue cognitive, behavioural or financial goals. Each of these goals should contain particular, relevant evaluative criteria that will vary across different campaigns.

According to these criteria and benchmarks for both time and measurement parameters, decisions can be made to “*abandon*” the creative and leave it to take its course online, attempt to “*contain*” it by combining online and offline PR, or if the campaign proves to be successful, “*reignite*” it with new, revised and updated campaign objectives (Cruz and Fill, 2008).

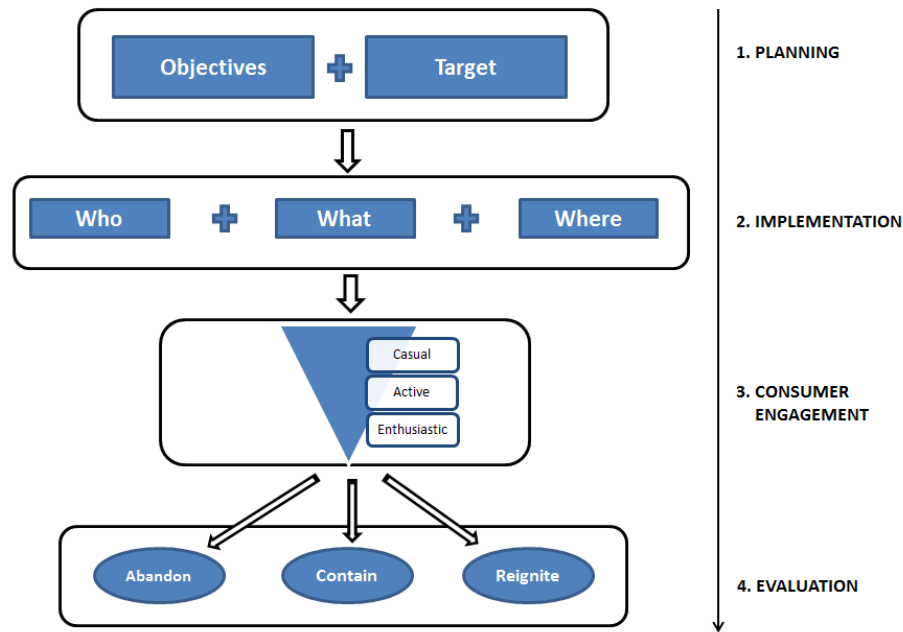
The dissertation will now proceed investigating the process behind the creation and implementation of two different viral marketing campaigns.

In order to better organize and structure the analysis of the case study, a theoretical framework was constructed in accordance with the four major campaigns themes that emerged from the literature review (figure 14).

Following the analysis of the data collected, the empirical results will be compared with previously developed theory in the attempt to find matches or discrepancies (Yin 2003) and respond to the research question.

¹³ Cruz and Fill (2008, p. 751)

Figure 14 – Case Study Model



4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper has taken Yin’s (2003) definition of the case study as the starting point of the research strategy and argued that the choice of the case study should be guided by the following research question: *how companies design efficient viral campaigns?*

According to Yin (2003) in fact, a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

Yin (2003, p.59) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” The peculiarity of the case study is to use theory or conceptual categories to guide the research and analysis of data, while other qualitative designs such as the ethnography or grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991) presuppose that “theoretical perspectives are grounded in and emerge from firsthand data” (Meyer, 2001).

Once the research question is defined, then researchers have to decide which specific type of case study to conduct, according to their specific research purpose. According to Yin (2003), three different types of case study exists: explanatory, exploratory or descriptive.

Exploratory case studies are often conducted to define research questions and hypotheses.

Explanatory case studies seek to link an event with its effects and are suitable for investigating causality. *Descriptive* case studies are often used to illustrate events and their specific context.

For each of these types, researchers can choose to investigate either single or multiple cases.

Multiple approach is most used when the aim of the research is to discover and explain differences between cases within the same context (comparative setting).

The research question and the choice of case design will affect the data collection procedure. In most of the cases, the case study approach combines different methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observation (Yin, 2003). This methodology provides the research with stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses (Meyer, 2001), however the choice of the procedure it is deeply affected by constraints in time and financial resources.

This research follows the *descriptive* case study model, since it studies a particular event or phenomenon on the basis of what is already known about it, the so-called descriptive theory. The subjects are then observed and the information gathered is compared to the pre-existing theory.

The research will consider two cases (multiple case study approach). The first case study aims at understanding the process through which Coca Cola Zero created and conducted at the beginning of 2012 its “Quanto mais voce melhor” campaign in the Brazilian market. The second investigates the process behind the creation of Dove “Real Beauty Sketches” campaign, launched worldwide recently this year. The two campaigns present considerable differences in the way they have been implemented, and they were chosen appositely to compare the two distinct approaches and draw interesting parallels.

Coca Cola Zero campaign was constructed around a ‘call-to-action’ message, where a carefully planned media strategy had the merit to unleash the viral potential of the message and boost consumer engagement. On the other hand, Dove focused all the efforts on the emotional content of the campaign that, powered by a perfect Public Relation strategy, efficiently touched consumers’ feelings and triggered positive word of mouth, generating an ‘infinite’ number of

shares. Dove's "Real Sketches" eventually became the third most viewed video in the history of advertisement and the most shared of all times.

The data had been collected through a combination of interviews, archives and observation, with main emphasis on the first two. The survey approach was not viable due to the absence of established concepts and indicators. In the case of Coca Cola Zero campaign, interviews definitely represented the most important source to collect data. In order to gather more information and different points of view on the research, one participant was chosen from the company top management (Senior Marketing Manager for Coca Cola Zero in Brazil) and the other was a communication professional from the agency that designed the campaign (General Director from Ogilvy & Mather Rio). In both of the cases, the respondents represented key informants that had an important role in the campaign development and were expected to be well informed about the process. In order to comply with the descriptive nature of the study, the interview format was semi-structured and open questions had been prepared in advance on the basis of existing theory (see Appendix 1). Moreover, interviews were recorded, with the consent of the participants, in order to fully focus on asking questions and interact with respondents and maintain a good level of accuracy and richness in data.

Due to some unexpected events that prevented to personally interview Dove's campaign protagonist, 'Real Sketches' analysis relied entirely on secondary data, such as observation, Internet databases and analytics, company reports, newspapers, social networks and blogs.

5. CASE STUDIES

5.1 Coca Cola Zero - “Quanto Mais Você Melhor” (August 2012, Brazil)

Coca Cola is and has always been a strong marketing-driven company. An analysis of its marketing strategies showed that the company adopted four different approaches to engage consumers throughout the years (see Appendix 2):

1. What the company does

On May 8, 1886 John Pemberton sold his first Coca-Cola drink at a soda fountain in Jacob's Pharmacy, Atlanta. Subsequently he published the first Coca-Cola advertisement in the Atlanta Journal. The Coca Cola ads of the first years aimed at informing the consumer about the characteristics of the product. The material show little creativity and long written parts to explain the practical functions of the drink – such as refreshing and invigorating.

2. The functional benefits

Once the consumer got familiar with the brand and its activity, it was possible to shift the attention on the functional benefits of the product. Starting from 1920, Coca Cola campaigns adopted slogan such as “The pause that refreshes”, highlighting the fact that the drink helps to entertain and relax. During 1930's, the company adopted the image of a fat and jolly Santa Claus in a red and white suit to advertise its product. The company is often credited for creating the image of Santa Claus as we all know him today. The image of Coca-Cola Santa Claus appeared through their advertisements for three decades. Before Santa, pretty young women were used to endorse Coca-Cola.

3. The emotional benefits

In this third stage, the brand started establishing emotional connections with the consumers. Now the ads embed more creativity and tell compelling stories that catch consumer's attention. Coca Cola centered its campaigns on people drinking Coke and feeling happy and positive. Campaigns such as “Coke is it!”, “Always Coca Cola”, “Open Happiness” and “The Coca Cola side of life” connect the brands with happiness and celebration, provide optimistic and positive vibes and encourages people to love spontaneity and to see the world in full color.

4. The identification with the brand

The last stage in Coca Cola marketing strategy is to build advertisements and campaigns around consumers in order to reinforce their bond with the brand.

In particular, as explained by Coca Cola Content 2020¹⁴, the company is now moving from creative excellence to content excellence. The objective is now to create ideas so contagious that cannot be controlled, design stories that are to be expressed through every possible connection, inspire participation. Coca Cola understood that technology revolutionized the way consumers engage with brands and different variables influence the way they make decisions, word-of-mouth being one of the most important. Nowadays consumers' generated stories outnumber company generated stories, for this reason Coca Cola decided to shift from one way to two-way storytelling and build its campaigns around powerful content that could be easily shared, interpreted, personalized, and experienced.

The “Quanto Mais Voce Melhor” campaign is part of the most recent Coca Cola marketing approach explained above. The campaign was launched in August 2012 in Brazil and it printed names on Coca Cola Zero cans and bottles in order to strengthen the relationship between the brand and the consumer.

It was designed appositely for the purpose to go viral, trigger word of mouth and stimulate consumer engagement and participation and for this reason it can be consider a valuable example to investigate the research question defined at the beginning of the case study.

