

VIRAL MARKETING IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: CRAFTING MESSAGES THAT CREATE AWARENESS AND CALL AN AUDIENCE TO ACTION

HANNAH DIANE PARKER, Fordham University

KATHY WACHTER, University of Mississippi

HUGH SLOAN, University of Mississippi

VAHID GHOMI, University of Mississippi

The nonprofit organization (NPO) sector has seen growth and with growth an increased need for nonprofits to compete with other NPOs when looking for clients, volunteers, and donors. Nonprofits often lack resources (knowhow and execution) for a marketing campaign. The emergence of controlled viral marketing offers a number of possibilities for NPOs looking to spread awareness and increase involvement. The purpose of this research is to explore common themes among previous viral marketing campaigns and identify factors likely to lead to viral spread. The research uses Berger and Mills NPO frameworks to qualitatively and quantitatively assess NPO marketing sector efforts. Results indicate that successful NPO viral campaigns should create an emotional connection, use credible sources, have social relevance to the viewer, and make it easy to distribute/share viral content with others. This research gives NPOs guidelines in developing compelling online content with the potential to go viral, thereby increasing their visibility and call to action.

INTRODUCTION

This research concerns nonprofit organizations potential to use social media content to generate a call to action. The section that follows addresses the literature on nonprofit marketing, issues they face with marketing, implementation and adaption of traditional marketing to the nonprofit sector, to present the idea of using viral marketing to generate a call to action using Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks applied to a chosen nonprofit organization.

Marketing in the Non-Profit Sector

This article addresses new marketing opportunities using ‘viral marketing’ for nonprofit organizations (NPOs) to move their constituents toward productive action and interchange. The phrase “viral marketing” was first introduced in 1996 by Draper, Fisher, and Jurveston to describe how Hotmail used advertising on the bottom of users’ outgoing emails to promote their free email service (Mills, 2012). The term itself refers to content

that spreads through social media, that when shared, spreads like a virus. Our working definition of viral marketing is as defined by Mills (2012, p. 163): “the strategic release or seeding of branded content into the socially networked online consumer ecosystem, followed by the potentially multiplicative spread of the content through the ecosystem as hosts (consumers) receive the content and are motivated to share the branded content with other consumers.”

Nonprofits contribution in goods and services within communities and across the country are becoming more important given cuts to service agencies once supported by the government. Budget issues and lack of resources creates intense competition for donor contributions. Intense competition for the limited donations and grants available necessitate an emphasis on marketing. Thus NPOs have had to rethink donor and donation strategies and how to market to these new realities.

Market Issues in the Non-Profit Sector

The goal of traditional marketing efforts has always been to improve a firm’s bottom line. Since NPOs are not necessarily seeking profit, implementing a marketing strategy was seen as

ill-equipped for the nonprofit sector. A reason for this is nonprofits different target markets: clients/customers, volunteers, and donors (Pope, Isely, & Asamo-Tutu, 2009). First, they must understand the different ways their target markets respond to the marketing mix. Second, they must communicate the nonmonetary benefits that consumers receive from donating or volunteering. Ultimately NPOs must craft messages that appeal to clients, volunteers, and donors simultaneously.

Conducting nonprofit market research can be difficult. Obtaining data about consumers, their behaviors, and preferences is difficult compared to research by for profit sectors. Tailoring NPO research to specific needs is challenging. Respondents may be inclined to answer in a self-serving or socially desirable way. Such responses might dilute the accuracy of results. For example, there is only one method for the American Red Cross to obtain blood from donors. However NPOs can adapt other aspects of the service, such as the physical location in which the Red Cross administers blood drives.

The intangible benefits of donating or volunteering for a nonprofit are hard to demonstrate and evaluate. Transactions made in the nonprofit sector are more complex and difficult to assess compared to transactions that occur in the commercial sector. NPOs offer consumers the chance to spend their money, with little benefit for the donor other than a tax deduction. The NPO benefit goes to a third party recipient, not the donor or volunteer. NPOs looking to drive brand awareness and donations must develop a captivating marketing strategy that will call their audience to action. One way NPOs can do this is by incorporating social media and the internet into their marketing strategies.

Market Implementation in the Non-Profit Sector

Social media and the internet present NPOs vast opportunities to extend reach and drive donations. NPOs surveyed by the Case Foundation reported that their most important communication tools were their websites and email (Sharma, 2014). Ninety-seven percent of respondents using the social media site

Facebook didn't see this as crucial in getting donations. Fifty percent had no one specifically responsible with social media efforts. Their major reason was lack of manpower and the knowledge to extend their marketing via social media. Furthermore 74% of respondents claimed to use social media primarily for information or to publicize events. They acknowledged that their Facebook and Twitter accounts do not focus on involving either donors or volunteers in the conversation (Sharma, 2014).

According to Constant Contact (2012) 64% of NPOs indicate they struggle connecting supporters with their fund initiatives. Managerially, 59% want to be able to engage supporters but lack marketing capability to do this for funding purposes. A little over one-third of these trying to develop effective marketing strategies have difficulties implementing their plans. Furthermore, 22% want to make their marketing dollars go further, yet lack the skillset to measure impact from these efforts.

NPOs are using the internet to raise funds, increase awareness, and improve relationships. A lack of expertise and financial resources hinder NPOs capitalization of Web content. Running a viral marketing campaign requires NPOs recognize the uncertainty of the strategy, with their ability to maximize chances of success (Liu-Thompkins, 2012). To aid NPOs viral marketing efforts, research is needed to examine optimal decisions one can make when designing a viral marketing (VM) campaign.

A report by Pope et al. (2009) with NPO employees identified money, time, and resources as major limitations in marketing efforts. A majority acknowledged marketing was important to their organization, but often confused about how to market and tailor their efforts given multi-targets (volunteers, donors, clients). To them, marketing was fundraising primarily focused on friends, board members, or using a purchased list from PR firms (Pope et al., 2009).

