INFLUENCE OF GUERRILLA MARKETING ON CELL PHONE BUYING DECISIONS IN URBAN MARKET OF CHHATTISGARH-A STUDY

Rahul Sharma

Research Scholar (Ph.D), Management

Dr. C.V. Raman University, Kargiroad, Kota, Bilaspur (C.G)

Dr. Sudhir Kumar Sharma

Professor & Head, Department of Commerce

Govt. J.P. Verma PG Arts &Commerce College, Bilaspur (C.G)

Abstract: Mobile phone today becomes life line of the peoples and do not remain just a medium of voice communication rather than becomes an entertaining device. In the present era, people does not purchase mobile phones just to remain in touch rather youth today use it to express their thoughts via social networking, play games, read news, surf on the internet, listen to music, chat instantly with friends & families and even use it for e-commerce activities. Today consumers were trying to block the promotional messages as they are surrounded with tremendous amounts of advertisements which annoy them, thus, it has become very crucial for cell phone companies to differentiate their marketing. Heavy promotion expenses to compete in market are cutting the profit margin of companies. One way of lowering the promotion cost is guerrilla marketing, which is very innovation, unusual and eye catching and attracts consumers easily.Guerrilla marketing was based on guerrilla warfare techniques used in military. It is an unconventional marketing approach with the objective of maximum result from minimum resource. This research paper will throw light on the basic principles of Guerrilla marketing and to examine the various tools and tactics used in it. This paper will also provide an insight about effects of Guerrilla marketing on cell phone buying behavior of the consumers. This paper may be useful in increasing companies' understanding of the concept of guerrilla marketing and how this can be used in a successful way.

Key Words: Guerrilla Marketing, Ambient Marketing, WOM Communication, Viral Marketing, Buzz Marketing, Stealth Marketing, Wild Posting, Ambush marketing

INTRODUCTION

Marketing and advertisements are all around us and we are constantly influenced by different kind of messages. In 1965, marketers could reach 80% of a mainstream target audience with three TV advertisement spots. By 2002, 127 spots were required to achieve the same reach (Bianco, 2004).From a company's point of view, the main goal is to reach as many potential buyers as possible and create awareness. Nowadays, the customer has the ability to block the channels used by the advertiser; people tend to put no-signs on their postboxes, delete mass advertisement through mail and are able to cut out commercial breaks on television and radio due to new technologies. Research shows that consumers are avoiding traditional advertising with new technology or mentally and even with increasing success (Speck and Elliot, 1997). A way of doing this is to expose customers to messages in an unconventional way.

Guerrilla marketing is used for breaking the old conventional perceptions and leading to "wow factor" by creating a surprise effect. It is efficient, rebellious, and infectious in nature as the recipient further spread this message and gets highly attached with the associated brand. Kraus *et al.* (2010)

state that guerrilla marketing stands for a variety of low-cost, high-impact marketing techniques that allow small companies and/or individuals to act like big companies. The term guerrilla marketing is nowadays in 2015 also used more loosely as a descriptor for non-traditional media, such as: ambush, viral, buzz, stealth, experimental and tissue-pack marketing. In spite of the various uses of the term guerrilla marketing, a consistent definition has not been proclaimed. For this research, guerrilla marketing is proposed as an unconventional marketing method, which comes at an unpredictable moment, in an original and relevant way and provides impact on the right moment focusing on the right target group. In addition, guerrilla marketing actions are often only one-time, limited in scope, and seldom repeatable. Although as a result from a "low-budget, only suitable for small businesses" definition by Levinson (1984) at the beginning of the guerrilla marketing emerging, the last few years have also faced an increased use of guerrilla marketing campaigns by large companies such as Heineken.Guerrilla marketing is achieving conventional goals, such as profits and joy, with unconventional methods, such as investing energy instead of money (Sharma, R. 2014).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study various tools & tactics of Guerrilla marketing used by marketers and their influence on cell phone buying behavior in urban market.
- To analyze the impact of Guerrilla Marketing on consumers buying decisions of cell phones in terms of factors influencing brand and model choice.
- To determine the factors of Guerrilla Marketing which drives consumers to buy a new cell phone.
- To know the perception of cell phone consumers towards various tools & tactics of Guerrilla Marketing.
- To identify the most recalled and credible tool of Guerrilla marketing among customers of cell phones.

