

1

Cheap? Let everyone know

Cost is paramount in the minds of many consumers—the less expensive a product or service, the better. If that's your business, have your marketing materials reflect that cost-conscious focus. "Right now we're in a price-driven environment," says Jay Lipe, author of *The Marketing Toolkit for Growing Businesses*. "If you're using marketing materials that show that price-driven personality, it really reinforces that image. Bare-bones positioning these days can really work effectively."

That's been the case for Monsoon Co., a Berkeley, California-based software development consulting firm. While the company has long touted its low-priced services, it recently mailed out some 150 rather grungy-by-design mailers: five-by-seven pieces of cardboard, broken from a used box, with a handwritten "recession message" that read, "OK, this is a lame way to save money. Call us about smarter ways to save on design and development in 2009."

Sandeep Sood, 32, president of the \$2 million company, explains that the mailer "plays with the paranoia" that people have about the recession. "Yes, it's bad, but it's not as bad as many people might think," he says. "And this message really made people chuckle." Moreover, the results have been great. "We kept getting calls from people saying how much they liked the card. And any time a client calls is an opportunity to engage."

2

Be social

There is no such thing as too much Facebooking, Twittering or other internet-based social networking. These services are free, they can reach millions (Facebook claims more than 175 million regular users), and they provide potential customers with a subjective feel for who you are and why they should want to connect with you.

But be warned: Social networking is a highly discretionary medium; it's critical that your online presence makes visitors want to return. A blog, for instance, may make a more informational focus—tips, strategies and other ideas for readers—more effective than a

pure sales schtick. And be prepared to put in the hours to keep your content fresh. "The only thing you have to factor in is your own time," says Lyn Mettler, 34, president of Step Ahead Inc. in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. How much updating is enough? Mettler says once a week on Facebook should do the trick, while a daily tweet on Twitter is acceptable, if not expected.

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Embracing a good cause can present a viable opportunity for low-cost marketing.



Photo: Veer Inc.