Pope et al, (2009) also found NPOs rarely use websites to their potential. NPO websites lacked specific links and had no link or information for online donations. NPOs lack

of volunteers was the most frequent reason as to why they lacked this capability. Research suggestions to NPOs were: 1) to make their website marketing efforts easy to use, 2) easy to implement, and 3) easy to measure. With NPOs variety of constituents (volunteers, donors, clients), crafting a marketing strategy for each of these is a challenging task. It is important that NPOs (particularly local ones) take advantage of the many resources available online. There is no major compelling reason that NPOs should not have an online presence in some form. NPOs struggle with “a general lack of understanding of the true functions of marketing, difficulties in branding, and (their) inability to reach out to all of their target markets”, makes viral marketing a useful strategy (Pope et al., 2009, p. 198).

Viral Marketing (VM)

Mills (2012) says viral marketing (VM) can be used to build a connection between organizations and consumers (clients, donors, and volunteers). The core of viral marketing is transmitting messages through the internet via peers (Daniasa, Tomita, Stuparu, & Stanciul, 2010). Social media applications (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) are vehicles that offer a variety of ways to spread and create buzz that is shared with others. Social media platforms can help nonprofits visually present information that would otherwise seem an intangible service at little or no expense to the organization via videos or online clips (Hausmann, 2012). These techniques can visually and emotionally engage consumers such that they feel compelled or called to action to share/spread the information to, on, with their social networks. Furthermore a call to action reaction can influence their decision to donate, volunteer, or support the cause.

The advantage of VM compared to traditional marketing strategies is a benefit and a risk to NPOs. The risk is lack of control when their information is shared or spread to others. VM can lower the costs of promoting the NPO brand and increase NPO speed of adoption. Brands most susceptible to viral marketing are unique and highly visible (Daniasa et al., 2010). For VM to work, the marketing message needs to be uniquely powerful.

Yet, not all VM campaigns gain traction. What differentiates campaigns that go viral from those that do not? What makes a product, idea, or behavior diffuse through an entire population? Since viral content is so dynamic and there is no “one right way” to design a viral message, this research looks at two perspectives present in current literature. Jonah Berger’s (2012) approach looks at what makes online content go viral. He identifies six key “STEPPS” that make content go viral: social currency, triggers, emotion, public, practical value, and stories. Adam Mills (2012) proposes an alternative, yet complementary framework. Mills identifies four key drivers of viral marketing success: spreadability, propagativity, integration, and nexus (SPIN). This research will apply their two frameworks to assess viral marketing strategy for NPO call to action.

Berger’s Framework

Every hour, there are over 100 million conversations and over 16,000 words shared about brands. Word of mouth is responsible for between 20 to 50 percent of all purchasing decisions (Berger, 2012). Moreover, word of mouth is much more persuasive and credible than regular advertisements. A friend’s candid, objective recommendation of a brand is much more believable than an advertisement coming directly from the company itself. Thus, positive word of mouth proves to be a mode of transmission that comes at little cost to the company. The challenge is getting people to talk. Once they are talking, though, the advertising and the targeting are being done by loyal brand enthusiasts. Obviously, the key question for NPOs is “how do we get people to talk?” Through his decade-long research on the subject, Jonah Berger has identified six principles that are often at work in successful “contagious” online content (Berger, 2012). Berger looked at hundreds of viral messages, products, and ideas. From YouTube videos, to political messages, and even popular baby names, Berger formulated his six key STEPPS for sharing content: Social currency, Triggers, Emotion, Public, and Practical value, and Stories. We outline a brief analysis of these constructs next.

Social Currency: People want to seem sharp and up-to-date. NPOs should craft content that reinforces this impression. At least 40 percent of what people talk about and share with others is based on their own personal experiences (Berger, 2012). Word of mouth, in effect, is an excellent tool (social currency) to make a good impression among peers. NPOs must mint their own social currency by giving consumers a way to look good while simultaneously making their idea seem so extraordinary or novel that people who share it are perceived as extraordinary or novel as well.

Triggers: While social currency starts the conversation, triggers keep people talking about a brand. Each day, the average American has sixteen or more conversations where they mention a brand, organization, or product (Berger, 2012). Key to sharing their brand word-of-mouth is to know what triggers compel sharing. Triggers are environmental cues or reminders that relate to a particular concept or idea (Berger, 2012). Mars candy bars (1997) exemplifies the use of triggers when they saw a huge uptick in sales with no change in their marketing effort. This occurred due to a trigger: the planet Mars and NASA's space mission to collect soil samples on Mars. The news outlets featured the story with Mars candy bars reaping the benefit/reward. For NPOs crafting VM content, their messages need to integrate ideas from popular culture.

Emotion: Contagious messages typically evoke an emotion. When a person feels passionately about an idea, they are much more likely to share it with others. Positive and negative emotions can effect what people discuss and share. Berger (2012) calls these emotional feelings, "a state of activation and readiness for action" (p. 108).

Henke (2013) reinforces this idea saying the intensity of the viewer's experience is more important than the particular emotion the message evokes. Engagement is conceptualized as "flow", or the state where people are so involved in the message that nothing else matters. Individuals experiencing flow lose self-consciousness and the concept of time (Cameron, 1991). Henke (2013) found participants who experienced "flow" were more likely to pass along a message and

express brand interest. The more intense experience of positive feelings generated positive comments about and toward the brand. *Public:* "Social proof" is a term coined by psychologists to explain how people resolve uncertainty (Berger, 2012). Individuals naturally look to others when they are uncertain of what to do. They assume that if other people are following a certain brand, it must be a good idea. By this logic, designing products or services that advertise themselves is a powerful strategy. NPOs with scarce resources to expend on marketing campaigns, can capitalize on this strategy by creating content that users want to follow and learn about. Conversely, this strategy can have unintended consequences. The "Just Say No" campaign was designed to teach kids how to handle peer pressure and avoid drug use using public service announcements (Berger, 2012). Kids saw the ads and saw their peers were using marijuana. Seeing their peers using the drug encouraged them to use as well. In this case, making the private public actually had the opposite effect than what the campaign intended. Thus, preventing a behavior actually requires making others' behaviors less observable (Berger, 2012).

