

# Guerrilla Marketing Explained

7 Steps To A Successful Marketing Campaign



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**Terry:**

Hey, you're listening to Terry Telford from [www.thebusinessprofessional.com](http://www.thebusinessprofessional.com), and today we're extremely lucky to have none other than Jay Conrad Levinson on the call. Just in case you haven't heard of Jay Conrad Levinson, he is the father of Guerrilla Marketing and he is a true marketing legend. He is a real veteran of the marketing and advertising industry. He's worked with two of the world's greatest advertising agencies. He's been with Jay Walter Thompson and Leo Burnett. He is the real deal. This is no smoke and mirrors; this guy is for real.

If you've been out there and you've read Guerrilla Marketing or you've read one of the other 31 books that he has in that series, you know that his stuff works. This is a guy where you can read his book and apply what he says... this is not theory; this is the real stuff. Another thing that's kind of cool is that Jay also worked with Playboy. He's written columns and articles for Entrepreneur Magazine, INC magazine, and the list goes on and on. This guy is absolutely amazing; I can't tell you how excited I am to talk to Jay and have him share all the information that he is going to be sharing with us today.

Even though he has a really impressive resume, the real tipping point for Jay was the Guerrilla Marketing book. Instead of me going on and on, without further ado, I'd like to welcome the father of Guerrilla Marketing, the mentor of millions, Jay Conrad Levinson. I'd like to say thank you so much for being here with us today, Jay.

**Jay:**

Thank you Terry very much. You sure know how to make a guy feel good.

**Terry:**

I'm just recapping your history, my friend.

**Jay:**

Well, I'll do everything in my power to live up to it, but everything you said is the honest truth.

**Terry:**

I just basically touched on your background. Can you fill us in? How did everything progress for you? Where did everything come from and how did you get to where you are today?

**Jay:**

I'll start at the real beginning: I was a counter intelligence agent... I was a member of America's spy core. I was in for spies in the United States, finding them, and then I had to write up a report of my investigation. Since all of my investigations were about people, I did some very James Bond investigation work. The best thing about that work was the writing of the reports of investigation; I really went off on writing. I was in the Army at this time, and I was going to get out of the Army, but I didn't know what I was going to do. I knew I was going to go back to law school, which was a bad idea.

I loved writing so much that I started thinking of a job in writing. I didn't want to be a book writer because you can't make money from writing a book. I had written for the college newspaper in Boulder, Colorado, and I knew I didn't like the literary style of a newspaper. Somebody told me that I should look for a job in an advertising agency. I had never thought of that; I'd never taken any courses in advertising or marketing, but that sounded like a good thing for me.

So, I got a job in an agency, but I was hired as a secretary, not as a writer. I was typing 80 words a minute, and I was willing to go to shorthand school; that was something that made me very much appreciated by this small-time advertising agency in San Francisco. That led me to becoming a copywriter in that agency, then another, and then I went to Chicago, and sure enough, mister Hugh Hefner hired me to be the promotion copy director of Playboy writing pieces for advertisers to advertise in Playboy, writing pieces for subscribers to subscribe to this new magazine, and writing ads about Playboy itself, like about what sort of man reads Playboy and things for Playboy products.

After that, after about a year, I got bored because I had to write in the same voice all the time. I would have been insane if I told Hef that I wanted to change the voice I was writing in. Hefner was a wonderful boss, but I couldn't stay there because for a creative type like me, writing in the same voice over and over wasn't really going to cut it. So, I left and got a job in an advertising agency, then another, and then Leo Burnett's. Leo Burnett was in London and that was a great three years getting to travel everywhere in Europe.

Then, I came back to the United States and found out that Leo Burnett, who was very close to me, had died while I was away. I noticed the agency had changed its personality and changed the way it

was. It was the best advertising agency in the world in the 60's, and it changed so I went to work for Jay Walter Thompson, which was the largest agency in the world at the time, and luckily they let me work in Chicago, which was my home base since I was raised there.

That was a lot of fun, however, I remember once waiting for a bus and it was 13 below zero. I remember that month in February that the temperature never went above zero. Here I thought I had achieved my lifelong ambition of being a vice president in a corner office working on these exciting accounts. So, I asked Jay Walter if he would transfer me to a place with a better climate. I asked, "How about San Francisco? You have a big office there." They said, "You've done a really good job, and you've gotten really close to some of our clients like Quaker Oats and V05, so we can't transfer you but we'll give you a big raise." So, that meant that I had to stand and wait for busses in 13 below zero for the rest of my life, and that didn't appeal to me, although the agency did.

I wanted a job in San Francisco and I got an offer. But, at the time that I gave my notice, Quaker Oats and the V05 people said that they didn't care where I lived as long as I continued to write for them. So, I accepted that and I told the advertising agency that I was going to work at in San Francisco that I'd work part-time and come in once a week, and they only have to pay me 1/3 of what they were going to pay me, but I'd do 100% of all the assignments they were going to give me. That sounded good to them.

So, I was living in San Francisco, I was doing work for Quaker Oats, V05, and for this advertising agency, and I was picking up little clients because of the new industries in San Francisco. The computer industry was pretty brand new, and the solar energy industry was brand new as well. Here I was, keeping really busy, working for those clients, and it dawned on me that I was only working three days a week and I was working from my home. The reason I worked three days a week was that I didn't have any memos to read, any committees to hold meetings and I didn't have people coming in to my office to talk to me.

I realized that being free from those distractions, I was able to work a three-day week. I thought that there was nothing special about me, but most people are trapped in a commuter lane working five or six days a week, doing work that was dictated to them from people above them. I, however, got to get rid of my alarm clock, which was one of the first things I wanted to do, and only do the assignments I wanted

to do, wear what I wanted to wear, and work from my office overlooking San Francisco bay.

That's when I realized that I should write a book about this because anyone could really do this. So, I wrote a book called Earning Money Without a Job. People said, "You can make money without working?" and I said, "What do you mean without working? You have to work your tail off!" It's not your standard 9-5 job with someone else calling the shots.

My book was a pretty big seller, and it became the basis of a course at the University of California at Berkeley in their extension division. They said, "Jay, don't call it "Earning Money Without a Job", it will make our professors think that it's a get rich quick scheme, and we know that's not what it is. How about we call it, "The Alternative to the 9-5 Job?" I said, "That sounds good to me," so I started teaching "The Alternative to the 9-5 Job," to young kids in Berkeley with long hair and empty pockets. I wrote a follow-up book when people were saying that the concepts were great, but they wanted ideas of the ways to do it.

So, I subscribed to a clipping service and asked people to send me unusual ways they are making money around the world. My second book was called, 555 Ways to Earn Extra Money, which made even more people attend my sold out class at Berkeley. One day, I get to class, and some students ask me, "Jay, you know we have good ideas, and you know we don't know beans about marketing, is there a book you can recommend to us for people with big dream but empty bank accounts?" I said that I'd be happy to come up with a book recommendation for you. After class I went to the library, and I couldn't find any books on that topic, so I went to Stanford's library and still didn't find anything, so I went to public libraries in the big cities in California and I found out that there were no books in the early 80's on marketing for people with budgets of less than \$300,000 a month. And those were certainly not my students; they didn't have anything like \$300,000 a month.

Still, I had promised them that I'd recommend a book. I put everything together that I had for my clients like the solar energy industry, waterbeds, computers... I had made a list of all the ways people could market without investing much money. That's a great and noble concept, but it's a bad title for a book. So, I decided to call it Guerrilla Marketing, because guerrillas won the conventional gold, but have to go about the attaining of them without the conventional

means. I wrote it for my students; I never knew the book would take on a life of it's own. I never knew it would be published in 44 languages. You're talking to a guy now who doesn't understand 43 editions of his own book.

