

Guerilla Marketing or, Rules for Playing with Jell-O

In some form or other, guerilla marketing has been with us for a long time. Theater posters plastered on construction barriers... companies paying people to have logos tattooed on their bodies... messages scrolling on the Good Year blimp... all are powerful examples of how it can work well.

Guerilla marketing is defined as “an unconventional system of promotions on a very low budget ... relying on time, energy and imagination instead of big marketing budgets.” And these low-key, grassroots ideas are often some of the most effective marketing tools around.

Every day, we're surrounded by these subtle, “here I am” promotions:

- Red Bull representatives who show up at your workplace to deliver free samples to keep you energized for the afternoon.
- Taste-testers who offer free samples of new foods in your local grocery store.
- Airplanes that fly over area beaches trailing banners advertising mortgage companies.

What makes guerilla marketing so special? Unlike most strategies, this messaging sneaks up on you. The marketing is delivered in unexpected ways using unorthodox tactics that surprise us. This strategy reaches out into our daily lives and brings marketing to us.

It's important to remember, though, that if you plan to target a specific audience, guerilla strategies may not be your best choice. Using guerilla marketing to reach a specific demographic is a bit like playing catch with Jell-O: the right person may catch your message, but it's guaranteed that you'll splash someone else.

Are you ready to throw a little Jell-O yourself? If so, here are three things you should keep in mind...

1) What do you want your campaign to accomplish?

Before going to your agency or brainstorming on your own, think about your goals. Do you want to let people know about your about-to-launch website to increase site traffic? Are you trying to get people excited about a new coffee shop/gallery opening next month? Are you expanding your product line and want to inform people about new offerings? Determining your objectives will help you choose the right idea for your needs.

2) How much money do you want to spend?

While it's true that guerilla marketing is typically less expensive than other strategies, even the simplest ideas will have some associated cost. Figure out how much you want to spend before asking your agency for ideas. After all, the greatest idea in the world isn't much good if it costs more than you can afford.

3) When (and for how long) do you want to run your campaign?

Don't rule out a seasonal campaign that may be an easy way to reach a large number of your general market. What about sponsoring a night at McCoy Stadium to reach local families with young children? Or maybe giving away logo'd kites at Brenton



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Point State Park during 4th of July weekend to advertise a great new attraction to Newport tourists? Or perhaps it offering jack-o-lantern making kits at a local festival to announce the opening of a new farmstand? Timing is key.

Guerilla marketing offers some great opportunities to be creative while saving money, but it's not for everyone. Talk to your marketing agency to see if a strong guerilla campaign could be the answer for you.

And make sure to duck when the Jell-O starts flying...



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