Professional associations

A recent survey of chief marketing officers, marketing vice presidents, and brand managers showed they're spending more time seeking alternatives to traditional advertising than in previous years. The number-one alternative they were exploring? Buzz and word of mouth. So important has this tactic become that not one but two industry associations have begun as a result — Viral and Buzz Marketing Association (www.vbma.net) and Word of Mouth Marketing Association (womma.com).

The Viral and Buzz Marketing Association works to validate and promote "consumer-oriented" marketing techniques. There are members in most of the major cities of the

world. Its Web site includes a very useful list of links about viral and buzz-marketing information, membership information, and a mailing list.

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association, shown in the following figure, has set out to promote word-of-mouth marketing and also to protect consumers by helping to set industry ethical standards. Members include international marketing and communications companies concerned with accountability and sound practices. The site has a blog, mailing lists, membership information, and good resources for those interested in word-of-mouth marketing.

