

Incidence of Guerrilla Marketing Practices in Small and Medium Sized Turkish Exporters

Gökhan Çalışkan¹

Abstract

Guerrilla Marketing is a marketing tactic designed to attract prospects' attention and to obtain competitive advantage by utilizing low cost or no cost marketing activities. Its popularity has been increasing as markets become increasingly competitive. Small or Medium sized Turkish exporters may benefit from deploying guerrilla marketing practices in the exporting process. In this article, the implementation level of guerrilla marketing practices among different types of exporters is analyzed.

Keywords: *Guerrilla Marketing, Direct Exporter, Indirect Exporter, Marketing Practices.*

¹ East Marmara Development Agency, gokhancaliskan9038@gmail.com

Introduction

Markets become globalized and competition among firms increases day by day. Firms desiring to maximize their profits with the limited resources they possess attempt to open up new profitable markets via exportation. In order to sell products or services abroad, companies either may prefer direct exporting by establishing a new department, or work with another company which is proficient in exporting.

SMEs in Turkey carry out exporting directly or indirectly. In direct exporting, firms set up an exporting department which is responsible from all exportation procedures. In indirect exporting, another mediator company which is proficient in exporting, helps the company to realize exportation and undertakes all the risks in the process.

Global market conditions force firms to seek competitive advantage through increased marketing efficiency. These circumstances lead to the need for guerrilla marketing which focuses on acquiring competitive advantage and conveying a marketing message to the target market through low cost or no cost marketing solutions.

Guerrilla marketing is an unconventional way to make a profit on a narrow market segment through low cost and creative marketing tactics. At first, as a new concept, guerrilla marketing was used only by small firms, but now it is applied by companies of all sizes in the World and in Turkey. One may thus expect Turkish exporters to utilize guerrilla marketing practices.

In this article, the scope of guerrilla marketing activities as they are applied by small and medium sized Turkish exporters will be studied.

Theoretical Framework

Types of Exporters

Exporting is done either through direct or indirect exporters.

- Direct Exporting

Direct exporting involves marketing a company's products in international markets through its own efforts. In direct exporting there is no intermediary; hence, the company takes all the responsibilities and risks upon itself (Koyuncu 1998).

In direct exporting, a company has to establish an export department, be familiar with foreign countries' culture, contact foreign buyers, make market research, control physical distribution of goods in foreign country, and perform export formalities.

Hence, the exporter has to be more active in foreign markets in comparison to indirect exporting (Koyuncu 1998). This means that, the company has to establish and maintain the capacity to carry out direct exportation.

Despite its difficulties, direct exporters have more control upon distribution of the goods in the foreign market. They also obtain quicker and more accurate feedback about the market and the results of their marketing efforts (Koyuncu 1998)

- Indirect Exporting

In indirect exporting, an exporter utilizes independent intermediaries to sell its outputs in foreign markets. Since these intermediaries are professionally engaged in international trade, the manufacturer does not need to have an export department, to do market research, or to maintain sales representatives in foreign markets (Koyuncu 1998).

When a company starts to sell its goods in foreign markets through indirect exporting, it does not have to make additional investments which would increase the company's fixed costs. By such cost reduction and minimization of inefficiencies due to inexperience in foreign markets, the firm can vary its product range, obtain new experience, open up to new markets abroad, and prepare itself to direct exporting (Koyuncu 1998).

In the 1980's the Turkish government encouraged Foreign Trade Capital Companies (FTCC) which have been implemented successfully in Japan and South Korea, to support Turkish exporters (Yalçın 1998). The target was to establish large FTCC's where experience in foreign trade will accumulate and exports by small and medium sized firms will be facilitated (Öncü 2000). In practice, however, the small number of giant FTCC's were soon dominated by a few giant firms which exploited SME exporters (Baykal 1998). To support the SME exporters, the Turkish government encouraged SME exporters to pool their capital, experiences, and knowledge into Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies (SFTC).

Brokerage is also important in the development of exportation (Akin 2009). Brokers find buyers and sellers on the internet or official websites related to exportation, such as; www.dtm.gov.tr, www.igeme.gov.tr. These e-brokers convey the purchasing demands from buyer to seller or transmit the selling demands from seller to buyer without revealing their contact information at first. If the mutual demands overlap, e-broker makes a contract with buyer or seller for an intermediary commission.

Guerrilla Marketing Practices

Guerrilla Marketers employ scientific facts and human nature while designing their marketing strategy. Some essential practices of guerrilla marketers are stated below.

