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# Time for Change; Time for Smart Persistence

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By Terry L. Brock

“This is no time for ease and comfort. It is the time to dare and endure.” Winston Churchill

It is a time of change. Many small business owners and mobile professionals are seeing that the old models of what worked before are crumbling today. They are not valid for today’s world.

In High Tech, the realization is slowly settling in Silicon Valley like the fog enveloping the Bay Area that times are really, really different. It is not just a matter of sitting this one out with a couple of lattes until it returns and everything is like it used to be. Instead we are seeing fundamental changes in society and what works in business.

Even what was new and cool just recently is no longer in vogue in marketing. A couple of years ago e-mail marketing was touted as the way to make millions. “You can send out millions of e-mail messages [many have done that] at no cost and reach masses on the Internet,” they would claim. What they forgot about was a law that hasn’t been repealed, the Law of Supply and Demand.

With all that e-mail out there and being inundated with it, most e-mail messages have been relegated to the bins of “junk” and the mentality has shifted. That mentality is the thinking of your target market and buyers.

It is a time for change. We have to think fresh thoughts. We have to adapt and be different.

Yet, at the same time, it is time also for what I call “smart persistence.” I define smart persistence and the willingness to diligently pursue a noble goal while adjusting our tactics and direction based on intelligent feedback, changes in the environment and new information becoming available. If you’re banging your head against a wall, and your objective is to break through the wall, maybe you should consider a new technology called a hammer! Continue with your mission but change tactics in a smart way.

George Leonard wrote a powerful book a few years ago entitled *Mastery*. In it he makes the case for staying the course and doing what you know you need to do, even when you don’t see massive progress. He says that we have to enjoy the plateau. Those are the areas where you’re doing what you need to do, in an exercise program, for instance, and yet don’t see real substantial progress right away. Sometimes you even see some slippage as reality sets in.

It is in those real-world moments where mastery comes into play. You keep doing what you know you need to do, even if you’re tired, worn out and just don’t feel like doing it.

You keep doing the push-ups and sit-ups even when your body is whining and complaining that its “too early” or “I don’t feel like it” or other pathetic moaning.

Couple this with smart persistence where you don’t push through if you have sustained an injury. Use your head for thinking, not bashing walls! This means getting help and feedback not only as you perceive it from the environment but from others around you and, at times, from competent professionals.

How does that translate into marketing?

Right now is a golden moment to seize the day. Many economists are pointing to a recovery and seeing changes in a positive direction by the end of this year and first part of next year. Be ready for that surge in growth.

Now is the time to have a regular e-mail newsletter that provides real value and solves the problems that your target market is facing. Real value is the key term. We want substance, not glitter.

A good example of that would be the phenomenal growth of Blogs or Web Logs. In contrast to flashy websites that deliver lots of glitter and little substance, Blogs have to have content to be noticed. The content of a Blog comes from words and ideas, not flash. Every small business should have a Blog today for customers.

I’ve recently added audio to my Blog, which you can experience and see how it applies to your business. Go to <http://yoursuccess.blogspot.com> and click on the audio icons you’ll see. These are audio messages delivered over the Net to computers that can play audio files (most computers today). You create the message via a phone call. For \$3.00/month you can have 12 2-minute messages to provide powerful, relevant information to your target market. Check out [www.audblog.com](http://www.audblog.com) to blend this into your marketing campaign.

This is not flashy and elaborate. To use it you need to have a touch-tone phone and know how to speak. It is that simple.

In an age of confusion and clutter (think too much e-mail) simple and compelling ideas win the day.

Here are some simple, yet powerful marketing ideas every small business can employ today for great results now and in the future:

1. **Have an e-zine.** This is your e-mail newsletter that helps you stay in touch with customers who want (key point) to stay in touch with you. Answer their questions and provide solid, real-world answers.
2. **Use postcards.** I’m continually amazed at the power of a hand-written postcard. It is personal. It is economical. It can’t be thrown away without reading it. It stands out. Get a stack and experiment. You’ll see amazing results.

3. **Letters.** Remember those old things? Yeah, the first-class mail letter gets attention and can deliver your message clearly. When most of your competition is using e-mail, letters can target the need of customers and make a difference.
4. **Phone calls.** A short, personal phone call that answers questions and provides relevant information is always welcome. As I've traveled around the world in different cultures speaking and consulting, I've noticed a common thread among very successful millionaires, regardless of the culture: They use phones a lot. They talk to a lot of people. Stay in touch. A quick "How ya doin'?" call can yield enormous benefits.
5. **Personal Visits.** In an age of e-mail and technology the value of a face-to-face, "I'm really here" visit makes a huge difference. Be there for important trade shows. Be there for client visits. Make it a point to schedule face-to-face visits when you're visiting a distant city. It will make a difference.

Now is a time for change. It is also a time to be smart in our persistence of doing what we know is right. The payoffs will come as we persist in a smart way.

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