

THE CONCEPT OF VIRALITY

2020



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BHM, 32 Community Road, Off Allen Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos.

www.bhmng.com

contact@bhmng.com

Contents

(Click Through To Navigate To Specific Pages)

- Introduction 4.
- Background 5.
- Don't Leave Me Challenge 6.
- Don't Rush Challenge 8.
- 10 Year Challenge 11.
- Elements of Virality 14.
- How Some Brands Took Advantage of Viral Trends 16.
- A Cross Section of Posts 18.
- The Unutilized Value of Virality 19.
- Conclusion 20.

INTRODUCTION

BHM Research & Intelligence presents a report, highlighting the concept of virality, with three recent trends, as case studies:

- **Don't Leave Me Challenge**
- **Don't Rush Challenge**
- **10 Year Challenge**

This report, available for free on our website, attempts to provide lessons for public relations professionals, social and digital media marketers, creative agencies, brand managers and content teams.

Why did the challenges become so popular so fast? Why are some brands benefitting from associating with it, while others are being burnt? How can brands recognise opportunities to create, or latch on to moments and contents that can get the world talking? Should they even try?

This is a follow up on BHM Research and Intelligence's first Concept of Virality Report in 2016 that highlighted the concept of virality, with Nigerian hawker-turned-model Olajumoke Orisaguna as a case study.

BACKGROUND

The Merriam-Webster dictionary describes virality as a means through which someone or something is spread or popularized quickly and widely by means of social media and eventually other forms of media.

Becoming 'viral' means that a piece of news or content has become incredibly popular in a period by being shared from thousands (sometimes even millions) of people. Due to its popularity, the news/image or video is often picked up by other media channels helping to increase its reach.

The study of virality shows that there's no one-size-fits-all formula for viral content, however, these viral content share some common elements.

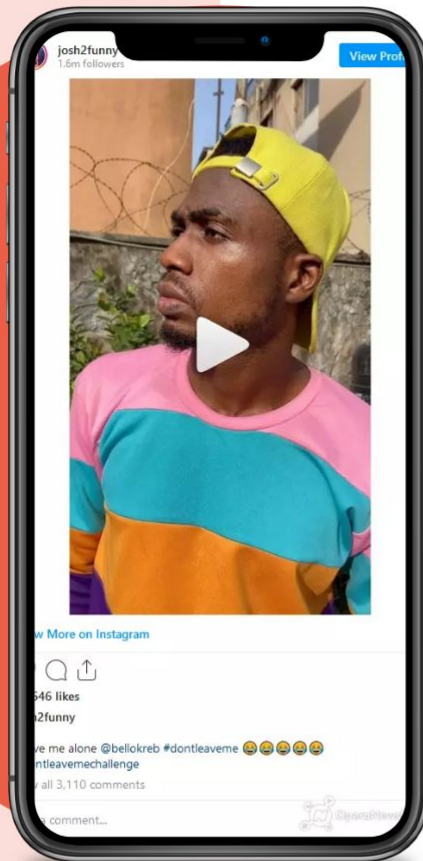


The first edition of BHM's Concept of Virality which X-rayed Olajumoke the bread seller as a major case study showed that as commodities, celebrities play a vital role in showcasing products and services that are consumed by the public.

Over the years, it has become easier for user generated content to thrive with the advent of platforms like Tik-Tok which helps to create spontaneous content that feature exciting mix of text, audio and video.

Additional features such as Whatsapp and Facebook status have also made it easier and faster to share contents.

DON'T LEAVE ME CHALLENGE



DON'T LEAVE ME CHALLENGE

On March 24, 2020, Josh2funny posted a skit on Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter comprising a series of puns.

In the skit, he is seen standing on leaves from a tree, and when asked by his friend and camera operator, Bello Kreb, to say something to the camera, he joked that he couldn't because he was "on leave". His friend's chants of "Don't Leave Me" as Josh2funny walked away at the end of the video gave the challenge its name.

