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Guerrilla Marketing

Over 90 field-tested tactics to get your
business into the frontlines *continued* ▶



We know this is a gorilla,
not guerrilla. But it's a better picture, isn't it?

by Jay Conrad Levinson

1. MAKE CUSTOMERS A BIRTHDAY CARD

Guerrilla Ray Fisher of Keylock Mini Storage in Pinellas Park, Florida celebrates his tenants' birthdays with a card he creates himself. He prints a poem on the card and gets four cards out of each piece of 8-1/2 x 11 card stock. He goes to Kinkos to have the cards printed and cut.

Since sending the cards, Fisher has received a very positive response. One tenant even dropped by office just to say he really appreciated the card. Fisher started a file organized by month to pre-address the cards to make it easy to mail within a week of upcoming birthdays. Any service business can profit from this personal touch.

2. A STICKY SUCCESS STORY

Guerrilla Mike Cohen informs us that no one ignores coupons from Captain Tony's Pizza in Cleveland, Ohio. That's because they are printed on Post-It™ notes and placed each month on every door in their delivery area. The typical response rate is 30%.

Cohen honors us by calling this promotional concept, Guerrilla Mail. He attributes the program's success to both the look and the feel of the coupon. It resembles the familiar UPS delivery notice and because it is sticky, recipients tend to post it on the fridge or by the phone where it acts as a constant reminder.

3. THE ICE CREAM INCENTIVE

Marketing Consultant and Coach Bob Janet emailed us after reading about a real estate agent who sent prospects home with a quart of ice cream on hot days. Janet's company used a variation on the old ice cream ploy. His sales staff would find out where customers lived and give them just enough time to get home with the melting ice cream. The representative would call them with an added incentive to buy from them (extra discount, special price on add on items, special financing, etc.)

The extra incentive always had a time limit of closing time that day. Janet reports that they made a lot of sales with that technique.

4. BEACH PARTY BINGO

Dusty Simmons owns a retail store in the Central Florida offering surf, skateboard, and beach supplies. Due to few exclusives and similar inventory among his competition, he had trouble differentiating his business. Simmons realized that he needed to implement Guerrilla tactics in order to get an edge.

Simmons created a Christmas Wish List of store items for kids of all ages to send to loved ones. Simmons also mailed out blank copies of the Wish List to folks on their mailing list who came in during the sign-up. Adult customers were invited to a special event: an after-hours shopping spree with live music, snacks and drinks. Simmons reported a record sales day in those three hours.

Since the promotion, there has been much talk about that night, with customers who did not attend asking if Simmons is going to do it next year. His reply? "Of course, only better."

5. TALKING HOUSE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

Guerrilla Scott Matthew, president of Realty Electronics Inc. of Fond du Lac, WI wrote to tell us about his Talking House® It's a small radio transmitter that sits inside a location (such as residential real estate that is for sale). Prospects just tune in on their ordinary car radio, while parked out front, and hear a customized marketing message.

Besides real estate, Talking House® can be used by restaurants to announce their specials of the day, banks to promote their CD rates at a drive-up window, or automobile dealers to explain low-interest leases. You name it, Talking House® can say it.

For more information visit the website at <http://www.TalkingHouse.com> or call 800-444-8255, fax 920-923-6222.

6. MARKETING TO THE DISABLED

Guerrilla Kimberley Barreda runs Cripmedia, an organization offering marketing and advertising services to firms targeting the disabled community. Barreda reports that the disabled community is responsible for over \$700 million per year in consumer spending.

Barreda, a former professional actor, started the company when she was refused a commercial audition because she used a wheelchair. She realized that the disabled community was being ignored by advertisers. She created the 1998 Consumer With a Disability profile survey. Through a fusion marketing arrangement, Barreda obtained the authoring software from Questionmark Corporation in exchange for full credit.

The results will be published yearly and an on-going product war page will be featured on their site: <http://www.cripworld.com>.

7. FREE DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION

Guerrilla Pat Messick of Bronxville, NY has cost-saving suggestion for other online Guerrillas. Messick found an advertiser-supported website offering free registration of domain names. Messick's ISP was going to charge \$50.00 for the domain registration. Messick has already referred a dozen friends to this site and is happy to spread the word.

8. BUSINESS CARD AS POCKET-SIZED BULLETIN BOARD

We hear many stories on using your business card as a marketing tool. Guerrilla Scott Miller of Aurora, Colorado has been paying attention.

Miller reports on the success of his new business cards. On the front cover of the folded card, Miller placed a catchy slogan. Inside he briefly lists his products and the method of sales (internet, home parties, mail order, by private consultation) on one side. On the other side he offers contact information including his website and email address.

Miller noticed some blank space on the back of the card, and for the next card run, he may add his vendors.

9. ADD MEMOS TO YOUR MARKETING

Frank Pipia, Jr. of Pipia-Graphics & Advertising, Inc. of Wauwatosa, WI has a timely reminder for all you busy Guerrillas.

Pipia suggests writing a brief personal note to each of your clients and prospects on a Post-It™ or 1/4 page memo pad. Attach it to your business card and mail it off. Keep the message short and personal. Ask them how things are going. Thank them for their business or their interest. Mention any new products or services you are offering and how they might benefit. Finally, ask them to give you a call or offer to call them in order to chat soon.

Pipia claims that people will be gratified that you took the time to jot down a few personal lines. If you do this once a month you'll maintain a high profile. Even if they don't need your services presently, you'll be more likely to get their business in the future.

10. IMEDIAFAX IS RIGHT ON TARGET

Guerrilla Paul J. Krupin of Kennewick, WA, has introduced an online news distribution service which faxes your business message to the media. Users create a proprietary media list from a vast selection of magazines, newspapers, syndicates, and broadcast stations. The service, ImediaFAX—Internet to Media Fax on-line custom news distribution service, can be found at <http://www.imediafax.com>.

Here's how it works: Make your selection by clicking your mouse on the industry and classification, key editors, states, market area, or circulation. Then enter your news release and click to send. ImediaFAX news releases can contain graphics, letterheads, logos or pictures. The cost is 25 cents per faxed page.

