

Luxury Experience Company

Word of Mouth Marketing - Rally Your Organization!

By Edward F. Nesta

Word of Mouth Marketing - You do not need Paul Revere, just rally your organization to spread your message.

So, you have heard the term 'Word of Mouth Marketing' used in different ways in conversations, or maybe you have seen it on the cover of different magazines, or tossed out, like someone who is name dropping at a party, but you still have a few questions bouncing around in your head.

Like in grade school, you first start off with the definition, this is from Wikipedia, the free Internet encyclopedia - Word of Mouth Marketing is a term used in the marketing and advertising industry to describe activities that companies undertake to generate personal recommendations as well as referrals for brand names, products and services.

Word of Mouth Marketing (you may see it represented as WOM or WOMM) is an activity that has a very high level of credibility via the "personal recommendation" component. It is a common occurrence that people will ask someone else their opinion on a movie, a hotel, a destination, a restaurant, or a brand or product. You may feel more comfortable to ask for an opinion from a source you know versus being told about a product by someone you do not know, or worse by someone you know, but whose opinion means very little, which makes their positive comment a negative in your mind. We are inundated by the formal forms of marketing from Television ads, Internet pop ups, print ads, billboards, and on-and-on, but with this set of advertisements you know that there is an ulterior motive aimed directly at you. If you approach a colleague, or a friend, you are looking for his or her honest opinion, there is no perceived ulterior motive, and you believe someone you know.

With this said, understand that marketers are using techniques to promote and manage word-of-mouth communications. If a promotion is a success it can create a positive buzz that may be carried a long way from person-to-person via the spoken message, or the newest medium of communications - email, blogs, podcasting, and text messaging. If a promotion is a bust, it may carry a negative buzz which may reach as far or farther than a promotion with a positive buzz. Therefore, word-of-mouth and its impact should not be taken lightly, as this can be a very powerful activity for a brand or a product. The Internet and email are a forum for Word of Mouth Marketing also known as Viral Marketing, where communication is transmitted like a virus spread from human-to-human, or like a computer virus is transmitted, and with the Internet, a word-of-mouth campaign with a buzz can take on a personality all its own as the message spreads. People like to know about something that others may not know about, or they want to be in the 'know', so they will spread the message to all of their friends via email, or text messaging; the ability to reach a large volume of people with the click of the mouse, or by hitting the send button is amazing. With so many slogans and campaigns 'hitting' us every day, people look to others to help them decipher and hear something straight, not packaged and polished; human-to-human communication is still the most valued.

Feeding off the value of human-to-human communication, every single member of your organization becomes a deliverer of your message, and they can advance your brand, products, and the mission of the organization. Every member across the organization is a valued contributor, it is not just your marketing and sales group, or the customer service

group that is responsible, though they may lead the way, the organization is as strong as all of its pieces [personnel].

The consistency of your message, as well as open communications throughout the organization becomes a critical element. An informed employee is a valuable asset, and he or she becomes a breeding ground of information which will be openly passed during conversations. Sharing new marketing campaigns both offline and online throughout the organization is important, but especially the online campaigns, which due to the potential of a positive buzz viral communication effect, you do not want to place personnel who work at your company in a position where they feel they are not informed.

Word of Mouth Marketing is an activity that is hard to control; this is why managing the message throughout your organization is one area of WOM that you have some level of control. Therefore, why let something as straight forward and direct as communicating with your organization become a roadblock to positive WOM.

Please look for the November 2006 Publisher's Notes where I will discuss Word of Mouth Marketing concepts such as: the power of a referral, handling negative WOM, some Pros and Cons, the art of patience when conducting a WOM campaign, and a look at the future of WOM.

I thank you for your continued support of Luxury Experience Magazine, and as always, your comments are welcome, so please send comments to: Publisher@LuxuryExperience.com.

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