FINDINGS

5.1.1 Theme 1 - Planning

Before the creation of the “Quanto Mais Voce Melhor” campaign, the brand was registering lower sales than expected and was in need of something to turnaround the negative trend, boost sales and engage the consumer. It had to be something that could generate a great buzz in a short period of time.

Coca Cola had previously successfully launched the “Share a Coke with” campaign in Australia, where the brand was facing similar challenges. For this reason the company thought the same campaign would work somewhere else and was adopted by Coca Cola Zero for the Brazilian

¹⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1P3r2EsAos>

market. The very first goal of the campaign was therefore both a cognitive and a financial one: the campaign had to go viral, reach as many people as possible to reinforce the relationship with the consumer and increase sales.

In second place the long term and more macro objective of the campaign was to improve the way consumers viewed the brand and doing so reach developments in brand equity.

When interviewed the Senior Marketing Manager for Coca Cola Zero in Brazil explained that the detailed goals of the campaign were the following:

1. Reach more than 70% of Facebook users
2. Generate 500,000 R\$ in earned media and PR
3. Boost sales of single unit of product
4. Improve brand awareness and increase the number of people experimenting the product for the first time
5. Build brand equity

In order to target consumers, the company used both demographic and behavioral criteria.

The campaign was designed to engage with young adults between 20 and 29 years old. In this regard, the main criterion used to sample the population is indeed demographic: the age. Moreover, the campaign was affected by geographic criteria, since it was carried on solely in those metropolitan regions of the south, south-east or north-east, where the purchasing power was bigger. Neither the northern nor the internal part of the country was considered.

Within the specified niche, just classes A, B and C were targeted. People from these classes have a certain habits that Coca Cola thought to be more suitable for its campaign (behavioral criteria). These individuals are more likely to be concerned with body shape, healthy products and calories consume. “The behavioural criterion had been really important for the campaign implementation, since it influenced the selection of the point of sales: just those restaurants, bars or shops that present an A, B, C profile were activated”, explained the Coca Cola Zero executive.

5.1.2 Theme 2 - Implementation

A. *The Who*: Coca Cola Zero did adopt a seeding strategy, identifying opinion leaders and influentials that could share the campaign content with their network and fastly achieve virality.

“These individuals are usually celebrities or popular figures that represent the target of the campaign and have an established relationship with the product and the brand. In this case Coca Cola was looking for somebody who had something to do with the young universe, who spoke the language of the youngsters, active in the social media and with a relevant number of followers (5,000 +)” said Coca Cola Zero executive when interviewed. Following this criteria, the campaign chose popular characters such as Marcos Mion or Luciano Huck and sent them a personalized can they could share. These influentials did not get paid nor received other benefits, so we can say the company adopted a *Random Viral* Strategy. Coca Cola said that it always provides opinion leaders with some compelling material that they would naturally share, without forcing or distorting their opinions.

In the “Quanto mais voce melhor” campaign, the seeding strategy did not play too well, since the content shared by the influentials was not so engaging for other users, and they did not feel like passing it along (the can with the name of the celebrity on it).

In a recent campaign that Coca Cola did during Rock in Rio, influentials were given a speaker made out of paper in which they could plug their devices and play music. This kind of content generated much more sharing on the social media, since it was a non personalized and peculiar gadget that people found interesting.

B. The What: According to the Senior Marketing Manager, the winning campaign is the one that lets the consumer interact with the history. “The more the campaign message is open to consumer’s intervention, the more likely is to reach virality”.

Coca Cola saw this in Australia, where the “Share a Coke with...” campaign successfully conquered new young consumers that were reluctant to drink Coca Cola. In Brazil, Coca Cola Zero had to adapt the message for the different product and a different consumer. Coca Cola Zero consumers are those who care more about calories and body shape, and the campaign message had to directly target them. “Share a coke with...” turned into “Quanto mais...melhor”, that instead of telling consumers to buy a coke and share it with a friend (not everybody likes Coca Zero), tried to directly engage with that niche. Eventually, the overall strategy didn’t change: the campaign was indeed targeting different consumers but it kept featuring the names on the cans to interact with the audience and reach as many users as possible.

In Brazil, the “Quanto mais...melhor” message functioned as a powerful hook, especially when Coca Cola launched an online application where users could complete the message as they pleased. The chance to interact with the campaign spread enthusiasm within the consumers, that soon created virtual cans that showed messages such as “Quanto mais Corinthians melhor”, “Quanto mais Jesus melhor”, “Quanto mais amor melhor”, and so on. When the cans reached the stores, consumers started playing with the 150 names chosen by Coca Cola that had been printed on the packaging. People would look for the particular can with their name on it and share the picture on social media, post it to a friend or find the can with the name of their lover. “Each viral campaign designed by Coca Cola embedded this characteristic, to offer a stimulus for the consumer and let him recreate or interpret the message” commented the interviewed executive about the company marketing strategy. “Nowadays, Coca campaigns don’t talk about product characteristics anymore, since it is something that consumers already know and absorbed. The message is rather constructed around emotions and consumer engagement. However, the functional benefits of the product are still codified in the company’s communication. Even if the ad doesn’t explicitly focus around product characteristics but rather emotional stories, it will always present a savoury product that refreshes and energizes”

However this is not the case for all Coca Cola brands. Fanta or Sprite’s campaigns for example aim more at informing the consumer about functional benefits, since the product is not yet well established in consumers’ lives.

C. The Where: The campaign was efficiently developed throughout different kind of medias to maximize consumer engagement. The biggest concern for Coca Cola was that consumers wouldn’t connect with the campaign when personalized cans reached the stores.

In order to prepare the audience and leave clear the intent of the campaign, Coca Cola first produced a TV ad showing the daily life of a consumer highlighting the happiness and positive side of his life. The film introduced the theme of the campaign without talking directly about it.

The use of *paid* media (TV ad) as the first vehicle to launch the campaign allowed marketers to reach a great number of consumers and increase awareness over the new action.

After one month, the campaign started exploiting *owned* media and launched on company’s Facebook page the application where users could personalize their can as they preferred. This operation introduced for the first time the interaction between the campaign and the consumers,

and online social media functioned as an easy and accessible platform to efficiently engage with them.

Afterwards, the campaign targeted opinion leaders and influentials, which shared with their network the new customized products. This operation aimed at expanding reach and generating *earned* media, which in turn would fuel the virality of the message. Eventually the product reached the point of sales and became at consumer's disposal. People finally could go to the stores and buy the product with their name on it and share it online.

Coca Cola Zero invested 70% on the budget on the TV ads, 20% on other channels, especially internet and the remaining 10% on off-line actions, such as the assembling of specific point of sales where consumers could ask for a customized packaging that was not present in stores.

The TV is definitely the most powerful media: in just one time it captures 15-20% of the total audience and through television marketers have more control on the content and the diffusion of the message than internet and social networks.

5.1.3 Theme 3 - Consumer Engagement: First of all, it is important to mention that Coca Cola divides consumers in four different categories according to their relationship with the brand:

1. Who knows the product and the brand but is not a customer
2. Who already tasted the product in the past 12 months or does a sporadic use every couple of months.
3. Who likes the brand and qualify it, meaning that he associates the brand with specific attributes "Coca Cola is the most refreshing" or "Coca Cola tastes the best".
4. Who loves the brand and defends it.
5. Who doesn't even consider competitors product.

"In Brazil, Coca Cola Zero is not so well positioned as in other markets. The aim of the campaign was to target the first two categories of individuals: make more people taste Coca Zero for the first time and increase consumption for those who already tried it", commented the marketing manager.

"The viral approach was used to spread awareness and enter in consumer's initial consideration set. The customized cans got the consumer physically close to the product and broke the virtual

barrier them. The shopper would see his name on the product and would grab it and hold it in his hands”.

The strategy of the campaign in order to generate enthusiastic consumers and achieve a wider reach is explained with the consequential use of different media. The product in fact reached the stores just after the campaign had already and sequentially launched a TV film, an online application and cans customized after influentials’ names.

When the product was eventually launched, one million people had already used the Facebook application and 50% of the population had seen the ad on TV.

Curiosity grew and enthusiasm exploded when consumers finally found their names in stores. It was like they saw something virtual (the online application) turning reality. “In a three months period, we saw the virtual cans appearing everywhere on social networks. When real cans reached the stores, the viral power of the campaign got even bigger” explained Luis Carlos Franco, general director of Ogilvy & Mather Rio. “The campaign engaged with everyone and became part of Brazilian popular culture, no matter which region or social class”.

Coca Cola Zero Marketing Manager said that many people tried to reach the company to request specific names. Other asked Coca Cola to deliver customized cans for birthday parties or weddings. “A group of people created a fan page on Facebook to help consumers localize stores where particular cans were available”.

As the campaign was developing, different interventions helped to reinforce enthusiasm and drive ongoing consumption. The company launched a survey on Facebook to choose 50 extra names to add to the 150 that first appeared on the products. In this way, consumers got involved in the process and interacted with the campaign, giving it more visibility and reinforcing enthusiasm. Moreover, during a weekend, Coca Cola assembled special point of sales in eight different cities where consumers could customize their Coke Zero as they want. Consumer would stand in line for hours to get their personalized can to bring back home as a souvenir.

