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Guerrilla advertisement and marketing

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Abstract

This study examines the relationships, similarities, and differences among traditional advertising applications, guerrilla art, guerrilla marketing, and guerrilla advertising, all of which are interrelated. Guerrilla advertising differs from traditional advertising in that it is creative and allows for maximum turnover while spending the least amount of money since it is able to benefit from innovative strategies and promotional tactics. Guerrilla marketing employs various techniques which keep costs at a minimum, and it is utilized for companies that have a say about their products. Of course this approach to marketing involves procedures, but these are not realized as TV commercials or advertisements which solely intervene in the perceptions of the audience; rather, this form of advertising appears in unexpected locations. Guerrilla marketing is utilized not only by institutional firms but also by local and small businesses, and these low-cost advertising tactics allow them to compete with larger firms. Guerrilla forms of marketing offer businesses various opportunities to boost sales figures through the use of unusual strategies. While guerrilla marketing also focuses on increasing sales and profits, it differs from traditional marketing with respect to the strategies and methods employed. This study takes a broad approach, and draws upon both local and international sources as well as the existing literature to identify problematic areas. After an examination of visual examples and discourses on the issue in the literature, the study concludes with a comparative discussion of guerrilla art and related advertising techniques.

Keywords: Guerrilla advertising, guerrilla marketing, guerrilla art.

1. Introduction

Unlike in neighbouring European countries, the concepts of guerrilla marketing, guerrilla advertising and guerrilla art are not well-known in Turkey and subsequently these approaches to advertising do not have a strong basis in Turkey. Taking this fact into consideration, this study aims to identify the constituent elements of the concept of guerrilla marketing and examine how they are interrelated by providing examples of guerrilla marketing and guerrilla advertising of guerrilla art, techniques which were initially developed by Jay Conrad Levinson in 1984.

2. Purpose and methodology

In accordance with this defined objective, this study will first discuss the meaning of the term guerrilla, the origins of the concept of guerrilla marketing, definitions and objectives of guerrilla marketing, how it is utilized by small and large companies, the advantages of guerrilla, marketing and the differences between guerrilla marketing and traditional marketing. Secondly, the study will investigate the necessary conditions for guerrilla advertising and how it is employed. In the last section, definitions of guerrilla art will be examined along with discussions of the relationship between guerrilla design and street art, and how these pertain to guerrilla art and guerrilla advertising.

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3. Guerrilla marketing

The uncertainty created by the transformations brought about by globalization makes it necessary for businesses to produce more value and to rapidly adapt to those changes. Today numerous large organizations have striven to maintain a competitive edge through a traditional understanding of marketing and trends. Some businesses, however, have begun adopting the more innovative approaches offered by guerrilla marketing, which is comprised of low-cost strategies to increase the chances of success in a fiercely competitive environment.

The Webster's New College Dictionary defines guerrilla as an "irregular war fought by an independent group," indicating that the term itself, derived from the Spanish word for war, *guerra*, originated in the context of armed conflict. This concept was first used during the Spanish resistance against the French invasion under Napoleon which lasted from 1807 to 1814 (Blog Advertising, 2012). In light of this, it can be surmised that guerrilla warfare, which means partisan struggle, is the weapon of the weaker or disadvantaged side in a conflict.

Guerrilla advertising started to attract the interest of the advertising sector in the USA after the Vietnamese used guerrilla tactics during the Vietnam War in the 1960s. Advertisers began to ask, "Can we market our products by adopting those tactics?" (Yüksel, 2010).

The guerrilla marketing concept which was first developed by Jay Conrad Levinson in 1984 with the book *Easy and Inexpensive Strategies for Making Big Profits for your Small Business*. This concept became an umbrella name for non-traditional marketing approaches and, as the book suggested, has been used for promotional strategies.

Guerrilla marketing draws its strength from creativity and the power of imagination. For that reason it is often a hybrid of marketing strategies utilizing a number of practices which differ from traditional advertising, and by drawing upon innovative materials and methods it makes it possible to obtain maximum levels of turnover for the lowest cost. Guerrilla marketing is a powerful means of rapidly boosting a firm's competitive edge, particularly for small and middle scale enterprises in today's fiercely competitive markets.

Guerrilla tactics are rational, and it is able to transform its disadvantages into advantages. Jay Conrad Levinson defines guerrilla marketing in the following terms: "It is for those entrepreneurs whose budgets are low but their imaginations are great..." (Blog Advertising, 2012)

The aim of guerrilla marketing is to maximize public interest in a firm's goods and services while also minimizing the costs of advertising. Just like guerrilla warfare, this form of marketing strives to focus attention in a particular direction. The means to achieving this in advertising are "different, surprising, original and entertaining," implemented with a small budget.

