

“A Study on Awareness Levels of Guerrilla Marketing Techniques among Select Young Adults in Muscat- Sultanate of Oman”

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization where technology has dominated different walks of life and taken a pivotal place in business especially in marketing arena, the growing cut throat competition lead the manufacturers of products and service providers with a challenge to cope up the demands of customers and also to adopt different techniques to bind them towards their product. Although the traditional marketing techniques exist and were handy in the past however the new and different challenges like similar products and different brand of same product , close substitute of products, brand war and other aspects has forced many companies to go for non-traditional marketing such as guerrilla marketing, which is very cost effective to use and reach more customers and create long lasting impact with the different promotional and advertising techniques. The current research is focusing on unconventional methods used in promotion of marketing mix especially the unconventional methods of advertisements through guerrilla marketing. The current research topic is “A study on awareness levels of guerrilla marketing techniques among young adults in Muscat region-Sultanate of Oman”.

Grounded-Theory research design was used so as to find out reactions of respondents towards the guerrilla advertisements when presented to them. The sample size comprises of 50 respondent participants. The data was collected from different respondents in the age group of 18-27(young adults). Focus group method was adopted, where in different advertisements, both posters and electronic social media advertisements pertaining to guerrilla marketing was showcased to group of 10 respondents at a time and later on pertinent questions were asked to the respondents following informal group interview method to capture the data about their awareness and ideas of guerrilla marketing. The current study is aimed at highlighting the significance of guerrilla marketing as tool for promoting products and also to stimulate interest among different business houses and stakeholders.

Keywords: Guerrilla Advertisements, Marketing, Globalization, Business. Muscat-Oman.

INTRODUCTION

In this globalized era, Advertisement has become an integral part of any business and the role of advertising has become mostly an inevitable part of business. Advertising is one aspect of marketing, It involves planning and implementing of product and services and bringing the buyers and sellers together in order to facilitate the transaction. Every business have their marketing strategy and a systematic way of executing their plan in the market for their product, it starts with analysis of its competitors in the market, analysis of distribution channels

and analysis of the market size etc. The marketing experts of the company collects the data and plan their pricing strategy which includes sales, commissions, discounts, incentives etc. (Caemmerer, B. 2009).

Ferguson, R. (2008) Traditional marketing is expensive and requires lot of time and the company has to pour lots of money. Another way of marketing is non-traditional marketing, Non-traditional marketing is cheaper when compared with traditional marketing. Non-traditional marketing involves the marketer to think outside the box, something which is

unorthodox and unpredictable. This type of marketing not only creates a new image in the mind of the customer but also touches the heart of the people.

Guerrilla Marketing- It is an act of executing an unusual activity in public place just to create buzz among the people. It involves low cost or no cost at all and can get maximum results when implemented correctly.

In today's world companies still spend billions of dollars on traditional marketing, but there are many companies which actually combine both the marketing i.e. traditional and non-traditional marketing in a way that their product should be a hit. In a more philosophical point of view, traditional marketing is very structured, disciplined and controlled, where as non-traditional marketing, the marketer will focus on four Cs i.e. consumer, company, competitors and collaborators. Non-traditional planning focuses more on execution than planning. (non-traditional marketing, 2012)

Guerrilla marketing relies on unconventional strategy which requires high energy and wild imagination. This type of marketing revolves around how to create a social buzz among the people. Guerrilla marketing doesn't only creates an image of a particular product but also touches people's heart. According to some researches, Guerrilla marketing plays an important role on consumer's buying behavior if implemented correctly. Some of the ads also made people emotional when it was created. If the advertisement is not executed correctly it can create a wrong impression about the product in the mind of consumers.(Granot, E. 2011)

Non-traditional marketing involves many unknown factors, it is important to go through all the factors before taking up any decision. The first step of non-traditional planning is to define the target audience. Planning according to the population will help the marketer. For example if the product appeals to the mass like soda, movie release or a car launch, the company can spend reasonable amount for its marketing. Whereas, if the product is software based then this has limited audience and it is waste to spend much for this product.