“It was a way to serve those consumers whose names was not included in the first 150 nor in the 50 extra voted on internet”, explained Coca Cola Zero executive.

After five months from the starting of the campaign, when the enthusiasm was cooling down, “Porta dos Fundos”, a popular Brazilian comedy group released an ironical video about names excluded from the campaign. The episode triggered curiosity and sparked word of mouth and eventually reached over 5.7 million views on YouTube.

The company estimated that the video was not derogatory but rather an occasion to bring new popularity to the campaign. Soon Coca Cola posted on his Facebook fan page “Quanto Mais Kellen melhor” or “Quanto Mais Porta dos Fundos melhor”, alluding to the names mentioned in the episode. “It was a spontaneous and hilarious video that was having a huge success on the web. For this reason, Coca Cola Zero decided to join the conversation and produced a related material that soon consumers started to share, generating a big buzz on social networks”, explained the respondent.

According the executive, communication is one of the most important factors to drive ongoing consumption, together with other variables of the marketing mix (price, availability, point of sales...): “When a product combines massive volumes with a fast turnover, it is fundamental for the company to keep communicating in order to drive ongoing consumption. For a product like Coca Cola, that presents such a high frequency of usage, many touch points exist to communicate with the consumers and retain him. It is important to be always on air, reach the consumers as many times as possible, but resources are tight. The more you communicate, the more you are likely to sell. If you sell, you gain more resources to keep communicating and increase sales, and so on”. Coca Cola (original) is the only product in which the equation works fine. For all the other brands (Fanta, Sprite, Coca Zero...) the challenge is to come up with ideas and stories able to engage with the consumers and generate enough resources to keep communicating.

5.1.4 Theme 4 – Evaluation

In the 4 months of “Quanto mais voce melhor”, the campaign managed to reach 85% of Facebook audience. Today, Coca Cola Zero detains 47% of market share in the light segment of the soft drink market, three points more than the 44% at the beginning of the campaign.

During the first month of the campaign, the Facebook fan page (global)¹⁶ hit one million of *likes* against the 30,000 of the previous period. Now the page has more than 5 million likes, being half of them from Brazil. The Brazilian consumer is in fact the one who interacts the most with the brand on Facebook. The campaign reached one million visualizations on YouTube, and eight millions consumers used the online application developed appositely for the campaign.

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/cocacolazero>

The number of queries registered by the company's customer service (SAC – Serviço Atendimento ao Cliente) grew 50 times and Google searches related to the product marked a tenfold increase. Moreover, as the Marketing Manager explained, “the number of visits to Coca Cola Zero website increased by 2.500%. The visits we registered in one month topped the total number of visits we had since the launch of the website”.

In order to keep up with the development of the campaign and measure consumer engagement, every week marketers would analyze digital media trends.

Moreover, an “after action review” was conducted two months after the end of the campaign, where sales volumes and returns on investment are analyzed more in depth.

“It is really difficult to measure the financial outcome of a single campaign, because you never know how much previous campaigns contributed to the result of the one you are considering” said the executive. “The most insightful analysis is conducted at the end of the year where yearly marketing investments are compared with aggregated results in order to understand how the campaigns performed. Just after one or two years from the start of every single campaign, complex statistical models allow us to disaggregate the numbers and study single cases”.

Every month, Coca Cola tracks brand equity developments through open interviews and structured questionnaires in order to understand how consumers see the brand and how they engage with its products. The analysis is carried on a national level and assesses how the brand is positioned in the market. In case of important campaigns, in addition to the monthly track just mentioned marketers conduct a specific research to investigate campaign thematic that are not covered in the national report.

The “Quanto mais voce melhor” campaign yielded positive results and had a positive impact on consumers. “We managed to turn ‘Zero’ in something positive”, summed up Coca Cola Zero Marketing Manager.

Given the positive outcome of the campaign, Coca Cola Zero decided to continue on the same theme, keeping the campaign alive with some fresh content that could engage consumers as the names did.

In February, packaging started displaying names of popular travel destinations. The new campaign - “Quanto mais viagens melhor”, exploits one of the biggest passion among Brazilian young adults: travelling. In doing so, the campaign aims at incentivizing consumers to share their destinations through Coca Cola Zero products.

Moreover, in conjunction with a major music event- the 'Rock in Rio' festival, Coca Cola Zero launched the 'Quanto mais Rock in Rio melhor' campaign. Cans displayed a musical wave that, if scanned through the apposite mobile phone app, would play one of the seven exclusive playlists created for the occasion.

5.2 Dove – “Real Beauty Sketches” (April 2013, US, Canada, Australia, Brazil)

Dove, manufactured by Unilever, is the No. 1 personal wash brand nationwide. According to Unilever website¹⁷, “one in every three households uses a Dove product, which includes beauty bars, body washes, face care, anti-perspirant/deodorants, body mists, hair care and styling aids”.

Dove’s campaigns for real beauty started in 2004, an effort to engage with the female audience through marketing material that explored the natural variations of the female body (see Appendix 3). In 2005, Dove “Real Beauty” went viral with “Evolution”, a sixty seconds film created by Ogilvy & Mather, Toronto that showed how make up and Photoshop transform real and natural beauty in retouched glamour. The TV ad, which concluded with a powerful self-esteem slogan – “No wonder our perception of beauty is distorted. Take part in the Dove Real Beauty Workshops for Girls”, appeared on YouTube, MySpace and Google Video, topping viral popularity on lists such as The Viral Chart. Today the video features more than 16 millions views on YouTube.

For eight years, Dove kept working on its “Real Beauty” campaign trying to come up with some other material that could emulate the success of the ‘Evolution’ ad. Despite the many efforts - they included a co-marketing ad with Wal-Mart and a Facebook "Ad Makeover" campaign last year that let people erase ads they found offensive, none drew the attention ‘Evolution’ had.

Rather than creating positive word-of-mouth, new campaign material rather raised critics about Unilever’s different treatment of women in Axe and Dove advertisements.

In 2007 Dove’s growth started slowing down and the company decided that it was time for the “Real Beauty” campaign to go back to its roots as a public-relations and brand-equity-building campaign aimed at raising self-esteem in girls and women (in the meantime the campaign had focused more about products’ functional benefits).

In April 2013, nearly 8 years after the first viral hit, “Real Beauty Sketches” from Ogilvy Brazil took less than a month to overcome the reach and the impact of its predecessor.

“The ad depicts an FBI forensic artist named Gil Zamora sketching women (that he can’t see) by the way they describe themselves. He says things like, "Tell me about your chin," to which these women depressingly reply, “It kind of protrudes a little bit, especially when I smile,” or "My mom told me I had a big jaw." Then strangers sit down and describe these same women to Zamora. Earlier in the day in fact, the women had been asked to spend time with strangers, though neither party was told why. The two resulting drawings of each woman were then hung

¹⁷ www.unileverusa.com

side-by-side and the contrast is pretty stark. The ones based on strangers' descriptions—are ultimately more attractive and look more like their subjects than the ones based on self-description. The idea is that women are too critical of themselves. The tagline of the campaign is: “You are more beautiful than you think!”¹⁸

Despite some criticism, the message of the campaign clearly appealed to a massive audience and became the most watched video ad of all time, according to what Dove later declared. It was uploaded in 25 different languages to 33 of Dove's YouTube channels and has been viewed in more than 110 countries.

FINDINGS

5.2.1 Theme 1 – Planning

The idea of the campaign resulted from a field research conducted by Dove that showed that only 4% of women feel good about themselves across the globe: “Our job was to talk straight to women in a more intimate, personal way. We decided to do something that would move the other 96%. From the very beginning, we tried to look for an idea that could actually prove they are wrong about their self-image. A social experiment.” said Anselmo Ramos, a vice president and creative director at Ogilvy Brazil, in an interview with *Fast Company* magazine.

Dove published survey data asserting “over half (54%) of women globally agree that when it comes to how they look, they are their own worst beauty critic, which equates to a staggering 672 million women around the world.” In light of these findings, the campaign adopted gender criteria to target its audience, deciding to talk directly to women independently from the geographic location, age or behavior. Clearly, the profile criterion was combined with a psychological one, since the message was directed to those women underestimating their beauty, otherwise it wouldn't have raised any effect.

As for the campaign goals, it was created appositively to build brand equity and reinforce the relationship between the brand and the consumer. According to Fernando Machado, the global brand vice president for Dove Skin at Unilever, the mission of the campaign was “to create a world where beauty is a source of confidence and not anxiety.” The result of the social experiment was uncertain, and nor cognitive nor behavioural goals had been set before the launch.

¹⁸ <http://www.fastcocreate.com/1682823/the-story-behind-doves-mega-viral-real-beauty-sketches-campaign>

5.2.2 Theme 2 – Implementation

A. *The What* – The characteristic of the message is most definitely what allowed the ad to reach such popularity. The campaign tried to establish a sense of trust with the consumer exploiting deep emotions that many women feel about themselves and their appearance.

David Waterhouse, the global head of content and PR at viral tracker Unruly Media agrees. "I think what made this campaign perform particularly strongly is the content, which elicited the intense emotional responses of ‘warmth, ‘happiness’ and ‘knowledge’ from its target demographic — one of the key factors behind a video’s sharing success," he explained in an interview with *Business Insider*.¹⁹ "But, more importantly, we are really seeing social motivations behind sharing becoming a lot more important. Brands have to give people a reason to share the video."