According to Krupin, “media receiving news releases from ImediaFAX will be happy that the news releases are better targeted. This will result in less over-broadcasting.” Another bonus is that there are no international phone or fax charges.

11. A DELICIOUS SALES PLOY

Guerrilla Walt Gibson of Dracut, MA passes along some wisdom from his days as a real estate agent. A seasoned pro once advised him to keep an ice chest packed with quarts of ice cream on hot summer days. When qualified customers viewed the homes the agent would give them a quart of ice cream. According to Gibson, this gave the customer two alternatives: (1) Eat it and think about the house; or (2) Go home and put it in the freezer and think about the house.

Either way the prospects probably wouldn't be viewing the competition's houses that day and would certainly remember the broker who gave them ice cream!

We wonder if the old pro kept hot chocolate on hand for snowy Winter days?

12 A TALE OF HOLIDAY CHEER

Guerrilla Dane Colby of Magical Landscapes in Whidbey Island, WA has a unique approach to competition. Because he lives in a tight and supportive community, Colby doesn't want to demean his competitors, believing that it removes all the joy from his work and gives the industry a bad name. He points out that when encouraging customers to devote time and money to landscaping, his main competition is holidays, movies, sports, and television.

Colby works with his colleagues to ensure that landscaping has a great reputation for service, fun and value. He sees marketing as a creative challenge to see who can bring clients the most value.

Colby reports that his approach is extremely fruitful in the friends, success and fun it generates, stating “it is more enjoyable than being a solitary guerrilla. The success of my island and industry are prerequisites to my own success. We prosper together.”

13. **ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE**

San Antonio private investigator and Guerrilla marketer, Venetia Flowers publishes a newsletter called the “Tricky Marketing Ploy” handbook. She provides techniques like the following to drum up business and make invaluable contacts.

Flowers was interested in subletting space in a downtown building containing more than 100 law firms. After two years on the waiting list, she called all of the attorneys she had previously done business with or had met in the courthouse. She asked them if they knew if any of the firms might have space to sublet. Each lawyer offered four or five names. She made a contact list and starting calling. If the lawyers appeared busy, Flowers was brief but if they had the time, she spoke at length. Every single lawyer inquired about her business and many invited her to lunch or asked her to visit their office or send marketing materials. Eventually, Flowers acquired the names and numbers of 65 people in this building and 40 more prospects in other downtown office buildings. She now has a growing database of the most powerful attorneys in her city.

Flowers found that people were both willing to help and interested in her business. Can you think of a way to engage prospective customers in helping you?

14. BUSINESS CARD DOES DOUBLE DUTY

Carol Parenzan Smalley, owner of Small Business Consulting Services in Palmyra, PA has a great suggestion for a variation on the old business card. She's created a bookmark that folds to the size of a standard business card. The front of the card contains her business information. And the back of the card lists her services as well as free resource information with phone numbers, library sections, government agencies, and websites (such as Guerrilla Marketing Online).

Smalley's stationery letterhead complements the bookmark, with her services listed down the left margin—subtly advertising all of her services with each and every correspondence.

Finally, Smalley reduced her costs by utilizing a great guerrilla tool: bartering. A client designed her stationery package in exchange for a marketing plan that Smalley wrote. Good going!

15. FINDING THE UPSIDE OF DOWNSIZING

By keeping her ear to the fluctuations in her business community, Guerrilla Diane Ernsberger of Ree Design in Columbus, Ohio is able to drum up business.

Ernsberger runs a resume consulting and design business. She found that an effective way to initiate business was to offer her services to the human resources department of companies that are downsizing. Many companies will pick up the costs of these services in order to help obtain a new position and advance their careers.

16. CREDITS NOT COUPONS

Competition is fierce in Guerrilla Jack Barth's community of Orangeville, Southern Ontario. As proprietor of Barth's Cleaning Centre, Barth takes precautions against competitive interference when marketing to his customers. Barth maintains his Guerrilla stance by opting to give customers a credit on their account rather than a coupon, which might be accepted by a competitor.

Barth sends customers and prospects personalized letters which can't be monitored by the competition. Even if a competitor intercepts a few letters they won't be able to estimate how many similar letters went out and when the letter's content was revised.

17. AUTORESPONDER OR URL?

When Guerrilla Jim Daniels of Smithfield, RI created his Website, he made some changes to his classified ads. He replaced the autoresponders—which had allowed his prospects to receive sales letters almost instantly—with his URL in his classified ads. He assumed that people would prefer to visit the site and view the color, sound, and graphics.

When his response dropped, he realized that there are literally millions of people who use email but don't surf the web. So out went the URL address in favor of the autoresponders. Daniels also had an email newsletter so he decided to do a little more experimenting. There, his newsletter ads contained both the autoresponder address and the URL.

Finally he had the perfect mix. His total inquiries (autoresponders plus page hits) went up by about 20% and remained there as long as his ad contained both contact methods. Along with these increased prospects came increased profits. A valuable lesson learned.

18. BECOME A MARKETING MATCHMAKER

Guerrilla Dana Burke, of Mind Your Business, has a terrific idea that can be used by anyone with a box of labels and some ingenuity.

Burke maintains a supply of her clients' and associates' business cards in her office and distributes them to likely customers. Using return address labels, she's created a sticker that says "Referred by Mind Your Business." Placed on the back of other people's business cards, the stickers remind the recipient who she is and help them when they call on the prospect.

The customer is reminded of her business and her name is the first one the prospect hears. Quite the win-win-win situation.

19. CAT SHOOT CAPTURES COMMUNITY'S CONCERN

Guerrilla Jim Valovic of Gloversville, NY concocted a controversial but effective event that earned Van's Harley-Davidson a tremendous amount of publicity.

Van's advertisement for a "Cat Shoot" to be held at the store on June 1, brought calls from the media, Humane Society, SPCA, local police chief and even the Mayor, wanting to know what was going on. To all callers, they replied "show up on the first and find out."

