Unravelling the Power of Guerrilla Marketing in Shaping Brand Image; A Conceptual Odyssey

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Abstract

The exponential progression of guerrilla marketing from its stature as a mere low-cost method used by small and unestablished enterprises to acceptance by major and established players, as well as the blending of street-based approaches and digital technologies, make the concept arduous to delineate (Dahlien et al., 2009). The idea of guerrilla marketing is incredibly pertinent in a world where advertisers compete for customers’ attention by being more strategic and ingenious with their marketing operations (Koeck & Warnaby, 2014). It is a novel, unconventional, and captivating method of marketing intended to pique interest and spread word of mouth (Dinh & Mai, 2015). The core of guerrilla marketing, in contrast to normal marketing efforts, is more about communicating a distinctive image or identity concerning a firm than it is about outlining the characteristics and benefits of the product (Lee et al., 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore how guerrilla marketing influences customer preferences. This article seeks to evaluate the efficacy of guerrilla marketing strategies in raising brand recognition, boosting brand loyalty, and eventually influencing customer purchasing behaviour. The outcomes of the study will offer focused insights to marketers and companies seeking to leverage guerrilla marketing effectively in their advertising endeavours.

Introduction:

Guerrilla marketing refers to non-traditional promotional initiatives and/or tactics that are intended to have a substantial advertising impact, but at a much lower cost than typical marketing campaigns would need to expend to achieve the same result (Patalas, 2006). It is predicated on promoting a product or service’s unstated qualities instead of its clear, practical features. It tackles the emotional viewpoint associated with the offering by demonstrating the concept that goes along with it in lieu of the actual product. This is accomplished using the leverage of attention, at least in the time of information exchange (Baltes & Leibing, 2008). One person is now exposed to hundreds or even thousands of short-term communications every day due to the accelerated growth in the number of advertisements in recent years (Shapiro & Nielsen, 2013). As a result, consumers have developed protective systems in the form of subjective projections that help users identify and steer clear of unwanted short-term signals. There are numerous interpretations and viewpoints regarding the application and purposes of guerrilla marketing as a consequence of the guerrilla concept’s translation into marketing nomenclature (Nufer, 2013). It has been determined to have an impact on customers’ buying intentions and is regarded as beneficial for marketers (Tam & Khuong, 2015).

Every customer now has access to a more modern concept of demonstrating correspondence in his ongoing path to meet requirements and allay concerns about selling, owing to the modern age. Modern consumers are more educated, which causes them to become more demanding and loyal to specific companies. In order to successfully reach the right customer through the promotion endeavour without getting entangled in the turmoil, a more effective plan must be available. To navigate the market’s confusion, one must choose a different type of instruction and place a greater emphasis on innovation and creativity (Biswas & Chakraborty, 2018). Here comes the pivotal part that guerrilla marketing plays. Guerrilla marketing can
therefore be defined as a method of marketing interaction that, in a plethora of ways, infiltrates unusual forms and controls the customer subject without the latter ever sensing the mass of such disciplinary measures (Serazio, 2021). Thereby, it can be summed up as an advertising strategy that makes an effort to not be perceived as such (Serazio, 2010). Guerrilla marketing, however, has some drawbacks despite being found to have an impact on customers’ buy intentions and being advantageous for marketers (Tam and Khuong, 2015). Guerrilla marketing campaigns only succeeded in reaching those who happened to be walking by the advertising activity, as opposed to the vast number of consumers that can be reached through other conventional promotional methods (Gökerik et al., 2011).

**Review of Literature:**

Due to its distinct strengths over conventional marketing, including surprise, diffusion, as well as cheap cost, guerrilla marketing is here to remain (Sajoy, 2013). The difference between views and expectations causes the startle impact (Hutter, 2015). Marketers can employ a variety of techniques to startle consumers, including foolishness, entertainment, surprising messages, and positioning ads in surprising places. It is anticipated that the surprise impact will amplify the communication dissemination effect (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011). The diffusion impact benefits greatly from the widespread usage of the internet across the globe.

