

# Chapter 1

## Entering the Jungle: An Introduction to Guerrilla Marketing

---

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Getting clear on what marketing is
  - ▶ Understanding how guerrilla marketing is different
  - ▶ Applying guerrilla tactics to market your product or service
- 

**W**elcome aboard! It's time to begin your preparations to enter the guerrilla jungle. Machete? Check. Muted linen attire with pockets that serve no real purpose? Check. Strategic nontraditional marketing plan? Um . . . check? No cause for alarm, you've got the machete and the duds — we'll help with the rest.

You've heard about it, you've read about it — but do you know what guerrilla marketing is? Not sure? Not to worry. *Guerrilla marketing* is a type of marketing that reaches consumers in an engaging and — this is key — *unexpected* way. Beyond the intoxicating buzzwords — *out of the box*, *viral*, and *grassroots* — guerrilla is about using your own creativity and the tools at your disposal to make a genuine connection with your customers (the ones you already have and the ones you hope to attract).

The best thing about going guerrilla is that, as you take stock of your *current* marketing assets, you're likely to find that you already have many tools to craft a campaign that will put you in direct contact with your customers in a truly unparalleled way.

We're getting ahead of ourselves, but it's to be expected. We guerrilla marketers are an excitable bunch, and as we tackle the elements that go into becoming a successful guerrilla marketer in the sections and chapters to follow, we think you'll agree there's a lot to be excited about! But before you can swing in the guerrilla jungle, it's important to have a little background about exactly what you're entering into.

Before you devote precious time, energy, or resources to going guerrilla, you need to know what goes into successful marketing in general. From there, we address how you can tilt, twist, or flat-out ignore these critical constructs when you apply them with guerrilla sensibilities.

Last, we take to the marketing buffet and explore a few of the more common outlets to which guerrilla marketing can easily be applied, and usher you on your way to becoming a marketing whiz kid yourself. Sound good? We think so. Now if only we could figure out what to do with all those jungle accoutrements.

## Marketing 101

*Marketing, advertising, public relations* — what do all those terms even mean? Between you and us, there are probably people who work in these fields who have little or no idea what they mean, so if you're a little hazy on the details, it's not surprising. Although we could break these terms down in stodgy textbook definitions, we think noted humorist and marketing pro S. H. Simmons put it in a more relatable context by viewing these related fields through the prism of wooing a foxy lady:

If a young man tells his date she's intelligent, looks lovely, and is a great conversationalist, he's saying the right things to the right person and that's marketing. If the young man tells his date how handsome, smart, and successful he is, that's advertising. If someone else tells the young woman how handsome, smart, and successful her date is, that's public relations.

Like concocting an exotic dish, successful marketing plans may involve a pinch of advertising and a dash of public relations (or more depending on the desired result). But marketing itself tells your consumers that they are intelligent, nice to talk to, and pretty, so to speak. In other words, the goal of *marketing* is to communicate brand messaging to targeted consumers by appealing directly to their wants and needs, with the intention of motivating them to buy into (literally or figuratively) a product or belief.

When flipping through the business sections of your local newspaper en route to the movie reviews and sports scores, you may catch snippets of headlines in your periphery touting, “OmniCola launches \$5M cross-platform marketing campaign,” and you think to yourself, “Why are they spending \$5 million on a marketing campaign? If I had \$5 million to spend, I’d quit my job, buy a solid-gold hovercraft, and write the screenplay for that buddy flick I just know I have in me.” Or maybe that’s just us.

However you would spend \$5 million dollars, the question of why companies participate in marketing is a very good one. The simplest answer is that companies participate in marketing efforts *to make money*. That may be an oversimplification of the question, but it gets to the heart of the matter. Mom-and-pop storefronts and multinational corporations all participate in marketing because doing so allows them the opportunity to reach out to their target consumers, appeal to their consumers' sensibilities, and shape the consumers' perception of their products or services.

