

OPENING AND FORWARDING MESSAGES ON FACEBOOK



“How do you create a message that will be opened and forwarded when users receive it through their Facebook account?” This is one of the many questions marketers need to answer in formulating effective online marketing campaigns. Sharing content online and creating a message that ‘will go viral’ are some of the challenges brand managers and marketers are confronted with. Marketers are plagued with the challenge of understanding what prompts consumers to act in a predictable manner specifically when it comes to content and messages. If they know why users open messages and what makes them forward messages then it may assist them in developing effective online marketing activities.

A recent study conducted by George Pantazis, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), investigated university students' intention to open and forward messages received through social networking sites.

The study was conducted amongst 323 students Facebook users from the University of Pretoria. The study revealed that students were more likely to open a message received through Facebook if it was received from a trusted source. Furthermore, the findings showed that university students were more likely to forward a message if they perceived the message to be of use for them as well as being altruistic in nature.

This study provided insights into the importance of building trust in an online community as a brand. When a brand is regarded a trusted source it might have a greater likelihood to result in being opened when received through Facebook. The content to be included in messages need to be perceived as useful by the user and of altruistic nature for such messages to be forwarded on Facebook.

Marketers therefore need to build trust within their Facebook community for their brand to ensure that users will open the message received on Facebook. Furthermore, content needs to be created and curated that is regarded of use to the user and of help to others in the Facebook community in order for such messages to be forwarded.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's Degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2014 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by George Pantazis, under the supervision of [Dr. G. van Heerden](#).