

GUERRILLA MARKETING: REDEFINING MARKETING

VASANTH KIRAN AND DEEPAK JOSE

Abstract:

In the fast changing conventional world, it is need of hour of doing conventional things unconventionally. Advertising demands nothing else but creativity and budget which Guerilla doesn't. Guerilla Marketing is a means to gain maximum exposure through minimal cost to the company. The term “guerilla marketing” is used to describe an unusual system of promotions on a very low budget, relying on time, energy, and the imagination instead of big marketing budgets. Up to par the term has also come to describe aggressive, unusual marketing methods generically. The paper serves to explore the uses and needs for the guerilla marketing approach and how they are superior and different from the traditional marketing tactics. The associated marketing techniques of innovative marketing in the new era of cost cutting but bearing maximum impact on the consumer will also be highlighted. While this paper also would try and understand the terminology, its literature, application to the small business and profitability.

KEYWORDS:

Guerilla Marketing, Creativity, Small Business, Advertising.

INTRODUCTION:

If you see the zebra cross white lines being dirty and only one lines being absolutely white and the picture under it saying Mr White ad, this is Guerilla Marketing. If you see yellow lines on street again and Mc Donalds French fries pouch under it as if the lines are fries, then this is Guerilla and many more like this are the simple yet impactful advertising techniques of Guerilla Marketing. These campaigns are considered to be guerrilla advertising. For the purpose of this research, the definition of guerrilla advertising is based on the definition provided by J. C. Levinson in his book, Guerrilla Marketing: Secrets for Making Big Profits from Your Small Business (1984), and is defined by the researcher as a creative, non-traditional and many times interactive type of advertising that is typically a low-budget production. These imaginative creations do not require placement in the usual advertising outlets making them an emerging potential alternative to traditional advertising. The creativity is the heart of the campaign rather than the budget. The whole idea is to get the consumer to interact with the product in a way that is unexpected yet memorable. The campaigns described above accomplished this exact objective: they each had the consumer interact with the brand in a non-traditional, unexpected way to make them more aware of the product. This research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of guerrilla advertising from the standpoint of advertising agencies.

Guerrilla warfare is about waging small intermittent attacks on different territories of the opponent with the aim of harassing and demoralizing the opponent and eventually securing permanent footholds. (Venkatraman, 2012)

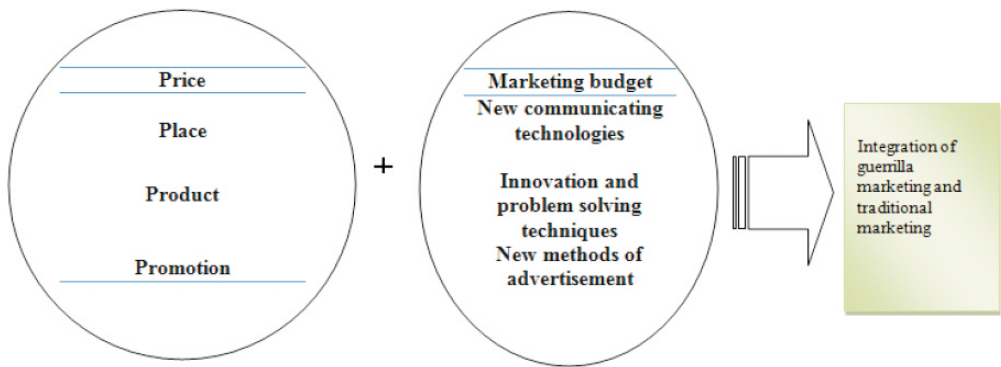
The term “guerilla marketing” is used to describe an unusual system of promotions on a very low budget, relying on time, energy, and the imagination instead of big marketing budgets. Up to par the term

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GUERRILLA MARKETING: REDEFINING MARKETING

has also come to describe aggressive, unusual marketing methods generically. Guerilla Marketing is specifically geared for the small business and entrepreneur. In this competitive, swift, and overcrowded marketplace more companies are resorting to the use of guerrilla marketing, which, simply stated, uses unconventional marketing methods to gain conventional results. Like in warfare, guerrilla tactics are used when an organization is small and/or does not have the resources to deal with a large, entrenched enemy head on. Instead of believing that single marketing weapons such as advertising or a website work, guerrillas know that only marketing combinations work. The paper would serve to understand this process in a greater depth. It also makes an attempt to study the associated marketing trends for innovative marketing.

