

CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF GUERRILLA MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

Marketing represents the company's activities which they carried out in order to attract new and retain existing customers. Today, companies apply aggressive advertising messages in order to get the attention of customers, but the customers are so "bombed" with a lot of advertising messages that they just ignore them. For big companies, it is easier to reach out to customers because they have large budgets, so they can use various ways of advertising while small companies can't because they have low budgets. In order to highlight their product or services in the market, they use a new type of marketing developed for small companies called guerilla marketing.

Guerrilla marketing is a relatively new type of marketing that seeks to achieve maximum effect with minimal investments. It applies unconventional methods of advertising which aims to attract the attention of customers and it is designed for small companies so they could compete with large companies on the market. However, over time, large companies began to use it because they realized the benefits of guerilla marketing.

Due to the presence of the economic crisis in Croatia, guerrilla marketing could help craft, micro and small businesses to prominent among the big companies that have large marketing budgets. In order to prominent among the big companies, they should be acquainted with the guerilla marketing. Therefore, aim of this paper is research and analyzes the perception of guerilla marketing by consumers and businesses in the Croatian market, specifically in Varazdin County. We hope that result of our research will help to better understanding and further development of guerilla marketing.

KEY WORDS: guerrilla marketing, businesses, consumers, advertising.

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a company activity undertaken to familiarize customers with its products or services. Companies are trying to attract new and retain existing customers, but competition in the market is rather large, and therefore they undertake different marketing activities which make them stand out and attract the attention of consumers. There are various definitions of marketing. The American Marketing Association (American Marketing Association, 2013) defines marketing as follows: "Marketing is the activity, a set of institutions and the process of creation, communication, delivery and exchange of offers that have value for customers, clients, partners and society as a whole. Kotler et al. (2014, 5) state that marketing deals with recognition, as well as with satisfaction of human and social needs. It represents a "profitable needs satisfaction." Furthermore, the authors believe that it is necessary to distinguish managerial and social definition of marketing, stating that marketing management is "art and science of choosing target markets as well as acquiring, retention and increasing the number of consumers by creating and delivering a superior value to customer and sending a

message about it", while social definition is: "Marketing is the social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating, offering and free exchange of valuable products and services with others."

Senečić (2000, 5, 9-10) believes that marketing is a form of market operation the result of which stems from the increased possibility of goods production. Namely, when the production is so big that offer in the market becomes greater than there is a demand, then it comes to a marketing orientation. Furthermore, he noted that there is no generally accepted definition of marketing and that the authors make a distinction between macro and micro marketing. The term macro marketing refers to the active role of marketing in streaming towards the social welfare, which is reflected in the continuity of economic growth and living standard of the population. Micro marketing is mostly regarded as a business function or concept. It represents a business activity of the company, enabling the identification and satisfaction of the needs of consumers, economy and society with products or services. Meller (2005, 15) also differs macro marketing and micro marketing, regarding macro marketing as macrosystem,

and micro marketing as a microsystem. So, he says that a systematic approach to marketing at the level of society as a whole represents macrosystem of marketing, while a systematic approach to marketing at the business system level represents microsystem of marketing.

According to Dobrinić (2010, 2-3) marketing is a dynamic area and discipline and therefore the definitions of marketing are changing. However, he states that the essence of marketing activities is connection of manufacturers and customers so as to realize the exchange in which both parties will be satisfied. Furthermore, companies should emphasize pre-sales and post-sales activities because there are many products and services on the market, and companies apply them in order to establish, maintain and connect with customers, but also to influence their perception and loyalty. Previšić et al. (2007, 1-2) define marketing as an area of business economy that is dynamic, exciting and contemporary, where it rests on the exchange which is the transfer value (tangible and / or intangible) between two or more parties. Also, they consider that the task of marketing is to detect an efficient and successful way, methods and means in order to be able to meet the individual needs of consumers. Meler (2005, 19) considers that the marketing should lead to satisfying the individual needs of consumer (from one side), and the individual needs of economic subjects (on the other side), whereby the company should not focus solely on profit or profit should not be a basic objective, but meeting the social needs of consumers.

Given the fact that the competition is strong, companies must find a way to their customers and use their marketing activities to reach them. As large companies have much larger budgets comparable to small ones, they can easily reach out to customers because they can use more marketing channels that require significant funds. Therefore, to enable to small companies to compete with large ones, it comes to the development of a new type of marketing that does not require large finances, which is the guerrilla marketing. Guerrilla marketing is a relatively new type of marketing in Croatia, and therefore, in this work it will be analyzed the perception of guerrilla marketing from the side of consumers.

