Emanuel Rosen is the author of the national bestseller The Anatomy of Buzz (2000) and The Anatomy of Buzz Revisited (2009). Prior to writing these books, he was Vice President Marketing at Niles Software in Berkeley California where he was responsible for launching and marketing the company’s flagship product EndNote which spread to a large extent by word of mouth. It was during this time that Emanuel became interested in buzz and especially in how it can be accelerated. He started his career as a copywriter in Israel. For his work in advertising he won the Bronze Lion from the Cannes International Advertising Festival, as well as several national awards including two gold medals. ‘The Anatomy of Buzz has managed to generate quite a bit of buzz itself’ as BusinessWeek Online noted. The book hit The Wall Street Journal’s business best-seller list and is now available in 12 languages.

Creating a buzz
My focus is going to be on what you can do tomorrow morning in order to get buzz going, in order to get recommendations. Yesterday we were here when Mark spoke and there was this beautiful Mexican wave, you guys did a fantastic job, but remember that this wave didn't start by itself. Mark stood here and he said on the count of one, two, three and it started and I’m going to focus on that one, two, three, what can you do in order to get people to talk to each other.

There are several things that I want to keep in mind as I talk. It all starts with a consumer experience – it all starts with the experience of whoever visits your museum or your play. For ten years I was Vice President of Marketing of a small software company in Berkley California, and 40-60% of our customers told us that they heard about the software first from another person. There is no doubt in my mind that the main driver of this buzz was the customer experience, how good the software was, how fast we answered the phone, how user friendly it was. This is really the foundation and word-of-mouth marketing is about taking this foundation and doing something more with it. But that’s the foundation, the user experience, the visitor experience has to be there. If the play is not good, they’re not going to recommend it.

The second point is that most word of mouth is positive. We have now a lot of research about this, and most of it is face to face the way we’re speaking right now, whereas only 10% is online. This does not mean that online is not important, in fact I’d say that online buzz is extremely important, because it accelerates word of mouth online and offline.

Another point is you don’t have to spend a fortune. Yes, money helps of course, but you can do a lot of things in word-of-mouth marketing by encouraging people
to speak, even for free. I mean there is always something that you have to invest, but a lot of it is not very expensive.

And finally buzz does not replace your marketing and that’s according to what I heard in other talks as well. Don’t make the mistake of stopping advertising or stop doing whatever you’re doing right now, because buzz is a little difficult to count on.

I went to one presentation that I really liked that Nicky Webb gave from Artichoke and I liked how she talked about viral marketing, but she also talked about a lot of effort that they make with traditional media. Don’t believe anyone who tells you that mass media is dead, because it’s not dead and in fact it can take your buzz and word of mouth to the next level, every time you get coverage in the media, so PR is still very important, your traditional media is very important.

**Being proactive**

Now, why do you need to be proactive about all that, sometimes people ask me – we have a good product, people will talk about it. Well, it doesn’t really work that way. Now let me give you an example for one of the case studies I wrote about in my new book and it’s called NOLS, the National Outdoor Leadership School, based in the US and what they do, they take students from UC Berkeley or students from Stanford, they take students for a semester in Alaska, a semester in Patagonia. You’re with ten other people in the wilderness for six months. Now guaranteed when you come back you have a lot to talk about and you talk like crazy, maybe for a week, two or three, but what they found was that over time, the buzz about NOLS stops. People run out of opportunities to talk, they forget stuff and this is exactly why you need to be proactive in re-igniting conversation by graduates or by alumni. So, what they specifically do, and that’s just one example of word-of-mouth marketing, they came up with this idea of the NOLS bus. The NOLS bus is not just a bus, it’s a bus that runs on recycled vegetable oil. So why? Because they’re environmentally friendly, of course, they have a whole story and they thought how can we come and visit campuses with this regular bus, so how about we do a bus that runs on recycled vegetable oil. So how do they involve their alumni? A couple of weeks before they come to a campus, you see this is an alumni, they send them an email and say, hey, you know, we’re coming out with this bus, it’s not just a bus, it’s a bus that’s running on recycled vegetable oil, can you help us find restaurants in the area that have good oil. Why, because not all oil is created equal when it comes to the bus, if it says animal fat it’s really bad for the engine, so it needs to be pure oil. I can tell you a lot about this bus, because I was for two weeks on this bus and I’m going to show you just for a second an image of me when I’m in the process of digging some oil from a back alley of a restaurant to send you home with no trauma. I’ll just show it to you for a second, this is me.
It wasn’t that bad. But anyway the process is you go in these back alley and help in the finding of oil and so on and then when the bus comes to campus, it has a climbing wall, so the alumni bring their friends along and challenge them.

