



LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

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WHAT MARKETERS NEED TO UNDERSTAND TO AMPLIFY THEIR MESSAGES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND CREATE BRAND ADVOCATES

Message Amplification



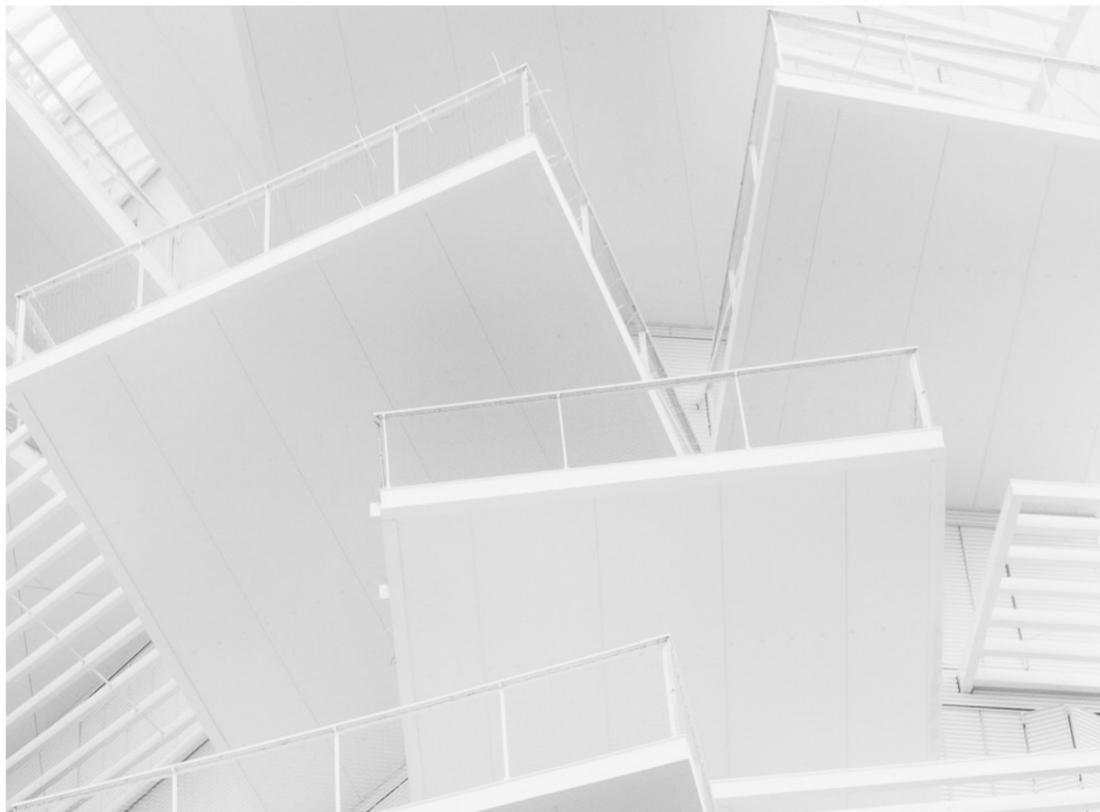
Why
consumers
share
content

What
content
consumers
share

How
consumers
share
content

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Stimulating Conversations: The Six Principles of Contagiousness



S

SOCIAL CURRENCY: It's all about people talking about things to make themselves look good, rather than bad.

T

TRIGGERS, which is all about the idea of "top of mind, tip of tongue." We talk about things that are on the top of our heads.

E

EMOTION: When we care, we share. The more we care about a piece of information or the more we're feeling physiologically aroused, the more likely we pass something on.

P

PUBLIC: When we can see other people doing something, we're more likely to imitate it.

P

PRACTICAL VALUE: Basically, it's the idea of news you can use. We share information to help others, to make them better off.

