

Keep Your Head Up and Think Toward the Future

Phil Walczynski

There is no doubt we are headed for difficult economic times, but your business decisions over the next year can help your company come out healthier and more profitable.

In 2002 the Colorado rafting outfitter business experienced two strikes; the uncertainty after 9/11 and a drought. In that industry if you don't have water you don't have a business. The industry as a whole came out of that year healthier and stronger. The outfitters that were smart about their spending, aggressive in their marketing and savvy about their business decisions now have thriving businesses. That's not to say there weren't casualties; several outfitters went out of business, were bought up or consolidated with others.

Everyone seems to be in a "wait and see" mode, which is ok as long as it doesn't turn into a long term state of mind. I've heard that other industries are down quite a bit more. "According to the U.S. Commerce Department, total retail sales fell 2.7% in December, more than double the anticipated decline of 1.2%. Although the outdoor industry felt the effects of a tough Christmas season along with the rest of the country, results were better than most industries, a cause for cautious optimism heading into 2009." (December 2008 OIA Topline Report, 2/3/09) I still think that our niche is somewhat insulated; people may not take the big European vacation, but they will drive a few hours to camp, hike, bike, raft, etc. "Active Americans Tighten Spending But Still Plan Vacation", Leisure Trends Group Boulder, Colorado 12/08. "More Americans camp than play basketball." (OIA Recreation Economy Report)

BALLSTON SPA, N.Y., Jan. 14 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- ReserveAmerica, the United States' leading outdoor recreation reservation and campground management solutions provider, has broken its previous reservation record on one of its busiest days of the year by processing over 20,000 reservations on January 2nd, booking more than 79,000 camping nights for the upcoming camping season, an 11% increase over last year's single-day reservation record.

That being said; this is the time to be smart about buying, don't take too many chances and stick to core products. From a marketing and general business stand point; now is the time to be aggressive (within reason). Your competitors will probably be cutting back on marketing and growth opportunities, so if you continue moving forward you'll come out of this "economic downturn" stronger than your competitors. Now is the time to implement marketing projects that will help your company capture a larger market share. Think of High Point as your source for special projects. We specialize in marketing, catalog & website production, staff training and general business projects. So if you need a little help with an idea give us a ring.

There are many ways to improve your bottom line; reducing payroll expenses is one. High Point can provide your business with contract temporary or seasonal labor, these employees are on High Point's payroll. We pay the workers comp, unemployment and hiring costs and you contract with us only for the time you need the staff. So, you don't have to keep employees on the payroll when you don't need them and you can request previous staff for your future needs.