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## Chapter **1**

# Understanding Consumers Today and What Matters Most

**T**here's never been a more exciting time to be in business, especially in marketing. With all the communications channels and technology available today, you can truly learn about and communicate with customers one to one while marketing to millions. You can know with certainty how customers spend their leisure time, what media channels they use and how often they use them, what their interests are, their brand attitudes, shopping patterns, preferences, likes and dislikes, and what their precise value is to you over their lifetime of purchasing. With all this knowledge, you can determine when and what they're likely to buy, how much and how often, and you can communicate specifically to their needs and relationship with you.

You can also monitor their attitudes, political preferences, and lifestyles on social media and insert your messages into their personal pages and sites when you see an opportunity to influence or inspire them. And you have the ability to analyze past behavior and scientifically predict their future behavior. It gets better all the time.

With the advent of artificial intelligence systems like IBM's Watson, you can program machines to have conversations with your customers, millions simultaneously and one to one, and learn even more so that you can deliver exactly what they need and want when they want it. And all these communications can happen in real time. Any day. Any time. Limitless possibilities await.

On the flip side: All this technology gives more knowledge and shopping power to customers as well and has changed the game significantly. They don't have to shop at the local pet store; they can order just about anything online and get it delivered within two days, often free. They want you to communicate and serve them like they're your only customer, and they'll abandon you on a whim if they don't like your values or if you don't support a cause that's important to them. People have so many options available today that loyalty is becoming obsolete. Consumers tend to choose brands based on their doing good in the world and the overall experience they offer rather than just the product and price.

As a result, marketers have to change their game. You have to change the way you distribute your products and services, how you reach and communicate with your customers and prospects, and how you engage them emotionally and physically. And you have to offer much more than a great product and value point; you have to offer consumers a fulfilling experience that adds value, happiness, or excitement to their lives.

This book is about doing all the above, effectively and affordably, for any business in either the B2C or B2B space, local or regional, national or global in scope. It's also for entrepreneurs starting a new business or marketing managers wanting to have a big impact on their job and their careers.

Beyond going through the essentials of building marketing plans, growth strategies, distribution channels, and pricing and merchandising strategies, this book guides you on developing emotionally relevant, creative experiences, websites, and online and offline promotions and marketing campaigns. You'll also discover the essentials of selling for a lifetime to capture lifetime value and loyalty in a world where both are hard to come by. And in Part 6, you find out how to measure your marketing in ways that can give you deep insights on how to grow your brand much more than just your traditional ROI and response analytics.

Before we get into the how-tos and guidelines for doing all the above, you need to focus on the mindset and behaviors of today's customers and this new era of consumerism. You need to understand what distractions you must overcome, generational influences that make or break brand relationships, consumers' level of trust in businesses like yours, and expectations for brand values and behavior. We cover these topics and more in this chapter.

# Coming to Terms with the State of the Consumer Mind

Today's consumer mindset can be summed up in one word: *distracted*. And it just keeps getting worse as people spend more and more time looking at screens.

Reports by eMarketer and Nielsen show that people spend about ten hours a day on a screen — computer, TV, mobile phones, and other connected devices. About three of those hours are on mobile phones.

The vast majority of adults 18 years and older have smartphones and on average check them 46 times a day, or 8 billion times collectively, or so says a Deloitte report on smartphone usage. If you have 16 waking hours (and get 8 hours of sleep), that means you're checking your phone about every 3 minutes.

The bottom line for marketers is that pretty much all consumers are highly distracted and not paying attention to much around them.

Now add to that how much people multitask when it comes to media consumption. Accenture put out a report showing that 87 percent of consumers use more than one device at a time — for example, watching TV while chatting, posting, browsing, texting, or playing a game on their phone. That doesn't leave much attention span for marketers to capture and engage.



REMEMBER

The best armor you have when fighting the battle for attention is a good marketing plan that directs your actions, budgets, and customer experiences across all the channels that are getting all that attention.

In this book, we show you how to develop creative that's emotionally relevant so you can break through some of that clutter and engage consumers in inspirational common causes, open distribution channels that address their lifestyle, and execute direct marketing programs using email, print, mobile, and more that get noticed, acted upon, and generate sales.

