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Stanford eCorner

Losing Control to the Consumer

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With consumer participation through user-generated content, blogs, real time feedback, self-promotion and web-based access, Roberts points out that a new form of marketing, viral marketing, is emerging. Viral marketing reflects a shift in power from traditional manufacturers to consumers who can now control the brand image of the product and troubleshoot on their own.

Transcript

Losing control.. Nobody likes to lose control.. But what's happening here? So, the traditional way to bring a product to market was you develop it, you package it, you position it, you have a marketing plan, you launch it in one place and you launch it in another.. I remember the early days of my marketing career.. We've had a marketing tour.. We wouldn't just go from country to country in the space of a month.. We go from city to city.. You could manage that, you could control it.. You could control your message.. Everything's changed..

Now, much of this is good.. So, today much of what we look towards in terms of marketing is viral marketing.. Obviously we look to the web as a means of communication, a means of search.. We look at use to generate content.. We look at blogs.. We look at real time feedback.. We look at self promotion.. All these and new trends that affect the way we interact with customers, with consumers, affects the way we take products to market.. So, obviously time reinforces with the time man of the year which is all of us.. We've recognize how the world is changed..

How we're all creating and participating in a way we hadn't done before.. And we've invested in a couple of companies that are leveraging this.. So, we've invest in a company where the people are posting sort of helpful hints, how to use certain products and technologies, not waiting for the manufacturer.. But often short cuts, service problems are solved not by the company that manufacture the product, but by the people who are using the product.. And so those useful hints are being posted now into web and we're looking at a way to aggregate that I'm sure others are as well.. But this is a very interesting idea that certainly wasn't there a while back.. And so there's more and more of this type of thing going on.. Certainly, we've seen companies that have had huge viral growth with minimum marketing.. It's all word of mouth.. It's all web based..

If you see a great idea, you tell six people, 10 people about it and so it goes from there...