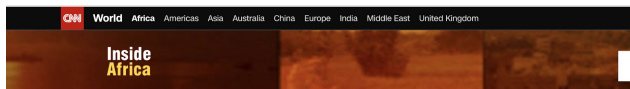
As at July 1, 2020, the challenge has almost 2 billion views across social media.

“The funny play on words has gotten over 1 million views on Twitter and recreated multiple times by TikTok users from the United States, Japan, Europe and other parts of the world.”

The funny play on words has gotten over 1 million views on Twitter and recreated multiple times by TikTok users from the United States, Japan, Europe and other parts of the world with hundreds of social media users mimicking his play on words.

DON'T LEAVE ME CHALLENGE

The 29-year-old's skit went viral in June, and recently got featured on international platforms like [Time](#), [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [BuzzFeed](#), [Teen Vogue](#) and [The Guardian](#).



This Nigerian comic is getting a lot of love on T with the 'Don't Leave Me' challenge

By Aisha Salaudeen, CNN
 Updated 1332 GMT (2132 HKT) June 27, 2020

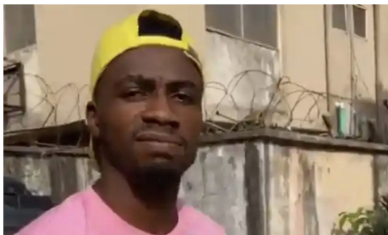


Nigeria

'Don't leave me' challenge makes Nigerian comedy go viral

Josh2funny's punny Instagram video highlights highs and lows of fame for internet creators

Emmanuel Akinwotu West
 Africa correspondent
 Thu 2 Jul 2020 05:00 BST



Josh Alfred, a Nigerian comedian popularly known as Josh2funny, is on

TEENMOGIE

STYLE POLITICS CULTURE IDENTITY SUMMIT

Culture

Don't Leave Me Challenge Is Making Africans a Monolithic Punchline

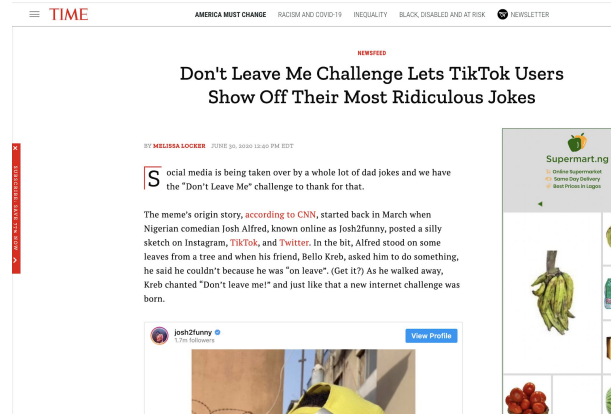
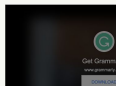
There's a cultural erasure when we decontextualize every Black person from the continent as a stereotype.

BY TAYO BERO
 JUNE 23, 2020

In this op-ed writer Tayo Bero unpacks the insidious nature of joking about African culture and perpetuating the idea that Africans are monolithic.

Social media challenges have been a huge part of popular culture over the last few months. The easy games created on TikTok, SnapChat, and Instagram have provided a way to kill time, and become standard recreation in the age of coronavirus. The latest of these to light up social media is the "Don't Leave Me" challenge. Stated by Nigerian actor and comedian Josh Alfred. Known online as