In this way, the key concept of guerrilla marketing is to obtain maximum profits from minimum expenditures. In traditional understandings of marketing, however, it is essential to spend money to make money; in contrast, with this alternative approach the essential thing is the power of imagination. The approach taken by guerrilla marketing surprises customers, and as a result produces memorable results (Uzman TV, 2012)

Initially, guerrilla marketing was primarily adopted by small companies to allow them to compete with larger firms that have larger budgets. As Kotler notes, "Guerrilla warfare is normally practised by smaller companies against larger companies" (Kotler, 2007). However, changing economic conditions have caused even larger companies to seek out means to achieve maximum results with smaller budgets in their marketing and advertising activities, and guerrilla marketing techniques are quite successful in this regard.

For instance, more than 750,000 new small- and medium-sized organizations have been established in the USA in the last 10 years. In the last four years, however, 62% of these were forced to shut down due of a lack of success. It has been suggested that the use of guerrilla marketing techniques are one way that small-scale business organizations can succeed in such a climate. (*Management and Economy Magazine*, Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, The University of Celal Bayar, 2002).

When Levinson's book first came out, guerrilla advertising was primarily a tactic for small business organizations. But nowadays, especially since the beginning of the 2000s, guerrilla marketing has taken on unprecedented importance for firms of all sizes, and is even utilized by large business organizations which should come as a surprise given that the cost of renting a billboard for advertising in New York City ranges between 1,000 and 5,000 dollars a month. When companies are caught advertising without permission, the amount of the fine they

have to pay is much less than how much it would cost to pay for a billboard which is one reason why most large business organizations prefer guerrilla advertising today. (Yüksel, 2010)

At this point, we must question the definition of the concept of guerrilla marketing as "activities of small organizations to pursue their long term marketing at low costs." What about those large firms that have large market shares in such sectors as food, clothing, and the automotive industry and have large budgets for marketing but still utilize guerrilla tactics? Is it possible to call this "guerrilla marketing" when such large firms spend so little on this form of marketing? Jay Conrad Levinson answers this question as follows: "Yes, it is possible to name this guerrilla marketing" because you can still perform guerrilla marketing activities even if you they take up just a fraction of the available budget. Guerrilla marketing is conceptualized as "actualizing the most stunning and effective communication by spending the lowest amount of money." Consequently, definitions have been altered to include any number of marketing activities which serve to surprise prospective customers and create effective communication, and hence a variety of interesting advertisements and marketing activities are now considered to be "guerrilla marketing" and are referred to accordingly (Blog Reklam, 2012). In fact, the aims of guerrilla marketing and traditional marketing are different. Although it focuses on traditional targets such as selling more goods and increasing profit, guerrilla marketing differs from traditional marketing in terms of the methods it utilizes. That is to say, the differences are not in the objectives but in the marketing instruments.

One of the basic advantages of guerrilla marketing is that its methods are less costly and employs a broader variety of marketing methods. Since guerrilla marketing tends to be cheaper or even free, it can easily be used together with classical marketing. Guerrilla marketing can select from 100 methods, 62 of which do not require funding, and this is its primary advantage.

Another significant aspect of guerrilla marketing is that it delivers its message in the most effective manner possible. The internet, which already has more than one billion users, is key area of implementation. Internet blogs, online magazines, and newspapers, along with chat and forum pages, are crucial arenas for getting the message across.

4. Differences between guerrilla marketing and traditional marketing

According to the designer and brand advisor Jay Conrad Levinson, who first introduced the concept of guerrilla marketing, there are 20 differences between traditional and guerrilla marketing, and he describes those differences as follows (Levinson 1998):

Table 1. Differences between guerrilla marketing and traditional marketing

Traditional Marketing	Guerrilla Marketing
Money is required for marketing.	If you have money, you are asked to invest but if you do not have any money, you are not obliged.
Confuses people's minds and creates a mystic atmosphere.	The guerrilla approach explains the reality clearly.
It is intended for the big business environment.	It is intended for small business organizations.
Measures performance by means of the rate of sales.	Profitability comes first.
Marketing is based on experience and judgements. That is to say, it is estimation or prediction.	Focuses on psychology and human behaviour because guerrilla advertising cannot afford to lose time for estimations. Guerrilla is aware of the fact that consumers make 90% of their decisions by subconsciously.
Is not interested in the work of competitors.	Says forget about competitors and watch those who have standards like you and cooperate with them.

