

WHITE PAPER: GUERRILLA MARKETING



Kommando is an innovative experiential and guerrilla marketing agency based in London and Glasgow. Since I established Kommando over 10 years ago we have delivered campaigns for major agencies and brands such as Mediaedge:cia, TBWA, Chanel, Nintendo and American Express.

For over 18 years now I have been active in using marketing communications that work outside the restrictive boundaries of traditional advertising and PR. I have spoken at nearly 100 events to date including universities with budding entrepreneurs and marketers and the golden questions I am always asked are:

- How can I become a guerrilla marketer?
- What is guerrilla marketing?

These questions will continue to challenge many people fixed in their habitual practices but I hope to provide an easy to understand explanation in this white paper.

For more information about what we can do for you, call Mark Evans on 00 44 845 050 2810 or email mark@kommando.co.uk

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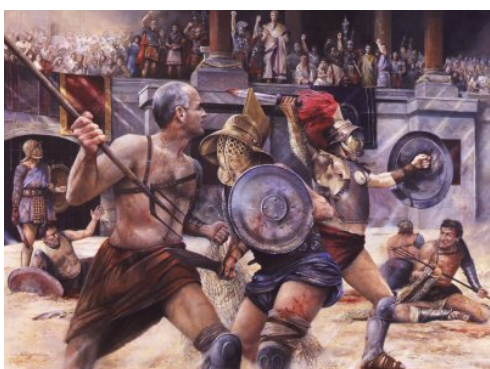
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INTRODUCTION

Guerrilla marketing can sometimes be perceived as a complex and ineffective method of marketing and is often sold as this by traditional agencies so that they can guard and protect their own methods. Unfortunately this means that it can be easy to miss the benefits of guerrilla marketing, both as a stand alone activity and as a way of supporting existing traditional campaigns.

Before we can bring you bang up to date on guerrilla marketing in 2011 I need to take you back to the history of guerrilla, starting with the Roman Times...



Early forms of social marketing were used in Roman Times to seed non-existent stories of great battles and glory.

Through the power of word of mouth whispers of fictitious battles and the great rewards of being a Roman soldier became amplified into stories of conquest, treasure and easy love with no mention of the darker realities of war.

THE POWER OF THE WORD OF MOUTH

So how were people back in the Roman Times successful in informing and capturing the attention of their target audiences without the media platforms and technology we have today?

Fly posting, stealth marketing and even early forms of social marketing were some of the keys ways they used to communicate essential messages, for example to fill the coliseums and ranks of the Roman Armies actors were often sent to seed stories of great battles and glory that never existed, whetting the appetites of young men at enlistment age. Through the power of word of mouth whispers of fictitious battles and the great rewards of being a Roman soldier became amplified into stories of conquest, treasure and easy love with no mention of the darker realities of war.

As advertising grew from the simple fly post to full street parades of captured beasts from the wild promoting the likes of Caesar's blood theatres and war enactments the 'brand experience' was born. In encouraging people to buy into brands and products Caesar was masterful; free loaves of bread were often handed out to poorer sections in the coliseums, building future audience loyalty to the arena in question.

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THE MASTER OF PR

Fast-forward to Barnum's Circus in the 1870's and we see the use of brand experience and live marketing to drive business and inject branded messages into villages and towns. The master of self PR, Barnum used stunts and buzz (think along the lines of twin headed ladies and werewolf boys) to create press coverage and distributed leaflets and free sweets to his target audience of children and mums.

Barnum required high amounts of paying punters in a short period of time to be successful and with little time to get the message out there it was his guerrilla actions that allowed him to achieve his aims, using every communication around him to work for his brand and sell his story to the consumer.



Advertising for Barnums Circus, designed to create buzz



Madmen; how the 60's ad agency changed everything

SPAM, CHIPS AND EGG

The arrival of the swinging sixties brought the birth of mass media and we saw the end of boutique agencies and the rise of the ad agency, signifying the end of "touch and feel marketing" and the evolution of one message fits all.

Have you ever seen the Monty Python sketch where the woman in the café gives her menu to the punter and says "you can have spam, chips and egg; chips, egg and spam; or egg, spam and chips!"? I'm sure you can guess where I'm going with this... "TV, press and outdoor; press, outdoor and TV; outdoor, TV and press"...

This approach may have worked well around this time but bear in mind there were only 2 – 3 TV channels back then and as families crowded around the screen every night it was pretty much a given they would see the ads as well as their programmes. Introduce fragmented family culture, 100's of new TV channels and the arrival of the internet and everything changes...

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GUERRILLA BITES BACK

With the marketing landscape dominated by the big media houses, guerrilla marketing became tarnished through its association with the likes of illegal fly posting and flyering and in turn any company who thought as a guerrilla also suffered from this misconception.