Practical Value: People want content that is useful. Accordingly, marketers must highlight the value offered in their content and package it in such a way that makes it easy to pass along. Social currency has the individual sharing information, whereas practical value concerns the receiver. Sharing online content is an easy way to help others and show we care about them. Whether from a sense of altruism or not, if a brand gives consumers messages with practical value they will often pass that message along.

Stories: Some stories have been shared and passed along for thousands of years. From the story of the Trojan Horse (beware our enemies even with gifts) to the Three Little Pigs (hard work and diligence pay off); these stories offer an entertaining way to deliver an underlying message or moral. Integrating messages and morals within the context of their story, delivered in an easy to remember format, makes them easy to remember and share. Stories are narratives and the information is naturally packaged inside (Berger, 2012).

Marketers, NPOs in particular must build their own Trojan horses. They must create a story that carries content that people will want to tell and share (Berger, 2012). While it is possible to craft a compelling story that gets people talking, it is important to make sure that the story gets consumers talking about what actually matters: the brand. Ensuring the NPOs story is entertaining or touching a chord with the reader such that they feel compelled to share with others.

Mills Framework

Viral content must have four qualities to facilitate its spread: spreadability, propagativity, integration, and nexus. While Berger's focus is on message content, Mills emphasizes the importance of facilitating message dispersion.

Spreadability: Messages that spread across social networks rest on the message being, 1) likeable and 2) shareable. If a message appeals to a viewer (likeability) and s/he feels that his/her peers will feel the same (shareability), it is seen to be spreadable (Mills, 2012).

Propagativity: To propagate a message, it must be easy for the user to share with others. To share content marketers must ensure their message is easy to spread/propagate, have an adequate network to support, deliver rich content, and make it timely and urgent.

Integration: While it is important that content be shared across a wide range of social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), it is also beneficial to consider content that will likely be shared across traditional media outlets as well (newspapers, magazines, etc.). Messages that are not only "share worthy" but also "news worthy" have the potential to reach an even larger audience.

Nexus: Reinforcing a campaign by releasing sequential units of viral content will leave viewers eager for more, and any organization can capitalize on that by launching additional viral content later on. If it can find a way to do so consistently, it has the potential to raise brand awareness. The distribution of this viral content is both self-propelled and widely received.

In a marketing campaign that has gone viral, the information spreads at an exponential rate. It is not bound by geographic locations and can spread to an international audience in minutes. These viral messages influence public opinion about products and brands (Botha & Reynecke, 2013). Despite its potential for success, most campaigns intended to go viral do not. Little empirical research has been conducted to identify reasons that some message content spreads while other content does not. How might NPOs develop shareable leverage using viral marketing?

Berger (2012) and Mills concepts of virality are each separately powerful. When applied together, NPOs could gain even more traction with their online content. While Berger's framework concerns message content, Mills' highlights tools for dispersion. NPOs that successfully integrate the two frameworks could potentially craft messages that are both conceptually stirring and easy to spread. Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks will support our two research objectives based on creating a successful NPO viral market campaign and getting viewers 'call to action' by sharing with others. Having people sharing your story can drive others to action. NPOs have an incredible opportunity to publish great online content that people will actually want to share (Scott, 2008). "If you can boil your message down to just its syrupy goodness, you can achieve life – the irresistible force of millions of viewers selling your product for you" (Scott, 2008, p. 12).

Viral Marketing Campaigns

Waters and Jones (2011) content analyzed YouTube's 100 most viewed nonprofit videos. They acknowledge YouTube is the fourth most viewed website in the USA. Their analysis of NPOs use of YouTube videos found they were primarily used to inform and educate. Videos have an advantage over images for creating strong mental impressions of a firm (NPO) in the consumers mind and thus can be used to persuade viewers thinking. Videos are verbal, vocal and visual creating multiple audience experiences. They concluded these three elements have the largest impact on viewer's ability to remember message content. Sharing these facilitates conversations and enhances

awareness with the ability to exponentially increase the viral marketing phenomenon (Waters and Jones, 2011). Their conclusions found NPOs didn't engage, nor had a call to action (contact, where to go) for information. Of the 100 videos viewed, four explicitly asked viewers to connect with the NPO and their social media accounts. Another 37% asked viewers to share, 15% asked for feedback, 11% for volunteer information, and 9% for donations. An NPO social media study by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) categorized social content. Information, community, and action were common themes to spread information, organizations could use to create communities, and call them to action through donations or volunteering.

Despite Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks, posting information content only generates poor results. NPOs rely heavily on informational content when creating video content. Only eight of 100 organizations in the study were primarily 'community builders' with three categorized as 'promoters and mobilizers', and only 15.6% of messages sent actually had a call to action (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2010, p. 348). Most of the NPOs used Twitter for information and community engagement purposes only.

Clearly NPOs are not using social media to their maximum potential. NPO sites can be used to create interactive content that gets consumers talking about a brand and inspire them to action. Information is the core activity used to attract followers. Community focused messages engage followers and action focused messages mobilize followers to action. NPOs can and should treat viral marketing as a strategic process with immense potential (Liu-Thompkins, 2012). A significant knowledge gap remains regarding how NPOs can craft marketing campaigns with the potential to go viral.

This research investigates how these frameworks can be used to 1) leverage these frameworks for NPO viral marketing, and 2) generate an NPO 'consumer call to action'. How might NPOs capitalize on viral marketing strategies to influence viewers, donors, and others in their organization? How might they engage and create the buzz a viral campaign

needs to get views, likes, and sharing of NPO marketing content?

The research explores previously executed NPO viral marketing campaigns using Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks for NPO viral marketing awareness and call to action to increase donations, clients, and volunteer bases. Results from the analysis were used to design and distribute a survey to assess respondents overall feelings toward one NPOs attempt at a viral marketing campaign and their reactions for a call to action. The next section outlines the process used to assess how NPOs can leverage viral marketing to get the call to action from consumers.