Fig 1: Integration of Traditional and Guerilla Marketing.



Source: Mughari (2011)

1.1 A Brief History of Guerrilla Marketing

Every year, millions of money was wasted in marketing, most of those messages either misunderstood by the consumers, or targeted to the wrong audience. Marketing is expensive back in 1980s. Compared to the giant corporations, the small business owners do not have enough money to waste in the ineffective marketing campaigns. They want to use the limited budgets to the right targets. Rather than shouting vague messages to vague audiences, marketers are whispering just the right word in just the right ears, evoking the exact response they desire (Levinson, 1999, p. 10). Guerrilla marketing was born due to the needs of the small business marketers. In 1984, a book named Guerrilla Marketing: Secrets for Making Big Profits from Your Small Business by Jay Conrad Levinson set the stage for Guerrilla Marketing in history.

Since 1984, Jay Levinson has written more than 30 books about guerrilla marketing. His books appear in 62 languages and are required readings for MBA courses worldwide. Jay Levinson now has been often referred as father of guerrilla marketing. However, back in 1984, even the author did not predict that the concept of guerrilla marketing from the book would completely change the way of marketing. For the first time, the small business could garner as much attention from the consumers as the giant corporation because of guerrilla marketing. Those different, personal, or even weird advertisements in 80s pioneered a marketing revolution for the next century.

In 1990s, guerrilla marketing had entered the mainstream. More and more major corporations started to adopt guerrilla marketing theory in their marketing campaigns. Even the consumers started to notice the difference in the corporations' marketing strategies. For example, 13 the TV commercials' focuses started to switch from promoting the products to pleasing the audience. The 30-seconds TV commercial used to spending the whole 30 seconds selling products, now they only used the last 3 seconds to present the product and the first 27 seconds to make audience laugh. However, guerrilla marketing can be extremely risky for the well-known business. If their marketing campaigns turn out to be too edgy, not clear and clever enough to pass the messages, the consumers will grow resistance feelings toward the products or

GUERRILLA MARKETING: REDEFINING MARKETING

service. For instance, in 2002, in order to advertise Microsoft's new MSN 8 Internet service, Microsoft unleashed thousands of colourful butterflies' stickers in Manhattan. The campaign received lots of critics. The residents of Manhattan were angry because the butterflies ruined the city view. Microsoft was ordered by New York City officials to clean up the butterflies and paid fine for corporate graffiti. With the development of Internet technology in early 2000s, online guerrilla marketing tends to be the new marketing trend. The online guerrilla marketing is also called viral marketing which is cost-effective and time-efficient due to the features of Internet communication. It bases on the fact that the marketing campaigns are so interesting that the prospects pass on the messages to the other prospects by their own intention via Internet. More details about viral marketing will be shared later in this chapter

1.LITERATURE REVIEW:

Wensen (2008) asserts nowadays that one can win the battle for the consumer's attention by being smarter and more creative than his/her opponent, instead of spending more money for TV commercials than his/her competitor does. His definition of guerilla marketing is a broad one and an unexpected brand program through alternative media. Guerilla marketing includes, for example, guerilla marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing and also events, but guerilla marketing is far more than the definition. It is a mentality too, because the mentality of thinking is outside the box and thinking for solutions for communications problems in a broader way, instead of thinking in terms of just TV commercials. Traditional advertising on TV, radio, print and even traditional outdoor advertising is not what is meant by guerrilla marketing. Guerilla marketing is a way of thinking. He says that the study have to use that way of thinking at the beginning of the strategic process.

