

Stay Visible. Spend Less.

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The "r" word (recession) is being whispered. That means more belt-tightening and penny-pinching. But does it mean marketing communications should stop? NO!!! It's been shown time and again that companies that stay visible during an economic downturn wind up winning.

That's right. Companies that stay visible wind up winners in the long run.

Visibility is essential for any business. But how do you stay visible when resources are tight? Here are some programs I recommend.

- 1) Postcard marketing - Use postcards to ask for referrals, announce events, build web site traffic, say thanks, and more. Of course, for best results you need a good list.

- 2) News release program - Does your company bring new products or services to market? Publish literature? These are great subjects for news releases. Send releases to editors at relevant publications regularly to get more than your fair share of coverage. Public relations activities like this are time-intensive, but cost much less than advertising.

- 3) Case history articles - Highlight your company's capabilities with problem/solution articles. Well-written case histories are in demand -- by readers and editors alike. These stories make great web site content, too.

- 4) Web - Creating and maintaining a web site is relatively low cost, especially compared to printed pieces like brochures. You'll need to promote the site in order to build traffic.

- 5) E-mail marketing - Sending regular messages by email saves on paper, printing, and postage. Be sure to get the recipient's permission, write a compelling subject line, and include an offer. Work with a good email marketing company - one that provides clear metrics so you can see what's working.

- 6) Newsletters - Developing a good newsletter takes market intelligence and careful planning. Then you need discipline and skill to crank out something worthwhile on a schedule. But it's worth it! A good newsletter can gain you loyalty, credibility, and - oh yeah - visibility.

- 7) Identity - Maintaining a consistent identity is a low-cost way to maximize impact. Consistency and professionalism help any business over time. Consistency means repetition. That's what solidifies ideas in our brains. Professionalism is about looking good. If you want to be taken seriously, present a professional image.

Whatever you do, repeat, repeat, repeat! A single mailing (for example) may get disappointing results. Don't be surprised or discouraged. Keep at it with a consistent look, message, and audience. Over time your message will sink in.

About the author Claire Cunningham, president of Clairvoyant Communications, Inc., helps companies jumpstart their sales with increased visibility. She shares her expertise on her web site <http://www.clairvoyantcommunications.com> Sign up there for her monthly e-newsletter, Communiqué. Contact Claire at 1-763-546-0479, 1-612-709-6845 or claire@claircomm.com

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