The book has sold 15 million copies, but I only wrote it for the 100 kids in my class. Those kids in my class, the ones with long hair and Levi's, went out to make huge inroads in the big Silicone Valley companies from Hewlett Packard to graphic design companies. Many, if not most, of the Fortune 500 firms from Silicone Valley have students from my class working for them. Some of them are still running their billion dollar companies according to the same simple seven-sentence marketing plan that I outlined for them.

The big key to marketing is to start with a plan and then commit to that plan. That's a two-step process, but here am I, being hypocritical, because I didn't have a plan, but I responded with needs. When I wrote the book, Earning Money Without a Job, I was responding to the need of a lot of unemployment issues from the recession and people standing in line to get a job someplace and the same thing happening to them. So, to protect them from their parents' work ethic, I wrote my first two books. When the kids in the class were doing what I said but didn't know how to get it off the ground in marketing, I wrote that last book for them.

So, there are really 57 books now that I've written, and they're all in response to a need. My publisher, who also publishes Mark Twain and Henry David Thoreau, said that there's a lot going on online, would it be possible if you could write a book about marketing online? I said, "Sure, I'll learn about it." I wanted to call the book, Guerrilla Marketing on the Internet, and my publishers said, "No, no... you can't use a new word in the title; people don't know what "Internet" means." And I said, "But they will know what it means."

**Terry:**

What year was this that no one knew about the Internet?

**Jay:**

This was in mid-1980's.

**Terry:**

Okay, wow. This is real pioneer stuff.

**Jay:**

This is real pioneer stuff. The people would have had the inclination that I was living in a place that started technology, and I was doing work for companies for Adobe and Microsoft, but I was doing work for these high-tech companies. Bill Gates said, "You know, Jay, if I say something, then people say, 'Well that's Bill Gates talking. Of course he's going to say that.' But if you say it, then people are going to say, 'Oh boy, well Jay Levinson does that.'" So, he told me to write a book and I wrote Guerrilla Marketing with Technology. The book answers people's needs. Consultants love Guerrilla Marketing.

I'm a fast typist and I love to write. My favorite thing to do is to ski, and when I ski I think of writing. My other favorite thing to do is write, and when I write I think of skiing. The two are hardly connected to each other, but they're both places where my passion burns very hot. That's how I got into the writing of other books. When you write books, you get speaking invitations. I didn't have a clue or a plan or experience doing that, but I was getting pretty fancy offers to give a talk. So, I got a speaking agent, because I didn't want to make all the reservations and work out all the details with the organizations without knowing how to speak. Then, I started giving talks four times a month, then three, then two a month.

I was earning more money than I had earned when I was a Senior Vice President and Creative Director at the largest advertising agency on earth. I was still only working a three-day week; I have been doing that since 1971. And I don't veer from that. I work very hard on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The reason I work so hard is that I know my weekend starts Wednesday at about 6 pm. I can get more time in for skiing, for running the rivers, and more time for exploring the national parks. I was leading a very good life and I still am; it's better than it ever has been.

That's the way it all came about, as a response to a need. Then, people started inviting me to give talks and it's easy to give talks if you're passionate about your topic. When you're in a public forum with 500 or 1,000 people listening to you, they don't care about you or themselves, all they really care about is the topic. If you can be passionate about your topic, then speaking is easy. The greatest fear in the world is public speaking, and the second fear is death. So, if you follow that reasoning, that means that if you're invited to speak, you're better off in a casket.

A major point in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the ability to speak on your feet, to be a fascinating speaker, the ability to type, and the ability to write. It never used to be like that. There never used to be a lot of talks and those talks were boring. Now, there are great books out on speaking, and I keep saying, if you feel the passion for the topic, it all happens automatically. So, that's the way my life has progressed.

My wife and I sold our home in San Francisco, where we lived for 35 years, about five years ago. It was a beautiful home overlooking San Francisco Bay. She said, "The kids are grown, and we should do something else and sell the house." I said, "Okay," even though it was hard, and my wife, Jeannie, who is also my co-author, suggested that we get an RV. I said that I didn't want to live in a trailer, and she said not to think of that, but to think of the bridal suite in the Ritz Hotel; a luxury suite just like that. Like John Madden's tour bus, or a spoiled actor/actress's trailer. It's a marvelous recreational vehicle, and it's got a washer, dryer, five television sets, satellite television, computer workstations, and I'm leaving a lot out. When you walk in, your breath gets taken away because it's so beautiful.

Luckily, my wife didn't like the traffic, so I got to drive it. We spent four years exploring national parks and staying as long as we wanted. We also got to visit our kids and grandkids all around the country. We had the time of our lives. We expected it to be really good, but it was way better than we expected; it was so much fun. We learned, as I think everyone learns, it doesn't matter what you drive or where you go, but who you're with. I was with the love of my life, so that was really easy for the two of us to get along and to spend time in all the paradises that are available by motor home in this country and in Canada as you know. We just spend eight days in Nova Scotia.

We spend a lot of time in Orlando because we have a lot of family there (most of our 26 grandkids are there), whenever we come here to visit, we always park on the side of a lake. We thought that we're always paying rent to stay at the side of the lake, why don't we buy the land at the side of a lake and park our RV there. We picked out land, decided to buy it, and the papers were just about ready to be signed when our real estate said, "Hey, just a few hundred yards away from this land, there's another piece of land, on the same lake, with the same view, and it happens to have a brand new four bedroom house on it, and it's the same price that you were going to pay for the raw land. The house is only three years old; would you consider getting a house.

We never thought about it, but we bought it. We still have the RV to use for shorter trips, and we're going to park it on our land in a few weeks. We're pretty much settled now on a beautiful piece of land overlooking a lake, near Orlando and Disney World. We're getting a little tired of Mickey, but we're not getting tired of being with our family all the time.

We're slowing bringing them all into this business. Now, my speaking agent is my daughter, Amy. She has a Master's in Public Administration, and up until now her mission was to save the world, and she's been doing it and she realized, if you're in the world saving business, you don't get much money. So, we told her that she can continue to save the world, but if she worked booking talks for me, handling all customer service issues, we could pay her far more than she could make saving the world, and she could still be saving the world by teaching them how to be self-sufficient through marketing. Most people make marketing so complicated, but we make it so simple.

So, Amy started doing that, and because she loves her mommy and daddy, whenever she's making a speaking date for us, she always gets a five-day vacation in the nicest resort in town.

**Terry:**  
Excellent.

**Jay:**  
That's how we got to spend so much time in Nova Scotia. Wherever we go, she arranges all these five-day vacations tacked on to my speaking tours. So, she does that. We just hired our son; he loves selling. We're creating a lot of Guerilla Marketing courses, an association, and special training. We need a person to help sell that. Sure enough, our son, Jeremy, wants to do it. Now, we have two of our kids working in our business, and they're definitely pulling their weight. It's also fun for us to have our kids. That kind of brings you up to speed.

Last year, a magazine asked our wife and I to write a book together. We asked what kind of book they wanted and they said, "Guerrilla Marketing has been out a long time and a lot of people want to do it but they don't know how to get started. Why don't you write a book called Jay and Jeannie Levinson's Start Up Guide to Guerrilla Marketing? So, we said okay to that. It took us about six or seven months, and we just finished it last week. It comes out in early

January of 2008. It's really a good book and it was really fun for me to work with my wife.

I've never worked with my wife except in the business we ran, but she was doing the business and financial end, and was booking talks for me before Amy got involved in doing that. I knew she was brilliant all along; at one time, she sold more swimming pools than anyone else in the United States. She knew business and knew marketing, so it was a privilege for me to write a book with her and have her bring her own passion and enthusiasm and information to the party.

