

# The Myth of STEPP Model: Based on A Framework of Dyson

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**Abstract.** The Internet is leading the era of virtual economy, the traditional marketing model based on publicity and promotion is gradually showing many drawbacks, and the network marketing represented by viral marketing is gradually becoming the mainstream model, which can have a subtle impact on consumer behavior. Accordingly, this has put forward requirements for the innovation of enterprise marketing models and methods. This paper uses viral marketing theory as the basis of research, and combines a renowned business framework, Dyson Co., Ltd, and this research aims to deliver readers a fundamental view of novel marketing strategies to have products or ideas go viral even though the traditional marketing strategy is classic and wise, it does not meet temporary market demands enough.

**Keywords:** STEPP Model; Viral Marketing; Dyson.

## 1. Introduction

The market nowadays lives in a rapid situation, where trends and things exist and soon become extinct over time. From a minuscule local business to multi-national cooperation, initiating a business, marketing it, proliferating and maintaining it is, perhaps, never straightforward.

Ever since Dyson designed, upgraded, and finally released its first signature product, it has reached splendid business success, standing out from competitors. Comparing Dyson's 2010 revenue and 2019's, its remuneration has extended by roughly 500 percent during these years. Noticeably, the Covid-19 outbreak did not impede Dyson's market growth since this upsurge peaked in the past three years when the global pandemic was severe. As proof, Dyson's annual profit in the past three years exceeded 35 billion U.S. dollars in a row. Therefore, while few brands perform well in the market, casting numerous benefits, the left has soon vanished from the big stage as if it never existed. A fabulous product does not necessarily mean it will flourish in the market unless the company fuses its well-designed products with elaborate marketing strategies.

Based on a renowned business framework, Dyson Co., Ltd, this research aims to deliver readers a fundamental view of novel marketing strategies to have products or ideas go viral. Even though the traditional marketing strategy is classic and wise, it does not meet temporary market demands enough. Ideally, this research also affords companies and organizations some brand new insights into marketing given this rapidly changing society. The covered topics include a STEPP model of social currency, triggers emotions, practical value, and the public as an extension of concepts in the book "Contagious, Why Things Catch On" by Jonah Berger.

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of viral marketing was first introduced by Rushkoff in 1994 [1]. Then, in 1996, Rayport first used the term "viral marketing" to describe the rapid spread of marketing messages like a computer virus [2]. The dramatic increase followed this in the number of users of Hotmail, which greatly demonstrated the effectiveness of viral marketing strategies [3]. Since then, viral marketing has started to become a hot topic in the field of marketing research. Wikipedia defines viral marketing as the process of sending a marketing message to an existing online social network to increase product awareness and attract potential users by spreading it in a way similar to a computer virus [4-6]. The ultimate goal of viral marketing is to increase product awareness and attract potential users. As society becomes more networked, the concept of viral marketing is beginning to receive attention from scholars in network science. The highly networked society has amplified the potential of viral

marketing. Scholars have proposed various communication models(e.g., STEPP Model) to describe the process of spreading marketing messages on social networks in order to gain insight into the inner workings of viral marketing and propose effective viral marketing strategies accordingly[7-10].

### 3. Case Analysis

#### 3.1 The Myth of Remarkability

Indeed, one factor that differentiates human beings from other creatures is that humans like to socialize. When individuals socialize, they often exchange valuable or profound information since this series of behaviors make them look good. Most individuals undoubtedly prefer others to perceive them as brilliant, fascinating, humorous people rather than mundane ones as the first impression plays a pivotal role in shaping their future perception, positively or negatively; this rule also applies to the business. Given that people have long relied on these gut feelings (popping emotions or responses after immediate exposure to an event), it is not likely that a business takes the risk of messing up its impression to customers. Therefore, a successful business or company yearns to leave customers an outstanding impression while constantly upgrading their ideas and products to make them worthy of sharing. This process is known as the form of word of mouth or social currency (Berger, 2016). Unlike the currency of paying bills or buying groceries, social currency is an intangible and amorphous tool but significantly ameliorates the potential purchases of products.