The second step in non-traditional marketing is - which strategy to pick? There are many strategies to select but choosing the right one is very crucial. If this goes wrong then the customer can get a wrong image about the

company. Companies have to consult with the branding experts and see to it that their product can deliver the right message to the customers and leave a positive impact on their minds. It is necessary to negotiate deals for ad space in usual places. If the goal is to create or place an ad where it has never been placed, in such cases, proper negotiation between the advertiser and the property owner is required. (non-traditional marketing, 2012).

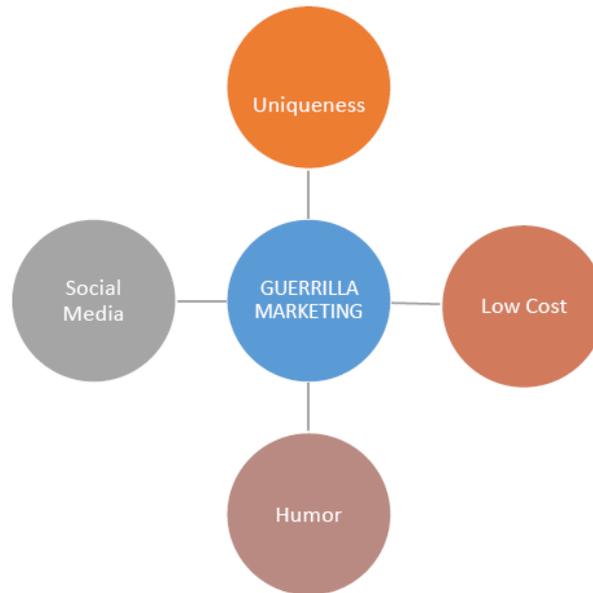
Problem Statement

Several researches have been conducted to study guerrilla marketing and its impacts on consumer's buying behavior. The current research highlights about how guerrilla marketing has been implemented in the modern era that has made consumer experience a newer marketing communication to satisfying the needs and wants of the consumer. As the business competes to survive in the market, it is compulsory to adopt various methods to market the product like newspapers, tabloids, magazines, television, radio and so on. Considering the significance of non-traditional marketing, the essence of guerrilla marketing as to how it has made a huge impact on the consumers buying behavior and which top multinational companies have adopted this type of marketing strategy and what were the outcomes is being discussed. The study also involves ideas as to how the customers were satisfied with the marketing strategy. Such field inquiry is unique and gives clear idea of how consumers taste or preferences are given importance when guerrilla marketing is implemented.

Theoretical Concepts and Framework

The term Guerrilla marketing was coined by Jay Conrad Levison in 1984 in his book 'Guerrilla Marketing'. The term “Guerrilla marketing” was inspired by guerrilla warfare which is a form of irregular warfare used by civilians.

Managing social media and creating humor in a unique manner is the key for guerrilla marketing along maintaining low cost in carrying different advertisements and promotional activities. There is a need to revise and upgrade the advertising and promotional strategies on a continuous basis so as to evolve the guerrilla marketing strategy to compliment the complexities of business today.



Literature Review

Guerrilla marketing is basically a type of marketing communication (MC) which affects the consumer behavior. The main purpose of guerilla marketing is to gain the customers attention by using different tools and techniques such as Personal Relations, Direct Marketing and unique advertising (Royne, 1999).

It was found that Consumers who belong to the Generation Y, i.e. Baby Boomers (Paul, 2001), tend to ignore all kind of advertisements. The basic reason behind this is the strong dedication towards the brands which are a reflection of their own individuality; this dedication has been built over years and can be seen especially during their purchase period, where they tend to buy things which give them satisfaction. (Yin, 2001).