2. JUSTIFICATION AND METHODOLOGY OF SURVEY

The survey was conducted on a sample of 117 respondents through the questionnaire, where 75 respondents completed the survey via the Internet, while 42 respondents completed the questionnaire in paper form. The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions, 10 of which were closed type (including demographic data, qualification and employment status) and three open-type questions. Since there is about a relatively new type of marketing, before the questions the definition of guerrilla marketing was presented to the respondents.

The survey was conducted with the aim to assess how much consumers are familiar with guerrilla marketing

or whether they ever noticed it. It was also intended to explore how they react to the mentioned type of marketing and how they might describe it, as well as whether it attracts better their attention than ads through television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and so on. Given the fact that the creativity is quite important in guerrilla marketing, respondents were also asked if they think that creativity is important for guerrilla marketing and why. Since there is an intention in marketing to attract the attention of consumers, the respondents were asked what would first attract their attention in guerrilla marketing and what method of promotion would immediately attract their attention and why.

3. DEFINITION OF GUERRILLA MARKETING

Although guerrilla marketing is not much well known in Croatia, it was created many years ago. The Levinson and Levinson (2011, 18) state that the guerrilla marketing was born in 1957 when Jay Conrad Levinson who worked as a counterintelligence analyst had to write a report on one and a half page. Then he realized how important it is to be concise, what presented a challenge to him, and at the same time led him to start building a career in advertising. The name guerrilla (Isaac, 2014, 175-190) describes a group of people who use violent approach to implement their beliefs and ideology. The only advantage of guerrilla fighters is the fact that only they know where and when to strike, while opponents are those with more people and resources (such as weapons and money). Original approach to guerrilla marketing is as an alternative marketing strategy which is suitable for small and medium enterprises. They must act as guerrilla fighters in the past when they were attacking valuable targets of large enemies by surprising them. Furthermore, guerrilla marketing is not a physical battle, but a psychological one waged with the aim to win in minds of customers and consumers. The strategies that strive to position products and services of the company in customer's mind are being adopted. Walsh (2014, 32) found that the guerrilla marketing in the past was unconventional and creative, using traditional marketing tools (labels, print ads and posters). However, today is necessary innovation; therefore the successful advertising techniques require the use of old tools and strategies, but with elements of surprise. Newer methods of advertising are, for example, *flash mob*¹ and viral marketing campaigns.

Authors define guerrilla marketing in different ways. Bygrave and Zacharakis (2008, 182) state that it is easier to define what guerrilla marketing does than to explain what it is. The guerrilla marketing has a unique effect that make people talk about the product and the company, and in such a way they seem to be "missionaries" of the product brand. Furthermore, it creates drama, interest, positive impact or emotion, and all these achieve incredible results. Klepek (2014, 79-87) believes that guerrilla marketing complements traditional marketing mix, which provides an opportunity for marketers to differ surprise effect of

diffusion (spreading effect). In addition to the claims of these authors, Hutter and Hoffmann (2011, 39-54) are of the opinion that guerrilla marketing is a common term for unconventional advertising campaigns to attract the attention of a large number of people in the advertising message at low cost, causing surprise effect and diffusion effect. They conclude that the guerrilla marketing campaign in terms of cost-benefit ratio, are highly efficient. Hallisy (2006, 13) claims that guerrilla marketing activities are designed to build awareness, brand and customer relations. Virk (2011, 19-21) states that the guerrilla marketing activity uses non-traditional media for marketing purposes, where guerrilla marketing campaigns tend to catch potential customers by surprise, resulting in a high rate of impact and retention. Southon and West (2006, 20) claim that in guerrilla marketing it is being worked on building of relationship with customers and is constantly being looked for a way to help the customer. The imagination and spontaneity are quite important.

