



# The potentials of YouTube as a marketing strategy

*A qualitative study concerning the genre of product review videos on YouTube*

**I CAN'T  
STOP  
WATCHING  
YOUTUBERS**

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## ***Abstract***

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In a world where marketers are struggling to make it through the clutter of advertisements, and in a world where consumers are overwhelmed with the amount of advertisement they see everywhere, new marketing strategies are needed. The Internet is taking a front seat in marketing these days, as consumers spend more of their time on the Internet than previously. Social media advertisement is being used to reach the consumers, as well as search engines and banner advertisements. However, this study concerns a new generation within marketing, which are product review videos on YouTube. Popular youtubers are contacted by companies that realize the potential in working together with them, and having them review their products on their YouTube channels. In return they offer discounts for the viewers watching the videos. The interest in this study concerns this newly adopted genre within marketing; how it derived, what it is made of, and how it can be related to marketing as we know it. Three YouTube product review videos were transcribed for this purpose. The videos were conducted by three different youtubers and the featured products were different as well. This was done to ensure diversity, which I found important, as the hopes were to be able to say something general about these types of videos. For the analysis, a thematic analysis was applied, which ensured that themes would be produced. Considering that the empirical data were video material, the transcripts were conducted in a multimodal manner, containing both text and snapshots from the YouTube videos. Therefore, a multimodal approach was applied to the thematic analysis, which is a slight untraditional way of conducting the analysis. However, thematic analysis is a flexible tool, which in some cases is argued against because of that – however in this study, a flexible tool was needed in order to apply a different approach to it. The findings of the thematic analysis consist of 13 themes, which have been divided into two groups. In relation to the genre theory in the study, it became clear that the themes were divided into what is called *genre structure* (Introduction, Product presentation, Product description, Product demonstration, and Outro) and *genre conventions* (Use of video camera, Product handling, Music/sounds, Interaction with viewers, Special effects, Personal opinion, Body language/facial expressions, and Humor). These structures were defined in relation to the genre theory, and therefore these are representing the genre of YouTube product review videos.

Within these 13 themes, some had clear relations to other genres, such as for instance the feature film genre, where both an introduction and outro is seen. The youtubers construct their videos as if they are inspired by movies, which implies that genre is not something that arises, but rather consist of elements adopted from previous genres. Within the themes, it also became clear that what is special about this genre, is the personal aspects of a YouTube video. The youtubers interact with the viewer, they share personal opinions regarding the products, and they show personality by applying humor to their reviews. This differentiates the genre from other marketing strategies that are seen today. An aspect that is, however, familiar to a marketing strategy seen today, is how youtubers can be related to celebrities used in marketing campaigns. Youtubers have fans as well as celebrities do – and as the theory regarding celebrity marketing implies, consumers are more likely to be attracted to a product that is promoted by a celebrity they relate to.

All in all, I argue that marketers today would be able to benefit largely from working together with youtubers in marketing their products. YouTube reaches a potential worldwide audience, adding transnational marketing in the mix as well. The potential on YouTube is huge, and I believe that marketers and companies will begin to realize the power and potential this international online media platform holds.