Strategies for guerrilla communication use a variety of tactics, such as ambush, ambient, and silent ads. Ambush marketing refers to a range of actions carried out by competitors of the formal advertiser that may mislead the public about who the actual sponsor is (Crow & Hoek, 2003). By putting the campaign in a new setting, ambient advertising (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011) refers to the practice of posting unorthodox ads in odd places (Hutter, 2015). From the perspective of the consumer, invisible communication is when there appears to be no exchange of information about the business, its goods and services, or both from the marketer’s perspective (Finne & Strandvik, 2012). Moreover, the main goal of this form of marketing is to seize the attention of the desired audience for the product sale while keeping them unaware that it is a company marketing effort (Shakeel & Khan, 2011). Another major factor that causes marketers to shift their attention from this type of marketing is the difficulty in concentrating on prospective clients due to polarisation, which results in the division of these clients into a very small number of clusters as a function of increased media exposure (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004).

**Perceived Interaction:**

Understanding the determinants that describe interaction with this form of promotional contact as well as the potential effects on brand image is crucial because the success of a guerrilla campaign relies on the proactive interaction of consumers through networking and general interaction with its content (Barbosa et al., 2022). Social media’s widespread use improves the effectiveness of guerrilla marketing by allowing user interaction and promoting content publicity. Therefore, integrated marketing tactics are typically used by marketers to increase the effectiveness of guerrilla campaigns. However, it is also practicable to configure campaigns that are solely virtual, especially when working with limited budgets and focusing on a group of customers who are highly active online (Levinson, 2010; Castronovo & Huang, 2012). Thus, the following hypothesis has been formulated.

**H1-** Perceived Interaction positively influences brand image.

**Novelty:**

Novelty has long been regarded as the cornerstone of inventive advertising (Ang et al., 2014). A frequent way to describe originality is novelty. It is the primary factor used by some experts to determine if a product is innovative (Jackson and Messick, 1967). It possesses two traits: a deviation from the norm as well as a feeling of distinctiveness, suggesting that advertisements that differ from those of the identical product group are novel. Novelty as an element of originality enhances the efficacy of marketing, and when combined with significance, it enhances customer perception and behaviour (Ang et al., 2014). Being regarded as the most prevalent and frequent aspects of advertising ingenuity, uniqueness or surprise and message applicability have garnered a great deal of support in the literature (2008). The efficacy of a commercial might be diminished
by too much novelty, according to Fillis (2002), who asserted that the streamlining of creativity is essential to success. In light of this, advertising should not be so novel that it makes it difficult for viewers to form lasting relationships (Efrat et al., 2021). Thus, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H2- Novelty of the advertisement positively influences brand image.

Meaningfulness:

Customers’ perceptions of advertisements that convey a product are what determine whether an advertisement is effective (Dinh & Mai, 2015). For some academics, a creative advertisement’s pertinence refers to how suitable it is, which serves as a measure of its originality (Ang & Low, 2000). At its core, an advertisement is not considered innovative if it does not have any significance, particularly for the customer. Meaningfulness is undoubtedly a key factor in advertising’s efficacy and a major area of emphasis for the marketing team (Lehnert et al., 2014). The novelty of an advertisement will only foster originality when it conveys some meaning regarding the product (Haberland & Dacin, 1992). Once innovation is developed, its influence on consumer behaviour is anticipated (Till and Baack, 2005). Additionally, both professionals and academics agree that creativity is a potent instrument for addressing the issue of advertising proliferation. However, given the abundance of meanings for originality, it is crucial to comprehend how viewers judge and respond to it (Smith et al., 2007). Therefore, the following hypothesis has been formulated.

H3-Meaningfulness of the advertisement positively influences brand image.

