

A STUDY OF VIRAL MARKETING
- NEED OF Y GENERATION CUSTOMERS-

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Abstract

This paper shows the impact of viral marketing in the current competitive market. As per the survey conducted and the results reviewed we can say that, VIRAL MARKETING is a new emerging technique in the current scenario of the marketing world. This can be and should be used in all the sectors as this is the most economic and effective tool that has the potential to boost the promotion campaign up to an extremely great extent.

The services and the benefits of this technique can be offered to all the sectors. This technique has been used earlier in the various sectors but the basic problem was that there was not a proper terminology that was awarded to this technique. Now we would like to suggest a proper name to this technique as VIRAL MARKETING. So that it becomes easier for the people to recognize this new technique.

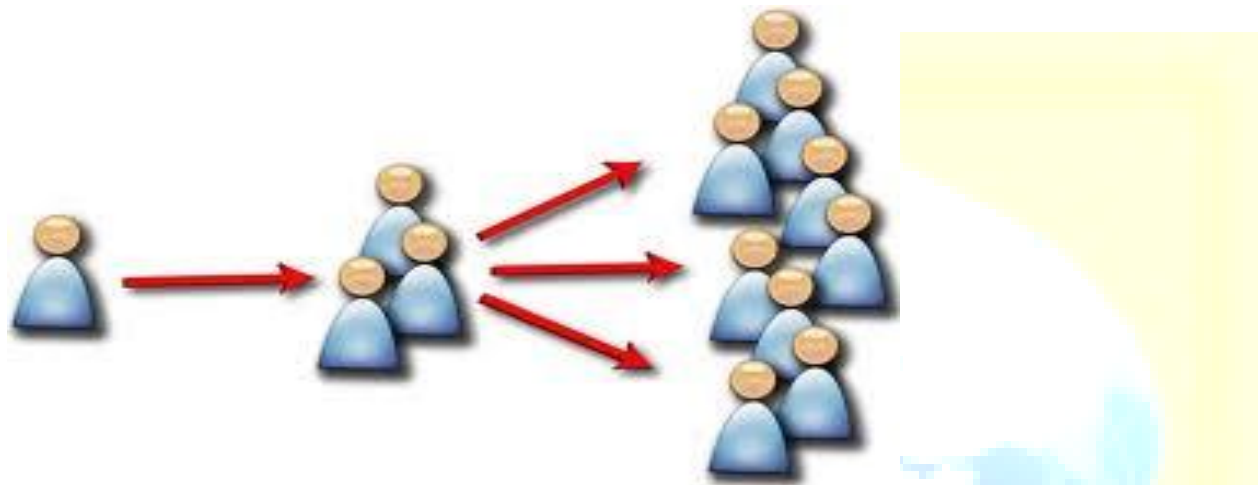
Key Words: Viral marketing, marketing technique, Types of Marketing, Internet Marketing, Buzz marketing

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is also known as the word of mouth marketing technique. Viral marketing generally consist of the use of pre-existing techniques so as to spread a particular message among a target group of people. Mostly the pre-existing tools are used under this, but one has to be very sure that these tools are used properly so that information about a particular product is televisive and spread in a proper and in an efficient manner.



Now a day's viral marketing is mostly using the social networking sites and tools like Flash games, Push messages, Blogs and some other tools like this. Mostly it is about the same as telling your friends about any new product, services or anything that is new and fascinating them.

1.2- CLASSIFICATION-

Viral marketing can also be classified under two main categories. These are

- 1) Frictionless.
- 2) Active

1) **Frictionless** – It is when audience spreads the word of a product or services. Like- Hotmail, Face book, Electronic greeting cards.

2) **Active**- This category requires customers' participation in recruiting new customers. Under this the successful viral marketing campaigns are what I CALL HAPPY ACCIDENTS. Because they are kind of viruses and no one really means to give them and no one really meant to get them, they kind of just happens.

