

PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH GUERRILLA MARKETING

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Abstract:

Environment becomes major concern for all countries throughout the world since Sustainable Development Goals were promoted. However the target is impossible to achieve without awareness and participation of the public. Promoting environmental sustainability is difficult and costly, therefore a breakthrough is required. The concept of guerrilla marketing has been widely used and recognized as low cost, but effective marketing strategy, therefore it is also an appropriate innovative way of promoting environmental sustainability in public area. This study explores the successful application of guerrilla marketing for promoting environmental sustainability around the world. Three case studies were chosen to figure out how it works. The successful applications confirm that guerrilla campaign for sustainability needs element of humour, uniqueness, sensation, creativity, surprise and education. Both profit and non-profit organizations can achieve their goal in both effective and efficient way when they know how to apply guerrilla marketing properly

Keywords:

Guerrilla marketing, Environment, Sustainability, Non-profit Organization



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INTRODUCTION

Totally 93 country members of the United Nations have endorsed the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs) for 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals are action plans for people, planets and prosperity. The Sustainable Development Goals maintain an increase in the people's economic welfare in a sustainable manner, development that maintains the sustainability of the social life of the community, development that maintains the quality of the environment and development that guarantees fairness and the implementation of governance that is able to maintain improvement of quality of life from one generation to the next. It is a global and national commitment in an effort to improve the welfare of the community including saving the ecosystem and world from climate change. To realize the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, all parties must obtain the same information to understand goals, targets, indicators and the roles that can be carried out in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Countries are also supposed to participate in every implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals implemented by the government. The community, academics and experts, the private sector and philanthropy can create and innovate to implement the Sustainable Development Goals individually, in the family, community or in groups to contribute to the success in achieving the goals and targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Nevertheless, promoting sustainability is a far more difficult than promoting product especially because people do not feel they get personal benefit from it and they still underestimate a personal contribution to save the world from climate change. World Economic Forum (2020) in a research entitled Global Risks Perception Survey 2019-2020 revealed that the world economy will be faced by increasingly central environmental issues. This research mentions environmental issues, especially those related to climate, dominating into the top five long-term risk indicators for the likelihood category as a global economic constraint. Extreme weather itself is predicted to make the earth hotter to 3 degrees Celsius at the end of this century. Global warming will make the polar ice begin to melt, causing an alarming sea level rise. Chief executive officer of Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), Fiona Reynolds said that it was impossible for the government to reduce the earth's temperature to 2.7 degrees Celsius without being forced to take fast action.

With the failure of various policies and climate commitments made to combat the imminent climate crisis, the impact will be felt for generations to come. This is what makes the world economy increasingly uncertain. One proof of the failure of climate action is the disappointing results of the last COP25. With the uncertain conditions of the earth due to the climate crisis, natural disasters also seem unavoidable. When disasters occur, not only threaten casualties, but greater is threatening the economic future. Because when one of the disasters is affected and it is difficult to carry out rehabilitation and reconstruction, the economy of other interdependent regions becomes sluggish and even paralyzed. Therefore, for a long time the world

has set priorities for post-disaster recovery in addition to human victims to the economy within the framework of frame work for disaster risk reduction.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) warns that 1 million species are at risk of extinction. IPBES also explained that most of the 2020 global targets for nature protection outlined in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (Aichi biodiversity targets) will not be met. Of course, the loss of natural wealth means that the world will lose its balance so that the ends disturb economic stability. Fifth, environmental disasters caused by human activity (human-made environmental disasters). In this case, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) said that 99 percent of forest and land fires were caused by humans. Greedy humans, in fact, have destroyed nature for personal and group interests. Though damaging nature to expand business also does not mean it will improve the quality of the economy itself. Natural damage will only worsen the economy.

A new way of promoting sustainability is required. People have to be aware of the importance of sustainability. Therefore a marketing effort to promote it should be more creative than what it usually looks like. The solution of this is called Guerrilla Marketing. Guerrilla marketing is a strategy that is reversed from what is in the minds of humans. By the concept of guerrilla marketing, the marketer creates a marketing strategy that will not be predicted by his market. This strategy is client oriented. The purpose of this strategy is to be able to touch the market they are going to, so that the intended market gets a different experience to be able to get to know more in a product. Like big billboard advertising, guerrilla marketing is usually executed in the public areas that are relevant to their targeted people. Guerrilla marketing is a special form of marketing that focuses on the effects of surprise. Usually, this is based on the idea that a little money can achieve a high advertising impact. Guerrilla marketing is an advertising strategy that uses unconventional and low-cost methods such as graffiti, sticker bombing, flash mobs. This type of strategy is used often in the local scope or wider network, to convey or promote a product or business idea. The term guerrilla marketing is easily traced to the term "guerrilla warfare" which uses similar tactics to achieve goals in intense competition. This study aims to explore the successful application of guerrilla marketing for promoting environmental sustainability around the world.