Is egocentric - always says "I" and everything is based on the ego.	Guerrilla says "you." Everything which stems from guerrilla marketing such as leaflets, flyers and web pages are all related to their prospective customers.
Cares about those bills which arrive at the end of the month.	Cares about relationships and asks questions such as "who have we contacted this month?"
Does not give much importance to technology.	Benefits from technology at all levels possible.
Aims at larger groups.	Targets small groups and individuals.
Aims at the unconscious and does not bother about minor details.	Targets the subconscious and emphasizes details.
It is a "monologue".	Is keen on dialogue, so guerrilla always says "you" rather than "me."
Utilizes only a handful of marketing methods.	Has 100 weapons and chooses the most appropriate one and utilizes their intersections or results. 62 of those weapons are totally free of charge.
Starts more than one job at the same time.	Says manage your business first and focus on other issues afterwards or embark upon another enterprise.
Tells you to enlarge your business linearly.	Targets growth in geometric proportion.
Says that the important issue is selling and forgets about the customer after the sale.	Always follows and waits on customers so there is a minimal risk of losing a customer.
Tells people, "You should take advantage of the benefits of my services and goods!"	Focuses on people's problems and finding solutions for them.
Marketing asks, "what can I sell to them?" The system is based on purchasing and selling.	Asks customers questions such as "What can I give you?" for the benefit of customers is the priority.
Argues that traditional methods such as PR are always beneficial.	Not just one but all approaches serve their purpose. A combination of these will be beneficial.
Believes that it is possible to do marketing by means of only promotional approaches.	The priority is to please customers and get their approval and satisfaction. In this case, sales are need-based and the customers come to you.

5. Guerrilla advertising

Guerrilla advertising is a non-traditional approach which is based on spending time and energy, and utilizing creativity rather than doing business by spending money. The advertising tactics of this approach extend far beyond those of traditional applications and they are also unexpected, and thus require creativity. Guerrilla advertising seeks to get the attention and interest of prospective customers in public places, on street corners, and in subway stations. The aim of this method is to maximize contact at a minimum of cost (Yüksel, 2010).

Because of developing technologies, transformations within concepts of family, and newly emerging lifestyles transformation and differentiation in marketing has become essential. As people have less and less time and as life becomes busier, the timely effectiveness of marketing becomes ever more important, and this demands greater creativity for advertising. Guerrilla advertising and guerrilla marketing are based on such issues. Owing to its very nature, a strong imagination, promptness, and creativity have become imperatives for success with this approach.

In the second half of the 20th century, television became a favourite means of communication for manufacturers to send their messages to prospective customers. TV commercials which last for 30 seconds and advertisements in

media organs as well as leaflets, flyers and billboards were used to support this kind of advertising. However, nowadays almost everything has changed because both the numbers of items and the names of brands of items on the shelves of supermarkets have increased 14 times during the last 20 years. A brand may, for example, fly a hot air balloon around the world instead of arranging the distribution of leaflets, flyers, publishing press advertisements or producing TV commercials, or it may arrange a party in a park or be the sponsor of entertainment activities of a night club. The development of technology has become an essential factor which creates many options for advertising agencies to go beyond certain restrictions and this increases the courage to take up some new initiatives in advertising policies.

Today, advertising has become indispensable both for prospective consumers and the staff of marketing communication departments (Kocabaş and Elden, 2006). The whole world has become one marketing platform, and as a result millions of brands and products compete for consumers' attention. Advertising is not just what we see on TV, billboards or magazines, which are the traditional means of media communication, but these are also quite costly. In addition, such approaches to advertising have become a kind of mere background noise in the lives of consumers today due to the ever increasing variety of brands which assault prospective customers with their nonstop messages.

As a response to this situation, the concept of guerrilla advertising campaign attempts to capture the interest and attention of prospective customers and hold their attention via unusual methods and unexpected means. Jay Conrad Levinson notes, "Guerrilla marketing is the harmony of wisdom rather than budgets" (Lucas and Dorrian 2007).

The first step in guerrilla advertising is to set the objective of the advertisement and the second step involves emphasizing the core benefit of putting this objective into practice. It is essential to determine the target audience of the advertising, to emphasize the plan in light of the characteristics of this audience, to determine the requirements of the advertising, and to delineate the framework of the advertising budget. In guerrilla advertising, large business organizations often prepare most of the work which normally advertising agencies to do for them. Regardless of whether or not the advertising text will be published, broadcast, or telecast, it must be brief, clear-cut and correct. The most effective words must be selected both to thoroughly convey the messages and to fit niche for advertising. Some common means for this approach include desktop publishing, laser print publications, TV, web sites, the Internet, fax and e-mail messages.

