

# UNLEASHING THE IDEAVIRUS

Turn Your Ideas Into Epidemics  
By Helping Your Customers Do  
The Marketing For You

SETH GODIN

**SETH GODIN** is the author of numerous books, including *Permission Marketing*, *The Bootstrapper's Bible* and *Point & Click Investing*. He was the founder of Yoyodyne, the first direct marketer on the Internet, which was acquired by Yahoo! in 1998. Mr. Godin served as Vice President of Direct Marketing for Yahoo! before leaving early in 2000 to devote time to writing and speaking. His Web site (including at present a downloadable copy of this book) is at <http://www.ideavirus.com>.

**SUMMARIES.COM** is a concentrated business information service. Every week, subscribers are e-mailed a concise summary of a different business book. Each summary is about 8 pages long and contains the stripped-down essential ideas from the entire book in a time-saving format. By investing less than one hour per week in these summaries, subscribers gain a working knowledge of the top business titles. Subscriptions are available on a monthly or yearly basis. Further information is available at <http://www.summaries.com>.

**MAIN IDEA**

Instead of using expensive mass advertising, the most effective way to market products and services in a network enabled economy is to create highly satisfied early customers – and then provide them with the tools, incentives and rewards they need to market your product or service to everybody else.

Companies that achieve this create and unleash an Ideavirus – a marketing vehicle that acts just like a biological or computer virus as it spreads and propagates from one person to another. The Internet is the ideal medium for “word-of-mouth” recommendations to be circulated and passed on to others who hopefully will do the same thing for a few of their friends, and so on. Managed well, a good idea encapsulated within an Ideavirus can grow to a huge size simply and purely on the strength of this self-replication effect.

Section 1 – The Concept of Ideaviruses – And Why They Matter . . . . . Page 2

An Ideavirus is a network based marketing program where existing customers market a product or service to other consumers. Properly executed, an Ideavirus is the ultimate form of a digitally augmented word-of-mouth referral system. Simply put, Ideaviruses are the most cost-effective way to market products and services within a network enabled environment.

Section 2 – How To Build Your Own Ideavirus . . . . . Pages 3 - 4

You start and then grow an Ideavirus by:

1. Developing an idea that’s worth talking about.
2. Identifying the hive you want to dominate.
3. Exposing your idea to the right people within that hive.
4. Figuring out exactly how your virus should be explained.
5. Making it easy for people to spread the word about your idea.
6. Getting permission to contact consumers again in the future.
7. Building a self reinforcing idea.
8. Matching expenditure to the evolving needs of the idea.

Section 3 – Hints on Fine-Tuning and Enhancing An Ideavirus. . . . . . Pages 5 - 6

To build and expand your Ideavirus, try these suggestions:

1. Make money later rather than sooner.
2. Try and develop a 5-word catchphrase.
3. Exploit the power of bestseller lists adroitly.
4. Inject some personality into your Ideavirus.
5. Position your Ideavirus as best in the world.
6. Pick your medium carefully.
7. Offset the trailblazer’s sense of danger.
8. The more people, the better.
9. Remember, the Internet doesn’t care how you make money.
10. Balance early-adopter’s cool with late-adopter’s utility.
11. Critical mass and self fulfilling prophecies.
12. Make Ideavirus building an art form.
13. Pre-condition your target market.
14. Always attempt to buck the status quo.
15. Digitally enhance every word of mouth encounter.
16. Be the first to use Ideavirus strategies.

Section 4 – Ideavirus Case Studies . . . . . Pages 7 - 8

Products and services that have successfully adopted the Ideavirus marketing techniques include:

1. Hotmail.com
2. Referrals.com
3. The new VW Beetle
4. Harry Potter books
5. Blue Mountain Arts
6. Amazon.com
7. Fast Company magazine
8. Les Nomades Restaurant
9. The Bridges of Madison County
10. Napster.com
11. Vindigo.com
12. Home shopping network
13. America Online
14. Yahoo!
15. The Aitkins Diet
16. The Harvey Wallbanger
17. Mission:Imp
18. eBay

# Summaries.Com

The Ultimate Business Library



We condense **300+ page** business books into **8-page** summaries.

By reading summaries, you'll get the **key ideas** in **30 mins**, so you can spend more time turning your ideas into **dollars**.

## Knowledge is Power — Invest in Your Future

For just **\$2 per week**, you will...

- Learn from the mistakes and success of the smartest people in business;
- Get fresh ideas, strategies & motivation that could be worth millions to you;
- Follow emerging trends, so you can catch the wave before your competitors do;
- Catch up on the classics you always wanted to read.

## 1,000 Top Business Book Summaries

Our catalog includes summaries on a range of topics for aspiring entrepreneurs, managers, and consultants.

BUSINESS PLANS

MANAGEMENT

PRESENTATIONS

SALES

LEADERSHIP

MOTIVATION

STRATEGY

AND MORE