Brand Image:

According to Dobni and Zinkhan (1990), brand image is the term used to describe how customers perceive a particular brand, such as any associations with particular characteristics of the brand’s goods and services (Cretu and Brodie, 2007). It can also be thought of as the sensible or intuitive associations that customers have with particular companies. There are two types of brand image: "functional image and symbolic image" (Simms and Trott, 2006). Brand image is therefore valued by both advertisers and academics. Shamma and Hassan (2011) call attention to the potential of buying impulse when the strong brand image is prominent in the customers’ minds. Companies use a variety of advertising techniques to improve the image of their offerings.

The development of the internet and social networking sites has increased the visibility of guerrilla marketing tactics. Through the web and social media, effective campaigns can become popular and even reach crowds of millions (Gökerik et al., 2018). Nevertheless, this method of communication also can put companies at risk, especially if consumers misinterpret the campaign’s content. The reputation of the company may suffer if the campaign is poorly planned or targeted at the incorrect demographic (Shang et al., 2006). Therefore, businesses employ branding and actions to forge a positive image in the thoughts of customers, who typically assess the brand image based on their comprehension, attitude, and perception (Soonro et al., 2021).
Practical Implications:

The impact of perceived interaction, novelty, and meaningfulness of guerrilla marketing advertisements on the enhancement of brand image has significant real-world ramifications for the marketing industry. First and foremost, the research clarifies for marketers the value of guerrilla marketing in improving brand image. This information can be helpful in creating marketing initiatives that are successful and improve customer perception of a company. Second, the study highlights the significance of designing creative and impactful guerrilla marketing strategies that not only grab consumers’ attention but also produce an enduring impression. Third, the research emphasises the significance of observed consumer-marketing campaign interaction. This suggests that in order to raise the probability of a favourable brand image, marketers should concentrate on developing campaigns that actively involve the intended audience.

The study could also be used as a guideline by businesses seeking to integrate guerrilla marketing tactics into their general marketing strategy. The results of this study will have essential applications for marketers, emphasising the value of designing innovative, interactive, and useful guerrilla marketing strategies in establishing a favourable brand image. The research also aids in pinpointing areas where advertisers can enhance their guerrilla marketing efforts. For instance, if a campaign falls short of leaving an enduring impact on the target audience, marketers can assess the campaign’s perceived novelty, level of interaction, as well as meaningfulness to pinpoint areas for development. Thus, this research can assist marketers in properly optimising their marketing efforts in this way.

Conclusion:

When guerrilla marketing starts to lose its effectiveness is up for debate from a long-term viewpoint in the field of marketing communication. The response is contingent upon when it returns to normalcy. The creation of unanticipated ads is a crucial element of astonishment and incredulity. Certain guerrilla marketing tools may capitulate to congestion, as we remember it from Television ads, banner blindness, and other issues. Unconventional marketing cannot always save the companies. They should always examine communication methods, assess the circumstance at hand, weigh its choices, and then allow executives to reach their own decisions (Klepek, 2014). Guerrilla marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour, is suitable for all companies, and ought to be done so in light of current neuroscience research instead of conjecture, opinion, and experience. Guerrilla Advertising is a common advertising technique that is used in conjunction with product promotion, and it entails the use of unusual or unexpected methods to introduce the product to the market.

It is undoubtedly not a new trend in advertising, but thanks to the advocates’ innovative ideas and persuasive arguments, it has recently begun to become somewhat more popular. From a financial standpoint, there is
a stark difference between the guerrilla approach and the traditional approach, with the latter achieving the customer in a manner that is much more persuasive (Barbosa et al., 2022). In summation, this unconventional and inventive marketing strategy has been clarified by the conceptual research on guerrilla marketing. This research has emphasised guerrilla marketing’s possible pros and cons as well as the elements that influence whether it is successful or unsuccessful through an examination of the various definitions and traits of the practice. Overall, this conceptual study has improved comprehension of guerrilla marketing and can be a useful tool for academics and marketers who want to make the most of it while avoiding its drawbacks.

References: