

### Introduction

Jonah Berger, author of *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*, presented the characteristics that make products and ideas go viral. According to Berger, there are six STEPPS (Social Currency, Triggers, Emotions, Public, Practical Value and Stories) which, if incorporated, make your concept/product/service is more likely to be shared with many other people.

These Characteristics are the same for virtually any organization or business providing goods or services to the public.

### 1. (S) Social Currency

#### How does it make Advocates look?

*People care about how they look to others, so give them something that makes them feel smart, cool and in-the-know.*

Wendy Harman, director of Social Strategy of American Red Cross, says the American Red Cross creates social currency by making their stakeholders and online communities feel proud to share information about the Red Cross.

One way they do this is by designating their Twitter volunteers as Disaster Digital Volunteers. This cool title makes their volunteers feel like VIPs, something to be proud of and share with their peers. Many Digital Disaster Volunteers include this position in their Twitter bios

### 2. (T) Triggers

#### What reminds people of the product?

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ makes people think of my organization.

Think about your answer for the fill-in-the-blank. How prevalent is this trigger in your supporters' daily lives? The idea behind triggers is that the more frequently your supporters and potential supporters encounter your organization's triggers, the more likely they'll talk about it.

When you're creating a campaign, leverage an object, thought, smell, sight or sound that will be frequently triggered in your audience's mind. When they encounter your trigger, they will immediately think of your organization and talk about it with others.

### 3. (E) Emotion

#### When We care, We share.

Pride, security, happiness, relief—Contrary to the popular belief that you should only share happy posts on Facebook, Jonah Berger contends happiness will not drive people to action because it's a "physiologically low-arousal" emotion.

To drive people to action, use high-arousal emotions like awe, excitement, anger, amusement and humor. These emotions fire people up, and this activation gets them to share your posts or take action.

### 4. (P) Public: "Built to show, built to grow."

#### Can people see when others are using the product or service?

The easier something is to see, the more likely people will talk about it. This month, it's hard to not talk about — or at least think about — breast cancer. There are many breast cancer walks and pink consumer products since October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

But that doesn't mean you need a whole month dedicated to your cause or branded products to make your organization and cause visible. Consider event venue: could you host your end-of-year reception outdoors, with posters and flyers, somewhere with high foot traffic? Consider swag: branded keychains are nice, but people usually have their keys in their pocket or purse, so bumper stickers are more likely to get people talking. This is why you receive an "I voted" sticker as opposed to a certificate or confirmation letter..

### 5. (P) Practical Value

#### Usefulness. People will share content that is incredibly Useful.

To create practical value, the information you share must be relevant and be packaged in a way that inspires people to pass along your cause along with the information.

To determine whether your information has practical value, ask yourself: Will people appreciate your organization more because you shared this information with them? Cleveland Clinic is a great example of an organization that leverages practical value to get its fans to share helpful information. The organization's Facebook page has more than half a million fans, and its posts typically get hundreds of shares thanks to the practical value of the posts.

### 6. (S) Stories

#### What broader narrative does the idea encompass?

People find it easier to remember stories than facts, so find stories for people to share. It's important to note that your organization should be integral to the story. While videos of people telling their stories can be powerful, these stories won't help your organization unless your organization and the services you provided are mentioned, so make sure the stories you tell always carry your brand.

### Image

### Jonah Berger's Six Steps To Virality



Social Currency	Triggers	Emotion	Public	Practical Value	Stories
People talk about things that make them seem smart and cool.	Top of mind, tip of tongue. What we think about is what we share.	When we care, focus on "high arousal" emotions.	Built to show, built to grow. The more public something is, the more likely people are to imitate it.	News you can use. Useful things get shared.	Build a Trojan horse, a narrative or story people want to tell, which carries your idea along for the ride.

Source: [www.jonahberger.com](http://www.jonahberger.com)

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