

Incongruity and Surprise Incongruity or divergence in marketing messages, especially in relation to the use of humor, refers to a deliberate violation of rational expectations, making the funny appeal seem unexpected, improper, or inappropriate (Brown et al. 2010). Studies concluded that the emotion of surprise has a strong influence on referral behavior, an important aspect for the success of viral marketing. Divergent ads increase the consumer's motivation to process an ad and make viewers curious and interested in the unusual format and content of this type of advertising (Smith and Yang 2004).