In order to efficiently design the content of the campaign, Dove used the social learning theory, a perspective that states that social behavior (any type of behavior that we display socially) is learned primarily by observing and imitating the actions of others. Individuals that are observed are called models. These models provide examples of masculine and feminine behavior to observe and imitate (Bandura, 1977).

Nowadays, the definition of beauty is modeled after social medias and celebrities messages. Most women think their appearance is not even close to those standards of beauty that society suggests (being thin, light eyes...), and for this reason they underestimate their potential. The campaign exploits this concept and delivers a correct standard telling its audience the importance of natural beauty. This three-minute ad actually made lots of women cry in the end because they never thought they are actually prettier

“I think it went viral because it moves you, because it makes you think, because it’s based on a true insight. Most ads today don’t evoke any clear emotion, they just communicate a particular product or service benefit” said Anselmo Ramos in a recent statement²⁰.

The advertisement is indeed built completely around emotion. It never mentions any Dove products during the entire clip and the company name appears only at the end of it. Dove understood that the best way to engage with consumers was to deliver a positive message

¹⁹ <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-doves-real-beauty-sketches-became-the-most-viral-ad-video-of-all-time-2013-5>

²⁰ <http://www.fastcocreate.com/1682823/the-story-behind-doves-mega-viral-real-beauty-sketches-campaign>

rather than try to sell the brand. Emotionally striking consumers, Dove managed to win their trust and create brand loyalty over the competitors.

The campaign got viral because it evoked emotions that stimulate the audience to share the content with friends. The ad went beyond its advertising purpose, becoming a social experience that spread a simple and genuine concept.

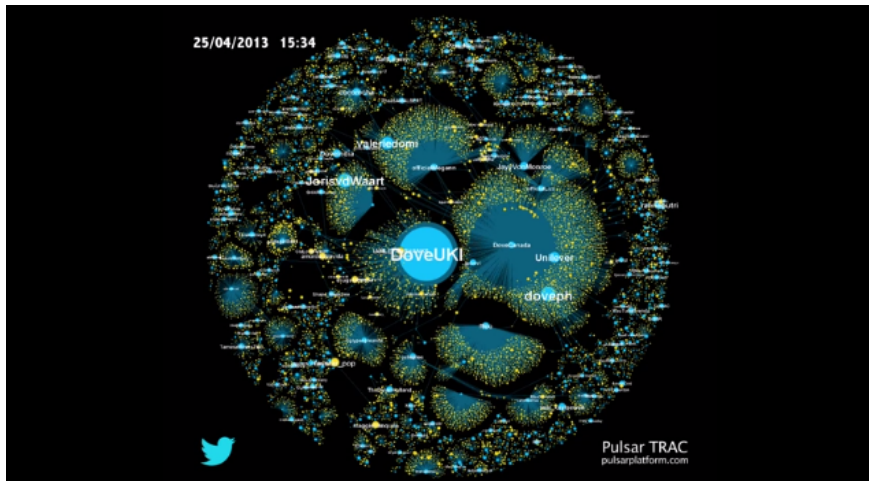
- B. *The Where*** – In order to roll out the media strategy for “Real Sketches” campaign, Unilever partnered with Edelman, its PR (Public Relations) agency and its media agencies MindShare and (recently added) PhD, the same who worked on the ‘Evolution’ campaign. While ‘Evolution’ got no paid media, "Sketches" has had such support from the beginning, along with plenty of owned and earned media. The campaign was first launched in four key markets - the U.S., Canada, Brazil, and Australia with a strong PR push through key publishers and distributors. Public Relations played definitely a key role for the success of the campaign, generating an initial placement with media such as the Today Show, Mashable, Huffington Post and Channel 7 Morning Show in Australia. Media started talking about the campaign on the very first day and provoked a strong early response from consumers, such that the company just after 24 hours decided to translate the ad in 25 languages and target other markets. In order to facilitate the distribution and seeding strategy and maximize the reach, Dove boosted paid media advertising. The brand partnered with YouTube, launching the campaign in 45 different regional channels, and bought advertising space on Facebook, Twitter and search engines.

The film was distributed to top media around the world and was quickly shared by women, men, media and even other brands. In just one week it hit 20 millions visualizations, being seen in 110 countries.

Despite the initial investment in paid media, the campaign mostly generated spontaneous media. The company eventually estimated the campaign lead to 4 billion PR and blogger media impressions.

- C. *The Who*** – Recently twitter examined some big viral video hits to demonstrate how Internet buzz spreads. Twitter produced 'dynamic visualization' videos to show how the videos went viral, using different colored dots to show how they spread on the social network.

Figure 15 – How “Real Sketches” went viral on Twitter



Source: YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrGySDMsYXQ>. Accessed in 22/09/2013

The blue nodes represent Tweets; the bigger they are, the larger the potential reach of that Tweet. The yellow dots represent retweets. In each case, reach takes into account not just followers, but also audience size and amplification by retweet.

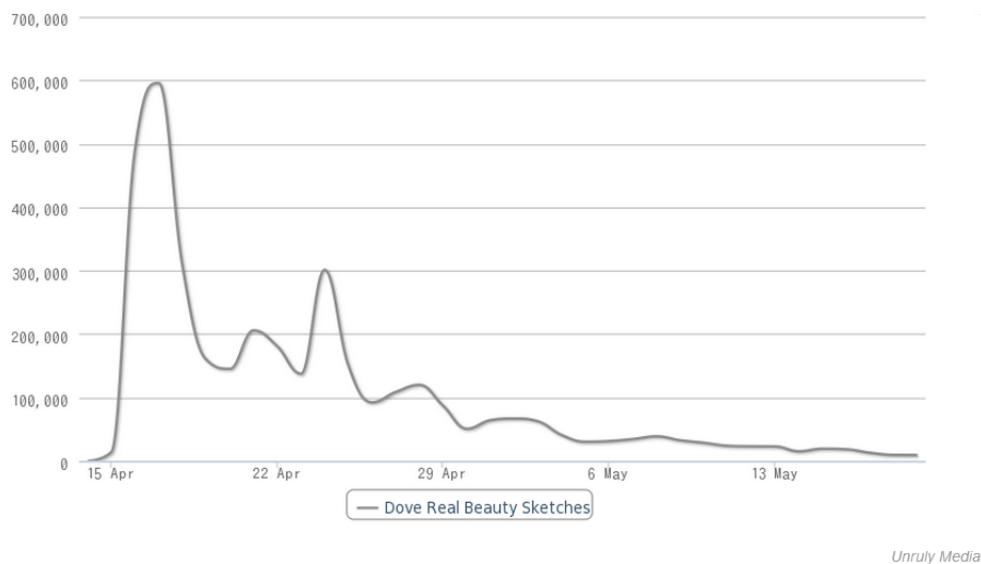
The image above, extract from a three minute video by Twitter that retraces the spread of the ad on the social network, shows that there were less spikes caused by influencers mentioning the campaign, “which instead spread in clusters of communities, demonstrating the value of local engagement”.²¹ Virality was boosted by local conversations around the world. Dove made a good use of the digital outreach program, exploiting its already massive social media presence - their Facebook page has over 18 million likes on Facebook and 97,000 followers on Twitter. The company had a ready-made audience into which they could seed their latest engaging video concept. The video had the merit to touch the nerve of the audience and was rapidly shared around networks without the need of many influentials. The campaign certainly has generated a wealth of emotion online. On his Facebook page, the actor George Takei acknowledged that the video was an ad, but said “it brought tears to my eyes through its powerful message.” More than 29,000 people have “liked” Mr. Takei’s post.

²¹ <https://blog.twitter.com/2013/how-videos-go-viral-on-twitter-three-stories>. Accessed in 22/09/2013

5.2.3 Theme 3 – Consumer Engagement

Figures are probably the best way to describe consumer engagement with the “Real Sketches” campaign. According to Unruly's data, the video was shared 4.16 million times, which makes it the third most shared video of all times. And it even has a better share-to-view ratio (one share for every 31 views) than Evian's "Roller Babies" ad, the previous record holder (one share for every 39 views). But what really stands out is the Dove campaign's fast momentum starting the day of its launch. "The pace of sharing for this campaign is also unprecedented," David Waterhouse said in an interview with *Business Insider*. "In its first two weeks it attracted an incredible 3.17 million shares — that's more than any other ad has managed in the same period”.

Figure 16 – Number of shares per day in the first month



Source: Unruly Media

In few days, the official campaign videos, launched first in the U.S., Canada, Brazil and Australia and then translated in 25 more languages, registered millions of visualizations on YouTube. Mashable, one of the most famous technology and social media blogs, published an article about the campaign²² that became the most shared in the website history.