Traditional means of promotion such as printed media (newspapers and magazines) as well as radio, TV, billboards, mailed flyers are generally expensive. However, it possible to develop more convenient means to actualize those defined objectives by coming up with good functional schemes. New advancements in Internet and technology have thus facilitated guerrilla marketing. In particular, the Internet provides small- and medium-scale companies with several opportunities to compete with larger organizations and acquire popularity. Especially original Internet websites which include interesting and useful information are hugely advantageous for small business enterprises. We can summarize the required circumstances for guerrilla advertising as follows (Yüksel, 2010):

1. Guerrilla advertising and marketing is particularly suitable for small business organizations.
2. It should be based on human psychology rather than on experience, judging, predictions, and assumptions.
3. Investments should be based on the utilization of time, energy and benefitting from the power of imagination.
4. The progress of a business organization should be evaluated not in terms of the rate of sales but the amount of profit actualized.
5. The sales person should concentrate on the number of prospective customers she or he has been able to contact in a given month.
6. The focus should be on major big product rather than many small products which are likely to cause confusion.
7. One should place more importance on current customers and their problems instead of running after new prospective customers.
8. One should cooperate with other companies instead of engaging in fierce competition with them.
9. The use of current technologies should be maximised in all aspects of business for the sake of empowering the business enterprise and boosting sales. The means of advertising and slogans should differ from that of competitors and the products, services, and advertising styles should be uniquely memorable. It is this memorable nature that plays such a key role in increasing the effectiveness of advertising.

Flexibility in advertising makes it possible in the long run to adapt concepts and characters to suit a given product, variations, and different storylines. Because it may be necessary to maintain the same storyline, the same characters and concepts make it possible for advertising campaigns to achieve coherence and continuity when implementing promotional activities. For instance, the advertising campaign of Marlboro is flexible enough to include many different products such as Marlboro Long, Marlboro Box and Marlboro Lights, within the framework of the same concept in which they used the same cowboy and the same horse in their television commercials and advertisements in newspapers and magazines (Levinson, 1998). In the middle of the 1980s, J. Conrad Levinson went beyond the ordinary, however, by attempting to do something unusual in the conventional advertising campaigns, as in the case of Marlboro. Naturally, many other companies began to utilize these techniques after seeing that this new method of advertising achieved unexpected successes. Levinson created the impression that these cigarettes were preferred by the public by leaving empty packets of cigarettes in front of popular venues such as bars and restaurants to attract the attention of target smokers. Consequently, the sales figure rates of this brand went up to first place from thirty-first place (Lucas and Dorrian, 2007).

The structure of guerrilla advertising proved to be more economical and more effective in comparison to other classical advertising approaches. Later, even global companies started to take an interest in guerrilla advertising. Naturally, this interest was not unreciprocated. Some global advertising agencies such as Leo Burnette and BBDO established special departments intended to deal with guerrilla advertising in order to meet these expectations. Some other large advertising agencies commenced to reorganize their activities and founded new departments to deal with the production of non-traditional TV commercials and advertisements. Wieden+Kennedy established Fat in London, and Lowe Worldwide established a department named Activation. Saatchi&Saatchi established the departments of Saatchi&SaatchiX and Fallon, Happen London (Lucas and Dorrian, 2007).

6. Guerrilla art

Guerrilla marketing and guerrilla advertising are interlinked activities which support one another. In a similar way, street artists have used public spaces to pass on their messages without the intervention and assistance of traditional institutions of art. Street artists seek to shake daily perceptions and consciousness by exhibiting their stencil works, graffiti, mural paintings or environmental works within the rhythm of daily street life. Their activities catch the audience unprepared and are able to shock those who pass by in the streets.

Guerrilla art is a movement of street art which was initially introduced in New York and Los Angeles as progressive forms of graffiti, but it quickly spread to other metropolitan cities in the world. It is a form of street art which utilizes an aggressive approach intended to fill the spaces of public areas. The term street art includes graffiti, tags, stencil printings, wheat pasting, street banner /poster art, projection of images, and street placements. This term is used to differentiate regularly updated public venue art from local graffiti. Art movements such as Dadaism, Situationism and Pop Art which appeared during the World War II can be seen in the development this form of art. Impacted by the sub-cultures of hip-hop and punk, Guerrilla Art invaded the streets in the 1980s.