Study Analysis

This section involves the content analysis of an NPO video. From this content analysis comparison, a quantitative survey measure was created. The questionnaire used Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks, asked respondents their general attitudes toward social causes, what influences their likelihood of visiting, donating, or volunteering, to charitable causes, and how NPOs might leverage their behavioral change as a call to action for them. The survey asked their overall attitudes toward NPO causes (pre-test, baseline benchmark) using the NPO text mission statement. They were then asked to view an NPO video. After viewing the video, they were asked to assess their overall feelings and reactions to the viewed video. To assess behavioral change post video, they were asked the same pre-test questions with an additional question on their likelihood of sharing the NPO video with others that mirror the call to action. This last question supports Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) framework for message content on the propagation and spreadability of the video (viral potential).

Qualitative Evaluation: Content Analysis

The qualitative content analyzed four NPO videos shared through corporate YouTube postings by the respective NPO's. Each hoped to gain traction and go viral. Two NPO videos went viral with over 1 million views. The first video: Invisible Children KONY (2012) campaign, concerned people caring about and

responding to child slavery issues. The second, *Water is Life* (2012) has as its mission to provide clean water, sanitation, and hygiene programs to impoverished people. The one minute video features Haitians reading actual tweets with the hashtag “#first world problems”. One young man, sitting on a dirt mound, reads aloud: “I hate when my leather seats aren’t heated”; another shows a young female, surrounded by children, washing clothes in a river, stating: “When I leave my clothes in the washer so long they start to smell” (*Water is Life*, 2012). The marketing campaign attempts to shed light on the irony and ignorance of #firstworldproblems.

The other two NPO videos, the Boys and Girls Club of America (2014) and United Way (2014) were not successful with less than 15,000 views each. The Boys and Girls Club of America launched a Public Service Announcement with the message that “every afternoon is a chance to change America’s future” (Boys and Girls Club, 2014). The video shows children leaving school at 3 PM and explains that one-third of these children have nowhere to go afterward. It shows children wandering around in alleys and on train tracks. It then shows children at a local Boys and Girls Club. At the end of the video, the narrator explains, “great futures start here” (Boys and Girls Club, 2014). In 2014 United Way posted on their YouTube channel titled “What is United Way?” (United Way, 2014). The video is informative in nature, explaining its origins, successes, and announces itself as the “World’s Largest Nonprofit Organization”. The video expresses the organization’s mission and strategic initiatives. It ends thanking its volunteers and asking viewers to join the movement. The video is solely text and involves no live action. These four video NPO campaigns were evaluated and judged subjectively on their quality, content, and overall messages using Berger and Mills frameworks.

During multiple viewings of the videos selected by the primary research, evaluations were done using guidelines from Berger’s (2012) effects of content (social currency, triggers, emotion, public, practical value, and stories), and Mills (2012) ease of diffusion (spreadability, propagativity, integration, and nexus). For this

study, each framework was evaluated component by component and subjectively given an evaluation of high, medium, or low by the primary researcher (Parker). The goal: to assess the likely overall effectiveness of each video. The viewings of the videos, already ranked by viewed frequency on the Internet, would also reflect an assessment of their performance (high, medium, low) on the Berger (2012), as well as the Mills (2012) frameworks. These rankings were compared to each videos number of views to gauge the accuracy of the two frameworks to predict viral content.

Applying Berger and Mills Frameworks to the Videos

According to Berger’s Six STEPPS framework, KONY 2012 and First World Problems Anthem both exhibit the elements necessary to make content go viral. This influence comes from the number of views each video received. United Way and the Boys and Girls Club, conversely performed much worse on Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) framework dimensions and one could argue that low viewership is a direct result. [The detailed analysis used for the four videos are available from the authors upon request.]

An important note in Table 1 below, none of the videos studied contained much practical value. This might be due to NPOs VM content offering little practical value to the viewer/donor. Their information seeks to inspire individuals to help others, rather than to help themselves. If a nonprofit could develop techniques toward helping others versus themselves, it could further increase its chance to reach millions.

Results of applying Mills’ SPIN Framework, agrees with Berger’s six STEPPS. KONY (2012) again scored the best and United Way (2014) scored the lowest. It should be noted that Mills’ framework is oriented to message transmission while Berger’s STEPPS framework oriented to message content. Integrating the two frameworks together could be very helpful for nonprofit organizations looking to create viral campaigns. The following section outlines the quantitative process, measures, and procedures followed for

TABLE 1:
Four NPO videos content analysis using Berger and Mills Frameworks.

Berger (STEPPS) & Mills (SPIN) Frameworks	Kony 2012 (Invisible Children)	1st World Problem Anthem (Water is Life)	What is United Way?	Great Future Campaign Boys & Girls Club)
Social Currency	High	High	Low	Medium
Triggers	High	High	Low	Low
Emotion	High	High	Low	Medium
Public	High	Low	Low	Low
Practical Value	Low	Low	Low	Low
Stories	High	High	Low	Medium
Rank/Views	1/100 Million	2/6 Million	4/12,000	3/13,000
Spreadability	High	High	Low	Medium
Propagivity	High	High	High	High
Integration	High	Medium	Low	Low
Nexus	High	High	Low	Low
Rank/Views	1/100 Million	2/6 Million	4/12,000	3/13,000

an NPO (Wish of a Lifetime) marketing campaign hoping to go viral.

Quantitative Constructs and Survey Development

As a check for the initial NPO viral content evaluation a quantitative survey was designed to incorporate results from the qualitative content analysis. Items from Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks were incorporated to assess consumer’s attitudes regarding NPO viral marketing campaigns, as well as the NPOs viral marketing campaigns ability to change attitudes toward NPO viral marketing.

A quantitative analysis of overall attitudes toward the NPO, Wish of Lifetime (2015) online marketing campaign effectiveness was used (www.vimeo.com/74885374). The survey items were designed to assess, first, respondents bias through a social desirability responding measure; second, attitudes toward NPO’s in general; third, feelings and reactive responses to the NPO viral marketing campaign; and fourth judgements toward the NPO video campaign.

