CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF VIRAL MARKETING – EXAMPLE OF CROATIAN MARKET

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ABSTRACT
Internet marketing has a broad range of activities eligible for promotion and one of them is viral marketing. This form of promotion appears under different names so you can talk about: viral marketing, Word of Mouth Marketing, Buzz Marketing or just Buzz. It is a type of marketing that aims to create ads that will quickly spread through the Internet and thereby gain significant popularity. It is important to note that viral marketing can be realized in any format, on any media or on any Web site.
To make viral marketing successful, it is necessary to devise a quality content and the same content focus to a particular demographic group for which the content is created. If we want to achieve the interest of consumers or potential user of a product or service for content that is created, content must intrigue them in a way that recognizes the passion of the one that created the content. The key to a good viral marketing is a good story that requires innovation, creativity and quality of what is offered.
The subject and aim of the paper is to explore the perception of the concept of viral marketing by the Croatian consumers on the one hand and the use of such forms of promotion by the Croatian companies on the other.
We believe that the results of the present study will contribute to the understanding of viral promotion concept and its acceptance and further development.
Keywords: Internet marketing, viral marketing, promotion, consumers.

1. INTRODUCTION
The term viral marketing was created in December 1996 by professor of Harvard Business School, Jeffrey F. Rayport, in the article for FastCompany. Jeffrey F. Rayport held that if an ad on the Internet reaches prone to user, it becomes "infected" and therefore still "infests" other users and potential users. Specifically, it is about how Rayport said that if such a user sends an e-mail to more than one address, infection progressively begins to spread. (Haramija, 2007: 884).
A pioneer of viral marketing was Hotmail (webmail service), which success is based precisely on the viral marketing. In fact, every time a user with a Hotmail address sent someone a message, the service would be at the bottom of that message automatically added text content: "Get your private, free email at http://hotmail.com.". (EBizMags, 2008).
Viral marketing is one type of internet marketing, and involves voluntary transmission of advertising messages by the users themselves. In order to further spread viral content, or to become a viral campaign successful, it must achieve a very positive effect. It is very important that the campaign challenges the consumer emotions because such campaigns spread further like a virus, all consumers want to see it, and, according to their opinion, to pay it forward. (Stanojevic, 2011: 174).
The article will fetch the feasibility and methodology that was used to find out the perception of customers and companies about viral marketing, it will be explain usefulness and
effectiveness of viral marketing, viral marketing in the Republic of Croatia, as well as the perception of viral marketing in the Republic of Croatia by customers and enterprises and the Croatian economy. At the end of this article authors will bring a conclusion.

2. FEASIBILITY AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH
The article aims to explore the perception of viral marketing in Croatia by consumers and businesses. The survey was conducted through two online surveys. Research subjects in the first survey were consumers or customers, while in the second survey were companies. The survey of consumers was conducted through social network Facebook, while a survey of companies was conducted by sending an e-mail to the addresses of those responsible.

The survey included 95 individual subjects through Facebook network and 14 companies. The relatively small sample of the main limiting factor of this research can serve as a basis for further research on the subject.

3. USEFULNESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRAL MARKETING
Viral marketing can be realized, or realized in any format, on any media and on any Web site, but you need to know when this kind of marketing is good solution, and when not. The viral marketing is an excellent solution in situations where there is the presence of a recognizable brand on the market, when the company wants to place a given product for a longer period without having any additional changes in the near future and is generally suitable for long-term projects. On the other hand, viral marketing is not a good solution in situations when you are organizing a one-day sales because it could be too slow, and therefore wrong marketing decision. (DEJANSEO, X).

To create a successful viral campaign, you need a quality viral content. Each viral content should have a "bait" of any kind to consumers interested in it and which will caused certain reactions in them. Viral content can be a photo, video, web page, or a song, but to make that content really went viral, it must have good quality and a very good production. For each viral content is required a passion of person who creates the content because if the creator of the content while creating the same content do not feel any emotions, consumers will not feel them too. (DEJANSEO, X).

A viral content and viral campaigns must be directed to a specific demographic group, namely, the same has to be built around specific products or services that are available in the market. Also, in the viral marketing it is essential constant awareness creation, extending like a virus, the presence of products and / or services. In fact, the aim of viral campaign is to do the advertising market for the company, but to achieve this, it is required a well-designed approach and the help of experienced professionals for viral marketing. (DEJANSEO, X).

