



ONE YEAR ON AND WE ARE STILL OUT THERE!

Dear JWA Clients and Friends,

I watched a TV programme the other day about a 'business troubleshooter' in the UK, who is, of course, exceptionally busy at the moment, trying to help a range of different businesses to survive the economic crisis.

One of the things that she said, which really struck home to me, was that the three main reasons that companies get into difficulties (not just now, but at any time), are over expansion, poor marketing and/or sheer bad luck. Since none of us are probably thinking about expansion at the moment, and even though, as my mother often says, there are ways of making your own luck, it seems to me that the one thing that we all need to be concentrating on, now, more than ever, is effective marketing, in order to get through the present situation.

We have seen with a lot of our own clients and friends that the first thing that they look at when reducing their costs is their PR and marketing budgets; now, you might think that this is me being biased, but I really do wonder how some

of these companies will survive if they expect customers to simply come and knock down their doors. If you want to remain competitive, you have to be out there, and that means finding a way to raise your profile – and there are ways of doing this without spending too much money; you just have to be clever. Later in this newsletter, we will try to inspire you!

On a similar vein and with our own 'communication experts' hats on, we recently sent a 'marketing and PR' questionnaire to a wide range of companies to get a feel for the type of issues that they are facing at present and, of course, to see where an improvement in their communications might help – we will circulate the results of that research shortly.

For now, though, happy summer and keep battling. Believe it or not, it is nearly a year now since news of the crisis really hit... and we are all still here!

J. Javorek

FD CONFERENCE FOR FD INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

As the Czech and Slovak partner of FD International, one of the world's most highly-regarded financial communications consultancies, we were delighted to be able to host the Central and East European network meeting for all FD partners in the region on the 11th and 12th of June.

About 25 representatives from 17 agencies based in 15 different countries attended the conference, which was entitled 'New Opportunities in Challenging Times.'

The purpose of the meeting was to bring senior members of agencies from throughout the region together in order to brainstorm ideas on how we can all help one another during the economic crisis, and we believe it succeeded in just that. Several concrete business opportunities and ideas have already developed as a result of the get-together and everyone went away with renewed enthusiasm for the next few months. It will be interesting to see what comes out of some of these new ideas!



FD *New opportunities
in challenging times*



NEW QUESTIONNAIRE

As a PR and marketing agency, we are very interested in the communications aspect of the current crisis. We often wonder how much employees of companies in the Czech Republic know about the crisis and, moreover, how they have attained that information – within their companies or from elsewhere. In response to this curiosity, we have recently carried out a direct mailing exercise, where we have asked marketing and other managers a number of questions relating to their communications practices, and we will soon circulate a report on our findings.

You can view and participate in this questionnaire by visiting www.jwa.cz and, as an extra incentive – the first 20 people to respond will win a free bottle of wine!



CASE STUDY

A couple of years ago, a company met with us to ask for assistance with their marketing. At the first meeting that we had with them, they told us that they had used a full range of marketing tools in the past and spent a great deal of money, but since they felt that none of the regular tools (advertising, direct mailing, PR, etc) worked for their type of business, they wanted us to come up with some new ideas.

Our own opinion, however, was, and is, that nearly all marketing tools work for nearly all companies, so rather than trying to come up with something totally unheard of (and, let's face it, it is very unlikely that anyone can come up with a marketing idea that hasn't ever been used before), we asked them to bring to the next meeting a presentation of all of the adverts, press releases, mailing letters and so on that they had used before,

plus a list of who they perceived were their target groups of customer.

It was quite clear from that presentation that the client had never sat down and thought through who, exactly, their target customers really were, and they had simply used a "scatter gun approach" to try and tempt their customers out of the woodwork. Without knowing who the target customer was, therefore, there had been little thought as to what they might read, look at, spend their time doing, which meant that all of the adverts placed, billboards used, press releases sent out and so on, had focused more on the cheapest price, rather than the most effective medium. And then, as a way to 'save money', they had prepared all of their marketing material themselves..... even though they had no real knowledge of marketing.

We prepared a whole new strategy,

that started with some fairly intensive brainstorming sessions as to who, really, would buy the company's products. Based on the results of that, we looked at all of the different tools that we could use to best attract the company's potential customers – print media, outdoor media, sponsorships, events, PR activities, and, in so doing, reduced the budget for the following year by 50%. We also threw away all of the old marketing materials and started again, with simple but effective adverts, short but to the point mailing letters and other materials. The result? A reduced budget and a huge increase in the number of sales in the first six months. Ask that company today whether marketing works and they will tell you something very different to two years ago! And, in case you are wondering, they are a very BIG company!

TIP: CONSISTENTLY REMIND PEOPLE OF WHAT YOU DO!

Word of mouth is a powerful tool, particularly in a business community as small as this. Your friends, staff and acquaintances can assist with your marketing strategy, but they need to be reminded and, in some cases, motivated to promote you! It is easy to get comfortable and assume that everyone around you knows what you do, but we would bet that, if you asked ten of your closest acquaintances, they would all say something slightly different! Make sure you remind people about the work that you do on a regular basis – sometimes you can be so focused on promoting your business to 'real' targets that you forget about those around you, who are always going to be easier to sell to.

BONUS TIP!

Don't be scared of talking to an agency; just as lawyer and accountants will meet with you for an initial consultation without making any sort of charge, so, too, will most agencies. We, ourselves, are actively promoting a 'one hour free consultation on marketing' at the moment to anyone that asks... why not try it? What have you got to lose...