S

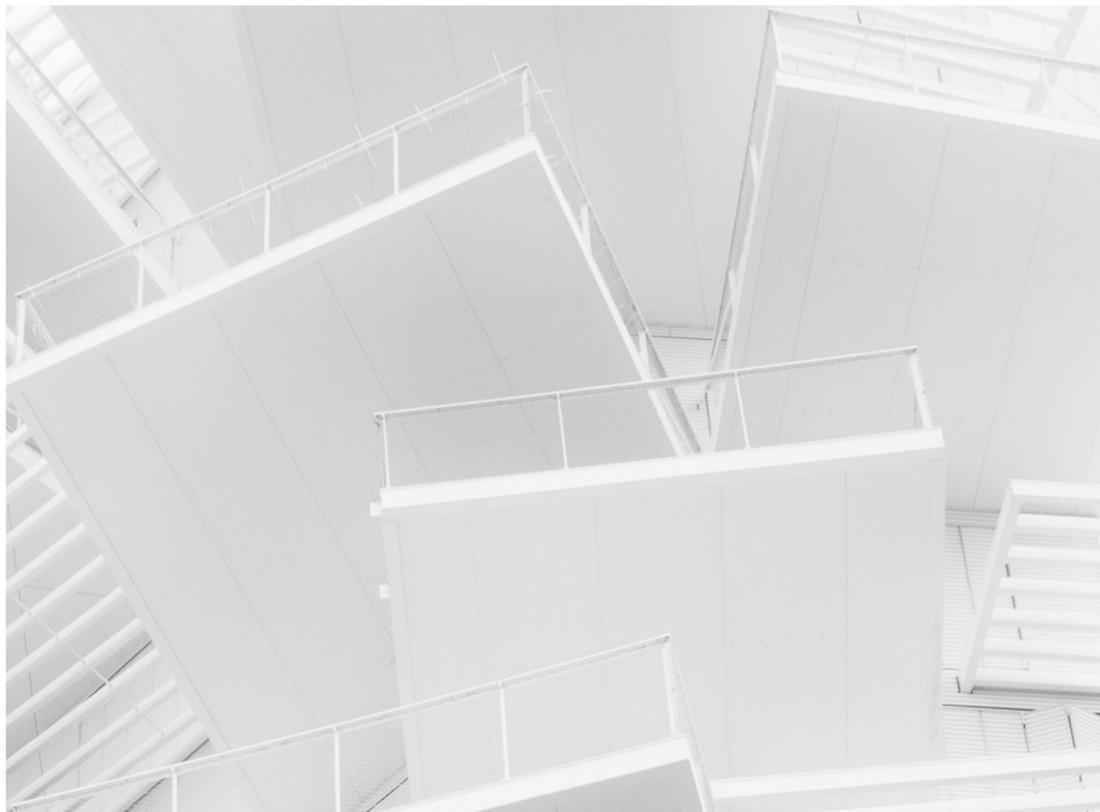
STORIES, or how we share things that are often wrapped up in stories or narratives.

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- ▶ People use money to buy products or services, they use **social currency** to achieve desired positive impressions among their friends, families, colleagues - and online communities.
- ▶ Give a people a way to look good while promoting products and ideas.

Principle 1: Social Currency



Three potential ways to mint social currency

FINDING INNER REMARKABILITY

- Remarkable things: unusual, extraordinary, worthy of notice or attention.

Talking about remarkable things, makes people remarkable (desire for social approval).

LEVERAGING GAME MECHANISMS

- Relative as opposed to absolute terms.

Talking about achievements, makes people look good.