Škare says that according to the study of Jupiter Research's, common objective of viral campaigns is to raise awareness of the brand (71%), sales promotion via the Internet (50%) and sales promotion through classic marketing channels (44%). (Fijolić, 2008).

The biggest advantage of viral marketing is the spread of viral messages, or viral content, orally, in particular the recommendation of friends or acquaintances. In fact, if friends recommend something to each other, it is very likely that they will register message and brand and ultimately, perhaps, buy the product being advertised. (Business Diary, 2013). Also, the big advantage of viral campaigns are that it does not require large financial costs and which can be expanded rapidly, which in turn contributes greatly to the effectiveness of viral marketing. On the other hand, as a lack of viral marketing, we can mention the loss of control over viral campaign, and over its course, and sent message can take on negative connotations, and call into question the purpose of their own viral campaigns. (Virtual Factory, 2015).
4. VIRAL MARKETING IN REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Viral marketing in the Republic of Croatia occurs in the mid-nineties, but about first successful example can be spoken since 2009. In fact, teleoperator network Tomato, before television advertising, has tested on YouTube four spot and monitor what will be the reaction of the viewer. It was a campaign "More is too much" which became extremely successful, and in support of this is the fact that even today, consumers remember Darinka and Ante. (Virtual Factory, 2015).

In Croatia the era of viral marketing is just starting, and the Croatian market tend to isolate agencies that specialize exclusively for viral marketing, due to the fact that the market is not big enough for that kind of specialization. As for the use of viral marketing in the Republic of Croatia, it is very rare, but every marketing agency can create a good viral campaign if rely on the creative department, media relations, if agency research the market and monitors trends. (Fijolić, 2008).

Igor Škunc, director of HTTPool, internet marketing agency, says that interest in viral marketing in Croatia awakens, precisely because it is an interesting distribution channel, which in turn may find fertile ground among the new generation. (Fijolić, 2008).

A good example of a successful viral marketing in Croatia is video of Ivan Saric "Hire me Jon Stewart," in which the famous stand-up comedian and presenter through humorous videos requested job at Stewart and thus tried to achieve his dreams. In fact, his "online resume" rapidly spread across the Internet. (BBC, 2013).

In support of the development of viral marketing in the Republic of Croatia is the fact that the HTZ (Croatian National Tourist Board) for 2013 planned viral campaign on the social networks of the tourist season that year. The plan was to engage the side bloggers who will be performing in Croatia in the pre-season and gained experience to their audience. To be hosted by bloggers, Croatian National Tourist Board in the budget provided 1.5 million kunas, and the viral campaign on social networks has invested about 4.5 million. (DugiRat, 2012). However, as stated in their report on the work, the means for viral marketing campaign planned for that year, converted for the activities envisaged revision of annual work programs. (HTZ, 2013: 260).

5. PERCEPTION OF VIRAL MARKETING BY CROATIAN CONSUMERS

In viral marketing customers or consumers are key to buy the product that is promoted by the viral campaign because it also means that the viral campaign succeeded and that desired effects and objectives are achieved. Also, apart from the customers, there are also key persons who sent viral message onwards to their friends and loved ones, if they are the same like it, but who are also potential customers or initiators of buying other users.

People who spread viral message still called “kihači”, and these are people who will go first to spread the news about the products. People who are considered as the best “geek” are enthusiasts, who are fascinated by new products and for this reason they want to share acquired knowledge with others. Likewise, as the best “geek” are considered and people with the same interest as well as users with a certain product and / or services intended, in addition to the pro-active in interactions with their counterparts. (Stanojevic, 2011: 174).

In order to better understand the perception of viral marketing in the Republic of Croatia by the customers themselves, or consumers, in the continuation of the article is due to present their opinions collected through a questionnaire.

The questionnaire was conducted via the social network Facebook for the reason that there are gathering users or consumers of different generations, and collected the results can get different opinions and views on the subject matter of this article.

Conducted survey consisted of 22 questions, for whose fulfillment had to be about 10 minutes, and the same is completed with 96 respondents. It is important to note that no question in the survey was not mandatory.
As far as the demographic characteristics of the 95 respondents who answered the question about the same, 22 of them are men and 73 are women. Furthermore, when it comes to age, the two of them have less than 18 years, from 18 to 24 years has 74 participants, ten respondents have from 25 to 40 years, eight respondents have of 41-60 years, while, more than 60 years there is only one respondent.

