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# GUERRILLA MARKETING: A LOW COST MARKETING STRATEGY

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Guerilla Marketing is an advertising strategy that focuses on low-cost marketing tactics mostly adopted by small scale concerns and yields unconventional results. The term Guerilla marketing was inspired by Guerilla warfare which is a form of irregular warfare and relates to the small tactical strategies used by armed civilians. Due to lack of resources, small business houses use different set of marketing strategies and tactics in comparison to big business houses. Guerilla marketing involves unusual approaches such as intercept encounters in public places, street giveaways of products, PR stunts, or any unconventional marketing intended to get maximum results from minimal resources. More innovative approaches to Guerilla marketing now utilize mobile digital technologies to engage the consumer and create a memorable brand experience. So many small firms can select other Medias and work with low marketing budget. This paper will throw light on new approach to the theory and practice of the Guerilla marketing including principles upon which the concept of Guerilla marketing is based with particular reference to the weapons of Guerilla marketing and also highlighting the ethical issues involved in Guerilla marketing.

**Keywords:** Guerilla marketing, Marketing strategies, Unconventional marketing, Approaches

## INTRODUCTION

Guerilla Marketing is an innovative marketing form that has gained a lot of importance in the present advertising scenario. The term “Guerilla” (battle) roots back to the war of independence in Spain and Portugal, the revolution in Cuba, and the Vietnamese War. Here “Guerilla” stood for an attack strategy based on the surprise effect and on acts of sabotage, which was used by smaller groups that stood against a massive military

force. In the 1960’s US firms brought the “Guerilla” tactics to Marketing, when they needed new ways to outdo competitors. Then they merely attacked weak points of competitors by implementing preliminary injunctions for their campaigns for instance. Only in 1983, did Jay Conrad Levinson made the term “Guerilla Marketing” known as a philosophy for small and start-up companies to successfully market their business with a small amount of money. He based the success of a

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marketing strategy on the use of non-traditional marketing channels, customer proximity, insistency, and patience. Through the drastic technological development until today and its complimentary change in the advertising market. Guerilla Marketing has developed into a marketing form mostly used for Promotion these days. Over the years, numerous methods of Guerilla marketing have emerged. The most popular of them are Ambient marketing, Sensation marketing, Viral marketing, Buzz marketing and Ambush marketing. Despite its numerous advantages, Guerilla marketing suffers from some negatives, which have to be accounted before any Guerilla marketing campaign is conducted. The present paper focuses on the origin of Guerilla Marketing and various aspects relating to it.

## OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept and tools of Guerilla marketing.
- To analyze the various merits and ethical issues involved in Guerilla marketing.