After the publication of Levinson's book "Guerrilla Marketing" in the late 1980s, guerrilla advertising also began to take over the streets. Guerrilla advertising is a commercial phenomenon, and just like guerrilla art it is put into practice in the streets without obtaining permission; the difference, however, is that it is not art. As guerrilla advertising became more popular, the demand for guerrilla artists increased accordingly. Guerrilla artists were employed by companies for the purpose of producing promotional products for advertising campaigns. Guerrilla artists thus went on to develop their work in the streets while doing jobs for advertising companies and as a result produced works of art through their words. Street Art developed in the gaps of public spaces such as in the streets and avenues of metropolitan cities. Although street art is generally the art of forbidden areas, this art movement stood for civil initiatives and the opposition rather than the government. Those works which go beyond traditional understandings of advertising can thus be referred to as guerrilla works which seek to draw in the audience through new applications and by means of direct interaction.

Guerrilla works have been utilized for a number of purposes including social responsibility campaigns such as for AIDS awareness, to encourage people to quit smoking, to protest drunk driving, to raise awareness of environmental problems, to opposed capital punishment, to support the homeless, and many more aspects of raising public awareness. Non-profit organizations such as Amnesty International and environmental organizations have

utilized such strategies and organized similar campaigns to impact public opinion. In this way, it can be seen that guerrilla marketing techniques can be utilized in other fields as well.

The most progressive contribution of guerrilla art to guerrilla marketing was achieved by combining the strategic techniques of guerrilla marketing with the forms of guerrilla art. Guerrilla art is a movement unconcerned with commercial issues and is able to reach its target audience; it calculates the impression it makes on people instead of computing margins of profit, and instead of becoming a brand, the work of guerrilla artists becomes transposed into the memories of observers. Warhol, who critically utilized many references to consumer society in his work, became an idol and was raised to the level of a celebrity by the same society of consumers. The patterns and designs of Pop-Art are still commonly utilized today by designers and advertising agencies as alternative and effective advertising instruments.

Even though guerrilla marketing is bound up with guerrilla design, it can easily be seen that such a phenomenon cannot be monopolized merely by the capitalist system because such designs can be seen in the visual work of civil society institutions and in protest street art. The important point on this issue is that applications of guerrilla art which bring creativity into the open may later become material for the advertising industry (Heper, 2008). The purpose of guerrilla art, which some may see as utopian, is to oppose a certain system. When such artists create their art, they reflect this, and they usually have utopian aims. On the other hand, guerrilla advertising aims at just the opposite of guerrilla art. This form of advertising is in the system and serves as a kind cogwheel which works within the system. They do not have artistic aims, but they utilize methods which are applied in guerrilla art. They sometimes design with the help of a graphic designer but mostly they hire a guerrilla artist for the work and they convey their messages and they articulate a saying by means of her or his art (Yüksel, 2010).

The fact that guerrilla art and guerrilla advertising are so closely interrelated and that guerrilla art, which is based on ideals, means that guerrilla artists have become a part of advertising which in turn has been placed in art galleries and sold. The fact that guerrilla art is a constituent of the system does not change the reality that it has merged into the society of consumers. At this point, art has become a product.

If we have a look at artistic movements, we can see that art movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism, Pop Art and Anti Art were introduced with ideas to oppose the current system. Over time, however, they became mainstream and began being shown in art galleries and museums, and later they even became products. When the advertising sector enters the life of an artist and artists begin to work for wages, the roles of artists start to change. Nowadays, we can say this even for guerrilla artists. When a guerrilla artist does work for an advertising company, she or he must drop her or his identity as a guerrilla artist. If what has been produced is for advertising and seeks to increase the sales of a product, then the work has become an image used to for business purposes. Even if this image is aesthetic, this does not change the fact. The artist who sets off with a utopian aim actually enters the system after producing something for advertisements and so becomes a wheel within the cogs of the system (Wernick, 1996).

In conclusion, nowadays guerrilla art has sought to transform space and to affect its energy with the use of visuals which seek to impact the world. Guerrilla advertising also utilizes the same method but the purpose is not to change the venue or the street, but to attract the attention of prospective customers. Guerrilla advertising and marketing uses the tactics of guerrilla artist in this process. They put up stickers, install banners with visuals, write slogans using spray paint, or put patterns around streets using stencils. They engage in performance as regards the product by employing secret actors and they place works in the streets. Whatever guerrilla artists do to display their art, guerrilla advertisers do the same and they perform these activities without getting permission just like guerrilla artists.

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