Guerrilla marketing is achieving conventional goals, such as profits and joy, with unconventional methods, such as investing energy instead of money (Kaden, 2007). Prévot (2006) defined guerrilla marketing as means to gain maximum exposure through minimal cost to the company. Most importantly, as the father of guerrilla marketing, Jay Levinson defined it as unconventional marketing intended to get maximum results from minimal resources (Levinson, 2003). Guerrilla marketing is more about matching marketers' creativity than matching marketing budgets. Guerrilla marketing can be as different from traditional marketing as guerrilla warfare is from traditional warfare. Rather than marching their marketing dollars forth like infantry divisions, guerrilla marketers snipe away with their marketing resources for maximum impact (Cohen, 2000). Regina and Galer-Unti (2009) expresses some of the principles of guerrilla marketing configured to aid in health advocacy efforts. The basic tactics of guerilla marketing are to substitute innovation and creativity for the staid and status quo methods of advertising

Compared to traditional marketing, guerrilla marketing has different focuses in terms of marketing theory. Firstly, guerrilla marketing believes that marketing plan should be part of business plan. The traditional marketing theory finds product life cycle as the guideline of marketing planning. The product life cycle typically covers four stages including introduction, growth, maturity, and decline; each stage calls for different marketing strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2009). However, the product life cycle is not necessary the business life cycle. Guerrilla marketing planning focuses on the growth of the business, highlighting the business' competition advantages. According to Levinson (1999), marketing plan may mention all the business benefits, but it concentrates on the big guns, the guns lacking from the major competitors' arsenals. Furthermore, the goal of guerrilla marketing plan is making profits by making the product or service interesting. Guerrilla marketing uses profits as the only yardstick for measuring its performance; it based on psychology-laws of human behaviour-more than on marketers' own guesswork and judgment (Levinson, 1999). Rather than traditional marketing which heavily focus in explaining product functions, guerrilla marketing presents marketing campaign as an exploration journey of product followed by the rules of customer behaviour. It brings in imagination, energy into the product with a consumer point of view. Secondly, guerrilla marketing uses different marketing weapons. Guerrilla marketers believe the most powerful weapon comes from the business itself. According to Levinson (1999), a mandatory weapon for guerrilla marketers is the business's competitive advantages. The competitive advantage is the unique identity of every business; it is the key to set the business apart from the competition.

Moreover, the additional mandatory weapon for guerrilla marketers is the power of information. In this information driven society, guerrilla marketers also believe in sharing knowledge with customers. Guerrilla marketers also believe that business grows with the competitors as long as the industry grows by the product knowledge of customers. Levinson (1999) points out that the more generosity the company shows to public, the better likelihood they'll see it reflected in its growing profitability. Thirdly, guerrilla marketers import their attitude in their every marketing act. The attitude of a guerrilla marketer is dramatically different from that of a non-guerrilla marketer, which is why customers feel the difference

GUERRILLA MARKETING: REDEFINING MARKETING

(Levinson, 1999). Successful businesses stand out the competition by showing their attitude to consumers. However, attitude alone may not bring success to the business, but it certainly sets the business apart from the competitors. It is important that the attitude of the business should be unique and consist to its competitive advantage. In addition, the consistency of attitude should be in every marketing detail, from splendid national TV commercials to every piece of direct mail. Levinson (1999) points out that the attitude of business must come shining through in all marketing materials. It needs to come across by what the marketers say, how they say it, where they say it and how frequently they say it.

2.GUERRILLA MARKETING'S OBJECTIVES:

Guerrilla Marketing is specifically geared for the small business and entrepreneur. It should be based on human psychology instead of experience, judgment, and guesswork. Instead of money, the primary investments of marketing should be time, energy, and imagination. The primary statistic to measure your business is the amount of profits, not sales. The marketer should also concentrate on how many new relationships are made each month. Create a standard of excellence with an acute focus instead of trying to diversify by offering too many diverse products and services. Instead of concentrating on getting new customers, aim for more referrals, more transactions with existing customers, and larger transactions. Forget about the competition and concentrate more on cooperating with other businesses. Guerrilla Marketers should always use a combination of marketing methods for a campaign. Use current technology as a tool to empower your (from article Guerilla Marketing, 2012)

