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CREATING TRIGGERS

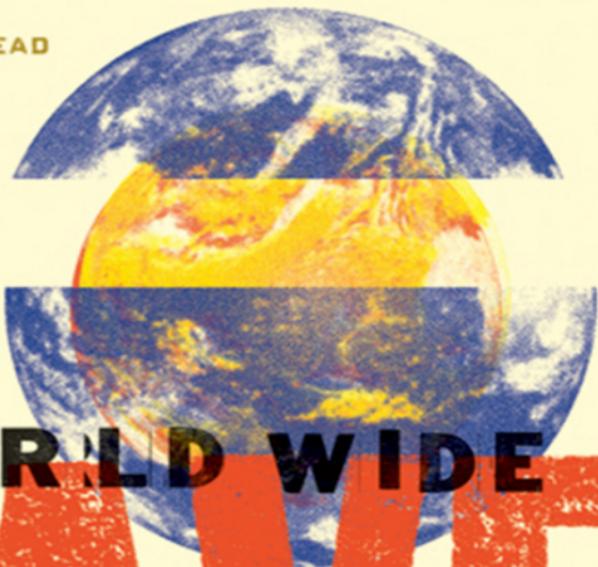
THAT GET MILLIONS

OF PEOPLE TO SPREAD

YOUR IDEAS AND

SHARE YOUR

STORIES



**WORLD WIDE**

**RAVE**

# A WORLD WIDERAVE!

What the heck is that?

A World Wide Rave is when people around the world are talking about you, your company, and your products. Whether you're located in San Francisco, Dubai, or Reykjavík, it's when global communities eagerly link to your stuff on the Web. It's when online buzz drives buyers to your virtual doorstep. And it's when tons of fans visit your Web site and your blog because they genuinely want to be there.

## RULES OF THE RAVE:

**NOBODY** cares about your products (except you).

**NO** coercion required.

**LOSE** control.

**PUT DOWN** roots.

**CREATE** triggers that encourage people to share.

**POINT** the world to your (virtual) doorstep.

**You can trigger a World Wide Rave too.**  
—Just create something valuable that people want to share, and make it easy for them to do so.

We're living in a time when we can reach the world directly, without having to spend enormous amounts of money on advertising and without investing in huge public relations efforts to convince the media to write (or broadcast) about our products and services. There is a tremendous opportunity right now to reach buyers in a better way: by publishing great content online, content people *want* to consume and that they are *eager to share* with their friends, family, and colleagues.

One of the coolest phenomena on the Web is that when an idea takes off, it can propel a brand or company to seemingly instant fame and fortune—*for free*. Creating a *World Wide Rave* in which other people help to tell your story for you is a way to drive action. One person sends it to another, then that person sends it to yet another, and on and on. Each link in the chain exposes your story to someone new, someone *you* never had to contact yourself! It's like when you're at a sporting event or concert in a large stadium and somebody starts "the wave." Isn't it amazing that *just one person* with an idea can convince a group of 50,000 people to join in? Well, you can start a similar wave of interest online, a *World Wide Rave*. You can create the triggers that get millions of people to tell your stories and spread your ideas.

## A WORLD WIDE RAVE

The World Wide Rave is one of the most exciting and powerful ways to reach your audience. Anyone with thoughtful ideas to share—and clever ways to create interest in them—can become famous and find success on the Web. The challenge for marketers is to harness the amazing power of the World Wide Rave. The process is actually quite simple; anyone can do it, including you. However, if you're already an experienced marketer, you need to know that success requires a far different approach than what you're likely doing now. Many of the easy techniques for triggering a World Wide Rave are the exact opposite of what you've learned on the job or have been taught in school. Similarly, if you're a CEO, business owner, or entrepreneur, you should know that these ideas are likely precisely what your agency partners and marketing staff tell you *not* to do.

If you've already had some success getting your stories and ideas to spread online, great! Those experienced with online media will benefit from the wealth of new ideas and fascinating stories of success I share in these pages. There are some very surprising approaches here, and I believe even experts will learn a great deal.

So without further ado, let's look at the important components for generating a World Wide Rave of your own. As you read the next few paragraphs, consider how completely different these ideas are from what you're likely doing today.

# **RULES OF THE RAVE**

Of course, it's obvious as hell that in order for thousands or even millions of people to share your ideas and stories on the Web, you must make something worth sharing. But how do you do that? Here are the essential components.