Guerrilla marketing, according to Nufer (2013, 1-6) should be a new, daring and innovative which consequently often make guerrilla advertisers act in a moral and legal zone, balancing between morality and bad taste or legality and illegality, which results from the request to violate the general norms and attract a higher levels of attention. Furthermore, there is greater potential for moral and legal conflict unlike traditional marketing methods. Nufer noticed that guerrilla marketing moves between enthusiasm and boredom, which can have a negative impact on the product brand (and may even destroy the core values of the brand itself). Hiam (2009, 339) defines guerrilla marketing as marketing, which applies creativity and efforts to increase the impact and reduce costs, but he still mentions that the term guerrilla marketing is sometimes used for mainly cheap, small and short-term marketing techniques. Kar Yan and Yazdanifard (2013, 1-5) come to the conclusion that the guerrilla marketing is a combination of cost effectiveness, creativity, unexpected, unconventional and shocking marketing techniques that can lead to WOM (*Word of mouth*) effect or to convey information from the mouth to mouth. A number of authors have similar opinions regarding explanations of guerrilla marketing. So, Stanojević (2011, 165-180) in a similar way as Yan and Yazdanifard describes guerrilla marketing "unconventionality, maximum results with minimum investment and the importance of creativity and innovation". In the same way guerrilla marketing is described by Zavišić and Medić (2006, 414-425), where they state that guerrilla marketing thoroughly investigate every possibility in order to implement the best possible business combination (winning combination), and the foundation of a successful guerrilla marketing make control, correction and overcoming problems. They also think that psychology plays a very important role in the guerrilla marketing because the purchase decisions are mainly brought unconsciously.

Guerrilla marketing also has an impact on the brand of company. So it presents a creative and innovative marketing strategy for product brand (Farouk, 2012, 111-119), where

a much bigger impression is done by the customer than with traditional forms of advertising. Given that it aims to influence the customer on a personal and memorable level, it creates an indelible impression on the brand of the product itself. In addition, it enriches the aesthetic and functional values of the brand and that makes it seem more innovative and different. The strategy of guerrilla marketing contributes to achieving distinctive competitive position of the brand on the market, thus allowing advertisers to use creative and innovative ideas. Weisberg et al. (2007, 92-106) claim that the aim of the campaign of guerrilla marketing is to increase awareness and interest of customer for the product and its relationship with the brand. However, it is not intended to achieve this in a way to sponsor, but the intention is that customers experience this spontaneously, and buyers involved, should feel as if they accidentally stumbled upon an exciting new product.

Given the fact that traditional media advertising (print media - newspapers and magazines, radio, television, posters and leaflets) is generally more expensive, Yuksekbilgili (2014, 2-7) considers the concept of guerrilla marketing campaigns an alternative that seeks to attract interest and the attention of customers and keep their attention by using unusual methods in unpredictable ways. Bigat (2012, 1022-1029) found that guerrilla marketing draws strength from creativity and imagination, which is why it is often hybrid marketing strategy that applies many practices, which distinguish it from traditional advertising. Through innovative design, materials and methods maximum level of turnover can be achieved at low cost. Finally, guerrilla marketing is a powerful tool for rapidly gaining competitive advantage, especially for small and medium enterprises in an increasingly competitive environment. Its goal is to maximize the public interest for the products and services of the company while reducing advertising costs. Guerrilla marketing (as well as guerrilla warfare) seeks to focus attention in a certain direction, and the way to achieve it is different, surprising, original and amusing, whereby it is carried out with a small budget.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF GUERRILLA MARKETING

Levinson (2008, 21, 80) claims that the companies which apply guerrilla marketing must monitor marketing campaigns of rivals, and be in trend with the latest trends. Also, they have to be aware of the happenings in the world and the situation in immediate surrounding (at local level), otherwise they could lag behind its competitors. Hutter and Hoffmann (2011, 39-54) believe that the reaction of customers to the campaign of guerrilla marketing can basically distinguish from the reaction to classic advertising because the guerrilla ads are extremely unconventional. Guerrilla Marketing appears in unconventional (unusual) places through unconventional media, where it intends to create surprise and diffusion effect (effect expansion). Isaac (2014, 175-190) noted that large companies with significant budgets, are potential users of traditional

marketing that measures success only by the sale, the number of responses or turnover in the store. The traditional marketing ignores future relationships with customers because the purchase takes place by the customers themselves, and focus is on predominantly short-term value of marketing. On the other hand, the strategies of guerrilla marketing are mainly oriented to small and medium-sized enterprises that have a small budgets. Size of profit can be measured only by something what is strived with and the intention is to build long-term relationships with customers. How Levinson and McLaughlin see the difference between traditional and guerrilla marketing, can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The difference between traditional and guerrilla marketing

