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Time Warner marketing stunt creates terror

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THE ARTICLE

Time Warner marketing stunt creates terror

A Time Warner Inc. marketing campaign backfired in Boston on Thursday when security officials decided the city was under attack from terrorists. The company that owns CNN, *Time* magazine and Cartoon Network inadvertently created a wave of panic in Boston and brought the city to a standstill. The company's marketing department placed 40 small, black blinking electronic devices in ten different US cities to promote a new cartoon show "Aqua Teen Hunger Force". Each was the size of a cereal box, although Turner referred to them as "billboards". Pictures of the flashing digital signs showed protruding wires, hence the belief that they were bombs. Boston's city officials were quick to react in the interests of public safety and brought out its bomb force in force and shut down highways, bridges and rivers.

Turner's marketing arm took full responsibility for the campaign, part of a tactic a spokesperson called "guerilla marketing" - an "alternative to traditional media tactics that are high-impact but also very eye-level with the consumer, very grassroots and in-the-streets." An apologetic company spokeswoman Shirley Powell said: "We approved it. We're taking full responsibility.... We were simply promoting a TV show". She was shocked by the reaction in Boston, adding: "If we had ever perceived this to be something threatening safety, we would never have proceeded with it." Boston was the only city that mistook the signs for being bombs, perhaps being sensitive to the fact that it was the base for the 9/11 bombers. The boxes caused barely a stir elsewhere. Look-alike devices were soon selling for \$2,000 on EBay — "There is market for everything," Powell said.

WARM-UPS

- **1. CITY SHUTDOWN:** Police and security officials have just shut down your city you cannot go anywhere. You have to stay in your school/workplace. Talk to other students about what might be happening and how the city shutdown will affect you. Change partners often.
- **2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

Time Warner / marketing / Boston / CNN / panic / blinking / billboards / responsibility / tactics / media / grassroots / apologizing / TV shows / EBay

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

- **3. GUERILLA MARKETING:** With your partner(s), write down (guess) what you think guerilla marketing is. Your teacher will write your ideas on the board. Talk about what you think of each idea.
- **4. STORY PREDICTION:** With your partner(s), use these words and make your own story to fit the headline. Tell other students your story.
 - marketing campaign
 - terrorists
 - ten American cities
 - cereal box
 - highways, bridges and rivers

- querilla
- · in the streets
- TV show
- bombs
- EBav

After you have finished, check your story with the real one.

- **5. MARKETING STUNTS:** Here are some marketing stunts. With your partner(s), talk about what you think of them.
 - a) Look-alike bombs in the streets to promote a new kids action cartoon
 - b) Offering a free car with every purchase the car is a toy
 - c) Drop thousands of discount coupons from the air "It's raining discounts"
 - d) Employ thousands to wear a George W. Bush costume in the street
 - e) Use beautiful, thin models to sell low-fat hamburgers as diet food
 - f) Pay a Hollyood/Bollywood... star to say your product will change people's lives
 - g) Hold a public contest the winner receives free goods forever
- **6. MARKETING:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with marketing. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a.	Time magazine released a story about terrorists bombing the U.S.	T / F
b.	A campaign to market a kids cartoon created panic in a U.S. city.	T/F
c.	A company paid actors to dress as terrorists like those in a cartoon.	T/F
d.	The U.S. city shut down highways, bridges and rivers.	T/F
e.	The marketing tactic used is called "gorilla marketing".	T/F
f.	A Time Warner spokeswoman apologized for doing the campaign.	T/F
g.	The campaign and panic caused a stir in other American cities.	T/F
h.	People were selling look alike bombs on EBay for \$2,000.	T/F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

flashing a. backfired b. wave commotion c. standstill division d. blinking stop e. protruding of-the-people arm went wrong g. tactics considered h. grassroots sticking out i. perceived flood j. stir methods

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

a.	A Time Warner Inc. marketing	attack from terrorists
b.	the city was under	a stir elsewhere
c.	inadvertently created	full responsibility
d.	brought the city	promoting a TV show
e.	brought out its bomb force	campaign backfired
f.	Turner's marketing arm took	to a standstill
g.	very grassroots and	to the fact that
h.	We were simply	a wave of panic
i.	being sensitive	in-the-streets
j.	The boxes caused barely	in force

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Time Warner marketing stunt creates terror