For example, maybe despite the fact that you haven't been able to build big muscles since your days of intramural shuffleboard in the ninth grade, you've committed yourself to creating the perfect workout attire. After spending seemingly countless hours studying athletes, fiddling with fabrics, and scanning through French fashion magazines, you've designed a recreational revolution: Cupid & Psyche, the finest fitness attire ever produced by man. What now?

To a certain extent, you've run into the old "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound" riddle. If you've created the most incredible spandex and cotton workout garment ever to hug human curves, and no one knows about it, does it really exist? Well, of course it does, but it probably isn't getting the respect it deserves. This is where marketing comes in. Marketing gives the product *life* in the form of public perception and positive consumer contact.

Marketing can be used to make people love your product as much as you do. As CEO of Cupid & Psyche, one tactic you may employ could be to offer free attire to sports figures and other athletic supporters or influencers whose mere donning of your attire creates the perception that your threads are the only thing to wear if you're serious about being in excellent shape. From there, you may launch a series of sexy, targeted ads featuring chiseled, toned couples dressed in the threads, with simple tags such as, "You Are a Legend."

Why take the time to do any of this? Because marketing helps you create the perception that your product or service is essential to consumers. Beyond getting consumers to buy, you're setting a tone that you're not just offering a great product, you're offering *the* great product — which will, with any luck, perpetuate the success of your business.

Honestly, everyone likes to be liked. A flirty glance while you're out shopping for groceries can totally make your day. As applied to marketing, brands look to find ways to get that flirty look from potential consumers. They do so by attempting to make themselves as appealing as possible while they're out in the "marketplace."



You don't need to major in marketing or advertising in order to design or execute a marketing campaign. Although it certainly may help to have a background in the field so that you can drop impressive-sounding terms (most of which can be made up at your discretion and dropped with confidence at appropriate moments) in meetings, the thing you do need is to know your brand. But even beyond that, you need the creativity, ambition, and audacity to create new methods to present your company in a way that makes it clear that you're in a class all your own.



The one thing we can't stress enough is when it comes to creating a marketing plan: Don't stress. Creating a strategy is about looking to the cornerstones of your business to help guide the trajectory of your marketing plans. To get started, you need to break down your business to barebones. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ✓ **Who am I trying to reach?** Who are your likely customers? To best position yourself, first identify those who most directly could benefit from your product and then expand from there.
- ✓ **What am I trying to tell or sell them?** What do you want? Do you want them to buy something, visit a Web site, talk to their friends? Clarify what you want to communicate so you can package your message accordingly.
- ✓ **Where is the best place to reach them?** Where are these elusive folks you're looking to reach? Sporting events? Quilting bees? Again, look specifically to where the most easily attainable consumers are and grow your reach from there.
- ✓ **When is the best time to reach them?** Say your product is a sleeping aid. The morning commute is probably not the best time to try to reach your consumers. When you try to communicate with your audience, when are they most likely to listen?
- ✓ **Why would they be interested in my product, brand, or service?** What are you bringing to the table that's unlike anything else? The answer to this question will help you craft a message that is persuasive and effective.
- ✓ **How can I make what I do stand apart from everyone else who does it?** Consider what's being done by the competition and try to figure out how you can make your efforts outshine those who may be after the same customers.

## *Going back to brand basics*

Picture yourself at an archery range. You have your quiver of arrows and a longbow. If you're particularly theatrical, maybe you even brought along your Robin Hood costume, but that's not a prerequisite. Clumsily, you head to the shooting line and place an arrow on your bow and a bag on your head. You spin around three times, and let your arrow fly. Releasing a campaign without specificity has about the same odds of hitting your target and could prove just as dangerous for your brand.

Considering the basics of what your product and service is and who you're trying to reach enables you to size up the direction of your marketing plan, take aim at your target, and launch a targeted, effective strategy. Having this sort of focus puts you and your brand in the position to make smart choices that position you to achieve your goals through careful planning of objectives.

