

Guerilla marketing role and analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When some starry-eyed startup or a small company takes on the big budget corporate in the marketing domain with an underground marketing campaign that costs nothing but causes shockwaves for months, its called guerrilla marketing.

Guerrillamarketing is a different kind of marketing which does not involve big budget but it is about out of the box thinking; it is about using anything around to market a product, an idea or a social message virtually anything under the sun.

It believes in entertaining and engaging the target customer. It does not involve preaching or educating but it is about exciting the viewer to find out a secret or solve a puzzle. Guerrilla campaigns purely depend on creativity, intensive word of mouth campaigns and its oddness like using unconventional locations. Some guerrilla campaigns are so brilliant that it has made bystanders feel lucky to be there to witness them.

The goals of guerrilla marketing are relatively simple: use unconventional tactics to advertise on a very small budget. It is based on the idea that one does not need radio or TV ads to market something. Make a campaign so shocking, funny, unique, outrageous, clever, or creative (even controversial) that people cant stop talking about it thus create intense word of mouth publicity.

In traditional marketing advertising was mostly about big budgets, big exposure, and catchy tag lines. Advertisers were all about the profits and bringing in new customers. The guerrilla marketing concept, which was created by Levinson (1984), implies an unconventional way of performing

promotional activities on a very low budget. In recent years, many companies, even the well established ones are moving from traditional marketing implementations to guerrilla marketing.

A few examples of how even established companies have resorted to Guerrilla marketing

Procter & Gamble started a unit called Tremor to spread the word about its products among young people

Kayem Foods (maker of Al Fresco chicken sausage), hired a company to organize a guerrilla campaign called the Great Sausage Fanout

The train line CSX launched a safety-awareness campaign by hiring people to throw eggs at the companys outdoor billboards

Thus at present small or big, startup or established, companies are resorting to Guerrilla marketing and in a big way.

Origins of Guerrilla Marketing

The term Guerrilla first appeared during the war of independence in Spain and Portugal at the beginning of the 19th century. It is a Spanish expression which can be translated as battle. Guerrilla stands for a combat operation that was used by smaller groups that stood against a massive military force.

The term and the connected operations became famous through Ernesto Che Guevara Lynch de la Serna (1928 1967), best known as Che Guevara, who used and defined this military tactic. Since Che Guevara and his followers did not possess as many resources such as weapons, money, or fighters as their
<https://assignbuster.com/guerilla-marketing-role-and-analysis/>

opponents, they based their operations on the surprise effect and on acts of sabotage. The usage of unconventional weapons and activities helped them to destabilize their rivals and led them to their final success. Che Guevara defined and shaped basic principles for his fighters and summarized them in the book *Guerrilla Warfare* that he wrote in 1961. These are the most important elements that can be pointed out:

Ultimate goal: victory over the enemy

Usage of surprise effects

Tactical superiority

Based on the idea of *Guerrilla Warfare*, marketers came up with the new marketing strategy called *Guerrilla Marketing*. During the late 1970s the idea of teaching consumers about the benefits and features of products seemed too old-fashioned and didn't do well for the promoters. So, they had to do something different and entered the *Guerrilla Marketing* with the main focus on entertaining and engaging people.

Also, during that time, the consumers behavior had changed and businesses had to come up with offers that fit their consumers needs and not only their own. Consequently marketing experts had to find realizable concepts for businesses with limited resources; something that lets one company stand-out in the crowd. The only promising way was to use an anti-marketing concept that included attrition and attack strategies in order to gain as much attention as possible and to weaken competitors considerably.

Though, earlier marketers had the idea of using this strategy, Guerrilla Marketing became popular after Jay Conrad Levinson defined its concept in his book *Guerrilla Marketing* in 1983. He introduced new ways of advertising where very little investment is used and results are better than the conventional marketing strategies. He based the success of a marketing campaign strategy on the use of non-traditional marketing channels, insistency, customer proximity, and patience. A company should create as many points of contact with customers and prospects as possible in order to stay in their memory.

Guerrilla marketing (worldwide)

Pomegranate Phone

This phone is publicized to have features like built-in harmonica, coffee maker, movie projector, global voice translator, trimmer etc. But, it's a fake phone used in real online marketing campaign, ran in Sep 2008 to promote Nova Scotia or New Scotland, a Canadian province as a destination for tourism, place for business enterprise etc. Inquisitive net users who go the phone's website and click on Release date gets to see the opportunities available in New Scotland along with the facilities provided, economy, culture etc to attract him/her to the place.

Médécins du Monde

When the other companies are using guerrilla marketing for money, this international humanitarian organisation used it to help the homeless in Paris. In 2005, the organisation distributed 2 second tents to destitute people

<https://assignbuster.com/guerilla-marketing-role-and-analysis/>

who were sleeping on the roads. As these people setup their rehab tents with the company's logo in prominent places of the city, it caught attention of the public and provoked such an outrage that the city was forced to act.