The media jumped on it. Van's was on front pages of three major newspapers ("Cat Shoot for real or hoax?" blared the titles). What everyone saw on the day of the event was a six-foot high cartoon cat that they could shoot—with a paint ball gun at three shots for a dollar. Signs announced that all proceeds would go to the Humane Society. Reporters and crews from print, radio and TV showed up and Van's got even more coverage.

20. FREE TEST MARKETING

Guerrilla C. Whitlock of Cellular One in Beckley, West Virginia, shares an innovative way to get products test marketed. A customer who wanted to leave the store and run errands while her cellular phone was being installed was loaned a special red pager. The customer was paged when her car was ready. Instead of sitting in the waiting room, the customer was out and about using the pager.

Whitlock plans to extend the red pager to other stores offering while-you-wait service. The customers roam freely and Cellular One gets their pager marketed for nothing!

21. CUSTOMER ADVOCACY

Guerrilla Nicole Baker of Millennium Marketing Solutions suggests becoming an advocate for your customers. Anyone can manipulate a customer into buying something they don't really need or want. Baker found objectivity and honesty to be more efficient than a hard sell techniques. Even if you don't make as many initial sales, you will inspire customer loyalty. If you're honest with them, customers will see you as the ONLY person to ask when they need advice or additional products or services.

22. RETAIL MARKETING FUSION

Looking for a free way to get people to step into your store? Guerrilla Gary Brummond came across this idea recently at a local mall. Gary noticed a collection of pet portraits in a portrait studios window with a little card in the corner that said the actual pets could be found in the pet shop opposite the studio. The portrait studio got some fun subjects for their window and the pet store got a little virtual window space. We bet their business relationship has grown beyond this elegant cooperation.

23. GUERRILLA GREETINGS

Troubled by the high cost of keeping in touch with your customers? Guerrilla Ron Foster keeps in touch with his customers year round using simple and inexpensive fax greetings.

Ron sends a fax greeting just before holidays, special events and personal events. His customers really appreciate the faxes and even call him back when the greeting is particularly creative. Either way, they enjoy the effort and remember him year-round.

24. FLOWER POWER

Do you have trouble finding the right way to reach people in your area with a creative message? Guerrilla Caty Woodstrom uses flower power to reach her market in San Francisco's South Park district.

Caty had no retail space or street level location and so almost nobody knew about her great floral shop and service. Caty's solution was to decorate a popular park and some small cafes in her area with creative and simple flower arrangements on a sunny day when people would be in the park for lunch. Her marketing savvy was completed by including her card in each arrangement.

Everyone in the park loved the flowers and she got loads of calls! She now budgets for these as her primary advertising tactic and does it regularly.

25. CREDIBILITY FOR SMALL COMPANIES

Almost every new and small business struggles to gain credibility and recognition. And, while technology solves many of these problems, it cannot deal with them all.

Guerrilla Adir Shiffman has a list of credibility enhancing tips sure to help any small office look much larger. Among Adir's tricks to get an 800 number: set-up voicemail boxes on your computer or with your phone company; use a suite address rather than a PO box; spend more on your business cards; and finally list your title as Sales Manager, Director, or something of a similar level, rather than more imposing titles like President, Chairman or CEO titles.

26. DIRECT MAIL GAMBIT

Trouble getting good direct mail response on small mailings with short messages? Here's an idea from Guerrilla Pablo Naranjo that works almost every time! Pablo puts a headline offer on his envelopes and makes sure that there is a phone number with the return address. Then, he sends out the envelopes empty! Most people call him back to let him know that their envelope was empty and this leads to a conversation about the message in the headline.

27. RICH OR FAMOUS?

If you'd rather be rich than famous, Guerrilla Marc-André Rampon has a tip to build response to you newsletters and websites.

Marc-André knows that great content makes for great newsletters and websites but he also knows that great content takes time or money that cuts into profitability. His solution is to get volunteers to write his content in exchange for building their visibility and popularity. Make them famous while you make you richer!

Be sure to make all submissions your property if used and gain all appropriate publishing rights.

28. TARGETED AND FREE ADS?

Everyone would love to have an unlimited ad budget but most of us struggle with how to stretch our marketing dollars. Guerrilla James Bond has a tip for getting free ads any secret agent would love.

James' company provides investigative services to law firms. He found it hard to reach lawyers with his promotional message until he decided to try putting his card in law books at a local law library!

Attorneys, paralegals and law students would find the cards and assume that other law firms used James' company. This gave him both recognition and credibility and resulted in some nice new clients.

We have also heard of another Guerrilla who puts his card into bookstore books to generate programming jobs.

29. FISHING FOR LEADS

Are you always looking for local leads? Guerrilla Cyndi Stout goes "fishing" for free leads all over town and you can too!

Many stores and restaurants have a glass bowl for business cards and they give away some kind of prize return for the cards people drop in. Cyndi simply asks these business if she can have the cards in exchange for something. Sometimes they give them to her for free and other times she pays for the incentive prize in exchange for the leads. You could even offer to type up the names and give them to the store in text and database form. So far nobody has turned down her request to share leads!

30. GET ONLINE LINKS!

If you've got a site but had trouble had trouble getting links and traffic, Guerrilla David Gresser has a simple tip for you.

David has a catalog site for sheet music and brings people to his site with loads o'links. His method is easy and you can use it too. David searches for music sites online and puts links to them on his website. Then he writes to the webmaster with news of the link he gave them and asks for one in return. He quickly collected 50 links this way and his list is still growing.

31. FREE P.R.

Can't come up with an angle to get your company in the news? Guerrilla Margaret Briggs has an out-of-the-box tactic that will send you back to "school."

It was just before a storm when she came up with this PR tactic and public service. Why not announce their closing like kids schools do when the weather gets bad? Most everyone listens to the news during a storm and every time they get a really big storm, Margaret's computer training company has to think about calling off classes. Also, calling students by phone takes time and money.

Margaret put together a local media list and sent out the "school" closing notice. She let customers know they could stay home for the day and she got many mentions in the local media.

32. HOOKING NEW CUSTOMERS

You've probably tried many different tactics with sometimes disappointing results and so had Guerrilla Betsy Berman, until she tried a simple tactic with a subtle difference.

