GUERRILLA MARKETING – REACHING THE CUSTOMER IN AN UNTRADITIONAL WAY

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing and advertising is all around us and one is under constant influence by different kind of messages. Although, the interesting part is how much attention do commercials and advertisements receive from the potential consumer? The commercial and print advertisements are getting old and these traditional methods are inefficient without support from more unconventional methods. Moreover, people are getting tired of the same old messages and there is a need for innovation in order to reach new grounds and the customer is easily bored with unadventurous way of marketing. From a company’s point of view, marketing and especially advertising is important for sales, though a company is paying for media space and want to reach as many potential buyers as possible. Hence by using mass marketing the waste is often big, organizations send countless of messages out to the erroneous group, therefore, the need for more of an efficient method is current, to reach the right customer through the marketing campaign without getting lost in the clutter. Furthermore, there is a call for more efficient methods, more innovating and effective, not as costly and have a higher focus on smaller demographic areas and targeted segments so the present articles believes that the internet could be a more cost-effective method in comparison to ads in daily newspapers, also knowing that through internet one could reach the target group in a more direct way. Marketing is also a question about financial means, since one has to invest money in order to use he traditional marketing approaches.

With the aim of getting through the clutter in the marketing, one has to choose a different kind of route and focus more innovation and creativity. Therefore, one shall find new ways and channels to reach the market; an interesting form of marketing is when exposing customers to messages in an unconventional way. The use of the unconventional marketing approaches was something that previously associated with small business firms due to their limited budget; they had to find new ways but nowadays, when the competition is harsh, the trend goes towards that large advertisers also have adopted the approach.

Since the positive aspects are more visible and the need for finding new ways of reaching the customer has increased one of these approaches is known as guerrilla marketing, as one could heed from the name the marketing approach could be experienced as controversial, since the name could be associated with warfare tactics, thus one should not associate it with a bloody battleground, more of a strategy that one uses in order to conquer a market through a well
planned approach in a smaller scale. However, companies use warfare to fight on the battleground of today, the consumer’s mind – where words and pictures are the weapons used and where the CEO of every company acts as a general, the development of guerrilla marketing over the years is a fact.

THE GUERRILLA PROBLEM

One could argue that guerrilla marketing is communicating a message in an untraditional way but the definition of guerrilla marketing is complex to characterize, although the general view of this approach is when an organization is using innovating marketing techniques that are cost efficient. While using guerrilla marketing, one should try to find the uniqueness in the marketing approach as each guerrilla campaign has a niche and targets a smaller crowd. In addition, guerrilla marketing is a concept that many marketers use, although the different of the meaning can be very individual, one element that the different opinions has in common is the cost. Entrepreneurs with a small marketing budget often used it and their only way to compete was to do it in a more matchless way but today it is even possible for big companies to take advantage of this phenomenon to compete with their market’s leaders.

However, there are numerous thriving corporations that have used the approach, both big and small, but have their approaches worked? Another expression for guerrilla marketing may be the only future that marketing has, at least for some companies. Therefore a study of this marketing phenomenon is of most interest, but is it a big part of the future? To summarize this problem discussion, these three questions will help to fulfill the purpose of this article: What is guerrilla marketing? How have organizations that have been in contact with the phenomenon experienced it? Is guerrilla marketing a good way of marketing? So an analysis of the phenomenon of guerrilla marketing and a presentation of the answers to the questions is attempted.

COMMUNICATION – THE DIRECTION TO WIN

Marketing is about sending a message through different channels, the message is transmitted new and different channels within guerrilla marketing compared to traditional marketing, although the communication process looks almost the same. There are two types of channels personal or non-personal, where guerrilla marketing is more of a personal channel as the channel as the channel is used to reach a targeted market or a segment. In light traditional marketers use given channels, like TV or radio, while guerrilla marketers use new and invented channels, hence giving guerrilla marketers a competitive advantage over delivering a message.

MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Knowing that guerrilla marketing is delivering a message through some kind of communication, though a one should add a more innovative approach to it, as guerrilla marketing could help get a higher awareness than other approaches. It is not just one, it is a form of thinking and acting in the market as it needs to have a clear purpose and be backed up in the right way within the organization. Guerrilla marketing must be an entire package of marketing tools so one could therefore compare the guerrilla campaign with IMC, integrated marketing communication, whereas several promotional tools are a part of the entire communication
process thus it is important for the organization using this approach to try to create a synergy between the tools.