WATCH

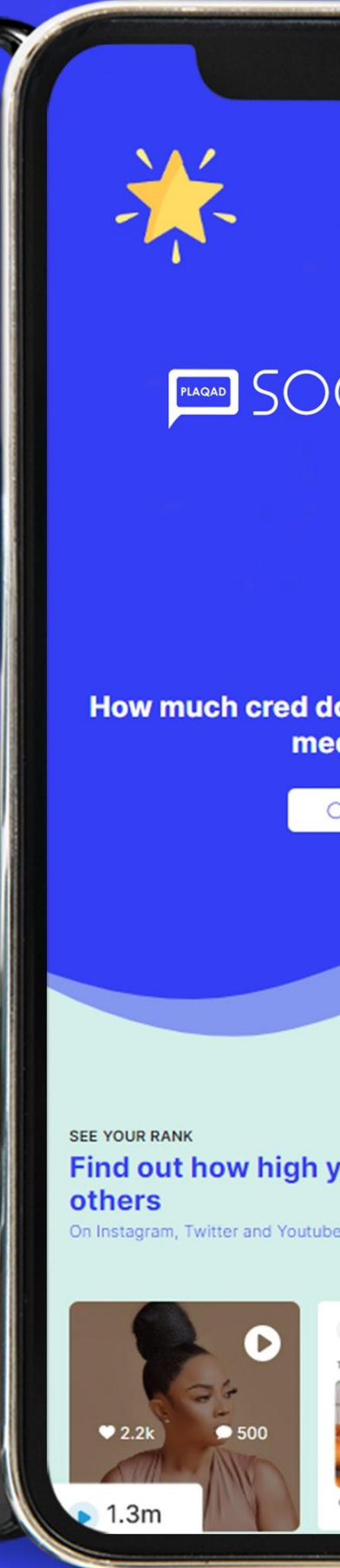
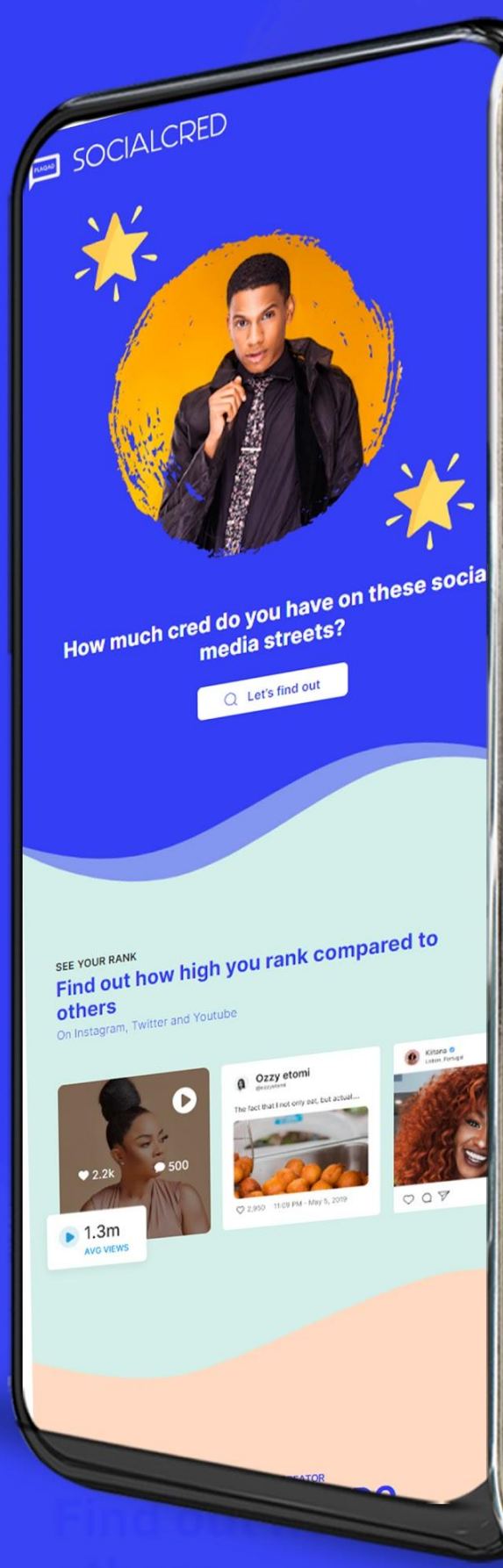


Nigerian celebrities like Olu Jacobs, DJ Cuppy, Falz, Funke Akindele, Omoni Oboli and Kanayo O. Kanayo have also taken part in the challenge.