Since Jeannie and I have been married, every time I had to speak, she's been in the first row taking notes like she's never heard the talk before and laughing at my jokes. She's picked up a lot. One of our plans for next year is that we want to put a lot of our books on CDs because we started it and we realized how many people don't have the time to read but they commute. Once again, it's responding to a need.

Just before writing my new book, I wrote an update of the original Guerrilla Marketing book. I researched and came up with 200 marketing weapons; most of which are free and people don't know about them. It's so possible to be an aggressive marketer. Then, you've got a business anywhere. In the early 80's I wrote a book about the 100 weapons of marketing. That's on the bestseller list now and I wrote it I like 1982. That shows that people like bite size chunks of information and they like learning how they can market aggressively without investing aggressively.

I developed this new book that I'm going to write next year with 200 marketing weapons. Almost all of the new 100 are e-weapons, which take advantage of online. The Internet is 55 times simpler than people think it is. It's very inexpensive if you do it right, and I'm writing books about how to do it right. It is the big revolution; after the television, it was abused before it was properly used; people didn't use it right. Most people are clueless when it comes to having a website or marketing online. They think it's all about having a website. They don't realize that it's actually all about e-mail. They need to compile a list of opt-in people who want to be on your mailing list.

The fact that I hope everyone remembers when I speak to them about marketing is that at any given point, no matter what, 4% of that population wants to buy what you are selling. And, at any given point,

no matter what, another 4% want to get information on it so they can make a decision ASAP. So, the reality to that is that 92% of people don't really care; they don't want to buy something and they don't even want to hear about it. So, marketing is transformed. Instead of using marketing to make the sale, (you've got your head in the clouds if you think marketing makes the sale), you can use marketing to gain people's consent. As you just heard me say, 4% of those people will give you that consent in a second, another 4% will give you that consent in a second and a half, and the other 92% don't want to give you their consent because they have better things to do than pay attention to your marketing. That's why the word opt-in is now in the dictionary.

A person who is a Guerrilla Marketer has to keep compiling a list. You have lists where you buy... but the list you need is one that you compile yourself and asking everyone you come in contact with for their e-mail address. Then, the key to marketing online is sending those people very brief e-mails – never more than a page long – that has a link to a site that can be as long as you want. However long you make it, you're going to be resented by people because they'll want it even longer. That means, the people who are in the market and who are not in the market, you have to love those people, because at least they're telling you they're not in the market.

Focus on what you're doing. If they want to hear from you, then find a way to expand the permission they've given to you described in the book Permission Marketing, by Seth Godin. Feel good about the people who give you consent. Also, feel good about the people who don't give you consent, but treat those other people like family; really treat them well. You'll find by gaining consent and broadening that consent becomes inexpensive, simple and very profitable for you.

Here, you asked me a question that had a short answer, and you won't believe this, but that was the short answer.

**Terry:**

You know what, Jay? I'm just sitting here absolutely soaking up all this information. That is absolutely fantastic. I've just written a whole bunch of other notes on the side of my page about things I want to ask you but I don't want to interrupt you because you're such an inspirational speaker; it's absolutely fantastic. One of the things that just hit me was that you had your students write a seven-sentence Guerrilla Marketing plan, and now you've come up with 200 marketing weapons. Is it something that you can connect together? Using 200

marketing weapons in with this seven-step Guerrilla Marketing plan. Would that work hand-in-hand?

**Jay:**

It would work hand-in-hand, and I'll do it now because it's such a simple thing to do. I guess I was lucky when I worked for Leo Burnett because he taught us the simplicity of marketing. Most other people tell you about the complexity. There are two ways to get the 200 weapons of Internet marketing. One way is to go to our website [www.gmarketing.com](http://www.gmarketing.com). Another way is to go to the Guerrilla Marketing Association and they've got a list of the 200 weapons. They could also get a list sent to them and get several newsletters is to sign onto our mailing list. Just send an e-mail to Amy at [www.gmarketing.com](mailto:amy@www.gmarketing.com) and they can say, "Amy, please send me a list of your 200 marketing weapons." There's no charge, and she'll send you the list. She'll also make sure you get a newsletter once a week, and learn what else the Guerrilla Marketing Association offers.

So, that's how you start with the 200 weapons. I can't do that in a hurry, but I can do the seven-sentence marketing plan, Terry.

**Terry:**

Oh, please. Yea.

**Jay:**

I hope everybody listening has a paper and a pencil because this is an easy thing that I'm going to ask you to do. First of all you should know that when I was teaching at Berkeley, I gave all my students this exercise. I said, "Write a seven-sentence marketing plan. I'll give you the structure of the sentences, and whatever you do, don't take more than five minutes writing this." You have to trust your instincts. I will charge you \$10,000 to do it for you, but you're going to do this right now for yourself for free. Here's the structure that everyone has to follow to get a marketing plan that is as strong as any marketing plan in the country. This is all you really need.

One of the most successful marketing companies on earth is Procter and Gamble. Almost all of their products are in first or second place in their product category. And, as big as they are, all of their products have a seven-sentence marketing plan. I kind of modeled mine after theirs. I did a lot of work for them when I was working in Chicago and London. If it works for them, and worked for my students, it's going to work for your listeners. This is all you really need. All the sentences are short except for one. If you take more than five

minutes to do this then you're missing out on the point I'm trying to make which is to trust your instincts. Don't take more than five minutes to write it. I rarely see people take the whole five minutes.

The first sentence tells the purpose of your marketing what physical act you want people to take. Do you want them to click to your website? Call an 800 number? Look for your product next time they're at a store? Go to your store? What physical act do you want people to take? That's pretty easy to say in one sentence, and that's all that's going in that first sentence.

The second sentence is about one of your benefits. Think of some benefit that has competitive advantage. What is your competitive advantage? You may have more than one, but only put down one because you don't want to complicate it. Tell your main advantage, and that's how you're going to achieve your purpose.

**Terry:**

Just before we go on, can we go over what the difference is between a feature and a benefit so people are clear on that?

**Jay:**

A feature is what is in your product and a benefit is what that means to them and what they get out of it. One of my clients goes to Norway to get their furniture. They get Norwegian slat beds. That's the feature. The benefit is that you have a more inexpensive sleeping surface that gives you the body support you need and you don't have to worry about a dirty innerspring mattress, you can use a slat bed. People only care about what is going to benefit them out of a product or service, and not care about anything else. Did that answer your question, Terry?

**Terry:**

Yea, I just wanted to make sure our listeners know the difference between a feature and a benefit because way back in the day when I was in advertising, it was very difficult to figure out the difference between them. That explanation is absolutely perfect, thank you.

**Jay:**

Here's the thing to keep in mind, quality is not what people think it is. Quality is not what you put into a product or service; quality is what people get out of your product or service. Don't talk to them about you, talk to them about themselves and they'll care like crazy.

Okay, so the first sentence talks about the purpose of your marketing and the second shows an advantage you have to achieve that purpose.

The third sentence talks about your target audience. Your target audience is full of people who are most likely to buy what you are selling. Maybe you have more than one target audience. Most companies do. I was doing work for a company who said that their biggest audience was probably in the legal industry. I asked if he was marketing to them and he said, "That's a great idea. I'll put some money aside to do that." I said, "No, no, no, you don't need to do that. Just use the money that you're using to advertise to the general public and take some of that to use just on lawyers. Don't spend an extra second, just market to a second audience." He did that and that year his profits went up 31% but he didn't spend any more money on marketing. It was just because he targeted to a second audience. So, the third sentence tells your target audience or audiences.

The fourth sentence is the only long one; it should probably be a list. This tells the marketing weapons you'll use. There are 200 of them, and more than 100 are free. I know people with multi-million dollar businesses who invest under \$1,000 a year on marketing. I know a woman who made nearly 5 million dollars last year and spend \$300 on marketing.