4.GUERRILLA MARKETING EXAMPLES IN INDIA:

4.1 Importance of Packaging:

The Guerilla marketing efforts uses minimum cost but creates maximum impact. Packaging is becoming a popular 'media vehicle' for guerilla communication. Nestle's Maggi noodles has cleverly used packaging for spreading awareness about the new offering from its brand mix (Bedi, 2010). When a consumer opens the packet of 'Maggi Masala Noodles' and takes out the pack of tastemaker (which is inside the noodles' packet), he come across the message written on the tastemaker's pack- 'try new curry masala'. The message is a part of guerilla communication as firstly, it doesn't cost extra to the marketer. Secondly, least effort is put in by the marketer for communicating the message but the impact created on the consumers is quite considerable and they may try out the new product variant.

4.2 Product's design as a means of communication

Marketer pay immense attention to the product's design, shape etc. and the intricacies involved therein. Nokia's Bajaj's Pulsar has a huge fuel tank symbolizing male's bicep and 'communicating' that the bike is as powerful as a muscular male.

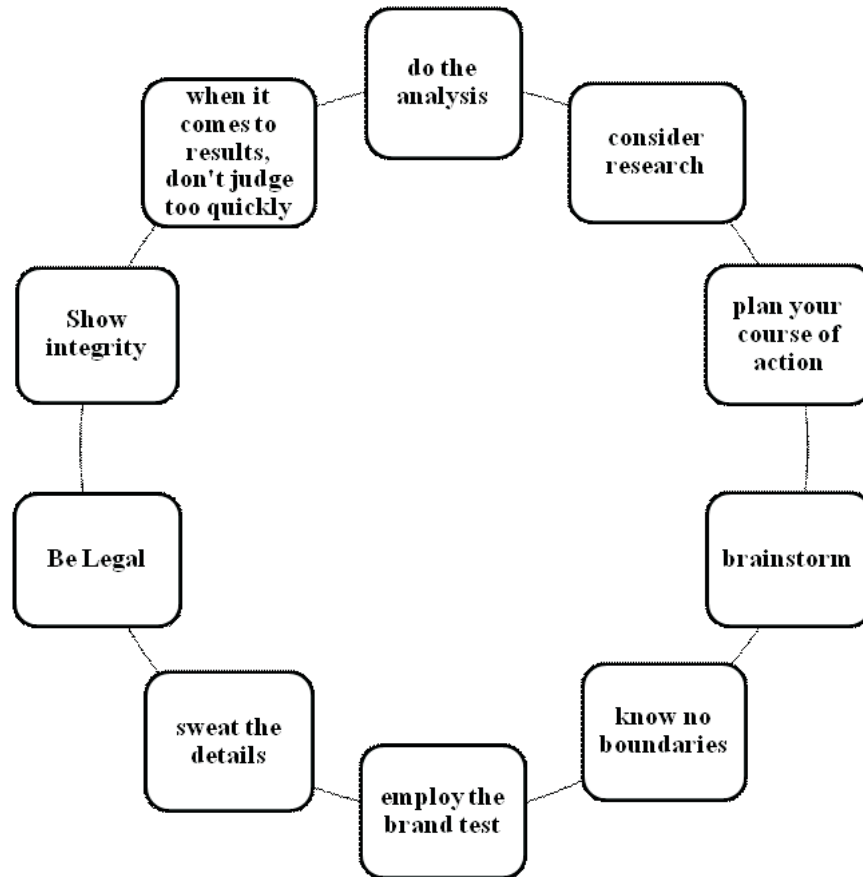
4.3 Colour as the means of communication

Colours of the packets and the product 'communicate' a lot. Bath soaps in pink and white colours are considered as feminine and are meant for females. The green dot on the pack of the products communicates that the ingredients of the product are vegetarian whereas the red dot communicates that the ingredients of the product are non-vegetarian. TVS Scooty Pep's bright and vibrant colours 'communicates' the vehicle is for girls. It had also launched the range of 99 colours of TVS Scooty Pep to lure the female youths.