When it comes to the status of respondents, out of 95 who responded to this question, two are students, 74 of them are college students, 14 were employed, and five are unemployed. Also, 92 of the respondents are active consumers of goods or services, while three of them are not active consumers of goods or services.

Consumer habits are different, so out of 95 respondents who answered this question, 55 of them used food items, 29 of them used non-food products, 12 respondents most used services, while 34 respondents used all states equally.

Respondents were further asked in the survey on their preferences according to conventional or modern technologies, to which the answer gave 93 patients, of whom 79 more preference modern technology, while only 14 believes that conventional methods for better advertising.

When it comes to the knowledge of internet marketing, out of 90 who answered this question, 77 were familiar with Internet marketing, while 13 of the same does not know.

As for viral marketing and the customer's perception of the same, which is the topic of this article, from 76 respondents who answered the question on knowledge of viral marketing, 51 of them are familiar with the viral marketing, while 25 of them are not familiar with it.

Respondents were asked their opinion about viral marketing, to which was answered by 52 respondents. 32 respondents said that they liked a variety of viral messages that company or an advertising agency on behalf of the company creates for customers and consumers, while twenty of respondents do not like this kind of viral messages.

Very important is the fact that, in the opinion of respondents, better go viral messages that are directed to the original and / or unexpected story (41 respondents) and the product companies (10 respondents). On this issue, therefore, answered 51 subjects.

Furthermore, respondents were asked their opinion on the impact of viral campaigns to them as consumers. The 26 respondents believe that viral campaigns have a positive effect on them as consumers, 25 are considered to have a positive effect on them as consumers, while one respondent have no opinion.

Many respondents cited numerous examples well worked viral campaign, showing their familiarity and ability to recognize viral messages or viral campaigns. Some of the examples cited by the Tele 2, where sheep Gregor sings in the church, which caused many reactions of viewers and advertising for beer Oţuško (Bednja, Ĉabar).

Also, the survey became the object of respondents on viral campaigns as a way of encouraging the purchase of products, to which answered 51 respondents. In fact, four of the respondents said that viral campaign in no way encouraged them to purchase products, 24 of respondents said that they neither stimulate viral campaigns, nor encouraged to purchase products, 11 of respondents said that viral campaigns generally do not encourage the purchase of products, while 12 respondents consider that viral campaigns generally encouraged them to buy the product.

Of the respondents was trying to find out whether, if they were able, will still send viral messages. On this question have answered 51 subjects. 34 respondents said that they will send viral message to their friends and / or acquaintances, while 16 respondents would not report it. Also, one of the participants had no thought about the matter.

In the questionnaire, from the respondents wanted to find out what must have a successful viral campaign. 42 respondents believe that successful viral campaign needs to have a good "bait", six respondents believes that successful viral campaign must have intended that the viral content
later transferred to an aggressive manner, or a manner that will in humans immediately cause reactions, while 21 respondents believe that successful viral campaign must have quality. One of the important issues that arose respondents were if they love in the future, if they have still not, meet with viral marketing. The answer gave 91 subjects. In fact, 69 of the respondents prefer to learn about viral marketing, eighteen of them would not like to meet with viral marketing, while four respondents did not express an opinion.

From the above it can be concluded that viral marketing has the potential on the Croatian market, but also, there is still much room for progress and development. Customers and consumers are mostly unfamiliar with viral marketing and to most of them, and those who are not, it would still be the same love to meet in the future. Also, respondents' opinions about the impact of viral messages on them as consumers are pretty much divided, but it is justified opinion. Also, the majority of respondents believe that good viral campaign or viral message (content) must have a good "bait" and the quality to become successful, and therefore interesting to them as consumers. Respondents of the survey were willing to send forward viral messages to their friends and / or acquaintances if they enjoy the same, which is a good indicator of the success of viral marketing itself on the Croatian market.

In conclusion, it can be said that the consumer's perception of viral marketing on the Croatian market is generally positive, but the same could be raised to a higher level. Also, the results of this survey can greatly contribute to the further development of viral marketing on the Croatian market, as well as help companies that opt to use viral marketing in a way that the same pay attention to the opinions of customers, as well as to their wishes and needs.

