

Proverbs 31, Victoria's Secret and Viral Marketing

When Alex Eklund updated his Facebook status on Nov. 30, he had no idea it would make him a social media star.

Eklund was studying in the Baylor University library when he noticed a theme among his friends' status updates. During the airing of the annual Victoria's Secret fashion show on CBS, girls posted updates like "I'm going to have to hit the gym after this" and "I'm going to starve myself for a week." Although Eklund assumed his friends didn't mean the statements seriously, they still made him uneasy.

"There was an underlying sense of insecurity which I sensed throughout the entire thing," he said.

On a whim, Eklund posted in response, "I'd rather have a Proverbs 31 woman than a Victoria's Secret model."

Almost instantly, Eklund's post went viral. Both negative and positive comments piled up on his wall as friends, friends of friends and total strangers reposted his comment. During the next few days, Eklund discovered the power of social media to capture an audience, cultivate a following and spread a message.

Some people, like Eklund, stumble on the social networks' ability to create overnight celebrities and scramble to make use of their instant audience. Others, like former Victoria's Secret model Kylie Bisutti, leverage their social media presence to help strengthen their brand. And sometimes, the two strategies overlap.

Markus Pfeiffer, a digital media professor at Regent University, believes Eklund's message generated such a strong response because his post reflected a timely trend: "An

unknown person or ministry can reach a very wide audience and get discovered, because of the viral capabilities—because they are watching trends. A lot of stories are born within these tools.”

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