## Addressing the Generation Gaps

This is not your father's marketing book, nor is it the same book that was released in 1999 under this title. Times, technologies, channels, and needs have changed and so, too, has the way you connect, engage, and sell to your customers. With all this change, the gap or differences in the various generations is getting wider as

people’s attitudes, perspectives, and the way they live, shop, and engage with brands is redefined by technology, media channels, and social trends.

This section provides some insights about some of the different values and attitudes that drive behavior among the generations most businesses target today, in both a B2B and B2C setting.

The primary “shopping” generations are roughly broken down as follows:

- » Millennials: 18 to 34 years old
- » Generation X: 35 to 54 years old
- » Baby boomers: 55 to 70 years old

Although a ton of information about each generation is available — from books to white papers to videos and more — the main thing marketers need to understand is what each generation thinks of brands, what they expect about brands, and what they respond to in terms of values and stimuli.

Tables 1-1 through 1-3 list some of the characteristics of the various generations that impact their “marketing ability” and what you can do to address and engage them in meaningful ways. These attributes, mindsets, and potential actions should be front and center when you create your customer profiles and emotional selling propositions (ESPs), as outlined in Chapter 2, and your creative, as discussed in Chapter 6.

**TABLE 1-1**      **Marketing to Millennials**

Value	Suggested Response
Want self-expression.	Involve in user-generated content.
Respect is earned, not given.	Use statistics, industry knowledge, and experiences to position your marketing leadership and authority.
Trust equity is low because many don’t trust brands to be truthful or operate in others’ best interests.	Be transparent. If you don’t have the best product, don’t say you do. If your customer service is poor, fix it before making promises. Listen and admit to wrongdoing when you’ve made mistakes.
Crave change.	Keep your brand energetic and change things up to add interest and novelty.
Respond to bold colors, ideas, humor, and interaction.	Use digital channels that provide interaction, such as games (discussed in Chapter 8) and bright colors that fit their energy level, and engage them in disruptive events, like guerilla marketing tactics (described later in this chapter).

Value	Suggested Response
Seek relevance.	Your products, not just your marketing, need to fit their lifestyle and add value. Marketing should demonstrate how.
Open-minded, intelligent, responsible.	Always communicate with transparency, and never talk down or misrepresent the value of an offer or product. When trust is broken, you won't get a second chance.
Expectations for brands.	Involve them in user-generated content and product design and respond to them promptly.



TIP

Millennials don't trust brands or authority in the same way their parents did and do, and they have high standards for how brands should behave toward consumers, employees, and the greater good, which is a strong trend in consumerism.



REMEMBER

Each generation has a unique way of looking at the same brands and assigns different expectations for how it wants to be served.

**TABLE 1-2** Marketing to Generation Xers

Value	Suggested Response
Want to feel they are contributing to something worthwhile.	Involve in volunteerism and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
Like recognition for what they do.	Send thank-you emails, invite to VIP clubs, and reward with experiences, content, discounts, or products.
Thrive on autonomy, freedom.	Give them options for pricing, packages, service agreements, and product inventory. Enable communications options as well.
Seek a balanced life.	Align your brand's values with their values and personal life.
Accept authority but are skeptical.	Position your leadership and authority in an objective manner.
Skeptical about economy, fearful of job loss and financial setbacks, and skeptical of big business.	Communicate the security, comfort, and peace of mind that your product and brand deliver. Be transparent about pricing and product claims. Design brand offerings around their need to feel in control and have peace of mind.
Entrepreneurial.	Appeal to their desire to initiate new programs, ideas, and movements.

**TABLE 1-3****Marketing to Baby Boomers**

Value	Suggested Response
Want to feel they are in control of their choices and lives.	Provide information that informs, provides guidance, and assists in decision processes.
Like recognition for what they do.	Thank them for their business, invite to VIP loyalty programs, and reward frequently.
Thrive on prosperity.	Because they have worked hard for years and want to enjoy the perks of successful careers and financial planning, promote perks, pampering, and themes around “you deserve this.”
Seek self-actualization.	Align your messaging and experiences with what matters most, such as leaving legacies, making an impact, achieving personal goals, and recognition.
Collaborative.	Invite to your causes centered on your common goals associated with charity, environment, and so on.
Optimistic.	They see good in communities and people and like to believe people can be trusted to be who they say they are.
Goal oriented.	Like to set goals and have a plan and a purpose.