**Terry:**  
\$300 total?

**Jay:**  
\$300 total.

**Terry:**  
Can you give us maybe four or five of these marketing weapons?

**Jay:**  
Sure, but let me finish the seven-sentence plan, then we can look at the weapons.

**Terry:**  
Okay.

**Jay:**  
The fifth sentence tells your niche in the marketplace. What do you stand for? When people hear the name of your business, what are they going to picture in their mind? Is it speed, economy, business,

innovation, personalized service? Something enters their mind, and you have to be in charge of what that is, so you have to have that niche come shining through in all your marketing materials. If you're clear on your niche, then your public will be clear on your niche.

The sixth sentence is an "I" word and it doesn't tell your image, because an image is a façade. The sixth sentence should tell your identity, which is still your company personnel, which you need, and it stems from honesty and from who you really are. They're going to trust you when they meet you because you really are who you said you are.

The seventh sentence tells your marketing budget. We express, this for simplicity sake, a percentage of your gross sales. Example: In 2006, the average business in the United States used 4% of their sales on their marketing. The Guerilla says, "What if I invested 6%? Or even 10%?" If you know what your marketing budget is, you can reduce it here because when you use the marketing weapons, some are going to hit the bull's eye and some are going to miss the target. If you're paying attention, you could eliminate the ones that are not working.

To go through the list of weapons would be too much, so I'll give you a list of about ten weapons. The weapon that this woman used in her word processing business in California (the one who did close to 5 million dollars with only spending \$300 total in her marketing) was that she realized there are community bulletin boards in every major city in the United States. She knew that the way to find her target audience was to market at universities. So, she got permission to put up signs inside and outside universities, talking about her low rates and her flawlessness, and by doing that... the \$300 a year was the cost of driving to the campuses, since putting up flyers costs almost nothing. She just went to the campuses and talked to someone that told her the best place to put them up, and she did it.

Some other marketing weapons include having a list that you're going to compile. The marketing plan is a weapon. Another is your days and hours of operation. Write a column for a publication. Offer to do one at no cost, and just make sure it says your name and website. If you don't have time to do a column, write an article. Another is speaking to people in clubs. Another weapon is community involvement. People would much rather buy from friends than strangers. When you become active in the community, working for

the community, you're not a stranger to the people around you anymore.

In Guerrilla Marketing, the biggest difference (there are 20 differences) is that traditional marketing says to invest your money and Guerrilla Marketing says that you can invest your money if you want to, but you don't have to if you're willing to make these investments: time, energy, imagination, and information. If you're willing to invest those things, you're going to find that you don't have to spend any money in marketing. All marketing really is, is the truth made fascinating.

**Terry:**

I love that.

**Jay:**

That's the truth. The sad thing is most marketing isn't truth or fascinating. You're going to stand out if yours is the truth and it's fascinating. Another marketing weapon is how they are treated on the phone and your demeanor. Midas muffler shop had 100% of their service through telephones, but only 71% of those phone calls turned into appointments. That means that 29 times out of 100, they were dropping the ball. So, we gave them a class on phone demeanor. Now, there's a new rule there that you're not allowed to answer the phone unless you took this phone demeanor class.

**Terry:**

What did you do there? Can you give the specifics?

**Jay:**

We spent half an hour telling people how to be on the telephone. You have to speak slower and lower than ordinarily. You have to listen a lot, ask questions, and listen to the answers. You have to treat each person as the reason you're in business, where are now they're being treated as an interruption to your business. Telephone demeanor means that people can see a smile, and if you're smiling on the phone, they can hear it. If you're friendly, if you don't talk too fast or too high, and you treat people as if they're glad they call, how much did that cost you? How much did that cost Midas? They went from 71% of orders being converted to appointments to 94%. It went up that much just simply by saying that you need to take that course before you answer the phone.

More really impressive, very high impact, free marketing weapons are free consultations, free seminars, free clinics, free appraisals, free demonstrations and even free samples if you can. The most powerful word in marketing is free. In marketing you can offer people all these free things. Another marketing weapon is media contact. People say that they would like to be on radio and television. That's not going to happen. You have to get to know people on a first name basis in the media. Take them out to a free lunch and talk to them about what you're selling. If you know people and talk to them human to human, you could be in the newspaper or a guest on a show. That didn't take any money, just time, energy, imagination, and information.

I told you about one of the other 200, which is online marketing. Some people think that that's the whole thing, but it's only 1/200 of marketing. Another weapon is a word that you'll never hear a marketing professor say, and you'll never read it in a marketing textbook, except mine, but it's neatness. The first line of the Disney marketing plan has that word in it. If you're sloppy, that's the way people will think you run your business. It's interesting that one of the biggest neat freaks on earth was the head of McDonald's.

**Terry:**

Uh-huh.

**Jay:**

Everything had to be neat with him. But, if you see studies to see why people go there, the number one is because of clean restrooms. The number two reason is good French fries. Another one of the biggest neat freaks was Walt Disney. If you go to Disney Land, you see people litter just like everywhere else, but Disney arranges it so that their employees come out from behind the shrubbery to pick up the litter. The restrooms are cleaned twice every thirty minutes. That doesn't cost any extra money, just time, energy, imagination, and information. You also need the right attitude.

Another thing that's important, and most people don't have a clue about this, is a guarantee. I'm talking about a guarantee that's not for a month. That won't attract many people. I'm talking about a lifetime guarantee. This attracts the most people and hardly anyone returns the merchandise. L. L. Bean has a lifetime guarantee and says it attracts everybody, but no one returns things because there's no pressure to return them. Just mentioning that you have a guarantee isn't going to cost you money, unless you have a not-so-good product, but it's going to attract a lot of people.

One of the most important weapons is location. This doesn't mean the biggest mall or fancy shopping center; it means the Internet. The world is learning to buy things and get information in a new way. People go online to accomplish something. The main thing they want to accomplish is information. No one is afraid of it anymore. A billion people use e-mail on a daily basis.

Another weapon that most people overlook is upgrading the size of the transaction. If someone decides to buy from you, tell him/her you have a deluxe version of what they're buying, or give them more. Say, "The deluxe version is only \$60 more," or, "If you buy this we'll give you two more of these and they are the companion products to the first one." That's not going to cost you anything. People appreciate being up sold and being told about other things that are available, especially if there's a price break. The point is that it costs you nothing.

The way to market in a tough economy is enlarge the size of the transaction for free. Have more transactions a year with each of your customers costs next to nothing to get in touch with the person whose e-mail you already know. Realize that every customer you already know has a network and has a load of referral powers. All you have to do is ask and they'll say yes to you.

Another thing is television commercials. You can get ad for \$12 for a 30 second commercial in prime time. Even in major cities, you never have to pay more than \$20. Television has changed like crazy because of cable and satellite television and now everybody can afford it. It's visual media. You have to plug your story visually or you're not telling your story correctly. I've never seen an industry where television didn't work. Where it literally cost \$197,000 to make one television commercial, now it takes maybe \$500 to make a nice looking commercial. Without spending too much money, you can be in one of the biggest marketing ways ever.

**Terry:**

To stop you there for a second, do you have contacts? I've never heard of making a television commercial for \$500 and booking it for \$12. Where can we find that information?

**Jay:**

Call any local television station. I don't mean NBC or CBS; I mean a local station. Call them and ask them their rates and tell them you

want to be on prime time. Since they know that more and more small businesses are trying to have commercials, ask them if they'll help you make yours. We just produced a series of really nice commercials for Mercedes Bens for \$300 each.

You just have to know how to write a television commercial, you shouldn't have more than 65 words. The left side has the copy and the right side has what people will see. You should record it in a recording studio, so when you're shooting the commercial you can do it right to the sound track. It's amazing how people think that the old rules are applicable for television and that it's only for the rich guys; it's not anymore. In cable stations A&E, MTV, CNN, The Discovery Channel, and so many others, the prices are very low. Those stations are really hungry to build an audience. If you call them, you'll see that they have very low rates and will help you make the commercial.

