How I Write Viral Texts. (By John Rush)

In the last 30 days, I produced 10 viral posts. Many million views on Linkedin, Reddit, FB, HackerNews and X. I've never been blogging or posting seriously in my life. Had no followers. Had no idea how content may go viral. **This is what I did:**

1. Switched from Short form to Long form.

Until December, I had 6 short scheduled tweets a day. It's not easy to give value in short tweets, so most of it was pretty boring stuff. Some got engagement and a few went viral. But when a short tweet goes viral, usually people don't care who wrote it, so you don't get many followers or profile views.

2. Long Form

In long form, it was much easier to provide actual value to the reader. However people have short attention spans, so my first long-form posts failed, because of their academic nature: valuable, but boring. I'm a big fan of movies and storytelling. I tell at least 5 stories a day every single day since I remember myself. About my past, about my fantasies, or my dreams or present. I realized that this may turn into a superpower, in the offline world, people love my stories. What if I start telling stories, instead of writing articles. My main goal was to write a cool story that I myself wanna read over again.

3. Stories

Stories are different from articles. I have an intuition for it since I practiced it for so long. If I have to give short advice:

a) start with a killer headline that the reader simply can't pass by
b) give a good promise in the first 100 words, so that the lazy modern reader will not quit and scroll to the next short tweet.
c) have ups, downs, and culmination, like a movie

d) structure it well with sections, lists, h2/h3

e) mix the tale and facts

4. Value

Stories on their own are fun, but without value, stories won't create respect. Luckily, I've been an entrepreneur since 2004. Built a bunch of startups, tools, products, directories, SaaS, learned stuff from scratch, such as SEO, Design, Programming, and Typescript :D. For 20 years. So I have a huge list of stories, facts, failures, lessons, case studies, and successes in my past. In each story, I do a 50/50 mix. Half of the words in the story are to entertain. Another half is to provide value.

5. Honesty

People respect me for being honest. It's often putting me at risk. Since not everything I say is pleasant. I criticize certain things, which might hit me back. But I try to be as open as I can. When I write my stories, I pretend it's being told to my best friend at a fireside chat.

6. Reply every comment

I reply to almost every comment. So I've replied 1000+ times in the last 30 days. It's not just "thx", but a tiny value to the commenter. Some ask questions, and I try to answer in a way that people get double value from my post+reply. I genuinely love helping people. I could just do it all day long for free. In fact, this is what I mostly do. So it's naturally going for me. If you're not like that, try to act as you are.

7. Diary, not an Article

Most of you have watched Rick Rubin's videos. He said: write text as you're writing a diary that nobody ever gonna read except you. This is perhaps the best advice ever given to the authors. Most authors write as the text will be read by others and this often turns the text into an average internet text, that's boring and 99.99% of the internet text is ignored by the world. But when you write it in your diary, you get free of outside judgment. You get

free of your own judgment. You just get into the creative process. Try this. It works.

8. If you don't wanna re-read it, nobody is gonna read it

Once you've written the article, you must re-read it from start to end and enjoy it. If you start scanning instead of reading and can't keep the focus to read every single word in it, this means your text is not good. Sorry. I've trashed 90% of all posts I wrote because I didn't enjoy them. If you enjoy it partly, but not completely, rewrite the parts you don't like. Until you can re-read the whole text in one stream of focus.

9. Sleep on Topics

Before writing the whole post, you need to come up with the topic. It's not easy to come up with one on demand. I add every topic that comes up into my notes. Every night I read all of them and remove those I find boring. Even those I found totally exciting, I might find them super boring the day or the week after. This is a good test. We somehow give a higher rating to the idea we just came up with. Because it's our idea and our effort. Once you sleep on it and detach from that moment when you "invented" the topic and read it again in a few days, you often realize that the topic is sh*t. And you can't understand how you liked it in the first place. So: never post anything at once. Write it down. Sleep on it. Clean the list in a few days. If an item is still there after a week, then it has survived natural selection as in a "meme theory" and you can spend an hour writing a whole story/post for it.

10. Post it everywhere.

If the text is good. It goes totally viral every-fuc*ing-where. It's the same as with products. If few users love a product, everyone in their group loves it too. Same with text. If it's viral content, it will go viral on any platform that has a similar audience. You need no followers, nothing really. I went on Reddit with 0 karma and my next 5 posts topped Reddit as top posts of the month, year, and even top of all time. Same with FB and Linkedin. All platforms these days are able to surface content outside of your follower

circle. If the content is good, someone will repost it, then someone else and it just goes viral to 100k-1M views. I didn't know this until December 2023. I was sure it was all about the number of followers. But now I learned.

11. When I write

I write after work. Not before. 90% of my text is written between 2AM - 4AM. I wish I could do it in a day too, but I can't. I don't know why. Maybe a spirit enters my body after midnight, idk :D. Find that peak time when you get this creative channel stream open, and use it.

12. Keywords & Trends

Most platforms use vector similarity to recommend the content in the feed. For those who don't know what is it: basically, the algoryhm is trying to see what have I liked/commented on before and find similar new content to recommend in my feed. So make sure to include the keywords, which resonate with your audience. Also, check trending keywords and include 3-6 of them. Don't do the hashtag thing. Just embed it naturally into the content. If you look at this post, you'll spot those, if you do, tell me.

I hope this inspires and helps you with your next writing, looking forward to reading it.

The End.