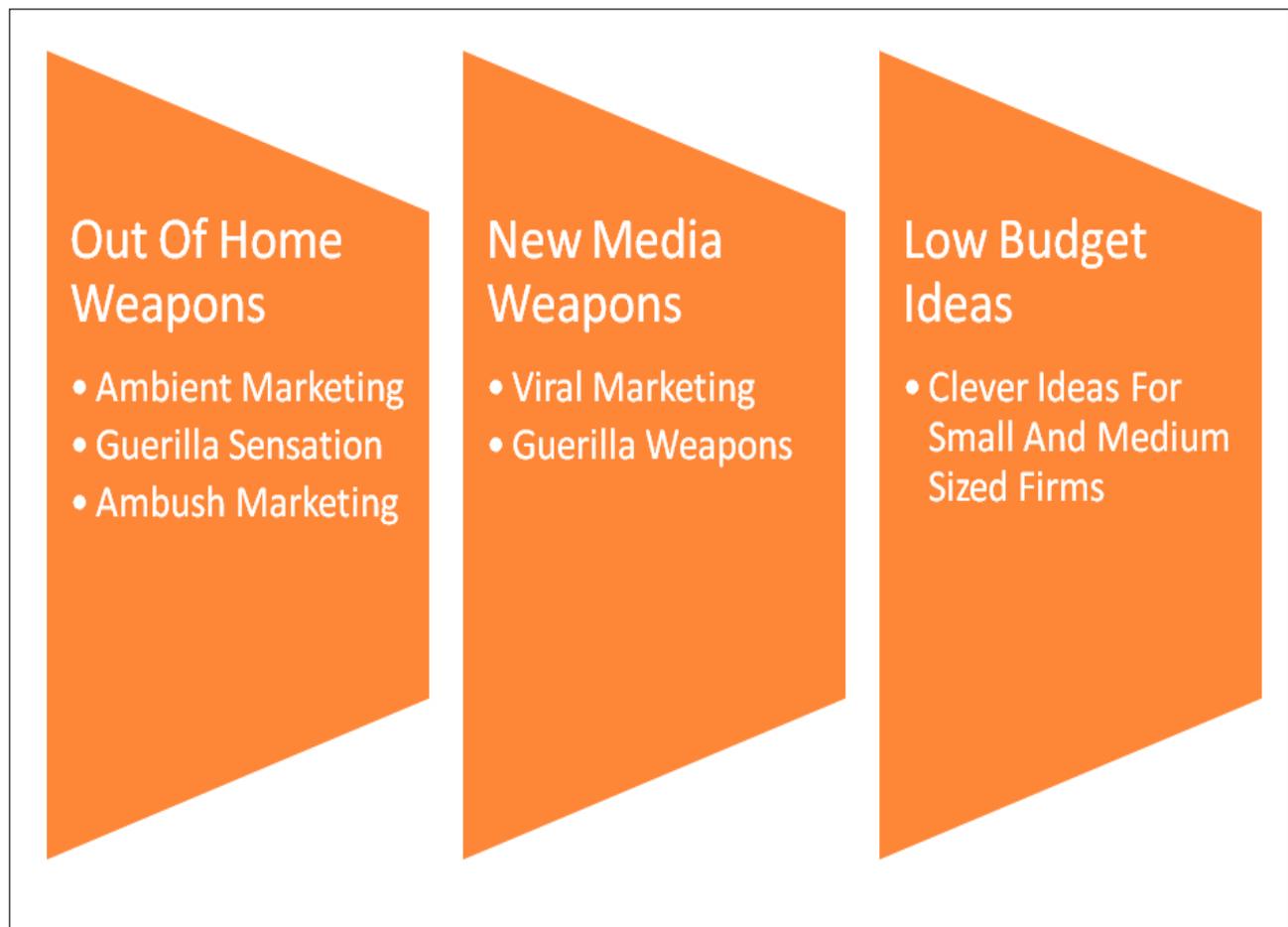
## HISTORY

The History of guerilla Marketing Advertising can be dated back to 4000 BC where the early Egyptians used papyrus to make sales messages and wall posters. What we consider traditional advertising and marketing slowly developed over the centuries but never really boomed until the early 1900s. It was at this time that the main goal of advertisements was to educate the consumer on the product or service rather than to entertain and engage them. In 1960, campaigns focused on heavy advertising spending in different mass media channels such as radio and print. Agencies struggled to make

an impression on consumers and consumers were tired of being marketed too. It was time for a change. In 1984, marketer Jay Conrad Levinson introduced the formal term in his book called, "*Guerilla Marketing*." Levinson comes from a background as the Senior Vice-President at J Walter Thompson and Creative Director and Board Member at Leo Burnett Advertising. In Levinson's book, he proposes unique ways of approaching and combating traditional forms of advertising. The goal of Guerilla marketing was to use unconventional tactics to advertise on a small budget. During this time, radio, television and print were on the rise, but consumers were growing tired. Larger companies have been using unconventional marketing to compliment their advertising campaigns. Some marketers argue that when big businesses utilize Guerilla marketing tactics, it isn't true Guerilla. Bigger companies have much larger budgets and their brands are usually already well established. Guerilla marketing is an advertising strategy, in which low cost unconventional means (sticker bombing, flash mobs) are utilized in a large network of individual cells, to convey or promote a product or an idea. The term Guerilla marketing is easily traced to Guerilla warfare which utilizes a typical tactics to achieve a goal in a competitive and unforgiving environment. The approach was first coined and defined by Jay Conrad Levinson following his success in changing the image of Marlboro cigarettes from a women's product into the now famous 'Marlboro Man' approach. According to Levinson, Guerilla marketing is designed to obtain instant results with limited resources using tactics that rely on creativity, good relationship, and willingness to try different approaches. According to Levinson, some of the principles upon which the concept of Guerilla

marketing is based includes the following:

- This marketing tactic is specifically geared for the small businesses to enable them obtain publicity more easily than large companies.
- Guerilla marketing is primarily based on human psychology and not on experience, judgment, and guesswork.
- Money is not the primary investment in Guerilla marketing; the basic requirements are time, energy, and imagination.
- In Guerilla marketing, sales are not the primary statistic to measure a business; amount of profit is the primary statistic.
- Guerilla marketing is not to sell diverse products and services; a marketer must create a standard of excellence with an acute focus.
- Guerilla marketing is less about getting new customers and more about getting more referrals, more transactions with existing customers, and larger transactions.
- Competition is not the key in Guerilla marketing; instead it suggests cooperating with other businesses and grab benefit.
- In Guerilla marketing, a combination of marketing methods should be used for a campaign.
- In Guerilla marketing, current technology is used as a tool to empower a business.



## **GUERRILLA MARKETING TOOLS**

### **OUT-OF-HOME WEAPONS**

“Out-of-home” refers to the weapons that are actually realized at public locations. It not only catches the interest of people who pass by, but media interest as well. It stimulates the action amongst people and makes them talk about the product. The expansion of brand awareness is the aim of this strategy.

#### **Ambient Marketing**

The Ambient Media refers to non-traditional out-of-home advertising. While other out-of-home Marketers advertise on large-scale billboards, ambient advertisements are posted on manhole covers, cranes, pizza cartons, free postcards and in bars. They are all a little more unusual displays. Now a day’s newer ambient medias have come up, such as messages on large-format screens in subways or handles of supermarket trolleys. There are no limits to their formats. The important aspect is to seek out the target group at their preferred location in an entertaining way. Ambient Marketing tries to approach the customer individually through the place of contact.