Repetition

Most purchase decisions are motivated by the subconscious. The marketer needs a share of mind, a place in the prospect's subconscious, before he earns a share of the market. An effective way of accessing the subconscious of people is repetition (Levinson, 1989).

According to the results of a year-long study, to make the marketing message locate in the prospect's mind, the prospect should be exposed to the message at least 9 times; moreover, two out of three messages are ignored by the prospect. Hence, the marketer has to repeat the message a total of 27 times to ensure its registration (Levinson, 1989).

When a person sees the marketing message three times in different media (via commercials, newspaper advertisements, billboards, etc.) only one impression is formed in the prospect's mind about the product. Until the 15th repetition, the prospect knows something about the marketing message, but feels unresponsive regarding the product. After 15 times, the prospect begins to feel a sense of familiarity concerning the product and the company. When the prospect observes the 21st repetition, 7th impression is formed in the prospect's mind and the consumer candidate starts to consider the benefit of ownership and how to pay for the product. At the 24th repetition the consumer candidate starts to evaluate the clearness of the product's identity and the consistency of the advertisement's offer which persuades the prospect to buy the product. As the 27 repetition advertisement is perceived by the consumer candidate, the required 9 impressions become embedded in the prospect's subconscious. So, the prospect makes the purchasing decision, and the business owner obtains the tangible proof of repetition's efficacy (Levinson, 1989).

This scientific fact may be called 27/9/1 rule which expresses that 27 repetitive messages provide the required 9 impressions to materialize one purchasing decision.

- Mind Map of Prospects

A human's brain functions fall into two categories. Functions of the left brain and the right brain are engaged in different activities. Left brain functions are analytic

thought, logic, language, numbers, science and maps. Right brain functions are colour, holistic thought, creativity, intuition, art and music. Generally, people use one of these functions more intensively; hence, they may be referred to as left brained person or right brained person. For instance, left brained people are more successful in highly analytical fields such as IT, engineering and law (Sullivan 2009). On the other hand, right brained people are more productive in social fields such as art, public relations, copying of designs, discrimination of shapes e.g. picking out a camouflaged object, understanding geometric properties, reading faces, music, global holistic processing, understanding of metaphors, expressing emotion, etc. (Sperry 2007). Therefore, left brained people have different sphere of interests compared to right brained people.

As a result, a marketing campaign or strategy can be twice as effective if the marketer aims it at both right and left brained people (Levinson, 1989).

- Selling Oneself

There are two types of bonds: Human bond and business bond. People would much rather do business with a friend than anyone else. Especially in the service sector, a marketer should become a friend before making a business deal (Levinson, 1989).

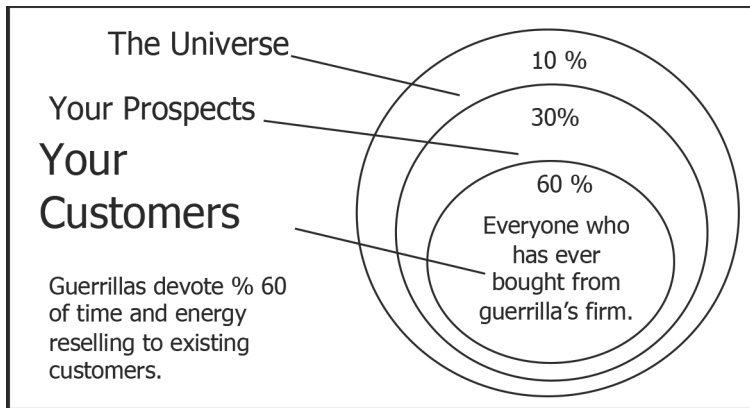
In addition, customers buy a lot more than the product and the service a marketer offers; they buy the marketer's personality. The marketer's job is to enhance his acceptance by the entire community or industry. Thus, a marketer should sell himself/herself before his product or service (Levinson, 1989).

- Identity

One of the most important human needs is having an identity. Recognizing the identity of prospects is one of the essential components of the marketing process. People are interested in themselves; hence, if a marketer wants to appeal to them, the marketer should make the customer feel special. Furthermore, the marketer should relate the offering directly to the customers and should do it in such way that the product or service is the most fascinating part of his message (Levinson 1989).

- Timing

One of the components of guerrilla marketers' success is using time efficiently. Guerrilla marketers conduct their marketing campaigns simultaneously on three fronts: the universe, their prospects, and their customers (Levinson, Gallagher, and Wilson 1989).

