

12 Cheap Marketing Ideas



Here are some free or inexpensive ideas you can use right away to enhance your marketing efforts:

- 1) Use a graphical e-mail signature with your logo to bolster your brand identity.
- 2) Print your company logo on checks.
- 3) Put a referral incentive on the backs of all business cards.
- 4) Use “on-hold” messages to promote offerings.
- 5) Translate your brochures into other languages and increase your base.
- 6) Leverage your TV ad expense by converting commercials into Web videos.

Idea Center

- 7) Save on postage and printing by sending e-mail newsletters.
- 8) Send press releases to the media to maintain name recognition (see “More Online” below).
- 9) Use point-of-sale posters to cross-promote offerings.
- 10) Try search engine advertising with a mere \$50 or \$100 budget to put your organization on top of search results.
- 11) Identify one or more complementary businesses and share the cost of sending promotional postcards four times a year.
- 12) Place a “Civic Activities” binder in your lobby with thank you letters and other correspondence acknowledging your civic and charitable work. •

More Online

Browse back issues and subscribe to the monthly electronic edition of COCO COntact at www.cocoboston.com.

Articles include:

- “More cheap marketing ideas”
- “Turn to the ‘hoity-toity’ for recession sales”

Also, visit the “Self-Help” section for more tips. •

Smart companies look beyond the downturn



Recessions don't last, but smart businesses do. There have been 10 recessionary cycles since 1945, each lasting on average 10 months. The expansion side, however, lasted on average 57 months.

Smart businesses do what they must to stem the bleeding during a downturn, but they also take advantages of opportunities and continue to plan for inevitable bright futures. The others lose market share and become the opportunities for smart businesses to feast upon. Asaf Farashuddin, a former executive director and global leader of corporate strategy for Cummins Inc., and director of corporate strategy for Lucent Inc., says rewards come only from planning ahead.

“A mere recovery from crisis is not enough to deliver sustainable success...the long-term success of companies may be determined not just by how well they handle a downturn, but also by their foresight in preparing for the upturn.” Farashuddin's comments appeared in the most recent issue of strategy+business.

On Balance

Develop a two-part plan that, first, looks at what products and services are still in demand during the downturn and, second, looks at potential future opportunities. Prepare a roadmap for marketing those offerings that still perform and develop a strategy for the future.

Perennially successful Procter & Gamble Co. recently rearranged its marketing budget to promote its lower cost clothes washing detergent over its premium product. The company has also been careful to consistently maintain its brand identities, continue repetitive messaging about its unique selling propositions and boost sales to pre-identified audiences. In fact, Procter & Gamble Co. Chief Financial Officer Clayton Daley told Advertising Age, “The productivity things relate to people, not to advertising spending.”

He explained his company will look for efficiencies, but that advertising is not among the planned cuts.

Bob Liodice, president of the Association of National Advertisers said many members are cutting marketing spending against his advice. “Historically, marketing budgets are ↗

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U.S. fuels your competitors

Unless you are among the Fortune 500, your business should take a skeptical view of the federal government's growing role as "guardian of giant corporate interests."

In recent years, the U.S. has been gradually crippling small businesses, community banks and others with questionable regulations and outright gifts to large corporations. Earl E. Devaney, inspector general at the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) reported on the latter in a July, 2008, report.

"We found about \$5.7 million in awards to large businesses for which DOI received small business credit in fiscal years 2006-2007. Several of the businesses are obviously large, such as Home Depot, John Deere, Dell, Sherwin Williams, Starwood Hotels and Waste Management." In violation of the intent of the 1953 Small Business Act, the federal government has stopped requiring listing of annual revenue and total number of employees on certification forms.

Another way to promote the conglomerates is to reduce oversight or pass legislation that supports the interests of the biggest of the big. The sub-prime debacle can be directly traced to the government's unwillingness to regulate the largest mortgage companies. Further, as noted in a previous Peeves column ("Napoleon Compliance" harms competition," Spring, 2008), the Interstate Banking and Branching Efficiency Act (IBBEA) permitted large institutions to wipe out half of the banks in the country. The good news is the public backlash may at long last put banks and mortgage companies on equal footing.

Sometimes federal support for the ultra large is subtle. Customers of American Airlines, for example, have been threatened with felony charges for even mildly raising a customer service issue. Even as the airline becomes increasingly inept at managing luggage

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or maintaining a minimal level of customer service, airline staff have apparently been directed to cite federal regulations (i.e., "interfering with a flight crew") to stifle complaints. The U.S. backs up American Airlines by refusing to develop "clear protocols for dealing with minor incidents," reported the Los Angeles Times.

In the "tell a lie long enough, it becomes the truth" category, Washington is on the verge of giving in to oil company demands to drill in sensitive areas. The fact is the oil companies have contributed to fuel shortages (and windfall profits) by refusing to drill on 68 million acres of federal lands – 81 percent of U.S. oil reserves – they have already leased. There's no guarantee they will drill on the new lands if given permission.

How has your business been harmed by the federal guardian of giant corporate interests? •



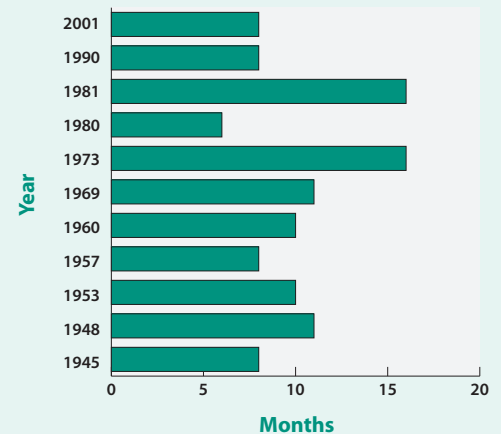
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among the first to be cut in a budget crunch (but) spending more during tough times when competitors may be scaling back is a good way to strategically boost market share, because this often helps brands come out ahead when the economy rebounds."

This newsletter will long be outdated by the time an "official" determination is made about whether the United States entered recession in 2008. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) did not determine the U.S. entered the last recession in March, 2001, until eight months later. It took almost two years to determine the recession had actually ended the same month as the first announcement. NBER says recessions begin at the "peak" of economic expansion and end at the "trough."

"Successful strategists promote upturn thinking even during the deepest downturns. Techniques such as crafting an upturn SWAT team, implementing long-term strategic planning, and requiring upturn thinking during restructuring help companies develop their own Marshall Plan to stay one step ahead of competitors when better times return," said Farashuddin. •

Recession Duration



Source: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc.

Mission

COCO+CO.'s mission is to help client partners ethically win market leadership and stakeholder respect by uniquely achieving a harmony of strategic and creative resources. Objective, experienced and audience-centered, the resulting public relations, advertising and marketing programs earn trust, respect and confidence. •

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189 Ward Hill Avenue,
Ward Hill, MA 01835-6973
Voice: 978.374.1900
Facsimile: 978.521.4636
Toll-Free: 800.374.4103
www.cocoboston.com

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