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THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

THE DROP & GO METHOD

In the age of social media, we often overlook the power and reach of good old fashioned *marketing*. And I stress the word marketing because there is a difference in marketing your product, service or business, and advertising it.

I'm partial to employing guerrilla marketing tactics whenever possible. I've seen the success of these campaigns in the past, and I think that there are still amazing opportunities for guerrilla style marketing.

For the unaccustomed, the dictionary defines guerrilla marketing as "an innovative, unconventional and low-cost marketing technique aimed at obtaining maximum exposure for a product."

'BILLY BUCKS'

Over the last year, I've deployed a few guerrilla marketing (meaning non-social media/digital marketing) tactics with fantastic results.

One of the best campaigns is a "Drop and Go" method where we leave behind collateral material, often in the form of a coupon or special offer printed on a full-color, glossy postcard.

The idea is that even if someone does not pick it up



Make your brand stand out with guerrilla marketing

and act on it themselves, then perhaps they will at least have exposure to our company name and email — or pass it along to a someone who might use it.

The best example of this technique is my deployment of Music Money, or "Billy Bucks," as my staff likes to call it.

I had our graphics person design a 10 percent off coupon based off of the U.S. dollar bill. We had some fun with it by dressing up George Washington

with a guitar and some nice shades, and we stuck a drum set on the back in place of the word "one."

I printed a stack of the discount bills and handed them out to my staff and teachers with simple but explicit directives: Leave a Billy Buck behind on the table at a food court, restaurant or random location in hopes the next customer finds it. They are not to leave the Billy Buck where it might create litter, and I ask them to try to leave these where they feel the Billy Buck will be picked up rather quickly.

The premise is if the original finder does not use it, maybe that person passes it along to someone that can use it who then visits our store. The finder or recipient can use the Billy Buck for 10 percent off any item they choose.

There are no expiration dates and the Billy Buck, once redeemed, can be left again for reuse somewhere else. When the Billy Buck gets a little worn, I take it out of circulation and replace it with a fresh bill.

THRILL OF THE HUNT

We've seen many Billy Bucks return to our shops, and it's fun to hear where the customer found it or how they

came into possession of it. I know how many Billy Bucks are in circulation at any given time, and I've had a few other business owners find them in their stores and contact me to ask what the coupons are for. Once I explain it, they want to copy it.

Only one business owner seemed a little irritated that we left a Billy Buck in their shop, but the same owner also admitted to me that they loved the concept.

There are lots of examples of this type of marketing. My friend, William Cashion, who is the bass player for the band Future Islands, told me a while back that he and the other band members will leave tickets in inconspicuous places around cities all over the world where they are playing for fans to hunt down and discover clues left on Facebook and Twitter.

So, are you ready to give it a shot? Remember the idea is to be as creative as possible while being thrifty. Have fun with it, and make your brand stand out. Good luck guerrillas! **MI**

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