

by Jay Conrad Levinson

When it comes to marketing, guerrillas become creative in very special ways and they're not the ways that are demonstrated by most marketing.

Guerrillas view creativity in marketing the same way that drivers view steering wheels in their cars. The creativity is supposed to guide the marketing toward its goal of producing profits just as the steering wheel is supposed to guide the car toward its goal of arriving safely at the destination.

It doesn't always work out that way. The bummer is that although there are tragedies on the highway because accidents happen, there are tragedies in marketing and none of them have to happen. Worse yet, they don't even happen by accident. People actually plan, sweat over and focus hard upon marketing that is headed from the start directly towards disaster.

Creativity in marketing is very much different from creativity in the arts, although marketing is as eclectic an art form as has ever been devised by humankind. Marketing embraces writing, design, photography, video, special effects, music, dancing, and acting-and yet its purposes are not those of the arts.

Guerrillas view marketing with ten insights into marketing creativity that illuminates the path for them. These insights prevent them from going over the edge, losing their way or wasting their time and money. Why wait? Here are the ten insights:

- 1. Creativity in marketing should be measured solely by how well it contributes to your overall profitability.** If it helps you sell at profit, it is creative and if it doesn't, it's not creative. That makes creativity easy to measure. Awards and compliments have nothing to do with it.
- 2. Creativity should always be blended with its ability to withstand repetition** because purchase decisions are made with the unconscious mind and repetition is the best way to access the unconscious. If your creative marketing idea can get stronger with repetition, you've got a winner.
- 3. Using creativity in marketing that resorts to humor is like reaching into a bag filled with poisonous snakes.** Not only might you get hurt on your very first time reach into the bag, but the more you reach the more it works against you because repetition helps marketing but murders humor.
- 4. Creativity in marketing not directed towards motivating a purchase is like employing a vampire in your marketing.** The vampire sucks attention away from your prime offer, your benefits and your main idea in an inane attempt to be creative at the expense of your profitability.

**5. Creativity should be seen as an opportunity not for show business but for sell business.** Marketing is business far more than entertainment, and although it may be entertaining, that is not its prime requirement. It exists mainly to create a desire to buy and not mainly to entertain.

**6. Creativity is a way to implant your name and not an excuse not to mention your name.** Gain awareness and a crucial share of mind by showing and saying your name creatively, helping people remember your name the next time they're in the market for what you sell.

**7. Creativity in marketing is the challenge of demonstrating your benefit in a way that people will remember.** It is important that your prospects remember your name and equally important to know what makes you special and why they should own what you are offering.

**8. Creativity comes not from inspiration or even perspiration.** It comes from knowledge. The more knowledge you have, the more creative you can be. You require knowledge of your benefits, prospects, industry, competition, media options, and the Internet-for starters.

**9. Creativity begins not with a headline, graphic idea, special effect or jingle; it begins with an idea.** The idea should center around your offer, your competitive advantage or your main benefit-and it should come singing clearly through your marketing in any medium.

**10. Creativity of the highest form in marketing has longevity and improves with age.** How long has the Green Giant been ho-ho-ho-ing in his valley? Have United's skies been friendly? Has the Maytag repairman been lonely? Great marketing creativity is both flexible and enduring.

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It's a cinch to sit here in my comfy chair typing out a bunch of insights about how you should be creative. It's easy for me and hard for you. But hey, I've got my job and you've got yours. I'd like to tell you that it's going to be simple and that list of businesses with timeless marketing creativity goes on and on.

But I'd be lying because it's a short list. Amazingly brief. Most business owners have this ridiculous notion that their marketing is supposed to constantly change. And most people who create marketing have their eyes on their awards wall on not on your bottom line.

So it's going to be a tough job for you to separate the true creativity from the pretend creativity. Most marketing you see these days is of the pretend variety. Still, armed with these insights, the creativity that you employ will be guerrilla creativity and will lead not down the garden path but directly to your bank vault.