1.3-Techniques used for VIRAL MARKETING-

1. Give away information to your customers and include back links to your site. You can post these books or special reports on ebook directories, give away sites and use JV partners to give to

their list. Encourage people to pass the information along to their friends who have an interest in the topic. If your information is accurate and helpful you'll find many people be passing the book to friends.

2. You can use a Tell-A-Friend script on your site. Essentially you give your customer and visitors a way to easily share your website. Depending upon your market you may find that offering an incentive to tell a friend or two will encourage more traffic. Incentives can be free information that is delivered directly after the tell-a-friend script has been executed. Assure your readers that you do not collect email addresses when they enter their friend's address. They are not opting their friend into your ezine.

3. Do you get funny video clips from friends and family? This is viral marketing. Although the clip may not be selling anything the concept of passing from person to person is viral. Now, putting your imagination to work, can you create an idea around your niche that would be interesting? Something that will be passed from person to person? All you need is a digital camera. Videos without the professional 'feel' lend themselves to authenticity. You only have to look at the popularity of reality TV to realize how much people like 'peeking' in on the lives of others.

4. Are you trying to get your information out to your public quickly? You can generate an Internet Press Release to draw in your readers. This is a method that can have far reaching effects when done with creativity and panache. Bring your readers to your page and send them out with a video or e-book to share with their friends.

5. Undercover marketing, done well, can be fun and intriguing. You create a mystery surrounding your niche. There are questions, mystique, a potential for danger and people keep coming back for more. It becomes fun and interesting. Your readers keep coming back for more and sending their friends to figure out the mystery. Yanik Silver has been doing this for some time with his Underground Marketing Seminar. He doesn't release the name of several of the speakers, the attendees are undercover agents and the information is highly confidential. The whole event is cloaked in mystery.

6. Social network sites are here to stay. They often evolve around a particular topic. MySpace, the most popular network site, is a general forum where people discuss anything from monkeys to marriage. The information on these sites is searchable. You can easily develop a list of people interested in your topic or niche and release funny exciting information that they are encouraged to pass along to their friends.

7. Buzz marketing is creating a 'buzz' about a particular subject, video, website or writing.

These were seven of the low technology techniques you can use to start a viral storm of traffic.

They are easy to learn and to develop. Use them to your advantage!

If your goal is to promote your business, whether it is online or offline, you cannot do better than to rely on viral marketing. Viral marketing, in case you were worried, doesn't involve viruses; the term alludes to the super-fast rate at which viruses spread. Viral marketing involves relying on techniques that will help spread your (promotional) message through a 'viral process' and reach a web-wide audience within a short amount of time.

The success of your viral marketing efforts depends on how expertly you play your social graph to use as a medium though with to push your message. However, if your message finds no takers, it can hardly go viral, which counts on people indulging in some furious sharing, and no one shares bad content. So, it would be a good idea to remember that a successful round of viral marketing needs both good content and some decent social networking skills.

- Word-of-mouth technique.
- Pre-existing tools to spread message.
- Fission Marketing.
- Large Target Group.
- Effective means.
- Cheap.
- Easy to spread.

SYNONYMS of VIRAL MARKETING

- Referral Marketing.
- Fission marketing.
- Self presentation.
- Word-of-mouth.
- Buzz marketing.
- Internet marketing.
- Wildfire marketing

1.4- Benefits of Viral Marketing.

1. Free advertising
2. Short term gains - gain immediate visitors.
3. Long terms gains - attracts visitors for years to come.
4. Causes exponential growth – reaches a large audience.
5. Automate your marketing methods - set it up once and forget about it.
6. Inexpensive to set-up – it primarily involves some investment of time.
7. Viral marketing tools are easy to develop i.e. you can create an e-book without knowing how to write.
8. Quickly build your reputation.
9. Easy to combine with other marketing methods – i.e. include as a bonus with other products.
10. Increase targeted traffic to your web site.