**This list is so important, and each item such a strong predictor of success, that I call them your Rules of the Rave. I introduce the six rules here and then provide much more detail later, elaborating on each one in its own section of the book.**

- 1. Nobody cares about your products (except you).** Yes, you read that right. What people do care about are themselves and ways to solve their problems. People also like to be entertained and to share in something remarkable. In order to have people talk about you and your ideas, you must resist the urge to hype your products and services. Create something interesting that will be talked about online. But don't worry—because when you're famous on the Web, people will line up to learn more and to buy what you offer!
- 2. No coercion required.** For decades, organizations of all kinds have spent bucketfuls of money on advertising designed to coerce people into buying products: Free shipping! This week only, 20 percent off! New and improved! Faster than the other guys! This product-centric advertising is *not* how you get people talking about you. When you've got something *worth sharing*, people will share it—no coercion required.
- 3. Lose control.** Here's a component that scares most people silly. You've got to lose control of your "messages;" you need to make your valuable online information totally free (and freely sharable); and you must understand that a World Wide Rave is not about generating "sales leads." Yes, you can measure success, but not through business-school return on investment (ROI) calculators.
- 4. Put down roots.** When I was a kid, my grandmother said, "If you want to receive a letter, you need to send a letter to someone first." Then when I was in college, my buddies said, "If you want to meet girls, you have to go where the girls are." The same thing is true in the virtual world of the Web. If

you want your ideas to spread, you need to be involved in the online communities of people who actively share.

**5. Create triggers that encourage people to share.** When a product or service solves someone's problem or is very valuable, interesting, funny, or just plain outrageous, it's ready to be shared. To elevate your online content to the status of a World Wide Rave, you need a trigger to get people talking.

**6. Point the world to your (virtual) doorstep.** If you follow the Rules of the Rave as I've described them, people *will* talk about you. And when they do, they'll generate all sorts of online buzz that will be indexed by the search engines, all relating to what your organization is up to. Forget about data-driven search engine technologies. The better approach to drive people to your stuff via the search engines is to create a World Wide Rave. As a result, your organization's web sites will quickly rise to prominence in the rankings on Google, Yahoo, and the other search engines.

That's it. Simple, right?

Sure, generating a World Wide Rave is as simple as can be. But again, when I discuss these ideas I find that they are so foreign to many people's thinking that they need much more than a list of rules in order to pull it off naturally. So the remainder of the book will be organized around these Rules of the Rave, so that you can learn them, too. My challenge to you is to implement them and create a World Wide Rave of your own.

## TELLING STORIES

I often use the word *stories* when I talk about the content people want to share. I do that on purpose. People love to share stories. When someone says, “Let me tell you a story . . . ,” you’re interested, right? When someone says, “Let me tell you about my company’s product . . . ,” is your reaction the same? It doesn’t sound like a way you want to spend your valuable time, does it? Stories are exciting. Most business writing is dry. That’s why I’ve loaded these pages with 39 stories, most told directly by folks who created World Wide Raves. There will be how-to information, too, of course, but the reason I’m including so many stories in this book is that the fascinating people profiled here can explain, in their own words, their strategies for triggering a World Wide Rave much better than I can do with too many flowcharts, four-square diagrams, and to-do checklists. Stories sell.

So let’s get moving. We’ll start with one of my favorite stories about a World Wide Rave.

### WHEN 7 = 350,000,000

Imagine you’re the head of marketing at a theme park, and you’re charged with announcing a major new attraction. What would you do?

Well, the old rules of marketing suggest that you pull out your wallet. You’d probably spend millions to buy your way into people’s minds, interrupting them with TV spots, billboards by the side of the highway, and other “creative” Madison Avenue advertising techniques. You’d also hire a big PR agency, with

staffers who would beg the media to write about your attraction. The traditional PR approach requires a self-congratulatory press release replete with company muckety-mucks claiming that the new attraction will bring about world peace by bringing families closer together.

That's not what Cindy Gordon, vice president, New Media Marketing at Universal Orlando Resort, did when she launched The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Other large entertainment companies would have spent millions of dollars to interrupt everyone in the country with old-rules approaches: Super Bowl TV ads, blimps, direct mail, and magazine ads. Instead, Gordon told just seven people about the new attraction.

And those seven people told tens of thousands.

Then mainstream media listened to those tens of thousands and wrote about the news in their newspaper and magazine articles, in TV and radio reports, and in blog posts. Gordon estimates that 350 million people around the world heard the news that Universal Orlando Resort was creating The Wizarding World of Harry Potter theme park—all by telling just seven people.