



# The Power of Six Degrees

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Changing the way we think about communication

**DDB<sup>°</sup>**



## Introduction

These days, a lot of people talk about 360 degree solutions. Everyone's doing it. Trying to surround consumers with advertising. Using every channel and touchpoint.

Following people wherever they go. Bombarding their 'target audience' with intrusive messages at every turn. But the truth is, it just isn't working any longer.

For one thing, it's incredibly expensive.

And, for another, intrusive messages can be pretty irritating after a while.

According to Synovate's global study on media and advertising from November 2009, ad avoidance is increasing. 87% have actively tried to avoid ads on TV or radio. 50% of respondents in Hong Kong and Taiwan say there are too many ads on cell phones. 67% actively take measures to avoid websites with intrusive advertising.

Clearly 360 degrees isn't the marketing cure-all some people claim. So we have a different idea.

**Instead of 360 degrees, how about six degrees?**

**Clearly 360 degrees isn't the marketing cure-all some people claim.**



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## What is six degrees?

You remember the old urban myth about Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon. The idea that everyone in Hollywood could be connected to the actor Kevin Bacon in six steps or less. It helped to spawn a whole new field of science. Network science. Scientists discovered that nature has a hidden blueprint. A structure that connects us all. Every network has its hubs and connectors.

The scientists believe the six degrees finding has the potential to change the way we fight terrorism, predict pandemics and combat the spread of disease. And, more importantly of course, we believe it can also change the way we approach advertising.

If everybody really is connected to everyone else, they can help spread our message for us. All we need to do is create something compelling, involving and valuable enough for people to want to pass on.



## People are the most important media

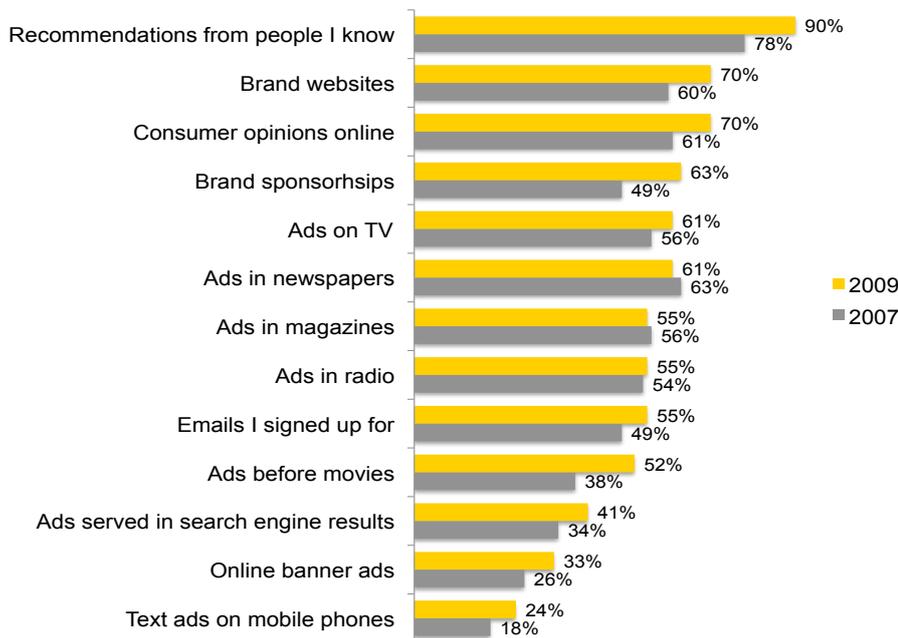
In many ways ‘six degrees’ is not a new idea. It builds on something we’ve believed for a long time. That people are the most important media. Bill Bernbach famously said ‘*Word of mouth is the best medium of all.*’ In the 21st century, the power of word of mouth has been kicked into hyperdrive by technology.

Today, social media has overtaken porn as the number one activity on the web. There are over 200,000,000 blogs, 77% of internet users read blogs and 34% of bloggers post opinions about products and brands and the statistics are showing an exponential growth. If Facebook were a country it would be the 3rd largest in terms of its population and more than 1.5 million pieces of content are shared...daily...on Facebook.

People don’t just like to share their views, we also find that recommendations which come via friends and family are more powerful than those that come from advertising.

Just look at this comparison from Nielsen.

### Trust Somewhat / Completely



Source: The Nielsen Company. Global survey of over 25,000 consumers online across more than 50 markets. July 2009

According to Bain, the most recommended company in its category grows **2.5** times the category average. Meanwhile, McKinsey estimate that **2/3** of the economy is influenced by personal recommendation. People are the most influential media. So, if we can turn customers into advocates and find ways to engage a ‘six degree effect,’ then it could have transformational effects for our clients. The ‘six degree’ effect can reduce their dependency on ‘paid media’ vs ‘earned media’ and create huge savings for them.