Inside the bus you have this panel with pictures that alumni brought to the bus or sent to the bus and that makes people start telling stories – ‘I remember this was base camp just before we climbed that mountain’ – and that gets people talking and that’s the idea of word-of-mouth marketing, you get the people who already loved your experience to remember it again.

**Stimulating buzz**
There are nine strategies you can use to stimulate buzz and I want to make two points:

► **You can do it!**
► **Your advantage**

You *can* do it, really. I’ve been following companies from 1998, when I started writing my first book and in fact I would say you have an advantage, because you know when I speak at Nike or Pepsi or these companies, they have deep pockets, they have a lot of money, but they deal with stuff that is less interesting than the stuff you’re dealing with, so you really have an advantage when it comes to word-of-mouth marketing.
So, now let’s talk about what you can actually do. Let me tell you a story about this guy, Mark Schiller. Mark Schiller is a known character in the word-of-mouth marketing industry and he’s famous for, in the late 90s he created a lot of buzz for Christina Aguilera, he really built Christina Aguilera on the internet, you know, creating buzz for her. In 2001, Miramax the film company came to Mark and said, you know, whatever you did for Christina Aguilera, can you help us promote this movie with these two guys from NSync, remember NSync? And he said sure and he started with his team going to chat rooms, news groups, identifying opinion leaders, whatever you want to call them, you know, getting people to talk and this is what he told me when I interviewed him. He said we’d never seen anything like this, the passion was there, the word of mouth was there, very strong buzz. The movie opens, complete failure, complete failure, the movie bombed. What happened?

So Mark was so traumatised by the experience that he actually closed his office for two weeks trying to figure out what happened and his conclusion was – there is an important insight here – his conclusion was that indeed he was hearing a lot of buzz from people, but it came from a relatively small group of NSync enthusiasts. And that’s something that very often happens with buzz, we are all excited about the idea of six degrees of separation, you know, we’re all connected and all that is true, but it’s also true that we live in somewhat isolated social clusters and the first strategy that I want to talk about here is listening and measuring. You need to listen to buzz and measure buzz, but make sure that you pay attention, not only to the volume of buzz, but also to its dispersion. Dispersion meaning is it happening simultaneously in multiple geographies in your city or multiple geographies around the country, in different social clusters and so on and we’ll revisit this idea when we talk about creating buzz. When you create buzz you also want to make sure it happens in several areas.

**Measuring buzz**
These days you can also measure buzz online. I use a service called Scout Labs, they were nice enough to let me use their software, here, it took me three minutes to measure two brands. Anyone want to guess what these are?
It took me about three minutes to do it, just to give you the idea that you can constantly measure how much buzz these entities get online at any point in time and it’s really important to start doing it. There are lots of tools like this, some of them are free, so I highly recommend that you do it.

**Find good stories**
The second strategy is find good stories and by stories I don’t mean *War and Peace*, I mean little anecdotes about people, people love to tell little anecdotes about people.
This is Brian Maxwell, in the 80s he was a marathon runner. In one particular race he was running and really leading as number one, but then he got terrible stomachache and he ended up number seven. This led him on a journey to develop a product that I think you probably know, known as Power Bar. I interviewed Brian back in 1998 and this little story – which took me less than thirty seconds to tell you – was early on a story that spread among athletes and served as a piece of buzz in this business.