## Creating Trust Equity among Today’s Consumers

Worldwide consumers are losing trust in business, media, and government. In just one year, the level of trust dropped three points and reached an all-time low in 2017, according to Edelman Trust Barometer for 2017, an annual report worth reading to help you get a better understanding of your customers’ mindset and how it may have changed year over year. Visit [Edelman.com](http://Edelman.com) for consumer studies on trust and other key topics.

The most trusted source for business information today is peers, or “people just like me,” while CEOs and other business executives continue to lose ground. Note that the most trusted industry is technology and the least trusted industries are financial services, chemicals, and banking.



TIP

Research shows that about 30 percent of insurance customers believe that their providers will follow through on promises made regarding claim fulfillment. If you’re in a low-trust industry, find ways to change this for your brand by communicating with transparency and providing objective information that serves your customers’ decision processes over your own self-interest.

What does all of this mean? If customers don't trust business, and if you're in a business that consumers don't trust in general, you need to build content, customer experiences, and messaging around the things you do to be trustworthy. Your customer experiences need to show that you and your people are honest, care about customers' needs, not just your own, and that you do what you say you'll do.



REMEMBER

The best competitive advantage is the ability for consumers to trust you. This is far more important than price.

In Chapter 2, you read about the emotional and psychological influences of choice and how to appeal to these emotions in ways that build sustainable trust among your consumers.

## Defining a common purpose

Traditionally, consumers demanded fair prices, good quality, and good service from brands in order to go back for more. Today, the demands are so much more. Consumers want to know what you've done for employees, communities, the earth, and the underprivileged and needy, not just what you've done for investors, stakeholders, and executive compensation. In fact, as we cover in Chapter 2, more than 80 percent of consumers (Cone Communications CSR study) state that their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty are based on what a brand has done and is doing to improve the world. A large majority, close to 90 percent, of global consumers are willing and likely to switch brands to one that's doing good in the world if price and quality are comparable.

More than 80 percent of consumers say that a brand's actions and positive impact on the world influence what they buy or where they shop and also which products they choose to recommend to others. As consumers continue to say, the most influential source for their purchasing decisions is actually other consumers, friends, and peers, and a brand's altruistic behavior becomes exponentially more critical.



TIP

Ninety percent of consumers say that they're more likely to trust a brand that supports social and environmental issues, making CSR efforts and positions even more critical for brands that want to thrive in this consumer-driven climate.

So what does this mean to you, the marketer? And for small businesses, regional, or large global enterprises?

- » You need to stand for something.
- » You need to commit some of your resources to doing good in the world just like you commit resources and budget to your advertising efforts and media spend.
- » Doing good is not just a good thing to do; it's a competitive advantage that makes your brand worth shopping, referring, and being loyal to.

This movement to align with good brands has become so powerful that it has actually sparked an era of anti-consumerism. A leading consumer activist group called Adbusters has grown consistently since the late 1980s and actively engages in what it calls “culture jamming,” which describes its movement to interrupt consumer experiences and expose underlying and not-so-positive truths about large corporations while jamming their profits from sales. It has exposed advertising it believes communicates unrealistic and misleading promises from companies that engage in child labor or other unethical practices, and it organizes movements that send messages to big corporations. Its best-known movement is Occupy Wall Street, which successfully jammed New York’s Wall Street district in 2011 and sparked similar protests against big banks worldwide.



REMEMBER

What marketers need to know most about Adbusters is its mantra: “Fight back against the hostile takeover of our psychological, physical and cultural environments by commercial forces.”

Although this statement may be an extreme expression of an extreme consumerism group, it reflects the level of distrust and angst toward big brands that other research from Nielsen, Edelman, and Cone Communications has reported in reports on trust, consumer social media, and so on.

As you go about reading this book and developing your own positioning strategies, messaging, and marketing and engagement programs, keep in mind the power of transparency, truth in all communications, integrity of your deeds and alliances, and the values you stand by and spread. You don’t want to be featured on Adbusters’ website or in its widely circulated magazine.