Traditional marketing	Guerrilla marketing
The focus on business	Is business
Unclear message	Directed message
Investing money	Construction of Intellectual Property
Building a brand identity	Building relationships with clients
Increase revenue	Increase profits
The creation of the media's perception	Reality uncover
Speak and sales	Listens and serves
One size fits to all	One size does not fit anyone
He takes market share	Creates market

Source: Adapted from Levinson, McLaughlin, *Guerrilla Marketing for Consultants: Breakthrough tactics for winning profitable clients*, 2005, p. 11

Guerrilla marketing can have a positive, a negative or even neutral effect. So, Prévot (2009, 33-40) found that guerrilla marketing can have a positive effect on the perception of customers regarding product's brand. Namely, if the strategy of guerrilla marketing is done correctly, customers can be amazed by the creativity of the campaign of guerrilla marketing, which will not necessarily lead to an increase in the specific value of the brand, but will increase the intangible value of the brand or the firm's capital. Neutral effect of guerrilla marketing is reflected in the fact that, for example, customers are not aware of advertising directed at them. Given that some guerrilla marketing strategies depend on publicity, there could be absence of effect on the brand of the company if local or national media do not report the story related to the product. Finally, guerrilla marketing can have a negative effect. There is always the possibility that something goes wrong in any campaign, which applies particularly to the guerrilla marketing because it is based on the element of surprise. Guerrilla marketing campaign may endanger or disturb potential of customer, which can cause a negative effect on the brand value. The negative effects of guerrilla marketing are also observed by Zuo and Veil (2006, 8-11) to whom the guerrilla marketing can be an effective weapon in the fight

with the competition, but if it is improperly developed and implemented, it can have negative effects on the brand.

Levinson (2008, 21) believes that it is necessary to use marketing combinations when advertising, because the use of certain advertising channels (traditional marketing) does no longer works. Therefore, companies must use more marketing weapons or combination of tools of traditional marketing, and gives an example on how to make advertisements, where the company has a website, and how to send emails and promotional materials by mail.

5. SURVEY OF GUERRILLA MARKETING PERCEPTION IN CROATIA

The research was conducted on a sample of 117 respondents, where 45 were male and 72 of them were women. With respect to age, the study included 45 persons aged 19-25 years, 21 persons aged 26-32 years, 8 persons aged 33-39 years, 16 persons aged 40-46 years and 27 persons aged 47 years and older. With regard to the employment status, the questionnaire was filled in by 1 pupil, 29 students, 63 employed persons, 13 unemployed persons and 11 retirees. For the need of data analysis, it was provided one hypothesis which states:

H1: Younger people better perceive guerrilla marketing comparable to the older ones.

For testing this hypothesis the age and guerrilla marketing observation variables have been used (whether respondents have ever noticed guerrilla marketing). In analysis it has been used analysis of variance or ANOVA, and in order to check whether it is suitable for testing, Levene's test of homogeneity of variance in SPSS program was conducted, in order to find out if the assumption of equality of variance has been violated (Table 2).

Table 2. Levene's test

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3,382	4	112	,012

Levene's test showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not broken because the size of significance (Sig.) is greater than 0.05 and it is 0,012, therefore the analysis of variance is conducted (Table 3).

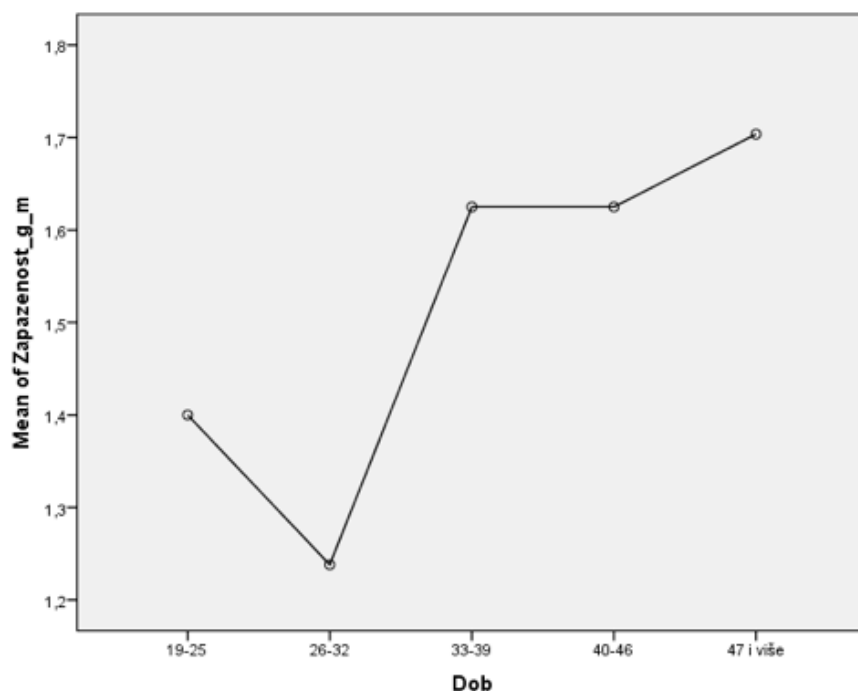
Table 3. Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3,367	4	,842	1,687	,158
Within Groups	55,864	112	,499		
Total	59,231	116			

