

recession proof marketing

is a recession a good time to start a business?

It is estimated that nearly 500,000 businesses were started in the UK in 2007, a huge increase of 20% on the previous year. There is an assumption that an economic downturn stifles start-ups but, according to The Prysm Group, organisers of the UK's largest small business exhibition, Business Startup: "A downturn in the economy merely accelerates the hunger to leave employment."

With unemployment rising, a salaried job looks less secure than before. You may be considering jumping before you're pushed and starting that business you always planned. Or the decision may have been made for you, and a redundancy package has provided some cash to use as start-up finance. You may already be a small business owner, but be worried about controlling your costs while expanding your market in a recession.

In a recession there is an assumption that only the strong survive and to be strong means to be big. But thanks to the Internet, you no longer need to be a big business to be a big hitter. Small businesses are lean, fast and adaptable, with smaller overheads than big corporations. By being smart with your marketing, you can weather the storm and survive – even thrive – in a recession.

how should you approach your marketing?

The first instinct of big businesses during a recession is to slash their marketing. This can create an opportunity for smaller players, as those who maintain their marketing will have a competitive advantage.

It is vital to keep marketing in a recession. Cut back on operating costs and expenses where you can – but never your marketing. Less marketing never leads to more sales. However, you may be able to reduce your marketing costs while reaching out to new customers by using social media: blogs, podcasts, video, social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, social bookmarking sites like del.icio.us, even virtual worlds like Second Life.

Traditional marketing such as advertising in magazines and newspapers and on TV and radio is expensive – and it is less effective than it used to be. In today's attention economy, people are tuning out of these channels and spending more and more time online. If you can make your products or services easy to find online, you're half way there.

The social media revolution has created powerful, low-to-no-cost communication tools and channels that are not just for teenagers. There is a large, global, adult population who can discover you online. Social media is now used to market businesses, products, services – even Presidential candidates.

By creating online communities around your products – or, better yet, tapping into pre-existing communities who are already interested in what you have to offer – you can create value, engage your existing clients and customers and find new ones.



why social media marketing works

Social media marketing works for small businesses because it focuses on building customer relationships rather than sterile marketing campaigns. If people can find you on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and iTunes as well as Google, you will quickly build a loyal following. If you make your content easy for people to find, pass on and share, you benefit from viral word of mouth marketing. Social media marketing is:

- **affordable - social media is cheaper than traditional marketing - use it to punch above your weight**
- **effective - people spend more time online - use social media to reach your market where they are**
- **authentic - social media is a personal medium - use it credibly as a small business owner.**



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your online marketing checklist

Which of the following are YOU using?

- Website** – the point of most online marketing is to get people onto your website
- Blog** – business blogs generate traffic, build trust and position you as an expert
- Search Engine Marketing** – pay per click advertising such as Google AdWords
- Email marketing** – the most important ‘call to action’ on your website is a newsletter signup form
- Facebook** – social networking sites help people discover your products or services
- MySpace** – has a younger demographic, suitable for some businesses
- LinkedIn** – a professional social network, useful for B2B businesses
- Social Bookmarking** – sites such as del.icio.us or Digg where people can bookmark and share content they like. Include bookmarking buttons at the end of your blog postings to encourage pass-on
- YouTube** – connect with people using video demonstrations, tutorials or testimonials
- Twitter** – a ‘microblogging’ site allowing updates of 140 characters or less. Useful for marketing blogs.
- Podcasts** – audio or video files that people subscribe to. Great for building a loyal following.
- Second Life** – a virtual world that looks like a video game, but the ‘characters’ are avatars of real people behind their keyboards. Harder to use than other social networks, but can have business benefits. One to watch...

Small Business Studio is a new one-stop web design and marketing agency working exclusively with small businesses and startups. We help you grow your business with the latest, low-cost online marketing tools including blogs, podcasts, video and social networking.

Give us a call on... **020 3178 6550**
or visit www.smallbusinessstudio.co.uk
and sign up to our **FREE Small Business Marketing newsletter** to learn how to promote your business online.

five ways to beat the recession

- 1. Bite the bullet.** If it looks like you might have to cut staff or rationalise your business, do it now. It will extend your business life.
- 2. Reposition.** Think carefully about your unique selling proposition (USP), your niche and your communities of interest. Adjust your positioning if necessary.
- 3. Follow the money.** Focus your sales and marketing efforts on the products and services people want. The market is always right.
- 4. Maintain your marketing.** Reduce operating costs and expenses where you can, but don't cut your marketing.
- 5. Find additional revenue streams.** One of the advantages of being a small business rather than an employee is that there are always additional ways you can make money. Think about ways you can ‘monetize’ your website.

how we can help

We can:

- Create websites, blogs, podcasts and video to build traffic, increase visibility, connect with your community and provide value
- Set up profiles, pages, groups and events on social networking sites such as Facebook
- Set up and manage your Google AdWords campaigns
- Develop email marketing solutions for you
- Draw up a social media marketing plan for your business
- Offer training with our Social Media Marketing for Business workshops.

marketing packages



social media marketing plan

based on a one-hour telephone consultation with you

social media marketing plan including:

- marketing aims and objectives
- recommended marketing strategy
- proposed social media tools
- calls to action
- measures of success
- set up of one of the following: Facebook profile, MySpace profile, Facebook group, Facebook page, Facebook event, MySpace group
- set up of one of the following accounts: Twitter, Feedburner, del.icio.us, YouTube



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