Finally we can begin to see this fog lifting with more and more brands and agencies turning to guerrilla to promote their messages.

To be a guerrilla marketer is to rise above the expected and use the unexpected route to deliver the result you seek.

Successful marketing doesn't always come with big budget TV and press ads – by using the full marketing mix and employing methods such as direct mail, experiential and social media to drive activity the return on engagement is as rewarding today as the return on investment was yesterday.



PR Stunt for IC Hotels



See you jimmy... campaign for Scottish Leader Whisky



Guerrilla campaign for Imperial Leather taking advantage of David Blaine's Above the Beyond stunt.

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MY GUERRILLA MIND

At 26 I owned and launched one of the UK's first super dance clubs in an old sea life centre slap bang on a beach in Scotland.

To attract the high footfall I needed I decided to go for the instant credibility using a medium risk PR angle with viral activity on the ground casting my customer net further afield; making my business a destination and experience driven model instead of a local only attraction.

With a low budget my mass media access was low so I used my guerrilla mind, mixing up everything I had available to me to create noise above the other businesses who were padding along with repeat local press and radio ads.

My strategy began with finding a subject that the press and media were hooked on and hijacking this, tying it in with my launch campaign. The perfect subject came in the form of the film 'Independence Day', a story of the world being taken over by alien invasion which at the time was captivating young minds on all things out of this world.

By using the Independence Day angle it meant that my strategy was born from public emotions delivered by the big screen and mass media; the emotional part was already there, now I had to get their attention and drive the all important footfall. Planning and timing was essential; while my decisions weren't exactly life or death getting it wrong would have cost the best part of £1million.

To create buzz in the run up to the launch I hired a team of actors wearing a wardrobe of extreme clothing and masks – guys covered in red body paint on dog leads being walked by stilt-walkers who distributed posters, flyers and free CD's as a taster of the music to be played in the club.

Momentum started to build and created a buzz which went beyond the PR, the brand was created from the ground up – not from the airwaves down, and it really connected with the target audience. The hype and chatter drove enthusiasm for the pre-launch night – the date and time of which was detailed on the flyers promising "something out of this world" was going to take place.

When the pre-launch night came I aimed 8 beam searchlights I had purchased at the low misty cloud cover and switched the lights on. The weather conditions were ideal and the lights showed up perfectly; mission accomplished.

That night I used my guerrilla mind to create something so unique, on brand and targeted that BBC, CCN, Sky and almost every red top newspaper reported on suspicious 'alien like' moving white circles in the clouds above Glasgow and the West Coast of Scotland. Cars drove to chase the lights and people filmed and photographed it in the street; if social media was in full swing back then who know what extra coverage I would have enjoyed, but for a budget of £13,000 returning in excess of £1m PR value I was happy.

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MIND OVER MATTER

Jay Conrad Levinson gave us the title of "Guerrilla Marketing" in the 80's and what he identified was that results can be achieved on low budgets using unconventional methods. In principle I agree with him, however in my experience working with the likes of the Government and Police departments it can't be said that it's always about the unconventional and low budget, and it certainly doesn't always revolve around illegal practices as the big advertising and media houses would have you believe.

I would actually try to avoid using the word "unconventional" when describing guerrilla marketing as I feel it taints its reputation and reduces credibility in terms of success – something which is not true when we look at results from past guerrilla campaigns.

Guerrilla marketing cannot be defined as a style of marketing like experiential and traditional marketing can be; it is a state of mind rather than an action.



Cutting knife crime for Strathclyde Police



Grayling PR Campaign



Who am I?... Guerrilla Campaign for Linden Homes

Although as I said before, I agree with Mr Levinson's definition in principle, it is no longer suitable in today's market. Guerrilla is the mindset of the few that understand that getting from A to B effectively can be done by various modes of transport, not just one. Guerrilla marketing is the collective approach to looking through all the communications options, selecting, inventing and being clear about how you test and assess the outcomes. Use TV, use business cards, use sponsorship or stunts, but only if it's right for your brand or product.

Thinking guerrilla can result in a more creative approach to your growing your business. With the rise of social networks and media, the boom of blog and a new generation of media savvy people I predict we will begin to see the demise of the integrated agency; as the marketing toolkit gets bigger it becomes more and more difficult for one agency to provide the entire marketing solution. We have seen evidence of this already as more companies take their marketing back in-house and think as guerrilla marketers by hiring the skills to build their strategy and plan.

As we look ahead I hope that you will instigate your guerrilla mind and confidently explore the full and exciting range of opportunities to communicate your marketing objectives, allowing you to enjoy the success.

CONTACT KOMMANDO...

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