"The moment that the Dove Real Beauty Sketches film was uploaded to the Dove YouTube page, it quickly started to gain traction around the world with men, women, media and even

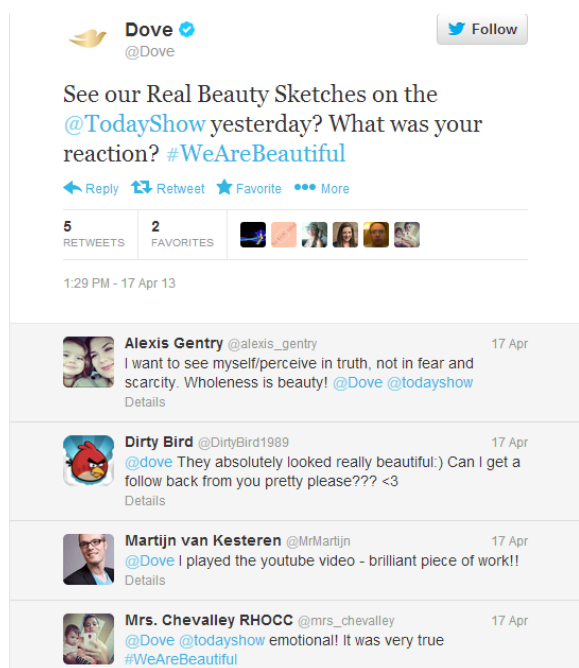
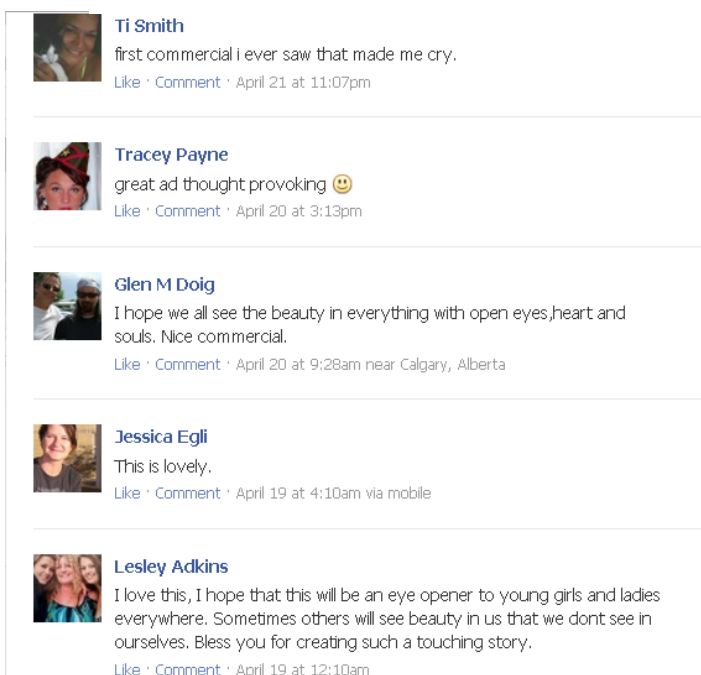
²² <http://mashable.com/2013/05/20/dove-ad-most-watched/> Accessed in 22/09/2013

other brands sharing the film," said Fernando Machado, VP of Dove Skin, in a statement²³ "The campaign evoked an emotional reaction in millions of people that inspired them to share the positive message with others. Beyond just the millions of views and publicity impressions, it is the outpouring of testimonials from around the world that are exciting us." Source??

The compelling message of the ad is definitely what moved millions of users to start and join online conversations (Figure 18). Moreover, through its established digital ecosystem, Dove started and fueled conversations between the users, increasing their engagement with the brand (Figure 19).

Figure 17 – "Real Sketches" Facebook Comments

Figure 18 – "Real Sketches" Twitter Responses



Source: Dove's Facebook page

Source : Dove's Twitter profile (@Dove)

Some data collected by Dachis Group shows that the number of conversations started by consumers outnumbered those started by the company itself. The campaign started with a remarkable investment in paid media but then what really made it take off was the massive amount of earned media it generated. Data shows that not only conversations were booming, but even that the message consumers were passing along was positive. The campaign managed to

²³ <http://www.unileverusa.com/media-center/pressreleases/2013/doverealbeautysketchesmostviewedonlinead.aspx/> Accessed in 22/09/2013

increase brand passion and created loyal consumers and brand advocates. The power of advocacy had a tremendous impact across Dove's social ecosystem.

However, the campaign faced severe critics as well. Complaints surged for different reasons. Some people found the message hypocritical, considering that Axe, another Unilever's brand, produced sexually explicit advertisements that have been accused of objectifying women. Charlotte Hannah from Twirlit writes²⁴:

"[Dove's] long-running Real Beauty campaign has shed light on some important truths about the media's unrealistic portrayals of women, but given the fact that Dove is owned by Unilever, which also owns Axe (ugh) and the company that produces Fair & Lovely skin lightening cream (double ugh), the campaign comes across as hypocritical and patronizing—a way for the company to pander to women for sales while practicing the very evil it preaches against"

Some questioned the use of 'good looking women' and others debated the relationship between beauty and women, saying that the ad focuses too much on a narrow definition of beauty. The dissident voice toward the campaign started from Jazz Brice, 24, that wrote a post on her Tumblr site soon after having seen the TV ad²⁵:

"So this video started going around my Facebook today, with about a dozen of my female friends sharing the link with comments like, "Everyone needs to see this", and "All girls should watch this," and "This made me cry." ... But as I clicked the link and started watching the video, I started to feel a slight sense of discomfort... When it comes to the diversity of the main participants: all four are Caucasian, three are blonde with blue eyes, all are thin, and all are young (the oldest appears to be 40). The majority of the non-featured participants are thin, young white women as well. Hmm... probably a little limiting, wouldn't you say?... Why are so many females I know having such a strong reaction to the sketches video, being moved to the point of tears? Because the message that we constantly receive is that girls are not valuable without beauty. Brave, strong, smart? Not enough. You have to be beautiful. And "beautiful" means something very specific, and very physical..."

²⁴ <http://www.twirlit.com/2013/04/15/dove-real-beauty-sketches-ad-wants-you-to-see-your-true-beauty-video/> Accessed in 24/09/2013

²⁵ <http://jazzylittledrops.tumblr.com/post/48118645174/why-doves-real-beauty-sketches-video-makes-me> Accessed in 24/09/2013

Many other women started agreeing with this point of view, sharing the article and writing critics themselves. The blogger backlash to the ad went viral itself but it did not worry Dove's management. "If you want to be a brand that has a point of view and strongly held purpose, you have to expect that not everyone will agree with you," declared Steve Miles, Dove Global Senior VP²⁶. "We're certainly letting the conversation play out, but what's important to us is that we know it's legitimate," added Sharon MacLeod VP Marketing at Unilever. "We aren't trying to control it, we really think that the community will engage and they'll be the judge."²⁷

Eventually the many critics ended up reinforcing the virality of the ad, creating further participation and debate within consumers.

The company took some actions in order to fuel enthusiasm. Beside the main three minutes commercial, the company soon published an extended six minutes version and eight individual documentaries, adding material to the conversation.

Moreover, it created a follow-up message for Mother's day, in which following the same theme of the original ad, daughters describe mothers in order to make them see their real beauty.

Another episode that reinforced engagement was a parody of the campaign in which different men were described by women. The funny consumer-created content proved how popular the campaign became and helped fuel conversations.

5.2.4 Theme 4 – Evaluation

The emotional reaction that the campaign evoked inspired millions of people to share the content and pass the positive message to friends and loved ones, fueling a global conversation that reached everyone. The three-minute ad eventually has been viewed more than 114 million times, topping the previous record holder for most viewed online ad — the Evian Roller Babies (111 million views). The campaign was uploaded in 25 languages to 33 of the brand's YouTube Channels generated more than four billion PR and blogger media impressions. Global launch coverage highlights include:

- ✓ 121 print features,
- ✓ 484 major broadcast news and lifestyle segments,

²⁶ <http://adage.com/article/news/dove-evolution-evolution/241971/Accessed> in 24/09/20134

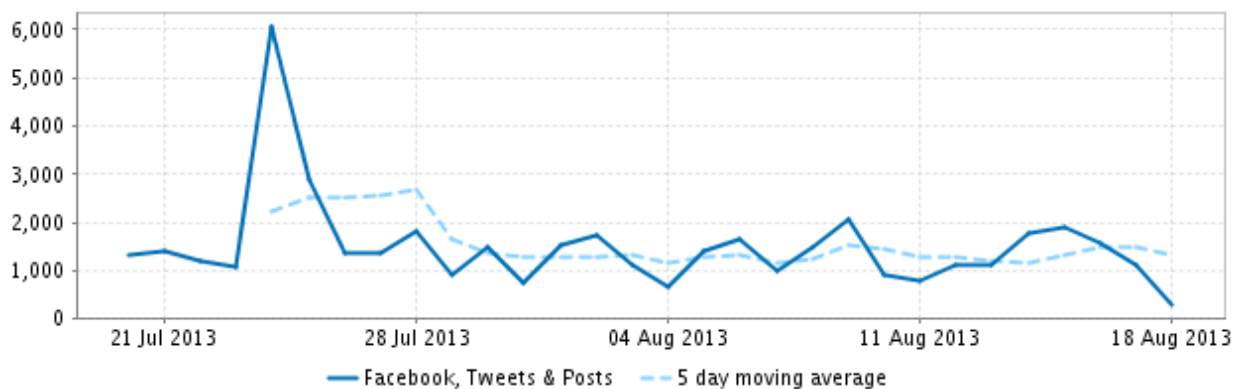
²⁷ <http://strategyonline.ca/2013/04/29/dove-sketches-real-beauty/Accessed> in 24/09/2013

- ✓ Thousands of online articles that have generated hundreds of thousands of comments, likes and shares,
- ✓ 4,090,848 shares on Facebook, Twitter and blog posts.