METHODOLOGY USED

A sample size of 500 respondents was selected for the research. The whole urban population of the Chhattisgarh is divided into five quota based on geographical location. A sample of 100 respondents were selected from each quota based on the ease of the researcher to get the primary data and various ads of companies using guerrilla marketing tools were showed to them. A structured questionnaire is prepared using a predetermined and verified scale under the guidance of the supervisor which was divided into three parts. The initial contacts with the consumers were done through survey. The questionnaires were distributed among the retail shops of city and consumers who purchased the handsets were asked to fill the questionnaire. The researcher has explained the basic concept about the unusual advertisements in a very simple and general language for better understanding. The questionnaire was got filled inside the retail shops to ensure the relaxed atmosphere and better recall of ads consumers used to watch usually.

GUERRILLA MARKETING

Guerrilla marketing is an approach, and as its name reveled one could easily understand it as a controversial form of marketing, since the name is adopted from the warfare tactics of military. The term guerilla marketing has its roots from the concept guerilla warfare and describes a group that uses a violent approach to achieve the implementation of their beliefs and ideology. The combat operation was used by small groups that stood against large armies. (Fahrenholz et al, 2008).This is a

strategy where one could take a win on his competitor with a much planned manner in a smaller scale. Companies use warfare to fight on the battleground of today, the consumer's mind – where words and pictures are the weapons used and where the CEO of every company acts as a general (Garsombke, 1987).

Guerrilla marketing is a special type of marketing strategy which is nowadays designed for marketing mix model and mainly used in 'P' (promotion) element. Levinson (2006) says that when one company uses this form of marketing, he is actually trying to weaken his rivalries using unconventional methods and stay profitable in the market even with the very limited resources. According to Levinson, guerrilla marketing is:"*A body of unconventional ways of pursuing conventional goals. It is a proven method of achieving profits with minimum money*." (gmarketing.com, 2009).

RULES OF GUERRILLA MARKETING

According to Baltes and Leibing (2008), there are seven tactical rules of warfare, which illustrate the principles on which guerrilla marketing relies.

- ➢ The *first* tactical rule is that guerrilla marketing is concentrating the company's resources (time, place, and topic) to achieve temporary superiority (Baltes& Leibing,2008).
- ➢ The *second* tactical rule is to sell the ideology along with the product, not the product alone (*ibid.*, 2008).
- ➢ The *third* tactical rule is to identify established patterns, analyze them and overcome these patterns (Baltes&Leibing, 2008).
- ➢ The *fourth* tactical rule is that guerrilla marketing should search for synergies (*ibid.*).
- ➢ The *fifth* tactical rule is to try to outsmart any perception filters established in the target group (Baltes&Leibing, 2008).
- ➢ The *sixth* tactical rule is that you should not go the direct way; instead trying to find detours offering alternatives (*ibid.*).
- ➢ The *seventh* tactical rule is that while using guerrilla marketing, a company should be flexible and agile instead of building strongholds (Baltes&Leibing, 2008).

KEY PRINCIPLES

There are a number of key principles that characterize guerrilla marketing. These can be remembered by the acronym NEAPS.

- • Networks - businesses should constantly look to make contacts and build relationships.
- • Energy - remember that every contact and every day is an opportunity to market your company. This is called 360 degree marketing.
- • Activity - be aware that there are always opportunities to make your product known and find ways of doing this when the opportunity arises.
- • Presence - find ways to make your business known to the market. This could be through chat rooms, email, forums, discussion boards, radio, magazine, street posters, and graffiti and so on.

- Smart - make sure that you do not offend customers. (Some businesses have in fact turned this rule on its head by deliberately offending people they know are unlikely to be customers and they then use the controversy to create awareness in their target audience.)

