

Guerilla Marketing

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Defining Guerilla Marketing

History

If you never heard of guerilla marketing, the term might sound a little extreme. Perhaps you might think of images of camouflage-clad rebels forcing unsuspecting consumers to buy products. Fortunately, guerilla marketing is not as threatening as it sounds. In fact, when used properly, this tactic is one of the most effective methods available for entrepreneur to cultivate a business and increase sales nowadays. This quite controversial form of advertising was not known before the late 1970s. Till that time big budgets ruled the world of advertising and it was all about catchy jingles. Companies wanted to make the biggest profit and therefore brought in as many new customers as possible. In the first half of the 20th century the main goal of advertisements seemed to be to educate the targeted audience rather than being entertaining. Advertisers were focusing on telling the consumers something they didn't know before, simply providing them with a load of information. No matter if it was a poster in public places or a newspaper, a spot on television; marketers thought that advertisements must have the main purpose to teach the people. This attitude from the advertisers side lead to hilarious campaigns such as “smoking will make you thin”. But then advertisers noticed that the effectiveness when using the traditional advertisement approach was not guaranteed anymore and campaigns started to get lose profitability. Consumers begun to get tired of advertising the way is was at that time. By the 1970s the advertising world was ready for a revolution. Jay Conrad Levinson was responsible for that revolution. In 1984 he introduced the idea of big advertising results with little investments in his book “Guerilla Marketing”. Even though

professional people in the advertising industry already knew the concept of marketing in a subtle manner, they only started to use it after the publishing of Levinson's first book. Levinson has since written over a dozen books on guerilla marketing.

One of the earliest and most well-known examples of effective guerilla marketing is the Marlboro Man. This campaign attempted to make filtered cigarettes more popular, because they were considered as feminine as this time. And because of the strong cow boy image of the Marlboro Man it really succeeded. The company literally skyrocketed from near the bottom of the cigarette brand list to the top slot almost instantly with the introduction of their mascot, and the guerilla marketing campaign that brought the icon to the attention of the public.

Coincidentally, one of the creators of the Marlboro Man and his campaign was the now-legendary Jay Conrad Levinson.

Definition

But the driving force of guerilla marketing is not that it only tries to be non-educational. It's about to make people feel that they are part of a secret and it will get more attention the more creative it is. There were even guerilla marketing events which made people proud to be at the right place in the right time when those events took place and be witnesses of a memorable action and participate in something which made them feel proud in some kind of ways. The goal is quite simple to define: use unconventional methods to follow conventional measures such as profit, growth and sales. Also marketers who are willing to use guerilla tactics should try to think outside the boxes of television or billboard, because simply everything is possible and therefore marketers should widen their horizon. A good

evidence that a campaign worked is when people can't stop thinking of it, because they found it very funny, shocking or outstandingly unique. Basically since the publishing of the book all the rules how companies compete against each other were changed radically. And for the first time it was also possible for small companies to gain as much attention as the global players, because budget was not the most important thing anymore to run a successful campaign.

To put it in other words Guerilla Marketing can be seen as any unconventional marketing technique that is designed to produce maximum results using minimal resources.

There are as many types of guerilla marketing as there are businesses and entrepreneurs attempting to use it. From the home business to huge mega-corporations, guerilla marketing strategies cover an enormous spectrum that includes a little of everything.

There are a few aspects that remain common to all guerilla tactics:

- ☐ They are inexpensive, and sometimes free, to implement.
- ☐ They involve a commitment of time and effort in place of money and resources.
- ☐ They are unexpected, and sometimes shocking, to the consumer.
- ☒ They promote brand awareness and customer loyalty.
- ☐ They concentrate on cooperation and relationship-building, rather than competition.

The last thing means relationship building on two levels: firstly the relation to the customer. Guerilla marketers always try to connect to the consumers on a friendship-like level and also interact with them. Secondly it means the cooperation with other businesses. It's always much easier to solve

problems together, two businesses are stronger than just one. Therefore companies build alliances.

The best approach to create an effective guerilla marketing campaign is to determine where your target customers are, and find a unique way to reach them.

Advantages & Disadvantages Of Guerilla

Advantages

- Guerilla marketing is cheap. At the high end, you may end up investing a lot of money in promotional items or a major, centralized piece that you can build a number of different campaigns around. At the low end, it is free.