IKEA

The name has become synonymous with unparalleled marketing efforts for modern style furniture and accessories. They've used very innovative ways of Guerrilla Marketing be it for telling the outside world it's their 40th birthday or trying to sell its fabrics through A little fabric makes big differences. IKEA is still continuing its innovative ways of reaching to customers.

While there is a general misconception that Guerrilla marketing is used by conglomerates and only for high-end products, the Truth is No. As can be seen from the below advertisements, the Guerrilla Marketing can be used in as little as straws, ice-cream sticks, carry bags etc to attract attention while consuming something.

Campaign Against Landmines (CALM)

In 89 countries walking on a mine is still routine is what is printed on the sauce sachets. This campaign was run by NZ CALM, which is the only NGO in NZ to work for primarily focussed on landmines and Explosive Remnants of War. They accept the responsibility for keeping the public, other NGOs, politicians and Government Departments aware of the problems these inhumane weapons create and the steps necessary to provide

solutions. These campaigns are run mainly to garner public support, to reach to youth, to raise funds so as to help minefields etc.

Governments

Even governments all over the world have started using the marketing for various purposes. In the photograph shown, Copenhagen government is promoting its Zoo with realistic imagery of a giant constrictor snake squeezing a complete Copenhagen city bus. This is one quick way of telling all the tourists that the city has a zoo with variety of animals.

Guerrilla Marketing in India

Any doubts whether Guerrilla marketing is prevalent in India, can be wiped out seeing the adjoining image.

One of the oldest guerrilla marketing campaigns in India was the Amul campaign with the chubby girl in the red polka-dotted dress. The Vodafone Zoozoo campaign can also be termed a guerrilla due to its unconventional style. The Fevicol ad campaign where in various situations, people stuck on different objects was shown struck a chord with Indian viewers.

The sponsor of the Indian cricket team Nike was trumped, as Reebok managed to put branded stickers on their bats, at far less cost but for a much greater return. Union Bank of India promoted their joint bank accounts with a print advertising campaign featuring one of India's most famous couple: Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi on a Rs. 100 Rupee note.

A recent ad of Airtel Digital TV features Saif in search of a long lost love. For this campaign spoof news columns have been published in national newspapers.

In another great example of shock marketing, Polaroid photos were taken outside homes and businesses and a sticker with message "With a CCTV security system you could have seen me outside your house" was placed on the back before dropping them in their respective mailboxes. This was a bold idea to demonstrate the disadvantages of not having a CCTV.

In these series of campaigns, Big Bazaar put up billboards in Bangalore, with subtle digs at its chief competitors Westside, Shoppers Stop & Lifestyle. This campaign garnered eyeballs.

A final guerrilla campaign in India, which we can highlight is this one done by Go Air which became one of the finest examples of guerrilla marketing at that time.

Guerrilla Marketing Disasters

The returns which a successful guerrilla marketing campaign can bring are well known, but occasionally a few end up as disasters. Below we recount some which didn't go to plan.

American Apparel

In 2008 American Apparel, decided to take an unconventional route to marketing, by putting up a billboard that featured an image of Woody Allen surrounded by Hebrew symbols.

As was expected, Woody Allen objected to the unlicensed use of his image. Following a bizarre courtroom drama including nonsensical defences and odd accounts of Allen's 1970s sex life, American Apparel decided to settle for \$5 million.

The Boston Bomb Scare

The producers of the movie *The Aqua Teen Hunger Force* decided on a guerrilla strategy to promote their film – they'd fill US cities with small computer motherboards of the same design as one of the show's characters.

Unfortunately, the public panicked at seeing the motherboards on the roads suspecting them to be bombs. After mass media hysteria and a considerable fine, the film was released.

All I Don't Want for Christmas is a PSP

With Nintendo DS hot on its heels, Sony launched a promotional website called *All I Want For Christmas is a PSP*, complete with fan mails and testimonials. Online gamers hacked into the site and realized it was registered to Sony. While Sony eventually brought down the website, their reputation amongst serious online gamers was permanently damaged.

The Coke Zero Movement

Leading up the launch of Coke Zero, a rebranded version of Diet Coke for men, Coke launched a blog called The Zero Movement. It was presented as something that was unbiased and unassociated with Coke. Visitors quickly

found out that Coke had simply purchased the domain name, created a fake archive of posts, and launched the website as a marketing tool.

After mass revolt from social bookmarking communities and popular online forums, Coke changed The Zero Movement into a completely blog-free promotional website.

Guerrilla Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

During the 1980s marketers supported the belief that prospects have to be exposed to the same marketing message as often as possible. Research showed that people need to see an advertisement up to 13 times before they understand what the product is and that it can be beneficial for them.