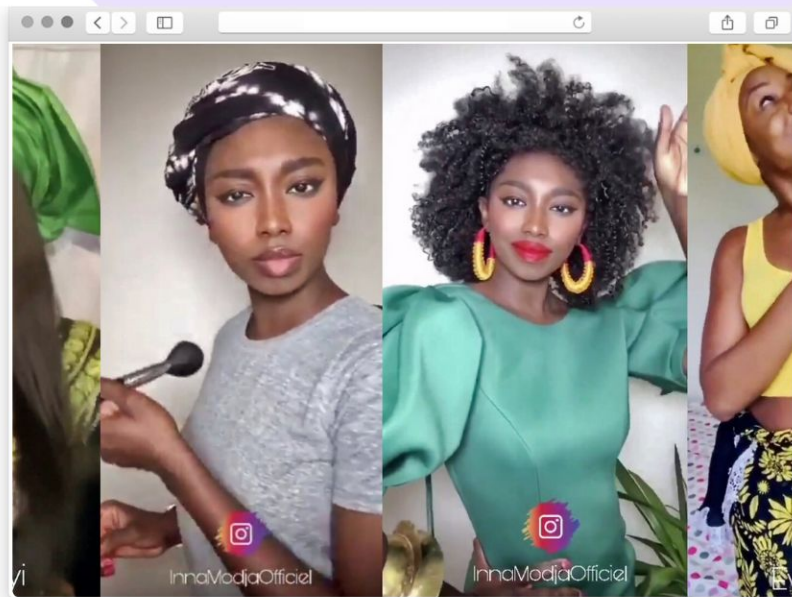


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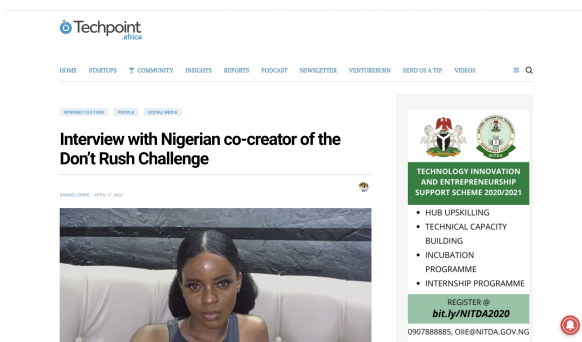


DON'T RUSH CHALLENGE

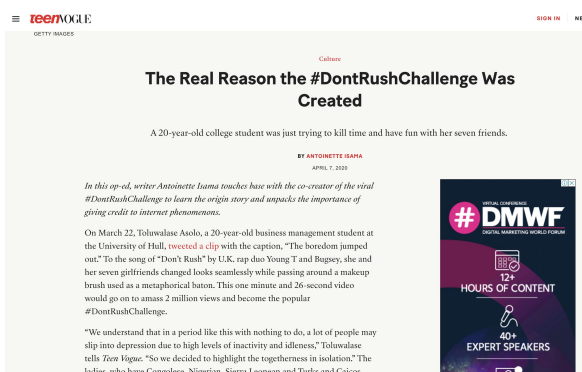


DON'T RUSH CHALLENGE

Toluwalase Asolo, a 20-year-old student at the University of Hull in England, co-created the challenge with her friends on March 22, 2020.



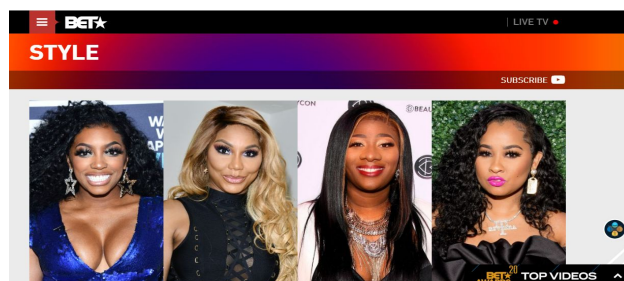
Their video featured Tolu and her seven friends who just wanted a moment of togetherness in a world where they suddenly felt isolated.