Betsy's tactic of "hooking" is something most of us have tried but with one little difference that almost everyone forgets. "Hooking" for Betsy's Charley's Steakery is "sampling" to the rest of us but they make it work like never before with measurement.

They measured and tracked the results of their sampling program, tweaking and refining it until it became an efficient practice all their own. Betsy's company went from one under-dog outlet to more than 50 stores in only 6 years and it all started with something they call "hooking."

33. DON'T GIVE IT AWAY!

Ever tried to give something away only to find few or no takers? Guerrilla Wayne Schulz discovered how to sell what he couldn't give away and gave his marketing a boost in the process.

Wayne used to advertise software demonstration seminars as freebies. Perhaps four people would sign up and of those, only one would actually show up. In frustration he decided to charge something for the seminars. Same content—only now people have to pay to attend.

Surprise! His enrollments went from four to fourteen! And because people paid, they valued the seminar more highly and more actually attended the seminar.

34. A LAUGH DISCOUNT?

Have you run out of ideas for new marketing tactics? Guerrillas know that it's better to spend marketing money on existing clients than it is to spend money looking for new customers. The problem is that so many tactics get taken for granted and are quickly forgotten.

Guerrilla Drew Roberts came up with a “laugh discount” for his customers. Any client that makes him laugh during the first five minutes gets a small discount. Customers love the discount and never forget him. It also makes his work easier.

35. GIVE A WEB PAGE

Seems everybody with a website is either trying to get people to visit it or trying to make more money with it. Guerrilla Thaddeus Frick did both when he started giving away web pages.

Thaddeus gave away personal pages on his site to his clients to promote themselves and this in turn brought traffic to his site and loyalty to his consulting practice.

36. BOLD AND DARING WINS

After 11 years as freelance voice talent, Guerrilla Mike Weiner had done lots of marketing but it was all ho-hum until he got bold and daring.

Mike had often joked that he could do his work in the nude and, since most only hear his voice, they believed him. So, he had a picture taken in his studio, behind the mike, with his shirt OFF! Then he sent out a demo tape to prospects with the photo on the label and using the headline: “The Naked Voice.” It was the best thing he ever did.

You might be better off to keep your shirt on but you might also want to think long and hard about how to be really bold and daring. What can you do to cut through the clutter in your prospects minds and touch them with your message?

37. MORE P.R. TRICKS

A new line of lawn furniture is no great media event but Guerrilla Cliff Stepp got great press for his clients' new product made from recycled plastics.

How, you ask? He dropped the press release in the plastic milk cartons that are used to make the new lawn furniture. Then he mailed the cartons to the media. The milk cartons were recycled but the press coverage was all-new.

Been wanting to do some direct mail that will cut through the clutter but stuck with a generic budget? Guerrilla Jose Uribe ran out of money for direct mail at their custom blind company so they had to get creative. Jose put stickers on blind scrap samples and mailed the scraps out!

They got way more response from the scraps than they had from their traditional brochure mailer.

38. DRIVE YOUR PROMOTION

Looking for a great and inexpensive way to spread the good word? Guerrilla Jeffrey Ross was thinking about his new business as he drove home in traffic when he noticed a pizza truck just ahead. Everyone knows to put promotional messages on delivery vehicles but fewer think to put ads on their cars but Jeffrey put “webentrepreneur.com” on his car and most of the employees cars too. Local visitors to their new website have been great!

39. FREE RADIO TIME?

Guerrilla Jack Livingston wanted to run a year-long radio campaign for a car dealership but he only had enough in the budget for 30 days. Trading a car for that missing ad budget was only part of the solution. Jack made sure that every one of the DJ's got to check out the car and drove the car to every station event and promotion. And later, when the station finally gave the car away in a contest, Jack got attention from local TV and newspapers for the contest and the lucky winner.

It all helped to make them the top selling area for the car company.

40. HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO RUN A CONTEST BUT LACKED THE BUDGET TO DO IT RIGHT?

Guerrilla Scott Harvey at AOL's Hecklers Online built an online area that now reaches many millions of people each month and keeps 'em coming back with games and contests, using prizes that he gets for free!

Scott gets prizes from other companies in exchange for great promotional plugs online. Want to reach thousands or even millions? Give some prizes to a media outlet that reaches your target market, in exchange from some promotional mentions.

Want to create a contest to boost interest in your company, service or website? Ask others for prizes to give away in your own contest and be sure to give them loads of promotion in return.

41. MOST OF US WOULD LIKE TO DO MORE MARKET RESEARCH

But it usually falls under “nice to” and not “got to” in our list of priorities. Guerrilla David Murphy used his research to find out about his market and then to create publicity and sales. And, he did it all online!

While planning a website for his company, David needed to know what web browsers his customers were using, what speed they were connecting at, and other important technical details. David decided to ask visitors these questions in a simple web-based survey. And when the results came in they thought others might also want to know the same things, so they put the results in a press release that got them on the radio, in print, and landed them a handful of new clients!

42. EVER WONDER HOW TO LAUNCH A PRODUCT WITH NO MARKETING BUDGET AT ALL?

Guerrilla Danna Munley wanted to promote a software package for locksmiths but had no marketing budget to spend.

Danna’s solution was to give the software to a few key groups; locksmith schools and associations. Schools used it in training and recommended it to students. The associations gave away a few copies of the software at their meetings and mentioned it in newsletters.

43. DO YOU FIND GETTING MEDIA ATTENTION MORE PAINFUL THAN GIVING BLOOD?

Guerrilla Charles Larsen gave blood instead marketing and got plenty of attention. Charles hosted a blood drive for his community and alerted the media about the event. He got all kinds of attention from the local TV and radio stations. The blood drive was a success for both the blood bank and Charles. Now lots of people know about his business.

You could also try the same approach with many other charitable acts and get the same result. You'll do yourself and your community a favor.

44. LOOKING FOR WAYS TO STRETCH YOUR AD BUDGET?

Guerrilla Jack Livingston found a way to get free radio time from his outdoor signs! Jack had already arranged for outdoor ads to promote his antique mall when he heard about a new oldies format radio station. He offered the station space on his signs in exchange for radio promotion. The fit is great for the two companies and they are even now working on a radio show about antiques. Fusion marketing!