- In addition to growing your business, guerilla marketing involves networking, both with your customers and with other businesses. In the process of executing and maintaining your campaign, you will make a lot of new friends and allies.

- Guerilla marketing is specifically tailored to meet the needs of small businesses, whereas traditional advertising venues are complicated and expensive to the point of exclusion (bordering on snobbishness).

- Many aspects of creative guerilla marketing campaigns are just plain fun! You get to perform wacky stunts and engage in unusual activities, all in the name of working for a living.

- Guerilla marketing works. If you do your research, plan your campaign,

and stick with it, you will more than likely end up with a better and more profitable business.

Disadvantages

- Guerilla marketing works -- but it is not completely failsafe. It is, after all, advertising; which is far from an exact science. The number of variables involved in advertising guarantees that nothing is 100 percent effective.

- As with any advertising campaign, you will not be able to pinpoint exactly what works and what doesn't. Obtaining measurable results is difficult (but not impossible, unlike other marketing techniques).

- Guerilla marketing requires a greater level of dedication and energy than traditional advertising venues, which often consist of throwing large amounts of money at other people to do the work for you.

- If you are looking for a quick fix, guerilla marketing is not your solution. You will not see instant or overnight results stemming from your efforts. An investment of time is required in order to achieve your business sales goals.

- Guerilla marketing is not for the thin-skinned or faint of heart. At the very least, you will have a few detractors who find fault in your methods. At worst, you may be threatened with legal action (which is why it so

important to check your local laws before engaging in a guerilla marketing campaign).

The origins of Guerilla marketing and how it changed

Imagine a club scene in the 80s: a woman appears next to a man and asked him to buy her a drink. It's a little weird when the woman insists on a very specific brand of vodka...and then goes on and on about why she loves that particular brand of vodka. Before the man know it, she slips back into the crowd and you're leaves him alone at the bar. The "buy me a drink" club girls of the 1980s were one of the earliest examples of guerrilla marketing in action. The tactic proved to be so effective that it's still in use today. Around the same time Adidas was on the top of the world. However, after management of Adidas changed a couple of times, the company started to get in trouble. In the mid 1980s, a French businessman named Bernard Tapie took over the company. He knew he had to do something drastic to get the shoe brand back on top. Because rap music was quite big at that time, he simply gave pairs of Adidas to up-and-coming rappers in New York. At that time people considered that action as insane, because no one could understand what shoes have to do with rappers. Practically overnight you could find Adidas shoes on the feet of people wanted to be hip and funky. Nowadays that method Adidas used in the 80s would probably not work. The reason is because it became quite common that companies provide celebrities with free products, no matter if cosmetics or fashionable clothing. No one would recognize a pair of shoes and therefore this simple

action could never serve as a phenomenon to save a whole company again. It's because once a guerilla marketing tactic is well known it becomes ineffective. Therefore marketers have to move and change constantly and analyzing their environment and the customer's preferences steadily. When an action is surprising to the customer, it is more likely working. And as the Adidas example showed, the personal approach became more and more important. Companies can't be very effective by paying an actor to play a role in a TV commercial, because people wouldn't believe what he or she says anyway. It's all about reality. That's why nowadays the most effective sales pitches are made for instance by a cute young couple who ask you to take their picture and hand you their brand new camera phone to do it and then they spend 10 minutes telling you how much they love it and why. This type of personal, one-on-one marketing has done wonders for a lot of small and struggling businesses.

How do big companies use guerilla

What happens when an advertising form which begun underground suddenly goes mainstream and big companies start using it? According to Levinson the heart of Guerilla is to use a very low budget and be very creative. But when global players started to use this approach to do whatever attracts people in an unconventional manner with a massive budget, because they are well established and can effort it. People know their names already, and there's no need to make a good first impression. For those companies using guerilla marketing can be full of risks. If they don't act clever enough and not able to catch the peoples interests with their message, their image can be destroyed and they might lose their already committed customers. Whether it is possible for a big company to

