

Recession-Proof Your Business: Publicity is the key

By Pam Lontos

If you're thinking of cutting your business' publicity during these tough economic times, think again. It's times like this that you have to get your company's name out there more than ever.

Consider the ingenious marketing move made by the Wrigley Company in the 1940s. During World War II, the company couldn't get the necessary ingredients to continue making their chewing gum. So they stopped production of all their product lines. However, even though they had no product to sell, they continued their advertising, with the "Remember this Wrapper" campaign. After the war ended and ingredients were plentiful again, they resumed production of their chewing gums and quickly regained and even exceeded their pre-war popularity, while much of their competition went out of business.

To put it in perspective, the Wrigley Company maintained top of mind awareness with their customers, even during a difficult time. That's exactly what your business must do to succeed in today's economy.

"But I can't afford a big advertising campaign," you may be thinking. Even if you're working with a small budget these days and advertising isn't possible, you can get great results with some carefully planned publicity. Remember that during a recession, the competition between businesses is greater than ever. Publicity helps you get that extra celebrity and credibility so you can stand out.

Additionally, you want to keep up the momentum from your current publicity efforts. If you stop marketing your business and try to resume once the recession is over, you'll be essentially starting from scratch. That's a tough place for any company to be. You'll be forgotten.

Here are a few suggestions to keep your publicity efforts going strong, even during difficult economic times.

- Inform the media that you have something to offer by sending out press releases. Press releases are also a good method for getting your product or service reviewed in publications. Watch the breaking news, and if something ties to your business, send a press release to the newspapers, radio and television shows, and magazines offering your take as an expert to interview about the situation.

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Recession-Proof Your Business:

· When you see something in the news that you have a strong opinion about, write a short op-ed piece and send it to the newspapers. Op-ed stands for "opposite editorial," referring to the page facing the editorial page - the page on which the newspaper publishes its own institutional statement of opinion. Even if your view is controversial, don't be afraid to put it out there. Controversy often sells.

· Write articles. Smart company presidents and business owners know they must constantly stay in the public's eye. Getting published in a magazine, trade journal, or local newspaper is an excellent way to keep the company's name circulating throughout the general public and to enable the company leader or business owner to become perceived as an expert. When prospects and current customers see that your company leaders have an impressive list of published pieces, they'll consider you an industry leader and will want to do business with you.

· Become an expert source for newspaper and magazine writers in your area. E-mail or call the editors to find out what stories they're working on. If you can provide information or insight on any of the topics, offer it freely so you can get quoted. Whenever you have an article or show idea, call the appropriate media personnel and present your topic. Ask questions such as, "What are your readers (or viewers or listeners) looking for?" "What are you looking for?" and "What angle do you want the story to take?"

· Use social media marketing (SMM) to promote your business online. These days, SMM is a vital and inexpensive part of any marketing campaign. SMM helps you get your business' name out to the masses quicker and easier than ever before. Create profiles for your business on sites like Facebook, Twitter and Plaxo and interact with potential clients.

The bottom line is your business needs to be out there all the time to maintain top-of-mind awareness. Granted, you may need to trim your advertising expenses, but publicity is an inexpensive way to keep yourself in front of your clients. And since many of your competitors will cut back on marketing now, by staying strong and true to your course, you will stand out, especially as the competition thins out.

With more competition between businesses today, you need to show why you are the best in your field. Credibility does that for you, and promoting your business with public relations builds that credibility.



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Recession-Proof Your Business:

You never want people to think, "What ever happened to (your business)...."
Maintaining your publicity efforts prevents that from happening and helps you get
business - even in tough times!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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