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THE 800 POUND LIE OF GUERRILLA MARKETING

You're probably a big fan of Guerrilla Marketing. This business-building approach is based on the belief that we can use dozens of unique strategies to land loads of prospects. Unfortunately, there is a price to pay for these "free" lead generation tactics.

First, let me make it clear that I love the creator of the Guerrilla Marketing concept, Jay Conrad Levinson. I began as a worshiper of Jay's thinking, and later became a friend. I've followed him from the beginning of his rise to power as an author and later as a trainer of entrepreneurial America. His books are published worldwide and he is in constant demand as a speaker. His network of Master Trainers blanket the globe from Russia to Rio. I even ran this article by him and he absolutely agrees with the truth contained herein (he also thought the selling blunder you'll read in a bit was pretty funny).

Like the age old battle between good and evil, sales and marketing co-exist, yet can't live without the other. And to use baseball as an analogy, marketing would be the starting pitcher, while sales would be the closer – the player whose job is to complete the game with a win.

So I've used Jay's ideas to land appointments with prospects in wildly imaginative ways. I once mailed a coconut to an elusive CFO from a major hospital. Written on it in black marker; "You're a tough nut to crack." Got the meeting.

I've given a cactus to a rude, dragon-like government employee and told her that it reminded me of her personality. Risky move? She laughed hysterically and gave me documents on the spot that normally took two weeks to receive. Just as good salespeople need guts to go on, good marketers need guts to boldly bring their products and services to the attention of their target market.

So you can join associations and networking groups. You can buy memorable products and advertising specialties to gain attention. You can form strategic alliances and create unique offerings. These strategies will all get you discovered by the media, and uncovered by prospects.

BUT IF YOU CAN'T CLOSE THEM, ALL YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS ARE WORTHLESS.

That is the 800 pound lie of Guerrilla Marketing – you do what we teach you and success comes knocking on your bank account. It's just not true. You need to pair up your marketing strategies with selling skills.

Again, you can get all the leads you can handle, if you can't convert them from prospects to customers, your lead generation efforts are worthless.

See, we don't have a million advertising dollars a day to create perpetual mindshare like McDonald's. We have today - right now - to find prospects, convince them to converse with us and close them.

As proof, read Kathy's story below. By believing everyone is a prospect, this guerrilla marketer confuses activity with productivity. After getting her bell rung, she realized that focus is more important than numbers of prospects.

A SALES MOMENT FROZEN IN TIME

In Kathy's early days of selling any prospect was fresh meat, whether she met them at an association event or pulled them from a database or was referred to them by existing customers. If she could find an inexpensive way to promote herself that defined her preferred marketing activity.

So she was aggressively working the local chamber of commerce for leads when Kathy first contacted this business owner. The experience, for her, is frozen in time. Have you ever been to a meat packing business? Maybe you'd call it a slaughterhouse.

Either way, you don't really want to wear an expensive linen suit into this environment. But you do want to tour a prospect's business.

It was disgusting, 15 foot long cow intestines hanging on walls. Other parts that she didn't want to know about hung or were stacked in coolers. And slippery floors everywhere. But at least the owner tried to keep her off those surfaces.

And the smell? Okay, now she's starting to recall the smell - revolting. Kathy could have skipped that memory.

So the rep is managing. And when she's asked "do you want to see the meat lockers?" What to do? The answer is always yes. So in she goes - high heels and all.

Everything is frozen, including her.

Stars! She's looking at the ceiling and there are stars everywhere. This is kind of cool. Then she realizes that she's lying on her back and the stars are moving around because her head has just hit the floor, quite hard.

After that, all Kathy remembers is that the owner didn't want to move his money to the bank, and to bring flat shoes to wear around hazardous prospects. And she remembered the lump was on her skull for about three weeks before it disappeared.

POSTMORTEM: Along with her acquisition of combat wounds, Kathy realized that marketing efforts can be expensive, time-consuming, even physically painful when they don't result in a sale. Should you choose to create unique marketing plays (and you should because they are, perhaps the most fun, most creative part of business-building practices), make sure that you are playing with and to your exact target market. Remember that pre-qualifying, disqualifying and qualifying should be part of your lead generation design process. This is exactly where too many guerrilla marketing efforts go bad. Your big effort, your advertising or telemarketing splash dumps too many prospects into the sales funnel and you have to wade through many, many bad ones to find a few good ones. And, with those good ones, your sales abilities might still garnish you nothing, unless you have the persuasion skills to advance prospects beyond qualifying. You'll only get your fairy tale, your happy ending when you can actually close someone. The key truth here is that your selling skills make marketing efforts worthwhile.

See, part of the problem is that anyone can pick up a book on marketing and replicate those ideas to generate leads. But few entrepreneurs or salespeople can pick up a book on selling and increase their closing skills.

So two lessons we gather from the 800 Pound Lie of Guerrilla Marketing.

- 1) Market to the perfect prospect;
- 2) Bring to the party the ability to close them.

Both these factors come from work you do prior to your arrival. Marketing smart is related to the design of your programs. Closing is related to (gulp) training. If you can't close before you generate leads, you won't suddenly find the skills when you arrive at the slaughterhouse.

Remember all those days in school when you groused and griped about required classes? "When are we ever going to use physics or geometry in real life?" That might have been a truism then. But today is here. You can now choose to go to class, sales class, and quantify its value - when you sell better and sell more product. That sounds like real life to me.

Develop your sales talent today. If you need to, go get training. This can keep you, like Kathy, from being frozen out of a new customer's life. Capture yourself some selling skills and you'll never fall victim to the 800 Pound Lie of Guerrilla Marketing.

Article is written by Dan Seidman of got Influence? To learn more about Dan, go to <http://gotinfluenceinc.com/>

Dan will be joining the ATDSFL Chapter on October 14 in Palm Beach. [Click here to learn more about the presentation and register for the event!](#)