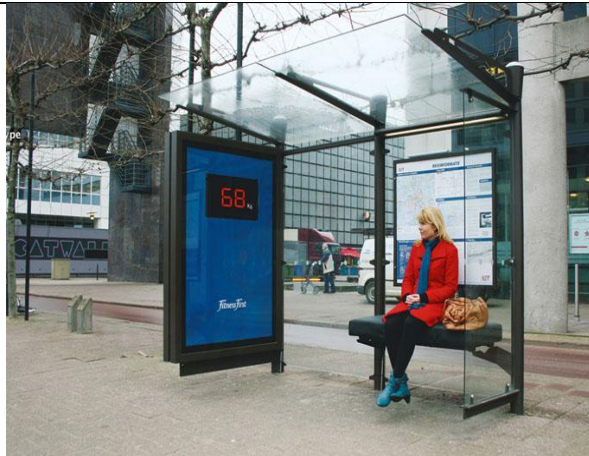
use modern methods or not depends on a lot of different factors. But even though a lot of money is put into market research, advertising is not as clear and predictable as science. There are several examples where a big company tried to do guerilla and it didn't work out the way they expected it: for instance when Sony introduced the PSP, they asked street artists to legally spray images of young gamers having fun with the PSP. Residents responded by painting over the ads and adding their own witty commentary, such as "Advertising Directed at Your Counter Culture." Or when Microsoft put thousands of butterfly stickers with the typical Microsoft colors on several house walls. Not only the New Yorkers reacted disgusted, but also the council ordered to clean up the butterflies and issued them with a fine. However, some large companies have had huge success with their guerrilla marketing campaigns. HP unveiled an amazing campaign in Malaysia in May of 2008 that had people literally stopping in their tracks. Life-size cardboard cutouts were placed in public areas with bits of paper protruding from them, making it look like the background was nothing more than a life-like picture printed on HP's paper – paper through which someone had just walked. Basically we can say that it doesn't really matter if big or small companies are using guerilla, it depends of a certain precise mixture of the right time, method, the message and if they are lucky or not, as mentioned this field is not as predictable as science. Also people are more likely to positively accept a campaign if it doesn't immediately look like an advert. As technology improves and consumer's requirements change as well, the advertising game is changing.

The importance of Viral marketing

To let people see and advertisement is a totally different thing than making people to actually talk about it. That's why marketers try to make the customers spread the word themselves. When a guerilla advertisement that doesn't really look like an advertisement and you find it so great, you will voluntarily pass it around because it's cool and you liked it and not because you want to help the company to strengthen their publicity. But viral marketing can't be planed or predicted, their effectiveness only depend on the people themselves and if they are willing to pass a message around. Once people are willing to talk about something it is always very successful, because it's obvious that people are more likely to accept suggestions from friends than from a marketer they never met. But again if the campaign is too obvious, this can mean the death for the company. They need to get the people talk without putting any effort in it. Marketers are taking on a new attitude toward their audience and the way they communicate. The method of the moment is trying to make campaigns into grass-roots publicity machines that don't look like advertising to make an ad that gets passed around like an annoying email forward. Every one ever showed a YouTube video to friend because it was very amusing or so. So basically everyone sometimes participated in this clever form of marketing without even noticing. So the secret is to create something that is entertaining and doesn't look like an advertisement, and begged to be passed around. And for the companies there is pretty much no investment. What also might be very successful are advertisements, which make people think and conduct research. Think about whether a story is real or not. All kind of attention makes a wildy successful advertising campaign. That makes people believe that the internet is becoming a less trustful place. But there is also guerilla which isn't only about making money. There are also

a lot of campaigns that are about politics, social change, and just about being a good person.

Examples



- Fitness First : health club scale integrated in seat at bus stops
- people confronted with their weight in public
- Extraordinarily clever; likely to increase membership numbers



Papa John's Pizza

- Ad which is taped to your door
- Looks like a real delivery man in your peep hole



Father Bob Foundation

- Help feed the homeless
- Sticker of knife +fork on each side of the bin giving the impression that hole is a plate



Dexter

- TV show about serial killer
- Fake dismembered arms with a little sign stuck in them which says 'Dexter' placed among the meat in butcher shops throughout Madrid
- marketing effective because very high shock value



Colgate

- Wooden stick in ice cream in shape of tooth brush, which says "Don't forget"
- good example of cooperation between companies



Unicef

- Wanted to raise awareness for children rights + raise funds with minimum costs
- put sound equipped baby strollers in the streets, inside the strollers was note with message 'Thank you for caring,, we hope there is more people like you. Unicef be a mom for a moment'
- Media public reach was overwhelming
- Flooded all the major TV, radio + web news



Coca cola

- Wanted let people know that the new coca cola grip bottle has better grip for holding.
- Posters printed on Velcro placed in bus shelters to make people interact with grip.