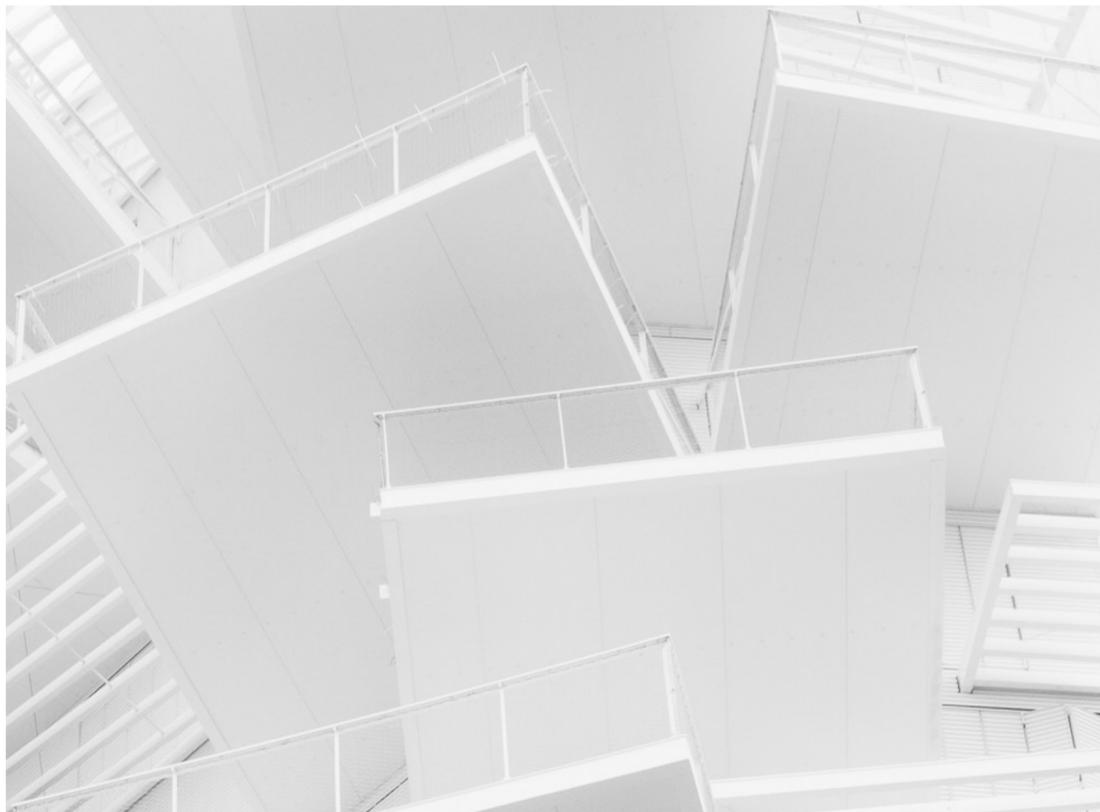
MAKING PEOPLE FEEL LIKE INSIDERS

- Scarcity, exclusivity, and "Please Don't Tell"

Talking about something someone got but not everyone else has, makes him feel special, unique, high status - and makes him look good.

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Principle 1: Social Currency



S SOCIAL CURRENCY

the motive to send social signals to the environment

SOCIAL
Quality
Differentiation
Premium/value
Relevance
Visibility

the motive to share positive or negative feelings about brands in order to express these emotions or balance emotional arousal

EMOTIONAL
Excitement
Satisfaction
Perceived risk*
Involvement*

the motive to provide and supply information

FUNCTIONAL
Age
Complexity
Type of good
Knowledge
Perceived risk*
Involvement*

WORD OF MOUTH MENTIONS
(online or offline)

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Principle 1: Social Currency



ONLINE MODEL



OFFLINE MODEL



Potential explanation:

Personal, intimate 1-on-1 conversations offline

versus

Social signaling in 1-to-many conversations online.

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KEY QUESTION: WHAT TRIGGERS IMMEDIATE AND ONGOING WOM?

Potential triggers of WOM communications

- **INTEREST**

- Interesting things arouse interest or hold attention, and products can be interesting because they are novel, exciting, or violate expectations in some way (see Principle 1: Social Currency).

