

Viral Marketing: Crafting Shareable Content

with Jonah Berger

Exercise Handout

Chapter 1. Contagious Content

What is it you are hoping people will talk about and share? Is it a product? An idea? A cause? Something else?

Why? What is your goal? To grow your business? Increase the reach of your message? Build a social movement?

Is there a certain type of person you are going after? Either demographically (age, gender, ethnicity) or psychographically (personality, values, interests, lifestyle)?

Are people talking about or sharing your product, idea, or cause currently? Why or why not?

Take action: Think about the idea of “giving away two.” How can you apply that idea? What can you give your current customers or followers that they can pass along?

STEPPS Framework

Social Currency

Just like the things we buy, what we talk about and share communicates things about us to others. The better something makes people look, the more likely they are to share it. If something makes people feel special, or smart and in-the-know, they'll be more likely to pass it on.

Triggers

A trigger is any stimulus in the environment that reminds you of something else. Top of mind means tip of tongue. The more people are thinking about something the more likely they are to talk about it.

Emotion

When we care, we share. High arousal emotions - like excitement, anger, and awe - activate people and drive them to take action and share.

Public

If something is built to show, it's going to be built to grow. Be visible. People often imitate after they see others take action first.

Practical Value

People share useful information because they want to help others. It might be saving time, eating healthier, or being more productive at work.

Stories

Stories are the currency of conversation. But they're also vessels or carriers of information. Like a Trojan Horse. Build a Trojan Horse story that carries your message along for the ride.

Chapter 2. Social Currency

Social Currency

How can you make people feel like insiders? What exclusive content or scarce information can you give them that will make them feel so special that they'll want to tell others?

Consider the *Will it Blend?* and Volvo trucks videos. How would you **show the inner remarkability** of your idea? What makes it surprising, novel, exciting, or interesting? What is a fact or detail that people might not know about it?

Take action: List three ways that you can use social currency to make people feel smart and in the know.

Chapter 3. Triggers and Emotion

Triggers

Find your peanut butter. What is the thing in the environment that will remind people of your idea, product, or cause (even when you are not around)?

Think about KIT KAT and Coffee, the GEICO "Hump Day" commercial, or Cheerios. These triggers come up on a daily or weekly basis. How often does your trigger come up in the environment?

Consider the Taco Tuesday story and the reusable grocery bags example. What action do you want people to take when your trigger comes up in the environment?

When is the right time you want people to be triggered? And where do you need them to be triggered?

Take action: List three ways you could harness either existing or new triggers to get people to talk about your product, idea, or cause.

Emotion

My product, idea, or cause evokes these emotions:

Excitement	Anger	Contentment	Humor
Awe	Fear	Happiness	Anxiety
Sadness	Surprise	Disgust	Envy

Using the 3 Whys, get to the core emotion of why people might want to care about your idea. First, **why** might people use your product or idea? Or why might they support your cause?

Why do they want or need that?

Why do they want or need that?

What are the top 2 high arousal emotions that you could use to get people to care?

Take action: Write down three ideas of how you can use these high arousal emotions to activate people and drive them to share.

Chapter 4. Public and Practical Value

Public

Evaluate your visibility as it is now. Can people **see others** buying your product? Supporting your cause? Adopting your idea? Following your brand?

If you have a logo, what can you do to make it easier for people to see that logo being used by others?

Think about the iPhone headphones example. How can you use color to make the private public?

What can you do on your website to make the size or volume of your followers, members, or consumers clear?

Take action: List three ways you can make your product, idea, or cause more public.

Practical Value

What is the special knowledge, insight, or expertise that you have? Jot down as many words as you can think of that describes what your expertise is.

Write down the titles for 3 lists that you could create that would be most helpful to others. For example: "5 tips for acing your job interview."

If you offer goods or services for sale, how can you frame discounts most effectively using the Rule of 100? As an amount? Or a percentage?

Take action: List three ways you could provide useful information that will help others.

Chapter 5. Stories and Putting STEPPS into Practice

Stories

What is the most interesting story you've ever heard or told about your idea, brand, cause, or product? If you're not sure, consider customer service calls and stories shared on social media, or ask close friends.

Think about the Jared story with SUBWAY, or the low-cost fees with Vanguard. What is the main idea that you want people to share about you?

Take action: What are three Trojan Horse stories that would illustrate that main idea?

Evaluate the three Trojan Horse stories. Is your main idea a key detail of each story? Is your product or idea integral? Write yes or no next to each story.

Putting STEPPS into Practice

Evaluating: Now that you've generated some ideas about how to get people talking about your product, idea, or cause, it's time to consider implementation. Go back to your answers to the **take action** questions. Knowing your customers or audience, which ideas make the most sense for you? Write your top 10 answers down here:

Take action Ideas	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS
_____	STEPPS

Next, circle the letter that corresponds with the element(s) of the STEPPS framework being used:
(S)ocial Currency, (T)riggers, (E)motion, (P)ublic, (P)ractical value, (S)tories

Rank your ideas: Numbering them 1 through 10, rank each idea as to how strongly you believe it will work to get people talking about your idea, product, or pro-social cause.

Make a plan: Beginning with your top ideas, build a plan for implementing them. Identify what resources you will require to take action. Who will help you? When will you begin?