The film became the most shared video ad in over a year and the third most shared of all time, according to the Viral Video Chart reported globally by Unruly²⁸.

Trend in shares can be seen from the chart below:

Figure 19 – “Real Beauty Sketches” Shares Trend



Source: Solomozone.com

Dove definitely managed to reach the brand equity objectives set at the beginning of the campaign. “Real sketches” broke in consumers’ hearts and established a strong emotional connection between consumers and the brand. Nowadays such connection represents a valuable competitive advantage for corporations, especially if they try to succeed in the face of lower-priced competitors. The campaign made many consumers associate the brand with positive personality traits, which turns into a strong brand equity, an asset that serves as the driving force behind price premiums and profits.

“Dove is so far ahead of most companies in terms of being in touch with women’s actual attitudes, emotions, and frustrations with the beauty industry in general,” said Marti Barletta, author of such books as *PrimeTime Women: How to Win the Hearts, Minds, and Business of Boomer Big Spenders and Marketing to Women*, in an interview with Business Week²⁹. Even if their intentions aren’t pure, she still thinks it’s genius marketing. “Companies have to be—and

²⁸ http://viralvideochart.unrulymedia.com/chart_keyword/Mashable_Global_Ads_Chart?interval=all_time

²⁹ <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-04-26/how-those-dove-real-beauty-sketch-ads-went-viral>

are starting to become—more savvy about understanding the people they’re trying to sell to.” Consumers today are savvy, she says. They know they’re being sold a product. “But women support companies that go above and beyond the commercial motivations and try to make an effort to understand how they think and feel. There’s a lesson there that other companies would be well-served in paying close attention to.”

The proof of this can be found in comments around the web.

Alice says:

“Yes they’re a company, out to make money. But they’re having a positive impact in the meantime, as opposed to no impact, or worse yet, a negative impact – like so many other advertisements do I, for one, will continue supporting Dove as long as they continue promoting a more realistic and accepting definition of beauty. Especially over the brands whose advertisements instill a need in their consumers by cutting them down (and their model’s already slim proportions), airbrushing them beyond recognition, and preying on the insecurities that they are helping create, or at least perpetuating.”

Jennifer agrees:

“I think it's brilliant and it did it's purpose which is to make me think... "oh, maybe I'm not as horrible looking as I think".. People can find criticism if they need to. But maybe, instead... Spend time on spreading the message and helping women, especially those with depression, to see themselves differently. I don't see any other brand going to such lengths to make a difference in anything but their bottom line. I am a woman and I approve this message!”

However, the company should not undervalue the threat posed by the many critics the campaign rose, as mentioned in the previous section. It could impact negatively on brand perceptions if they will not efficiently manage to invert this trend in future campaigns. Nevertheless, the “Real Sketches campaign” yielded the desire effect and reinforced Dove’s brand positioning.

But did it sell soap? "On something like this that's about long-term Dove love, I would be much more interested in brand-health measures than short-term sales," said Mr. Miles to Adage.com³⁰, and those indicators look good. "We have plenty of product communications directed at those short-term sales." But the campaign indeed impacted on sales. Data from IRI, a market research company, show Dove's U.S. sales up 1% in the four weeks ended May 19, right after the April 14 "Sketches" release.

³⁰ <http://adage.com/article/news/dove-evolution-evolution/241971/> Accessed in 24/09/2013

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Findings

6.1.1 Planning

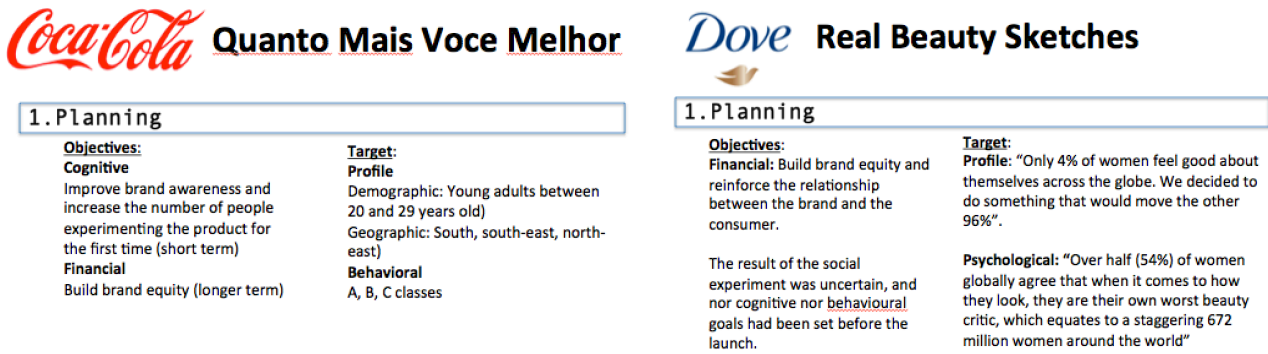
In the creation of a viral campaign, the definition of the objective is definitely one of the most critical drivers, since it remarkably affects the characteristics of the message.

If a company designs a viral campaign with strictly short term financial goals in mind, its content is more likely to include a call-to-action message. That was the case for Coca Cola Zero and its ‘Quanto Mais Voce Melhor’ campaign. The company was registering lower sales than expected and decided to build a campaign that could catch the attention of those consumers who have never tried the product before. Displaying names on the packaging made consumers actively look for their specific one and customized cans turned into a popular phenomenon. The campaign was constructed appositely to make consumers buy the product.

On the other hand, if the company prioritizes reach or awareness goals, or longer-term financial objectives (such as brand equity building), the message is more likely to be built around emotions that can easily engage consumers. Dove’s campaign never mentions any of its products and relied completely on the power of the message.

Moreover, the case studies showed the importance to have a specific target in order to better design the campaign strategy and talk to the right customers. The analysis suggests that a combination of profile and behavioural or psychological criteria is preferred. The first one allows marketers to extract the biggest sample of the population (women, resident of particular geographic areas, young adults...) and affects especially the choice of the marketing channels and product features. Coca Cola Zero implemented its ‘Quanto Mais Voce Melhor’ campaign solely in those points of sales where young adults from A, B,C classes were most likely to be found. Adding a psychological or behavioural criteria is fundamental to efficiently design the message. ‘Real Sketches’ talked to those women (profile criteria) that underestimated their self appearance (psychological criteria) and created a message that was aiming to touch this particular nerve, which was the very reason behind its huge success. In the same way Coca Cola Zero exploited the behavioural target to build a campaign around happy and healthy life.

Figure 20: Comparing Campaigns Planning



Source: Elaborated from the author

6.1.2 Implementation

In the implementation of the campaign, the influentials (*who*), the media strategy (*where*) and the content (*what*) play all important roles, but the latter is probably the fundamental driver of success. In order to go viral, campaigns have to put the consumers at the center of the attention, make them able to interact with the content, touch the emotions that are most likely to trigger word of mouth and shares. Coca Cola Zero campaign got viral even before the product reached the stores because of the online application that let the users personalize the virtual can. Winning messages are also those which can be easily reinterpreted and personalized by consumers. In both of the cases analyzed in this dissertation, campaigns increased popularity when consumers offered their interpretation of the message ('Porta dos Fundos' for Coca Cola Zero and the men parody for Dove's Real Sketches).

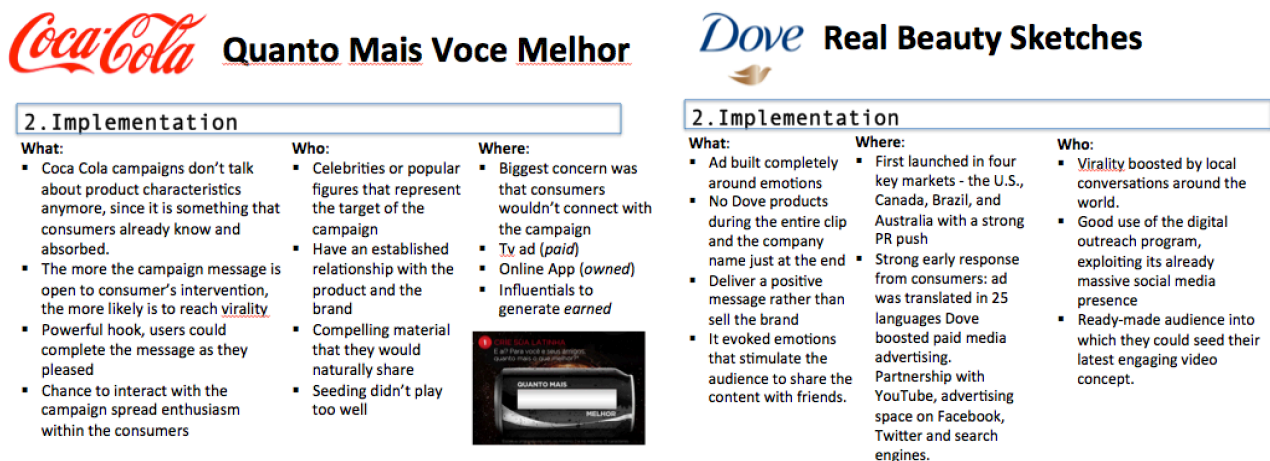
Dove's campaign particularly highlights the key role of emotional content. In this regard, the example confirms the theory explained by Berger (2010, p. 29), for which "positive and negative emotions characterized by high arousal (i.e., awe, anxiety, and anger) are positively linked to virality, while emotions characterized by low arousal (i.e., sadness) are negatively linked to virality". Dove's message in part generated positive reactions, but in many consumers it had the opposite effect. Despite the valence of the message (positive or negative), what drives virality is arousal. People who felt hurt by the ad generated as much conversations as those who liked it.

