



UNLEASH THE GUERRILLAS

A lot has changed since the term “Guerrilla Marketing” was introduced in 1984 by Jay Levinson — and becoming a marketing guerilla is now a requirement! BY MARK OKUN

“Guerrilla Marketing allows you to build upon your showroom’s existing professional relationships while attracting others.”



Being a Guerrilla still means that you must take a different approach to marketing than the traditional media channels such as print, billboards, and television. However, these once steadfast staples have lost their pop and are not delivering the same results to showrooms that they once did.

The goal of today’s “Guerrilla” is to gain the attention of current customers and stimulate potential clients by implementing marketing strategies that are uncommon, attention-getting, and financially economical.

WHY BE A GUERRILLA

There is no reason to get into the depths of the digital changes that we have experienced over the last decade. It is these changes that now demand that showrooms and individuals supplement their current marketing efforts by doing some Guerrilla Marketing. A well-rounded marketing team will benefit in 2018 by adding these techniques to their repertoire.

The consumer has become numb to the 20th Century marketing messages being rehashed in the digital space, and they will overtly ignore the costly mass-market attempts that have been designed to connect with them in other traditional mediums.

Fortunately, it costs much less to feed a Guerrilla than many of those old school marketing campaigns. Given the new ways we reach customers today, there is economy when using a Guerrilla Marketing strategy.

Once the strategy is implemented and the results are tallied, the expenditures will be less in the form of the amount of money spent and more about the extra time needed in creating and applying Guerrilla Marketing efforts.

Being a Guerrilla requires that you use your resources and energies to make your marketing messages stick in the consumer’s mind. Begin laying the foundation of this stealthy consumer outreach by utilizing your wildest imagination blended with some industry-specific knowledge and a whole bunch of humor.

WHO IS A GUERRILLA

In my opinion, the modified definition of a 21st Century Guerrilla Marketer is any person(s) or team who engages in out of the ordinary activities specifically designed to get the attention of the public at large and to touch specific customers to foster or reinforce an existing relationship.

Melding the sales and marketing teams involved in this activity is a no-brainer; this is what provides power to your program. When possible include people from the entire enterprise — even operations, the warehouse, and the accounting department. By broadening your Guerrilla task force, you expand both the appeal and the reach.

BENEFITS OF GUERRILLA MARKETING

There are significant benefits that any and every size business can experience from the use of these stealth and frugal advertising tactics. These unconventional methods are designed

to increase marketplace awareness of your showroom, the products you represent, and the services you offer in a memorable way that connects to the potential client.

Guerrilla Marketing also can help to support your local business community by developing complementary campaign initiatives that promote each business to their respective audiences. This can be done with positive results that are mutually advantageous.

Being unique and stirring emotions with a strong foundation in humor will create the “sticky” memories we are after. When any marketing experience is memorable, consumers begin to associate the brand with the feelings being promoted. The most considerable advantage in Guerrilla tactics, unlike mass marketing, is that it allows for the easy targeting of specific customer personas, letting you hone in on a new or less than productive segment of your audience.

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“Creativity is the workhorse showrooms can employ to make an impact with Guerrilla Marketing.”

GUERRILLA GUIDELINES

When building your strategy, there are several questions to ask yourself to assure that you get the effect that you want.

1 Is my message clear?

The goal when creating these concepts is that they do not resemble anything close to marketing. The message being sent can be a bit edgy, yet it is a clear story to the people that interact with it.

2 Am I humorous and respectful with the content?

There are many ways to garner the attention of people, some of those ideas are positive and others negative; in every case, it is essential to stay on the respectful side of edgy. Being courteous indicates that while you're on the forefront of connecting with people, the showroom has a level of professionalism.

3 Am I following the law?

Since using “attention-getting” marketing can sometimes be unsettling to the community at large, check the laws and use common sense when designing ideas that might be questionable. Depending on the company's risk tolerance, the closer you can get to creating a shocking campaign the more likely your message will get through.

4 Does the content align with the objective?

Getting attention is the natural result, but the real test is coming up with creative content – in both images and words – that solidly promote your showroom brand and vividly express your desired communication.