Environmental groups and concerned persons the world over have worked diligently to promote a culture where we waste as little as possible. Having an objective understanding of your brand enables this same sort of frugality for your own natural resources. Possessing a firm grasp of your company, what you're offering, and who you're offering it to puts you in a position to cut waste by enabling you to avoid spending time and resources on people who may have no use for your product.

If you're selling baby strollers, you do yourself a great disservice by launching a marketing campaign late nights in city hot spots — your target went to bed four hours ago in the hopes they could get a few hours of sleep in before they had to wake up in the middle of the night to feed a crying baby. Careful consideration of brand basics enables you to cherry-pick ways to reach your target directly, while carefully side-stepping those who have no need for your offering.

## *Going Guerrilla*

Before you step into the ring with guerrilla marketing, you're likely to be full of uncertainties. "Would I be better off going the traditional route and simply placing my ad in the local newspaper?" We can't say for sure. What we *can* do is arm you with the information necessary to be an educated marketer.

In this section, we give you the basic introduction to what going guerrilla actually entails. We begin the getting-to-know-you process by exploring exactly what this unique slant on marketing is.

## *What is guerrilla marketing?*

*Guerrilla marketing* is a shape-shifting form of marketing that takes a brand's messaging and presents it to the desired consumers in a way that is personally engaging and wholly unexpected.

The term *guerrilla* conjures imagery of bearded revolutionaries and makeshift armies. Though perhaps lacking the modern sex appeal of a Che Guevara, non-traditional tactics have not strayed too far from the military roots that are so often correlated with what it means to be guerrilla. Guerrilla tactics, in terms of their militaristic roots, were created by armies who didn't have the resources to reach their political and military goals through traditional methods. As a result, they had to look at the resources available and get creative with how they chose to approach and engage. Or, if you prefer, "You got lemons? Make lemonade." (For more on how the old tactics of the guerrilla are new again, turn to Chapter 2.)

As used in warfare, guerrilla strategies involve picking opportunities where the opponent will not expect to engage them in order to make their best assault and then blend back into the background. In many ways, these are the essential principles of guerrilla marketing. The tactics follow a similar basic plan of attack:

- 1. Identify your target (audience).**
- 2. Strategize where they are and how you can make the most effective impression.**
- 3. Hit them in a way that is completely unexpected and impactful.**

To be successful in guerrilla marketing, you have to be innovating constantly. You can't expect to make an impact on consumers if every time you approach your audience you're decked out in a fully-branded tuxedo, performing an elaborate tap dance. The first time you do this, you may be met with applause and raves — but if you don't change up your act, over time you may quickly find that the performance that once used to slay them in the aisles now has them sarcastically rolling their eyes.

Guerrilla marketing tactics are invigorating because they empower all businesses to be able to use what they have to work with to appeal to their consumers in a way that is unique to their brand. Unless you work at the marketing department of a major company, you probably don't have tens of thousands or millions of dollars to spend on your efforts. But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't do anything. It just means that you need to get inventive with how you apply the resources you have. Much like the definition of marketing discussed in the previous section, you want to find ways to shape consumers' views and opinions of your product, but do it in a way that has direct and motivational impact on your consumers.

Whereas, traditional marketing uses tried-and-true methods to reach consumers, guerrilla marketing turns the approach of reaching consumers upside down in order to cause consumers to look at a product differently. Even though guerrilla marketing can use traditional methods (such as print, TV, and radio) to get the word out, what sets it apart is that it breaks traditional expectations by applying these tools in a different way. Guerrilla marketing gives the consumer something tangible and experiential, something more intimate and meaningful than just another ad.

For example, a guerrilla marketer may buy a billboard on the side of a building to promote her brand, but she would never be satisfied to stop there. To the guerrilla marketer, this is not a \$5,000-per-month ad space — no way! This billboard is a blank canvas. She must decide how she'll take this canvas and produce something that's unmissable.

Maybe the board becomes a multimedia display that dazzles consumers. Maybe the board is outfitted with motion-detecting capabilities so it spews coupons when consumers approach it. Or maybe it's as simple as printing a small Web address in the center that's dwarfed by the space thereby drawing consumers in to wonder, "Why would they buy this space just to print that tiny URL?"