Over the course of the last decade, an array of viral marketing examples have come and gone with varying degrees of success. Though the term “viral” infers that the campaign is organic and self-replicating, marketers and big-name brands have begun to attempt manufacturing viral content in the hopes of increasing their brand awareness or product sales. Some feel that viral content cannot be manufactured and is only the product of organic and unpredictable forces, while a growing number of others feel that they can predict what people will be interested in, how they will share that content, and ultimately what will become viral. Though the debate rages on, the fact remains that viral marketing has evolved over the course of the last decade from a rather obscure Internet phenomenon to a massive, multi-million dollar marketing tool employed by agencies and brands the world over. With that said, let’s explore some of the better examples of viral marketing in the last decade

LITERATURE REVIEW

Viral marketing

Based on the discovery of Rushkoff and Rayport in 1997, Wilson in 2000 introduced six factors that influence viral marketing, as follows:

1. Offering valuable products and services,
2. Providing efficient ways for communications,
3. Utilizing larger-scale spreading of information,

4. Making efficient use of public positivisms and behaviors,
5. Establishing communication networks,
6. And sharing resources of the others.

After many case studies, Podoshen discovered in 2006 [20] that although various company's viral marketing modes are different and heterogeneous, the actual steps of viral marketing performed by a company seems to be an integration of the design of information resources, information spreading, information release, and the consequent management.

On the other hand, it is usually believed that although viral marketing needs fewer directed expenses on information transferring, the marketing mode would have some cost due to serious management of the viral marketing processes.

As in the papers of Michael J Hawkyard we could find that Viral marketing can also be classified as :-

- COMMERCIAL VIRAL CHARTS
- NON-COMMERCIAL VIRAL CHARTS

COMMERCIAL VIRAL CHARTS-

Commercial Viral Charts exists to build traffic and income to their owners. For example LYCUS may charge upto 3000 EURO for advertising commercial branded games in their VIRAL CHARTS. Unbranded games are listed free because they help to build a popular section for their site.

NON-COMMERCIAL VIRAL CHARTS :-

Other sites generate revenue by embedding your campaign into their own website and placing adverts around it. These sites can be difficult to get placed on if you are a direct competitor of their current advertisers.

~ The COMMET group receives 1200% increase in campaign traffic when they had their game featured on AddictingGames.com

2.3. Viral marketing and social networks :-

Both the traditional word-of-mouth marketing and the viral marketing campaigns are carried out over social networks, and the existing literature of viral marketing over social networks has

significantly grown as research is being further developed recently. Social network potential (SNP) is a numeric coefficient, derived through computational algorithms to represent both the size of an individual's social network and the ability of individuals to influence the whole network. Alpha users were first briefly discussed in the book 3G Marketing by Ahonen et al. in 2004, thereafter SNP was used for the purpose of identifying alpha users. Message customization, social network structure and customers' motive are salient antecedents that determine the spreading performance of the marketing information and communications. Some research on viral marketing schemes was carried out by the present authors based on Q Quser-groups between 2007 and 2008. Moreover, the simulation results reported in Ref. reveal that the email network of the users performing actual viral marketing activities is similar to a small-world network, regarding the information spreading behaviors.

2.4. Propagation of email viruses -

A model of e-mail virus propagation was proposed in an email user would be infected if this user opens a virus contaminated email attachment; thus, the virus program will infect the user's computer and send itself as a new attachment to all email addresses existing in the user's computer address book. Using that model, simulations on the spread impact of the network's magnitude and the initiator's degrees of the network were analyzed. The present work, to be described below, has some similarity with this email virus propagation mechanism but only in the initiation and propagation aspects; they address different networks with different mechanisms.