Here’s another story about a guy named Blake Mycoskie, I interviewed him for the new book. Back in 2005 or so he went to Argentina and saw these cool shoes that he said hey, I can sell these shoes maybe in the US. A couple of days later he came across some kids in a very poor neighbourhood outside of Buenos Aires who were running around with no shoes, hard to believe, but we have kids with no shoes on this planet and he said how about this, how about I start a company and for every pair of shoes that we sell, we give a pair of shoes to a child in need and he started a company TOMS Shoes and again it took me like thirty seconds to tell you this story, but this is what I mean by stories.

Two additional points about stories: one, again you have an advantage here, because you’re dealing with life, essentially, so stories are all over. The best stories are about people, so any time you have a story, a short story, like an anecdote about a person that is tied to your art or whatever, that’s something that can get more buzz.

**Evoke and emotional response**

We talk when we are afraid, when we are happy, when we’re excited, when we’re wowed, that’s when we talk, so any time you evoke emotional response, you’ll get more buzz.
This is from the second shoe drop that TOMS did in South Africa, they gave 50,000 shoes to children. I myself, I went to one of their shoe drops, of course this is something you talk about. The moment you’re emotional and so on you talk.

**Spread visual buzz**

Let me explain to you what I mean by visual buzz, because I think this will become more and more important in the future. A lot of what we learn in this world doesn’t come from words, but from us observing what other people are doing. You notice someone with earphones for an iPod and millions of things that we learn through visual buzz, not through words. You’re familiar with the strong bracelets? Someone there took the abstract concept of living with cancer and translated to something that people observe on the street. 55,000,000 of these have been sold all around the world.

So that creates a lot of visual buzz. A study was done for Adidas on MySpace, and the question that this study posed was, where does the value for Adidas come from being on MySpace and their conclusion was very clear. Most of the value for Adidas didn’t come from kids emailing each other, hey, Adidas is cool, but from kids observing that their friend downloaded Adidas stuff.

Another example is a campaign that the Museum of Modern Art, MOMA, did. They developed this little magnet that people can stick on metal objects around the city and thank God, we have a lot of metal objects and that’s again a form of visual buzz. So, the question you want to ask yourself, if I go to your play or I go to your museum or I visited whatever you offer, can others see that I attended your event and that’s something that I think you constantly have to think about because more and more observing other people will become a form of buzz. Today, you know, a lot of my friends learn about my activities by just watching me on Facebook. I don’t email them, hey, I’m going to this conference, they just see that I’m going.
Give people something to talk about
That’s one of the biggest challenges in word-of-mouth marketing and in buzz, you constantly have to come up with new things to talk about. How many of you are familiar with this guy?

Okay, good, not enough, because I always look for an opportunity to show this video. This is a guy, now remember they advertise here blenders, okay, blenders, it’s more boring than anything that you do, but look at what they are doing: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg1ckCkm8YI. I think you get the idea. Before we leave him, you notice that the number of views, 8.7 million views so far and it’s still going.

What’s so brilliant about what they’re doing, first of all it’s tied very closely to the product benefit, because after you see a couple of them you say this is one robust blender, but also they keep coming up with new stuff to blend. It’s fantastic and it’s a campaign which really maintains itself.

Now I have a question for you about this. Where do they get the ideas for what to blend, anyone? Shout it out.

‘Twitter popularity.’
‘Selling the product.’
‘People suggest that to them, they demand to see them’

People demand, exactly, exactly. This is a very important part of this campaign. There is a form on their website that says, okay, you just saw an iPhone being blended, what would you like us to blend next and it has a room for the item and then you can even write an essay why, that’s optional and very important you put your email address and George Wright, the guy behind this campaign told me for the iPhone, they got one thousand requests, one thousand people requested the iPhone. When they had the iPhone filmed this commercial you just saw, of course all these one thousand people got an email that said, hey, you asked for an iPhone, we did an iPhone, here’s the link and what do these people then feel? Ownership, participation. This feeling, whenever you can create this feeling of ownership that I’m part of it, that I made it happen, that’s when you get extra
word of mouth, because I bet all these one thousand people told all their friends that they just did this, created an iPhone blended in a blender. So any time you can create participation, which is the fifth strategy through voting reviews, creation, we'll talk some more about creation, you are going to get more buzz.