GUERRILLA WEAPONS FOR CELL PHONE MARKETING

Levinson in his official website gmarketing.com has listed about 200 tools of guerrilla marketing commonly used by the companies worldwide. Cell phone companies use some of these tools and bundled them with their traditional practices. These tools were identified by the researcher and discussed briefly in this research.
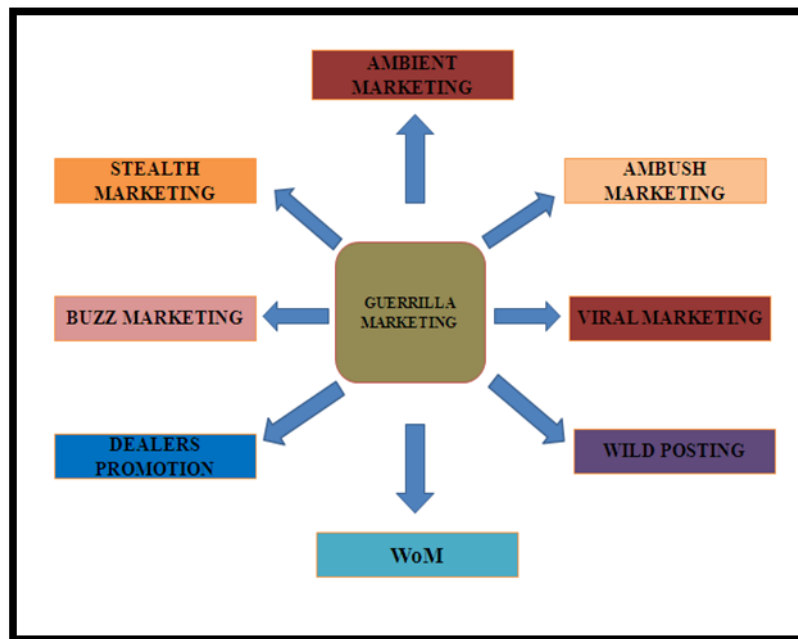

Figure 1: List of Guerrilla Marketing Weapons used in Cell Phone Marketing (Own Source)

(a) Ambient Marketing

'Ambient' is a term that in relation with advertising was first used in 1996 by Concord Advertising, an outdoor campaigns' specialized agency from the UK. Luxton and Drummond (2000) define Ambient Marketing as *"placement of advertising inunusual and unexpected places often with unconventional methods and being first or only ad execution to do so"*. As Hutter and Hoffmann (2011) state, ambient marketing represents theguerrilla variant of traditional outdoor advertising. (Sharma, R. 2015).

(b) Ambush Marketing

Sandler and Shani (1998) describe ambush marketing as "the efforts by non-sponsoring organisations in a planned effort (campaign) to associate themselves indirectly with an event in order to gain at least some of the recognition and benefits that are associated with being an official sponsor". McKelvey (1994) described it as "a company's intentional effort to weaken or ambush its competitor's official sponsorship".According to Crompton (2004) ambushing has two complementary goals. The first is to abate the public's perceptions of a competitor's official

association with an event, so official sponsors derive less benefit from that association than might have been anticipated. The second goal is to associate obliquely with the sports event in order to gain some of the recognition and benefits that are associated with being an official sponsor (Sharma, R. 2014).

(c) Buzz marketing

'Buzz' refers to the sound of a lot of people talking and is basically "the sum of all comments about a certain product that are exchanged among people at any time" (Rosen 2000). "The buzz marketing is like a virus, it is ideally spread with a predefined target which will relay the message to the people who love surrounding the same products and services that carry the message (Sharma, R. 2014). To get people talking or the creation of 'buzz' is the goal of every buzz marketing campaign. In a world where advertising is classic denigrated by a growing consumer, buzz marketing appears to be a real alternative to war trusts. The actual intention of buzz marketing is to reach a critical mass of adopters for a company's new product more rapidly (Sharma, R. 2014).

(d) Wild Posting

Wild posting advertisements are exposed to people as they walk the streets and have roots from traditional advertising such as billboards, city lights and other outdoor activities. Wild posting ads are usually placed building walls, construction site barricades and other available public urban spaces for advertising. Construction site barricades are the most popular location. Wild Postings consist of street posters, sidewalk ads, magnetic wild posters, transport door hangers, and other non-traditional media (Sharma, R. 2014). However locations for wild posting change often due to temporary nature of construction projects and duration is usually one to two weeks. Wild postings show much better result in large urban areas with high pedestrian traffic (Sharma, R. 2014). Wild posting alone might not be very effective as the ad size is small and legal spaces for placement are limited. That's why wild postings are used as additional element in marketing campaigns (Sharma, R. 2014).

(e) Stealth Marketing

Stealth Marketing is also known as undercover marketing, as the advertising may appear to consumers as some other form of communication. Stealth marketing is a highly developed technique of cheating that often escapes the notice of tens of millions of online users. It is named after famous fighter planes that can avoid radar detection—the Stealth fighter. Stealth marketing strategies are developed to efficiently break through the consumers advertising shield. The intention of stealth marketing is to reach out with marketing product messages. The goal is to plant the marketing message without consumers realizing that the messages are company sponsored, and thereby generate positive attitudes toward the product. (Sharma, R. 2014).

