

Top rate service will help you survive the tight economy

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It seems most believe the term “recession” has a negative connotation. Some may be in denial as to whether we have, in fact, reached this point in our natural business cycle. However you choose to look upon the current economic situation, when the economy tightens, it is a good time to refocus. Not-for-profits and for profits share a common need: to survive and remain financially healthy. As such, maintaining sales, service and maximizing flow-through is the order of the day.

Marketing challenge. Stay close to your audience, members and exhibitors/suppliers. Listen to their needs and reinforce the value your organization offers in addressing these needs. Be certain the core purpose of your organization is “tuned up” and well communicated. Avoid the temptation of being all things to all people.

To whom you market. First and foremost, focus on current members and exhibitors/suppliers. Take a “key account” management approach. It is always easier to keep a satisfied member/customer than it is to attract a new one. If your membership is organization-based vs. individual-based, this might be easier to accomplish. Whichever it is, protect your base by identifying your major sources of membership and larger exhibitors/suppliers. Most important, to retain their commitment to your organization, have an action plan enabling you to listen, respond to their needs, communicate with them often and, as much as possible, communicate with them directly.

Know your members/customers budget cycles. When are key decisions made? Be sure to be ahead of their decision process time line. Don't wait until their budget is completed and approved. Making a financial commitment to an organization is an “investment.” Be sure their needs are understood and the value your organization offers is clearly communicated *to* them and acknowledged *by* them.

To hook or not to hook. Be cautious not to assume hooks are a substitute for value. Time and money spent on coming up with and promoting special offers and gimmicks might not result in a significant return. Remember you are up against a financial choice. Someone is making a decision on where to invest their limited dollars. Will a 2-for-1 sale, door prize or free offer be perceived to have value? The mind set is one of investing vs. saving a quick buck.

Increasing ROI. All too often, increasing return-on-investment means sacrificing service. Compromising service is counterproductive to delivering value. The trick is to find ways to do business faster, better and more economically. Fortunately, technology, software and emerging companies with new business models offer tools and systems allowing business to be done better and, at the same time, increase ROI.

Evaluate all areas of income and do a comparison of their operational cost vs. respective revenue received. This will identify the more profitable revenue streams that can produce quicker positive returns, and it will also point to areas where cost might need to be brought inline.

Review current suppliers and business partners. They too are dealing with the same economic pressures. Don't expect them to sacrifice their financial well-being, but rather explore opportunities where business can be done better, faster and at a reduced cost. Look for win - win opportunities where both organizations realize benefits and can help each other weather the cycle.

Atlanta-based [TradeshowLogistics](#) is a next generation general contractor committed to making tradeshows more valuable for their clients. Contact Robinson at crobinson@tradeshowlogistics.com or 240-281-0471.