**PROMOTIONAL MIX – WEAPONS TO WIN THE WAR**

One tool used for a great success is direct mail; another interesting approach is direct marketing, direct marketing is one tool that goes hand in hand with guerrilla marketing approaches, meaning that it is more of a direct way of marketing where one in a straight way influence the target customers and may be the best traditional promotional tool that can be compared to guerrilla marketing approaches as it is interactive and it do use more than one media to affect the response. Personal selling is also an important part of being a guerrilla marketer as the first contact is made with the customer, one need to sell the idea or product in a good way. Though, the need for personal selling is high and since the trends in the market tend to become more personal, sales is and will always be an important part of a company. If guerrilla marketing is a part of the future, sales will also be of most concern so sales promotion is also strongly connected to the personal selling and it is also an important tool for the guerrilla marketer. Promotions are often an important tool for guerrilla marketers as guerrilla campaign do use promotions, but they should be targeted exactly right in the war in order to be effective and maybe the most important tool in the guerrilla marketing way of thinking is publicity and public relations.

**WORD OF MOUTH**

Word of mouth is about personal communication between two persons discussing a brand, product or a service and discussing something they have experienced or seen this is where guerrilla marketing comes in; guerrilla marketing campaign uses more senses and will therefore stay with the people, getting in contact with it, for a longer time. Consequently, guerrilla marketing should surprise people and when people have experienced something fun and surprisingly they have a tendency to talk to others about it. Further, the chance that guerrilla marketing campaigns will be spread through the word of mouth is high since, one of the goals with guerrilla marketing is to create publicity, in newspapers and magazines, enhance that statement where the campaign must be relevant in order to be successful and to start a positive word of mouth.

**VIRAL MARKETING**

Viral marketing is another form of word of mouth; it could be called virtual marketing since it is mostly about spreading the word in digital domains with the help of internet like blogs, forums and chat rooms throughout the globe, which creates great potentials, for guerrilla marketing. Consequently, today’s consumer have a high level of awareness and searches the internet for there product or service information, hence the usage of viral marketing could prove to be very successful.

**IN WHAT WAY COULD AIDA SUPPORT WINNING THE BATTLE?**

Guerrilla marketing is about to find new channels or others ways than your competitors, this is in order to get through the noise and get the attention needed in order to advance on the
purchasing ladder that is “to do unexpected things that creates big attention”, which would lead to an interest. Once the interest is found, one has to keep the customer interested in order to create a desire for the product or service, then one has should add in a piece of creativity and the effects of the campaign can be successful. Hence, the phenomenon of guerrilla marketing should be consistent through out the entire process of the AIDA model. Furthermore, one has to be prepared once the attack is made, so that the sales personnel are ready for the outcomes of the attack as it could be compared to the warfare; taking the customers through the AIDA ladder is a complex method and guerrilla marketing will definitely help taking one up the ladder in a smooth way. Getting to the action stage is though a long process and the methods used is different for different kind of people, in order to work in a good way one should find the uniqueness within it, this is to encourage the customer to take action and start buying from you, it is often the last part that is hard to get the customer to reach.

CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

There are two kinds of channels, direct and indirect, the direct channels is when the contact with the customer is taken directly through face to face communication, phone conversation, mail or even in an electronic way. Consequently, the indirect approach often goes through a second part before reaching the end target. Guerrilla marketing is a direct channel to the end customer, it is more effective than indirect channels as preferable usage of direct channels, proves to be an effective way to reach the end customers.

THE INTERNET CHANNEL – GETTING AROUND THE DEFENSIVE LINE?

Internet is a great tool to use in guerrilla marketing as it is much more then just a home page and e-mails, today it is also blogs, forums and pod cast, a means to reach the potential end customer. However, internet channel is perfect for the companies that want to cut down on marketing costs and reach a big market, but internet is huge, the competition is fierce and it can cost a lot of money to protect you form hackers etc, although it is not too hard to develop, but the company must have a well built webpage that encourage the customers to action.

