

SMALL BUSINESS PROFITS

Unprofitability Fears? Five Predictions May Help Chase Them Away in 2010

It has been rough out there for small business, but of marketing's most knowledgeable and effective gurus, Stan Rapp, predicts that profitability this year will be driven by harnessing the Internet and cellphone communication, federal assistance, daring to be different and more.

Rapp is chairman of Engauge, and editor of *Reinventing Interactive and Direct Marketing*. Leaders of Information Strategies, Inc., parent of this newsletter, have learned from professional and personal experience that Rapp's predictions will, more often than not, be right on the money.

Rapp has demonstrated time and again his profound wisdom in providing small-business leaders not only with information about what is happening, but also, and more importantly, intelligence on what will happen.

Here is a glimpse of Rapp's vision for small businesses in 2010:

1. Small-Business Marketers Think Big

In the digital era, the playing field for advertising and marketing by big business and what a small-business marketer can do is leveled. In 2010, every small business can be a direct marketer utilizing digital tools to build profitable customer relationships. It now costs relatively little to target your prospects and customers online, analyze the results and learn by doing, how to build true believers. You can build your brand on the Internet just as the big-name marketers do - now that costly traditional advertising channels are fading away as the big-business favorite.

2. Small-Business Retailers Go Mobile

You don't have to be a big-box retailer to cash in on the mobile marketing revolution. Whether you are a dry cleaner, a convenience store, a specialty retailer or a strip-mall restaurant, you can experiment with the just-arrived new capabilities of mobile marketing. This is the year you will begin profiting from real-time, really productive, really pinpointed promotions delivered by the ubiquitous cellphone.

3. You Save the Economy

More than half of U.S. employment is in the small-business sector. As the pressure to deal with the double-digit unemployment rate builds in 2010, Washington will finally realize that subsidizing small business is the best route to bringing down the unemployment rate.

4. Small Business Adopts 'Purple Cows'

Seth Godin wrote a marvelous book on how to make your firm stand out from the crowd - *The Purple Cow* - a few years back. Coming up with truly remarkable, business building ideas has always been the pathway from being a small business to becoming a big business. If you are serious about taking your business from small-time to big-time, you need your very own Purple Cow. It's time to go to Amazon, order Seth's book and make 2010 your breakthrough year.

5. Vey Small Business Gets a Very Big Lift

With unemployment stubbornly refusing to recede in the first half of the year, nervousness about being dependent on a paycheck is certain to soar. Growing numbers will want to start their own very small business with one or two other partners. These very small businesses (under five employees) will thrive in the easin entrepreneurial online environment established by the eBays and Amazons of the world.