**Terry:**

Are you going to be the one writing? You said don't produce it yourself, which I think is key, but are you writing the push and benefits yourself or are you going to have someone else write that for you?

**Jay:**

If you can write the key things well, then you can do it yourself but if not, then you have to get someone else to do it. Writing ability has to do with writing words to motivate people to change their mind, which is all what marketing and advertising are all about. Writing 65 words to advertise something is a talent and you might need to get a freelancer to do it, which might make it better. When you watch the production, you might realize that you can do it too. Or, the cable station will help you. Make sure it doesn't sound like everybody else, and don't exaggerate. Listen to the commercials that are on television now; they're terrible. Even if you try it yourself, you'll probably do better than them.

**Terry:**

What's the point of the actual TV ad? Does it work the same within the whole Guerrilla Marketing realm where you're pushing your prospects to go to your opt-in list? As you said, you're not trying to sell to people with your marketing; you're trying to get them to opt-in to something. Is that pushing the TV people to opt-in to something as well?

**Jay:**

That's exactly right; you're getting people to visit your website. Advertising is much easier than it used to be because you had to try to sell a product before. Now, all you've got to do it to get people to click to your website. You're not going to be able in 30 seconds to sell your product, but you will be able to get them to click onto your website. So, use that opportunity to make your website sound fascinating, and tell them to visit your website to learn more. It's the same; it's consent marketing. The TV commercial will enable them to give their consent, and then you'll be able to get in touch with them because they'll e-mail you.

I've got a few more major weapons that I should talk about.

**Terry:**

Yes, please.

**Jay:**

One is a story of a woman wandering outside a village. Her name was Truth. She went into the village and knocked on the door of a villager and the girl who opened the door took one look at her and slammed the door in her face. She knocked on every door in the village and each time they would take one look at her and slammed the door in her face. So, she went to the House of Fable and asked, "Why do I get such a cold reception wherever I go?" The woman who lived in the House of Fable said, "Well, the truth is, people have a hard time handling your truth." Truth went out into the village, and instead of telling facts, she told stories and people invited her in and invited her for dinner.

One of the things that Americans have been bamboozled with is our attention span. Kids have short attention spans; that is false. Kids have long attention spans if you put the context in a story. Sure, if you tell them a fact, they won't be paying attention. If you tell it in a story, they're going to want to hear it. Grown-ups like stories too. So, don't tell facts, tell stories to make the truth come alive.

Another thing you can do is, do your own marketing research. That means, make your own questionnaire and have your customers or people in your neighborhood do it. Ask questions like, "What TV shows do you like? What radio stations do you listen to? What trade shows do you go to? What are your hobbies? What are your kids hobbies?" And learn about the families so that you can send them a mailing later in the year. Instead of doing a silly thing like sending a

Christmas card and saying "Happy Holidays," send a Thanksgiving card and say, "Happy Thanksgiving. And congratulations to your daughter for making the cheerleading squad." You can only do that if you're doing research where you prepare the questions yourself.

Another weapon requires that people stop believing a lie that they've believed all their lives. This is a damaging lie that is hurtful to a business, family, and the individual and most people have thought this all their lives. Here's the lie: time is money. That's not the truth. There are many studies done a year about what Americans cherish the most. In 1988, time was the number one on the list. In 1989, 1990, and every year since it's still the same answer. It will be number one on the list for the rest of our lives. People know that time is life. Time isn't money. Whatever you do, don't make your prospects wait. They want speed. They don't want anyone who will waste their time.

A final weapon I'll mention to you is called spying. Here, I'm not talking about the kind of spying that I did when I was in counter intelligence. I mean spying on your own business and on other businesses. Call your own business and ask for information and see how you're treated and see if there's any follow up. Do the same with your competitor. See how that information request is process and see how you're treated on the phone.

There's a story of a 10-year-old kid who went into a pharmacy and the kid asked to use the phone. The pharmacist said, "Sure." He handed him the phone and the kid dialed a number. The pharmacist was listening and the kid said, "Hi. I'm calling because I want you to be proud of your yard." The people on the other end said, "I am proud of my yard, young man." He said, "What I'm really calling for is to make sure that your heart is filled with joy and beauty whenever you see your garden and your yard." The man said, "Well, my heart is filled with joy when I see my yard and garden." The boy said, "Why I'm really calling is to make sure you have the services of the best yard boy in town." And he said, "Well young man, to tell you the truth, we do have the services of the best yard boy in town." And the boy said, "Well, I'm happy for you." Then, he hung up.

The pharmacist has been listening to this with his mouth hung open because he has never heard an attitude like this. He said to the boy, "You will have no trouble succeeding with that attitude. And you'll have no trouble getting a job as a yard boy." The kid said, "Well, I already have a job as a yard boy. I'm the yard boy for the people I just called. I was just checking up on myself."

**Terry:**

Wow.

**Jay:**

That's what spying is all about. It takes time, energy, imagination, and information. You can be sure that all of your competitors are trying to be better than you. Since this is the hot new word in marketing, and people are just realizing the importance of branding, one of the most long-term goals is brand name awareness. That's what people trust: brand names.

Now, I have given you probably more than ten marketing weapons and there are 200 to go with. So, some people have to wait a few years to buy my book, or you can go to [www.gmarketing.com](http://www.gmarketing.com) and get the list there or go to [www.guerrillamarketingassociation.com](http://www.guerrillamarketingassociation.com). There you can be on the phone with me on a daily basis and to ask questions on our forum boards and get answers from at least one of 20 trained coaches. When you're a member of the Guerilla Marketing Association, it's like having a thousand dollar an hour coach in your computer.

You've also got free courses in the association; that's a new way that authors are communicating with readers. I used to feel frustrated because I couldn't talk to a reader, but with this association, I can talk to them on a regular basis. I always felt guilty that my books were a little behind the time because it takes years for the book to get from my word processor to bookstores like Barnes and Noble or to be available online at Amazon. We write a video and written newsletter called the Guerrilla Marketing Insider and it's all these up to the moment things; nothing is outdated. Everything that we put in it is something that people can do immediately. As you have mentioned, this is not about theory; it's about reality. People can do what they see in the newsletter tomorrow and most don't cost them any money. This has been how marketing has evolved, and I want to lead that revolution and be of service to my readers.

**Terry:**

You're definitely leading in this, Jay. This is critical information for anybody that's operating a small to medium size business, more than huge ones. You mentioned branding. How important is branding for a one-man show, sitting in his office, online, typical entrepreneur? How important is it for him to brand himself?

**Jay:**

By practicing the art of repetition. By repeating what he says in his marketing, until his name becomes a brand name. By staying with a thin line and never abandoning it. By creating a meme or a visual representation of the idea that you represent. A hitchhiker standing there with his thumb out is a meme because people don't need instructions to find out what he wants. The most common memes in the world are international traffic symbols because instantly they communicate a whole idea.

Enlightened companies are getting rid of the whole idea of logos because logos only communicate the name of your company while memes communicate a whole idea about your company. Memes and repetition lead to branding. Branding leads to confidence. The main reason people patronize the businesses that they do is confidence in the retailer. Your job is to write a marketing plan like the seven-sentence marketing plan that we talked about, then you have to come up with a thin line, and create a meme that they represent, then realizing that with time they're going to become a brand name. When new businesses come down the pipe, they're not going to be able to compete because they don't have a brand name yet.