McDonald's and Disney do it all the time and you can too, for a lot less money. It's called fusion marketing and it means joining forces with another company that reaches the same target market that you do. Guerrilla Jane Thompson found a way to promote her CD store at local grocers with very little budget.

Jane created a cute coupon resembling a dollar bill and a counter-top box to hold them. Then she approached local independent grocers and stores in the area and asked them to help by putting them on their checkout counters. In return, she promised to take out an ad on her first year anniversary and promote them all with a "thank you" message.

Every grocer she approached agreed to place the coupon box and they began to show up at the CD store about a week later. One year later she ran that thank you ad and two years later her business is expanding to a larger space.

45. HOW TO BOOST SALES DURING THE OFF-SEASON?

People will always spend money to solve a problem before spending to improve something that is already OK. Guerrilla florist Hugh Atkinson knows that this true in every area of life and not just business-to-business marketing.

After all of the social expressions of the year-end holidays, flower sales can drop off until Valentines day. His solution is a small road sign that simply asks, “How mad is she?” He’s never had a busier January thanks to the sign.

46. NEED A GOOD EXCUSE TO MAKE A SALES CALL?

Guerrilla Diana Ratliff consults Chase’s Calendar of Events (buy the book by email: Bookserve@aol.com) to discover all sorts of holidays and “awareness weeks” that apply to almost any business. She uses the events as reasons to contact customers and prospects.

One prospect was unaware of a holiday for “National Reminiscence Week” and used it to get local radio coverage. Of course, the grateful prospect became Diana’s customer.

47. DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING UNIQUE TO SELL?

When Guerrilla Dennis Buchner of Buc's Aqua Farms had trouble selling his minnows because there were too many on the market, he made a new fish! Dennis bought hybrid minnows from more than a thousand miles away and then mixed them with others to create his own fish. Now he has a product that no one else has and everyone has to have his minnows.

48. WHEN THINGS GO WRONG, IT'S WHAT YOU DO NEXT THAT COUNTS.

Stuff happens, but Guerrilla Arthur Mickel-son knows how to get the sale even when you're all wet. Arthur's customer wanted to see a sample before ordering some promotional umbrellas but when the sample arrived, it was rusty! Arthur rushed over to see the problem. He got the sale by acknowledging the problem, promising to fix it and keeping his sense of humor.

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50. DID YOU EVER NOTICE HOW MANY BUSINESSES POST SIGNS ON WHAT THEY WON'T DO?

No change for parking meters. No change for the pay phone. No checks accepted. The list goes on.

Guerrilla Shawn Bishop suggests that merchants start providing change and other services and even advertise the fact. Shawn also suggests strategic placement of impulse items and staffing with friendly and helpful people.

51. ASK NOT AND YE SHALL RECEIVE!

Guerrilla Dave Sunde was hoping for a celebrity endorsement on his company's line of T-shirts so he searched for someone who could reach his target: Evander Holyfield. He gave the friend some free samples to pass along to Evander but without any request for endorsement.

The friend passed them along and almost immediately Mr. Holyfield was photographed with one on. So, Dave sent some more along to Evander, but still without any request for endorse-

ment. Mr. Holyfield wore these on camera as well. In fact, he wore them after taking off a paid endorsement shirt for another company!

The secret? Well the T-shirts were themed after something Mr. Holyfield cared about, his religious beliefs, and they were given freely and without obligation. The results and impact to sales were very strong.

If you have a product people care about, why not send out some samples today? Just remember not to ask for anything in return!

52 TIMING YOUR PROMOTIONS

If timing is so important to marketing then why are we usually thinking about our timing and not the customers? Guerrilla David Murphy has some classic ways to tap into your customers timing with promotion.

Every event in the customer's life and relationship has a promotion at David's company. For 5 years of business they get an extra 5% off for the whole month. A birth brings an offer of 3 for the price of 2. Graduation gets a free upgrade or similar increase. David's examples are many but you will have to adapt them to your own business. David's result from this approach? Lifetime relationships with customers.

53 WONDERING WHY YOU MIGHT WANT A WEBSITE?

Guerrilla Michael Turco didn't need a website to get new customers because his prospects aren't online. Still, Michael found some very compelling reason to have one for his business. Retention, Service and Referral!

As a computer consultant, Michael helps local business with their computer installations. Along the way he also gets them wired to the net and introduces them to the online world. He's created a website for his customers to use as a starting point and filled it with information and helpful resources.

His new customers start their online journey at his home page. They really appreciate the extra training and service he provides with the website and it becomes a reason and vehicle for referral business.

54 TWO WORDS TO INCREASE SALES!?

Guerrilla Brian Morris waits until just before money is exchanged and then, with an expectant, upward inflection says "Something else?" Keep doing this until the customer says "No." You are just helping the customer to think "Was there something else?" Test it. It will work almost every time.

55 BUY SOMEONE A TASTY BEVERAGE AND THEY'LL LEND YOU AN EAR.

Buy drinks for a whole group and you've got yourself a great Guerrilla tactic!

When Guerrilla Dave Forman noticed that a fundraising event had a no-host bar, he offered to pick up the tab. Dave took care of the bar service in return for kind mentions in the program and a chance to put his marketing materials on the bar.

He got five orders from the event and the group asked him back for their next event!

56. REPEAT TRAFFIC

Most of us know that the key to online marketing success is getting people to keep coming back to your website but it's not easy to get repeat traffic. Guerrilla David Murphy figured that the best way to generate return visits to his site would be to ask his readers for advice and then use it! David ran an online contest asking for suggestions on ways to improve his site and offered a nifty coffee mug for any idea they use.

He got a flood of suggestions in the first few hours and many will be getting their prize in the mail soon. Of course, the handsome coffee mug prizes carry his logo, phone, website and address information!

57. WORD-OF-MOUTH ADVERTISING

Every business we can think of needs good word-of-mouth advertising but so very few attack this task head. Mostly we hope for the best. Guerrilla Gary Brody hunts down his word-of-mouth advertising with an online marketing tactic.

