

INDA's Small Business Newsletter

Covering Issues That Affect You

May 15, 2008

INDA SMALL BUSINESS E-REPORT

Welcome to the INDA Small Business e-Report. This monthly e-publication provides INDA members with insight and advice on operating a successful small business in today's nonwovens industry.

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TIME TO RECESSION-PROOF YOUR BUSINESS

How safe is your business "if" the U.S. experiences a recession this year? Will it do well, continuing along its productivity and growth trajectory with little more than a slight re-focusing and tightening of the belt? Or will it succumb to financial pressures that in many ways are no fault of your own?

What action will you take to recession-proof your small business this year ... or any year, for that matter?

What if there were a simple, effective solution to ensure your business productivity and growth, no matter what the economy does? Small business author and consultant Susan L Reid, writing on ezine.com, provides these seven steps that focus exclusively on strengthening your business from the inside, at its core. No long-term planning is required to implement them. They are things that everyone – from the smallest nonwovens supplier to the largest – can do right now just in case we do slip into a recession.

1. Be known for delivering great products and services. Now, more than ever, this oft repeated maxim is true. Your products and services are a reflection of you, are the frontline calling card for your business, and are the number one way to make your customers trip all over themselves referring others to you.
2. Stand out by offering an astonishing guarantee, one so amazing that others in your industry would balk at offering it. Delivering on your astonishing guarantee distinguishes you and gets your business noticed.
3. Add value, not price. Continuously adding value to your products and services makes you look rich and attractive to your customers and prospects. Adding price without value makes you look cheap.
4. Cultivate business with customers who have similar beliefs and interests. This eliminates having to work with jerks.
5. Connect to give; don't connect to get. Cultivate mutually beneficial win-win relationships with emphasis on the "give" part. Ask not what your customer can do for you, but what you can do for your customer. Then deliver.
6. Command time and space this year and create what you see for yourself, not what someone else sees for you. Meet your own sales goals, provide your own growth incentives, and keep abreast of the markets so you can remain on the cutting edge, rather than waiting for someone else to do these things for you.
7. Forget about last year. Whether you did well or not, forget about it. Create a new voice. In the words of T. S. Eliot, "Last year's words belong to last year's language, and next year's words await another voice."

RECESSION FEARS? DON'T CUT YOUR WORKFORCE

Continuing on our theme of getting tough in a tough economy, the first thing many small business owners will do in reaction to a slowdown in business is to look at where they can cut to reduce expenses. That normally ends up being payroll, the biggest small business expense. But you want to use caution before you take any radical action.

Tom Gimbel, CEO of Chicago-based staffing and executive search firm the LaSalle Network, says cutting staff is absolutely wrong and could be the worst decision you could make. He actually suggests the opposite approach -- hiring during a recession. Here are three reasons why.

1. **Think Long Term.** Unfortunately, many small business CEOs are short-sighted and only see the looming "recession monster," but fail to think at the bigger picture of long-term company growth. Most of the time, economic downturns are short-lived and riding them out would have been the better option. In addition, it's easier to invest training time for new hires during slower growth periods that will translate into long term success.
2. **Consider Training Time.** Many employees that are fired during a recession will have to be re-hired after the numbers turn around. Ultimately, this costs companies a lot more money than just keeping the employees they initially had. The average employee takes at least a year and a half to really get acclimated to a new job. That's all time and energy taken away from getting the work accomplished!
3. **Peer into the Talent Pool.** Since a lot of companies make the mistake of firing during a recession, there is a greater amount of good talent looking for jobs. This is a great time to find top performers who will help bring your company to the next level. Rather than having to play "catch-up" after a recession is over by trying to fill holes that were left from downsizing, you could have top-notch, productive employees already in place.

SUMMERTIME IS A GREAT TIME TO TAP INTO INDA INTERN PROGRAM

Most college students are already out on break or have graduated, which means they are looking en masse for summer internships at good companies. INDA members can take advantage of this current and future talent pool through a new online Intern Program established by INDA to help bring together companies and young students looking for opportunities. This program can be especially helpful to smaller companies that do not have the recruiting power of their bigger competitors.

Unveiled earlier this year with the goal of identifying, recruiting and training the next generation of nonwovens industry professionals, the online Intern Program is bringing together nonwovens companies and young students and professionals considering the industry as a career. The Intern Program's goal is to help companies find qualified interns and employees where they are most comfortable – on the Internet – through the INDA website:

<http://www.inda.org/class/interns.html>

INDA also strongly urges companies to post their internship openings on the website to attract students interested in being a part of their companies.

Proving especially popular is a link where students can complete the intern form that is then posted online so that participating companies can review their interests and background and contact them if they have a match. In addition, the INDA Website also allows INDA member companies to list their intern positions for all levels of positions within the company. The students then are able to check the available intern positions and contact the company directly.

To learn more about the online Intern Program or to register, log on:

<http://www.inda.org/class/interns.html>

IDEA10 IS GOING 'GREEN'

Does your small business make a product that can help other companies reduce their environmental impact and pave the way to a sustainable business model? Then INDA wants you — for IDEA10.