STRATEGY SUGGESTIONS

If the whole idea of Guerrilla Marketing is foreign to you, or maybe you can't wrap your head around the actions that need to be taken, here are some ideas I have used and found to work well.

1. The first strategy involves working with other local businesses to create a marketing partnership group. The companies you select may be aligned with your showroom, or they can be local market influencers such as your local breakfast/lunch shop or fashion boutique. This strategy can be repeated throughout the year, but do not use it at the same locations for long periods or without a break as it will get stale.

Using the breakfast shop example, when customers have breakfast and get their bill, they are given a discount coupon that can be used at any of the marketing member group's stores. When you present it with a little story about why the customer is getting this unexpected benefit, you will produce the best results. This same activity is reciprocal and occurs at each of the businesses involved.

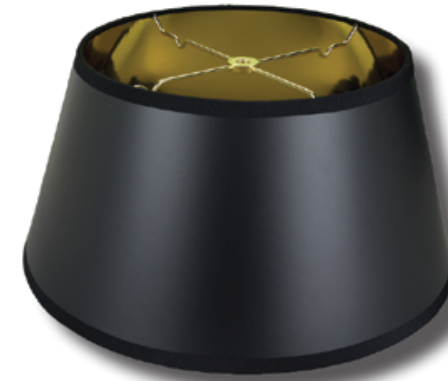
2. The next Guerrilla Marketing technique – sticky notes – is one of my favorites. It is affordable for any showroom or individual to undertake and is a method that has been used for decades, produces results, and I have personally found it to be successful.

The sticky notes can be blank or pre-printed with your logo and a marketing message, sometimes a discount or free item is included on this personal mini-flyer.

If you select blank notes, do not hand-write the marketing message. Instead get a self-inking stamp for your repeated messages as they make quick work of customizing blank notes.

These little gems require the same thought and effort as any marketing message – and maybe even more – due to the limited space available. Make sure your name is clear and include both your phone number and Web address.

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"If offering discounts are part of your business strategy, have a special discount or offer only associated with business card marketing."



Here are some sample lines:

- » "Don't be afraid of the dark, use a professional lighting design company."
- » "When you want your light right, come to Our Lighting Showroom."
- » "It is better to light with a good designer, than curse the dark spots."

Based on the message, you can place sticky notes anywhere in targeted locations.

For example, before the mass acceptance of LED lamping, a sticky note that said, "I can save you \$55 a year for every light like this," was placed next to recessed fixtures in our showroom that needed an LED retrofit. This strategy resulted in several sales and some good referrals, which is excellent for a passive marketing program.

Highly visible colors make sticky notes stand out when they are placed on unfilled fixture locations on the outside of a new construction home being built or on the door of a new business being set up. An additional benefit was that there was never a negative call about leaving sticky notes anywhere. Just don't overdo it. One or two notes are powerful; five is littering!

3. The last strategy is what I call the "Business Card Billboard." Most companies that have business cards do not use the back of the card for marketing. They may have the location or other contact information there, but in the digital world, this space can provide better benefits.

Our society has seen an ever-increasing activity in dining out. We eat out for fun and convenience.

Each time we go to a restaurant, we interact with the server, bartender, manager, or even the owner — this is a great opportunity to be a Guerrilla.

Whenever you are venturing out, have a few business cards in your wallet or purse with this handwritten note, "You have been excellent at providing us with great service, if I can ever do the same for you or a friend, please connect with me."

Leaving your card with a tip that is a little larger than the norm will also get the attention of the server, and it will bring in business. If offering discounts are part of your business strategy, have a special discount or offer only associated with business card marketing (this makes tallying the results of the program a bit easier).

This strategy can be used in other places of business, too! No matter the type of business you patronize, let them know how well they did and share your card with them. If your car has been serviced, pass a card off; if you had in-home service, pass a card, etc. No matter the interaction, if you were treated well, pass a card.

THE GUERRILLA'S EDGE

I hope after reading this article you have an appreciation of the benefits that can be had by adopting a Guerrilla Marketing strategy. When you apply any of these suggestions or design one of your own, the benefits you will reap will eclipse the initial time and work invested by providing connections and leads that can't be obtained in any other way.

Happy Selling! ❖



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