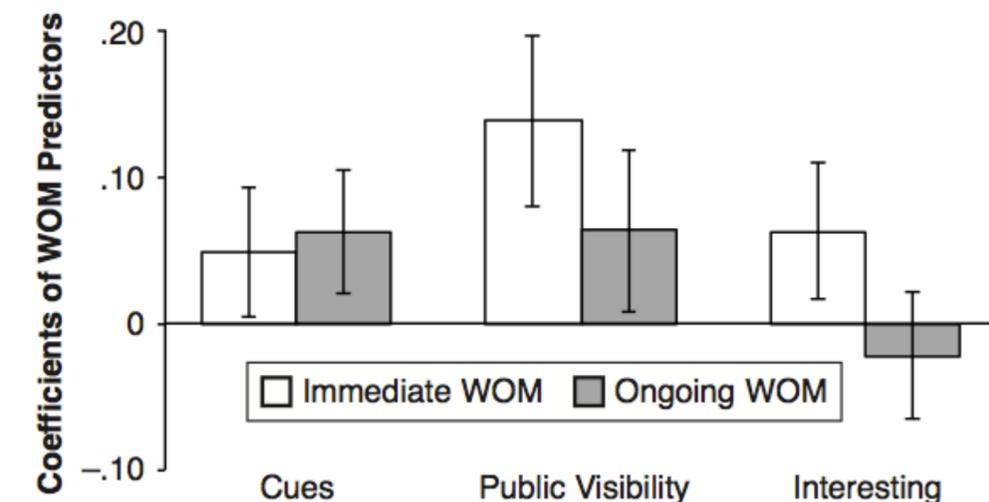
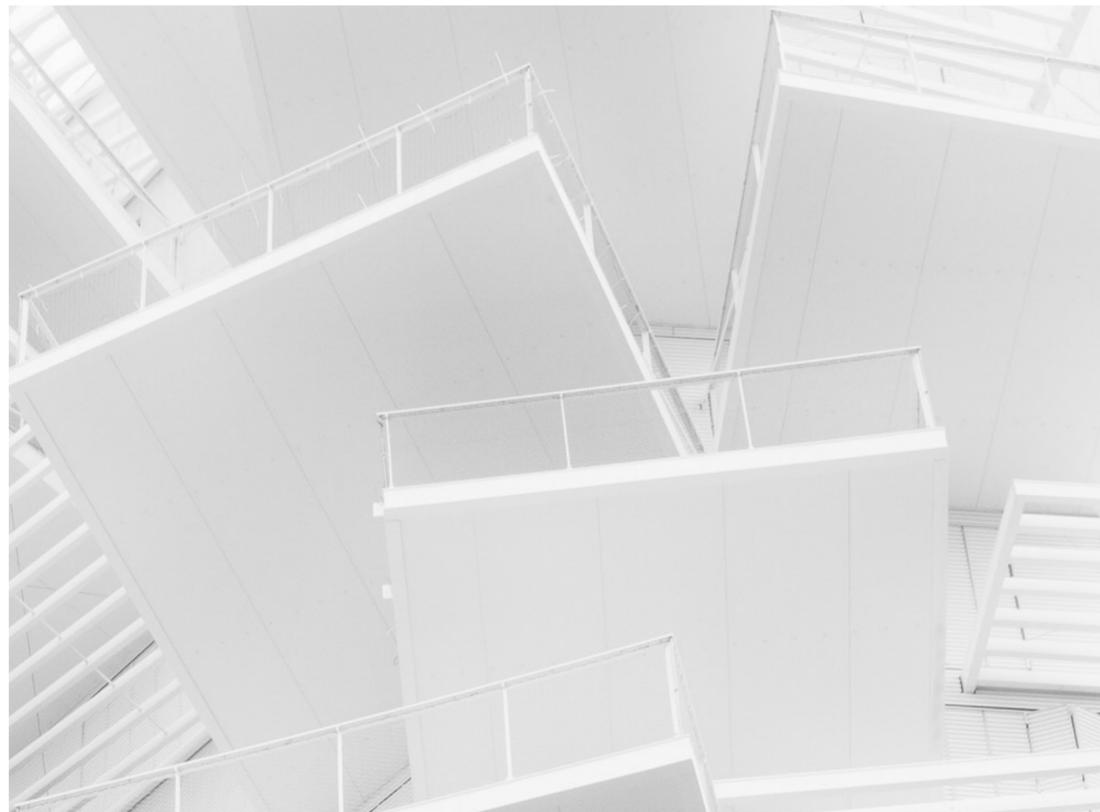
- **ACCESSIBILITY**

- Products vary in their accessibility and stimuli in the environment can act as cues, activating associated concepts in memory and making them more accessible.
- Potential cues: usage situation and frequency, conceptually related cues (e.g., color orange during Halloween)

- **PUBLIC VISIBILITY**

- Public (e.g., cars) versus rather private products (e.g., antivirus software; see Principle 4: Public)
- More publicly visible products are easier to see, which should increase product accessibility and boost the chance they are brought up in conversations.