2.5. The present work -

Based on a complex network model, this paper performs simulation studies on a spreading scheme for viral marketing over the real instant messaging system QQ in China. As mentioned above, Ahonen et al. contributed quite a lot to viral marketing research in combination with the network theory and modeling. However, they only focused on the selection of the initiator in viral marketing over an ordinary social network but not on a more realistic complex network. Bampo et al. used a network generated by a computer to predict the small-world and scale-free properties of some real information spreading networks. Zou studied the impact of the social network's magnitude and the initiator's degree on email virus spreading. Clearly, what has been studied is not the problem about the design of spreading schemes for viral marketing. These approaches on simple networks or on computer-generated artificial networks generally cannot be applied to designing effective spreading schemes for the large scale and complex task of viral marketing,

therefore it is very important to perform real data-based studies on the complex social networks for viral marketing.

It has been commonly experienced that although the macroscopic properties of two network models can be similar, for example possessing the same small-world features and even identical power-law degree distributions, their microscopic structures can be very different.

Therefore, instead of discussing mathematical graph models generated by computer, it is more practical to consider real-world networks with information spreading dynamics using real data sets.

OBJECTIVE

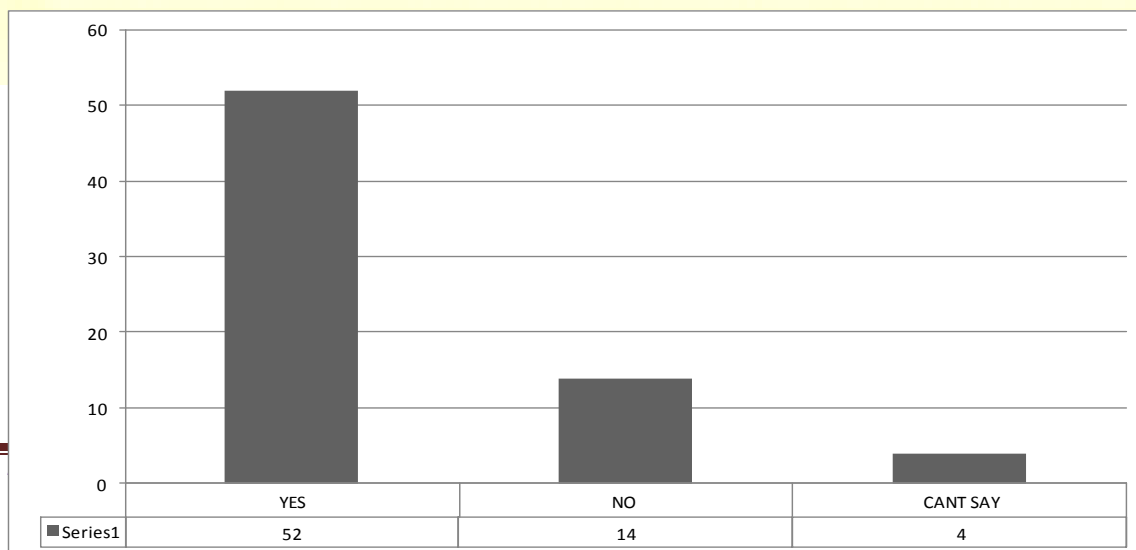
- To study whether companies are aware about the term viral marketing.
- To study whether the marketing technique preferred by product manufacturer.
- To study whether they are satisfied by the use of this technique.
- To study the areas where this technique can be used.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Primary data is being collected by through questionnaires which have been filled by the company’s marketing department.
- Convenient sampling is being used for the data collection.
- Out of 100 samples 70 is being considered for the findings. 30 is being rejected due to the non-completion of the form.
- Data compilation & evaluation of results