The challenge got its name from the song "Don't Rush" by British rap duo Young T and Bugsey which was featured in the video.

The original video has received 2 million views and has since spread across social media platforms like wildfire with over 767 million views on Tiktok and over 651,000 posts on Instagram.

The trend, which was featured on [Huffington Post](#) and [BET](#), showed that many celebrities from Nigerian disk jockey DJ Cuppy to beauty influencers like Jackie Aina and Dimma Umeh have jumped on the challenge.



DON'T RUSH CHALLENGE

Although the challenge has been more popular among women of colour, several men have also hopped on, often replacing the makeup brush with hairbrushes or other accessories.

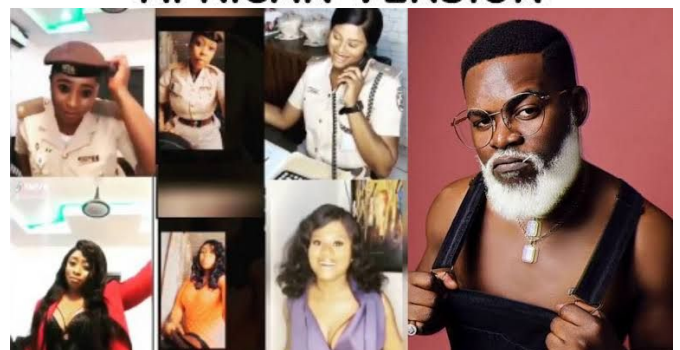
The #BopDaddyChallenge, hosted by music star, FalztheBahdGuy spun off the Don't Rush Challenge to promote his new single "Bop Daddy". The video yielded 1 million views in less than a month.

Many other songs have been used for the #DontRushChallenge all over the world.

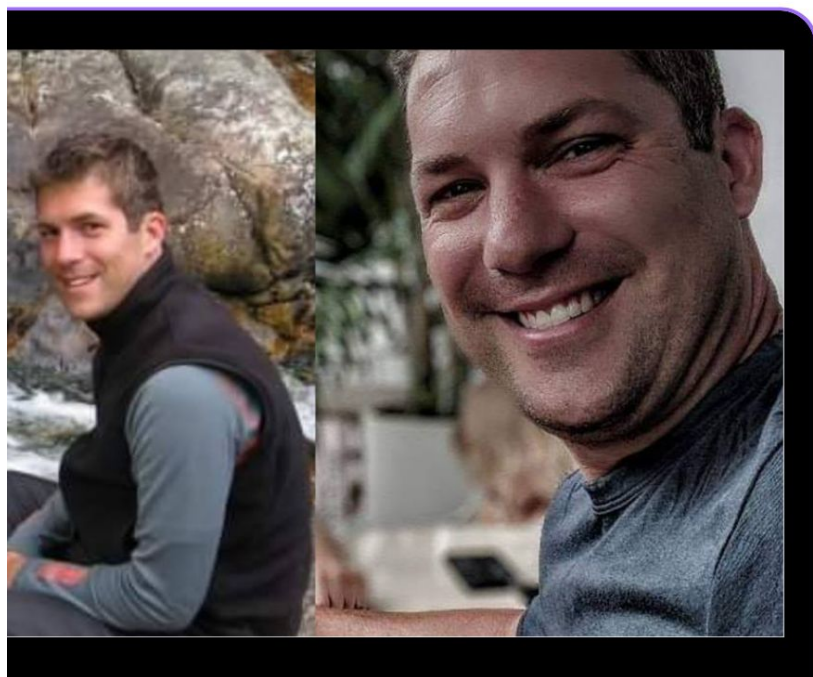
While some female wrestlers, airline workers and brands like Nanawax took advantage of the challenge to showcase their products to the world, getting over 20k views online, the Nigerian Immigration Service received massive backlash for allegedly punishing some female staff who joined the challenge.