We’ve seen a lot of consumer action toward brands because of their positions on social issues. Remember what happened to Target’s stock value when it announced customers could self-identify their gender to decide which bathroom they wanted to use? And all the boycotts of Chick-fil-A when the CEO’s comments opposed same-sex marriage?

You need to consider your company’s positions and how you’ll communicate them if the need ever arises, because in a market driven by consumer expectations and demands that transcend products and prices to social issues, you need to

understand how your actions and words can trump even the best and most carefully crafted marketing plan. We're not suggesting that you change your values for financial gain but rather that you consider how you communicate about and respond to social issues. There is power in taking a stand for what you value and believe. As a brand, you need to plan for both positive and negative feedback.



REMEMBER

A marketing plan is not just a road map for how you'll develop products, build distribution channels, and earn profits; your marketing plan must also define the following:

- » What you stand for
- » How you'll act responsibly for society and the environment
- » What causes you'll support and how you'll engage your customers accordingly
- » How you'll build relationships with customers based on common values and causes
- » How you'll communicate with transparency to build trust equity for your brand

## Building relationships with customers

Your biggest competitive advantage is not how clever or fun your social and traditional marketing campaigns are, and, as you'll read throughout this book, it's not your price. It's your ability to build relationships with customers on trust, value, and relevance.



TIP

Customers seek to align with brand personas that are “just like them.” Your brand is first a reflection of what matters most to you and the customers you serve. It's also a community of like-minded people — your executive staff, frontline employees, customer service representatives, and customers.

Your marketing plan is thus not just about building a sustainable and profitable business through the right sales channels, distributors, social engagement, and advertising strategies; it's about building a community.

Brands that have done this well and which are referenced in detail in this book include TOMS, Wildfang, and Patagonia. Check them out online after reading their stories in later chapters and stay on top of what they're doing to build strong emotional bonds with customers who have like values and purpose.



TIP

Building a community around your brand is more than announcing your CSR program action items. It's about inviting people to engage with you, to volunteer together to impact local communities, and to donate time and money to a common charity, maybe the Salvation Army, Red Cross, or children's advocacy groups. Communities are also centered around sharing information to guide others on their journeys, whether it be to make a sound and wise investment or to join an association, support a cause or a political campaign, and so on.

Communities need to make sense for the products you sell. If you sell clothing, creating a community effort around helping people in underprivileged situations to get professional clothing for job interviews and jobs is likely to be meaningful to your base. Building a community around carbon emissions or climate change, not so much.

Ask yourself the following questions to help guide your actions that present your values as you build a community of like-minded people:

- » How can we make our brand about consumers' needs, not our business's?
- » What common goals and ideals do we share with our core customer groups?
- » How can we align marketing, community relations programs, and brand values with those common goals?
- » What programs can we execute that bring us together, online and offline, with our customers to further our common goals?
- » What is the reputation for the retailers that distribute or sell our products and how could their reputation, positive and negative, potentially impact our reputation with customers and communities?

## Improving Customer Experiences for Sustainability

As customer expectations and demands change from generation to generation, so, too, does the nature of marketing campaigns in general. Changes we've seen recently include refocusing the marketing department to become the customer experience department.

Some businesses have even renamed their chief marketing officer (CMO) to a chief experience officer (CXO) and are replacing advertising campaigns with customer experience initiatives for both their online and offline worlds.

How is customer experience defined today? Customer experience is the entirety of interactions between a brand and a customer beginning with her first purchase to the end of her purchasing life cycle. Interactions take place during each step of the decision process, which includes the following:

- » **Problem or need identification:** Consumers realize that they need to purchase a product to solve a problem or fill a need. For example, they need a good home computer.
- » **Discovery:** Consumers conduct research and explore options for products that fit their need and decide on the functions and features they need. For example, should they buy a laptop, notebook, desktop, or tablet?
- » **Evaluation:** After they've found options or product categories they want to purchase, consumers start to evaluate brands.
- » **Trial or purchase:** After research, and engaging with various brand representatives online or in stores, consumers make a purchase.
- » **Confirmation and reassurance:** Consumers gather information after the decision or purchase to reaffirm their choice was the right one. They read customer reviews, talk to others who chose the same product or brand they did, post decision on social media to get more validation, and so on.
- » **Assignment of loyalty:** A brand experience doesn't stop after the purchase. It continues as consumers use the product and access the resources available, such as customer service and technical support.