Gary runs an independent record label and uses online music lovers to hype his new releases. He visits online discussions, newsgroups, and forums, choosing people randomly to receive copies of new releases for review.

Respondents supply their real world address and get free copies of new music. The music comes with a request that if they like the music, to please post comments online and/or share them with friends. If the music is not to their liking, then they are under no obligation.

58. ONLINE MARKETING

Junk email is surely the scourge of the net but an email list can be a powerful weapon for online marketing. Guerrilla David Scherer uses mass email simply and appropriately with great results.

David used to use a FAX to get out urgent bulletins but it took loads of time and cost plenty. He switched to email and quickly built a list to replace his faxes. The reason that it worked so well is that everyone on the list wanted the information and elected to be on the list and David never misused his subscribers. Now they get the word out to hundreds in minutes, for pennies!

Everyone knows that follow-up is essential to marketing and selling but the time and expense usually get in the way of our best intentions.

Guerrilla Nancy Prince has a way to follow-up online that takes very little time or money. She sends a note and a “virtual” gift after meeting someone new. Nancy sends different gifts to different people; a virtual Porsche to a car dealer, a virtual bouquet to women, or a virtual bottle of wine to a man. Along with each gift she sends a personal note.

Holidays, anniversaries, and other special events can all be acknowledged with a virtual gift and everyone seems to enjoy them. It’s the thought (and very little more) that counts in a virtual world.

59. NEED REFERENCES?

If your business requires a little trust from your customers then you need great references! Guerrilla Ronald Smith develops new references with every new job using a customer satisfaction survey.

Ronald's company sells and installs a skylight product for home remodeling. He knows that whenever people start work on their homes they are afraid of what might go wrong, so he lets his current customers put those fears to rest.

They send out a customer satisfaction survey after they finish a job and ask for permission to use comments in their marketing. They also offer a free dinner to anyone who refers a new customer to the company.

Nearly 70% of the surveys are returned and about 90% of those agree to use of their comments in marketing efforts.

60. WEB PUBLICITY

Marketing online can be like winking at people in the dark—you'll never catch their attention unless you turn the lights on.

Guerrilla Wendy McClelland turned the lights on for her website publicity by putting URLs (a web address) on everything that left her office. T-shirts, fax cover sheets, stationery, press releases, and even her car were plastered with the website address.

Wendy logged over 4,000 registrations on her web guest book in the first 2 months and got a lot of local press coverage.

61. TEMPORARY TATTOOS

Temporary tattoos are a fun way to promote your company at a conference or event. The SLO Brewing Company of California put their name on a temporary tattoo and created quite a buzz at a trade show. The SLO Brew Heart tattoo was picked by almost everyone that stopped by the booth and proudly displayed by people all over the trade show floor. Get yours from Boomerang Business Communications at 805/481-0760.

62. WOULD YOU LIKE TO REACH MORE HOME-BASED BUSINESSES?

Home-based businesses (HBB) are rarely listed in directories and are shy about attracting too much attention from local zoning authority. They can be pretty hard to reach.

Guerrilla Deborah Wilson had trouble reaching home-based businesses in her area, so she suggested to her local chamber of commerce that they set up a special committee for HBBs. They liked the idea and appointed her head of the HBB Committee and also let her use chamber resources to organize the community. If your chamber doesn't have such a committee, start one!

63. TROUBLE MAKING MONEY ONLINE? MAYBE YOU NEED A NEW STRATEGY!

Guerrilla David worked for two years to develop a successful online sales effort before changing objectives and finding success. David realized that it wasn't logical to sell their training and technology products online so he decided to use their website to develop and qualify leads instead.

They now provide useful information to prospects and collect information in online questionnaires. They use the information they collect to follow up more effectively.

64. SILLY PROMOTIONS CAN WORK

Sometimes we avoid silly and obvious promotions but they can get the job done. Guerrilla Terry Stone knows all about the great value of "cheap" things.

Terry gives away all kinds of promotional items with the business name and phone number imprinted on them but rulers are one of the most effective items. Terry uses a corny opening line for the rulers before a presentation, "Use these to measure the effectiveness of my presentation." It might be silly but Terry laughs all the way to the bank.

65. EVEN THE BEST-LAID PLANS CAN GO WRONG.

Stuff happens. Guerrillas know that it's what you do next that can turn it all around.

Guerrilla Larry Rudd was about to do his first trade show when the giveaway premiums he had ordered showed up with the wrong phone number on them. The corrected items wouldn't be ready in time for the show.

During the show they held a drawing for a free dinner and collected names from visitors to the booth. Then, when the giveaway items arrived after the show, he sent them out with a letter of thanks for visiting the booth and followed it all up with a phone call. Everyone remembered him and the gift and sending them after the show had created a much larger impact.

66. MAKE THE MOST OF CHANGE

Guerrilla Melanie Deardorff knew that her company name no longer reflected her current services and client base, so she changed the name of her company from Birchwood Publishing to Birchwood Marketing Communications. Though the name change was not very drastic, she wanted to make the most of this event.

After registering the name and converting stationery to the new name and logo, Melanie developed a large postcard to mail out with images of the new \$100 bill and her new logo. The copy on the front said "Both got a new look..." and the back read "Only one increased in value." She then explained her expanded services and provided contact information.

67. ATTENTION-GETTING PITCH

Everyone has trouble getting the attention of a prospect at one time or another. So, when it counts, Guerrilla John Rowley attaches one half of a US \$20 note to a simple mail pitch. He promises to give them the other half in exchange for 20 minutes' time. John says it gets him an order from one in three attempts.

68. CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAMS

Most customer loyalty programs are expensive to set up and manage but Larry Gaynor's simple approach is the Guerrilla solution that turns it into a profit center.

Larry sends a Tootsie Roll Pop out with every order and attaches a client survey card. Each week they get back hundreds of customer survey cards raving about the candy and good service. Over 80% respond with some kind of comment.