DON'T RUSH CHALLENGE AFRICAN VERSION



10 YEAR CHALLENGE



10 YEAR CHALLENGE

The 10 Year Challenge started off on Facebook as a photography comparison challenge in which people publish photos of themselves, taken 10 years prior.

It is widely believed that the challenge started off as the “How Hard Did Aging Hit You Challenge”.

The first prominent user to partake in the challenge was Damon Lane, chief meteorologist for KOCO News 5 in Oklahoma. The post appeared on his facebook page on January 11th, 2019.

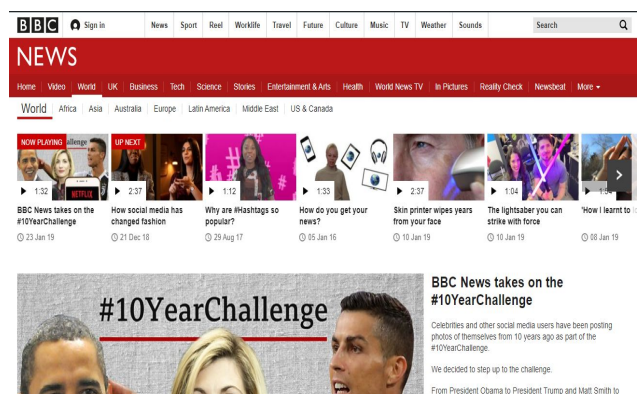
From that point on, the trend rapidly grew from the “How Hard Did Aging Hit You” challenge to a “Glow up” challenge and eventually the #10YearsChallenge that trended across social media.

At its core, the 10-Year Challenge became a way to brag or show off by

comparison of photos that were taken ten years ago and recent ones.

Celebrities like Jessica Biel, Cardi B, Pharrell Williams, Juliet Ibrahim, Toke Makinwa, Mercy Johnson, Ayo Makun, Dotun, Woli Arole and many others joined the challenge. It didn't take long for their fans to follow the trend.

The challenge recorded about 824 million views on TikTok and 4.1 million posts on Instagram with media platforms like CNN, BBC, Independent and Netng reporting about the challenge.



10 YEAR CHALLENGE

Several brands around the world like MTN Nigeria and N26 bank took advantage of this challenge to celebrate the change from traditional to mobile system.

Nigeria's Sterling Bank and Union Bank also used the trend to show off the face of their new look.

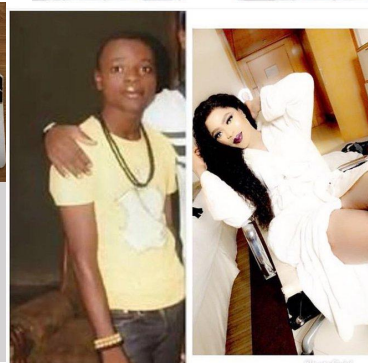
The unpleasant side of the trend had brands like Nokia being discussed as evergreen cases of disruption and arrogance.

Nigeria's Bobrisky was also 'dragged' by social media users while the trend lasted.



2009

2019



ELEMENTS OF VIRALITY



ELEMENTS OF VIRALITY

'Going viral' can be strategic, but the most viral content are never planned. To understand virality, one must understand key elements that make sure these content and campaigns get millions of engagements.

Some of these elements include:

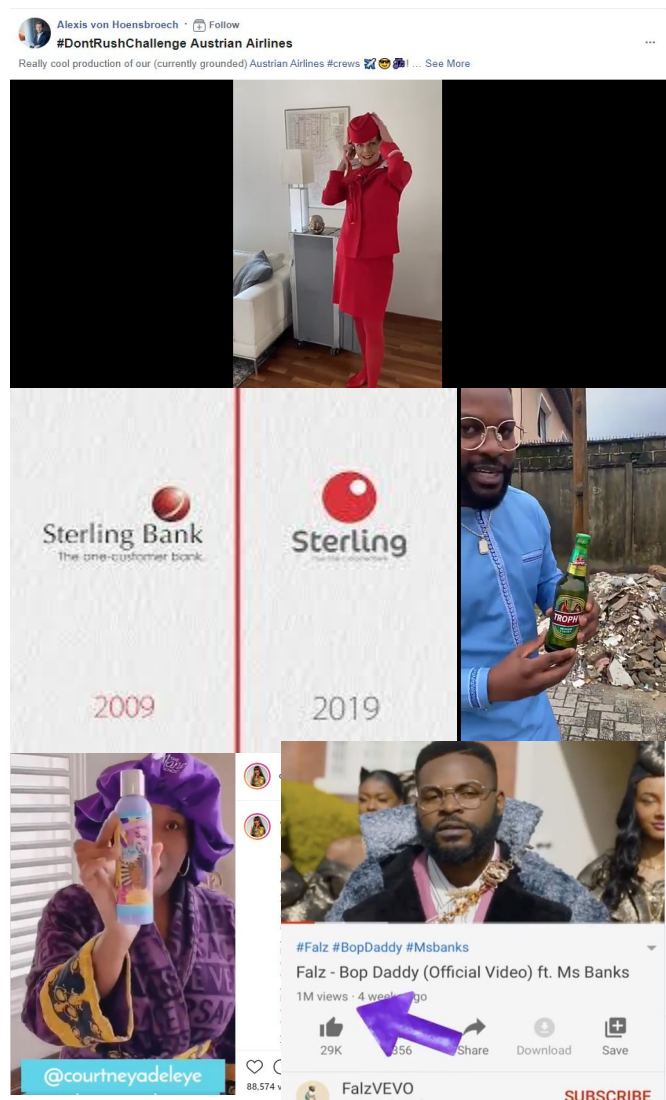
- **Using The Right Platform** - It was easy to participate in the #10yearschallenge on Facebook because of the feature that reminds you of old posts and pictures. Also, the audio/video mix advantage of Tik-Tok app made it easy for fans to take part and share #DontRushChallenge.
- **Knowing Your Audience** - To get your content shared, you have to make sure the content is alluring and irresistible.
- **Setting A Cause** - most viral social media campaigns began for a reason. Be intentional.
- **Relatability** - The three challenges gained audience interest by evoking emotions that people could easily relate to.
- **Vanity** - The trends trigger the emotional urge to show off.
- **Mastering The Art Of Timing** - The #10YearChallenge kicked off at the beginning of the year which was quite a strategic time for the trend, #DontLeaveMeChallenge and #DontRushChallenge started just at the beginning of the lockdown with millions of people stuck at home due to the pandemic. With everyone increasingly turning to social media for entertainment, it was all too easy for the challenges to thrive.

HOW SOME BRANDS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF VIRAL TRENDS

Several brands took advantage of the trends for brand awareness.

Some notable instances include:

- Austrian Air staff who engaged their customers and fans by jumping on #dontrushchallenge during the lockdown.
- Sterling Bank changing its logo from 'aiming for moon' to 'rising sun' on 4th January 2019 and used #10yearchallenge to reach out to the target audience.
- Trophy Lager Beer featuring brand ambassador Falz with the “Don’t Leave Me Challenge”, which had over 150k views.



HOW SOME BRANDS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF VIRAL TRENDS

- In India, McDonald's took the #10YearChallenge up a notch by, launching an app where customers grabbed their favourite meals at 2009 prices for 10 days starting from January 23, 2019.
- Digital Funnel, a marketing agency used the #10YearChallenge to show the transition from traditional style of marketing to digital.
- The Curvy Kate team also used the challenge to flaunt their best selling swimwear collections.



- Other brands who associated with the trends include:
 - Malaysian Airline
 - Female staff of U.S. Airforce and NYPD
 - Medical Doctors
 - Shatta Bundle

THE UNUTILIZED VALUE OF VIRALITY

While some brands and Individuals positively enjoyed the use of the trend, it turned out to be the opposite for others.