FINDINGS

1. Whether marketing technique has been preferred by companies.

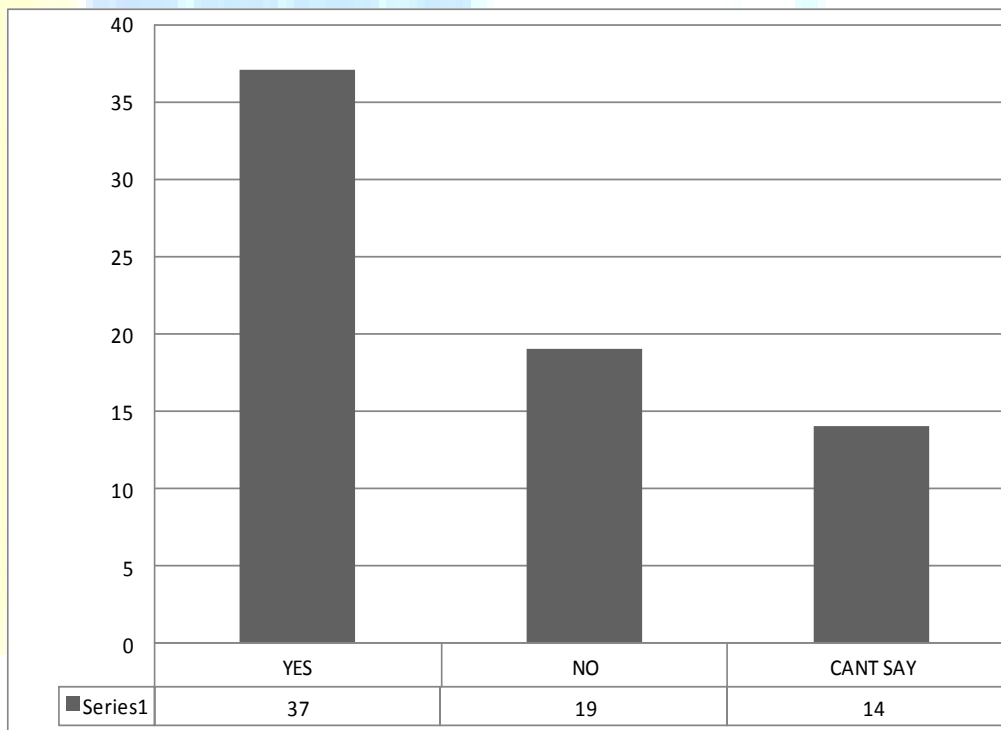


Most of the companies would like to use the marketing techniques for the benefit of their business.

On elaborating this we could find that the subjects covered by us in the INDIA were satisfied by the use of the various marketing techniques. And they were ready for further use of these techniques as they think that the use of techniques like these would be very beneficial regarding the promotion of the product among their own customers.

This in turn will be an essential edge for them regarding the marketing aspect which is a must in the current scenario.

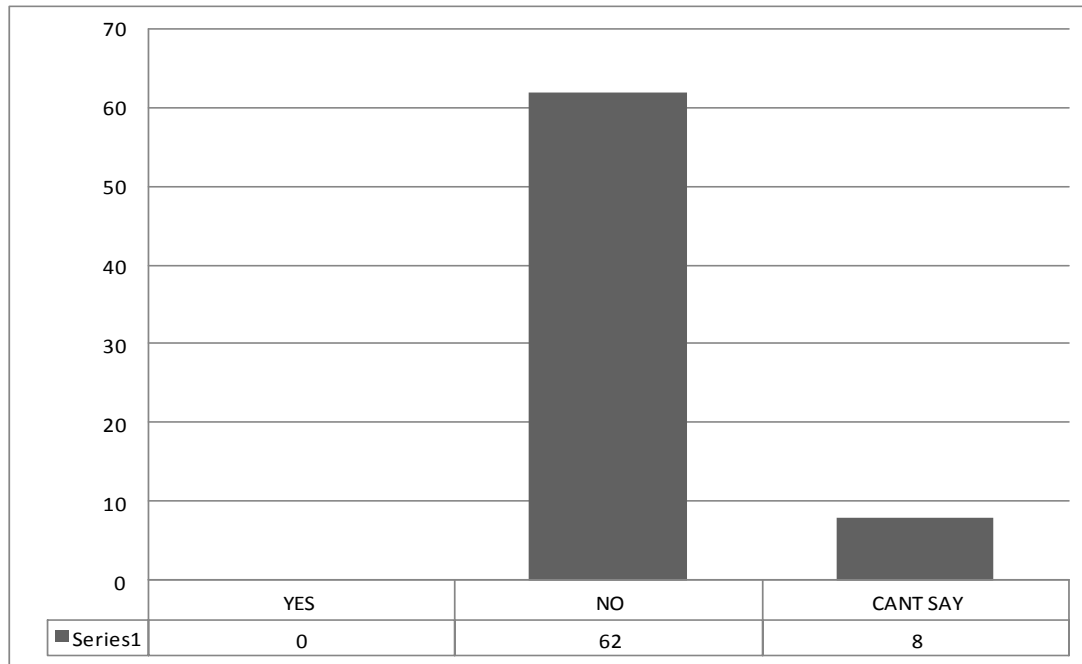
2. Whether they are satisfied by the use of this technique.