METHOD

The author uses descriptive research method because this study has the aim to obtain answers related to the opinions, responses or perceptions of someone so that the discussion must be qualitative or use descriptive words. Descriptive research tries to find an appropriate and sufficient description of all activities, objects, processes, and people. Descriptive research recognizes various forms that can be categorized such as surveys, case studies, studies, causal-comparative studies, correlation studies, and so on. Each form of descriptive research has a different function and purpose, while this descriptive study is included in the case study category. Case studies are in-depth studies of specific events, environments and situations that make it possible to express or understand something (Bhattacharya, 2017).

The data collection method used in this study is documentation. Documentation is a method of collecting data that is directed at finding data and information through documents, written documents, photographs, drawings, and electronic documents that can support the writing process. The results of the study will also be more credible if supported by photographs or academic papers and existing art. Literature study is then it can be said that literature study can affect the credibility of the results of research conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Guerrilla Marketing

Guerrilla marketing is an unconventional method to surprise consumers or public. Attention achieved makes it very efficient and financial benefits are relatively low compared to classic and expensive advertising campaigns (Khare, 2017). Unusual steps are used for Guerrilla campaigns which should have been unprecedented. Generally, guerrilla marketing campaign cannot be done for the second time without modification because it contains element of surprise. The basic principle is to provoke discussion so that it goes viral on social media, public relations, and word of mouth. When replying to the same campaign, there will be no surprise effect and automatically does not attract public attention. In the worst case, it can have a negative impact if it is done repeatedly. This can happen when the target group gets bored and the positive effects of the first run can turn in the opposite direction. The goal of Guerrilla Marketing is to increase reach with advertising. Classic adverts must fight the reach that has shrunk over the years (Levinson & Horowitz, 2016).

History of Guerrilla Marketing

Guerrilla marketing was founded by marketing professional Jay C. Levinson, who developed the concept in the 1980s. Guerrilla tactics are very useful in both online and offline marketing and emphasize on its viral effect to attract a public attention. The concept of guerrilla marketing was first developed as an unconventional system of promotion that relies on time, energy and imagination rather than a large marketing budget. Usually, guerrilla marketing campaigns are unpredictable and unusual according to the habits of the people, and have the potential to create interactions, and consumers are targeted in completely unexpected places. The concept of guerrilla marketing aims to create a concept that is interactive, communicative, unique and attracts people to think. All of that to generate buzz, encourage more people and intensely talk about your brand and business. This term was first coined and defined by Jay Conrad

Levinson in his textbook, "Guerrilla Marketing." This term became known and became popular as a part of vocabulary in various marketing textbooks.

Guerrilla Marketing Principles

The main goal in guerrilla marketing is to attract media attention, grab customer attention, and create positive attachment to them. The guerrilla marketing campaign is based on a certain effect mechanism that leads to a kind of AHA-effect. This makes consumer tell others about the campaign and bring it to the world. So consumers are surprised, laugh with amazement, break taboos and laugh at company competitors. Levinson, Adkins & Forbes (2010) explained that guerrilla marketing has the following characteristics:

1. A touch of guerrilla marketing is on common sense. Therefore it does not depend on experience, assumptions or evaluation
2. Especially, profits are at the forefront, compared to the percentage of sales
3. New customer relationships can be built every month
4. Campaigns are designed specifically for individual products and not for public areas
5. The focus of the campaign is on existing customer relationships and recommendations
6. Getting new customers is secondary
7. Collaboration with other companies is preferable to observing competition
8. Customers must be handled individually. The smaller the target group, the greater the effect of guerrilla marketing
9. The campaign goal is customer approval to provide more information, rather than targeting conversions

Guerrilla marketing includes unusual approaches such as distributing gifts in the form of products on public roads, public relations tricks, or other marketing efforts intended to get maximum results with minimum expenditure. Another more innovative approach to guerrilla marketing is now using digital technology in mobile devices such as smartphone and tablet PCs to establish communication with consumers and create a brand experience that is remembered for all time in the minds of consumers (Haque, 2018).

Guerrilla marketing focuses on low-cost creative strategies. The only requirements needed for that are time, energy, and creative imagination. Funds are not the main requirement although they are still needed in small or moderate amounts. Sales are not the only yardstick in measuring the success of a company. However, it still holds on to the amount of profit that organization can create from marketing efforts. More emphasis is placed on how to retain existing customers rather than aggressively pursuing new customers who are not necessarily loyal (Khare, 2017).