By its very nature, guerrilla marketing affects consumers in a more intimate way than more traditional marketing or advertising. Guerrilla marketing has also been referred to as "relationship marketing" or "love marketing," because of the desired intimacy of the connection. Although we can't guarantee a love match, over time we've discovered that in a society overwrought with robo-calls and automated everything, reaching out to consumers as individuals is consistently well received; it engages and empowers your target to work not only as potential customers for your brand, but as advocates to spread the love for you. And that's the *real* power of guerrilla marketing.

## *Who does it?*

Who does this stuff anyway? Is it rag-tag garage bands looking to drum up some more attendees at their rock concerts? Is it major companies looking to get some publicity? The answer to the question "Who's doing guerrilla marketing?" is, "Everyone." As advertising rates for traditional media soar into the stratosphere, brands big and small are looking for innovative ways to reach their audience.

What may have initially begun as a grassroots push to help get the word out about a particular cause or product has grown across the marketing industry as an accepted, effective way to market to consumers. Brands are coming to recognize the fact that speaking directly to consumers in ways that are uniquely personal enables them to have a firm connection to the product or service and instills a certain degree of brand loyalty if these connections are consistently positive.

Although we could provide you with countless headlines touting how a variety of industries are shaking up their marketing approach to speak more directly to their consumers, we're not really telling you anything you don't already know. Consider your week for instance. On your walk to work, you may have seen a smiling brand ambassador distributing a coupon or sample complete with a peppy tagline. Perhaps during lunch you went to your favorite Web site, and entered an enter-to-win contest to win a pampering spa treatment. Then when you arrive home, you turn on the boob-tube only to see that, in the town square today, 500 people were made up with body paint and posed to create a living sculpture garden to promote the kickoff of a local arts festival.

Everyone from the food industry to consumer electronics is turning to guerrilla marketing initiatives to help get the word out on their product or brand. Even charitable groups and nonprofit organizations are jumping onboard, because they've seen how cost-effective it is to produce something that's dynamic in order to help raise awareness and drum up support from people who are most likely to be influenced by their message.

## *Why do they do it?*

Traditional methods work. We're not going to deny that for a second. Why else would they be called *traditional*? If they didn't work, they'd be called "flash in the pan methods" or "fads," but the truth is, to get your message out to a large community, the instantaneous reach of TV, radio, and print is impressive. However, consumers demand more customization and the high operating costs for these media can cause headaches for advertisers.

Take TV commercials for instance. We're sure without really thinking you can easily rattle off three of your all-time favorite TV commercials. That speaks directly to the impact of such advertising efforts. The problem for brands and media buyers looking to stretch their budgets as far as possible is that, well, the cost of airing a TV commercials can still be pretty expensive.

What you see on-air is only the half of it. To produce that commercial, the agency had to hire actors, directors, writers, caterers, studios space, and likely a best boy grip or two (whatever they do). That's just to get it produced. Then from there they have to pay the networks crazy amounts of money to air the ad. Seeing dollar signs? So are the agencies. You add DVR machines to the mix, and suddenly agencies are wondering if consumers are even seeing these commercials!

Then there's print media. As much as we love the act of reading the paper while sipping on our morning coffee, most people these days are opting to get their news, sports scores, and gossip from the Internet. The wider breadth of information and the fact that most of it is free make for a relatively easy choice for consumers.



These obstacles require innovation, and that's why brands are embracing guerrilla tactics — because there's a *need* for it. Marketing budgets vary from year to year, so instead of spending it all in one large ad buy, brands are able to stretch those dollars further in nontraditional mini-bursts that are lower on cost but high on consumer connection. These programs are gaining steam for the following reasons:

- ✓ **They're unique.** The whole point of guerrilla is to do something that's never been done before to make the greatest connection to consumers.
- ✓ **They're targeted.** Instead of spending money where it doesn't need to be spent, you're hitting your target consumers directly where they reside.
- ✓ **They're cost-effective.** The money you spend is directed specifically at creating a desired effect for a specific consumer in a specific way at a specific time, so the money is spent on the people it will have the greatest impact on.
- ✓ **They're buzz-worthy and often press-worthy.** You do something truly unique, and you're bound to attract attention. It may be just among your target, but if you're lucky you could also be picking up some press exposure as well!

