



As a marketing specialist I 'm always amazed at what motivates the exchanges of currency for goods or services.

What I have been struck by is the powerful phenomenon that is "Word Of Mouth". Sometimes referred to as "Buzz" or "Chatter".

I can't begin to count how many clients or students have told me that they are going to relay on W.O.M. as their primary source of marketing and advertising. To which I ask, "how do you plan to start the Buzz?" Generally I get a blank stare. So let's explore just how this Word of Mouth or Buzz works.

First you need to understand what the terms really mean.

Samuel Rosen in his book "The Anatomy of Buzz" defines it as "the sum of all comments about a certain product or service that are exchanged among people at any given time."

Yet another interpretation is: "communication about product and services between people who are perceived to be independent of the company producing the product or service in a medium perceived to be independent of the company."

Ok, ok it's called word of mouth and it happens to be the most powerful marketing force there is. So why has it been overlooked by so many companies or businesses as "out of their control"? I have yet to meet the first manager of Word of Mouth.

Interestingly enough Word of Mouth is really misunderstood.

People are typically lazy when it comes to researching purchases; probably stemming in part from the fact that you each process on average over 50,000 thoughts per waking day and you are just too exhausted to do the work.

It is so much easier for you to take the word of a trusted friend or colleague who encourages you to use the product, since it is non-commercial in nature.

The best way to avoid work and still get things done is to have somebody else do it.

As for your business, the best way to increase profits would be to increase positive hype about your product or service; the best way to increase a positive decision process is to make the decision easier to make; the best way to make the decision easier is through asking a trusted friend.

"Even those deaf to the bragging cries of the marketplace will listen to a friend." – Paddi Lund - Building the Happiness Centered Business.

Buzz is a thousand times more powerful than standard marketing. We trust our friends and colleagues consistently over what is perceived to be some sort of commercial pitch.

So how does word-of-mouth take off?

Buzz travels through an invisible labyrinth or circuitry like conversations, one-way endorsements, telephone calls, emails, newsgroups, company websites or blogs. (When was the last time you rated a movie on-line?)

What you need to realize is that you are not selling to individuals but instead to interconnections of folks. This concept is not so much the mystery it is perceived to be and in other columns I will talk more about how businesses can work at getting positive Buzz or Word of Mouth moving through the invisible circuitry.