You must address all these decision steps in your marketing plan and customer experience strategy. The following sections walk you through how you can integrate each one into a concerted, mapped-out marketing plan.

## Guiding the decision process with customer experience planning

Charles Graves, mentor of author Jeanette McMurtry, offered this great piece of marketing advice: “Consumers don’t want to be sold; they want to be told.” In other words, they want to be told what is in their best interests so that they can make informed decisions. When marketers educate rather than sell, they become trusted partners, not just suppliers and vendors, which often leads to lifetime value and loyalty (discussed in detail in Chapter 16).

Education-based marketing is not only a strong marketing communications strategy, but it is also a sound customer experience strategy. Providing guidance, decision support, and information for each step of a customer’s experience with your

product and brand can help set you apart from the competition. Here are some customer experience activities that can help you succeed at this important task.

- » **Problem or need identification:** If you're selling computers, your plan may include white papers and educational materials for a content marketing plan that you execute online via social and digital channels. You can read more about this in Chapters 7 and 8.
- » **Discovery:** If you've done your customer research as mapped out in Chapter 4, you know what matters most to consumers shopping for home computers today, and you likely know how involved the decision process is. You can tap into this stage of the decision process by creating how-to guides or checklists to help consumers make wise choices and posting links to those guides on social media ads (discussed in Chapter 8) and direct marketing initiatives (outlined in Chapter 10).
- » **Evaluation:** You can increase support for your brand and product line by engaging influencer marketing so that others are endorsing your products and validating your claims. We cover tips for content that you can share via influencers, such as bloggers and media writers, in Chapter 7. You can also engage in emotional selling practices to get prospective buyers to recognize the emotional or personal outcomes you offer, which are known to secure sales for both B2B and B2C. Tactics for emotional selling propositions (ESPs) are outlined in Chapter 16.
- » **Purchase:** After you've secured a purchase, your job isn't done. You need to continue to communicate your emotional and functional value and invite customers to engage with you on a great journey through the communities you build and causes you support. You've read about this already in this chapter and can get more information on how to do this in Chapter 5 on marketing plans and Chapter 12 on building brand communities and hives to which customers want to align.
- » **Confirmation, reassurance, and loyalty:** Again, building hives or communities is critical here as well. Sending customers thank-you notes, inviting them to join VIP programs for rewards, and sending them digital games to play that reward them as well are all key marketing tactics to create loyalty and capture lifetime value. We discuss these programs in Chapter 8.

## Creating powerful experiences beyond the sales process

Customer experiences clearly start with the sales process, as outlined earlier in this chapter, but your marketing plan must address a bigger journey after you close the

sale that builds loyalty, referrals, and of course captures lifetime value. As part of your customer experience strategy, you need to map out your customer's journey or the steps necessary from first sale to lifetime value that you need to address.

Again, a customer's journey encompasses the steps you must take and deliver upon at every touch point. For example:

- » How do you thank or recognize customers for their purchases?
- » How do you resolve conflict when you're right or wrong?
- » How do you validate customers' decisions to continue purchasing from you?
- » How do you reward them for loyalty and referrals?
- » How do you engage them in meaningful activities, causes, and so on?

The purpose of a customer journey is to build and maintain emotional bonds with your brand and get customers to refer others. To do this most effectively for your brand, it helps to look at the most powerful affiliations people have in their lives that aren't associated with purchase of products or services. Not to be politically incorrect or controversial, but these are your political and religious affiliations. In many cases, people don't know why they believe what they believe or take the stand they do on social issues other than somewhere, someone taught them to believe a certain way or embrace certain values. Right or wrong is not the issue.

The issue is that people hold powerful beliefs that guide them, and they make life-lasting choices and decisions based on these values and beliefs. People's commitment to their chosen organization is so strong that they commit their time and even money to organizations that don't give anything in return but intangibles, such as hope, faith, and anticipations of rewards if they stay the course and further the cause.