## *Can it work for me and my brand?*

In a word, yes. Producing a guerrilla marketing campaign requires you to design something that's exciting and that connects your consumers. So chances are, you can find a way to use it to fit the needs of your brand, product, service, or site.



Our advice: Don't come out guns blazing. Feel free to test it out. Many times we get calls from people saying that, although they may not have a marketing budget per se, they're willing to give it a try and see if it works. And if it works, they'll do a lot more. Now that last part may have just been a ploy to "encourage" us to come in low on our initial estimate. Regardless, testing the waters is always a smart proposition before jumping into the deep end. (To dip your toes further in the water, check out Chapter 4.)

Not every company may see the same return on the investment of a guerrilla campaign, but that doesn't mean you should throw out the whole guerrilla marketing thing. Instead, it may mean that you need to take a second look at your methods and refine from within. This may require redefining your target demographic and campaign specifics and then attacking it from a different angle.

## *Taking the Road Less Traveled*

Perhaps you've been told that you march to the beat of a different drum — or maybe you've always wanted to be told that. If so, we welcome you into the non-traditional fold with open arms. Guerrilla marketing encompasses a variety of broad methods to connect with consumers, and all of them are best executed when done so with fearless creativity and wild (yet targeted) ideas.

In this section, we explore a few of the more common methods that guerrilla marketers use to touch consumers in unexpected ways. We fill you in on street-level initiatives, the creation of new forms of innovative media, the power of the Internet, how to get the press exposure for your deeds, and the various partners who can help make your efforts a success.

### *Hitting the streets*

That old advice “You're never going to make any friends, if you don't put yourself out there” is particularly true when it comes to reaching target audiences. The goal of street-level efforts is not only to put your brand out there, but also to make yourself the most engaging and fun person at any party. You do this by giving consumers the chance to see, smell, touch, and even taste your product (assuming it's edible).

There are a wide array of methods to make these unique one-on-one connections — your basic street-team distribution and sampling campaign (Chapter 6), the spectacular publicity stunt (Chapter 7), and events (Chapter 8) to help give your target the opportunity to experience your product in an uncluttered and personal way.

### *Developing new outlets*

You don't like street teams? Billboards too boring for you? Come up with your own outlet! The best marketing idea is the one that you haven't created yet. Across the board, the most exciting thing about guerrilla marketing is that it's constantly evolving with new platforms created by inventive entrepreneurs.

The *guerrilla sensibility* is the idea that everything you encounter could be a platform to reach a specific group of customers. It's kind of fun to think that you could be the person who invents a whole new form of marketing.

## Ushering in experimental the theatrical, dot-com way

We first felt the taste of guerrilla marketing in the theater industry. Why? For starters, often, theater professionals are big on passion, but not so big on funds. Plus, New York theatrical groups are constantly seeking to reach a highly targeted demographic — usually tourists roaming the streets of Midtown, and sometimes even more specific than that (depending on the show and its demographic appeal, among other factors). These circumstances provided rich guerrilla training grounds.

We realized what we were doing in the theater industry could also be applied to more commercial brands, which just so happened to occur at the same time as the explosion of the dot-com era — a group of tenacious entrepreneurs that were fiercely fighting for your eyeballs. So instead of being like the next guy, these young highly motivated MBA graduates were charged with trying to find ways to cut through the clutter.

This maverick style gave the guerrilla community the chance to put our skills (and their dollars) to the test. We could propose the unimaginable, design the incredible, and, with any luck, achieve the impossible. Being creative was crucial to survival, because the market was simply saturated and the competition was fierce.