MARKETING WARFARE

Almost every company in the market could identify itself with some of the military approaches the defensive strategy, the offensive warfare, the flaking warfare and the guerrilla warfare. Having this, guerrilla marketing should not only be suitable for smaller companies, it depends on their position in the market, if being the marketing leader, advantages such as financial muscle power could be the deciding factor otherwise one could use smaller more efficient methods instead, as it is just a matter of thinking in the right way in order to win the war. As a market leader one does not have to use the small dirty roads in order to gain advantages in the war winning customers, they can afford driving down the main road in a tank, taking the competition easy. As a challenger it is different, some times all out attack must be used in order to win market share, or even so as being smaller, one has to take some shortcuts in order to find the right target market. Further, all companies might not internally be ready for using more of a guerrilla tactic in order to gain market share, hence it is of most concern to be internally prepared before an attack.
GUERRILLA MARKETING

Guerrilla marketing is in a shorter time frame than traditional marketing, as guerrilla marketing campaigns are often taking place during a shorter period of time because more and more marketers will start to use guerrilla methods since the end customers have proven to be harder and harder to reach. Furthermore, the consumers block out marketing today in several different ways, therefore they must fund new channels, a good way to reach the end customer without being blocked is to target the segment, using target marketing to work properly. In addition, guerrilla marketing time and energy is one of the key ingredients in a successful campaign, these attributes and imagination and knowledge is what that takes to create guerrilla marketing and finally it should be fun, humor and surprise people. However, many companies today uses guerrilla marketing as a way to be fun and modern and to a large extent to reach a younger, perhaps, more aware crowd.

DISCUSSION FOR THE STATED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS GUERRILLA MARKETING?

Many believe that guerrilla marketing was a method or an approach but guerrilla marketing is a way of thinking; one could not characterize it with particular actions, though one could identify the philosophy in several actions. It is a way to act, be and think. Mainly, it is choosing a different kind of route with an open mind and a different attitude in order to gain advantages in the war for the customers. It is also clear that when thinking as a guerrilla marketer one tends to use new channels, new innovative ways to contact and reach the end customers, with such an effect that it says with them for a long time and creates a buzz.

HOW HAVE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE PHENOMENON EXPERIENCED IT?

All individuals and organizations that are a part of the marketing environment have experienced the guerrilla marketing as something positive and pioneering as it has changed their view on marketing, they have become more open minded to new creative ideas where one can witness from the campaign what we receive in the field of advertising and promotion.

IS GUERRILLA MARKETING A GOOD WAY OF MARKETING?

When one plans guerrilla marketing well, it often proves to be very effective, though the hard part of it is do the right research, preparations and find the right information. Guerrilla marketing is not working if you do not focus on the right target and sent out a relevant message using the right vehicle on the right frequency. If not, this is what one can call the negative side of guerrilla marketing, then the campaigns relation to it is just seen as a bad attempt to create attention and awareness. The aspect of guerrilla marketing is focusing on uniqueness to the target, which in several cases leads to publicity, which could result in attention in the media, an economical way of getting message to the target market.
CONCLUSIONS

Guerrilla marketing is not a model one can study in the textbook or a marketing method described as one practice; it is a state of mind, a way of thinking, a mindset for marketers and business people. The ones who use guerrilla marketing have a more open mind then the ones not using it, the people that believe in the phenomenon of guerilla marketing is open to new and creative ideas. Guerrilla marketing is a good compliment for organizations using a more traditional approach, it is a way to spice up the consisting marketing and a way to get attention which will make it easier to come through the clutter and reach the target market. Guerrilla marketer would be much more enthusiastic and open to the new idea then a traditional marketer would be.

THE FUTURE OF MARKETING

Since guerrilla marketing is strongly connected to entrepreneurship, it would be of most interest to combine these two topics that are of most concern and study them in relation to each other. A deeper study connected to what kind of companies that would allow a different kind of attitude when it comes to marketing through quantitative approach, in order to generalize the results in other kind of way. How can one in a good way measure what the customers thinks of your marketing? Furthermore, what is needed in order for a paradigm shift within marketing? Its advertising going to die? Is internet really the way of the future? How can companies reach the target market in a more efficient way?

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