Principle 2: Triggers



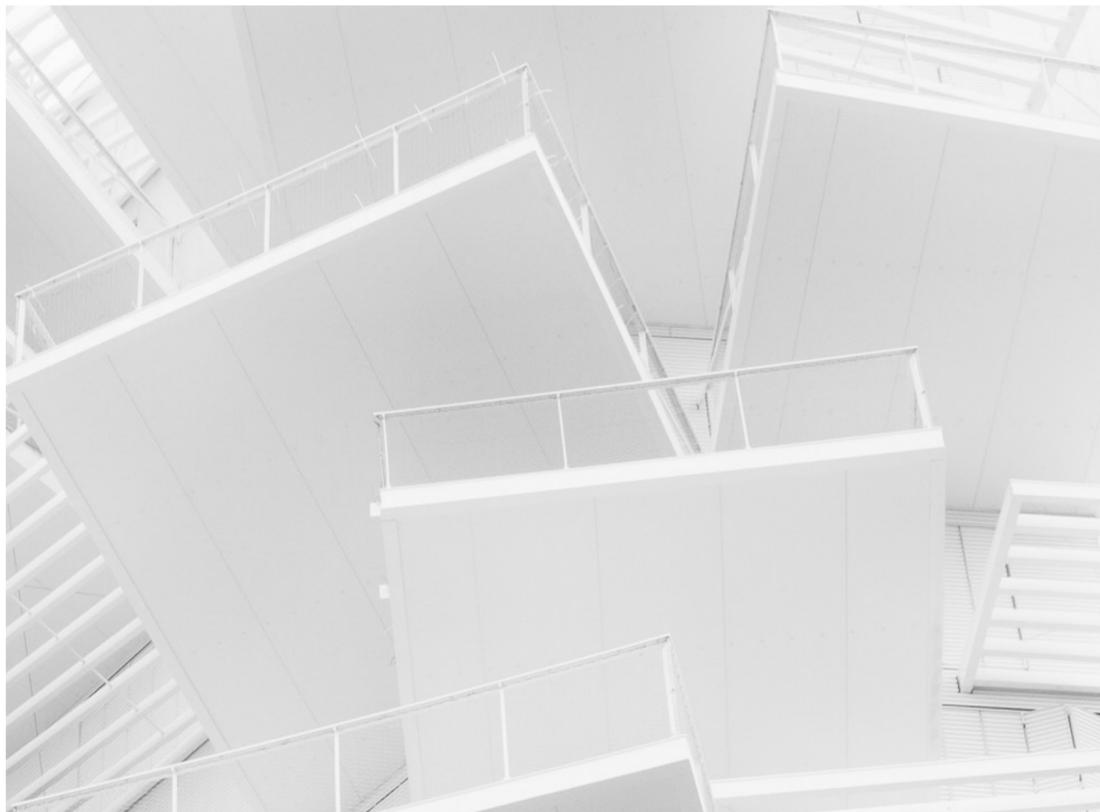
Source: Berger, J., & Schwartz, E. M. (2011). What Drives Immediate and Ongoing Word of Mouth? Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), 48(5), pp. 869 et sqq.

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E EMOTIONS

KEY QUESTION:
WHAT MAKES ONLINE CONTENT GO VIRAL?
THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS.

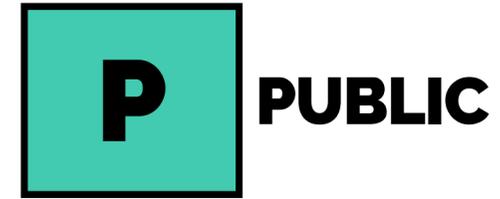
Principle 3: Emotions



	High arousal	Low arousal
Positive	Awe Excitement Amusement (Humor)	Contentment
Negative	Anger Anxiety	Sadness

