



Don't Play the Recession Game

By Rich Kizer & Georganne Bender

We read recently that the retail industry in the United States represents a whopping \$4 trillion dollars. Now, let's think this through. Yes, business can be hard at times, but even if the retail industry took a devastating \$1 trillion dollar hit, there would still be \$3 trillion dollars worth of business being done. Stake your claim to those dollars by adopting a power approach to growing your business. Let everyone else cry recession – you can't shrink your way to greatness!

“Turbulent times call for leaders, not followers. Stake your sales claim now!”

How you stake your claim on your portion of that multi-trillion dollar pie is up to you. How do you see your business and your opportunities?

• **Move from the defiance syndrome to positive expectancy.** Statements like, “This can't be happening to me. I've been in business for 15 years!” is a sure sign the defiance syndrome has set in. It's far better to adopt an attitude of positive expectancy and look for opportunity instead of failure. You can't give up in recessionary times; you need a positive can-do attitude.

• **Stop placing blame and accept responsibility.** Some people will blame the business environment or the economy on their store's lackluster performance. Unfortunately, the only thing this does is create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, accept the realities of today's business environment and decide now what you can do to prosper in turbulent times.

• **Stop haggling with yourself and go with accountability and creativity.** Self-haggling is negotiating with yourself to do as little as possible; minimizing risk to get over a dilemma. “Well, I suppose if I just do this ...” Self-haggling is merely tweaking your business; making only small changes. Accountability and creativity is all about reinvention. Make the customers' experience better, using events and promotions, new ideas, and new applications as strategies to lure customers back to the store.

• **When everyone's talking about what's wrong, go in the opposite direction.** Despair breeds destruction. It robs you of the desire to step up and do what needs to be done. Adopting and maintaining a positive atmosphere in your store is hard when everyone else is complaining. Put a positive spin on things. Look for opportunities, not disasters. Your attitude is reflected in your people, and their attitude is reflected in how your customers feel about your store.

• **Embrace a “one more thing” attitude.** Ask yourself, “What one more thing could we do to go above and beyond what our customers' expect?” We do. When we send our press kit to perspective clients, we shrink wrap all kinds of goodies in a big basket so the client can't wait to open it. We send freshly baked chocolate chip cookies with birthday cards. Our goal is to thrill our customers like crazy. We pride ourselves on the fact that we're crazier about this “one more thing” attitude than our competitors are.

You can prosper in turbulent times. Believe in yourself and your ability to keep your business healthy. Turbulent times call for leaders, not followers. Stake your sales claim now! ■

Rich Kizer & Georganne Bender are nationally recognized experts on customer service, customer retention strategies, “messing with the media,” and everything retail. Contact them by e-mail at info@kizerandbender.com. ©Kizer & Bender 2008. All rights reserved.