(f) Viral Marketing

The actual term *viral* is what turns people off to this technique because of the word's negative connotation. But, the origination of the term does come from a disease driven definition. The term —viral marketing takes us back to early nineties where businesses realized the great potential of

viral marketing and started to use it more widely (Kirby & Marsden, 2006). According to Rayport (2007) this phenomenon facilitates and encourages individuals to forward a marketing message. A company through creation of contents that motivates a person to forward the message to friends and family could achieve this. During the years, viral marketing has been described in many different ways, Kirby and Marsden (2006) explains that viral marketing is: *"The promotion of a company or its products and services through a persuasive message designed to spread, typically online, from person to person"*(Sharma, R. 2015).

(g) Word of mouth communication (WOM)

Ardnt (1967) describes word-of mouth marketing as: "Oral person to person communication between a receiver and a communicator, whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, concerning a brand, a product or a service." WOM is a consumer-dominated means of marketing communication where the sender is independent of the market. Therefore it is perceived to be more trustworthy, credible, and valid by consumers compared to firm-initiated communications (Schiffman et al. 1995). The "Like Me" principle makes customers to follow and trust more to the customer created information rather than the seller created one. (Raluca,2012). In other words, customers rely on WOM more than any other type of traditional communication; because it is objective and independent.

(h) Dealer's promotion

Dealers' promotion also known as Dealers push is also a Guerrilla marketing tactic, and is widely used by all the companies nowadays. Traditionally this tool is used to promote FMCG products, especially non branded products, but now, almost all the companies were using this weapon along with their traditional promotional campaigns. This *tool* provides high penetration rate, high sales which is favorable for small entrepreneur and local players who has very less promotional budgets to compete in the local market with the big giants like MNC's or big companies national companies.The strategy behind this tactic is to assist the dealer's in promoting a specific brand/model through in store promotions and motivating dealers to put an extra effort to push a brand/model in the market. Dealers need to convenience the customers for purchasing the brand by giving effective sales pitch based on features, price, design, efficiency, and services associated with the product.

CELL PHONE BUYING BEHAVIOUR

As cell phone falls under the category of specialty goods, the decision process is detailed in this case and thus mobile phone purchases is found as extended or complex decision-making processes. There are numerous models trying to explain consumer behaviour. A simplified model for showing cell phone buying process is presented in figure 5.5 which is adapted from the model given by Cant et al. (2004).
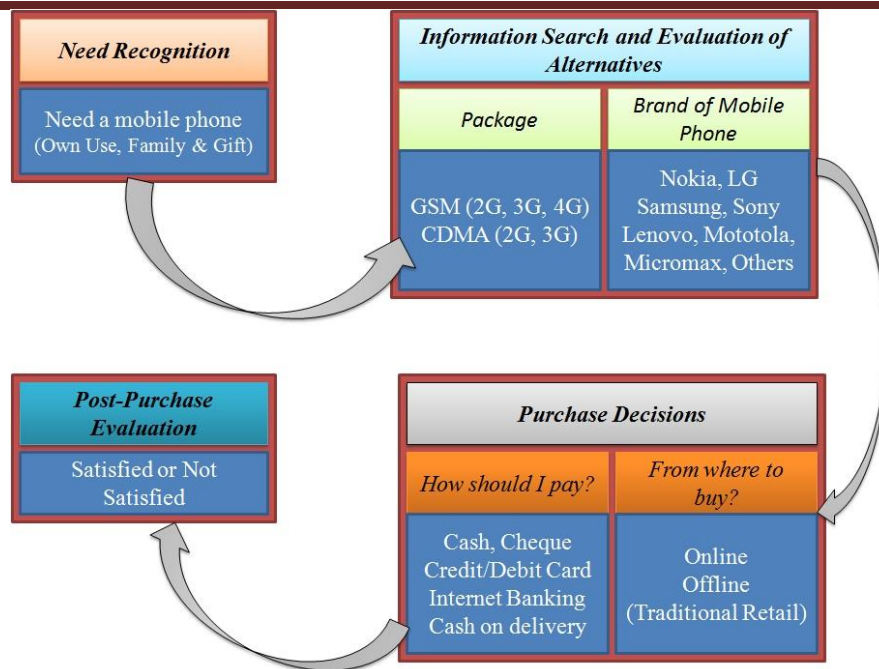
Figure 2: Cell phone buying process (Adapted from Cant et al. (2004))

The whole cell phone buying steps was divided into four steps: Need recognition, Information search and evaluation of alternatives, Purchase decisions and post – purchase evaluation.