Suppose that a person is sitting in a café watching three people walking through a pedestrian crossing; one of them is wearing a regular white shirt, and another female is wearing a black coat without any logos embedded on whereas the left man is wearing a quirky purple jersey with grandiloquent logos tinted on the front. Which person would likely first pop up in the audience's minds? The man with the quirky clothing, in most cases. It turns out that average individuals tend to engage with exciting things rather than mundane ones, and so do the consumers. Like many others, customers prefer their service or experience to be exciting, novel, and quirky; thus, one decent way for a company to gain social currency is to target inner remarkability.

To make the brand remarkable, Dyson ceaselessly re-invests twenty percent of its earnings to brand new research and development, which is approximately six times more than the average competitor's investments. (Berger, 2016) The official financial report reveals that Dyson Co., Ltd earned 10.48 billion U.S. dollars in 2021. Therefore, the R&D budget for 2021 will be 2 billion U.S. dollars, and within these adequate funds, this company is settling its pursuits as creating new things based on top quality, fashionable design, and exciting technology to differentiate itself from other average competitors. Taking one of Dyson's signature products, the supersonic hairdryer redefines the rule of a traditional hairdryer while it features a fancy appearance and exciting patent of anion technology, asserting to smooth and softens user's hair while it dries hair efficiently.

The success of Dyson is not pure luck or coincidence yet, the consequence of their tireless efforts to seek remarkability. Moreover, targeting remarkability is identical to refreshing its design and technology to cater to market demands and customers' curiosity while exalting word of mouth.

#### 3.2 Triggers

Humans' day-to-day behaviors result from their interaction with the surrounding environments, namely, conditioning. A small bite of cookie dough on a sloppy afternoon, a sip of beverage in a hot summer, etcetera, are the consequence of preceding stimuli, starvation, and thirst. Likewise, most consuming behaviors are the response to various hints. These can be either an awareness of product demand or satisfy curiosity and vanity. These hints, known as triggers, act like the lightbulb and continuously refresh one's mind, keeping products and ideas onset. While these triggers lingered, potential demographics will likely discourse on this topic, sharing the journey with others. Moreover, the purchase is likely bombarding when a company has potential customers long exposed to these triggers on different occasions. Therefore, besides owning a decent product, how to scaffold these triggers with marketing critically determines a business's long-term success.

As covered earlier, Dyson invests because it values product design and innovation; this business also knows how to trigger a purchase by placing these triggers per se.

Dyson endows and defines numerous concepts especially love and care to the products in response to different cultures and types of holidays. On February. 14th, Dyson has the hairdryers become a cartoon figure standing in a line asserting to blow love to customers and their loved ones. When it comes the Mother's Day, there is an advertisement for the elegant flower, a flower that never withers. Dyson advertises this idea while replacing the flower's stamen with its Cyclone technology to indicate a suggested gift of a brand new vacuum, which rewards every mother by saving their time and energy via these convenient machines. By the time of Chinese Saint Valentine's Day, Dyson had previously placed the supersonic hairdryer with a violet rose on a poster to afford an insight into love, care, and a suggested gift.

Overall, these innovative triggers cater to the tastes of young people and target customers nowadays. Compared with monotonous pictures, these new styles are flexible in response to different festivals and styles, constantly creating topics and marketing their products.

Rather than a type of word of mouth that vanishes quickly, a brilliant trigger, such as these amusing designs here, makes word of mouth last long among the public.

### 3.3 Manipulating Emotions

Whether it is a positive or excruciating experience, perception of anger, or anxiousness, these emotions all act to color and enrich life. While some emotions and memories quickly vanish over time, others remain and pass to other individuals as a story. What drives these differences? It turns out that humans are more likely to memorize and perform the word of mouth if the scenario is high-arousal per se. Illustrating high-arousal means that when engaging with specific stimulation, participants would undergo an intense state of physical activation and mental responsiveness; thus, individuals would concentrate more on these scenarios in response, propagating to others about the outcomes.

