



MARKETING STAR



## Jeff Slutsky: Street Fighter Marketer

[By Anique Gonzalez]

Jeff Slutsky has learned a lot about marketing over the years, but interestingly one of the most important lessons was imparted by a childhood friend. The friend, a CPA, instilled in Slutsky the importance of accountability in marketing campaigns, shaping his view of the field and the way he continues to approach it today. As Slutsky explains, “I would do all of that creative stuff, and he would go ‘yeah, that’s fine, people laughed at your promotion, but did it generate any business?’”

Originally hoping to pursue a career writing sitcoms, Slutsky focused his creative talents on the advertising field when he obtained an internship with an ad agency writing 30 second “sitcoms” for television and radio commercials. However, after some time in the industry, Slutsky became disillusioned with the field. “You get a 15% commission on all of the media that you sell a client...a lot of my clients were also friends, it wasn’t huge corporations that I was doing stuff for. So, if my stuff didn’t work, their kids didn’t go to college, and they had to live somewhere else,” Slutsky says.

Seeing an opportunity in this otherwise negative predicament, Slutsky began developing supplemental marketing tactics that his clients could utilize in addition to traditional methods. He was so successful with this endeavor that he eventually left the agency and founded his own consulting firm in 1980 known as Street Fighter Marketing.

Slutsky, president and CEO of Street Fighter Marketing and author of *Street Fighter Marketing Solutions: How One-On-One Marketing Will Help You Overcome the Sales Challenges of Modern-Day Business*, does not believe in conventional approaches. To engage consumers and obtain proven results, Slutsky believes that marketers need to approach consumers in interesting and original ways that also take expenditures into consideration. This is the basis for street fighter marketing: generating successful and

innovative marketing campaigns on a local scale and a shoestring budget.

So what is a street marketer campaign? One of the first accounts that Slutsky worked on when he began working at the advertising agency was for an appliance store that was being outsold by competitors. To combat this problem, the store filled their freezers with ice cream and gave them out, for free, to customers who left the store without

making any purchases. This created a slight quandary for the customer because if they went to another store to shop, the ice cream would melt. As a result, customers began shopping there instead.



**Q: What was the last thing that you ate?**

**A:** Last thing that I ate? Let’s see, we just had lunch so it would have been very bad Chinese food.

**Q: Throughout your lifetime, what movie have you watched the most?**

**A:** It’s a tie probably between *The Godfather* and *My Favorite Year*.

**Q: What is your favorite TV show?**

**A:** Right now I’d say *House*.

**Q: What was the last CD that you listened to?**

**A:** My own. I was working on an editing project. Music CDs? The CDs I listen to—my daughter makes them, so there’s no one artist; it’s some sort of compilation of songs that I like.

**Q: If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you spend it doing?**

**A:** Sleep. I just had my sixth child. She’s three months old, and if I have extra time, I sleep.

Another example that Slutsky provides further demonstrates the street marketer mentality. In this case, a hair salon, which had developed a loyal client base, suddenly found itself being out priced by a competitor that had moved in across the street, offering \$6 haircuts versus the salon’s \$15 cuts. The competitor created an advertisement that was simple, to the point, and promoted their competitive advantage. They posted a billboard that said, “We give \$6 haircuts.”

Viewing this as an opportunity to promote quality over price, the salon struck back with a billboard of its own which was designed to mimic the competitors: a simple white billboard with blue block type that read “We fix \$6 haircuts.” Remembering why they went to this salon in the first place, the clients went back.

As Slutsky explains, “We don’t have to spend a fortune to solve the problem necessarily. We just have to understand what it is our



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customers really want and find a way to deliver that message in an inexpensive and impactful way.”

And inexpensive, impactful campaigns are the core of street fighter marketing. Because of this, Slutsky continuously touts the importance of ROMI, or return on marketing investment, a factor that until recently many marketers have disregarded.

“If you don’t know what you’re return is, you don’t know if you’re having success with your marketing or not.” More importantly, ROMI serves as a form of accountability for marketers. According to Slutsky, knowing

how much was spent on a campaign, as well as how much that campaign earned, reveals whether or not those marketing tactics should continue to be employed or abandoned. For instance, asking questions such as “How much did the marketing campaign grow the business this year?” and “How many new customers did it generate?” allow marketers to determine how to allocate the marketing budget in the future in order to achieve success.

As Slutsky’s friend taught him many years ago, creating great ads may get a marketer laughs, but it won’t necessarily get him or her new clients or improve the business. And

since that realization, generating business has become the basis for everything Slutsky does.

## ON THE NET

Street Fighter Marketing  
[www.streetfightermarketing.net](http://www.streetfightermarketing.net)

*Street Fighter Marketing Solutions: How One-On-One Marketing Will Help You Overcome the Sales Challenges of Modern-Day Business*  
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