When it comes to brand loyalist, generation Y have their own sets of needs and demands, where the brand has the overall effect on the advertising campaign (Lammiman, 2003), To change this pattern, company's marketing department has to keep in mind that the advertisement has to be proved in order to win the Gen y loyalty. “Companies must into consideration that the Gen y, does not pay attention to any commercially transmitted message (Paul, 2001)”

The endorsers plan for these companies a way in which they re-position and re-brand their products through the expected response of consumers (Henry A, 2003). It is very common these days for celebrities to appear in

commercial ads which results in increase in product exposure in the market, the endorsers use modern means of formatting the advertisement so that it can conform to new technology, the current prevailing trend amongst customers is their continuity of buying products that are endorsed by celebrities (Roozen, 2010).

Marketing plays a key role in effective distribution of the product from the factories. Hence, marketing plays an important role in the production process and is considered heart of a profitable enterprise. Renowned author Peter Drucker, highlighted that all business decisions must be made “in the light of the market.” Marketing has equal importance in the organization and is at par with the finance and production departments. Marketing has evolved itself over time and became the key to industrial and economic growth. Modern enterprises are adapting themselves to turn out to be more marketing oriented in order to survive, expand and flourish. Modern Management is constantly trying to incorporate the art of scientific know-how to marketing, manufacturing processes and techniques (rosenbloom, 2011)

Word of Mouth (WoM) is viral marketing; which has the ability to create image and build customer base on the social networks it is an ability to create a chain among the existing and prospective consumers, it works in the form of network one sharing with few and few sharing the information pertaining to the product and services with many in process free of promotion taking place for the product. WoM plays a big

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role in strengthening the ideas and the props used in guerrilla marketing and in creating a customer based who are band for the products that are showcased through non conventional marketing (Caemmerer, 2009).

Significance of the Study

This study helps to gain in-depth knowledge of how guerrilla marketing influences customers to buy the product i.e. consumer buying behavior.

Objectives of the Study

To understand guerrilla marketing efficiently,

To know the different types of guerrilla marketing used.

To study the selected companies and their strategies implemented during the guerrilla marketing.

Scope of Research Study

The study involves know how international brands have adopted guerrilla marketing and how they have created an impact on consumer purchasing behavior. The current research study is restricted to young adult age group (18-27 years) in the Muscat region of sultanate of Oman.

Research Methodology

Grounded-Theory research design was used so as to find how the consumers buying perception changes when they are exposed to few guerrilla advertisements. The sample size comprises of 50 respondent participants. The data was collected from different responded in the age group of 18-27 (young adults). Focus group advertisement method was adopted. Both posters and electronic social media advertisements pertaining to guerrilla marketing were showcased to group of 10 respondents at a time. Later on pertinent questions were asked to the respondents following informal group interview method to capture the data about their awareness and ideas of guerrilla marketing.

Limitations to the Study

- The focus group selected is small and accurate data will not be obtained.
- The study of the research is in Muscat, capital city of Oman. Not necessary all the region people have similar opinion about guerrilla marketing.
- Age group considered for research may not be representative of all age group of people.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION (FINDINGS OF THE STUDY)

The audience which were exposed to guerilla marketing had a very positive impact about the product, it was observed that all of them agreed to the concept of guerrilla marketing. The sample size of the respondents was a total of 50 respondents which consists of 32 females and 18 males. The focus group on which the research was conducted had a healthy mixture of both expats and locals who were mostly in the age group of 18-27years. The research was conducted on a group of 10 people. This group was shown successful guerrilla marketing campaigns from renowned multinational corporations both in print form and in electronic form.

Firstly the focus group of 50 respondents was divided into 5 groups (10 respondents each), after the division each group was given their special code. 5 excel sheets were created representing each group. Based on reactions received from the respondents, the common comments from each group was categorized accordingly.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Q1. Are you familiar with the concept of guerrilla marketing?

Most of them, 80% agreed to knowing the concept of guerrilla marketing.

Q2. What do they think about unique advertising campaigns of guerrilla marketing?

Most of them, 75% said that they found the non-traditional way of advertising much more convenient and hassle free, whereas around (25%) felt that if the advertising team is effective enough it can result in highly creative, never thought of before ad campaigns

Q3. Whether they think unique advertising would help in benefiting the company?

