



DESIGNING STRATEGIES

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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Regardless if you agree we are in the midst a full-fledged recession, or headed for a massive depression, there are certainly enough things going on to cause major turbulence for almost any business. The public has pulled their purse strings tight, spending less, or more cautiously. Projects on the drawing board have been relegated to the back burner. Life has definitely become more interesting and challenging for business leaders, their employers, suppliers and customers.

How is your business being affected? Did you make it through skyrocketing fuel prices a few months ago, only to find your credit sources drying up? If part of your business is retail, have your sales dropped off drastically? Is your outlook for normal year-end and holiday sales looking bleak?

Visualize

Now, more than ever before, leaders in top and middle management are being challenged to keep their companies and employees on track and above the fray. How can leaders maintain control, especially of their greatest asset, their human resources? Everyone can pick up their morning or evening paper, turn on the news or scan the Internet and see that another major corporation laid off hundreds or thousands of workers. Other companies are filing for bankruptcy and closing their doors. Stress and tension among our working population are at high levels. What can you do to ease those stress levels, keep your people on track, motivated and moving forward toward your planned goals for success?

Analyze



What can you do? As a leader, a major part of your job involves motivating staff. Now, more than ever, that skill is critical. Show confidence to your people that your firm is on solid ground and on track, and that the economy will swing up again. Communication is the most important skill you possess right now. Find something positive to share with staff on a regular basis. If leaders are not communicating with their people, something is going to fill that void. You can count on whatever fills the vacuum not being positive... rumors and speculation about layoffs and downsizing, pay cuts and any number of issues that can dash morale. Inspire your employees, don't just inform them.

Understand the stress your staff is under and try to defuse it. Emphasize that you're all in this together, and above all be sure that a *them vs. us* environment does not exist. Take advantage of employees' fear and insecurity to pull out higher levels of productivity, creativity and innovation. Assign employees to task forces to look for creative solutions. This is no time to cut back on marketing and training - you can bet the economy isn't going to change until it's good and ready. Instead of sitting back, wringing your hands and worrying, find ways to change your staff's ability to deal with today's changes in anticipation of tomorrow's return to a thriving economy. Train your people to deal with today's challenges and to become what you want them to be when the economy picks up.

Strategize

Leadership in the times of crisis is about knowing where you are going, staying calm and focused, and relentlessly communicating!

Jackie Zehner's Purse Pundit blog

Visualize - Analyze - Strategize Plan for success!

Maurer On The Move
November 22nd
 ASID Arizona South Chapter's
 Annual Design Awards Celebration,
The Best of the West
 Tucson - Conquistador Resort

*Wishing you all a wonderful
 Thanksgiving, happiest of holidays and
 a successful New Year!*



Terri L. Maurer, FASID

Continuing Ed Ops!

Looking for a way to get designers into your showroom, or help a distributor attract new customers? Consider one of my continuing education programs on a variety of business topics, or a presentation on industry trends or timely topics like *generational diversity - designing for the generations, marketing and selling to the generationism or recruiting and retaining an age-diverse workforce.*

NEW TOPICS in 2009: "Business Survival in Turbulent Times" and "Improving Your Customer Experience."

For a complete list of programs or for more information, please feel free to contact me directly at 330.666.0802 or tmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com. Please remember to email me your questions. If space permits, they will be answered in future issues of **Designing Strategies**.