A Time Warner Inc. marketing backfired in	
Boston on Thursday when security officials decided the city	terrorists
was under attack from The company that	beliet
owns CNN, <i>Time</i> magazine and Cartoon Network	
inadvertently created a wave of in Boston and	panic
brought the city to a standstill. The company's	billboards
department placed 40 small, black blinking electronic	promote
devices in ten different US cities to a new cartoon	promote
show "Aqua Teen Hunger Force". Each was the size of a	force
cereal box, although Turner referred to them as	marketing
"	
protruding wires, hence the that they were bombs.	campaign
Boston's city officials were quick to react in the interests of	
public safety and brought out its bomb in force and	
shut down highways, bridges and rivers.	
Turner's marketing arm took full for the	devices
campaign, part of a tactic a spokesperson called "guerilla	uevices
marketing" - an "alternative to traditional media	eye-level
that are high-impact but also very with the	market
consumer, very and in-the-streets." An	
apologetic company spokeswoman Shirley Powell said: "We	sensitive
approved it. We're taking full responsibility We were	grassroots
simply promoting a TV show". She was shocked by the	_
in Boston, adding: "If we had ever perceived this	reaction
to be something threatening safety, we would never have	tactics
proceeded with it." Boston was the only city that mistook	rosponsibility
the signs for being bombs, perhaps being to the	responsibility
fact that it was the base for the 9/11 bombers. The boxes	
caused barely a stir elsewhere. Look-alike were	
soon selling for \$2,000 on EBay – "There is for	
everything," Powell said.	

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Time Warner marketing stunt creates terror

A Time Warner Inc. marketing campaign on
Thursday when security officials decided the city was under attack from
terrorists. The company that owns CNN, Time magazine and Cartoon
Network inadvertently created in Boston and brought the
city to a standstill. The company's marketing department,
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cartoon show "Aqua Teen Hunger Force". Each was the size of a cereal box,
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being sensitive to the fact that it was the base for the $9/11$ bombers. The
boxes caused elsewhere. Look-alike devices were soon
selling for – "There is market for everything," Powell said.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

- **1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'marketing' and 'stunt'.
 - Share your findings with your partners.
 - Make questions using the words you found.
 - Ask your partner / group your questions.
- **2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.
 - Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
 - Ask your partner / group your questions.
- **3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?
- **4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.
- **5. STUDENT "MARKETING" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about marketing and the tactics, stunts and strategies.
 - Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
 - Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
 - Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.
- **6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:
 - security officials
 - wave
 - blinking
 - billboards
 - wires
 - force

- arm
- high-impact
- simply
- proceeded
- 9/11
- market

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b) Did anything in the article surprise you?
- c) What do you know about the Time Warner group of companies?
- d) Do you think Time Warner should have been more responsible?
- e) Do you ever watch Cartoon Network or CNN?
- f) What would you think if you saw a black box with flashing lights and protruding wires in your town?
- g) Do you think Time Warner are happy now their cartoon has got a lot of extra publicity in the world's media?
- h) What would you do if security officials shut your city down?
- i) Have you ever done any marketing before?
- j) Should guerilla marketing be allowed?

K-----

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think about what you read?
- c) Do you think Boston city officials overreacted to this marketing stunt?
- d) Do you think someone should go to jail for causing such panic?
- e) If you were a citizen of Boston, would you be happy your city was shut down because of some cereal-box-sized adverts?
- f) Do you know of any marketing stunts that went wrong?
- g) If you were a Boston citizen would you be angrier with Time Warner for its marketing stunt, or your city for closing bridges and highways?
- h) What other ways do you know to promote a TV show?
- i) Why do you think people would want to spend \$2,000 on a lookalike device on EBay?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MARKET YOUR PRODUCT:

You work in the marketing department of a big company. With your marketing exec classroom partners, think of a new product or service to launch and promote. Use the table below to help you.

	Your ideas	Reasons why your ideas are / will be winners
The product		
Product name		
Product logo		
Product slogan		
Target consumers		
Reasons why it is better than other products		
Marketing method 1		
Marketing method 2		
Guerilla marketing stunt		

Present your ideas to the class / other teams. Decide on which teams were best. Tell other teams why their ideas might not be winners.

Change partner(s) and give help on making your presentations better. Tell each other what is needed for a more effective campaign. Present again.

Discuss the things you heard. What products would be most exciting or useful in your life?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Choose the correct words from a-d below and write them in the article.