As exhibitor confirmations for IDEA10 continue, INDA is putting special emphasis on identifying and recruiting “green” companies that make sustainability and energy efficiency part of their corporate philosophy and product development. The IDEA10 International Engineered Fabrics Conference and Expo, scheduled for April 27-29, 2010 in the Miami Beach Convention Center in Miami Beach, Fla., will once again bring together all links of the global supply chain for products and services, including raw materials, machinery/equipment, engineered fabrics, converted products and services.

In 2010, the event, held in the U.S. every three years, will place a special emphasis on how the industry's companies are adapting to and solving today's energy challenges around the world.

“In a recent INDA survey, 66% of top executives told us that rising energy costs are their number one problem,” says Marilyn Bellinger, INDA Associate Director of Sales. “IDEA10 will be an ideal time for all of these companies to learn about the technologies that will help them deal with this challenge.”

With all of the major companies that supply, use and convert engineered fabrics all in one place at one time, “IDEA10 will serve as a 'green' meeting place for the nonwovens industry,” Bellinger adds. “Any company whose products are specifically designed to reduce energy consumption and costs in the manufacturing of nonwoven fabrics will find a receptive global audience at IDEA10.”

INDA is already addressing the energy costs inherent in the nonwovens industry with its first-ever New Energy Technologies & Sustainability International Conference October 28-30, 2008 in Raleigh, N.C. That program will focus on answering both the economic and technical questions companies are currently facing and more than 200 decision makers are expected to attend this inaugural event.

IDEA10 will be taking that concept to the next level with full displays and presentations from these energy-focused suppliers whose products reduce energy costs and the industry's impact on the environment.

For more information: www.inda.org

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY ARE HOT TOPICS AT INTC

The most important technical issues facing the nonwovens industry in 2008 - ranging from increasing energy costs to nanotechnology to the need to pursue technologies with commercial applications - are part of the agenda recently announced for the 2008 International Nonwovens Technical Conference (INTC), scheduled for September 8-11, 2008, at the Hilton Americas in Houston, Tex.

Co-sponsored and organized by INDA and TAPPI, Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry, the world's largest nonwovens technical conference will once again bring together hundreds of technical executives from all aspects of the nonwovens, textile and paper markets. It will feature presentations from dozens of researchers and experts from around the world during the four days of technical sessions, tutorials and networking.

Highlighting the four-day technical conference will be a keynote presentation from Karen Jones, Director of Fibers & Feedstocks at Chemical Market Associates, Inc. (CMAI). She will discuss how nonwovens manufacturers are facing an enduring squeeze as rising resin costs are quickly eating into margins. Jones will also provide insight into the current oil price dynamics that are having a major impact on the nonwovens industry.

Among the other highlights of INTC 2008:

- ⇒ A unique addition to INTC 2008 is a full-day Nonwovens Enhancements session co-sponsored INDA and AATCC that will feature industry experts explaining the technologies and complexities of enhancing nonwoven fabrics. The one-day session will focus on innovative structure technology, coloring and printing techniques, performance finishes and surface treatments for product enhancement. A similar joint session was successfully held for the first time three years ago at INTC 2005.
- ⇒ A Graduate Research Award will allow up-and-coming professionals to present papers detailing their research in nonwoven technology. The winner of the Graduate Research Award will be announced at the INTC Keynote & Award Luncheon.
- ⇒ A Table-top Event & Reception will provide attendees with the opportunity to network with more than 30 corporate and university in an informal, relaxed setting.
- ⇒ A number of TAPPI Committees will hold their annual meetings during INTC, including Nonwovens Binders and Additives, Building and Industrial Mat, Materials Characterization and Modeling, Fibers and Process Technology, and Nonwovens Insulation.
- ⇒ The traditional Awards Luncheon will once again recognize the accomplishments of a number of industry professionals, including the presentation of the TAPPI Mark Hollingsworth Award.

For more information or to register online: www.inda.org

INDA MEETINGS SCHEDULE

2008

May 8-9, **Elementary Nonwovens Training Course**, INDA Headquarters, Cary, NC

June 16-18, **WOW08** (World of Wipes), The Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel Chicago, Chicago, IL

September 8, **Nonwoven Enhancements 2008**, Hilton Americas, Houston, TX

September 8-11, **INTC 2008** (The International Nonwovens Technical Conference), Hilton Americas, Houston, TX

September 16-18, **INDA Nonwovens Course**, INDA Headquarters, Cary, NC

October 28-30, 2008, **NETS 2008** (New Energy Technologies & Sustainability), Marriott City Center, Raleigh, NC

December 9-11, **Filtration 2008**, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA

2009

January 26-29, **VISION 2009**, Sheraton New Orleans Canal Street, New Orleans, LA

February 22-24, **Annual Meeting 2009** (Members Only), Four Seasons Aviara, Carlsbad, CA

May 5-7, **Link with Asia 2009** - The East/West Business Connection, Sheraton Wall Centre, Vancouver, BC Canada

September 21-24, **INTC 2009**, Grand Hyatt Denver Downtown, Denver, CO

2010

April 27-29, **IDEA 2010** International Conference & Expo, Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami Beach, FL

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS

We would love to hear from you. Just email us at [mjacobson@inda.org](mailto:mjacobsen@inda.org) to let us know how you are getting along.

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