Consequently business owners were urged to publicise their name, logo, and message at every possible opportunity. Thus the aim was to catch the consumers's attention over and over again. Furthermore a chosen strategy had to be kept for a long period even if it did not bring the desired success immediately. Levinson, who founded the idea of Guerrilla marketing, suggested that only a certain number of exposures can bring the customer to a final purchase. Simply put, Marketing takes time and consequently business owners have to wait. A hasty change in strategy would reset the customer's mind and the invested time and money would have been wasted.

Based on a research by Saxion University, GuerrillaMarketing seems to be something that amuses people and inspires them to take a closer look. 59. 5% people in the survey believed that they would have taken a closer look if they had seen or heard such advertising in reality. A closer look would mean that they would remember the information they saw better and that might

<https://assignbuster.com/guerilla-marketing-role-and-analysis/>

influence their purchase decision later on. This is the ultimate goal of advertisements. It is a myth that an advertisement can push a person into the next shop to buy a product. Customers have to be exposed to advertisements up to 15 times before they feel the wish to buy a product.

GuerrillaMarketing seems to be the right way to get the first two steps of the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model, the attention and the interest of customers, even at the first contact. Often advertisements need several contacts before they get the attention or even the interest of a prospect. Even though the survey revealed that people spend some thought on unexpected and unusual advertisings, the survey also showed that people do not necessarily consider buying the product $\frac{1}{2}$ at least not right away. Even though the desire and the action are not inspired yet, the huge effects of GuerrillaMarketing on the attention and the interest of a customer leads one to suspect that a prospect does not need as many contacts with the advertisement as with other marketing strategies to bring them to a final purchase.

Guerrilla Marketing: Criticism

Guerrilla marketing goes another method than traditional marketing. Therefore it is often difficult to spot the fine line between incitement and offence, between capturing the attention to an organization and to create a negative reputation, to get new customers and to lose prospective customers.

The example below site an incident that shows a Guerrilla Marketing campaign that failed. There are sometimes invisible borders that a corporation should not cross:

An organization, Aqua Teen Hunger Force, promoted its new comedy series by placing a large electronic hoarding featuring an adult character in the city center of Boston, MA. Lose cables were hanging out of the hoarding. Persons passing by believed that they were explosives and panicked. They called the police and an anti-terror unit was sent to disarm the hoarding which was wrongly understood as a bomb. The city center and all access roads were closed. Later that day the mistake was exposed and it resulted in two arrests and costs of USD 500, 000. Even though the advertising was already in the city for some days and was also placed in other major US cities and did not cause any excitement there, it is obvious that those in charge should have dealt with this topic in a more sensitive way. The incident raised the hits on the website of the organization on that particular day, however it can be inferred that the reasons might not be very encouraging.

New technologies, internet, mobile telephony and 3G etc., are a blessing and a curse at the same time. Viral and Mobile Marketing are the most successful marketing trends that spread the word so fast that it often cannot be retraced or controlled anymore.

As explained in the instance above an innovative idea can quickly turn into bad promotion and poor P. R. Particularly in these circumstances it would be valuable if the advertising could be just wiped out and would thereby limit the number of people that see it. Consequently an even greater impairment

could be circumvented. But in today's context of Viral Marketing and media coverage from all over the world, it is almost impossible to let something disappear that was accessible to the public earlier. Thus this means that every promotion that has not been thought through cautiously can impair the reputation of the organization and can result in the loss of customers.

Guerrilla marketing as detailed earlier lays emphasis on time, energy and imagination rather than marketing budget. However in competitive industries where there is crowding and mix of small and large producers large producers might swipe away small firms following Guerrilla tactics by their huge market expenditure. Another point of view states, Guerrilla marketing does not have to be cheap and is not very cheap most of the time. It is cost effective, but that is something really different. It is possible that using the same investments, the effect of alternative media is greater. It has been argued that financially strong companies should use Guerrilla marketing as a complementarity tool.

Another school of thought led by American marketing experts Al Ries and Jack Trout specified the root idea of Levinson, but they also established some contrary beliefs. Like Levinson, Trout and Ries states that Guerrilla marketing best suits small and medium-sized companies. Trout mentioned that the market size also has to be controllable with the limited and available resources. Therefore he suggests specializing and investing in a niche product and/or market niche. Both Ries and Trout recommend that a small business should attempt to use every product and/or market niche that becomes available and also not hesitate to change their position in case they

believe another strategy would be more profitable. As a result insistency and endurance is not one of the important elements anymore like it was in Levinson's opinion. Unlike Levinson, Ries, and Trout, Kotler have confidence in the belief that main purpose of Guerrilla Marketing is to disrupt the opponent.