As we can see in Table 3, there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of guerrilla marketing between younger and older population ($p = 0.158$). Therefore, we can conclude that both younger and older populations

perceive guerrilla marketing equally. Which age groups perceive best the guerrilla marketing; can be seen on the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Perception of guerrilla marketing given the age of the respondents



The averages diagram shows that the consumers aged 26-32 years best perceive guerrilla marketing, while consumers aged 47 and over at least perceive guerrilla marketing.

The study also sought to find out how respondents react to guerrilla marketing, and research results showed that to the majority of respondents (77) guerrilla marketing attracts attention, 12 respondents ignore it, while 5 respondents are encouraged to purchase. It should be noted that there were analyzed responses from 94 respondents, because all respondents who gave a negative reply to the question „Have you ever noticed guerrilla marketing?“ didn't continue with the survey.

Respondents were also asked the question in what way they would describe guerrilla marketing, where they could choose more than one answer. So, most of the respondents selected as guerrilla marketing is creative (54), followed by an unusual (41), and then an unexpected and surprising (37). Surprising (appears in unexpected places) has chosen 29 respondents, followed by mobile answer (appears in different places) that has chosen 23 participants, and then contagious (the story is about him), and an inspiring and stimulating (18). Aggressive answer was chosen by 11 participants, and finally follow the rest chosen by one participant, who mentioned under the answer that the guerrilla marketing is mostly irritating.

When the respondents were asked whether the guerrilla marketing attracts and retains their attention better than, for example ads on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc, the majority answered “Yes” (62). 16

respondents claimed that the guerrilla marketing does not attract and hold their attention better than ads on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc., while 6 respondents stated that both marketing equally attract and retain their attention. Since these were open type questions, participants had to devise their own answer. The most interesting responses were: “Guerrilla marketing is a great thing because it's about the story talked about in the population, but the ads are more effective because of the amount of information transmitted to the user. The main function of guerrilla marketing on the other hand is attention attraction, but it does not transmit information”, “Yes, it encourages me to think and to convey to others my opinion about it.”, “Yes, because it is certainly interesting to see advertisements on unusual places”, “Yes, although I try to resist it, there is always found something interesting” and “When an ad is interesting, it is not important in which way it is presented.”

Since creativity is a very important component of guerrilla marketing, respondents were asked whether they think creativity is important for the guerrilla marketing, and research results show that almost all respondents (89) believe that it is important. Only one respondent believes that it is irrelevant, while 4 respondents were not sure.

Due to the fact that respondents made themselves clear regarding the importance of creativity, they were required to mention the reason, and they replied that creativity is important for every marketing because it encourages interest and allows a person to pay more attention. If something is new and creative, the better the chances that people notice it. Furthermore, respondents indicated

that creativity is needed in order to create a way to attract someone's attention, and it is even more needed in searching of way to attain the attention. It is also mentioned that a more creative ad will attract attention sooner than a classic form of marketing activity. Respondents claim that creative solutions are interesting and imaginative, and thus attract more attention and also feel that without creativity there is no good marketing. Furthermore, creativity allows spontaneity in communication with the audience and encourages the communication and dissemination of news about seen advertisement. It is believed that it also raises the marketing to a higher level and opens new markets. It is also important because of originality and effectiveness, but also because of creative approach to the problem. Respondents state that creativity is important to reach a good effect with a little resource, and a good and humorous commercial will always attract a customer to buy the product even though he doesn't need it. Furthermore, they claim that without creativity the meaning is lost, where they mention that non-creative guerrilla marketing is irritating and tasteless. Finally, it is believed that creativity brings something new, where it is important to induce interest, simpler product promotion, but also because it goes beyond the usual offer.

