

How to advertise in a recession.

by ^{TE} ESPRESSO San Diego's Coffeehouse & Café Newspaper.

In 18 years of ad sales, ESPRESSO has seen tough times before and how businesses weather them. Along the way, we've noticed some recurring elements and patterns among businesses that have prospered during times of economic turmoil. We've summarized some things we think are important to keep in mind when economic times are tough. Some are glaringly obvious and following them can greatly increase returns on ad expenditures. Yet many businesses react like deer in the headlights when trouble looms, and standing still in the path of danger is a recipe for disaster. Here are some of the things we've learned that will help keep you from repeating others' mistakes—and help you come out ahead when times get better:

1. SERVICE: Go the extra mile for your client.

When times are hard, people feel *hurt*; their earning power is down, their ability to enjoy life is less. They suffer increased pressure and feelings of loneliness, especially as consumers in the market place.

That's why it pays to smile, remember the client's little habits and preferences, share a joke every now and then and give the client a bit of cheer and human warmth. People remember those who make them feel good and they'll come back to places where they're respected and feel happy.

Clients repay those little kindnesses in two ways: they patronize their favored businesses to the extent they're able whenever they can, and they tell everyone they know about favored businesses. *They respond and bond.* Their goodwill is like gold to businesses that develop a corps of

clientele in spite of downturns and competition.

2. CONSISTENCY: Position your business to express promise, personality and stability. Your best defense against tough times is to tell the client what to expect from you.

The packaging of your business or product should aim to make the client bond with you during hard times. People like stability and if they know that your business offers consistent quality, prices and service, they'll prefer to shop with you. This kind of positioning reassures the client that you'll be there for them. People have faith in the strong; show yourself to be strong. Consistency helps.

HOW TO POSITION YOUR ADVERTISING IN A RECESSION

Here are some key elements in effective hard-times advertising. Successful businesses have used these keys since they were developed during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

1. In addition to offering stability and service, tough times offer wise business operators the chance to re-create or enhance their brand. Establishing or re-inventing a powerful brand takes the fear out of buying and even makes some people willing to pay significantly more for what they want from a brand they've bonded with.
2. Display ads are an extremely effective way to enhance a brand—they can offer detail, image, price and promise in a concise package. They have staying power.
3. The benefits of branding require specific magazines and newspapers that reach target markets. The power of the brand lies with the

medium that delivers the message. The better the pairing, the greater the success of the ad.

4. Very often, money spent in large, mass-circulation magazines or newspapers is money wasted on useless circulation. If you pay to reach people who cannot or do not buy from your kind of business, or are diffident about what you offer, you are throwing money away. In tight times when every nickel counts, it's important to know whom the magazine or newspaper reaches before you buy.

5. Put the promise of your business in all of your ads.

6. Sell your quality, consistency, strength and service.

7. Hammer home your name.

8. If your business is a one-person or family operation, make sure the public knows *you*.

9. Promote every aspect of your position in all your ads.

HOW TO BUY PRINT ADS IN TOUGH TIMES

Saving pennies on ad space and crowding text and pictures into small ads is useless. Ads need enough space to focus the eye on where and what is important.

Color is essential for all new business advertising. People see in color and they need to see your logo or brand name in color like they'll see it at your place of business. If you are enhancing a brand, color is key.

Ad space should be bought for one-year periods, with options on bigger spaces at a discount price. Using a reserved-page spot is worth the extra cost because it promotes stability and strength.

Depending on your position, it may be wise to reserve small ad spaces on different pages of the same issue that tie to a bigger, main ad on a back page or cover.

Remember that your ads in tough times will position you to come out ahead when times are better. The public will remember you—they won't be familiar with businesses that don't advertise.

And last but not least:

Advertise in ESPRESSO.

An intelligent, affluent, early-adopting and savvy public willing to experience new things and happy to tell their friends about their finds are to be found in the hundreds of coffeehouses throughout San Diego County.

ESPRESSO's readership is a perfect public to introduce new businesses, products, goods and services to because *they are willing to respond and bond to the businesses they like.* Café Society is an individualistic public that prefers the local shop to the mall, the independent to the chain. They willingly pay back respect with long-term patronage and they are a trendsetting core public for businesses and products of all kinds. They are brand-adoptive and loyal in their purchasing choices.

You can advertise anywhere; it makes sense to advertise with a newspaper that knows your needs and how to help you find the clientele that will make you recession-proof.

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San Diego's Coffeehouse & Café Newspaper since 1992.

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