From Seven to 350 Million

When Universal Studios wanted to advertise their new Harry Potter theme park, they needed to ensure that not only were their marketing dollars going to be spent effectively but the impact would be truly global.

But instead of flexing their vast financial muscle putting adverts on TV, radio or online on Google, they notified just seven people.

Cindy Gordon from Universal invited just the seven top bloggers on Harry Potter to a secret midnight webcast where she shared information with special access to parts of the unseen park, including interviews with some of the main characters.

Just seven bloggers

The seven bloggers then blogged their followers. This was picked up by the worldwide media networks and within **24 hours, 350 Million people** were aware of the Harry Potter theme park. That's the power of viral marketing for you. But it was planned and carried out brilliantly.

What was unique here is that Cindy Gordon rejected conventional investment in advertising on TV, radio, etc to raise awareness and got the audience themselves to become her sounding board.

The above example is viral marketing on a grand scale but you can do it yourself in the local arena just as easily.

It is a fact that if your information is of interest to certain people and you enable them to find it then they will spread the gospel for you without you having to keep the momentum going yourself. In actual terms, because the interaction is two-way, keep injecting more useful information to keep the fires well stoked.

Do you have the bottle?

The first thing to remember is that online, nobody cares about you or the products you offer. Do you care about other peoples' products and services when you search the web? No! So get real!

Online people only want their own problems solving. Period!

You also have to speak to them in the way they expect to hear. I've mentioned many times that being friendly and chatty is far more effective than using jargon or corporate speak. Unless you break free in the

language you use online, your audience will perceive you as trying to sell them something. You must be more indirect, like Cindy.

Grateful Dead

Some of the pioneers of creating a viral buzz have been bands like Nine Inch Nails and Radiohead but the forerunners of them all were the Grateful Dead, who started making their music available for free. Why? Because the band liked touring, free material meant massive exposure to thousands of people who wouldn't normally listen to their music. Their events were sell outs! This sort of marketing is less about putting up barriers to sales and everything about increasing people's awareness.

Nine Inch Nails gave away the first 9 tracks of their latest album for free, and $5 for the remaining 25. They also posted online, a restricted number of $250 box sets with loads of their music, which sold out within hours.

The viral world

What you're doing is pointing the viral world to you. And as long as you come across as genuine, people will respond. Any deviousness or hard sell will be spotted instantly and you're toast!

Don't believe this only works for the big guys. Structure it right and it will work for you.

To find out how you can create a viral buzz, email me on **gerryw@flyingveemgt.co.uk** or call me

on: **01925 262800**

Be prepared. Be persuasive. Make it happen.

Best wishes

Gerry

www.flyingveemgt.co.uk