Many of the people who run businesses now who think they need to change their logos and their presentation to the media around, that's the opposite of the truth. They should repeat as much as they can, because brand name awareness is the name of the successful companies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Terry:**

So, being able to brand properly, it doesn't matter what media you're using, but you need to keep repeating the same thing. With the Jay Conrad Levinson name, that's going to be on your TV commercials and that's going to appear the same on your e-mail marketing, on your websites, and it's going to be on everything that you do. Is that what the continuity branding is?

**Jay:**

Go to a bookstore and you'll see that all the Guerrilla Marketing books have a camouflage motif. Regardless of what language they're in, the Guerrilla Marketing brand is a brand. It's the best-marketing branded brand in history because it's a huge marketing brand. McDonald's has a stronger brand with their arches. They're bigger now than Disney; Ronald McDonald is better known around the world than Mickey Mouse. It didn't used to be like that. McDonald's really gets it when it

comes to marketing. They have the speed and cleanliness... they really understand branding.

**Terry:**

That's super. Tons and tons of students have probably come back to you saying, "I put your seven-sentence marketing plan and all those weapons in action, and this is what happened to me." Can you tell us some of those stories?

**Jay:**

What happens with them is that I let them know that Guerrilla Marketing is all about the profits. Anyone can build sales, but what's really important is profit because that's harder to do. I get my jollies other than from skiing and writing not from people telling me that I'm a good speaker or not saying that I'm a good writer, but I like best when people say, "When I read your book I didn't know anything about marketing and last year I made seven million dollars in sales. I never took a marketing course; I just did what you told me to do. I wrote a seven-sentence marketing plan, picked a handful of weapons and paid careful attention of which worked and which didn't hit the bull's eye. Now, I only use eight weapons; I know there's 200 but these eight have proved to me that they work in action." I hear stories like that a lot from around the world.

You said, when we first started this session, that it works; Guerrilla Marketing works. It's successful. When people hear me speak or read my books, they know I don't make any promises about Guerrilla Marketing that aren't true. I don't say that it works fast, because it doesn't. I don't say that everything you do will work every time because half the things you do aren't going to work. You just have to stick to the other half that actually do work.

I hear people telling me those stories all the time and most of them report incomes way bigger than mine because they've really taken it to the limit and have built up giant companies. I've warned them and said, "If you're not working that's not giving you a pace that's giving you a lot of time to spend with your family, friends, and at the places that you like, then maybe you're doing it wrong. Maybe instead of your company being a 12 million dollar company that has you working seven days a week, it should be a 2 million dollar company where you're only working two days a week."

**Terry:**

Exactly.

**Jay:**

That's what Guerrilla Marketing is all about; it's about profits and about balance. The people whose stories that I like to repeat and write about are the people who add the balance. It's easy to build a business and make money. It's hard to build a business, make money, and maintain a balance in your life to watch your kids grow up, improve your golf score and to ski better now than you did in college.

**Terry:**

To anybody who hasn't ever seen you, to put that into perspective about the skiing, the lifestyle, and the total way that you're living now, how old are you, Jay?

**Jay:**

74.

**Terry:**

I think that is so amazing. I can't say that you're retired...

**Jay:**

No, I still work a three-day week from my home. I think retirement is fatal. I think that's one of the leading causes of death. Unless a person remains active with their mind, the word for them is doom. You don't have to work all the time, but you should work some of the time. In nature, nothing retires. I'm saying that you should cut back, but don't retire. I feel bad when I hear someone say they're retired because that means they have too much free time and probably don't know what to do with it. They also probably don't have a lot of money because retirement doesn't really pay enough money, in most cases.

**Terry:**

Right.

**Jay:**

I think that's just a shame. So, I'm 74 years old. I do ski better than I did in college. That's probably because I've been doing it so long, the equipment is better, and because they groom the slopes better, but the point is that I can do it better now than I did when I was a kid. I remain true to my three-day a week business. My wife is probably smiling in the other room because she knows that sometimes that three-day week is a seven-day week. You have to be flexible because if you're not flexible, things become brittle and break.

I do work a three-day week, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, but sometimes, like next week, I have a speaking invitation right near my house, which is pretty cool, but it's for a Thursday. What am I going to do? Say no because I work a three-day week? No. I just have to work that Thursday. Maybe I'll take off another day. But, you've got to be flexible.

**Terry:**

That's cool. Now Jay, is your entire income now based on your books and speaking engagements?

**Jay:**

Yes, my books and speaking engagements.

**Terry:**

And what kind of level have you reached now? You have 51 books?

**Jay:**

57 books. And when people ask me how much money I make from a book, I say that I was paid \$15,000 for my first book from my publisher.

**Terry:**

Is that upfront?

**Jay:**

Yea, upfront. The first year it probably brought in another \$15,000. So, I say that you make about a million dollars from a book, because that book lead to me being invited to write other books, invited to consult, and invited to talk. The talks I give, the other books, articles, and columns I've written, and the consultations that I do, I'd say that's about a million dollars. Now, I've written 57 books. I don't have an interest in money. I just need enough to pay the bills; that's all I care about. Conspicuous consumption is not a thing that my wife or I do. The money that you make from writing is inestimable because if you're a writer, you're separating yourself from the ranks of other people.

As many people in North America who have earned their living as a writer is the same number of people who have earned their living as a professional athlete. Which is to say that very few people do it. If you love to write, can put together a book, and can promote a book, you'll realize that it's a good door opener for you. You don't have to do anything else besides write that good book except speaking.

The amount of money you make from writing a book can't be seen as just the advance you get or the royalties. It has to be measured by what it leads to and the doors it opens. It's embarrassing because so many doors have opened for me that we have to get other speakers in to do my talks because I'm too busy to say yes to every invitation.

**Terry:**

Wow. So the book isn't actually the product; the book is a marketing tool that allows you to get the real product of the speaking and all the other bits and bites out of it.

**Jay:**

What you said is correct but the other truth is that, when I wrote a book, I thought that was the product. I never thought it would lead to speaking engagements. I never knew they'd ask me to write another book. I never thought people would ask me to consult with them. I thought the book was the product. Only later did I realize that the book was only a means to an end.

**Terry:**

How would you go about now? If you weren't so well known in the industry. Say, you love writing as you've said, you put together a good quality book, but nobody knows about you, no publishers know about you, nothing. Where do you go from there to get somebody to read that manuscript and to get someone to say, "Here's \$15,000; go to it," and things like that?

**Jay:**

The first time I was confronted with that question, I was so in the dark about the answer, I decided to self-publish the book myself. I didn't know about agents, publishers, royalties, or anything except I wanted to write that book. So, I self-published the book, and that's a good way to start out. I discovered later on that having an agent, which I ended up having, I could be free just to write and speak; I don't have to worry about finding someone to sell it for me. I had someone who took the book from me and published it for me.

I learned to be independent from publishers. I believe this is the Guerrilla's manifesto: don't do anything that you can delegate. Speaking of Playboy before, I had never met anyone in my life with less talent than Hugh Hefner. He had absolutely no talent at all, but he had incredible vision. He knew he wasn't talented in writing, so he hired people to write and edit. He knew nothing about art so he

brought aboard great art directors. He knew nothing about photography, so he brought along photographers. Hugh Hefner brought about a very profitable and successful magazine, but he did it not by having talent, but by realizing his own shortcomings and finding people who he could delegate those jobs to.

If you met him, which is not hard to do, he would tell you in a hurry, "I have good judgment but I don't have much talent; I never did." It's the people who fail are the ones that say, "I've got talent; I can do anything." Most of the time that's delusion city because they can't do anything. They just have an ego that's too big to have them delegate. But not Hefner; his ego was the size of a thumbnail and it never got in the way, so he was an amazing boss. I thought bosses had big egos that yelled at people all the time. He was a very soft-spoken person, a very moral person, a person who always had his readers first at mind. He knew that in the areas of judgment he was good, but when it came to the other parts of the magazine, he didn't know anything.

