



As businesses begin to recover from the recession, developing and retaining client relationships is essential. Preserving a place in the public eye through strategic marketing can help a company withstand hard times. Marketing is critical, and there are several cost-effective strategies businesses can utilize in this tough climate.

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS KEY

Customer service is vital to the success of any company. The majority of any company's profits often come from a small percentage customers and clients. Staying close to loyal customers and demonstrating your value will make them aware of what you can offer — keeping you in the front of the customer's mind. When appropriate, you can also leverage your client relationships and ask for referrals, creating new business opportunities. As they evaluate their budgets, closely held client relationships will help highlight your value.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Staying close to your customers is important, but the way you conduct your business is also vital to success. Checking in with your customers on a regular basis is an easy step. In addition, reminding your clients of your hard work, attention to detail and on-time delivery on past projects can only help maintain your relationships.

LETTERS TO PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS

One easy way to create new business opportunities is by sending a well-written letter to potential clients. Following up with a phone call makes you a tangible resource, and simply calling and making a connection keeps your company on the radar for future business.

E-MAIL AND DIRECT MAIL

The importance of communicating with customers and new prospects is at an all time high. E-mail marketing is an inexpensive way to market your organization. You can create a professional e-mail using an attractive design with a strong, targeted

message that goes directly to a potential customer. After tracking interest in your e-mail, follow up with phone calls.

E-mail marketing is cost-effective and timely, and it integrates well with other marketing tactics, like direct mail. Direct mail can maintain relationships with specific prospects. Within a fully integrated marketing campaign, direct marketing can be a critical tool in creating a foundation of leads for sales conversion.

SEMINARS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Attending seminars allows you to network with potential clients, and learn about new trends in your industry. Trade associations, like the Subcontractors Trade Association, are often looking for speakers for their meetings — and you can position yourself as an expert in your industry by volunteering as a speaker. In addition, you may volunteer to author articles for industry newsletters and publications, which is another great way to increase your visibility and showcase your knowledge.

NETWORKING

With all of the new ways to approach business, the fact of the matter is that people like to do business with people they know. Joining associations and attending meetings, and using LinkedIn and Facebook to communicate with existing and potential clients increases your chances of maintaining old and making new connections in these challenging times. Using your organizational contacts and partnerships to network can be vital to any business.

About Sarah S. Berman, President, The Berman Group, Inc. Sarah S. Berman serves as President of The Berman Group, a full-service marketing, public relations and special events firm based in New York City. The firm specializes in serving business-to-business clients in the real estate, construction and professional services industries. The firm's website can be found at www.bermangrp.com.