6. PERCEPTION OF VIRAL MARKETING BY CROATIAN BUSINESSES

In order to better understand the application of viral marketing, as well as the understanding of the same in terms of Croatian companies, and Croatian economy, authors have carried out the questionnaire among companies. Specifically, the survey included 14 companies, to which was set 26 questions, and to fulfill the same they needed about 10 minutes. The survey is conducted online, via e-mail, to personalize examination.

The continuous of this article will highlight some of the most important results obtained from the implementation of the survey in order to obtain a better insight into the thinking of companies about viral marketing.

Of the 14 companies that participated in the survey, three are large, five are medium-sized, and 6 are small businesses. The survey involved a row following companies: Zagreb Brewery, Unity dd, Katarina line doo, Pula Herculanea, Dubrovnik Water Ltd., Health Care Institution Hippocrates, Bead Iton, Mobilisis Ltd., SLink, Biovit, Mobis, Adecco Ltd. For temporary employment and Yasenka Ltd. Companies that participated in the survey deal with different sectors from different branches of the economy, which is a good indicator for the survey, as authors want to know different opinions and views of businesses about viral marketing.

As for the use of Internet marketing, from 13 companies that responded to this question, nine of them use some form of Internet marketing, while four companies do not use any form of this kind of marketing.

When it comes to the topic of this article, or on viral marketing and the perception by the customer and the company, the question of whether companies use the viral marketing in their business, answer has given by 10 companies, of which four companies use viral marketing, four don't use viral marketing, and the two companies are considering this possibility.

Companies were also asked their opinion about viral marketing as a way of solutions to their business, on which was answered five companies, out of which all five considered to be the viral marketing an excellent solution for their business. The assumption is that all four companies that are alleged to use viral marketing in their business feel that it is the perfect solution for their business, while one of two companies that are considering the possibility of
introducing viral marketing in the business, also believes that viral marketing was excellent solution for their business.

Furthermore, authors wanted to find out from the companies in which situations they are using viral marketing, to which the answer is given by 5 companies. Three companies use viral marketing for short-term projects, which is not desirable in theory, the two companies replied that they use viral marketing to the marketing of products, and three responded that they use the same in situations where there is the presence of a recognizable brand.

One of the very important question was about creating viral content, specifically what is most important to companies in the creation of the same, and to this question six companies have responded. The three companies believe that in creating viral content, most important is to having a "bait" of any kind, the two companies are considered quality as the most important, while one company considers the most important intention of the content aggressively later transferred in a way that humans immediately cause reactions.

When it comes to elements of viral marketing, on this question answered six companies. 2 companies are considered as the most important element of the transmission of a message, which does not require too much effort, to others, one company considered as the most important element of viral marketing offering products or services, one company believes that most important element is use of common motivations and behaviors, one thinks that this exploitation existing communications network, while one considers that this is something else, but it is not specified which.

Companies in Croatia believe that the biggest advantage of viral marketing is voluntarily spread the message by friends and / or acquaintances (4 companies), one company believes that the biggest advantage of the financial cost, until one considers that this is an intimate and personalized messages that result in greater efficiency. On the other hand, as the biggest drawback, three companies state that it is designation viral campaigns as unwanted by consumers, two companies as the biggest disadvantage of viral marketing considered the danger of a certain loss of control over the campaign, and one company believes that it is damaged image of the company in case of unintended reaction of the market. When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of viral marketing responded 6 companies.

As for the mode of implementation of viral marketing, 4 out of 5 companies that responded to this question viral marketing conducted themselves, while one company has not declared about how they conduct viral marketing.

Companies were also asked about which channels are considered the most important for the spread of viral message, which was answered by 7 companies. 6 companies believe that social networks are the best channel for the spread of viral messages, while one company believes that the best way of spreading viral messages to the target group is through oral tradition channel-"word of mouth".

Also, companies are asked and what they think about which viral messages do better with their customers. Three companies believe that their consumers respond better to messages directed to the original and / or unexpected story, while the two companies believe that with their consumers best passing messages directed to the product itself.

When asked whether the company, as such, benefit from viral marketing, from five companies that responded to this question, 3 are considered to benefit from the same, while the two companies are considered to have little use of viral marketing.

