

# ***IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE:***

by Don Mogelesky

If marketing can be compared to war, “guerrilla marketing” is probably like being on the front line—with a bayonet.

“Guerrilla means unconventional—using your head rather than the brawn of big marketing bucks,” says Bill Gallagher, head of the Diamond Springs, Calif.-based Guerrilla Sales and Marketing.

What is Gallagher’s assessment from the professional trenches? “Somebody needs to be responsible for marketing. Companies need to have a marketing calendar—which means 52 weeks—of what they’re going to do,” he says. “Marketing is everybody’s mission; otherwise, the company is doomed.”

In order to avoid doom, part of the guerrilla marketing strategy is to use innovative techniques and incentives to spark sales. This usually takes place on a grass-roots level. “We have techniques that get phones ringing off the hooks,” says Gallagher. “It’s effective because we’re using the same techniques and tools that are being used by the Madison Avenue big shots, but they’re not techniques that the young, new entrepreneur is generally aware of.”

Taking a company’s message directly to the public is a key objective for most guerrilla marketers. This can be done in all sorts of ways—from staffers going door-to-door to crashing events. The word “free” is also a cornerstone of guerrilla marketing. “‘Call for a free brochure’—we insist that goes into every ad, with ‘free’ in capital letters,” says Gallagher. “You get someone’s name and address, and then can call later to make sure they got [the brochure].”

Guerrilla marketing outfits have given away free merchandise ranging from CDs to food. Gallagher tells of one client, a furniture store in Manhattan, that gave away free T-shirts emblazoned with the company’s logo and the slogan “Why Pay More?” to homeless people in the area. The promotion not only provided the homeless with clean clothing, but it also generated advertising for the store.

“We take ‘guerrilla’ to mean people like George Washington’s soldiers, who were the first guerrillas on this continent. They’d hide behind trees and put mud on their faces while wearing civilian clothes. They used the phrase, ‘Don’t shoot until you see the whites of their eyes’ because they didn’t have as much ammunition,” says Gallagher.

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