

Bonus #1: How to Create a Hypnotic Viral Marketing Campaign

"There's GOT to be a better way!"

My girlfriend was freaking out. She put up her own website and was feeling overwhelmed by all the marketing she needed to do to get people to it. Since she lives with me (you know, the so-called marketing guru), I easily supplied her with ideas, tips, steps, sites, articles, reports and more. I even narrowed it all down and advised her to read just one or two hand-picked books on marketing online.

In short, I didn't help her any.

"Can't you just give me three easy things to do?" she pleaded. "Isn't there a fast, cheap way to get promotion for my site and get me some business NOW?"

Her intensity shook me. I took her out to eat and we discussed her site and what we could do to promote it. We had just returned from a Vegas marketing seminar, where Jay Conrad Levinson and Mark Joyner gave us at least another 100 ways to promote ourselves online and off.

Again, it was just overwhelming.

But also in Vegas, the day before the seminar, we had drinks with Paul Lemberg, an author and executive coach. My girlfriend told him about her website, and he suggested she create a "pass-along" image that could promote her site. It was a good idea. It planted a seed.

But nothing clicked for her, or me, just then.

Finally, over our dinner, I had an insight.

"I remember something I did way back in 1995 to promote one of my books," I began. "The book was *CyberWriting* and this may help you."

"Tell me, tell me."

"I met a comedy writer for Jay Leno at one of my seminars in Houston," I began. "We hit it off. I spontaneously had the wild idea to ask if he could generate some humor which could have my book as the butt of the joke. In other words, I knew that if he could write something funny, the Internet would spread it for me. The humor would promote my book online. After all, jokes get passed around easily. I figured this could work."

"What happened?"

"He wrote something called 'The Top 10 Reasons to Read *CyberWriting*' and we sent it out to everyone I know by email."

"Yes? Yes? What happened?"

"That simple bit of humor got spread around the Internet within 24 hours. Virtually overnight my book became well-known and began to climb the best-seller list at Amazon."

"And your point is ... ?"

"Well, if you can create something so good that people will pass it along, you will get them to act as your agents," I explained. "There's even a website called PassItOn.com where you can see samples of what I mean. It's what Paul Lemberg was advising you to do in Vegas. What you are creating is a meme."

"A what?"

"A meme," I replied. "A meme is a symbol or phrase that represents a complicated idea. Jay Conrad Levinson's new book, called *Guerrilla Creativity* is devoted entirely to the subject of memes. He gives examples of memes, such as "Ho! Ho! Ho!" for Jolly Green Giant and "How do you spell relief?" for Roloids. They are hypnotic, in a way."

"So you're saying I need a picture that people can pass around?"

"Something like that. Maybe you can create a picture of a critter and make it so good that people will *want* to pass it around. You can put your website on it in small letters so every time someone sees your picture, they also see your website."

"What could I do?"

"Beats me," I said. "I'm just planting the seed. You water it."

"I could use SOME suggestions!"

"Oh. Well, it needs to be funny, or patriotic, or bizarre," I began, not really knowing what to tell her. "The more unusual, the better. The more it touches the heart, the better. The more unique, the more hypnotic."

Dinner was over. The very next day she received a photo of my sister's cat, Snicker's. It was a truly lousy picture. Half the cat was covered up by a blanket. The kitty's eyes were bright red from the flash. Good luck making anything out of THIS picture, I thought.

But my girlfriend is smart. She's a former Hollywood film editor. Her credentials on major movies, from *Ace Ventura 2* to *Evening Star*, are staggering. Besides, her website is all about taking regular pet pictures and turning them into art. That's why her site is called MakeYourPetaStar.com.

So I stood back and let her work.

To my honest amazement, a few hours later she had created a picture so good that it took my breath away. I immediately decided to send it out to my own list of 3,400 people. I sent it to my webmaster. He took one look and decided to send it to his list, a well. In short, my girlfriend had created an authentic "pass-along." She created *Hypnotic Marketing*.

Here's the email I sent out to my list:

Subject line: Vote for this Spokescritter

My sister sent Nerissa a terrible photo of Snickers, her cat. A sheet covered half the kitty and her eyes were devil red from the flash of the camera. Yet Nerissa took that lousy picture and made this original one. I think it's so good, and so inspiring, that I thought I would pass it along. If you felt like it, you are welcome to pass it along to your friends, too. This land is for all of us---our critters, too. Snickers gets my vote as spokescritter.

See www.mrfire.com/photogallery/snickers.jpg

Joe

Within one hour (one hour!) I had 15 personal replies, all thanking me for the picture. One fellow with his own newsletter and subscriber list said he would feature the image in his next newsletter! Many people said they were already forwarding the image to their family and friends. On top of that, Nerissa's website began to see traffic for the first time ever, and she also began to receive emails from people about the picture, her site, and her service.

Not bad for a quickly made hypnotic meme!

In fact, only *one* person complained. He said the idea was "weird." As it turns out, he's not a pet owner and probably not a pet lover.

Oh well, you can't please everybody---particularly on the Internet!

The moral: Consider creating a joke, phrase, or image---some sort of meme or "positive thought virus"---that just happens to promote your site. Then email it to you family and friends, peers and clients. If you've created a truly hypnotic meme, stand back! Traffic will be a-coming. If you haven't, no worry. Just create something else.

Hey, this is the Internet. ANYTHING goes and testing is FREE!