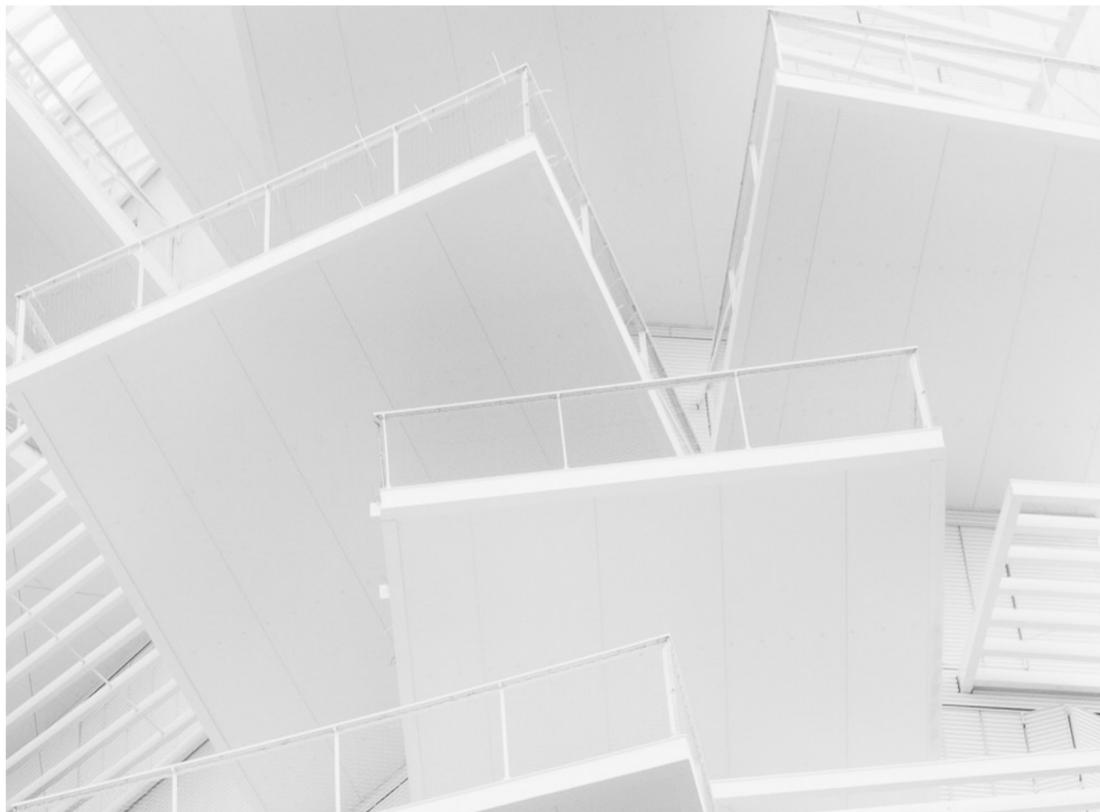
- ▶ Online content that evoked high-arousal emotions are more viral, regardless of whether those emotions are of a positive (i.e., awe) or negative (i.e., anger or anxiety) nature.
- ▶ Online content that evoked more of a deactivating emotion (i.e., sadness), however, is actually less likely to be viral.
- ▶ When marketing content evoked more of specific emotions characterized by arousal (i.e., amusement or anger), it was more likely to be shared, but when it evoked specific emotion characterized by deactivation (i.e., sadness), it was less likely to be shared.

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- **Observability** has a huge impact on whether products and ideas catch on.
- **Visual influence:** the impact of the observation of others' behavior on one's own behavior.
 - Example: When people see others around them driving new cars, they should be more likely to purchase new cars themselves.
- Observable things are more **likely to be discussed**.

