

Measuring a Viral Campaign

There are two criteria we use to measure the success of a viral campaign.

The primary measure of success is whether a campaign achieves its primary goal: generating the target qualified leads or reach/ time increasing brand awareness.

A secondary measure involves measuring engagement: user behavior and interaction with the campaign.

Viral marketing is one strategy for achieving a specific goal, and only in relation to this goal can we evaluate the viral reach and effect of each campaign.

Viral campaigns can be used in pursuit of a variety of goals, though we've found that the vast majority of campaigns are related to one of the following three results:

- **Lead Generation:** Efforts designed to harvest a user's information, for use as potential sales prospects, research subjects, or for building a list of consumers interested in a brand or product. Gathering actionable data is the name of the game.
- **Brand Exposure:** Educating and exciting users about a brand, product, or offering. The experience is designed to reach as many relevant eyeballs as possible, and keep those eyeballs engaged for a significant amount of time.
- **Conversion:** Getting the user to *do* something, whether it's making a purchase, signing up for a service, subscribing to a newsletter, or visiting a destination.

A viral campaign can have millions of users and hundreds of thousands of posts to Facebook, but if it does not actually achieve its foundational goal then we can hardly call it a success. User sessions, emails sent, time spent on the application – all of matter only in concert with a campaign's progress towards a defined and measurable goal.

That said, it is still valuable to measure and track the performance of a campaign by way of a number of usage metrics. Traditional online marketing efforts are often measured in terms of page views and clicks, but viral campaigns are more complicated – and they offer the opportunity to gather a fuller picture of what users are doing as they interact with the messaging and content. (See Addendum: "Oddcast Reporting Parameters", as a reference.)

Our philosophy for measurement revolves around assembling a picture of what users actually do, and our custom reporting system is built with this goal in mind. Rather than tracking visits or views, the basic unit of our reporting is the user session: it begins when a user loads the application and ends when they depart. During this session, we measure defined actions such as email sent and audios created, downloaded content and posted messages. We look at how many people were included on an email, not just how many messages were sent, and whether the recipients came back to the application and sent their own messaging. With proper planning, we can track drop-off within the application and the popularity of different options. Our system accounts for the most common metrics that are applicable in almost all cases, but it is always best to have a specific plan for what should be measured – and how – long before the launch of a campaign.

When planning for a viral campaign, it's also critical to set realistic – if optimistic – goals. We've worked on a number of campaigns that have been truly exceptional: tens of millions of users, millions and millions of emails and postings, or with average interactions of more than ten minutes. All of these are possible, but they are the exception to the rule – and we must remember that these numbers are not the only, or even the primary, measure of success in most cases. Just as the goal of a campaign must be carefully set, so should benchmarks for success on viral indicators be realistic and relevant to the task at hand. Each campaign is unique and must be individually evaluated – there is little to be gained by comparing a small, targeted campaign designed to achieve conversions against a large campaign backed by a national media buy and designed to increase brand awareness.

With that said, however, there are certain metrics that can serve as indicators of whether a campaign is achieving viral success and the sustained amplification that makes viral marketing such an effective tactic. In general, we suggest that these indicators be considered in relevant terms, as percentages or ratios pegged to the fixed metrics in each case. These data points provide a good indication of the viral success of a campaign:

- An average session length of 4:00 minutes or more.
- Visitors who arrive at the application by way of an application-generated email or posting comprise, at minimum, 15% of all users.
- Messages sent from the application have an open-rate of at least 70% (significantly higher than the 20-30% open rates direct email campaigns aim for).
- An email pass-along rate of more than 10%, defined as the percentage of user who were initially recipients of an email or message and who then go on to send their own.
- Repeat visitors accounting for over 20% of the visitors

None of these indicators, alone, necessarily predicts that a campaign will reach viral critical mass and take off. With good concepting, design and planning, and with a solid seeding plan in place, a campaign that can reach these benchmarks is very, very likely to succeed.