As it is possible to perceive in the case studies, media strategy has a big responsibility for the success of the campaign. Once the message has been efficiently constructed to engage with the predefined target, marketers should make sure it appears where targeted consumers are most likely to see it. PR role is determinant to gain *earned* media, which seem more effective than

owned and paid media to spread virality. These two are in fact usually exploited by companies to generate further earned impressions. Owned channels are also very important to keep consumer engagement high and fuel conversation. Coca Cola Zero used its Facebook page to launch the user application, while Dove stimulated consumers' interaction by asking their opinions about the campaign on social platforms.

The seeding process enables the campaign to reach fertile networks. As the network coproduction model shows, marketers use techniques to directly target and influence the consumer or opinion leader. Moreover, they acknowledge that messages are exchanged among members of consumer network and they interpret and share them rather than just taking marketers' meanings. However seeding techniques not always yield the expected results. This leads to a consideration about the three forms of word of mouth individuated by Bughin, Doogan and Vetvik (2010). The importance of influential word of mouth is indirectly proportional to the power of the message. Intentional word of mouth efficacy in fact strictly depends on the characteristics of the message and sometimes it may not work if consumers don't feel attracted by what influentials are sharing with them (see the case for Coca Cola Zero). Marketers can build campaigns only around consequential word of mouth if their message is able to highly engage consumers. In the Dove's campaign, the message was so compelling that was spread by local communities without passing through influential individuals. Consequential word of mouth can be really powerful. Experiential word of mouth is likely to be more important than other forms to drive sales, but is not as effective as the consequential type when it comes to achieve virality.

Figure 21: Comparing Campaigns Implementation

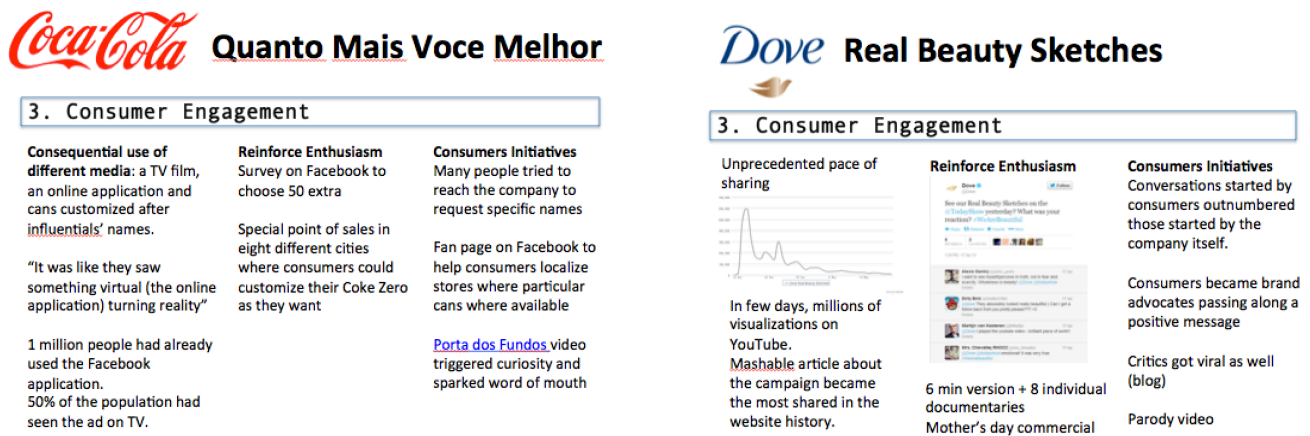


Source: Elaborated from the author

6.1.3 Consumer Engagement

The examples showed how important is that companies keep consumer enthusiasm high. As we have seen, this may be done through blitz campaigns (Dove’s Mother Day ad), offline actions (Coca Cola Zero’s action in shopping malls), get the consumer interact with the campaign (Coca Cola Zero’s survey for 50 extra names) or produce more material of conversation (Dove’s extended version ad). Moreover, Dove’s showed that negative conversations help spreading the campaign. In this case, companies should not underestimate the threat and take measures against it but still realize that these conversations keep fueling virality. They should be open to such scenario and join the conversation anyway. The worst move is to remain silent.

Figure 22: Comparing Campaigns Consumer Engagement



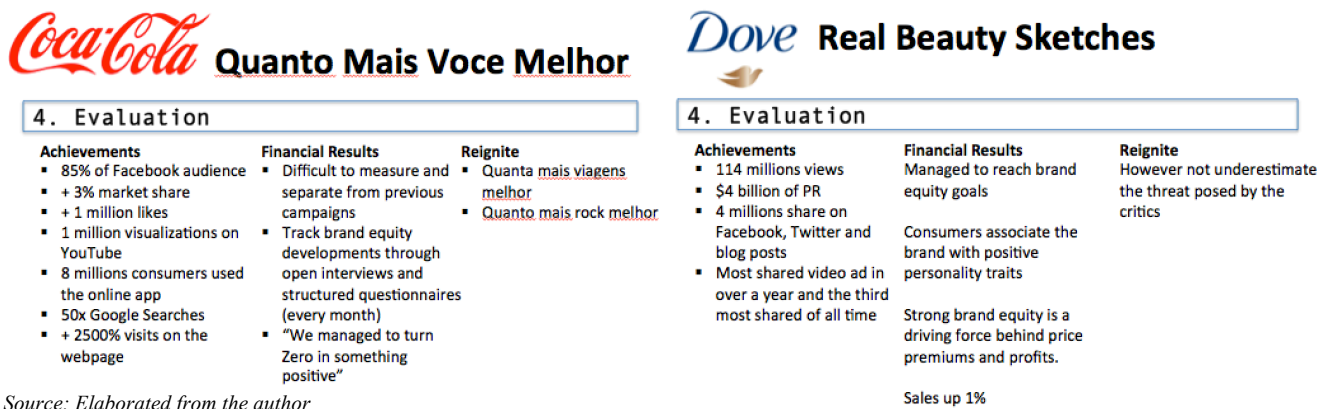
Source: Elaborated from the author

6.1.4 Evaluation

Finally, the case studies show that campaign evaluation is done mainly according to the objectives set at the beginning, as suggested by Cruz and Fill (2008). If the campaign aimed at raising brand awareness or build brand equity, consumer’s reactions are analyzed and figures offered by websites and social media help understanding the virality achieved.

Assessing the financial results of the campaign is never an easy job but is always a matter of interest for marketers and companies. Viral actions are likely to yield returns on the longer term and it is difficult to determine the impact of the campaign on short term sales indicators, as emphasized by Lusch and Harvey (1984). However, the underlying research confirmed Cruz and Fill study (2008) that viral marketing practitioners, no matter what are the specific objectives of the campaign, are always concerned about the financial perspective.

Figure 23: Comparing Campaigns Evaluation



6.2 A New Framework for Viral Marketing Campaigns

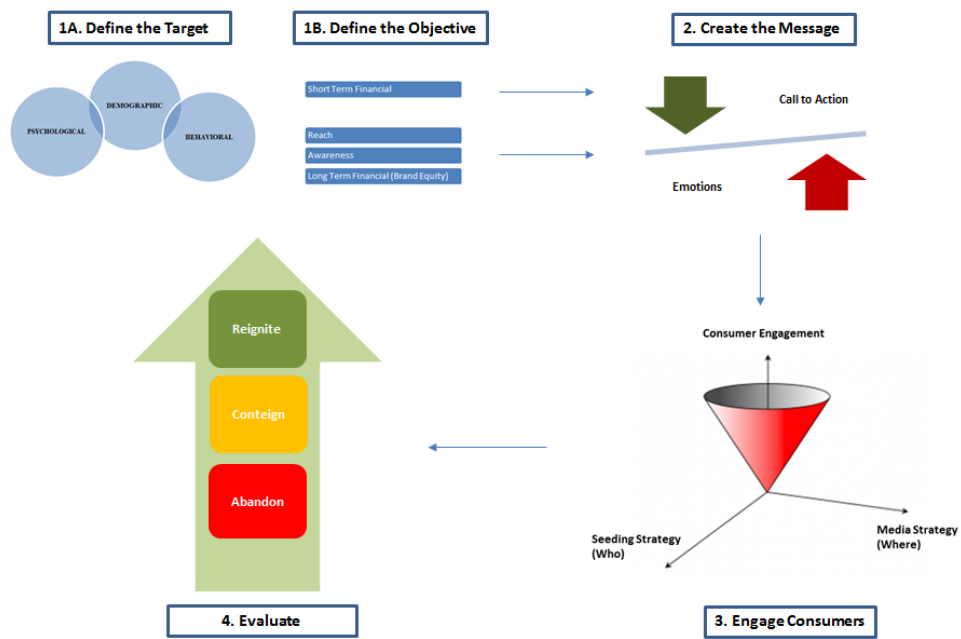
The research allowed to develop a new framework (Figure 24) that still has to be tested but seems more aligned with the findings of the cases studies.