The really positive survey responses get a follow-up letter from the president and a sample issue of their paid newsletter. Over half of these customers go on to order the newsletter at US \$89 per year!

69. DO YOU FEEL FORGOTTEN BY YOUR CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS?

Make sure they forget you not by following Guerrilla Helen Cottreau's lead. Before relocating her business, she sent out packets of forget-me-not flower seeds with the announcement of the move and the new address. She has not been forgotten.

70. TROUBLE SETTING PRICES?

Guerrilla Marvin Mansky tried letting his customers do it for him in an unusual promotion!

Marvin ran a promotion from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day and let patients set their own prices for his dental services. Patients got a complete basic exam and cleaning and then paid what they thought it was worth.

Most patients paid close to the regular rate. A few paid very little, but had been putting off dental care. And, some even paid higher-than-normal rates, because they so liked the whole idea.

Marvin's dental practice was totally booked, and they had more new patient referrals than ever before!

71. NEED CUSTOMERS FOR YOUR NEW BUSINESS?

Guerrilla coach Wendy McClelland suggested that her client build a bridal make-up business by giving away free demos in local bridal stores every Saturday morning.

Some lucky bride-to-be gets a demonstration make-up session and everyone in attendance gets some ideas for their own make-up. The audience for the demo also gets brochures and drawing entries for free sessions.

Wendy's client got great exposure to prospects, referrals from stores, and a mailing list of future brides and their friends.

72. LOW-COST COMPETITORS GOT YOU DOWN?

The Guerrillas at Kara's Hair Studio were facing new competition from a chain offering super cheap haircuts until they decided to fight back. Kara's launched a radio and newspaper campaign featuring victims of bad haircuts wearing bags over their heads. She also hired students to wear paper bags on their heads and walk around outside the competitor's shop with sandwich boards bearing her ad line. The message was simple, "Kara's fixes \$5 haircuts."

73. GIVE FREE SAMPLES

Free samples sell everything from cereal to software, so why not use them for your business?

Guerrilla Lil Zielke gives away work samples for a desktop design and layout business. Friends collect flyers and promotional materials that they get in the mail. Then, Lil redesigns them, marks them as "draft" and sends them off to the prospect with an introductory letter.

No one has ever complained and Lil has picked up plenty of business from the tactic.

74. COLD CALLS

Guerrilla Ramil Cueto gets through to prospects where others fail because of when he calls and what he says. He is most successful with an approach using emotion and calls on his prospects after 6PM!

He says that after work is when they are most relaxed and willing to talk. He asks the prospect "why" they think, feel, or say what they do and shifts his approach to suit. This is no simple "mirror" technique. Ramil says that sometimes it pays to surprise the prospect with your tone and approach.

75. TOP TEN REASONS TO USE YOUR COMPANY

Instead of leaving business cards, brochures, pens, memo pads or the typical junk that gets pitched as soon as you leave a cold call, Guerrilla Don Snyder will leave a list of Top Ten Reasons they should be using his company.

List items are all true, sometimes humorous, statements why they are the best game in town. He actually gets his prospects to call him and laugh about the list while he gathers data on their needs!

76. THE VIP TREATMENT

Guerrilla Bill Symons treats every visiting salesperson who comes through his door as a very special guest. His company will even take the visiting salesperson to lunch, rather than letting them pick up the tab.

When salespeople leave his office, they have become unofficial ambassadors for him and go on to spread word of his company wherever they go. The rapid growth of his company proves this tactic and he feels much better at the end of the day.

77. USE WAL-MART TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Guerrilla Jim Mayfield used Wal-Mart's strength to his own advantage.

Jim is a small town specialty retailer of lawn, garden, feed and seed supplies. So when Wal-Mart came to town and the other retailers ran for the hills, Jim launched a clever new media campaign of his own.

The campaign said simply, “Go to Wal-Mart for paper towels, then come to Rainbow for your feed.” and “Go to Wal-Mart for deodorant, then come to Rainbow for irrigation supplies.”

Each ad closed with “When you think of Wal-Mart, think of Rainbow AG.” During Wal-Mart’s opening week they also created a sandwich board and handed out leaflets with the line “THINK RAINBOW” in front of Wal-Mart. Results? His sales doubled during Wal-Mart’s opening week, they haven’t gone down since, and people still talk about the ads!

78. USE ADVERTISING SPECIALTIES

Guerrilla Thomas Kan got his Hong Kong internet marketing firm off to a quick start with advertising specialties.

He sent out 3,000 promotional mouse pads just as he launched his company. Now he’s getting lots of calls. The promotion worked because of three things: (1) the mousepads all had a phone number, (2) the pads were given away before most were thinking about the internet, and (3) they were interesting enough to keep on a desk. If you think it might work for you and would like find some suppliers, check out our Vendors and Resources Directory for suppliers.

79. SAY IT WITH CHOCOLATE

When Guerrilla Ann Douglas wanted the attention of a prospective agent, she had a local chocolate store make up a large chocolate “YES” and she sent it along with a note that said, “I hate to put words in your mouth, but I want you to say ‘yes’ to representing my work...”

If her proposal is as good as the pitch, we should see her on the shelves soon!

80. REVERSE PHONE LISTING PROMOTION

Guerrilla Doug Hannan came up with a promotional offer that helps others to become Guerrillas themselves. He was looking for ways to improve response to a newsletter for North Star T-Shirts in Kimberley, British Columbia, when he came up with an offer for a reverse phone directory.

Response to the offer was tremendous. Many readers reported using the reverse directory to confirm information before returning unclear phone messages. Doug says the easiest way to create a reverse directory is by using one of the many popular CD ROM phone books, exporting it, sorting on phone number, and then printing.

81. MAKE STAFF CHANGES A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Most people lose customers whenever staff changes at a client company but Guerrilla Mark Brodie finds new clients and profits whenever staff changes occur.

Mark works in the competitive field of graphic art and design. He scans the weekly want ads for companies that have open positions in marketing, advertising and graphic design. He waits a few weeks and then contacts the new employee, who is often looking for new vendors and anxious to get things going.