Retailers that were examined by us were satisfied by the marketing techniques used by them as they think that these techniques will not only help them to make their product familiar among their own consumers but will also provide them an additional support regarding state of the competition in the market.

These techniques also help them for the promotion regarding the new products that has arrived in their stores and which are also not very much familiar among their own consumers.

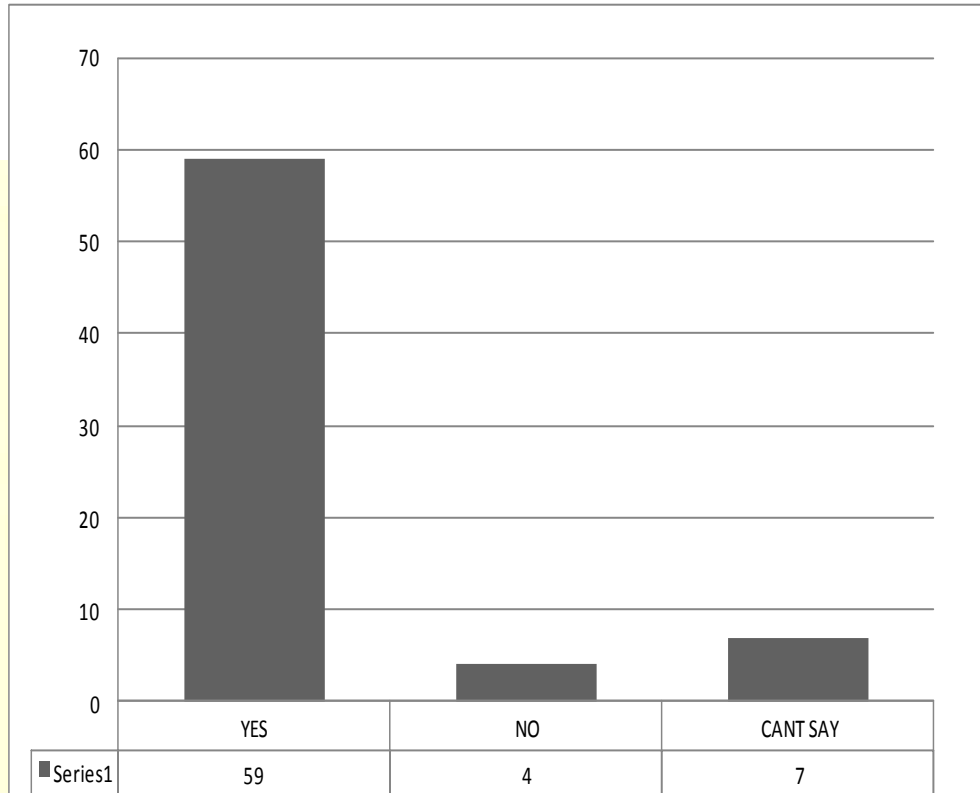
3. Whether Retailers are aware about Viral Marketing



From the above graphical representation it can easily be observed that none of them were specifically aware about the term VIRAL MARKETING.

Accurate examination of the targeted subjects in the India has led us to a state which clearly displays that none of them were exactly familiar and aware about the term “Viral Marketing”. From this response we can say that this was a pretty new terminology for them.