Wish of a Lifetime (2015, www.vimeo.com/74885374)

A Denver, Colorado NPO, Wish of a Lifetime (WOAL), was chosen for quantitative study. WOAL’s mission is to: “Foster respect and appreciation for senior citizens by granting life enriching wishes.” WOAL currently lacks significant brand awareness, so would benefit from the exposure that viral marketing offers (Wish of a Lifetime, 2015). The organization grants wishes for individuals 65 and older. Four categories of wishes considered are recognizing service, fulfilling lifelong dreams, reconnecting loved ones, and renewing and celebrating passions. WOAL has granted over 1,000 wishes, ranging from skydiving to visiting long lost relatives.

WOAL has released several videos on social media, but none have gained much traction or reached the standard of over 1M views for viral status. In order to benefit WOAL and other small NPOs like it, a survey was created, pre-tested, and then used to measure respondents overall attitudes before and after a WOAL video. The chosen video, titled “Start Seeing Seniors” has garnered 23,900 views. Understanding how consumers perceive the

NPOs existing efforts toward viral may suggest how to craft message content to enhance future viral marketing campaigns. Themes and elements are identified that may intensify or reduce virality.

Quantitative Survey Measures

The metrics for this research come from existing scales, adapted to this research objective. The following section discusses the metrics used in our research.

Social Desirability Response Bias (SDR) (Robinson, Shave & Wrightsman, 2013, p. 43): Respondents sometimes seek to favorably impress researchers. They respond with their perception of the socially desired answer on an item. For example subjects tendency to give lower scores on metrics of undesirable behaviors (e.g. selfishness) and higher scores to desirable behaviors (e.g. altruism). Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) research emphasizes a need for consumer attitudes about message content being likeable enough to be shared. The Responding Desirably on Attitudes and Opinions scale (16 items, dichotomous 0=agree, 1=disagree) was used as a check for social desirability bias. The SDR scale assesses dejection, social estrangement, social opportunism, trust, social contentment, anomie, expediency, and self-determination. Higher scores on these items indicate that the respondent is trying to respond more desirably. Respondents' SDR scores will be correlated with behavioral intention (BI) scores to identify biases likely resulting from an SDR tendency.

Attitudes Toward Donations to Charitable Organizations (Bearden, Netemeyer & Haws, 2011, p. 165): What might influence consumers' attitudes toward donating to charitable organizations? NPOs need both volunteers to serve at no cost and donations to cover program and service delivery. To assess donor behavior, the survey used Likert scale, strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA) to address attitudes toward: 1) helping others (4 items, 1=SD to 6=SA); 2) charitable organizations (5 items, 1=SD to 6=SA); visiting website (6 items, 1 to 7 bipolar adjectives e.g. unlikely--likely); volunteering (6 items, 1 to 7 bipolar adjectives); and donating (6 items, 1 to 7 bipolar adjectives); for visiting

website, volunteering, and donating pre-video. The intent is to benchmark the baseline measure and the effect that 'preconceived attitudes' toward NPOs may have on responses.

Behavioral Intention (BI). Pre-test Benchmark: How might the intention to volunteer (time) and/or donate (money) to NPOs be influenced? Prior to respondents viewing the NPO WOAL video, they were asked about their intentions based on WOAL's text mission description. Bruner et al, (2005, p. 106) behavioral intention (BI) scale was adapted to identify a baseline for visiting, volunteering, and donating to WOAL given the written text mission statement only. After gathering these benchmark (pre-test) responses, respondents were then instructed to watch the WOAL video embedded in the survey by clicking on the link. The same Bruner et al., (2005) scale items were used for the post-test, with the additional question concerning their attitudes toward sharing the video with others (1 to 7 bipolar adjectives, e.g. unlikely--likely). This question supports Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks for the ability of stories to generate sharing and spreadability. BI scores (pre and post) were averaged to assess their behavioral change after watching the video compared to their benchmark scores.

WOAL Video View: (www.vimeo.com/74885374): Respondents then viewed the WOAL video (approximately 3.3 minutes duration). The black and white video shows senior citizens holding paper signs with words written on them. The first sign asks, "What do you see when you look at me?" Other seniors then appear, holding papers with written adjectives: old, weak, dependent, and incapable. Then a paper sign stating, "Maybe you don't notice me". "But did you know?" another paper asks. With a change in music (up-tempo), seniors tell how they: helped win a War, mentored at risk children, volunteered to save the country. Despite World Wars and the great depression, they built what future generations have today. The video ends with the statement: "Making dreams come true... One wish at a time". WOAL then displays their website and the video fades to black.

After watching the video the survey asked respondents their feelings about what they had

viewed. We used the Emotion Quotient and Reaction Profile scale from Bearden et al., (1999).

Emotion Quotient Scale (EQ) and Reaction Profile Scale (RP) (Bearden et al., 1999, p. 282): Respondents were surveyed to measure the impact of the WOAL video. Important dimensions of ad (video) recall, especially for NPO videos intended to go viral, is the emotional appeal and reaction sharing. The Emotional Quotient (EQ) scale and Reaction Profile (RP) scales were adapted to assess: a) both overall emotions about the video (attractiveness, meaningfulness, and vitality) and b) specific reactions related to video content (e.g. interest, liking, coldness) vitality. The 25 item EQ scale (with favorably worded, e.g. beautiful and unfavorably worded, e.g. ugly) items can give insights on how well the WOAL video complemented Berger (2012) and Mills (2012): social currency, emotion, and spreadability, comparing the 12 items for attractiveness, 9 items for meaningfulness, and 4 items for vitality. Items are eight point scales and the appropriate items for each dimension are summed to form scores. The RP used a 12 item Likert scale rating (1=SD to 7=SA) assessed viewers reactions to the WOAL video (e.g. liking, appeal).