82. DELIVER QUALITY

Guerrilla Ed Clark sometimes gets price objections for his resume writing service in Louisiana. When a prospect gives him a big harumph or says “I’ll write it myself,” he offers to rewrite it without obligation.

If they don’t like his work, they pay nothing (they also DON’T get to keep it). To date, his Guerrilla method is 100% effective. The secret? Deliver the best possible quality work.

83. INCENTIVIZE STAFF-GENERATED SALES LEADS

Southern New England Telephone Company rewards its non-sales staff every time they generate a lead for the sales force. If friends of staffers express any interest in any product or service, staffers give the company the lead by calling a toll-free number. The lead is processed and the salesperson contacts the prospect within a few days. For generating the lead, the employee receives a certificate for lunch at a local restaurant. If the lead becomes a sale, the employee can win up to \$25 in award points or a gift certificate for selected stores. In 1993, the program generated \$1 million in revenue. The message of the program should be the message even without a program—“You can make the difference.” Related item: Southwest Airlines hires employees based on their sense of humor.

84. ELECTRONIC MARKETING TACTICS

Political Guerrilla Bill Barbee used the web and email to get a city councilman re-elected. When he discovered that computer ownership in his county (Ventura, CA) was over 55%, he decided to campaign electronically. His councilman went on to become mayor.

Guerrilla Jeff McNeal wins business online with a rapid response. One recent prospect reported that after contacting fifteen suppliers Jeff was one of only two to reply within 48 hours. Other online vendors even replied with snail mail and fax and then did not include their email addresses. Even though Jeff's rates were a little higher than the rest, he beat out all his competitors with a 30-day, unconditional, 100% money back guarantee.

Guerrilla Greg Dale of Carrollton, TX sells all kinds of window coverings and wins against even the largest competitors. He puts his email address on everything—from postcards to letters, ads, business cards, his van and even his wife's car.

Customers always mention the email address as something that gives them comfort in dealing with them. Greg uses email for all kinds of things, quotes, follow ups and general correspondence with our customers through email. Even though they operate from home, customers say that they seem like a “real” business and not some “fly by night” operation.

85. TEST MARKETING ON THE CHEAP

Guerrilla Jim Servies has a great tale about how to develop a winning business name and logo:

“When starting my new business I took the advice of the Guerillas and hired a professional graphic artist. When two different designs were decided upon, the Guerilla in me took it one step further and let the waitresses at a local Waffle House pass it around to their customers for a day.

With all walks of life seeing the two logo designs and marking the one they felt were the most appealing (clarity, readability, and other considerations) I was able to make a better choice. Measured and tested! test test test all that you do!”

86. USE HUMOR

Guerrilla John Weiss entertains prospects with offbeat humor and gets repeat traffic and great word-of-mouth in return. His company created a website for an acne treatment product that included a forum entitled “Confessions of a Pizza Face,” and an interactive game called “Zit Hunt.” It may not be pretty, but it worked well enough to get covered in *Internet Life* magazine.

87. FAXBACK RESPONSES

Guerrilla Jeff Rubin gets great direct mail business with a faxback form and a free report offer. Instead of asking for business in his direct mail pitch, Jeff offers a free copy of a report, “How To Produce Newsletters That Get Results.” Response is fast and painless because Jeff lets them respond with faxback form. The information on the form qualifies them and gets them a copy of the report. He gets 5–8% response on each mailing.

You can reach Jeff Rubin and Put It in Writing via email, jeff@put-it-in-writing.com, or phone 510-724-9507.

88. BUSINESS REFERRALS

Guerrilla Vince Furlong, with Micro Computer Solutions in Chicago, sells computer training but doesn’t do Macs.

Instead he refers all Macintosh training requests to a competitor. In return, the competitor refers training requests for a course they don’t do to Vince. So, even though they compete on many courses, they have niches where they can cooperate. Most customers respect their attitude and the word gets around.

89. 30-DAY REFUND POLICY?

Don't say "We have a policy of no refunds after 30 days, so I cannot return your money." Instead, say "Our usual policy is not to issue a refund after 30 days, but we don't want any unsatisfied customers. What would you consider a fair deal?" Customers just love it when you bend the rules for them.

90. USE A FUNNY PITCH

Guerrilla Peter Schroeder runs a collection agency near Toronto in Waterloo, Canada. He sends gets postcards to prospects from Florida with the following on the back: "Please don't send my overdue account for collection to Rampart Canada collection agency. I am having to much fun with your money here in Florida!" He adds to the fun by forwarding them to Florida for a more authentic postmark.

Response to his creative campaign is great, but there have been a few complaints. Non-Guerrillas might think even one complaint bad, but when Peter explains that it's just a funny pitch, they sign right up!

91. USE CONTESTS TO GENERATE IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

PaperDirect of New Jersey sells computer paper via catalogs. They also run quarterly contests for new product ideas from customers, netting about 500 suggestions each time. Sales have jumped from \$1.1 million in 1990 to \$17 million in 1993. I wonder how much of that came from customer ideas?

92. FREE HOTLINE PHONES

Norway's largest transport company, Toll-piost Globe, will install free hotline telephones on the desks of Norway's top 500 managers according to Euromarketing. That's micromarketing, Scandinavian style.

93. ASK FOR A FEW SECONDS

Financial planner Michael Marteloni calls prospects and asks them for 43 seconds of their time. It's such an odd number that people are curious enough to say yes. In 43 seconds, Michael introduces his firm, himself and his objective: a 50-minute face-to-face meeting. Around 10% of people agree to the meeting and of those, 10% become clients. Michael talks to a lot of people.

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Master the art of Guerrilla Marketing. For more information or to buy the books, click here.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jay Conrad Levinson is the author of the best-selling marketing series in history, *Guerrilla Marketing*, plus 24 other business books. His guerrilla concepts have influenced marketing so much that today his books appear in 37 languages and are required reading in many MBA programs worldwide.

Jay taught guerrilla marketing for ten years at the extension division of the University of California in Berkeley. And he was a practitioner of it in the United States—as Senior Vice President at J. Walter Thompson, and in Europe, as Creative Director at Leo Burnett Advertising.

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
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