

Determinants of Consumers' Attitudes towards Viral Marketing Practices: Empirical Evidence from Pioneer Institute of Business and Technology

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The rapid advancement of information technology has opened many cost effective avenues for marketers to communicate their messages to customers. One of the emerging techniques of marketing communications through the use of information technology is viral marketing, which is widely recognized as a prolific direct marketing tool for marketers across the world. Despite the extant literature postulates that individuals who pass along messages play a vital role in viral marketing practices, factors that result in increased acceptance of viral marketing practices by consumers remain largely unknown. This study addresses voids in extant literature by examining factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards viral marketing practices of Pioneer Institute of Business Technology (PIBT). A total of 236 sets of questionnaire were distributed to target respondents from Colombo district in database of PIBT. However, there are only 182 set of questionnaire is usable for analysis. Correlation and regression analysis were used as the major analytical techniques. The study findings indicate that Informativeness and source credibility have a positive, statistically significant impact on consumers' attitudes towards viral marketing practices of PIBT whereas irritation has a negative, statistically significant impact on consumers' attitudes towards viral marketing practices of PIBT. However entertainment did not emerge as a determinant of consumers' attitudes towards viral marketing practices of PIBT. Implications for the marketing managers are to create and deliver viral marketing messages through a credible source that provides informative, authentic and trustworthy messages to customers. Moreover, the adoption of these findings in viral marketing campaigns may lead to more positive consumers' attitudes towards viral marketing practices of PIBT.

Keywords: Viral marketing practices, PIBT, Consumers, Attitudes