4. Whether the retailers were satisfied by the use of this technique.



More than 80% of the sample size have agreed that they are satisfied by the use this technique.

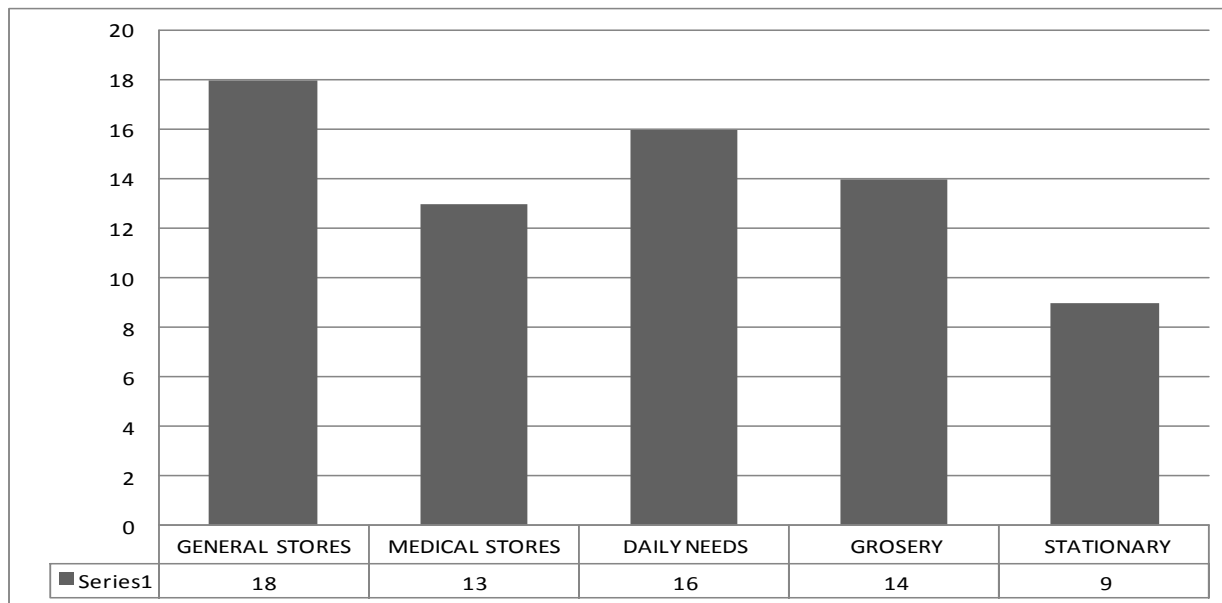
This simply states that among the targeted subjects most of them were satisfied by the use and effect that can be generated by the proper and effective use of this technique.

This clearly states that VIRAL MARKETING can be used as one of the most crucial weapon regarding the battle in the Product World.

They have come to a result which motivates them to take VIRAL MARKETING as a key tool in their marketing strategy and also in the promotion campaign. They have seen this as the new opportunity in the emerging and the continuous changing market. They have also agreed regarding the fact they have to make themselves aware and familiar with continuous and frequent changing environment around them. They were eager to imply this new emerging technique in their various plans.

Among the various techniques used by the retailers they have agreed to use this new technique as one of the key tool and effective streams that can be used as a key to get more benefits and market share in their particular area.

5. Areas where this technique can be used



As per the complete analysis of the data provided we could suggest that this new terminology which can also be treated as the new and emerging technique in the marketing environment suggestions regarding the proper use of this technique has been provided by us to them.

It has clearly suggested that this new technique can be and should be used by the retailers which will be beneficial up to an extreme extent.

CONCLUSION

- Among the targeted subjects most of them were satisfied by the use of this technique.
- VIRAL MARKETING can be used as one of the most crucial weapon regarding the battle in the Retailers World.
- This can be and should be used in all the sectors as this is the most economic and effective tool.
- The services and the benefits of this technique can be offered to all the sectors.

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