Guerrilla marketing can be a solution for start-ups to understand marketing in a way that is simple, easy to implement, and low in cost. Guerrilla marketing is a way to achieve conventional goals in business, such as profit and pleasure, with unusual methods, for example by investing in energy and not money. Guerrilla marketing is a way of marketing that really use energy and imagination. Guerrilla marketing is a way to attract the attention of customers in unexpected ways, creating a lasting impression, while creating a pulsing effect (Levinson & Horowitz, 2016).

Guerrilla marketing is generally more ideal for start-ups and small and medium-sized businesses to reach large masses without breaking into bank accounts. Because of its uniqueness, guerrilla marketing is also used by large companies in grassroots campaign activities as a complement to the on-going mass media campaigns. Guerrilla marketing is able to create a more valuable impression in the minds of customers compared to traditional forms of marketing and advertising. The test came about because the majority of guerrilla marketing actions are aimed at targeting customers in a more personal way and at a level that is close to memory (Gupta & Singh, 2020).

Characteristic of Guerrilla Marketing

Guerrilla marketing campaign should have element of humour, unique, sensation, creativity and surprise (Situmorang, 2016). However to promote sustainability, the five elements are not enough, therefore author develops the framework into six elements, by adding the element of education because marketing campaign for sustainability provide non-commercial education to the public in order to go green and pay attention on saving world from more serious incoming environmental damage.

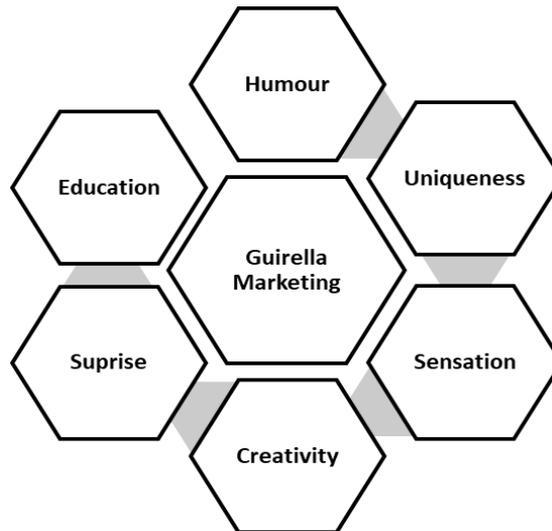


Figure 1. Elements of Guerrilla Marketing for Sustainability

There are six elements of guerrilla marketing for promoting sustainability, as follow:

1. Surprise
This element must be present so that the audience feels something is surprising the feeling of the display or action taken. Basically, people are occasionally happy to get a surprise so he is more curious about what he saw.
2. Humour
Action or display that invites laughter or a smile can arouse the feelings of the audience to be happy or happy. A heart that likes to see guerrilla marketing action will facilitate further interaction between companies and consumers.
3. Uniqueness
What is displayed by the company should be different from what has been there before or what has been done by competitors. The uniqueness will be the main attraction for the audience who see it.
4. Sensation
The sensation element is also an advantage of using non-traditional media. Although sometimes sensations can be anticlimactic, but in an event or action, sensations still play a fairly important role.
5. Creativity
The idea of guerrilla marketers must be realized in guerrilla marketing action by the company. Creative ideas will display actions that are able to capture the attention of the audience even if the audience cannot immediately understand the action or display they see.
6. Education
In order to promote sustainability, guerrilla marketing should have element of education. Educating people to save world from environmental damage is different from increasing brand equity of company. The education element will also push public to pay more attention and share its experience to other people because they value the positive hidden message behinds the marketing campaign.

The Risk of Guerrilla Marketing

At first glance, Guerrilla Marketing offers an excellent opportunity to achieve high advertising effects with little money. But there are clear risks. The viral effect of the Guerrilla campaign cannot be controlled, so if the virus becomes viral, the virus can develop further in all directions, so it is also negative. If the target group reacts in a chaotic way or does not understand, the campaign can provoke a controversy which can result in loss of image and sales. So when planning a guerrilla Marketing campaign, all possible scenarios must be considered so that in the worst case scenario everyone knows how to react. A solid tracking and monitoring system of user behaviour is important (Išoraitė, 2018). Although it sounds very interesting, guerrilla marketing strategies may not be suitable for business that are not a risk-taking type or are in an industry that is tightly regulated by regulations, such as financial services and insurance. Company should also know that the implementation of guerrilla marketing strategies can create a big emotional effect to the public.

Implementation of Guerrilla Marketing

The result of documents collection shows that guerrilla marketing has been used by both profit and non-profit organizations to promote sustainability in many countries all over the worlds. There are several interesting cases of guerrilla marketing that is used to help green campaign and promote sustainability as follow. The first case study goes to guerrilla marketing to reduce the use of tissue or toilet paper that is actually aimed to minimize deforestation.