All of the examples show that there is no one right way to form a campaign. Creativity has no limit. Companies are allowed to do whatever comes to their minds.

Different types of Guerilla marketing

One of the main advantages of guerrilla marketing is that it's unexpected. It catches us and we usually answer in an emotional way: we laugh, are shocked or sad . And the companies also attempted to use things people didn't know before, they're using guerrilla marketing to their advantage. Because when people know their secrets, they may just stop responding. Principles of human psychology are always important in the marketing field, because they that make people want to buy what the companies are trying selling, even though people were not considering buying it before. No matter what type of guerilla marketing, you can always find psychological principles hidden in it. We previously discussed **viral marketing**. It is not predictable, but the key to success is to use existing communication networks. Therefore no resources are needed.

Ambient marketing allows a business to create brand recognition without necessarily pushing their

products. When the Simpsons movie was released for instance 7-11 transformed some of their stores to look just like Kwik-E-Marts, complete with weird Springfield-type products. This ambient marketing campaign was ridiculously effective and people will never forget it.

Presence marketing is along the same lines as ambient marketing. It's about making the business name recognizable and familiar and always there. This can be achieved through product placements in movies and TV shows, stalls at local festivals and markets, regular Twitter updates, or whatever else makes that product name visible daily.

Grassroots marketing A grassroots campaign can take on many forms, but for the most part it is about winning customers one-by-one rather than on a very large scale. Some grassroots campaigns have elements of presence marketing or viral marketing A successful grassroots campaign is all about building relationships and emphasizing the personal connection, not about broadcasting your message and hoping potential customers are listening.

Wild postings may seem old-fashioned, but they are still wildly popular with indie bands and products that want to portray that indie image. When a wall is plastered with multiple copies of a poster for a movie, concert, or alcoholic beverage, then this would be wild postings, and part of their effectiveness lies in the way that they can make us believe we're witnessing something momentous.

Undercover marketing or **buzz marketing**, is said to be one of the more devious ways of marketing to the masses. It is all about selling something to someone who has no idea they've just witnessed a sales pitch.

Astroturfing is considered to be the slimiest of all guerrilla marketing methods. It involves creating an artificial buzz about a product, and it's mighty risky in the information age. Postings are created in online forums, singing the praises of a certain product or service – but they aren't made by the public. They're made by shills, or people associated with the company who are paid to express a positive opinion.

Alternative marketing is referenced consistently by marketers, but it is by nature challenging to define. It may be best defined as publicity that looks like it is completely removed from the company itself.

Experiential marketing is increasingly embraced by all types of companies and brands today. It's becoming easier for us to tune out and ignore advertisements today, so experiential marketing aims to give you an experience rather than send you a one-way message. Experiential marketing lets you interact with the product and associate your immediate emotional responses with that brand.

Future of Guerilla marketing

Even though guerilla marketing is always about being innovative, some methods might become worn out and old. Guerilla marketing was considered as the most effective advertising method, but like all advertising methods, also guerilla marketing will at some point be replaced by another big thing. Since we are so inundated with advertising these days, most of us have learned to simply ignore it. When put into practice successfully a guerilla campaign can convince us that we are not watching at a

advertisement and that it is worth paying attention. Those tactics help businesses to be in a superior situation and a step ahead, because they use methods which were not known before. It is still a good way for small businesses to get as much attention as the big ones, as they are able to use a small budget, which makes companies move equal and competition more fairly. But the more people know and experience, the more suspicious they get, when we for instance meet someone in the streets, who (as the previously mentioned example) asks us to take a picture with a brand new camera. As companies run out of ideas they start to get outrages and move on the edge of acceptability. They start to replace innovativeness with being increasingly shocking and horrific to get the people's attention. In a perfect world, it would be nice to think that guerrilla marketing will take a different (less shocking, more personal) turn. We're seeing already that brands – especially small businesses – are going to the streets by joining forum discussions, obsessively updating their Twitter accounts, and writing articles for newspapers, magazines, and especially blogs. Building personal relationships with customers may be the best marketing move of the future. Maybe the days of outrageous advertising are becoming less. But it's for sure that for the future it will be hard to distinguish between advertising and a simple conversation.