FIGURE.1 TIMING IN GUERRILLA MARKETING

Source : Levinson, J. C. (1989). *Guerrilla Marketing Attack New Strategies, Tactics & Weapons For Winning Big Profits From Your Small Business*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, p 18

To a guerrilla marketer, everyone in the universe is a potential customer. However, in guerrilla marketing only 10 percent of a market's time is spent on attempts to communicate to this audience. These efforts increase the cognition of marketer's identity in the marketplace.

Guerrilla marketers devote 30 % of their time and resources to their prospects who have a potential need. 60 % of their time, however, is spent on concentrating on existing customers; i.e. everyone who has ever bought from the guerrilla's firm (Levinson, Gallagher, and Wilson 1989).

- Gathering Relevant Information

Guerrilla marketers should utilize as many sources of information on their markets and customers as possible.

From the preceding discussion, it follows that a guerrilla marketer must

- a) Use repetition
- b) Appeal to the entire mind map of prospects ; i.e. both right and left halves of their brains
- c) Sell himself before he sells the product
- d) Recognize the identity of the customers
- e) Spend 60 % of his time with his customers; 30 % with his prospects; and only 10 % with his universe.
- f) Collect relevant information.

Research Methodology

13 questions were designed to measure the presence of six basic guerrilla marketing practices. (See Table 1) among different type of Turkish exporters. For example, Q.2 and 3 measure the use of repetition; Q4 and 7 measure interest in the identity of customers; Q12 and 13 measure timing; Q 1, 8, 9, 11 measure information collection ; Q.6 measure selling oneself first ; and Q.5 and Q.10 are included as basic guerrilla practices. Each question was evaluated on a five point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4), to Strongly Agree (5). The ratings were obtained via personal interviews and online survey form. Initially, the questionnaire was sent to 178 SMEs Export Managers' whose e-mail addresses were obtained from the General Secretariat of Istanbul Mineral and Metals Exporters' Association. Additionally, 59 emails were sent to York-Trade Business Club an association of exporters and export intermediaries. Although a total of 237 emails were sent twice, only 23 questionnaires were returned by SMEs export managers and export intermediaries. Another 75 interviews were then conducted face to face with SMEs export managers selected on a convenience basis. Thus, the study comprised a total of 98 responses.

Cronbach alpha was used in order to determine the reliability of the scales in this study. Cronbach's alpha can range from 0.0 to 1.0 and indicates the strength of the relationship between items within a scale. If variances of the coefficients of the alpha is 0.70, the research is reliable. Some researchers suggest that when the number of questions is low in the questionnaire, the research would be acceptable if the alpha coefficient is greater than 0.6 (Sipahi, Yurtkoru, & Çinko, 2008, p. 89). Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.839 for the marketing practices questionnaire, thus indicating reliability.

Findings

The extent to which guerrilla marketing is being practiced by Turkish SME managers is shown in Table One. Table One gives the mean values for each questions.

TABLE ONE. THE MEAN VALUES OF MARKETING PRACTICES IN DESCENDING ORDER

	Marketing Practices	Mean
3	I try to convey the same marketing message to customers consistently.	4,30
11	In marketing work, I take scientific studies and cultural differences into consideration.	4,19
4	I approach customers as special individuals.	4,11
2	I am patient while dealing with customers. I do not hesitate to call again the customers' who did not respond positively at first.	4,09
5	In dealing with customers, I utilize social and emotional approach in addition to commercial one.	4,05
7	In selling, I often ask questions and listen actively.	4,02
1	I collect information regarding rival companies and market.	3,97
8	I take notice of and actively use free information sources related to my job that are provided by government and associations.	3,91
9	I take notice of and utilize financial, technical, and publicity supports provided by government and associations.	3,69
10	First, I focus on a narrow market segment product line. After I am successful, I broaden my market segment and product line.	3,61
13	I allocate 30 percent of my working time to find new customers.	3,53
12	I allocate 60 percent of my working time to existing customers.	3,52
6	I try to sell myself before selling a good.	3,40
Mean Value of Marketing Practices		3,88

The highest average value in the questionnaire is obtained by Question #3. Therefore, it can be stated that the companies endeavor to be consistent by giving the marketing message. Question #11 ranks second which means the companies that are sensitive to the cultural differences and utilize scientific studies in marketing work; they regard customers as special individuals. Additionally, Question Three implies that exporters and/or brokers are patient while dealing with customers.