Dyson brilliantly utilizes this emotional tool as a business strategy to make its brand and products go viral. For instance, Dyson Co., Ltd often associates a so-called positive and high arousal emotion, "the power of awe," with its product introduction and depiction. Indeed, most of Dyson's products, including but not limited to the supersonic hairdryer vacuum cleaners, would not exist without its aggressive patent of anion, air amplifier technology, laser detection, and anti-tangle mechanism, etcetera. Dyson realizes that these terminologies are brand new and unseen by, perhaps, the most public; thus, exposing the target demographic to these will keenly incite their curiosity about Dyson's products. Whether visiting a Demo store offline or making purchases online, this company constantly provides a mysterious and technological vibe, where visitors can probe the innovative built-in algorithms or technologies among products. On Dyson's online website, for instance, they depict one of its signature products, the most dated V15 vacuum cleaners, with vivid images of internal blueprints and provoking contexts. Target demographics learn that it is the exclusive motor that spins with 125,000rpm, generating solid suction. Furthermore, those elaborately designed tunnels, known as counts, will detect and shuffle the sizes of clouds of dust to alternate the dusk level for consumers systematically.

Individuals yearn to explore these issues when engaging with high arousal entities (Unknown, Exciting, Refreshing). When they triumphantly cipher these, for instance, technologies or terminologies, word of mouth likely ameliorates due to the byproduct, physical arousal, and again, sharing novel, quirky info makes them look impressive.

### 3.4 All About Practical Values

Society is proliferating, which expedites the pace of life today by that, especially in urban areas; individuals nowadays spend more on dealing with various stuff. As proof, a growing number of individuals may work O.T. At the same time, scholars also concentrate more on academy and research, resulting in efficiency has become a critical factor before deciding which products to purchase.

Overall, the average public prefers things that have more practical values. A product says to have high practical values if it saves time, energy, and resources. Or its culinary value lasts long and is unchanged. (Berger, 2016). Target demographics may experience these services or products while sharing these efficiencies since people are keen on feeling beneficial to others.

Therefore, assigning practical values is crucial for a brand to go viral, which is how Dyson does.

Recall that Dyson funds heavily on novel research and development; these fundings enable Dyson to design and manufacture products that efficiently save demographics' time and resources. Dyson's hairdryer has a particular anion haircare function in addition to simply drying hair. Alternatively, taking Dyson's most dated V15 vacuum cleaners again, its cordless technology enables the machine to embed and separate with elaborately invented brush bars, which affords a 3-in-1 house cleaning. Suppose consumers intend to clean multiple areas, rather than merely the floor of the house, which is how a traditional vacuum cleaner does; these targeted demographics likely purchase vacuums from Dyson since it clean, including but not limited to floor, carpet, curtain, mattress, corner of the desk, etcetera. Hence, only one Dyson vacuum cleaner takes into account the workloads of the sum of other machines, saving buyers' future budgets as a win-win situation.

Pertaining to a psychological view, individuals also consider the value preservation of the product itself when purchasing as people abominate the chosen products as it is equivalent to the vanishing of the product's value per se and unfairness to previous customers. Unlike average competitors, Dyson, nevertheless, is not keen on discounts or marking down the price to proliferate as Dyson concentrates more on quality rather than quantity. This rule plays a significant role in ameliorating practical values while it preserves these values, too.

So far, Dyson's innovation in product functions lies in so-called technical strength and its technical nature. The functions of Dyson's manufacturings are diverse, while Dyson's DNA per se cast a sense of technology, mainly due to Dyson's adequate research and development (R&D). It tirelessly boosts the customer's experience with its technology, assigning more additional functions to the products so that Dyson's products are not concise, as the name suggests. In light of this, a preeminent business ought to frequently question the satisfaction of its products while supposing itself as a target customer to judge from an objective view instead of a subjective one. For instance, How is the experience of purchasing and using its products? Given that affording target demographics a decent experience is pivotal, the brand likely goes viral if it could target and assign practical values to products and clarify if these products act to save consumers' time, energy, and resources.

