

BUSINESS

Toyota Tundra ties with Ford F-150 for top large truck in J.D. Power survey. Page 4C

Downturn a time to increase your profile

Your presence affects your prosperity.

It's that simple.

Many people mistakenly think that public relations and marketing are not essential to running a successful organization. Your competitors may be swinging the PR budget ax, but they are the ones that likely will not survive this economic downturn.

PR, marketing and networking are critical in these tough fiscal times.

When you are consistently proactive and visible to mass numbers of people who have buying power, you not only will withstand this difficult cycle but you will thrive.

Countless business and nonprofit professionals here in San Antonio and across the country tell me they are "the best-kept secret." My immediate response is, "You don't want to be a secret! It's time to let the cat out of the bag."



Susan Young is the president of Get in Front Communications.

GUEST VOICES

Here are five fast and affordable tips to increase your company's visibility, credibility and revenues:

■ Focus on your expertise and how it affects the public. Write a tip sheet or short article (formatted like this one!) to position yourself as an expert in your field. Address the pain/problem of the public and offer solutions. Then post the information on your blog, Web site, e-zine or Facebook profile. E-mail copies to your clients and prospects.

■ Learn the power of technology. It's critical to understand how social media can be an integral part of your

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marketing mix. Make a commitment to learn about online marketing opportunities. If you dedicate 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening to social networking, you will reap the benefits of your investment.

■ Speak. Volunteer to provide a free presentation at your local Rotary Club, church, library or professional association. This is an excellent way to get in front of a group of potential customers who are interested in

your topic. You'll be able to help people while building your credibility and name recognition.

■ Pay attention to the news. Develop relationships with reporters so when they need a source in a particular field or industry, they will contact you and quote you.

■ Get out from behind the computer. As helpful as Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and technology can be, we still must leverage the "human factor" of business. A cold keyboard cannot replace a warm handshake. Determine where your ideal clients spend their time and go there. Face-to-face connections, smiles and

human conversations are priceless.

When you decide to be proactive and use a combination of public relations, online marketing and networking, your presence will increase. So will your prosperity.

Susan Young is the author "Communicating with Confidence: Tips & Techniques for Powerful Business Communication." Visit www.getinfrontcommunications.com or call (210) 375-6422