## Will 'six degrees' work for brands?

But is it really possible to create a 'six degree effect' for a brand? Will people really share and pass on content related to brands?

**Yes.**

In fact, they're already doing it. Work from around the DDB Network is already creating the 'six degree' effect. According to Synovate more than 70% of respondents have discussed ads they have seen with friends. 43% have searched for an ad online (e.g. on YouTube) and 38% have shared links with friends. Nearly three in ten across 11 markets have promoted a brand or campaign on their social networking page or become a fan of a brand. Some of the biggest increases in online brand engagement behavior over the past year can be found across Asia. Especially in China where 53% have searched for an ad online, 40% have shared links to ads and 35% have promoted a brand via social networking.



## Six degrees in action

Over the last two years, we've created six degree effects with traditional pieces of film/TV like 'Bud Swear Jar'. Around interactive films for Philips TVs (Carousel and Parallel Lines). With integrated social media campaigns like those for Canada Tourism and VW People's reviewer. We've created six degree ripples playing off cultural events like the solar eclipse, for J&J Neutrogena's SunStopper campaign. And we've even created promotions with six degree effects, such as that for Spain's Bellotta Tools. From this experience we believe that, with the right level of creativity, you can create a 'six degree' effect around any kind of brand, problem or activity, in any sector and in any country.

Here are three examples from different markets and categories with a little more detail.



## Clorox Green Works Reverse Graffiti

Green Works set out to become the #1 green cleaner within one year of launch. In our research we found a clear problem with most cleaners. As one of the consumers said, “The cure is worse than the disease.”

It is unacceptable to have a dirty home, but introducing cleaning chemicals into the home feels just as bad. The trouble was, they didn’t really believe that the alternative - existing green cleaners, actually worked.

So, we needed to prove that Green Works was a natural cleaner that actually worked. We decided to create a product demo. But a product demo with a difference.

“Clean tagging” artists create graffiti in reverse. Instead of adding paint to a wall, they clean a wall to create an image. We commissioned one of the top clean taggers to ‘clean a mural’ of plants and trees out of the filthy

140-foot wall at the entrance of San Francisco’s Broadway tunnel, using Green Works.

If Green Works could clean years of dirt and grime off the Broadway Tunnel, it could probably cope with your bathroom.

We made a documentary about the event and housed it on ReverseGraffitiProject.com, giving people an inside look at the project.

The documentary also debuted on YouTube and was seeded on popular social and environmental blogs like beingboing, The Huffington Post, Al Gore’s *Current TV.net* and Discovery Channel’s *Planet Green*.

It became the #1 YouTube video in 13 countries over two days, with over 400,000 views in the first week. It generated more than 200 blog posts in the first week.



And 7.5 million media impressions, worth 2.1 million USD with a total spend of just 55K USD.

Within 6 months, Green Works had become the #1 green cleaner.

It had also doubled the size of the green cleaning category. And, more than a year later, the mural is still visible.





## Telstra Mum 2.0 Digital Makeover

When Australia’s largest telco asked DDB Sydney to review their long-running, TV-led ‘Call Mum’ campaign, a number of things became clear.

The “guilt” proposition of Call Mum wasn’t resonating with the audience anymore. But while few people were talking about ‘Call Mum’ online, there were literally thousands of conversations about how parents were parents connecting online.

Using the social media that kids thought was designed just for them. The dominant theme was “OMG – Mum’s on Facebook”.

And the theme was polarizing: some kids loved connecting with their parents via Facebook and IM, and others were aghast at the thought.

Through analysis of over 10,000 conversations a unique insight – and opportunity– emerged. Mums need to understand net etiquette if they are to connect with their kids better.

The opportunity for Telstra was to deliver a digital makeover to Australian mums.

So, we ran a campaign for kids to ‘dob in their mum’ for a digital makeover and another targeted at mums, inviting them to learn the etiquette in a fun ‘makeover’ style. An instructional booklet was



inserted in Australian Women’s Weekly.

We enlisted comedian and mum Wendy Harmer to lead a national PR campaign and, online, we hosted six video tutorials, informative enough for mums to learn from, and funny enough for kids to send around.

Everything led consumers to the Mum 2.0 website, which provided instant connectivity with the Digital Mum Facebook page.

Here, mums and young alike could share advice.

There were weekly prizes for sharing experiences and polls for further engagement.

There was also a final “exam” where mums could become a fully accredited Mum 2.0.

The program is still running with more digital tutorials and retail integration coming up in the next few months. The increase in mentions from the previous Call Mum campaign is at 1200% and there was a 100% increase in positive mentions for Mum 2.0 compared with other recent Telstra campaigns.

There’s a growing Facebook community of over 4,000 mothers and kids who are

now actively engaged with Telstra.