Another example, there are a couple of guys who are very famous country singers in the US and here's another little gimmick that they do to give people something to talk about and I thought that's something you can definitely use. They go, before every performance and they hide some tickets somewhere and then they tweet about it to their followers. Now again you have the foundation of goodwill, because people love them and people go crazy and they told me that, you know, people kill for these tickets, because it's also going backstage and so on and so here, this is, they're at Walmart and hiding tickets under a shelf. In any case there is a lot you can do when it comes to giving people something to talk about.

I want to show you a great example for voting, because one thing I really like about voting, it's very simple. When something is very simple, you can have lots of people participating, but this is a campaign which is pretty brilliant. So what did they do here? This campaign was done for American Express and they were going to donate some money to the National Trust for historical preservation in the US. Now, they could have just written a cheque and written a press release, but they wanted to get some extra mileage out of it. So what did they do? They had a committee that chose twenty five sites, twenty five landmarks in every city. So they did it in San Francisco, then Chicago and then New Orleans, they still do it, I think.
Now, the trick is they say, okay, these are twenty five landmarks that are candidates for funding. We're going to fund thirteen and how are we going to pick the thirteen, the public will vote. You can vote once a day for six weeks and whoever gets most votes, I mean the thirteen that get most votes will get funded. Now what happens, each one of these projects, like this is the community centre in Chinatown in Chicago that I visited, this little thing, it's just a building, there is a whole community around it and the people who are passionate who run this place start encouraging everyone on a daily basis, hey, you know, American Express is giving $5 million to our community, but we'll get some of this money only if you vote and this created tremendous buzz through voting for this cause that American Express was giving. So you understand the idea here, by voting, you can really encourage people to spread the word about your message.

Encourage self expression and creativity
When we create we share, you guys know it better than me. People, the moment you let them create something they're going to show it to someone and this campaign was done for duct tape.
Again, I picked pretty boring products, just to show you that you can do pretty exciting things for a product that is not boring. So duct tape, one of the companies that makes duct tape in the US, they came up ten years ago with the idea of prom night dress made out of duct tape. They run a competition every year, create a tuxedo or prom night dress out of duct tape, these are just two entries I chose from this year’s competition. I think it’s still open if you want to join, but this is obviously people are part of it, the whole school knows about it, they tell everyone, when people create, when you allow people to participate and express themselves, they are going to create buzz. But there is a catch here and that’s something I overheard during the conference from time to time, I mean it’s a numbers game. How many people will go into the trouble of creating a dress out of duct tape? Okay, if you do something with this, you will get only a few people with deep engagement. On one end of the spectrum and I’m not saying that one thing is better than other, but here you get a lot of engagement, but very few people will actually do it. On the other end of the spectrum, you can do something like voting that really doesn’t require anything except for clicking, you’ll get the masses. You can do both.

Let me show you an example for something I think is brilliant that was done for Bob Dylan and I think it’s brilliant because it’s very simple to do, yet you can be creative. So, I can write a poem here and then Bob Dylan with a card, do you remember this famous scene from a 1964 movie?
So I can say hey, AMA Leeds, I want to hear everything, I hear that barbecue last
night was great. Okay and now I can send it to a friend, in this case I'll just
preview the message to show, but the reason why I like it so much and there
were like a quarter million people did it, okay, well we'll watch it.

Song plays

So this is, as I said, 250,000 people actually created this little song. You saw how
quickly you could do that. I asked him by the way, Bob Dylan didn't know
anything about that, so we're talking about something that is separate from the
art, this is marketing, of course somebody there had to approve it, but the main
idea is that this is something that you let people participate in a very simple way
and yet feel very creative. This is the future, I think we'll see much more of that,
although it's currently pretty difficult to put together, but we'll see much more of
that, things that are simple, yet create a great sense of creativity.

