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Top Five Most Cost-Effective Ways to Market Your Business in a Downturn

By Sherry Prescott-Willis

Need to do more marketing in this downturn for your product or service but don't have a deep wallet for marketing activities? Most businesses understand that now more than ever, it's critical that you market yourself! Thanks to many Web 2.0 and online tools available via the Internet, you don't have to spend a ton of money marketing yourself or your product or service. You can make a difference in your business quickly by using free or low-cost online tools. Here are some ideas to get you started today:

- 1. Set up a FREE Teleconference, Webinar or send an email** and invite customers to attend a session where you address key topics or trends that interest them. Thanks to free online teleconference and webinar tools out there, you can quickly and easily set up a conversation with customers to educate them more about your product or service.
- 2. Provide your marketing tools as downloadable documents online.** Today, customers are using the Internet to make key decisions about purchases and to find out additional information about the companies they want to work with. Save on printing costs by posting online! Do you have some existing brochures, archived newsletters, promotions, reports or any whitepapers? Something as simple as taking existing documents and making them a PDF that can be downloadable on your website is a great way to quickly get the attention of your customer. You can also create "Top 5 or Top 10 best practices" PDF downloadable documents that are quick and easy to create yet valuable for your existing and potential customers.
- 3. Use FREE Web 2.0 tools such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook** to get the word out about what your business is doing. Yes, these are all FREE tools! Simply requiring a set-up account, you can collaborate with new customers, market your product or service and get direct feedback online from customers who are interested in finding out more about you. The opportunities are endless for how you can market yourself for using these tools. Running a workshop or seminar? Looking for clients to participate in a survey? Post it. Need a quick video posted to your site? Do something using YouTube and post to your website.
- 4. Survey your customers to see what they think about your product or service.** There are many free and low-cost surveys out there that can help you to reach customers to understand how they think about your product or service or get a feel for how they are using your product or

service. Surveys like Freeonlinesurveys.com, Zoomerang and Survey Monkey are great tools with survey templates built in to help you get started fast. Online surveys are a great way to promote your product or service and the survey results can also be useful in developing future marketing content for you and your business!

- 5. Host an online or in-person roundtable** focused on top issues facing your customers in this economy. Invite your top customers and/or potential customers and you be the one to facilitate, take notes and offer a summary of the event. Once the event is over, you will have valuable information about your customers and potential customers. You will have also had the unique opportunity to share your expertise to those who attended the roundtable! A roundtable is also an excellent opportunity to get an update from your customers on key problems they are facing, how the organization needs help and find out what is happening with budget requirements. All of this information will help you to understand your customers better and as a result give you the tools you need to create more valuable proposals and projects in the future.

About Sherry Prescott-Willis

Sherry is passionate about helping people become better marketers. She is especially interested in helping early and mid-stage companies to develop effective marketing strategies and tactics that work. With an innovative approach, she has a keen eye for developing marketing programs that increase revenues and impact the customer. Sherry has over 18 years of marketing experience specializing in both consumer and high technology products. She has a track record of developing successful marketing programs that create results through strategic marketing plans and activities. Sherry's new book, *Market This!: An Effective 90-Day Marketing Tool* was released last month and is now available on Amazon and BarnesandNoble.com. For more information, go to: <http://www.marketthisbook.com>