Viewer judgement of (video) ads (Bearden et al., 1999, p. 289): The Persuasive Disclosure Inventory (PDI) scale measures viewers' judgements of the video. The items are designed to model the persuasive discourse perspective (PDP). The PDP is based on the Aristotelian theory of rhetoric, encompassing Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. Ethos items focus on the source 'character' in WOAL. Pathos items try to capture viewers' emotions of the WOAL experience and suffering. Logos items relate to the appeal of the persuasive logical content in the WOAL video. The three constructs encapsulate Berger's social currency, emotion, and practical value framework. There are 17 bipolar adjective sets using an 8 point scale consisting of Ethos (5 items, e.g. Unbelievable-Believable); Logos (5 items, e.g. Not informative-Informative), and Pathos (7 items, e.g. Is not moving-Is moving). Summed scores represent each construct.

Post Video Behavioral Intention (Bruner et al., 2005, p. 106) : Did the WOAL NPO video move viewers to action? This section serves as a post hoc analysis of attitude change after viewing the video. Respondent's responses after video viewing address the influence upon behavioral intention post-video compared to behavioral intention pre-video (mission text). A semantic differential scale measured their expressed inclination to engage in specific behaviors after the video: visiting the webpage, volunteering, donating, and sharing the video. Sharing the video question was asked to assess the ability of the WOAL video to go viral. Important insights can be gleaned on the video's ability to change respondent's behavioral assessments. Any significant change in behavioral intention (pre and post video) can be detected by a paired t-test statistic. Changes in behavioral intention were calculated using paired t-tests analyses to determine attitude behavior changes. The survey questionnaire is available on request from the authors.

Sample and Methods

A pre-test was used to address/examine the validity of the study content, clarity, and wording. Fifty undergraduate students viewed and completed the survey. Analysis results made minor changes to clarify wording due to confusion, length, and order of questions. The pre-test sample from a southern university were believed to be a good population to study attitudes and intentions as they are very present on social media and entering a stage in their lives where they will come into resources to donate to and volunteer for NPOs.

For the formal study, 261 undergraduate students attending a southern university completed the survey. A recruitment email and the link to the Qualtrics survey were sent to students in undergraduate business courses. Respondents were offered ten points extra course credit for completing the survey. Participation was voluntary with 131 people (50.2% response) completing the survey. Of the 131, 14 were eliminated due to missing or incomplete information. The final sample of 117 was used to analyze the survey data. For those who completed the survey, average age was 22 with 40.7% male and 59.3% female.

Quantitative Survey Results: Wish of a Lifetime

The first analysis assessed respondent tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner. Table 2 below is the correlation matrix and descriptive statistics for all constructs with means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha, reported. For the SDR analysis correlations for all subsequent survey constructs were computed. Results suggest little or no impact on response bias. The first two items weakly, but significantly, correlate with the SDR metric and their attitudes toward: Helping others (Help_pv) ($r=.186$, $n=117$, $p<.05$) and Charitable Organizations (Charity_pv) ($r=.195$, $n=117$, $p<.05$). A number of respondents' SDR inclinations may have been triggered more strongly by two such opening items. One exception, is Logos (PDI) ($r=.265$, $n=117$, $p < 0.01$), a component of the Persuasive Disclosure Inventory, a scale measuring viewers' judgements of the video (Bearden et al., 1999). Our conclusion is SDR had little or no effect on these results.

Pre- and Post-video View Evaluation

The pre-video (mission text) and post-video (YouTube) constructs of web viewing, volunteering, and donating, are critical needs of NPOs. The Behavioral Intention (BI) metrics for the three pre-video are based on mission text questions and post-video (WOAL) are on the same constructs averaged for each construct. See Table 2 for means and standard deviations. First, we look at these three constructs averaged separately. Pre-video (mission text) overall mean score ($\bar{x}=4.69$) and post-video WOAL mean score ($\bar{x}=4.99$) do suggest a positive gain of 6.4% overall on visiting, volunteering, and donating. Table 3 reports the percentage change pre and post video for donating, volunteering, and visiting the website. This suggests initially that video content framed in Berger (2012) and Mill's (2012) constructs and using interactive content (video) can generate attitudinal shifts in NPOs results with viral marketing. To assess whether the 6.4% overall positive change was significant a t-test was computed on pre and post BI scores. They were weakly correlated and nominally insignificant ($r=.221$, $n=117$,

$p<.055$). Yet, due to the nature of this study at $p < .10$ would approach significance.

The pre-video and post video behaviors paired t-tests, while moderately but significantly correlated, had significantly differing means in visiting ($r=.510$, $n=120$, $p<.05$), volunteering ($r=.683$, $n=120$, $p<.10$), and donating ($r=.571$, $n=120$, $p<.05$). See Table 4. Multiple t-tests can be misleading if many are calculated, but with the three tests and weak findings, overall assessment outcomes (summed values versus summed values) would likely be weak as well. A stronger test for paired relationships, Eta-squared, is not encouraging, showing low though insignificant findings for the same pairs. But it is the raw differences in response range from about 7% to 6%, which encourages consideration of NPO viral campaigns in potential strategy. The results are only marginally encouraging, but perhaps useful to decision makers (Table 2), who can note the positive direction. The WOAL video had a deleterious effect. What effects might a more powerful, emotional video with a strong call to action achieve?

Post video: Emotion quotient (EQ), Reaction Profile (RP), and Persuasive Discourse Inventory (PDI) Evaluations

The Emotion Quotient post-viewing WOAL scores for attractiveness, meaning, and vitality correlate quite low across the board in pre and post video viewing, but fail to attain significance (Table 2). EQ as a cluster of attractive, meaningful, and vital, show moderately high and significant positive correlations among themselves, which the individual Cronbach's support. Therefore, EQ as an index seems a good metric. Comparing EQ as a summated score to Post Behavior Intention to share in a paired t-test, we find the difference ($\bar{x}=0.247$, $SD=1.39$, $n=120$) resulted in values: $t(119) = 1.949$, two-tailed $p<.054$, with a 95% C.I. about the mean difference between EQ and Post BI is $(-.00392, 0.49781)$. Though disappointing at $\alpha=.05$, in an exploratory context, a $\alpha=.10$ could be reasonably used in this context, especially with the WOAL video. A lower standard with the WOAL video (having no call to action) would be useful because the finding is then