Time Warner marketing stunt creates terror

wher compared to the compared	n secu cany t ced a c cany's Hung red to cuding als we	rity officials that owns CN (2) of parketing in ten differ ger Force". En them as "b wires, (5) ere quick to	decide NN, Tir panic i depart ent Us ach w dillboar react	ed the city we me magazing the place of the cities to place of the cities to place of the belief the belief the city we may be considered.	was un e and d brou d 40 s promot of s of th hat the	der attack from the control of the c	om te vork i o a st blinkir toon , alth pital s nbs. E	rrorists. The nadvertently andstill. The ng electronic show "Aqua ough Turner igns showed Boston's city brought out
a ta tradii cons spok respo the some Bosto being The	Turner's marketing (7) took full responsibility for the campaign, part of a tactic a spokesperson called "guerilla marketing" - an "alternative to traditional media tactics that are high-impact but also very eye-level with the consumer, very grassroots and in-the-streets." An (8) company spokeswoman Shirley Powell said: "We approved it. We're (9) full responsibility We were simply promoting a TV show". She was shocked by the (10) in Boston, adding: "If we had ever perceived this to be something threatening safety, we would never have proceeded with it." Boston was the only city that mistook the signs for being bombs, perhaps being sensitive to the (11) that it was the base for the 9/11 bombers. The boxes caused barely a (12) elsewhere. Look-alike devices were soon selling for \$2,000 on EBay - "There is market for everything," Powell							
1.	(a)	reversed	(b)	back	(c)	backed up	(d)	backfired
2.	(a)	wave	(b)	weave	(c)	wavelength	(d)	waft
3.	(a)	devices	(b)	divisions	(c)	devotees	(d)	divas
4.	(a)	volume	(b)	space	(c)	dimensions	(d)	size
5.	(a)	dense	(b)	tense	(c)	hence	(d)	fence
6.	(a)	farce	(b)	force	(c)	forceful	(d)	fierce
7.	(a)	leg	(b)	arm	(c)	muscle	(d)	hand
8.	(a)	apologies	(b)	apologize	(c)	apologetic	(d)	apology
9.	(a)	taking	(b)	mistaken	(c)	mistakes	(d)	bringing
10.	(a)	reactive	(b)	reaction	(c)	react	(d)	reacts
11.	(a)	fact	(b)	detail	(c)	knowledge	(d)	fiction
12.	(a)	beat	(b)	mix	(c)	whisk	(d)	stir

HOMEWORK

- **1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- **2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information about world famous marketing stunts. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.
- **3. AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE:** Search the Internet and find more information about the cartoon Aqua Teen Hunger Force. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.
- **4. POSTER:** Think of a new product. Make a poster about it. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Vote on who made the best poster.
- **5. MARKETING DIARY:** Spend a day writing down the different marketing tactics you see or experience. In your next lesson, talk about whether they are successful and what makes them so.
- **6. NEWSPAPER ARTICLE:** Write an article for the *Boston Sunday Globe* newspaper about the Time Warner marketing stunt that went wrong. Describe what happened. Discuss Time Warner's apology and the city official's reaction to it. Interview some people (imagine) to find out their view. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?
- **7. MAGAZINE ARTICLE:** Write an article for the Boston Sunday Globe on marketing. Discuss how marketing has changed in your country or around the world over the last twenty years. What is marketing today? How will it change in the next twenty years?
- **8. WORLD MARKETING:** Look at the websites of companies in different countries. Write a report on differences you find in the ways or styles of marketing. Look at marketing in your own country, country of study and others.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. F d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. backfired went wrong
b. wave flood
c. standstill stop
d. blinking flashing
e. protruding
sticking out

protruding sticking out e. f. arm division tactics methods q. of-the-people h. grassroots perceived considered i. j. stir commotion

PHRASE MATCH:

a. A Time Warner Inc. marketing campaign backfired
 b. the city was under attack from terrorists
 c. inadvertently created a wave of panic

d. brought the city to a standstill

e. brought out its bomb force in force

f. Turner's marketing arm tookg. very grassroots andfull responsibilityin-the-streets

h. We were simply promoting a TV showi. being sensitive to the fact that...j. The boxes caused barely a stir elsewhere

GAP FILL:

Time Warner marketing stunt creates terror

A Time Warner Inc. marketing **campaign** backfired in Boston on Thursday when security officials decided the city was under attack from **terrorists**. The company that owns CNN, *Time* magazine and Cartoon Network inadvertently created a wave of **panic** in Boston and brought the city to a standstill. The company's **marketing** department placed 40 small, black blinking electronic devices in ten different US cities to **promote** a new cartoon show "Aqua Teen Hunger Force". Each was the size of a cereal box, although Turner referred to them as "**billboards**". Pictures of the flashing digital signs showed protruding wires, hence the **belief** that they were bombs. Boston's city officials were quick to react in the interests of public safety and brought out its bomb **force** in force and shut down highways, bridges and rivers.

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LANGUAGE WORK

1-d 2-a 3-a 4-d 5-c 6-b 7-b 8-c 9-a 10-b 11-a 12-d