On the other hand, exporters and brokers relatively deficient in selling themselves (Q.6), spending equal time for finding new customers (Q.12 and Q.13), gathering information (Q.9,8 and 1); the values of three questions are below 4.0. Furthermore, exporters and export intermediaries do not seem to adhere to the guerrilla marketing timing model (Q.10).

The difference between different types of exporters in terms of guerrilla marketing application is shown in Table Two.

TABLE TWO. MARKETING PRACTICES AMONG DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXPORTERS

Participants	Number of Participants	Mean Value of Marketing Practices
Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies	3	4,21
Brokers	23	4,11
Direct Exporters	72	3,80
Total	98	3,87

Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies have the highest mean value of marketing practices (4,21) among all participants. As it has been mentioned earlier, Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies were established by bringing SME company's capital, experiences, and knowledge together to develop their export performance. So, Guerrilla marketing is implemented by Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies to a larger extent than the other companies that are engaged in direct or indirect exporting.

Another important observation from Table Two is that brokers occupy the second rank. The mean value of brokers (4,11) is greater than that of the exporters' (3,87). It can be said that they possess more guerrilla marketing practice compared to exporters.

The statistical significance of the differences between different types of exporters was analyzed. Results are shown in Table Three.

TABLE THREE. TEST OF HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES FOR MARKETING PRACTICE

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0,572	2	95	0,566

Significant value of Levene Statistic is 0,566 which means ANOVA test could be performed.

TABLE FOUR. ANOVA TEST FOR MARKETING PRACTICE

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,240	2	1,120	4,180	0,018
Within Groups	25,461	95	0,268		
Total	27,701	97			

Table Four indicates that significant value of ANOVA test is 0,018 which is lower than 0,05. This static shows the existence of a statistically significant difference among marketing practices according to type of exporters. However, Tukey output of Anova test should be observed in order to compare which type of exporter implements more than others. Tukey output of Anova is given in Table Five.

TABLE FIVE. TABLE OF TUKEY OUTPUT

(I) Types of Exporters	(J) Types of Exporters	Mean = Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Direct Exporters	Brokers	-,33073*	,12400	,024
	Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies	-,41880	,30505	,359
Brokers	Direct Exporters	,33073*	,12400	,024
	Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies	-,08807	,31779	,959
Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies	Direct Exporters	,41880	,30505	,359
	Brokers	,08807	,31779	,959

This statistic indicates that there is a statistically significant difference among marketing practices only between brokers and direct exporters; the incidence of guerrilla marketing practices is higher among brokers as compared to direct exporters (Brokers - Direct Exporter = 0,33073). Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies exhibited no statistically significant difference in this respect.

On the other hand, the number of sectoral foreign trade companies and brokers as participants are less than thirty; therefore, Kruskal-Wallis test, which is non-parametric alternative to ANOVA, has been also implemented. Findings are given in Table Six.

TABLE SIX. TEST STATISTICS a,b

	Marketing Practice
Chi-Square	8,573
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,014

Significant value of Kruskal Wallis test is 0, 014 which is lower than 0,05. This statistic shows that there is a statistically significant difference among marketing practices according to type of exporters (Direct exporter, broker, sectoral foreign trade company).

Types of Exporters	N	Mean Rank
Marketing Practices	3	65,33
Sectoral Foreign Trade Companies	23	63,22
Brokers	72	44,46
Direct Exporters	98	
Total		

Table Seven implies that the incidence of guerrilla marketing practices is ordered from highest to lowest as sectoral foreign trade companies, brokers, and direct exporters. Thus, the result of Kruskal Wallis test is the same as the ANOVA test for implementation of guerrilla marketing practices among different type of exporters.

Conclusion

The study has shown that:

Guerrilla marketing practices are being applied by SME's in Turkey to some extent (3.88/5.00), but there is considerable room for improvement. Guerrilla marketers must increase their skills and motivation especially in

- selling themselves,
- allocating their time,
- market targeting , and
- information gathering, in that order.

Incidence of guerrilla marketing seem to be highest among Sectoral Foreign Trade Company managers, and lowest among Direct Exporters. This suggests that, especially the latter should be more receptive to training and development offered by institutions such as IGEME (Export Promotion Center of Turkey) and KOSGEB.

In interpreting the findings of this study, one must consider its limitations in terms of the size of the sample and the voluntariness of participation. Furthermore, this study has ignored to analyze the match or mismatch between the personalities of respondents and personalities of guerrilla marketers. Future research along these lines may prove fruitful.

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