Reviews

Guerrilla Marketing Online, by Jay Conrad Levinson and Charles Rubin. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, 1995. (ISBN 0-395-72859-2). 303 pp. paperback, $12.95.

If you plan someday to sell educational products (e.g. publications, videotapes, software, satellite-delivered programs, etc.) via the World Wide Web (WWW or Web), Guerrilla Marketing Online is "must reading."

This new guide by the author of a series of books on marketing techniques (Levinson) and the author of more than 20 books on computer hardware and software (Rubin) covers everything you'll need to know to get started and stay in business online.

The authors thoroughly cover the basics of delivering information via the Internet, and present strong arguments on the economics and effectiveness of using this technology to market your products. They explain the difference between "online services" (e.g. Prodigy, CompuServe and America Online) and the "net" (or Internet), and give good examples of how each work.

A good share of the book is especially of value to those of us who are developing our own Web pages and want to market our products through this medium. The down side of this, according to the authors, is getting and keeping the attention of those people who might be in the market for our products. Their advice to us comes in the form of 75 tips they refer to as "online guerrilla marketing weapons." Examples include: "In cyberspace, most customers will first hear about your business by its name." And you want a name that will be picked up when someone uses a "search" to find sites that market products like those you're offering.

"Your unique position in the market is the best way to distinguish yourself from a horde of competitors." You can set yourself apart from the competition by virtue of the unique nature of your product, its quality, its price, your credibility, etc.

"The way you package your online presence says a lot about you...make sure your packaging is attractive, clear and well-organized."

"Every store is equally invisible on the Net. Each Web or Gopher link you add to your online store is another doorway into it from a different part of the Net."

"Neatness conveys a sense of reliability and competence. It helps give customers the confidence to buy from you. Check...for proper spelling, grammar, and formatting before sending them out into cyberspace."

The authors are liberal in their advice on how to advertise your Web pages. They give the pros and cons of such things as bulletin boards, electronic mailing lists, paid advertisements online, print advertisements in magazines and newsletters, postcards, and flyers.

An interesting note from the authors is that "in cyberspace, your marketing message must be carried through written words. You may be able to help it along with pictures or sounds if you're marketing on the Web, but words do the real selling." And they add, "The most effective online messages are those that don't waste the recipient's time or money."

This is a great book of do's and don'ts. And you're sure to learn more about the online world of cyberspace.

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