TABLE 2:
Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics for Constructs

	Mean	SD	SDR	Help_pv	Charity_pv	Visit_pv	Volun_pv	Donate_pv	RP	Attract	Meaning	Vital	Ethos	Logos	Pathos	Bi_Share	Visit_pv	Volun_pv	Donate_pv	
SDR	0.779	0.124	1																	
Help_pv	4.947	0.774	.186* (0.045)	1																
Charity_pv	4.670	0.676	.195* (0.035)	.358** (0.001)	1															
Visit_pv	4.658	1.326	0.126 (0.175)	.455** (0.001)	.218* (0.018)	1														
Volun_pv	4.714	1.250	0.15 (0.107)	.410** (0.001)	.362** (0.001)	.572** (0.001)	1													
Donate_pv	4.702	1.472	0.112 (0.231)	.277** (0.002)	.258** (0.005)	.488** (0.001)	.577** (0.001)	1												
RP	5.024	0.848	0.079 (0.394)	.314** (0.001)	.351** (0.001)	.293** (0.001)	.413** (0.001)	.261** (0.004)	1											
Attract	5.619	1.063	-.034 (0.718)	-.105 (0.258)	-.068 (0.054)	-.068 (0.463)	0.016 (0.865)	0.071 (0.449)	0.072 (0.438)	1										
Meaning	6.571	1.269	0.085 (0.365)	-.074 (0.428)	-.082 (0.379)	0.022 (0.818)	0.114 (0.222)	0.075 (0.423)	0.056 (0.549)	.688** (0.001)	1									
Vital	5.786	1.237	0.023 (0.803)	0.001 (0.996)	-.067 (0.47)	0.02 (0.827)	0.095 (0.306)	0.105 (0.259)	0.064 (0.494)	.739** (0.001)	.807** (0.001)	1								
Ethos	6.497	1.311	0.151 (0.104)	.282** (0.002)	.246** (0.008)	.306** (0.001)	.347** (0.001)	.284** (0.002)	.477** (0.001)	-.005 (0.961)	0.164 (0.077)	0.127 (0.172)	1							
Logos	6.118	1.163	.265** (0.004)	.255** (0.005)	.202* (0.029)	.235* (0.011)	.335** (0.001)	.267** (0.004)	.422** (0.001)	0.018 (0.843)	.227* (0.014)	0.144 (0.122)	.679** (0.001)	1						
Pathos	6.119	1.154	0.072 (0.438)	.252** (0.006)	0.174 (0.061)	.336** (0.001)	.386** (0.001)	.278** (0.002)	.645** (0.001)	.227* (0.014)	.339** (0.001)	.278** (0.002)	.603** (0.001)	.598** (0.001)	1					
Bi_Share	4.814	1.550	0.021 (0.822)	.288** (0.002)	0.17 (0.067)	.522** (0.001)	.569** (0.001)	.418** (0.001)	.546** (0.001)	0.038 (0.688)	0.029 (0.756)	0.09 (0.336)	.430** (0.001)	.275** (0.003)	.488** (0.001)	1				
Visit_pv	4.942	1.512	0.057 (0.538)	.294** (0.001)	0.134 (0.149)	.510** (0.001)	.574** (0.001)	.364** (0.001)	.514** (0.001)	0.076 (0.415)	0.07 (0.454)	0.133 (0.152)	.379** (0.001)	.339** (0.001)	.515** (0.001)	.764** (0.001)	1			
Volun_pv	5.041	1.593	0.07 (0.452)	.350** (0.001)	.210* (0.023)	.380** (0.001)	.683** (0.001)	.439** (0.001)	.499** (0.001)	0.001 (0.99)	0.005 (0.957)	0.045 (0.628)	.438** (0.001)	.239** (0.009)	.446** (0.001)	.676** (0.001)	.770** (0.001)	1		
Donate_pv	4.980	1.487	0.095 (0.307)	.272** (0.003)	.208* (0.025)	.429** (0.001)	.481** (0.001)	.571** (0.001)	.375** (0.001)	0.073 (0.433)	0.014 (0.882)	0.103 (0.27)	.363** (0.001)	.252** (0.006)	.444** (0.001)	.595** (0.001)	.625** (0.001)	.705** (0.001)	1	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). A KR20 test (Dichotomous data). KR20 derived formulaically from Q1 and Score 1 data. N=117.

TABLE 3:
Behavioral Intentions Pre- and Post-NPO Video (WOAL)

7 point Likert Mean Differences:	Pre-Video Mean	s.d.	Post-Video Mean	s.d.	Change +
Visiting website	4.66	1.33	4.94	1.51	6.0%
Volunteering	4.71	1.25	5.04	1.59	7.0%
Donating	4.70	1.47	4.98	1.50	5.95%
Sharing	NA	NA	[4.81]	[1.51]	-----
BI_1 and BI_2 Overall	4.69	1.16	4.99	1.33	6.4%

TABLE 4:
Paired t-tests, Pre- and Post-NPO Video (WOAL)

		Paired Differences					t Stat	df	P 2-tail T ≤ t
		Diff in Means	Eta ² 's	P<	Correlations - Differences				
					Corr. r =	Sig. p =			
Pair 1	Average Probability of Visiting Webpage (Before & After)	.3519	.009	.142	.510	.000	-2.202	119	.03
Pair 2	Average Probability of Volunteering (Before & After)	.2810	.010	.126	.683	.000	-2.757	119	.01
Pair 3	Average Probability of Donating (Before & After)	.2467	.007	.197	.571	.000	-1.959	119	.05

significant. Clearly, more research is needed with different NPOs.

Scores in the EQ measure for attractiveness (\bar{x} =5.62), meaningfulness (\bar{x} =6.57), and vitality (\bar{x} =5.79) suggest WOAL’s video performed best on the meaning dimension and worst on the attractive dimension. These results are better for having been explored, most clearly in the positive direction as to outcomes, though often the desired impact was insufficient to show significant differences. These results can influence thinking in viral campaign creation.