**Terry:**

His true talent then was being a project manager.

**Jay:**

Yes.

**Terry:**

Excellent.

**Jay:**

He also realized that he should hire a few project managers who could do the job better than him.

**Terry:**

Right.

**Jay:**

He had opinions all the time, but whenever there was an argument, he'd always give in. He figured that he should give the decision making process over to the people he hired and he was right. I've met a few people like that, but the majority were the opposite.

**Terry:**

So he's a smart, talent-less man.

**Jay:**

Yes.

**Terry:**

So, if we could just go back to the publishing side. You said self-publishing, what does that encompass? I've written the book, what's the next step?

**Jay:**

These days, you have to go to Google. When you're in Google, type in "publishing on demand." You realize now that there are publishers out there who will publish one copy of your book and charge you probably \$30 to do it and it will be a gorgeous book. It will be bound, type set, on gorgeous paper, and will look like a first-class book that cost you \$30. You might want to go sell that book for \$70. If it's a good book, then lots of people will pay that much.

So, publishing on demand is the fastest and easiest way to become published and make sure you will make money on the book. When I wrote my first book, I self-published it and I couldn't find a company that would publish less than 5,000 copies. So I went to Michigan and found a company that made 5,000 copies of my book. That was not the most fun I've had in my life, but I did it and it was worth it to me. It opened up enough doors that I had a marvelous life since then.

**Terry:**

Now you have 5,000 books sitting in your garage. What's the next step? Do you have to go to the bookstores, or... what do you have to do?

**Jay:**

You can either go to distributors, whose only job is to distribute books to bookstores, or you can go directly to the bookstores themselves. They will give you 30 seconds to talk about their book. They have so many people trying to have them carry their book. They want to listen but they don't have time so you have to try to summarize your book in 30 seconds.

**Terry:**

You can base your summary on the seven-sentence marketing plan that you've put together.

**Jay:**

Exactly. They might say, "It's a good book and could be great for people, but how are you going to promote it and get it out there. Even if you put it in our stores, how are people going to find out about it?" That's why I wrote Guerrilla Marketing for Writers. This book talks about how to get on talk shows, how to get articles about your book, how to put on seminars of your own, and how to market your book because unless you market your book, it's probably going to fail. You have to market it. So, the questions you're asking are just brilliant, Terry. What are you going to do after you write a good book? That's the question to ask and most people don't.

You have to make the decision if you want to self-publish it and write little ads and do mail order, like Jay did, or should I try to get this into bookstores and have them sell it, like Jay did. I tried all of that. I then started to live by the motto, "Don't do anything that you can delegate," so I started delegating everything. All I did was the writing, and that was the part I did the best.

**Terry:**

Okay, so now you graduated to the point where you have an agent working for you. Say a person finishes off a book, could he/she take that manuscript and take that directly to an agent and bypass all that other self-publishing bits and pieces.

**Jay:**

Oh, yes. Just look at Writer's Market; it's a book that has all the agents listed in there. They want to get manuscripts from first time writers. That book is updated every year, and lists all the publishers, what they pay, and all the agents. Agents take 15% of all your royalties but they make more for you because of their ability to know what publishers are publishing what kinds of books now.

**Terry:**

Right, okay. Is there a rule of thumb? Say, I came up with the idea of Guerrilla Marketing for writers. What could I expect that book to bring me in? When you did your first book, it was \$15,000 upfront and then \$15,000 in sales. What could I expect now as a first time writer, getting my book out there for the very first time?

**Jay:**

About the same.

**Terry:**  
Okay.

**Jay:**  
It hasn't gone up. It may have gone down because publishers know that 80% of books fail and don't earn what it costs to produce them. So, they're pretty careful in giving big advances to people.

**Terry:**  
Right. What if you use Morgan James? With them, you write the book, give it to them, and they read the manuscript and then you pay a fee to be able to be incorporated into their system. They actually show you how to go through the marketing, what to do with your book, how to really promote yourself and get the system flowing.

**Jay:**  
That's a wonderful thing they do. They also work as a standard publisher who gets you book in the bookstores and sells it. They show people how to market their own books.

**Terry:**  
Would you recommend going that route?

**Jay:**  
I recommend experimenting. I have several different publishers from the biggest and the oldest, to new ones like Morgan James. By experimenting with different publishers, I learned who's really pulling their weight and who's not. When I self-published, I didn't think that was a bad thing at all because you're in charge, it just means that bookstores will only put it up front near the cash registers. Regular publishers aren't going to do that for you; self-publishing people are going to make sure that you love what the cover looks like. Regular publishers wouldn't care. They've got their own agenda.

I think it's a good idea to do a lot of this yourself, but, if you read [Guerrilla Marketing for Writers](#), you learn how many options you have and how many things you can do. These days it's really up to the writer. It just doesn't happen that you write a book and it automatically becomes a big seller.

**Terry:**  
No, it's kind of like building a website.

**Jay:**

Yes. If you can write a book and keep it timeless, that's going to be the best for you. That means when you write a book, don't say anything in it that will soon be dated. Write it in a way that you want it to be timeless; that's why books that I wrote in the 70's and 80's are still on the bestseller lists. I wanted to make timeless books, and luckily that happened.

**Terry:**

Now the book writing part of it is one part, but you're very strong on the copywriting side of it too I believe, aren't you?

**Jay:**

Oh, I love copywriting, yes.

**Terry:**

When you sit down and you're going to write a sales letter for a direct mail piece or a website, do you have a formula that you just sort of follow along?

**Jay:**

The formula that I use... my favorite number is ten so I figure whenever I'm writing, if I can find ten ways to compartmentalize it. In other words, it starts with this, and the next place you go is here, and then you go to the third thing. I try to make sure I cover ten points. That makes it easy to write a book or write a sales letter. It doesn't overwhelm me and prevents me from writing too much or not enough.

That's sort of an unwritten formula that I use. I break everything up into ten and then it's easy to write ten chapters one at a time or a ten-page chapter one at a time. That's the formula I use. My formula is that I only work on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, that I'm a fast typist, and all of my friends know that I'm not available to talk to them on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday; they respect that. So do my clients.

**Terry:**

When you're writing copy, say, for a headline, how do you get your inspiration? Say you have a client for margarine. How do you get inspired and go about the research side and build your headline?

**Jay:**

Well, I've never been inspired in my life except about my wife. I'm not inspired about anything I've done in writing, because if you wait for

inspiration, it's just not going to come. I believe that good writing comes with knowledge, so I try to gain as much knowledge as I can about the project at hand or the company I'm writing about. The more information I have, the more creative I can be.

I never think of terms of inspiration. If that happened, I would have written one book by now instead of 57.

**Terry:**

What about a headline? That's really important. You're at a completely different level than 99% of everyone else, but if someone wants to learn how to write a headline and a sales letter, do you have a Guerrilla Marketing book on copywriting?

**Jay:**

Well, we have a Guerrilla Marketing CD on copywriting called "Guerrilla Copywriting." It's wonderful.

**Terry:**

That's probably the best place they can go to learn about it.

**Jay:**

I'd say yes. I know that the best people in the marketing world... if they have ten hours to work on an ad or a website, they'll spend nine of those hours on the headline. The headline should do one of two things; it should either tell a story, or intrigue people to read the rest of what you got.

**Terry:**

How long can that headline be then?

**Jay:**

It doesn't really matter; there are no rules. If it tells a story or intrigues people into reading more, then it doesn't matter if it's six words or four lines. I've never seen anything written that says what the optimum length is for a headline. I've seen a number of things about just what I'm telling you; it should tell a story or intriguing people to read other things you've written in the rest of the website.

**Terry:**

What about the rest of the website? Should it be long; should it be short? What's the rule of thumb?