Very important question for companies, which directly touches on the theme of this article, was whether they find it is viral marketing in Croatia is still a phenomenon, and whether consumers continue to represent viral marketing as something abstract, but the same was answered by six companies. The three companies believe that the viral marketing in Croatia is still a phenomenon, while three companies do not agree with that, or do not believe that is the case.
Also, most of the companies that responded to the question about satisfaction with the use of viral marketing are satisfied or mostly satisfied with the same, and none led to dissatisfied using viral marketing in their business. Accordingly, the company considered that their campaigns were successful, largely successful, or neither successful nor unsuccessful, which is a good indicator because neither company did not specify how their viral campaigns were unsuccessful.

Companies are asked whether to recommend other companies to use viral marketing in their business. 6 of 7 companies that responded to this question, gave an affirmative answer, while one company didn’t have an answer.

Modern technologies are considered to be better and more successful way of advertising than conventional methods, which is considered as many as 9 out of 10 companies that responded to this question, while one company considers that are still better conventional methods.

In conclusion, it can be said that those companies that use viral marketing are satisfied or mostly satisfied with the results of the same, and the benefits they receive by implementing viral campaigns. Also, companies should not use viral marketing for short-term projects, such as, for example, a one-day sale because it will not bring positive results. Also, it is very important to pay attention to the importance of planning viral campaigns by the companies themselves, how they could be more successful and more natural, and therefore would have a greater effect on the market, as well as a greater willingness of buyers to such viral content is sent on.

7. CONCLUSION
Viral marketing is one of the types of Internet marketing, and involves spreading advertising messages by consumers to their friends and / or acquaintances. When creating viral campaigns, it is essential for viral messages that may be developed very good viral content. Also, it is necessary to know in what situations the viral marketing can be used, and in which not. In fact, it is not advisable to use for short-term projects, while, for example, for products that are intended to keep a long time in sales greatly recommended.

In Croatia viral marketing is not as developed as much, for example, outside its borders. In fact, in Croatia the same began to develop the nineties, however, the first true viral campaign was in 2009, and was initiated by teleoperator network Tomato. Also, in the Republic of Croatia is harder to find agencies that specialize exclusively for viral marketing, which is understandable given the fact that he is still developing and that is not so much present on the Croatian market, as it is for example in America.

In order to obtain a better insight into the customer’s perception of viral marketing on the Croatian market on the one hand, and the opinion of the company on the same on the other hand, conducted a survey of consumers and businesses with the intent to collect certain results. Based on the data collected, and the results, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents are familiar with the viral marketing and its features, which is not surprising given the fact that most respondents just younger people. Furthermore, the majority of respondents believe that the better-off viral messages that are directed to the original and / or unexpected story, which is understandable because the buyers or consumers prefer those viral messages that in themselves have certain emotions. Respondents believe that viral campaigns have a positive effect on them as consumers, but almost half of them, too, believes just the opposite. The majority of respondents agreed with that and that viral campaign to be successful, it must have a good "bait", whether it is about photography, text, video, or something similar. In support of this article is the fact that the majority, if not, love to meet with the features of viral marketing in the future, which is a good indicator, because respondents as consumers are willing to know more about the topic of this article.

On the other hand, of the companies that participated in the survey, less than half of them used viral marketing, while a few are considering the possibility of introducing viral marketing in
your business. A good indicator is exactly what companies are thinking about implementation of the same in business, and that those companies that already use viral marketing in your business are the same happy and feel that their viral campaigns were successful and largely successful. Furthermore, half of the companies believe that the viral marketing in Croatia is still a phenomenon, and that continues to consumers represents something abstract, which is not a good indicator because there is a possibility that the very reason companies do not opt for this form of advertising, no matter what is something cheaper than other forms of advertising.

In conclusion, we can say that viral marketing in Croatia has the potential for development, as well as the possibility to become one of the best methods of advertising, however it is necessary the Croatian market, as enterprises and consumers familiar with the definition and characteristics of the same as far as possible, with the fact that the same is under-researched in the Croatian market.

**LITERATURE:**

8. Link na anketu za poduzeća: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1wXEzstJhnyI64Vq7ZJTImpoNoMtD1mOHWvXn_mpqZk/edit
9. Link na anketu za potrošače: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10Pjig_2r_pt05Hrfc0_2kUZaORJg_ILyViYg9jDbNg/edit