### 3.5 Exhibition & Public

How to exhibit products to the customer has, if not confusing at the moment, long puzzled business dealers as another tactic to make something go viral is to expose the public with the ideas or products in dimensional settings. If it is built to show, the product will likely grow and proliferate in the market. Indeed, humans are social animals that obtain and accumulate social rules and norms via oral communication and observation of behaviors. Individuals often imitate others and vice versa to fuse themselves within these social settings. Whether a quick shot at another or long-time exposure to an event, these all play a far-reaching role in shaping upcoming perceptions and behaviors. For instance, walking around a street in the fresh morning while seeing others crossing through with a cup of Starbucks likely elicit the same behavior----buying a Starbucks to start the brand new day.

Dyson is bright and realizes its product is not the daily necessity that the public frequently consumes. In contrast, it is not necessarily to say Dyson cannot exhibit its products well in the market. Indeed, Dyson Co., Ltd adopts dimensional ways, both online and offline, to propagate its products and remind viewers or target demographics that it is perfect timing to purchase a Dyson product to freshen and facilitate the life routine. Firstly, traditional advertisement has always been a wise choice as Dyson spreads its concepts and products by placing ads on bus stops, T.V., the internet, apps, etcetera. Moreover, Dyson has established numerous offline Demo stores in metropolitans among countries to provide a place where target demographics can explore Dyson's DNA and try its products.

Having a fabulous product is not necessarily to say the company will flourish yet; numerous may vanish and quit because they fail to accommodate the temporary market. In contrast, numerous young businesses thrive and proliferate since they know how to market and spread its product to the public. These novel strategies include live-streaming and cross-border cooperation or known as crossover.

Dyson, for example, hires celebrities to propagate the products via live-streaming e-commerce. While user engagement is stable, live streaming also attracts new followers in a large number, which is a decent strategy for Dyson to go viral, making Dyson a trending topic recently. Significantly, live-streaming e-commerce is a concert platform for target demographics to explore the brand while it consists of a significant percentage of online sales. A monumental business ought to dare to innovate, step out of its comfort zone, initiating cross-border cooperation instead of competing among the same professions. To illustrate, Dyson has collaborated with numerous luxurious brands on T-platform to integrate its DNA and product design on the stage; this is a brilliant tactic to promote Dyson's product awareness of its exclusivity and peculiarity. It is not arduous to notice that visitors and guests of these luxury brands' events are Dyson's target demographics, too. Thus, the frenzied cycle of word of mouth is likely to emerge to stimulate further propagation among individuals.

#### 4. Conclusion

There is, perhaps, not any best business strategy at all, whereas, through deeper exploration, each operation ought to and will target the better tactics to manage the business in response to the rapidly changing market. The above has clarified a so-called 'STEPP' model, which substantially fits today's growing market, illustrating the significance of word of mouth and ways of retaining word of mouth around. Accordingly, a superior product needs to be creative, providing customers an exciting, novel experience and journey since individuals often prefer the newfangled products over mundane ones. Numerous behaviors, including purchasing, are consequences of exposure to specific stimuli, whether directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously; thus, figuring out these stimuli while also placing these triggers into the market helps proliferate. The brilliant operation also manipulates those emotional tools to attract the potential demographics. The average public prefers exciting vibes, but individuals are also likely to engage and share with others if the topic per se is high arousal, physically and mentally.

Significantly, this arousal has nothing to do with positivity or negativity but only arousal. As an illustration, people are likely to share when the info has the power of owing (Dyson's impressive technology); when something elicits anger and anxiety (When Covid just emerged and humans did not identify this virus first, and there were numerous reports of newly confirmed cases and deaths), individuals also share this info as ongoing word of mouth since they care about these topics. Additionally, a company ought to always suppose itself as a customer and answer why a customer would buy a specific product from them. Is it affording practical values? Regarding these values, outstanding products save others' time, energy, resources, etcetera, facilitating and simplifying the day-to-day basis. Finally, to proliferate the product or idea, the operation should target innovative ways to exhibit these entities to the public. Including the traditional offline advertisement, online e-commerce or live streaming has become another crucial path to propagate the product.

Managing a business is never a straightforward job as the market environments and rules are frequently transforming nowadays. As such, retaining a creative sight to perceive this changing world is crucial for a company to survive, while the campaign regarding targeting novel business strategies shall never stop.

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