The RP was moderately correlated and significant (p<0.001) for all constructs except EQ. Both pre- and post-video constructs (visit, volunteer, donate) were all significant (p<0.001). See Table 2.

Viewer judgements toward the NPO video results for Persuasive Discourse Inventory (PDI) elements ethos, logos, and pathos are all significant at the p < 0.01 level for visiting, volunteering, and donating post video viewing. BI post video is also positive and significant for all three (p < 0.01). Pre-video and PDI results were significant for all pre-test constructs for visiting, volunteering, and donating. See Table 2.

Discussion and Conclusions

Aided by the review of literature and the results of both qualitative and quantitative analyses, several insights are possible regarding how NPOs can craft original online and powerful content that possesses certain qualities making it more likely to go viral. First, NPOs need to create messages that not only go viral but also call viewers to action. Incorporating Berger (STEPPS) and Mills (SPIN) themes making them relevant to their own brand, smaller nonprofits have the opportunity to have their message heard by millions. One approach to accomplish this is to create a connection with the viewer about your NPO, use social currency (events relevant to viewers), get them to react and promote (propagate) to others, who then share or spread distribution of the content to their audiences.

Respondents' RP scores significantly correlated with behavioral intentions for the WOAL video. The content analysis of the successful and unsuccessful NPOs suggests the Boys and Girls Club and United Way both failed to create a reaction (RP) that resonated with viewers and hence, failed to go viral. Creating reactive stimuli instead of relying upon content to express the NPOs mission is crucial. One may conclude that content needs to get viewers to react. This reaction will have viewers feeling like they have no choice but to find and share the video, donate, or volunteer. From laughter to anxiety, strong emotions increase the likelihood of video sharing. For local NPOs, reactive stimulation can be achieved through using familiar concerns and themes. The issue may be in viewers' backyards, heightening the probability of reacting. For most, reactions are often closely related to many of their daily activities.

Another theme among viral videos in the nonprofit sector is whether or not it is relevant to the viewer and their network. Berger (2012) identifies this as social currency and practical value; Mills (2012) defines this as spreadability. Whatever the name, it is apparent that a message needs to be socially relevant in order to be shared. If an individual does not feel that a message would be of interest to their friends, there is little reason to share it.

Fundamentally, NPOs must create content that is relevant to society. Develop a message that comes across as important and necessary to anyone who views it that spurs them to some form of action. One way is through popular culture. For local nonprofits, using current events in the community can help increase social relevance. Again, being present and involved is necessary.

A message needs to be easy to share in order for it to go viral. Social media makes this easier. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and many more sites allow viewers to share your message with the click of a button. Beyond the scope of social media, nonprofits should consider how easy it would be to share their content with relevant news outlets asking themselves: Is my content socially relevant so that even newspapers and magazines would want to distribute it? Smaller, more locally focused nonprofits have a greater advantage when it comes to connecting with news outlets. Local news stations are often easily accessible (via phone call or email) and are always looking for stories relevant to their communities.

If an NPO viral marketing campaign changes consumers' attitudes about a brand does it follow up with a call to action? Even if an NPO's campaign succeeds in going viral, it has little practical value if it does not call consumers to action. Viral videos may increase awareness, but awareness without public reaction and measureable results will do little good for NPOs and their missions. The message needs to resonate affectively and cognitively before leading to behavioral action. For example, content that is simply informational may induce cognitive responses, but without any level of heightened sense of feeling leading to affective responses, viewers are unlikely to express much behavioral intention.

Nonprofits need to create a message that informs the audience of its mission, demonstrates that participation or donation will benefit a community or network at large, and expresses a dire need for action. Paramount to successfully calling consumers to action is developing measurable goals. Looking again to scale, a video campaign reaching over a million views is great goal, but this alone is not

enough. It must also appeal in such a way those viewers feel compelled to donate, volunteer, and visit.

Local nonprofits have access to a body of volunteers and potential donors. Local NPOs can and should work with local schools. These students often have time to volunteer. The time invested and experience gained during their volunteering could also turn them into future donors. Many high schools and colleges often require students to accumulate volunteer hours, so by helping your organization they are also fulfilling a need for themselves. The key is to have a compelling message that resonates with this audience and makes them want to volunteer with your NPO in particular.

Achieving such objectives requires stimulating, personally, and socially relevant video that makes a call to action crystal clear. In this process, you may provide a direct link to a donation page, a phone number, text message or social media contact across all platforms for volunteering. NPOs need to help facilitate the process of donating, and one way to do this is to leave no doubt or question about what individuals need to do, a specific call to action. Using these techniques should help move an online audience to offline action in the form of donating and/or volunteering. Viewers appreciate honesty and cannot help your organization if you do not ask for help and provide a clear way to make it happen.

To conclude, viral marketing is a relatively new phenomenon for marketers who are planning for, positioning, and supporting their NPOs. They very often possess many of the qualities necessary for their appealing content to go viral. Hopefully this research will assist NPO marketers of any size, using the idea of crafting messages that go viral. This can lead to desired actions that provide tangible outcomes to viewers and NPOs.

Limitations and Future Research

One major limitation is the bias that often comes with a convenience sample, thus our research reflects responses of university students, limiting the generalization to other populations. Millennials are users of social media and the internet, which NPOs admit is

their weakness. NPOs should focus efforts on using this talent. The Berger (2012) and Mills (2012) frameworks alone, with their approach to effective content, are worth further research and can add to the study of NPO viral video campaigns.

Future research could significantly add to the study of potential NPO viral video campaigns. A study with a larger demographic and sample size could more adequately and accurately encapsulate the average NPO's target audience. This could lead to stronger inferences regarding generalizations and assumptions that enable NPO content to go viral and call consumers to desired actions. This study only looked at feelings toward one NPO's campaign. Future studies should incorporate several different campaigns to allow for better comparisons.

Subsequent research should investigate such differences attributable to size and the influence this may have on the research results. There are potentially both similarities and differences in strategy and success between the local/domestic and global types of NPOs. NPOs can adapt and customize strategic elements from regional and global nonprofits, to suit their needs. Further research is needed.

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