**Jay:**

The rule of thumb is to realize that the public intelligence is on par of that with your mother, and she's not going to buy anything because of clever effects or jokes. She's looking for the real substance rather than style. You have to give her enough information to make an intelligence purchase decision. Sometimes that's many pages of information and sometimes that's just a few lines. The important thing to realize is that studies show time and time again that a reader's attention falls off dramatically after the first 50 words.

**Terry:**

Wow.

**Jay:**

But, after those 50 words, nobody leaves. So, the people who aren't really interested know that after the first 50 words. If they're interested, the more you write the better. You could write 500 words. The important thing is, don't try to make it short; try to give people enough information to let people make an intelligent purchase decision. That's not that hard to do. Don't ever think, "Is this too long or too short?" Think of the person reading it. Am I giving my mom enough information to spend her hard-earned money on this product? If not, then she's going somewhere else.

**Terry:**

To someone who can write copy.

**Jay:**

Right. They're not concerned with long or short copy.

**Terry:**

Okay. Another thing that you'd mentioned a little earlier, with your first book, is that you responded to a need because there were no books out there on that topic. Now, you're putting your books on CDs because people don't have enough time to read. Where do you get all of this insight to know what's a need and what people are looking for?

**Jay:**

I just read. I read books, magazines, things on the Internet, I watch television, I go to the movies, I travel; I never spend any time in real research time.

**Terry:**

So what kind of books and magazines are you reading?

**Jay:**

Wow. I'm reading magazines about videos or the Internet. I read the New Yorker, I read Esquire, and I read Sports Illustrated. I read those whenever I can which is really whenever I fly. I read Time magazine, which shows me what's going on in the world right now. I read those magazines very regularly. I read a book every couple months.

**Terry:**

What's the latest book?

**Jay:**

The latest book that I'm reading is a book by Larry McMurtry who wrote Terms of Endearment. He wrote a book called Evening Star, which he wrote after Terms of Endearment. He won an Oscar and a National Book Award. He writes about the west, and I love the west. His only reason for writing is to have enough money to buy more books for his book collection.

**Terry:**

Wow.

**Jay:**

That's what gets him going: his collection of books. So I've read almost everything that he has written. I've got Malcolm Gladwell's book Blink to read when I'm through with Evening Star.

**Terry:**

Oh, you're going to love it. Did you read The Tipping Point?

**Jay:**

Yea.

**Terry:**

Then you're going to love Blink.

**Jay:**

I appreciate you telling me that. I believe in testimonials; especially from people like you.

**Terry:**

Oh, I won't ruin it for you, but I think it's better than The Tipping Point and I thought nothing was better than The Tipping Point but I think Blink is a bit better.

**Jay:**

I'm glad to hear you say that. That's good stuff to hear, thank you.

**Terry:**

You're reading a little bit of business, a little marketing, a little fictional; you read a broad spectrum of books?

**Jay:**

Yea. I do most of my reading when I'm flying. When I'm home with my wife, I don't spend much time reading.

**Terry:**

If we could switch gears, what do you attribute to your secret of success? When you're back teaching at Berkeley and you wrote your first book, was it in your mind that things could take off and that you could reach the level that you're at now?

**Jay:**

No, it never entered my mind; I never think of things like that. I was just thinking that there are 300,000 people laid off in the United States in the past month and these people are looking for jobs but the same thing is going to happen to them again. They have to realize that there's more to life than having a job. I know that each of these 300,000 people represent a family that is suffering, they don't have any food to eat, they're not able to keep their car in running condition, and I wrote to help those people.

The only force in my mind was thinking of the people who were going to read that book. I never thought about might happen to the book; that was the furthest thing from my mind and probably from most successful authors' minds. The topic they're writing about and the people they're writing it for are what keep them going. I don't know anybody who writes for the money.

**Terry:**

That's beautiful. You are a living example of the phrase, "You give and you shall receive," I believe.

**Jay:**

Well, I've heard that from other people.

**Terry:**

What about a mentor?

**Jay:**

I've never really had a mentor, Terry. I had great bosses. I learned how much fun the marketing business can be from my first boss in a small advertising agency in San Francisco. The next person who I worship was Leo Burnett, he was my boss and I learned so much from him. He didn't let people work after five o'clock, he didn't let people take work home with them, and he never let people work weekends. He said that if you can't get the work done between nine and five then maybe you're in over your head and you should move to another line of work.

Leo showed me that every product has something about it that's fascinating and that my entire job would be to find what about it is fascinating and not lie about it. He made everything quite simple and homey and not how it's portrayed. His sense of ethics blew me away; he was such an ethical person. He had no interest in money; Leo lived on a farm outside of Chicago. His great joy was embedding the egg money that him and his wife, Naomi, would earn, by selling the eggs at fairs. They would go to a racetrack and bet on the horses with their egg money. This is not what you'd picture when you hear that he's running one of the most profitable advertising agencies on earth that's created some of the most successful and long-lasting marketing stories.

His work ethic was not at all what people think his work ethic has to be. He really thought you should get it done right the first time, and you should work very hard to get it right. He's the one who coined that line that everyone's repeating now: if you reach for the stars, you're not likely to get one, but you're also not likely to come up with a handful of mud.

**Terry:**

Exactly. Well Jay, it seems like you've given us a two-hour course here! Do you have any last words of advice that you'd like to wrap things up with?

**Jay:**

Yes. I'll give one word of advice, and then two rules, but in reverse order. I think that anybody who has spent the time listening to what we've been talking about today will get the most out of it if they just remember these things. Number one, when it comes to succeeding in marketing, all you need is to start with a plan, and then commit to

that plan. That's what marketing is all about, and that's how you make it work.

The word that I want people to memorize is the word that's the single most important secret of marketing. It's amazing that there would be a one-word answer to the whole secret of marketing. It's the same secret as having a successful radio show, a happy marriage, to finish the marathon that you're running. This is the word that will help your business be a successful business, where other people are falling by the wayside. That word is commitment.

That's the hardest thing to do, but if you commit to your plan, it's not more complicated than that. It's hard to commit to something; when people come to marketing they want instant gratification. That's not what Guerrilla Marketing is all about; it's about eventual gratification. My secrets are to start with a plan, stick with that plan, and the most important word in most parts of life itself is commitment.

I hate admitting this in public, but mediocre marketing with commitment works better than brilliant marketing without commitment.

**Terry:**

Have you heard the bacon and eggs theory about commitment?

**Jay:**

No, tell me about it.

**Terry:**

I think this is the loveliest expression I've heard. If you have a bacon and eggs breakfast, the chicken was involved; the pig was committed.

**Jay:**

That's definitely the truth. It's what I had for breakfast yesterday.

**Terry:**

I thought that was great. It kind of separates the involvement and the commitment; it shows what commitment really means. It means you're in it for the long haul.

**Jay:**

That's the truth. I thank you for that story. I will give you credit whenever I tell it.

**Terry:**

Well, thank you. Now Jay, how can people get a hold of you? If they want your books and courses and all of your extraordinary information that you have, where is the best place to go?

**Jay:**

They should go to [www.gmarketing.com](http://www.gmarketing.com).

**Terry:**

And everything is listed there for us?

**Jay:**

All of the books are listed there and everything else is there. If you want to get in touch with me you should write a letter to my daughter, Amy at [amylevinson@gmarketing.com](mailto:amylevinson@gmarketing.com). She'll answer your questions, she'll enable you to get books, she'll get you through to me; she's a great gatekeeper and a terrific daughter.

**Terry:**

Wonderful. That's great, Jay. You've been listening to Jay Conrad Levinson the master marketer of all time and the author of 57 different Guerrilla Marketing books, and myself, Terry Telford from [www.thebusinessprofessional.com](http://www.thebusinessprofessional.com). Thanks very much for your time.