Experiences that keep people faithful to belief structures and value systems are present in all religious and political organizations despite how different they may be. For example, the same tenets are present in Christianity and all the various churches within this genre, Buddhism, Judaism, Islamism, and so on. These tenets exist in political organizations, too. These include symbolism, sensory appeal, promises, community, and rituals.

Successful brands integrate these same tenets. Think of your favorite brands. Note how they embrace these tenets. Apple is a great example of a brand using these cornerstones of religion to create a faithful following. Here's how:

- » **Symbolism:** The simple Apple icon recognizable by most consumers worldwide represents creativity, innovation, and personal power to communicate, self-express, create, and enjoy music and other forms of entertainment.

- » **Sensory appeal:** Apple's products appeal to people's senses by delivering music and videos with ease and giving them the chance to create their own creative and media events, which appeal to even more senses.
- » **Promises:** People believe and experience the promise of quality and innovation and novelty as Apple releases new applications and capabilities.
- » **Community:** Apple has many communities you can join online, such as iTunes, and has become a community itself through market penetration. Many people you know own Apple devices, and you can easily exchange ideas, tips, and enthusiasm.
- » **Ritual:** Shopping at an Apple Store is a fun ritual. You have a cool setting to explore products; you're assigned your own personal assistant when you walk in the door; your transactions are done casually via a hand scanner, not at a sterile divisive counter, so you feel more engaged with your assistant; and you can sign up for the Genius Bar and get one-to-one attention.

How can you create religious-like events and thus loyalty for your brand? This book is full of ideas for doing just that. Check out Chapter 8 for digital tactics, Chapter 16 for emotional selling, and Chapter 2 on how to trigger the unconscious mind for unthinkable ROI.

## Pushing Boundaries with Guerilla Marketing

Beyond getting religious about your branding and marketing programs, you need to push the boundaries of traditional marketing. Guerilla marketing is one way you can do this.

*Guerilla marketing*, also known as ambush marketing, is all about ideas that are outside the boundaries and take competitors and customers by surprise — competitors, because you did something that took attention or market share away from them, and customers, because you did something fun and engaging that exceeded routine expectations or experiences with competing brands.

A short definition is

Actions, messaging, creative, experience, and events that transcend the bounds of traditional marketing that focus on product, service, price, and other common messages

In addition to commanding attention, one of the primary goals of guerilla marketing is to change behavior for the better, or at least how you want consumer behavior to be to drive more sales and loyalty.

## The Fun Theory

One of our favorite examples of changing behavior by changing up routines comes from Volkswagen who created The Fun Theory. This program was built around the notion that fun can change behavior for the better, kind of like the discussion in Chapter 8 about the power of gamification in building customer engagements.

For The Fun Theory initiative, Volkswagen asked people to create ideas for changing routine behavior for the better. It then tested and executed winning ideas to see whether they would indeed work.

Here are a few attention-grabbing ideas that successfully changed routine behavior by doing something new and fun. As you review these ideas, ponder on how you can build on them to create “fun” customer experiences through every touch point of your customer journey — from need identification to purchase confirmation.

- » **Will fun reduce the amount of speeding in a city?** This project involved setting up signs throughout Stockholm that showed people just how fast they were going. It was really nothing new because speed meters are located in many places these days; however, this program made it more fun to stay at or below the limit. The speed camera would track your speed and light up according to whether you were under or over the speed limit. If you were over, you were sent a ticket. If you were at or under the speed limit, you were entered into a lottery in which you could win a cash reward from the money collected by the speeders. It worked beautifully. In three days, the cameras tracked the speed of nearly 25,000 cars and found that the average speed for traffic went down from 32 kilometers per hour to 25 kilometers per hour, which is a 22 percent reduction in speed.
- » **Will fun get people to use stairs over escalators?** Another “fun” experiment designed to get people to make healthier choices was to turn a staircase that sits adjacent to an escalator into a keyboard. If people could play music with their feet as they moved up or down the stairs, would they choose the stairs, the healthier option? The answer was yes as 66 percent more people than normal chose to take the stairs.
- » **Will fun get people to increase their use of recycle centers over trash cans?** The Fun Theory’s bottle bank arcade experiment turned a bottle recycling depository into an arcade. Every time a bottle was placed inside, the

depository would light up and make noises like a machine at an arcade. It would even add up points for each bottle people deposited. People flocked to see how many points they could rack up with bottle deposits, even though there was no way to cash in their points for a tangible reward. In just one night, nearly 100 people used the arcade depository as compared to 2 people who used the conventional depository that was routine and void of fun.