Principle 4: Public



CASE EXAMPLE: SHARING HOTMAIL WITH THE WORLD

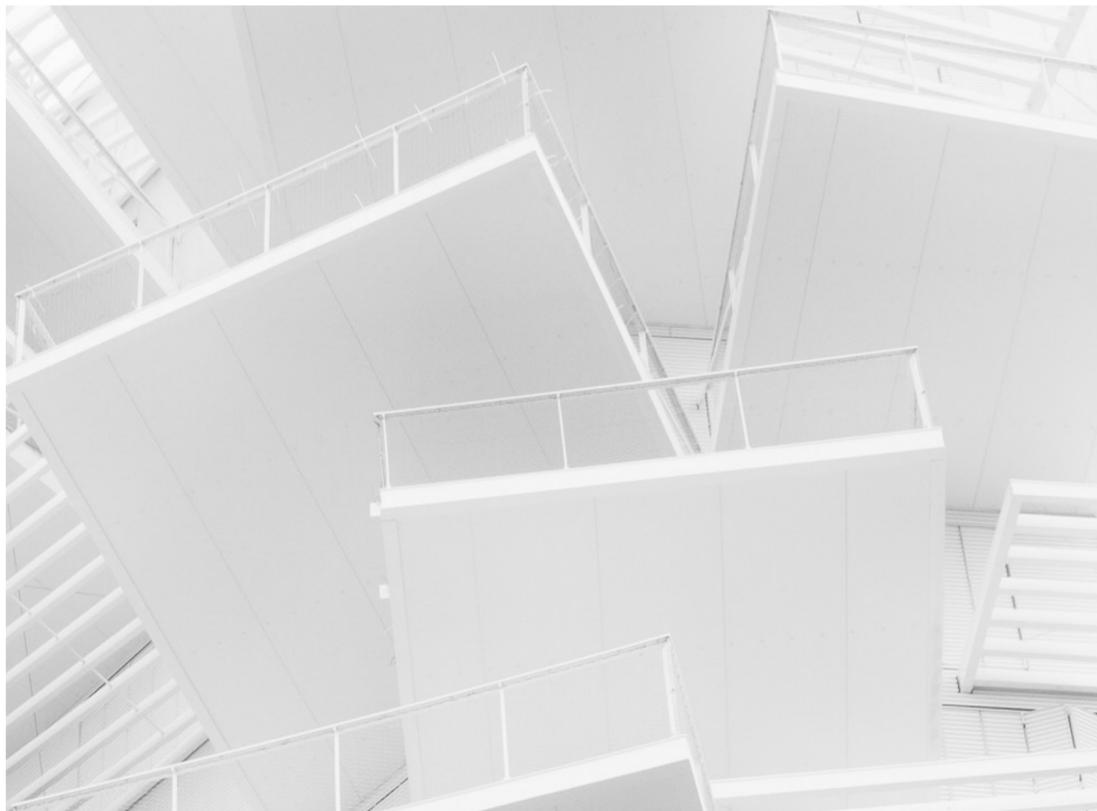
- ▶ 1996: Introduction of a new email service on Independence Day: Hotmail.
- ▶ Current situation at that time: customers got their email through Internet providers like AOL: monthly fee and need to dial up from home using phone line to access email through AOL interface.
- ▶ Differentiation of Hotmail: possibility to access inbox from any computer anywhere in the world.
- ▶ To stimulate WOM (in addition to social currency and practical value), Hotmail leveraged observability:
"Get Your Private, Free E-Mail from Hotmail at www.hotmail.com."
- ▶ **Results:** more than 8.5 million subscribers and soon after bought by Microsoft for \$400 million.
- ▶ Compare today: "Sent from my iPhone", "Sent using BlackBerry"

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People share practically valuable information to help others.

Principle 5: Practical Value



- As related to the **social online community**, individuals usually also satisfy their need to help other consumers make better (purchase) decisions **by sharing their own experiences with them.**
 - This altruistic motive of providing support to fellow consumers represents one of the **key drivers for sharing behaviors via social media.**
- COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS PRINCIPLES:**
- If social currency is about information senders and how sharing makes them look, practical value is mostly about the information receiver.
 - Emotion = "**if we care, we share**"; Practical value = "**sharing is caring**"