Most of them (95%) agreed, they said that if the advertising campaign was done in a right manner considering all age groups, then it would have great results for the company. The key here was that the campaign should appeal to all the classes and masses.

Q4. To record the reactions after showing them the clips of successful guerrilla marketing across the world.

The initial advertisement campaign for the soft drink was considered as a refreshing one by

many respondents who were college students. It was very enjoyable and they instantly connect to it. But there were some who said it would not appeal to all the age groups. Another campaign of contact less payment used by the charitable organization, after seeing this campaign all (100%) the respondents were really amazed and thought that this would work well in Oman and could be used by all non-profit organization based in Oman.

Q5. whether they think guerrilla marketing would be successful in Oman?

Respondents had mixed reactions, some of them said no since Oman is a conservative country. Whereas there were a few who believed that guerrilla marketing could be conducted in a right manner, this would be successful provided the advertisers are able to alter the guerrilla marketing campaign according to Oman and its conditions.

Q6. Whether these guerrilla marketing campaigns were able to influence them?

The answer to this was 100% yes. All belonged to the young age group of 18 to 27 years. All of them felt it was quite exciting and must be applied to other products and services in Oman.

Q7. Whether such guerrilla marketing campaigns would lead to them changing their purchase decision?

This was arguably and the most difficult question for most of the respondents. Most of them (85%) were in dilemma they said it would for the first time but for them to become brand loyalist it would take more than just a campaign and said that the product has to live up to their expectations. So basically for the product to be successful, it must be good enough and much more than an ad campaign.

Q8. What do you think, whether guerrilla marketing would prove to be a low cost campaign for the company?

Most of them (90%) said yes, it would rather be an in-expensive method, since the company would have to spend less amount on the machinery whereas the others felt the cost need to be justifiable as the sales for the companies will shoot up. Another point is that guerrilla marketing is cost effective, as the companies could cut down the additional man power cost which they paid to their distributors and to the whole sellers and other intermediary in process.

Q9. How do you think guerrilla marketing can be altered to suit the Middle Eastern conditions and be successful in Oman?

Majority of the respondents (90%) felt that there is a good scope for guerrilla marketing in middle-east countries especially in Oman, as major percentage of the population come under the young adults category who are smart, tech savvy and well informed about the latest technology updates.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that most of the respondents are aware about the concept of guerrilla marketing; however the respondents are unaware about the different dimensions of guerrilla marketing. Guerrilla marketing if implemented properly in Muscat region of Oman, would be a major hit among the youth. Oman is a country with high percentage of people under the age of 30. Generation Y .i.e. baby boomers, are not much aware about such kind of marketing as there are exposed to the traditional way of marketing.

Youth being most active on social network, would help to promote such advertisements. As Oman is now turning into tourist hub such kind of marketing attracts the customers. People are getting more aware about the guerrilla marketing, as it is cost effective compared to the traditional way of marketing, which involved huge cost in production, creative team, media etc. The idea of guerrilla marketing will be successful provided proper care is taken while devising the advertisements which will not hurt people and their sentiment; moreover proper measures are to be taken so that it will not be against the culture of the country and within the purview of law.

SUGGESTIONS

This study was conducted in the Muscat region of Oman, primarily targeting the particular age group; it will be more productive to involve different age groups to know their perception about the guerrilla marketing. Research area was restricted to awareness of respondents about guerrilla marketing, further in depth topics pertaining to marketing can be added to know the larger scope of success. Guerrilla marketing awareness exercise needs to be tried with all age groups to know their liking and disliking.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The sample size used for this study was 50 respondents, for further studies the researcher may take a larger sample or alternative qualitative techniques. Further the researcher can also study about other GCC regions and can explore more about these countries population perception towards guerrilla marketing. The current research was conducted on the age group of 18-27 years; alternatively, researchers may take different age groups to know their perspective and understanding towards the techniques of guerrilla marketing.

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