

A N A T I O N A L B E S T S E L L E R

THE ANATOMY OF BUZZ REVISITED

Real-life Lessons in Word-of-Mouth Marketing



EMANUEL ROSEN

Completely updated and revised edition with over two-thirds new material

"The only thing that could dislodge Emanuel Rosen's *The Anatomy of Buzz* from its place of honor on my bookshelf is an *expanded* edition of *The Anatomy of Buzz*.

Rosen is the most insightful person I know on what makes buzz happen."

—CHIP HEATH, coauthor of *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*

you challenge your friends. But this network effect is just the beginning.

As you win, you may feel an urge to brag to other friends about it. When you lose, your cubicle neighbors may hear about it too. The software also helps you with this reporting. When you win, it will broadcast to your friends that you “destroyed the competition.” Right now, my Facebook friends can read on my Mini-Feed that “Emanuel is worse than global warming.”

Red Bull caters to an audience with a certain style of social interaction: tongue-in-cheek banter, lots of bragging, and real competitiveness. Roshambull fits well in this context. There’s a feature that allows you to talk smack when you compete and even one where you can see live smack talk from other matches.

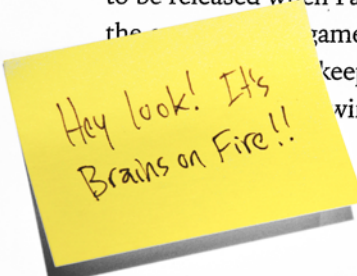
Reading the live feed, you can see that some of it is indeed used to break the opponent’s spirit (“Bring it on, punk!”). But another part is simply chatting: “I totally could have gone today, but i didn’t get this until now! how about tuesday?”

Last time I checked, 334,234 people had downloaded this application. A guy named David Stein was in first place, with 1,444,548 points. Roshambull was one of the first applications to be released when Facebook opened its architecture, so part of the game’s success came from its novelty. But months after the release, the game kept playing, challenging each other, and in the wings of Red Bull.

Scissors

The second comment at the beginning of this chapter was about meeting a woman named Cheryl who’s a lead “Fiskateer.” What is that all about?

People love to talk about people, and this comment is a side effect of some interaction created by Fiskars, the scissors com-



Hey look! It's
Brains on Fire!!

pany. Fiskars has been around for more than three hundred years. Everybody knows its orange-handled scissors, but it makes a lot of other stuff for scrapbooking. Research showed that the company image was kind of bland. Customers were asked, “If Fiskar was a snack, what would it be?” The answer? A saltine cracker. Pretty dull. This lack of emotional connection was a problem especially in the area of scrapbooking, a field known for the passion of its dedicated “scrappers.”

Fiskars hired a company called Brains on Fire to do something about it. When Brains on Fire learned that scrappers have an extremely rich, vibrant community, it decided to build an on-line community of scrapbook fans who’d use Fiskars products. How did it do that? It started by hiring four women part-time to become “crafting ambassadors,” known as the lead Fiskateers. When you join the community, which you can do only through one of the lead Fiskateers, you get a welcome kit that includes a pair of scissors with your Fiskateer number.

I have to admit that when I first heard Virginia Miracle from Brains on Fire talk about this, I thought the whole thing was a little weird. But this thing is working, and it’s working because it has a purpose. Participants share layout and project ideas with others and socialize a bit. After all, people who make scrapbooks are creating stories—about their families, friends, and pets; of course the hobby lends itself to conversations. The four crafting ambassadors—Stephanie, May, Cheryl, and Holly—blog frequently, and their postings are clearly read, as is evident from the dozens of comments each posting gets. There’s talk about crafting on the blog, but there’s also lots of talk about social interaction. Interaction creates talk.

Like Lego Mindstorms enthusiasts, when Fiskateers create, they share. Other hobbyists appreciate good work, and a compliment from a fellow hobbyist may be worth just a bit more than a compliment from a family member.

The quote that began this chapter came from a woman who met Cheryl at a store event put together by Fiskars. During the event there was obviously lots of talk among the Fiskateers; later, participants went on to tell their friends or write about the people they met at the event.

Ten years ago Steve Jurvetson and Tim Draper put it this way in the now-famous article in which they coined the term “viral marketing”: “Are you like a subway station with banner ads flying by the commuters who are just trying to get to their destination, or are you like a café where customers mingle and feel like they belong?”

Mingling creates buzz.