

The Empire State *Proposal*

*When trend jacking works — and when it doesn't.
look at how brands responded to the internet's biggest
viral proposal, and what separated the memorable
from the forgettable.*



• INTRODUCTION

Every viral moment is an invitation. Not every brand should RSVP.

Every few days, the internet gifts marketers a viral moment. Some trends fade within hours, while others dominate conversations across every social media platform. One such moment was the Empire State Building proposal, where a man proposed to his partner at the top of one of the world's most iconic landmarks.

What initially looked like a dream proposal quickly turned into an internet sensation for another reason — the couple were reportedly detained by authorities afterward for unauthorized activity, before eventually being released on bail.

Overnight, the proposal photos, arrest images, and subsequent updates became meme material across the internet.

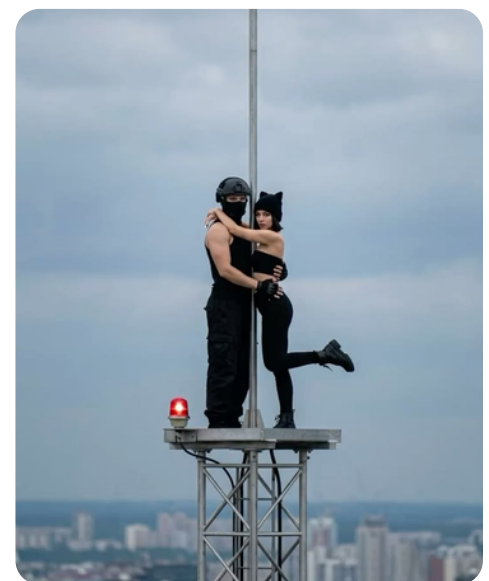
Millions of people, especially women, were captivated by the proposal itself, while marketers immediately saw an opportunity to join the conversation.

*But the biggest lesson
wasn't about speed.
It was about relevance.*

The internet reacts

The story generated everything social media loves — and brands from every industry rushed to create content inspired by it. Some were brilliant. Others simply posted because "everyone else was posting."

And that's where the difference became obvious. The brands that succeeded weren't necessarily the fastest — **they were the ones that found a natural connection** between the viral event and what they actually sell.



• WHAT WORKED

The brands that got it right

Instead of forcing the trend, they made the audience think, "that actually makes sense."

01

Jewellery Brands

Jewellery brands had one of the strongest opportunities — the proposal naturally revolved around engagement rings, love, commitment, and weddings. Their creatives felt authentic because proposals are directly connected to their products. Instead of dwelling on the arrest, many shifted the conversation back to finding the perfect ring, making proposals memorable, and celebrating love.

02

Nail Artists & Beauty Businesses

A surprisingly sharp angle — the proposal photos prominently featured the engagement ring, and whenever a ring is shown, people notice the nails. Many nail artists posted lines like "imagine getting proposed to without your nails done." It was funny, it was relatable, and it naturally promoted the service.

03

Event Planners & Wedding Businesses

Wedding planners, photographers, proposal planners, and decorators also entered the conversation. Instead of focusing on the controversy, they positioned themselves around creating unforgettable proposal experiences — again, the connection was obvious.

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSIGNMENT

Marketing giants that got the memo

Some of India's biggest brands once again proved why they dominate real-time marketing.

Brands like **Blinkit** and **Rapido** didn't try to copy the proposal — they found an angle that fit their own positioning. Their creatives reflected what their brands are already known for: speed, convenience, and everyday situations. The audience instantly understood the joke because it aligned with the brand's existing personality.



*This is what makes real-time marketing effective.
Not copying. **Connecting.***



WHAT DIDN'T WORK

Where many brands went wrong

As the trend gained momentum, countless brands jumped in. The problem? Many had absolutely no connection to the event.

Many simply recreated the viral image, changed the caption, and posted it. There was no product integration, no storytelling, no brand recall — no reason for the audience to associate the trend with the business. Instead of adding value, the post simply became another piece of content lost in the crowd.

"If it's trending, we have to post about it."
Not true.

A trend should never become your content strategy. A trend should support your brand strategy. If your audience has to ask "why is this brand talking about this?" — the trend probably wasn't meant for you.

• TAKEAWAYS

Key marketing lessons

01

Not every trend is meant for your brand

Just because everyone is posting doesn't mean you should. Sometimes the smartest marketing decision is to skip a trend entirely.

02

Relevance beats speed

Being first doesn't matter if your content doesn't make sense. A well-thought-out post published later often performs better than a rushed, irrelevant one.

03

Your product should still be the hero

The trend is only the hook. Your product, service, or brand should remain the main focus — if people remember the meme but forget your brand, the opportunity was wasted.

04

Trends should strengthen brand positioning

Every viral moment should reinforce what your audience already knows about your brand, not confuse them. The best trend-based campaigns amplify identity — they don't change it.

05

Don't force creativity

If you're spending more time justifying why your brand fits a trend than actually creating valuable content, it's a sign to move on. There will always be another trend.

Final Takeaway

Virality gets attention.
Relevance builds brands.

The next time a trend takes over the internet, don't ask "how can we post about this?" Instead ask "why should our brand be part of this conversation?" If the answer comes naturally, create the post. If it doesn't, let the trend pass — because in marketing, not every trend deserves your logo.

A GET SOCIAL CASE STUDY