Make it easy to spread the word
You know, people are busy, they're inundated with information, make it easy,
make it simple. Let me tell you about a boring campaign that I did when I was in
marketing, software marketing. So we introduced our software, it was called End
Note first in 1988, it's a boring product for academics. In 1988, we introduced it
on a Macintosh, in 1995, we finally had a Windows version, so what do you do,
we gave each Mac user one coupon and we told them this is one coupon you
can give to a friend who uses Windows. It's limited to one copy per person and
they can buy the software for $99. Now again we had the foundation of goodwill,
our customers loved End Note, our Mac users loved End Note. They also knew
that $99 was really a good deal. I don't know if you know much about coupon
redemption rates, usually they're way under 1%. More than 20% of these
coupons were redeemed, so we just did something very simple, we made it easy
for them to spread the word.

Let me give you another much more recent example. Ben and Jerry’s, do you
have Ben and Jerry’s in the UK? Good, I'm glad. Ben and Jerry’s, they have a
tradition that goes back to 1979, it’s called free cone day, at least in the US, you
walk into a participating store, get a free scoop ice cream, you learn about ice
cream at the location and so on, great. In 2008, the team at Ben and Jerry’s sat
down and said, okay, how can we create extra buzz out of this, how can we do
something more and what they did on Facebook, a couple of days before free
cone day, you saw this icon of a cone with some text about free cone day and
said give this to your friend as a gift. Now it wasn't a coupon or anything, just give
this. Within twenty four hours, half a million Facebook members passed it on to a
friend and we know their exact numbers, because that's something that Ben and
Jerry’s actually bought from Facebook, so half a million Facebook members
exchanged these gifts. Again, this is an example for what you can do in social
media by making it easy and fun for people to spread the word. Now, I hope you
all have this type of mechanism on your website, if you don’t, this is something extremely easy, it’s cheap, I mean it’s free, something that allows people to quickly link your website to their Facebook page or to Twitter and so on. There are a bunch of these mechanisms that are available now and as far as I remember, all of them are free. So just make it easy for customers to spread the word or for your audience to spread the word.

**Using Influencers**

There is no doubt about one thing: some people talk more than others and I call them hubs. I make a distinction between social hubs, people who talk more because they know more people and expert hubs, people who talk more because they know more about something and then there are evangelists or happy visitors, whatever you would call them who are simply people who love you, they’re excited, but don’t confuse them with people who are perhaps in their networks.

Okay, so here are a couple of examples. One is about James Cohma. He’s a barber in the south side of Chicago and I visited several barbers in Chicago and he talks a lot about prostrate cancer, specifically about the need for African Americans to be screened for prostrate cancer. Why does he talk about this so much? Because there is this organisation that decided to spread the word about this health issue among barbers. Why barbers? Because barbers talk a lot and especially in the African American community, the barber shop is really a place you just hang out around. So this was an extra successful campaign.

Another woman I interviewed for my book, Susan Brandley, is an example of an expert hub. So Susan is an accountant by day and in the evening she loves to support technical questions about small business servers. It sounds pretty boring, but that’s what she does, she loves it. So no wonder Microsoft invites her once a year to be at Microsoft for three days and talk to the programmers and so on. So that’s the idea of hubs. Hubs are very important and especially, I think for you, social hubs.

I want to say something about social hubs, so people in the community who are active locally in the parent, teacher association or in city hall. There is research that shows at least in the US that these people also make more product recommendations and here I picked just, there are stats about movies and TV shows, they significantly recommend more than other people, the reason is they just talk more, they just, they know more people, they love to talk.

**Seeding**

I want to revisit the issue of wide scale seeding. Remember when I talked about Brian Maxwell and his power bars? So this guy invented power bars and he was after athletes, so who do you go to if you want to influence athletes, what athletes will eat. Anyone, who can influence athletes?
Coaches.