We sampled, we stunted, we toured, and we gave out more free points, offers, and T-shirts than you could ever imagine. So although most of those dot-com companies have since shut down (none due to our efforts, of course), they offered us some of the most fearless case studies of taking experiential marketing to the streets, some of which we show you throughout this book. We were able to use guerrilla tactics to market theater, as well as the big ideas of the dot-com era — and we're confident you'll find applications for your brand, too!

How is your target entertained? Where do they congregate? What do they talk about? Surveying these sort of things and looking for available opportunities could cause a brand-new marketing platform to make itself known to you, which you can then sell and use the profits to retire to a tropical island somewhere. (For more on developing new outlets, check out Chapter 11.)

## *Harnessing technology*

People love that information superhighway. Back in the early days of the Internet, one of the most commonly uttered phrases was, "It's just so addictive. One site just leads right to another." These days it's only gotten more so. Tech-savvy guerrilla marketers have fully embraced the Internet and technology on the whole as the latest battleground in the struggle to reach consumers.

Embracing current trends and new technologies in the digital age work to further connect with consumers where they most commonly play — online. This can be as simple as creating a dynamic Web site or as involved as creating a thrilling custom game to further attract your consumers.

Beyond the Internet, another method of plugging into your base is to look to technological developments to entertain and inform. (To plug into your target, check out Chapter 13.) What's available right now that you can use to reach your consumers? Maybe you want to use talking posters in restrooms, reflexive multimedia displays that are sensitive to consumers' movements, or customizable green-screen video booths that place participants in the action of their favorite movies or video games. Looking to the things that thrill and entertain is yet another way to tempt the consumer "buy" button.

## *Publicizing your efforts*

A distribution team or spectacle may touch hundreds or even thousands of potential customers in that instant, but leverage the power of the press and you can reach hundreds of thousands or even millions! So much of creating an effective guerrilla campaign is about connecting with consumers to shape impressions, but another facet of guerrilla marketing is applying the techniques to help raise awareness for your brand.

## *Finding partners*

Hey, we're all people — people . . . who need people. What makes *you* the luckiest person in the world is the knowledge that you don't have to (and shouldn't) engage in a guerrilla campaign alone. Depending on which avenue you choose to apply your marketing efforts, you're likely to find that you'll need the assistance of co-workers, the industry, or perhaps even the help of a guerrilla marketing, advertising, or media buying agency. Here are a few of the calls you may want to consider making.

### *Colleagues and friends*

You probably have numerous talented, skilled co-workers, friends, or family members — people whose skills may be just the thing to tap when you're looking to produce a guerrilla campaign. Whether it's wrangling your sister Lisa to distribute materials, calling up your good buddy Lou to host an event, or sending an e-mail to brother-in-law Dan who writes for the local paper to write some ad copy, these immediate resources should be your first line of attack for a guerrilla effort. As you consider methods to monopolize your

inner circle's skills, you may find that you have all the necessary tools available to you at the family reunion or social gathering place!

### ***Charity***

Doing a good turn just makes you feel good. Doing a good turn that may serve to benefit your brand feels even *better*. If you decide to produce an event, you may consider getting a charity involved. Give them a call! More often than not adding a charitable component to your campaign or plan will not only serve the good of the cause, but also help raise awareness of your product or brand by placing it in a very positive light.

### ***Industry***

Depending on your field and industry, resources may be available to you by virtue of your participation in the trade. Maybe there's an industry magazine, trade show, Web site, e-newsletter, or association related to your product or service. Some of them may be free; others may cost a few bucks. Nevertheless, it may be exactly what you need to keep you on the cutting edge of your game and pick up some important contacts along the way.

### ***Agency***

You're no amateur. You want to make sure that everything that you create to market your brand jives with the image you'd like to have in the industry and among your consumers. As you examine your resources, you may decide you can't do it all — so why not get the help you need.

Whether it's hiring an agency to design your entire marketing plan or just using one to execute your next event, sometimes calling in people who have experience in the field can set your mind at ease by ensuring that everything goes off flawlessly. Such agencies are likely to have the experience, manpower, or resources to help achieve your goals in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