Addendum: Oddcast Reporting Parameters

Report #1 - Overview	
Editor Sessions	Total editor user visits.
Editor Streams	Total audio played in the editor.
Player Sessions	Total player user visits (zero if the application does not have a player).
Player Streams	Total audio played in the player (zero if the workshop does not have a player).
Audio Created	Total number of Workshop sessions in which an audio was created by the site visitor.
Photo Uploaded	Total number of successful PhotoFace or standard upload photo events.
Video Generated	The number of videos generated (zero if the workshop does not have video generation features).
Email Sent	Total number of successful emails sent from the application.
Gallery Posting	Total number of scenes posted to the application gallery (zero if there is no gallery).
Post To Social	Total number of scene posted to social networks (Ex: Facebook).
Get Embed Code	Total number of requests made by visitors to retrieve the completed scene embed code.
Download Video	Total number of video downloaded. Only available in VideoStar applications.
Send to Mobile	Total number of scenes sent to mobile using the Web To Mobile interface.
Report #2 - Editing Sessions	
Editor Sessions	Total editor user visits.
Unique Sessions	Total unique editor user visits.
Average # of Concurrent Sessions	Average number of concurrent sessions within the given time period.
Max # of Concurrent Sessions	The peak number of concurrent sessions within the given period of time.
Average Session Length	The average time spend by visitors in minutes.
Other	The number of user sessions that initiated with direct site visit or visits that don't originate from the player or email.
From Email	The number of user sessions that were initiated via email.
From Player	The number of user sessions that were initiated from a link in the embed code or the player itself.
Report #3 - Editing Sessions Breakdown	
Editor Sessions	Total editor user visits.

Created Audios Session %	The number of sessions that had personal audios created. Percentage out of all sessions. Includes audios of any type except pre-recorded.
Uploaded Photo Session %	The number of sessions that used the upload photo feature. Percentage out of all sessions.
Video Generated Session %	The number of sessions that had videos created. Percentage out of all sessions. (Value is zero if VideoStar is not implemented for this application).
Sent Email Session %	The number of sessions that included sending emails. Percentage out of all sessions.
Got Embed Code Session %	The number sessions where users got the scene embed code. Percentage out of all sessions. (This does not validate if the code was actually embedded in a web page).
Post to Social Network Session %	The number of sessions where the users attempted to use one of our automated post to social implementation (ex: Facebook). Percentage out of all sessions. This does not validate of the posting to the social network was successful.
Sent Audio To Phone Session %	The number of sessions where the scene was send to a phone using the Oddcast Send to Phone interface. Percentage out of all sessions.
Send To Mobile Session %	The nubmer of sessions where the scene was sent to mobile handsets using the Oddcast Web to Mobile interface. Percentage out of all sessions.
Download Video or Audio Session %	The number of sessions where the video or audio was downloaded. Percentage out of all sessions.
Report #4 - Audio Creation Breakdown	
Editor Sessions	Total editor user visits.
Created Audios	The total number audios created for the period. (Zero if application does not have audio creation).
TTS Audio %	The percentage of session in which a TTS audio was created.
MIC Audio %	The percentage of sessions in which a visitor created an audio using Record By Mic.
Pre Recorded Audio %	The percentage of sessions in which a visitor selected one of the pre-recorded audios.
Record By Phone %	The percentage of sessions in which a visitor created an audio using the Record by Phone feature.
Report #5 - Email Efficiency	
Editor Sessions	Total editor user visits.
Average Emails Sent per Session	Total number of emails sent divided by the number of sessions for that period.
# of Recipients Imported Using PM	Total number of email address important using the Popular Media import component.
# Email Sent	The total number of email sent during the report period. (NB: one email sent can have more the one recipient).

# of Recipients	Total number of recipients who received emails.
Recipients Who Opened Workshop	Total number of recipients who clicked on the link and ended up in the application.
Recipients who Sent Email	Total number of recipients that created a scene and then sent their own email from the application (i.e. viral effect).
Recipients Who Got Embed Code	Total number of recipients who created a scene in the application and used the Get Embed Code feature.
Recipients Who Posted to Social Network	The total number of recipients who created a scene in the application and used the Post to Social Network feature.
Report #6 - Editor Custom Events	
Editor Sessions	Total editor user visits.
Custom Event 1 - 8	The total number for a specified custom event for this application. Oddcast can add certain custom events for each application to this reporting tool. Arrangements for these additions should be made as early in the development process as possible.