Exactly, coaches, trainers and that’s exactly how he promoted it initially and I asked him something, I said, okay, let’s say you go to Stanford, isn’t it enough to find a swimming coach at Stanford and they will tell everyone and he said something important, he said, no, we really had to plant separate seeds in each area. You know, swimmers don’t talk to tennis players, tennis players don’t talk to runners, runners don’t talk to golfers. Yeah, eventually they talk, but if you want to accelerate word of mouth, which is the whole idea here, you really need to send your extension into every one of these social clusters. Remember Mark Schiller with this problem with the movie that failed – that’s the mirror image of this. If you want to create buzz, you want to make sure you really reach out to different geographies, different social circles, different classes, whatever, different professions. In the book publishing industry it’s very common and it’s done through sending out advance copies. This is a book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, anyone here familiar with it? This book sold 20 million copies in the US, if you want to understand the US, America, read this book. It’s a religious book, but it was done with initial seeding of 400,000 copies, which is mind-boggling. You need to talk about thousands not hundreds when you do these types of seeding campaigns and you need to go beyond the usual suspects. You know in every industry, I was in high tech, there is always this list of one hundred analysts who are the most important people. I’m not saying that they’re not, they were very important, but think beyond that, we’re talking about wide-scale seeding, when you have a new product, a new exhibition, whatever, don’t think about hundreds, think about thousands. Numbers make a difference in this game of seeding.

**Summary**

We talked about listening and measuring, we talked about finding good stories, stories that people will pass on to others, we talked about evoking emotions. That’s extremely important, when people feel emotional they will talk. We talked about visual buzz, the idea that you want people to have something they can project to their friends, give us something to talk about. If you create something like Will It Blend, the initial budget for Will It Blend, the first commercial was $50. Hiding tickets, you know, the thing that they do, hide tickets and put it on Twitter doesn’t cost them almost anything. There are lots of things that you can do for really low budget. Encourage participation, remember we talked about that, encourage self expression and if you make it really easy, self expression like the Bob Dylan one you get a lot of participation. Make it easy to spread the word, it can be a coupon like we did with End Note or it can be something like Ben and Jerry did and we talked about working with hubs.

It really requires a new attitude. We are not talking about tricking customers or, you know, writing reviews, hiring some students to write reviews of your later show or something. If you want to get into word-of-mouth marketing and I think you should, you need to use an open approach of here we are, this is our product, this is our exhibition or play or whatever and you have to expose
yourself to some extent. There is the Word of Mouth Marketing Association, www.womma.org/ethics - they have a great ethical code and some guidelines regarding ethics.

Now there is also www.wommauk.net – a great organisation, really fantastic people who try to put together, I think they already have a code of ethics about how to deal with it, because there are some areas that are not clear, that need to be for disclosure, when you give somebody something and so on. So I highly recommend that you go to these websites and explore this more before you get on your next campaign. You have to be original, there is no way around it. I mean if you create one of these live strong bracelets, you know the yellow one in 2004 everyone wants to know what it is, you know, 2010 if you create yet another one in red or blue or whatever, of course the buzz factor goes down significantly, it’s not as buzz-worthy and finally the most important thing is think network. With everything that you do, don’t think how you’re going to impact the customer specifically, but think about how are you going to impact this customer to pass on the word to other customers.

Some tips for success
I want to finish with five tips to get you started, you know, five things you can do tomorrow morning. First of all, don’t start by brainstorming, but start by listening, start by hearing what people are already saying about you, because they are – people obviously talk about whatever you have to offer. Really begin ‘talking’ to customers, using online listening tools, whatever. What is it that people are already talking about now? Try to amplify it with everything that I talked about and add a tangible element.

5 tips to get you started

1. Start with the current buzz
2. Add a tangible element
3. Create an event (a special event)
4. Run a simple tell-a-friend promo
5. Ask the audience to tell their stories

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