- **Need recognition**: Here person recognizes the need of new cell phone which may be used to give as a gift or for the use of some family member or for self-utilization. The need for self-utilization is aroused due to upgraded technology & features offered, on viewing certain Ads, or due to status and prestige factor.

- **Information Search & Evaluation of Alternatives**: Once the need of new cell phone aroused, consumer starts gathering the information regarding various brands and packages available in the market which suits his need to be satisfied. Evaluation of alternatives was based on pros and cons of brands, models available and packages. Consumer tries to select the best combination of each attribute with respect to the need.

- **Purchase Decision**: When consumers arrive to the decision with respect to brand, model, and package, the next thing which he thinks about is the place of buying and mode of payment. Consumer may go online or traditional store as per his suitability and convenience, likewise mode of payment is also selected. It is to be noted that maximum consumers opt the mode of cash on delivery while online shopping due to the factor of trust (Bhargav. S, 2015).

- **Post – Purchase Evaluation**: After using the cell phone, the consumer may form a perception and attitude towards brand. If the performance of phone is good, it will satisfied the consumer and vice versa. In case of gift, consumers seek the feedback from the person whom it is given to judge the performance. Satisfaction results in repeat purchase and selection of same brand whereas dissatisfaction results in loss of customers as they switch the brand and never consider it at the next purchase.

GUERRILLA WEAPONS INFLUENCING CONSUMERBUYING DECISIONS – A MODEL OF COMPLEX DECISION MAKING

A new model of complex buying decision is developed which was based on Engel, Kollat and Blackwell model of decision making. This model shows the influence created by marketing stimuli i.e in this case guerrilla marketing tools over complex buying decisions of the customers. This model is developed as per the requirement of the study as cell phone buying falls under the category of complex (extended) buying decisions. Figure 3 shows the model of marketing stimuli (Guerrilla weapons) over complex buying decisions.
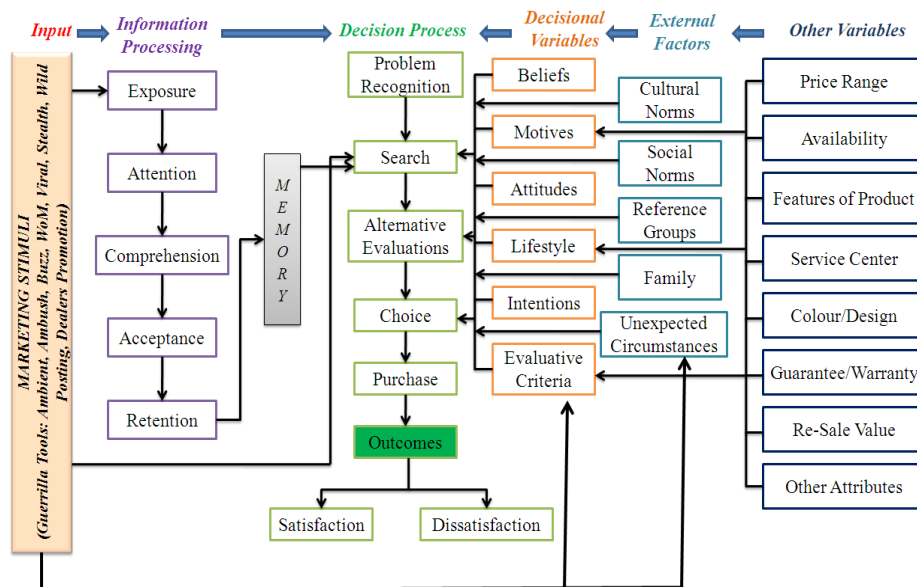

Figure 3: Influence of marketing stimuli (guerrilla marketing weapons) on complex buying decisions (Own Compilation)

The model developed above consists of six stages. They are:

i.   First stage: decision-process stages

The central focus of this model is on five basic decision-process stages: Problem recognition, search for alternatives, alternative evaluation, purchase, and outcomes (satisfaction or dissatisfaction). All consumers necessarily don't undergo all the stages: it depends upon the type of product about which the decision of purchase has to be taken. In the present case of cell phone, consumers goes through all the stages of decision making. Repeat purchase of brand may seen many times but same model was not purchased again.