5.STEPS IN BUILDING GUERRILLA MARKETING CAMPAIGN:

Guerrilla marketing starts with careful planning and recommends 10 steps, including

GUERRILLA MARKETING: REDEFINING MARKETING



Source: Developed by author

In terms of being legal, the most common pitfalls of guerilla marketing are trespassing on private property, defacing private or public property, and not getting permission from the property owners when required. Guerilla outlets may include some obvious dangers. For example, a large proliferation of advertisements on highways might distract drivers' attention, thus causing traffic accidents. Alternative outlets could pose more subtle dangers. Improperly conducted campaigns may cause social disorder.

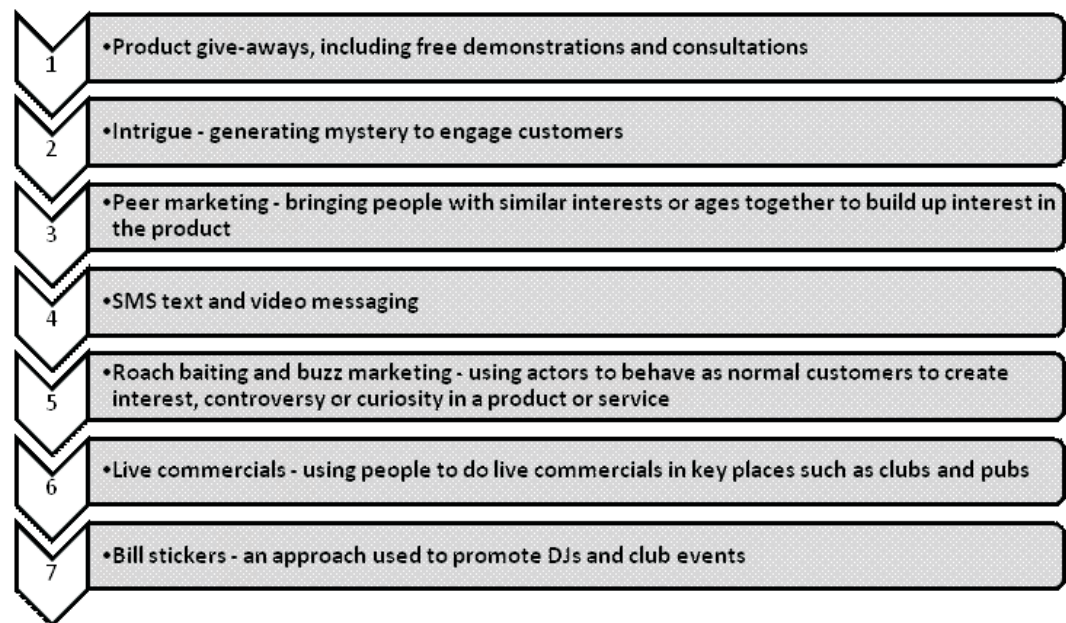
Guerilla marketing has proven to be a valuable communication and outreach tool. In today's noisy environment, the acuity of a guerilla marketing effort is an effective weapon to cut through the competition. However, if improperly developed and executed, guerrilla marketing can also exert negative effects on a brand.

1.MODES OF GUERRILLAMARKETING:

Guerilla marketing encompasses marketing approaches such as buzz marketing, viral marketing, and grassroots marketing. Guerilla marketing employs give-aways and contests, special events and "happenings", and street teams and other highly visible marketing teams.

There is a list of some methods for guerrilla marketing that can be used. These methods are:

GUERRILLA MARKETING: REDEFINING MARKETING



Source: Developed by author

7.CONCLUSION:

Since beginning, guerrilla marketing always brings inspiration to the marketers and specially small businesses. However big companies have definitely been quick enough to benefit out of this concept. It requires imagination instead of money from marketers to promote the products and services. It encourages community sharing from the marketers to their customers. It also recommends marketers to create joyful experience for customers by giving away surprises. All in all, guerrilla marketing can help any business build an innovative image for them.

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GUERRILLA MARKETING: REDEFINING MARKETING

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