Tissue is one of the forest extractive products. As with paper, tissue is made from pulp made from wood. To produce tissue, trees must be cut down. That means, the greater the demand for tissue, the greater the number of trees that must be cut down. According to research carried out by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to make 3.2 million tons of toilet tissue, producers must cut 54 million trees. It can be imagined that as

many trees must be cut down to meet the demand of all people in the world. While more than just a raw material for tissue, forests have the function of absorbing carbon. The more forests that switch functions the less absorbent of the earth's carbon. That is why there is global warming and climate change. Based on the results of a survey conducted by WWF-Indonesia in collaboration with the creative agency Hakuhudo, Indonesian people living in big cities have the habit of spending three pieces of tissue to dry their hands. While globally, WWF estimates that every day, around 270,000 trees that are cut down end up in the trash. And 10% of that amount comes from toilet paper.



Figure 2. Guerrilla Marketing of WWF
Source: Saatchi & Saatchi (2007)

The second case of guerrilla marketing came from China. Pollution is a global problem that has so far been campaigned continuously so that it can be overcome. Not only dangerous for humans, but more broadly is for all life on earth. Quite a number of casualties have been incurred due to pollution and people certainly do not want to continue this bad trend. It's no secret that China is the busiest industrial country in Asia. This statement can be proven by the number of factories that stand in many areas complete with smoke that makes shortness of breath. The pollution case in the bamboo curtain country is at an alarming level. Named Breathe Again, this project aims to make residents aware of how dangerous pollution is. The campaign concept is very unique where they use large projectors with representative images. The picture itself was in the form of crying children.

This unique campaign succeeded in inspiring many people to the danger of pollution. The projected image itself was large enough to be seen by many people. Xiao Zhu's own goal, indeed, is to make people aware of how dangerous the future will be when such pollution continues. The unique method also successfully won praise from the local community. The public said this is a very brilliant and complicated idea because it uses real smoke to deliver the message. However, good intentions do not always get the same response. There were also those who commented that this campaign was nothing more than a promotion, considering Xiao Zhu is a water purifier company. Anyhow, Xiao Zhu has been strategically promoted both environmental sustainability and its product at the same time.



Picture 3. Guerrilla Marketing of Xiao Zhu
Source: Zhu (2015)

The third case of guerrilla marketing was inspired by what happened in New York back to 2009. The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) put a vending machine that sells dirty water on the streets of New York City. The water bottles were labelled common diseases caused by consuming unclean water. UNICEF did it to increase public awareness of the importance of drinking clean water. The motivation behind the idea was 3,000 children die in a day because of diarrheal disease and 783 million people were lack of clean water for drink. The consumers were actually expected to donate \$1 by buying dirty water instead of drinking it. The guerrilla marketing successfully attracted media attention and shocked people in the town. This is a very effective way of educating people about health and UNICEF with low investment. The aim of this campaign was actually to get \$1 Million donation. This vending machine project was successfully deliver its education message about water crisis, make people surprised and contain a sense of humour, the creativity brought a sensation that motivate people to come and donate as it became a unique experience to them.



Figure 4. Guerrilla Marketing of UNICEF

By the example of those cases above, guerrilla marketing is proven as an effective innovative marketing campaign tool for any organization including non-profit organization to promote sustainability. The successful applications confirm that guerrilla campaign for sustainability needs element of humour, uniqueness, sensation, creativity, surprise and education. Both profit and non-profit organizations can achieve their goal in both effective and efficient way when they know how to apply guerrilla marketing properly. Willingness to take risks is mandatory because these actions require the courage of brand owners and managers to get out of their comfort zone and do things they have never done before. Organization needs to set clear goals, think about brand positioning as well people who will be targeted by guerrilla marketing, at the lowest possible cost. They must understand who the target market are and know what tickles their curiosity. They need to think from all angles, imagine all the things and ideas that might be realized.

CONCLUSION

The use of guerrilla marketing is profitable, even for non-profit organization whose mission to promote sustainability or green campaign because once people are surprised by its creativity value, they will indirectly help organization to promote the campaign like loyal customers who recommend our product to other potential customers. The element of guerrilla marketing should include education to public about the danger of being ignorance of what happens to our world. The shocking effect of guerrilla campaign will also attract media to tell a wider audience about the campaign and therefore the benefit can be multiplied and so worthy to do as a low cost marketing strategy.

Companies and government institution are recommended to adopt this strategy in order to increase the effectiveness of sustainability promotion because when people become more aware, they will be more likely help save our ecosystem and environment. However, they must also be careful when designing the concept, because a concept of guerrilla marketing can sometimes produce more than one point of view and when wrongly applied, can offend a certain party and lead to negative consequence. The future researchers are expected to figure out the effectiveness of guerrilla marketing, especially that aims to promote sustainability.

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