You can watch videos of these experiments in action at [www.thefuntheory.com](http://www.thefuntheory.com).

## Other guerilla marketing examples

So, yes, fun and games motivate behavior, and if used for building brand images and product sales, they can be a highly effective form of guerilla marketing. With enough fun involved, you create a movement or a society frenzy like Pokémon, the game that uses augmented reality to present Pokémon characters on your mobile screen in a depiction of a real setting so that you and your avatar can capture the Pokémon and train them to help you battle against other players doing the same thing on their phones.

Some other activities along the lines of surprise or guerilla marketing include

- » **Augmented reality (AR):** You can use augmented reality games or apps to make your products pop up spontaneously so you can suggest a need to go buy your product. It's a great app for food and drink brands. You can see how Valpak is using AR in a very clever way later in the book.
- » **Flash mobs:** Imagine if all the pedestrians at Times Square were suddenly surprised by an impromptu performance of people dancing and singing in your company's uniforms and handing out coupons for a free drink, cosmetic item, or such at your store around the corner?
- » **Captivating displays:** What if a tall building in your town was lit up all night long with images of your products and logo on it and a coupon code flashing that offered a not-to-miss discount to those savvy enough to see it?

Things like these get people's attention and break into their routine.

Other forms of guerilla marketing can be as simple as offering the best in industry:

- » **Return policies:** Be better than Nordstrom's if you can and take the fear out of committing to high-end purchases or subscription-based services.

- » **Free product trials:** Let people try a product for free with an easy return process if not happy. Once it's in home, a very high chance exists that they won't return it no matter what they think.
- » **"Freemiums":** Offer for free what others charge for and make your money through sponsorships, advertising on your sales websites, or upgrades to your basic service.

Blending guerilla marketing with CSR can have a really powerful impact as well.

## Guerilla marketing and community building

The best guerilla marketing tactics are those that are fun both for you to execute and for your customers to experience.

Earlier in this chapter, we discuss building a community around a women's clothing store and helping distribute clothing to underprivileged women trying to enter the workforce. Here's how guerilla marketing can blend social giving and outside-the-boundaries thinking.

What if you asked your customers to adopt the cause of helping abused or homeless women get out of shelters and into jobs? You can tap into the emotions of their own personal journeys to success with a campaign on the theme of "Remember when . . . ," such as "Remember when you were just starting out and people said you couldn't, wouldn't, or shouldn't, but you proved them wrong by becoming the successful businesswoman you are today?"

Your campaign could go on to invite women to "adopt a woman" just starting her journey to success like you did at one point in your life. UNICEF encourages people to adopt a child through monthly donations for education, food, and shelter. You could ask your customers to donate a small amount every month for clothing items that you donate to the woman they have adopted (anonymously so privacy is maintained, of course) or to women in shelters in their community. Upon purchase of items they buy for themselves, you could send them an email or insert a statement with their receipts asking them to recycle the clothes they just purchased by donating to a local women's shelter when they no longer need them. You could even host donation days where you invite customers to come in and donate old items at your retail outlets and get 20 percent off any new items they buy. You'd be building a community among "people just like them" and helping others find joy by doing good in the world — a powerful way to bond with customers and communities.

A campaign like this shows guerilla marketing at its best because it not only involves customers and surprises them with a new idea, but it also takes them away from considering the competition as you've given them a strong emotional reason to stay loyal to you. People buy TOMS shoes knowing a kid in need will get a pair, too. The clothing guerrilla marketing idea has the same appeal. Buying a new blazer or winter coat from your store provides them with warmth and fashion and a good feeling because someone else is getting what she needs as well as a result of their choosing your brand.



REMEMBER

Your marketing plan is not just a guidebook for getting your product out to the world and making money; it's about creating an experience, event, and outcome that makes people's lives better or more enjoyable and brings people together for the better. When you deliver emotional fulfillment and build a community around the value you deliver, it's difficult to fail.