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# Modern ways to advertise a business

Disruptive media is the way of the future - Barack Obama used it in his successful election campaign, and your business can, too

The term 'disruptive technology' was coined by Clayton Christensen and introduced in his 1995 article 'Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave' and later modified in his 1997 book to 'disruptive innovation' due to a recognition that few technologies are intrinsically disruptive or sustaining in character. It is the actual strategy or business model that the technology enables that creates the disruptive impact.

Disruptive media is a term that is increasingly being used to describe disruptive innovation in the field of media. In days of yore, if you wanted to increase your market share you allocated an advertising budget to the project and spent that money on traditional media ads on TV, newspapers and radio.

That is no longer the case. Two examples stand out in my mind over the past couple of weeks that drive this message home. As resellers we need to learn from this and make sure we advertise our businesses in modern ways.

I am not sure if you heard anything about it, but there was a small obscure event overseas recently called the US presidential election. The budgets of McCain and Obama were staggering with estimates of more than \$1 billion spent between them. Obama raised \$600 million in small donations alone. These two were not short of a penny when it came to advertising spend - but what was it that made a crucial difference in the campaign? Four years ago, Obama was still paying off student loans and two years ago he was relatively unknown. McCain spent big on TV - at a reported ratio of 3:1 compared to Obama.

In my opinion, a major difference in the result was the disruptive media approach taken by Obama's team which in some ways is a reflection on the age and generation of the two candidates.

Obama utilised Facebook, MySpace and YouTube to great effect. His

speeches, hailed as the best delivered since John F. Kennedy, were used to generate viral videos across the nation. Obama even took out advertising space on billboards in online games. When Obama won the final race, he sent an email to all his supporters telling them of his victory and thanking them for support before he went on stage for his victory speech to be delivered live to TV sets across the nation. It is obvious to see where he believed his victory came from.

The closest that McCain came to really utilising a disruptive media approach was when Sarah Palin appeared on *Saturday Night Live* with her impersonator, Tina Fey. The publicity surrounding this event and the water cooler discussions meant that only one third of the people who saw this show watched it on the Saturday night it was aired. This is the sort of advertising that we all dream of - creating an ad or video that sparks so much interest that everyone forwards it on or tells people to view it.

Ultimately, the Obama campaign won through a tactic I used to call guerrilla marketing - spending less money than the opposition to gain greater impact by doing something different. It is also important to note that the product was superior - which made the task of the marketing team just that little bit easier.

The second example came from a four-hour chat I had with a businessman on a flight to Perth last week. He was probably hoping to sleep on the flight, but had to put up with me beside him quizzing him for the entire trip.

I found the overall concept of his business fascinating. He runs a niche entertainment channel. Through an innovative idea and the wonders of modern technology including the Internet, this channel is delivered to hair salons with dedicated programming per salon. With home viewers gaining their entertainment and news in a variety of ways and with the remote control

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reducing the effectiveness of ads, TV advertising seems to be on the decline. This is TV advertising at a different level. This is advertising that has an audience who can't move (you can't really get out of the chair when the hairdresser has the scissors at your ear) and an audience who could be quite nicely placed into a particular demographic. In addition, the advertisers know they will return every six weeks for their next haircut. What a perfect situation for advertisers. In addition, the actual salon can run their own advertising for products or solutions that only they sell so the material can be tailored right to the level of the salon.

If I was an advertiser chasing this demographic, I would definitely want to spend my money on this channel rather than traditional means. You could even go a step further and participate in email or SMS campaigns with the salon whereby a special was offered by the salon alongside the purchase of a particular product that was advertised on this channel. The opportunities are almost endless - which is the complete reverse of the opportunities in the traditional three mediums which, by comparison, seem staid and 'yesterday'.

Think of the largest-ever launch of a product by RIM in Australia. Its major strategy uses stickers in the bottom of notebook trays at airport security screening sites. The sticker simply states, "Did you really need your notebook with you on this trip?" Brilliant. Target audience going through a point of pain while pulling their notebook out of their briefcase. This advertising makes a difference.

How are you advertising your business? How are you getting your message out to your clients? Is there an opportunity for you to use disruptive media to deliver your message in a more effective way rather than using an evolutionary or sustaining strategy?

Tell me your disruptive strategies at [mathew.dickerson@smallbusinessrules.com](mailto:mathew.dickerson@smallbusinessrules.com)