The total number of unique visitors to the website. hit 125,000+ in the first few months (150% more than the previous campaign that ran for 7 months).

The PR had a circulation reach of 13,739,337 people, with an advertising value of \$315,375.76. We achieved an ROI on the ad spend of 3:1.

But most importantly, Mum 2.0 Digital Makeover is not a ‘campaign’, but an ongoing conversation with Australian mums and kids. Turning them into Telstra brand advocates.

In the next phase of the campaign we’re developing more video and written tutorials and using our digital mums and kids as an outreach medium to convince their friends and their friends’ mums to become Mum 2.0 certified. According to Bain, the most recommended company in its category grows 2.5 times the category average. Meanwhile, McKinsey estimate that 2/3 of the economy is influenced by personal recommendation. People are the most influential media. So, if we can turn customers into advocates and find ways to engage a ‘six degree effect,’ then it could have transformational effects for our clients. The ‘six degree’ effect can reduce their dependency on ‘paid media’ vs ‘earned media’ and create huge savings for them.



## VW Fun Theory “the most viral video in the world”

The eco car market is booming. An environmental focus is no longer new news, particularly in Sweden, a market awash with green advertising. So how could we launch VW’s BlueMotion technologies & improve VW’s green credentials?

As with Green Works, again we found a clear tension in the market which we could help to resolve. Despite feeling they should buy green, many of our potential audience didn’t really want to buy green. It all seemed a little bit like hard work and they worried that when it came to cars, they would have to trade off driving performance for green credentials. The reality is very different: VW cars with BlueMotion technology are fun to drive.

So, our idea was challenge the current belief that green is dull and hard work and show that green can be fun. More than that, we wanted to show that it is possible to change behavior for the better by making things more fun. We called this ‘the Fun Theory’.



Instead of just creating some traditional advertising around green being fun, DDB Stockholm and VW decided to create some social experiments.



A stairway at a Stockholm subway station was turned into a giant piano in order to encourage people to take the stairs not the escalator next door. People voted with their feet. 66% more of them chose the stairs over the escalator, compared to an average day.



A waste bin was modified with sound effects. It attracted more than twice as much rubbish compared to a normal bin nearby.



Finally, a bottle recycling station was turned into an arcade game where you gained points by putting bottles in the correct hole when a light lit up. Close to a hundred people used it during the



evening it was put up compared to two people who used a nearby recycling station that same evening.

We also created an award for the best new experiment to test out ‘the fun theory’.

All this was housed on a website, the funtheory.com.

It created enormous attention - over 11 million views on Youtube, 6,000 subscribers to our Youtube Channel, 14,000 tweets and nearly 4,000 blog posts. International sites have copied and posted the video independently no less than 163 times, meaning the actual viewing figures have probably be doubled.

The list of publications and television programs that have featured the Fun Theory is a long and prestigious one from the biggest Swedish newspapers like *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* to automotive magazines to international media giants like *The Guardian*, *LA Times*, *the New York Times* and even the Discovery Channel. The list of blogs and other consumer media that have praised the Fun Theory includes the well-known environmentalists at *Top Gear.com*, *The Freakonomics Blog*, *Mashable.com*, *BoingBoing* (the world’s most popular blog), *The NY Times Wheels Blog*, *Doga* (Japan) - and that’s on top of the usual automotive blogs.

The earned media value was enormous and the effect on the brand and sales has also been strong.

## What's the secret to creating a 'six degree' effect?

We have found that whatever the category or country, there appear to be some clear lessons in creating a six degree effect.

- First you need to be absolutely clear about what your brand stands for and what behavior it is you are trying to change.
- Second, you need to find a cultural tension your brand can help to resolve or a relevant passion that your brand can be associated with.

That way, you can unlock the desired new behavior. Where there is tension or passion, there is also heat, energy and conversation both on and offline.

And that creates the momentum required for 'six degrees.'

- Third, you need to create content with 'share value' built in – ideas which people can participate in, play with and pass on.
- Finally, if it's going to be shared, the content you create must be innovative, entertaining and/or useful. Or ideally, all three

Only those with a real understanding of social creativity will master the final point and be to create 6 degree effects for their clients consistently.



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**DDB Worldwide Communications Group Inc (www.ddb.com ) is one of the world's largest and most influential advertising and marketing services network. With more than 200 offices in over 90 countries, DDB provides creative business solutions by its proprietary philosophy and process built upon the goal of influence. DDB and its marketing partners create and deliver unique, enduring, and powerful brand experiences for competitive advantage.**

DDB is excited by ideas. We invite you to visit our website to share yours and keep abreast of ours. We believe that creativity is the most powerful force in business and that ideas get sharper with more minds rubbing against them.

The logo for DDB, consisting of the letters 'DDB' in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font, followed by a small yellow circle with a dark blue outline, resembling a degree symbol.