

# Poweroften

MIDLANDS BUSINESS FIGURES REVEAL THEIR OPINIONS ON A HOT TOPIC OF THE MOMENT

## Q Is it sensible to scale back your marketing during the downturn?

NO

ALAN BOYDEN, GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR, BCS



"In business winning is everything. Winning orders and, most importantly, the confidence of your marketplace. In any downturn there will be winners and losers so it's a case of deciding which you want to be. The choice is hide away or get out and market your wares. It might hurt your bottom line in the short term and be a bitter pill to swallow, but the alternative may be a lot more unpalatable. Undoubtedly, those who invest in marketing now will reap the rewards later."

NO

DR PETER HUGHES, MANAGING PARTNER, COGNITION PR



"It's more important than ever to step up your marketing during a recession – particularly to your existing customer database. With market share becoming more costly to acquire, securing a bigger share of each of your existing customers and seeking referrals should become the main focus of your sales and marketing strategy."

NO, BUT...

JAMES TWIGG, FINANCE DIRECTOR AT ORCHID BUSINESS COMPUTING



"In a downturn businesses often try to protect the financial stability by cutting costs, and the most obvious area is marketing. My business is continuing to invest in PR and marketing as we believe it's shortsighted to cut spend, which plays a large role in gaining sales to meet targets or just break even. This depends on the quality of the marketing and that is the ultimate consideration that needs to be made."

SOMETIMES

MARK SMITH, WEST MIDLANDS CHAIRMAN, PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS



"Advertising and marketing budgets are the cost areas that typically get cut first, despite evidence that indicates companies that maintain marketing spend through the lean times fare better in the long run. While short-term cuts in advertising may be inevitable in some circumstances, businesses should maintain a marketing presence and continue to invest to avoid giving an advantage to their competitors."

NO

GUY ASHWORTH, HCK COMMUNICATIONS



"This is no time to cut marketing communications spend. This is particularly true for PR, which is a highly effective and relatively low-cost route to market for the business-to-business sector. Cynics might say this is simply enlightened self-interest. The challenge for us, however, is to ensure we demonstrate the value in what we do. If you cannot measure it, there's no point doing it."

MAYBE

HILARY CAMPTON, MARKETING CONSULTANT TO THE WILSON ORGANISATION



"Marketing tends to be first when it comes to cost-cutting. Yet rather than abandoning it at the first signs of a downturn, focus on proactive marketing and development activities that will take you closer to your target markets. This will help you steal share from rivals too busy naval-gazing. Belts need to be tightened but it's important to support those areas, and the people with the ability to pull the business through."

NO

SAM KEATING, REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL



"When a downturn happens, companies often respond by cutting marketing and advertising. But those that increase spending significantly outperform competitors. What we have in 2008, which we didn't have in previous recessions, are advances in technology. There are many options – the media, websites, blogs and online e-bulletins. It's more important than ever to seek out new business and contacts."

NO

LIZ CARTWRIGHT, CARTWRIGHT COMMUNICATIONS



"During a slowdown it's not realistic or sensible to rely on existing customers: it's important to think about attracting new customers to secure a consistent pipeline of work. Media coverage is a cost-effective way of communicating the right messages, especially if you're a smaller brand in a competitive market. By continuing PR and marketing during harder times, you stand out. It's vital to see marketing spend as an investment during the downturn, not an expense."

NO

ALISTAIR WESSON, REGIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR, TENON



"It's easy to see marketing costs as an immediate saving as the economy starts to tighten. The usual argument is that no-one can afford to buy so why bother? What's forgotten is that people require good advice. What sense then in ceasing to market to the people who will be craving your input? The only guaranteed result from short-term savings is a poor business pipeline when you most need it to be strong."

NO

JULIET COLLINGS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CORE MARKETING



"We need to go back to basics. Streamline key messages, ensuring they are carefully targeted to make the right impact and stand out from the crowd. It's more imperative than ever that businesses reach out to customers and make the most of existing contacts and relationships, placing themselves at the forefront of their marketplace."

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT IN A FUTURE POWER OF TEN PLEASE EMAIL SAM METCALF AT [SAM.METCALF@NEWSCO.COM](mailto:SAM.METCALF@NEWSCO.COM)