As it is increasingly difficult to attract consumers attention because they are „bombarded” with promotional ads, respondents were asked what would firstly attract their attention in guerrilla marketing, and to the majority of respondents is creativity in message transmission what draws their attention (41 respondents). Then follows a message that is transmitted, colors, sounds, channel which carry the message and others. But, a part of the mentioned question, respondents were asked a question about what way of promotion through guerrilla marketing would immediately attract their attention. Majority of respondents would immediately be attracted to fanciful content (43 respondents). Then it follows a humorous content selected by about the same number of respondents (41). While instructive content attracted attention in 7 respondents, the attention of one respondent would be drawn to frightening content, while the attention of no respondent would be attracted to sad content. It is also necessary to specify that one respondent chose answer the other.

In the last question it was required to state why the chosen method of promotion would immediately attract their attention. The mentioned question was related to the question: “What content of guerrilla marketing would immediately attract your attention?” So they gave replies following up on the previous question (What content of guerrilla marketing would immediately attract your attention?). Respondents who replied in previous question that humorous content would immediately attract their attention, argued that it would attract their attention because they remember long what make them laugh, they love humor, it is about something new. When the promotion is humorous it gives better mood and brings serenity in everyday life, a message with a touch of humor makes a person laugh and cheer the person up, comit it to memory and keep telling it to others. Furthermore, the

respondents believe that the humorous is always easy to remember, creates a positive energy in person and attracts on purchase. In this way a high quality message transfer can be achieved, humor is a cure for all people, they would remember what they saw if it made them laugh, entertaining and humorous ways are the most memorable, longer stay in the memory and creates a positive reaction. Respondents who indicated that creative and imaginative advertising attracts attention argued that in it it is invested a lot of effort and talent, creativity provokes thinking, imagination would surprise a person and certainly influence the awareness and curiosity, the content would be different and unusual, a person would be happy and smile to imaginative idea, it is different from any other, due to diversity, the idea itself, because it's not monotonous, take you away from bitter reality, people are fed up with the expected traditional marketing messages, methods and channels, and because the traditional methods of advertising are too predictable. Respondents who replied that the informative content would attract their attention, mention that an individual will continue to think about it in the next period, they like to receive lessons in life from all sources, due to excitement and because these are new information. One respondent who mentioned that intimidating way would attracted his attention, gives the argument that it is because he cannot be so easy to scare.

Testing the hypothesis, it was concluded that both the younger and older population notice guerrilla marketing in the same way, where those in the age 26 to 32 years notice it most. As guerrilla marketing tends to attract attention of the target group, the survey showed that it is successful. Respondents describe it mostly as creative, and they argue that creativity is needed in order to attract customer's attention. However, the attention cannot be attracted in the same way at all customers because ones like more humorous content of the message, while others prefer creative and imaginative content of the message, whereas to the third ones the instructive content of the message.

CONCLUSION

Various authors define marketing in their own way, but most of them put emphasis on the customer. Since companies are aware that customers are crucial for their existence, they try to reach them through various marketing activities. But over the time the customers have become saturated with numerous advertising messages, and therefore were forced to find a new path to its target group, which has resulted in the development of guerrilla marketing. But, it was originally designed for small and medium enterprises in order to compete with large companies that have much larger budgets. The authors describe a guerrilla marketing as creative and unconventional, aiming to attract the attention of customers with minimal expenses.

Survey shows that the younger and the older population perceive guerrilla marketing in the same way, but it is mostly perceived by people aged 26 to 32 years, and the least by those aged 47 years and older. Theoretical

review shows that guerrilla marketing tries to attract the attention of customers, and survey confirms this because most of the respondents stated that it indeed attracts their attention. Respondents describe it as creative, and then unusual, and theoretically it is described in that way. Most respondents believe that creativity is the most important for the aforementioned type of marketing, which is also referred to in the literature. So, we can conclude that the theory is consistent with the practice or, as the guerrilla marketing is described in the literature, so the companies

try to apply it, what is concluded from respondents answers. However, it should be noted that all customers are not the same, so they should be approached carefully because some of them will be attracted by humorous content of the message, while to others will be more interesting instructive or imaginative content. Therefore, in order to be successful in marketing activities, the companies have to know the target to enable them to find out what message content is most appropriate for them.

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