ii.   Second stage: Information input

Marketing Stimuli (Guerrilla marketing weapons in present case) act as the input to the information search process of the consumer when he gathers the information to satisfy his unfulfilled need. Consumer either exposed to the messages placed by marketers or recall the previous watched promotions stored in his memory.

iii. Third stage: Information Processing

After exposure to the ads, consumer's to undergone from the stage of ACAR (Attention, Comprehension, Acceptance, and Retention). Here first consumer pay attention towards the various marketing stimuli or ads (guerrilla weapons in present case), which can be understood and accepted by the consumer and this information, is stored in the memory. Whenever the need is aroused, the stored information in the memory is recalled and act as the input to the search process.

iv. Fourth stage: Decisional variables influencing the decision process

This stage consists of individual and decisional variables that affect the three stages of the decision process i.e. information search, alternative evaluation, and choice stages. Decisional variable includes beliefs, motives, attitude, lifestyle, intention of purchase, and evaluating criteria. These factors affect and alter the information searched, at the time of evaluation and choice already made based on evaluation of alternatives. Apart from this, these variables were also affected or changed due to marketing stimulus.

v. Fifth stage: External factors influencing the decision process

This stage consists of external factors on which consumers does not have any control like cultural factors, social factors, group, & family factors. Unexpected circumstances faced by the consumers which alter or postpone the purchasing decision, also included in this stage. Likewise the third stage, these variables also affect the three stages of decision making process i.e. information search, alternative evaluation, and choice stages. These external factors also influences the decisional variables and also get influenced by marketing stimulus.

vi. Sixth stage: Other factors influencing the decision process

This stage consists of all other factors which will alter or affect the decision of consumers. Factors such as price range, availability of product, features of the product, availability of service center, colour/design of the product, guarantee/warranty associated with the product, re-sale value, and other important attributes related to product and services will heavily affect the above mentioned three stages of purchase decisions. These other variables also affect the decisional variables.

This model incorporates all the items which influence the complex decisions making of the consumers. This model is applicable to all the items which are costly and high-priced. Consumers exert extra effort on arriving to a particular choice by extensive gathering of information and careful evaluation of all the available alternatives. Thus above mention variables may heavily affect and influence the purchase decision. At any stage if consumer found things inappropriate, he starts the whole process from beginning.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ➢ It was revealed that innovative ads placed by the companies influences brand/ model choice of the consumers. The degree of influence is found moderately at 35%.
- ➢ It was revealed that influence of guerrilla marketing is low when people think about all aspects and alternatives before arriving to purchase decisions.

➢ It was revealed that the factors of guerrilla marketing which drive people mostly for cell phone purchasing are *"Eye-catching & Memorable", "Group Influence" and "Prestige"*.

➢ It was found consumers possess positive perception towards various techniques of guerrilla marketing.

➢ It was found that information provided by friends and family (WOM communication) is most recalled and credible tools of guerrilla marketing.

➢ Ambush is found as least recalled and least credible tool among all techniques.

➢ This study shows that various phone attributes did not have any implications on the consumers' willingness of spending amount on new cell phone purchase as well as their frequency of changing cell phones.

➢ It was revealed that people often recalls guerrilla marketing tools when they use to purchase a new cell phone.

➢ It was also revealed that recall of guerrilla marketing techniques does not have any implications over the amount spend on cell phone by consumers.

➢ It was found that people find guerrilla marketing techniques enough credible to rely their purchase decision of cell phones.

➢ It was also noted that people don't find any guerrilla marketing tool credible when they purchase a cell phone to fulfill their need of it.

➢ Study reveals that credibility of guerrilla marketing tools have implication on the amount spend by consumers for purchasing a new cell phone and frequency of purchase and influences their decisions.

➢ This study finds that perception of consumers towards different guerrilla marketing tool has positive influence on cell phone buying behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study was focused on influence of guerrilla marketing on cell phone buying decisions in urban market of Chhattisgarh. This research thoroughly reviewed the concepts of guerrilla marketing along with its various tools and tactics and buying behaviour of the consumer and an attempt was made to know how these tools of guerrilla marketing influences the buying behaviour of the consumers with respect to purchase of cell phone so as to design effective tool to reach every possible customer effectively and change their buying decisions in favour of the companies. The customer survey revealed that the respondents are looking for something different than what is presented to them in daily advertisements. Advertising needs a comeback as an element that influences people towards a purchase. Even though quality and price are the essential factors that influence the decision for or against a product, the predominately used advertising forms, that praise the advantageous price or quality of a product, are not very well perceived by customers.

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