

# The Four-Step Guide to Multiplying Your Word of Mouth



It's a shame if a talker only talks to one person. But you can expand the power of your talkers by making it easier for them to share with more than one person at a time.

There are plenty of ways to make your word of mouth spread further and faster. In this article, you'll learn about four tools to help you do it.

## 1. Twofers

The classic “two for the price of one” offer is all about word of mouth. This works best with things that need a second person present, like movie tickets (it's hard to sit in two seats at the same time). You get bonus word of mouth when the talker is asking around, looking for that friend to share it with.

## 2. Make Your Pages Super-Viral

Make it really, really easy for users to share your web pages. You can do so much more than just the standard tell-a-friend form. Design the entire page to encourage word of mouth.

YouTube beat out 30 identical competitors to become the biggest video-sharing site. The secret? It is really good at asking people to email their friends and makes it incredibly easy. Every page has many ways to share a video, including:

- A “Share” link
- HTML code ready to paste right into your own website
- Links that can automatically send the video to your social network accounts without leaving YouTube
- After you watch the video, it fills the screen with another “Share” link
- A super-simple form for sharing that takes less than three seconds to use
- Saving the email addresses of people you send to so you can send to them again (This is powerful. If you send a video to your mom the first time and your sister the second time, both email addresses are waiting to be used again without retyping. The next time you go to share a video with your dad, there's good chance that you'll also send it to mom and sis, because their emails are right there.)

## 3. Build Word of Mouth into Your Product

Look for ways to build word of mouth right into your stuff. The challenge: Add qualities or features that make spreading the word an automatic result of using the product.

The creation of Hotmail is a classic story of word of mouth marketing. In 18 months, the company went from zero to more than eight million users, then was sold for \$400 million, with little more promotion than word of mouth. The secret? Every email had a little link at the bottom that said “Get Your Free Email from Hotmail.” Hotmail is what we would call a pure viral product—there is no way to use the product without also spreading word of mouth about it.

It won't work for everything, but try to find features that make using your product and sharing your product part of the same process.

## 4. Look for Network Effects

If you had the only fax machine in the world, it would be useless. If a few people have them it's okay, but they get exponentially more useful as more people get them. That's the network effect. You've seen it for phones, faxes, email, instant messaging, and most new communication technologies. Network effects put out giant waves of word of mouth.

Think about calling circles, buddy lists, team discounts, and any other reason why a customer would benefit when her friends use your product, too.