

MARKETSHARE Through MINDSHARE™

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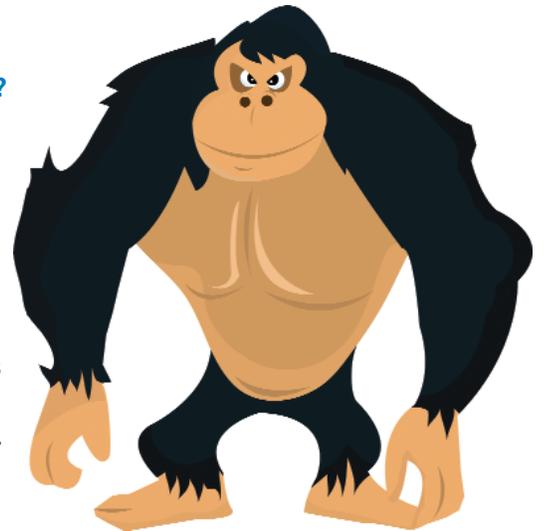
We see things differentlySM

Of Gorillas, Wombats and Viruses

**Quick. What do these three creatures have in common?
Well, not a whole lot that I know of, until you take
some liberties. Try this:**

Guerilla...wombat...viral?

If you made the correct association, you'll recognize that they are different yet related types of marketing processes. The commonality is that all three are designed to build awareness. All three are alternate methodologies that work if properly deployed. All three benefit from associations with more traditional marketing applications. All three shouldn't be attempted without a solid strategic marketing plan. We will distinguish between them in the following paragraphs and provide some insight into the question... "when is guerilla marketing better than viral, or viral better than wombat, etc?"



Viral Marketing: Benign or malignant?

Viral marketing is designed to expand brand awareness in a very low cost environment. So low cost, in fact, that the key to successful viral marketing is the utilization of a pre-existing dissemination vehicle as opposed to creating a new one and incurring its associated expenses. Historically, this infecting action took hold with the development of the delivery device, the advent of email. Once the email system was in place, viral marketing changed from endemic to epidemic.

That's what makes it quite cost-effective. In fact maybe this should be called parasitic marketing because of the way it is deployed. Essentially you are building awareness of brand through processes that self-replicate. Typically an ad or blurb is included in an email text message or video clip or image. When the recipient is socialized about the message (positively or negatively) and they pass it on, the message and the embedded ad become phenomenally exposed. So with this multiplier, it is quite pathological. Hotmail is the classic example with the offers of a free account, but Yahoo also was successful with their "Do You Yahoo" message. And just for the record, those disagreeing or dissatisfied with messages tend to pass them along 3x-4x as often. Imagine that.

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But along with assuring low cost comes a very low predictability index. So if you're looking to spread and measure the word ultra fast, metrics can become problematic.

But viral marketing can run into problems before you even begin. First of all, the message that is the crux of the viral marketing campaign has to resonate unto itself before it can reasonably resonate with others. Viral marketing is characterized by enfranchisement of the recipient so the recipient becomes a proponent. The message has to inspire or motivate or resound with the target, so that person can effectively motivate other people to action, thus "infecting" them.

Wombat Marketing?

Believe it or not, this has nothing to do with wombats or Australia. Actually it is the au courant slang for WOM or WOMM, itself slang for...word-of-mouth. Wombat marketing is a kind of slower building cousin to viral marketing that utilizes the available social networks, but especially the e-networks. It has the resonating message but does not have a pre-existing dissemination vehicle as viral marketing does.

Wombat marketing has an elitist origin. The message is initiated in the form of a thought or an observation...but not with just anyone. Rather it is done with key leaders, those individuals who are capable of being proponents. In practice they are unofficial endorsees. Referred to in different circles as "kingmakers", "powermen" or "angels", it is the initiation and conversion of these influential individuals that puts the WOM in WOMBAT. Because the message or mantra is spread from them through social networks like YouTube or myspace.

Since what the kingmakers espouse appears to originate with them, the audience at large interprets this as being endorsed by them. In some cases it is. And they tend to add their own commentary, thereby accruing value. In turn this becomes highly acceptable and believable to acolytes and affiliates, and so the word-of-mouth chain continues.

So, wombat marketing enfranchises the elite and makes them willing (or in its purest form unwitting) endorsees of the message. Tivo did it. Certain game companies used it. And no doubt you do it when you experience a great restaurant ("*Hey Murray I just had the best tamales over at Hispania's.*")...or when you have someone admire your shoes ("*Lime green with a 6-inch heel, wow!*")...or talk about a new TV show ("*I was bored stiff.*").

The seeds of wombat marketing are in effect when you positively or negatively comment on just about anything...the news...your new mattress...the car that just caught your eye. The trick is to get your selected message into the thoughts of a kingmaker and have him or her spread it for you.



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The 1,000 Pound Guerilla?

And what about good old Guerilla marketing? It's been around forever. It conjures memories of Van Halen and Culture Club, Ghostbusters and Gremlins, though it is still applicable today. Guerilla marketing was codified in Jay Conrad Levinson's book of the same name. It's brilliantly simple, based on human psychology. The goals remain the same but the methodologies of achieving them are unconventional. It preceded the concept of "thinking outside the box" and often adds the element of surprise.

One of the most distinctive features is that with Guerilla marketing, the targeted audience seldom realizes they are being sold to...pitched to...marketed to. Creativity is at a premium. Invest time, energy, etc. versus investing hard cash. It's common sense methodology applied in an uncharacteristic manner. And it could be anything...from supermarket drops to building wraps...store floors with Read Me's in high traffic or centralized areas...bicycle racks covered with pressure sensitive labels...painted pavements...or goodie bags used as after-sale incentives. Men's restrooms in restaurants and clubs provide the perfect captive audiences for newspapers, articles and ads. Even certain wash up areas outside operating rooms in hospitals are festooned with messages.

It doesn't stop there. Authoring an article, being a guest columnist or co-sponsoring a website give you the impact of subliminal advertising as does the appearance of a soft drink in a movie or video. Rest assured if you can read the label, it's a paid or bartered ad, and if you can't, well it's just a prop.

The Dots...

Now let's connect the dots. All three of these alternate marketing methodologies are viable when applied correctly. All are, or can be, low-cost alternatives for those fast-vanishing marketing budgets. But they're not panaceas. In fact without a strategic marketing plan to precede their deployment, their chances for success are greatly diminished. Their true value is best seen when they lead or support a more traditionalized marketing approach, something which over time they may very well displace.

Marketshare through Mindshare™!



◀ The *ballerina linebacker* symbolizes PMG. We pride ourselves on the ability to provide strategic marketing services with the creative finesse of a ballerina and the tactical marketing power of a linebacker.

▶ **Jamie Stanco**, President of Progressive Marketing Group, Inc. is a recognized authority on strategic marketing and branding.



Is strategic marketing right for your business?

Call us at **631-756-7160**. Or email us at news@pmgstrategic.com and let's discuss what will work for you.



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