- The Nigerian Immigration Service got criticized for punishing some female staff who jumped on #dontrushchallenge rather than using the trend to promote the organization.
- The trends were platforms for many brands to reach out to their consumers but only a few saw the need to use it.

The screenshot shows a Twitter thread with three tweets. The first tweet is a reply to a tweet that says "Your country folks are weird." and says "What's weird about me asking that? The Nigerian immigration threatened to sack some women that participated in the #DontRush challenge in their uniform." The second tweet is from TOA (@TokunboAkerere) and lists "Immoral Behaviour", "Sabotage", and "Any other act unbecoming of a Public Officer". It also says "When you have 'unexposed' illiterates running every sphere of the country... This is what you get...". The third tweet is from Portharcourt 2nd Son (@Polymat43955419) and says "Can you all show the immigration mullah pics of the US Army/NHS female #DontRush vids". Below the tweets is a "Tweet" section with a tweet from Puff Mammy (@PaolaAudrey) that says "MAC Cosmetics should jump on this #DontRushChallenge thing with its different brand ambassadors/influencers and link the whole thing to donations for people affected by the Coronavirus. I said MAC but i could be any brand, Fenty Beauty etc". The tweet has 35 Retweets and 71 Likes.

Your country folks are weird.

2

Mobolaji @AbdulHerviz · May 11

What's weird about me asking that? The Nigerian immigration threatened to sack some women that participated in the #DontRush challenge in their uniform.

1

TOA @TokunboAkerere · Apr 20

"Immoral Behaviour"
"Sabotage"
"Any other act unbecoming of a Public Officer"

When you have "unexposed" illiterates running every sphere of the country... This is what you get...

1 1 4

Portharcourt 2nd Son @Polymat43955419 · Apr 20

Can you all show the immigration mullah pics of the US Army/NHS female #DontRush vids

← Tweet

Puff Mammy. @PaolaAudrey

MAC Cosmetics should jump on this #DontRushChallenge thing with its different brand ambassadors/influencers and link the whole thing to donations for people affected by the Coronavirus. I said MAC but i could be any brand, Fenty Beauty etc

9:52 PM · Mar 29, 2020 · Twitter for Android

35 Retweets and comments 71 Likes

CONCLUSION

From these three trends, it is evident that viral content thrives on emotions like humor, affection, surprise and excitement.

It is important to note that most viral content have elements of fun and sometimes incites vanity.

It is easier and cheaper to reach consumers with emotive content.

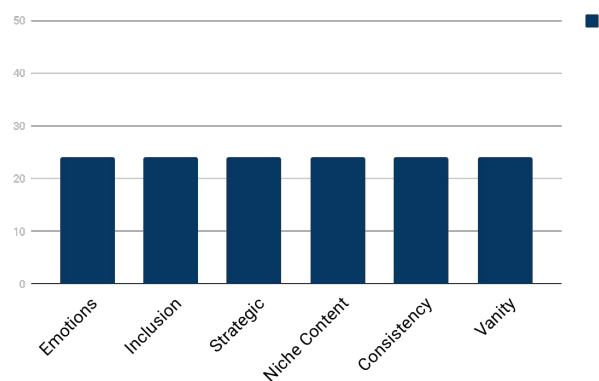
It is also important for brands and individuals to create genuine personalized and interactive content that give consumers a true sense of inclusion.

Because of the huge potential for growth in brand love and revenue that comes with potentially viral content, there's an increased need amongst brand custodians to dial up talkability around their brand.

What is however important, is to do so strategically by creating worthy content that consumers will naturally gravitate towards.

Brand custodians must explore specific brand-related fields that are peculiar to their consumers.

Finally, it is imperative to point out that getting your content to millions of consumers requires consistency. Not all cases will be one-hit wonders. You have to keep at it. Keep engaging with your consumers and followers.



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