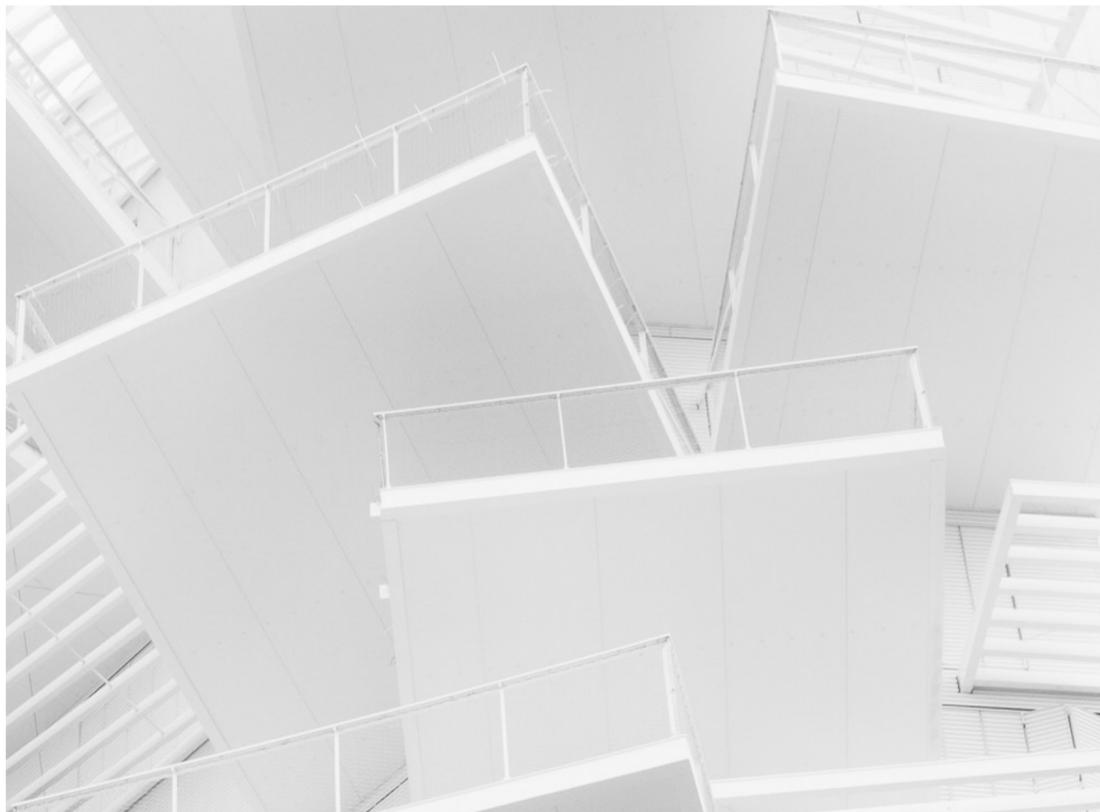
	Overall	Class 1: Lurkers	Class 2: Creators	Class 3: Multipliers
Class size	693 (100%)	382 (55.1%)	94 (13.6%)	217 (31.3%)
Motives				
Altruism based on positive experiences	5.61 (1.14)	5.19 *** (1.18)	6.21 (.73)	6.08 *** (.90)
Altruism based on negative experiences	4.68 (1.59)	4.22 *** (1.54)	5.38 *** (1.44)	5.20 *** (1.46)
Venting negative feelings/retaliation	1.86 (1.26)	1.71 *** (1.06)	2.15 * (1.41)	2.01 (1.45)
Social bonding	2.39 (1.48)	2.06 ** (1.19)	2.10 *** (1.20)	3.10 *** (1.77)
Economic incentives	1.73 (1.26)	1.62 *** (1.09)	1.43 ** (0.86)	2.06 *** (1.57)
Intrinsic fun and enjoyment	2.76 (1.60)	2.38 *** (1.31)	3.01 (1.59)	3.31 *** (1.78)
Means and standard deviation in brackets; without: Frequency to write and the socio-demographic variables: proportions. Mean differences as compared to respective overall mean (second column): p<.1.*; p<.05.**; p<.01:***.				

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S STORIES

- When trying to generate WOM, many people forget one important detail. They focus so much on getting people to talk that they ignore the part that really matters: **what people are talking about.**
- Stories are an important source of **cultural learning** that help us make sense of the world. At a high level, this learning can be about the rules and standards of a group or a society.

Principle 6: Stories



Important: VIRALITY must be VALUABLE.

- Virality is most valuable when the brand or product benefit is integral to the story. When it is woven so deeply into the narrative that people cannot tell the story without mentioning it.