Generally speaking, Marketing takes time to show tangible results and therefore corporations have to wait because of the lag. An impulsive change in Guerrilla marketing strategy creates a dissonance in customers mind and the invested resources, time and money would be wasted.

Even though the explanation sounds logical it is not valid in today's context. The market and the environment is very dynamic and change rapidly, therefore all companies try to retain the attention of the customer as often as possible.

The Guerrilla Marketing appearances of smaller companies are often more radical and on the verge of crossing the line. Thereby it is of utter importance that the advertising is not at the expense of the audience. If the aim for awareness and publicity is placed higher than the interest of the people, the brand image is damaged.

While there are more successful implementations of Guerrilla marketing strategies and related advertisements, Guerrilla advertising campaigns that are not developed and implemented properly may lead to certain ethical trouble. It is particularly more relevant to advertisements that exploit fear appeals, annoy the target consumers or those that are baffling may be

ethically problematic. As it can be seen an improper use can lead to side effects even of an effective emotion-arousing advertisement.

Therefore planning of advertising without considering the facts from the contextual use may lead to certain ethical problems. The original intention of the advertiser may be to increase the sales, increased customer reach or better brand recall. Irrespective of the goal it will capture the attention of the customer and influence the perception of the consumer. These kinds of advertisements generally do not aim to entertain the audience. They build a notion of anger, disturbance, turbulence, fear and sad among the audience. It may lead to a temporary discontent and temporary impatience in the behavior of the audience. The audience situation can be called as worse than just dislike. Therefore the aim is to evoke negative emotions like sadness and fear instead of positive feelings of joy, calmness, peace and love. It is viewed that these factors may spiral and lead to development of long term or permanent negative towards the brand.

International organizations are more reluctant than small companies when using Guerrilla Marketing. It is the innate need to maintain a focused brand image globally; their marketing functions need a definite direction.

Conclusion

Guerrilla marketing is much more than just a trend today. It is rather an instrument that is utilized by companies of all sizes. Today's Guerrilla Marketing, though, differs from the Guerrilla Marketing philosophy that Levinson developed in the 1980s.

Neither the majority of small nor the majority of large companies take over the original Levinson idea. But still many companies partly use the aspects of the root philosophy. Basic ideas such as the setup of a corporate identity were taken over by almost every company.

Even though they often rely on a classical marketing mix, advertising campaigns make use of the Guerrilla surprise effect and its witty ideas. With the help of only a small budget, the maximum attention is drawn to their advertising. The approach to insist on a chosen Marketing campaign, even if it does not lead to the expected return for quite a long time, for instance, is difficult to put into practice at a time where economical conditions and markets are changing rapidly.

Although companies of all sizes utilize the same new defined approaches of Guerrilla marketing, the reasons why they opt for that instrument differ. For small and medium sized companies the advantage is still the cost-effectiveness that makes it so interesting to implement. Larger, often more solvent companies on the other hand do not have to opt for such an inexpensive way of advertising. Guerrilla marketing is an additional marketing instrument to them, which provides additional value in form of attention. Classical advertising alone often fails to provide that extra value.

Guerrilla marketing is not a guarantor of success. A design framework is needed to make campaigns as effective as possible, since people in the modern world have a rather negative attitude towards advertising. Such barriers have to be overcome first. Thereby it is fundamentally important to create an advertisement that does not praise the obvious advantages of low

prices and high qualities, but to draw the attention towards the brand. Not the product is the central issue in Guerrilla Marketing. The creative idea is fundamental and is supposed to reflect positively on the brand. Moreover, because guerrilla marketing tactics depend on the surprise element so they become ineffective once the method is well-known, and consequently marketers have to keep moving and changing, bobbing and weaving, avoiding detection and blazing new trails. Their business depends on stealth and the element of surprise.

The concept of Guerrilla Marketing will also work in the future if not too many companies work with this alternative. In case the traditional advertising is repressed more and more and Guerrilla Marketing activities are a rather normal appearance among advertisings, the essential surprise effect will not be guaranteed anymore. It could come to this development when weak economic conditions diminish marketing budgets even further.

But in all probability classical advertising will also exist in the future and will not be displaced by alternative forms like Guerrilla Marketing. Nevertheless classical advertising has to change to get through to customers. Therefore it is likely that traditional marketing will transform for example by taking over characteristics of Guerrilla Marketing. This might result in advertisings with pointed formulation and direct address towards the target group.

Advertising would need to activate as many senses as possible. Also it should act multimodal, being present in all kinds of channels their target group moves in. The fact that classical advertising is often perceived negatively among customers should be a warning for future Guerrillas.

Although customers often perceive Guerrilla Marketing as something new and interesting today, in the future it can also turn to be something that bothers prospects. This is a real threat due to the fact that a single Guerrilla Marketing activity cannot influence customers' behaviour or their purchase decision.