The framework that emerged from the literature review and was used for the case study analysis (Figure 14) identified four major campaign steps – *Planning, Implementation, Consumer Engagement* and *Evaluation*. In this regard, the new framework does not differ much from the old one. *Planning* is the first step and still implies the definition of the target and the objective, however the collected evidence suggests different selection criteria. In the target definition, the model emphasizes the importance of demographic criteria as the basis to start sampling the overall population. Psychological or behavioural criteria will be combined with demographic ones in order to identify a more specific sample and thus design a better campaign strategy. As for the objective definition, the model divides campaign goals according to the financial outcome desired. In this regard it separates strictly short-term financial goals (e.g. increase sales) from non-financial or longer-term financial goals, such as awareness or brand equity. Such division allows to better design the campaign message. The more the company prioritizes short-term financial goals, the more the message should feature a call-to-action component, something that trigger conversation and at the same time drives consumers to the purchase. On the other hand, if the main goal of the campaign is reach, awareness or brand equity building, then emotions are the key for a viral success. As the evidence emerged from the case study shows, a message that raises arousal is highly likely to be passed along and shared within consumers' networks.

The creation of the message becomes a central step in the implementation of the campaign. Content is what most drives virality and marketers should spend considerable time designing a compelling and engaging message if they want their campaign to successfully meet the defined goals. The seeding (*who*) and media strategy (*where*) should be used as powerful tools to stimulate and boost consumer engagement. In particular, the research highlighted the importance of *earned* media to spread virality. Companies should engage in effective PR strategies and use paid and owned channels to increase visibility and trigger further earned impressions.

Finally, the last step remains the *Evaluation*, where initial goals are compared to the effective achievements of the campaign. In this regard, as suggested by the first model, marketers have the possibility to either abandon the campaign, contain or, if it proved to be successful, reignite it with new, revised and updated campaign objectives.

Figure 24 – A new framework for viral campaigns



6.3 Managerial Implications and Study Limitations

The research findings highlighted some main points that marketers have to consider when planning a viral campaign.

1. Clearly define campaigns objective to design an efficient message

If the campaign aims to achieve short-term financial goals (e.g. increase sales), it is more indicated to build a call to action message in order to gain new consumers or push the existing ones toward a more steady use of the product.

On the other hand, companies that want to prioritize reach, awareness or long-term financial goals (such as brand equity) may rely on the power of emotional messages to engage with consumers and build a valuable relation with them (Dove).

2. Have a specific target

Profile target (demographic, gender, age, geographic...) helps extracts the biggest sample and define marketing channels and product features. Its combination with a *Psychological* or *Behavioral* criteria helps to narrow down the target and better create a proper and efficient message.

3. Message is the key driver

In order to spread the message and reach virality, it is of fundamental important for marketers to create a content that consumers can interact with and touch those points that are most likely to trigger word-of-mouth. In this regard, emotional content plays a key role and it demonstrated to be highly effective when it comes to move the consumer to pass along the message.

Arousal is what really drives virality, thus companies should design contents that provoke strong reactions into consumers.

4. Media strategy to boost consumer engagement

Media strategy has to make sure the campaign message appears where consumers are most likely to see it. The case study highlighted the importance of earned impressions. Companies should therefore implement an efficient PR strategy and use owned and paid channels to create further earned media. Owned channels such as social media pages or websites may be used as powerful tools to fuel consumers conversations.

5. Seeding strategy's efficacy depends on the content

In order to reach fertile networks, it is important to adopt direct techniques to target influentials. However not all the seeding strategies yield the expected results. Consumers are attracted by engaging content and not all the messages appeal to them, even if shared by celebrities or peers.

6. Efficiently leverage experiential, consequential and influential WOM

Importance of *influential* WOM is indirectly proportional to the power of the message. *Consequential* WOM is what most drives virality while *experiential* WOM is more likely to drive sales.

7. Keep consumer's enthusiasm high

Blitz campaigns (Dove's Mother Day ad), offline actions (Coca Cola Zero in shopping malls), involving the consumer in the process (Coca Cola Zero's survey for 50 extra names) or producing more material of conversation (Dove's extended version ad) are initiative that companies have to consider in order to keep the enthusiasm high and prolong the life of the campaign.

8. Evaluate against the objectives

At the end of the campaign, achieved results should always be compared with predefined goals. Assessing the financial results is never an easy job but always a matter of concern for companies.

Bearing in mind the points above, marketers may also refer to the framework described in Figure 23 as a useful tool for viral marketing practices. Companies may use this model when developing new campaigns in order to understand the most important stages that affect the creation process. For each step, the framework helps marketers to identify the most important variables that drive virality and their impact on the final outcome.

However, it is important to highlight that its efficacy is still to be tested and the underlying study present some limitations that can affect model's reliability.

The research is based on a multiple case study analyses that consider a restricted (two) number of cases. In order to draw conclusions of wider range, further researches should collect more evidence and consider a higher number of examples. Moreover, as mentioned, the research was conducted through a combination of few primary data and extensive secondary ones. More primary data should be collected in order to gain more insights.

Further researches should keep on investigating the different characteristics of the viral messages according to the financial dimension of the objectives (call to action vs. emotions).

In this regard, it would be of relevant interest to discover how messages are properly design to meet company particular needs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Interview Questions

THEME 1 – Defining campaign objective and target

- **RQ#1:** *How do you set campaign objectives? What was the objective of the last viral campaign the company launched?*
- **RQ#2:** *How do you target your consumers? What was the target of your campaign?*

THEME 2 – Campaign Planning

- **RQ#3:** *What are the most critical features that a message should present in order to go viral (transformational vs. informational)? Should it contain a call-to-action or just entertain the consumer? Which product characteristics are more likely to generate buzz? Which emotions your campaign message contained and how consumers behaved in relation to it?*
- **RQ#4:** *How do you target influentials? How did the seeding process work out?*
- **RQ#5:** *How do you manage paid, earned and owned media to boost conversation? How do you combine online and offline actions? Did you adopt a Placed or Random Virals strategy?*
- **RQ#6:** *Which of the three dimensions proved to be most crucial for the success of your campaign- the who, the what or the where?*

THEME 3 – Implementation and Consumer Engagement

- **RQ#7:** *How do you measure consumer engagement? How do you create enthusiastic consumers?*
- **RQ#8:** *Which techniques do you adopt to reinforce enthusiasm and improve ongoing consumption?*

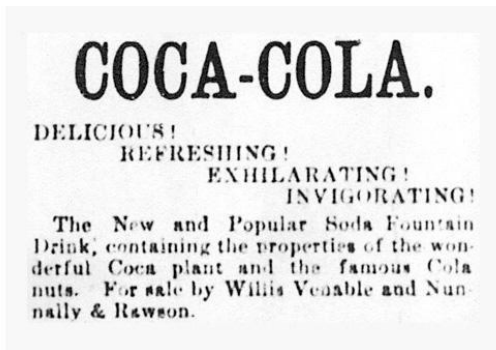
THEME 4 – Evaluating against campaign objectives

- **RQ#9:** *Which metrics do you use to evaluate your campaign? What are the most important criteria?*

APPENDIX 2 – Coca Cola Marketing Strategies

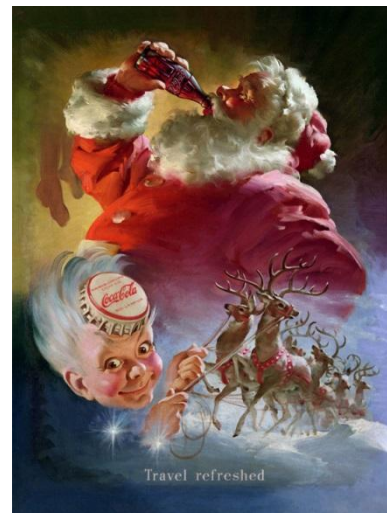
1. What the company does

The first Coca Cola commercials informed the consumers about the characteristics of the product.



2. The functional benefits

In the 1920's, ads shifted on the functional benefits of the products and adopted Santa Claus



3. The emotional benefits

The brand started launching new campaigns to establishing emotional connections with the consumers



4. The identification with the brand

The last stage in Coca Cola marketing strategy is to build advertisements and campaigns around consumers in order to reinforce their bond with the brand.



APPENDIX 3 – Dove’s “Real Beauty” Campaign

In 2004 Dove launched the campaign for Real Beauty



In 2006 the campaign went viral with ‘Evolution’ (Ogilvy Toronto):



In 2013 'Real Sketches' (Ogilvy & Mather Brazil) became the most viral ad of all time