#### **Guerilla Sensation**

Guerilla Sensation is very similar to Ambient Marketing. As specified above, Ambient Marketing positions advertising at unusual places. Whereas in Guerilla sensation the main focus is not necessarily on the idea, but on the advertising space itself. In general Guerilla Sensation works with the same principle, but it is only used on a very limited number of events and activities. The number of prospects that are exposed to the advertisement is therefore relatively small.

#### **Ambush Marketing**

It stands for a sneaky out-of-home marketing

method, which promotes a brand at huge events without paying a sponsorship fee. At many major events one brand pays a high price to be the exclusive sponsor, whereas competitor finds the other way out. Even at such odd situations Ambush marketers find room to popularize their product. Pepsi for instance placed a huge oversized Pepsi bottle close to a soccer game which was sponsored by Coca Cola. Giving out company material on a fare without having a stand is also Ambush Marketing.

## **NEW MEDIA WEAPONS**

New technologies change our lives and they often make it easier. Coming up of mobile phones, and internet, has provided unlimited information and shopping possibilities to the customer at a click of the computer mouse. Business houses also try to take the advantages that technology provides.

#### **Viral Marketing**

Encouraging people to pass the message along to others for free is an art. The Viral Marketing concept is not dependent on a certain media. Communication between two persons has always existed in various ways. A viral buzz is created by passing the information regarding the product from one person to another. The impact, coverage, and pace that this media offers today is astonishing.

#### **Guerilla Mobile**

Not only the PC offers unlimited possibilities to marketers. Since the number of mobile phones exceeds the number of inhabitants in many countries, the cell phone is a permanent companion of prospects. Therefore it was only a matter of time until marketers took the opportunity to reach customers and prospects at any place

at any time. The wireless connection provides the possibility to present marketing messages in different ways, via., SMS, MMS, Bluetooth, or Infrared.

## LOW BUDGET WEAPONS

This Weapon refers to Guerilla Marketing for new, small, and medium-sized companies, who only possess a small marketing budget. Like Levinson already pointed out in the 1980's that does not necessarily mean that those companies have a disadvantage compared to financially strong competitors. But since their capital is low, the top priority is to use it as efficiently as possible. Guerilla Marketing should put this into practice by focusing on the local culture with its geographical, sportive, social network, its rituals, needs, habits, norms, traditions, and values. Clever ideas appear through unconventional methods which are supposed to catch the attention of the target group. Small businesses can use the following tools and implement their own Guerilla tactics into them:

- Trade shows
- Sponsorship programs
- Public relations programs
- Alternative media

### Merits of Guerilla Marketing

- Flexible – Compared to other marketing strategies, this strategy is more flexible. This strategy is unconventional so it can overcome the barriers created by the traditional marketing communications.
- Target Audience – The message can be designed to reach the target market which reduces waste and ineffectiveness. The product or brand breaks the clutter and stands

right in front of the target audience.

- Low Cost – Guerilla marketing is a low cost strategy which makes ideal for firms who do not have massive marketing budgets. Celebrity endorsements are very costly and so are the TV ad rates. So many small firms can select other Medias and work with low marketing budget.
- Simple – Strategies are simple and easy to use and implement which is ideal for the smaller business or new ventures. Many communications are very effective when they are made in simple for rather than complicated one.
- Impact – There is a higher brand recall and better positioning as it is targeted to the audience. The impact of such strategies can directly be seen in sales and profits of the company.

### Ethical Issues involved in Guerilla Marketing

- Proper and relevant content should be used while popularizing the product through guerrilla marketing in case immoral images like of warfare, etc., are utilized the whole message might get distorted.
- False and misleading advertisements, which may lead to wrong conclusions, should be avoided.
- Direct comparison with the competitor and outright claims regarding superiority of the product should also be avoided.
- Negative emotions like fear and anger to promote the sales of the product amongst people should be avoided.
- Marketers select places where people do not

expect to see an ad, such places like inside wash rooms, under the bridges, hangings from the ceiling, paints on the public wall or stunts at public places. Many of such incidents may cause distraction and lead to accidents.

- Advertisements should be such that they can be viewed both by adults as well as children. Advertisements which may pollute the young minds should not be promoted.

## CONCLUSION

Guerrilla marketing, in spite of its modest beginnings in the early 1960s, is today extensively used not just by small and medium enterprises, but also by big corporations. Guerrilla marketing, due to presence of a few distinguished characteristics like element of surprise, diffusion and low cost has come up as modernized low cost strategy in comparison to traditional marketing techniques. Over the years, numerous methods of guerrilla marketing have emerged. The most popular of them are Ambient marketing, Sensation marketing, Viral marketing, Buzz marketing and Ambush marketing.. The present paper has thrown light upon the principles and practices to be kept in mind while going guerilla. As well as the various merits of this sort of marketing has been discussed. In comparison to other promotional techniques like advertisements, sale promotions, personal selling, etc., guerilla marketing has gained a wide acceptance whether we talk of big business houses, small scale concerns or mid scale organizations.

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