

# Succeeding in Today's Marketplace

For Clients and Friends of Professional Services Marketing

Winter 2002



## From Terrie

Holiday Greetings from Professional Services Marketing! As the New Year approaches it is important to look toward the coming year—hopefully you are all in various stages of strategic business and marketing planning for 2003—and are reflecting on your challenges and successes from the current year.

In this issue of *Succeeding in Today's Marketplace* you will find tips and suggestions on growing your business in a tight economy as well as a summary of some work Professional Services Marketing (PSM) has been doing for clients over the past year. Plus, I want to reintroduce you to the extremely talented resources available to you through PSM. No matter what your strategic business and marketing planning needs, we have people who will help you advance your goals in the areas of copywriting, web site development, database management, graphic design, public relations, project management, sales management, and many other areas.

As we begin our seventh year of business, we thank you for the opportunities to work with you and to help you in growing your business. We wish you continued success in 2003 and look forward to serving you in the future.

Terrie Wheeler  
President, Professional Services Marketing  
[twheeler@proservmarketing.com](mailto:twheeler@proservmarketing.com)  
[www.proservmarketing.com](http://www.proservmarketing.com)

## Growing Your Business in a Tight Economy

We all know the recent economy has been lagging, and in some sectors it is downright slow. It is certainly a different marketplace than we had just a few short years ago. Clients and friends consistently ask me questions about growing and expanding their businesses at a time when revenue may be down and when clients closely scrutinize the value of their services to justify a continued relationship. In a tight economy, it is critical to focus on maintaining and growing the *relationships* you have as well as positioning your company for growth. Be confident! The economy is cyclical and has always bounced back. Rather than just waiting for things to change, here are a few tips to consider as you look at your business planning and marketing goals for 2003:

**Keep Your Eye on the Ball.** We have all heard the adages, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail” and “It is better to attempt great things and fail than to attempt nothing at all and succeed.” These statements reinforce the importance of knowing where your business is going—to plan for the future. Take the opportunity to step back from the day-to-day operations of your business and reassess what has made you successful to date. Analyze your business by taking an in-depth look at your 2002 revenue. How does your revenue compare to past years? Where did your revenue come from? What industries are you serving? What other characteristics do your best clients have in common? How were they attracted to you in the first place? Which services are most profitable? Develop a strategy for your business that allows you to set realistic goals—and to support those goals with cost-effective marketing and communications strategies.

**Know How You Got Here in the First Place.** What made you successful when you started your business or went into practice? If you woke up tomorrow and had no clients, what would you do first? Now is the

time to refocus your efforts on what has worked for you in the past. Your future success is dependent upon being able to replicate what made you successful when you started your practice or business.

**Target your Audiences and your Messages.** It is highly likely your marketing strategy will be focused at a number of target audiences – prospective client groups, referral sources, industry sectors. Make sure your marketing **strategies are** uniquely targeted to the audiences you seek to reach - - and that your messages are responsive to each separate audience.

**Show them Don't Tell Them!** Clients want to see that you have done what they need. Focus on providing representative examples of your expertise. Don't just create a list of services - - show prospective clients that your firm has the breadth and depth required to work with them based largely on your past experience. Create case studies of your best work that summarize each client's situation, your approach to the problem, and the solution. Results sell!

**Focus on Relationship Building.** If you are in a service business, the vast majority of your success has been due to referrals from satisfied clients and business referral sources. Make a list of everyone you want to reconnect with and promise yourself that you will call at least five people per day - - just say "hello," to check in and see how they are doing. Reconnect over breakfast or lunch. Staying connected to the great people you have met throughout your career will lead to opportunities you may never have imagined.

**Reinvigorate Your Sales Strategy.** Once you reconnect with your contacts, determine messages that convey why clients should hire your firm. Develop a plan to meet your sales goals for 2003. If you need or want outside coaching, consider hiring an outsourced sales manager for your firm—someone to keep you accountable to your sales efforts. [Tom Schaber](#) does this type of work and is an exceptional resource for many of our clients.

**Be a Stickler for Responsiveness.** If a client or contact calls you, call them back. If they send you an email, respond—the same day. Even if you have no news to report, call them back. It continues to amaze me how many service providers do not return their phone calls and emails.

**Exceed Your Clients' Expectations.** When you exceed client expectations, not just meet them, their view of you as a service provider is remembered...especially when they are evaluating their continued relationship with you and your firm.

**Focus on the Media.** When the economy is tight there is no better way to expand the name recognition and awareness of your firm than to focus on public relations. Develop a public relations plan that will enable your firm to communicate with the media on a regular basis, position members of your firm as subject-matter experts, help you pitch articles to targeted publications, and to communicate newsworthy events at your firm. For increasing name recognition, there is no better tool than a targeted public relations effort.

**Communicate with Your Clients.** Keep your clients in the loop on the work you are doing for them. Let clients know what changes and service enhancements have been made at your firm to better serve their needs. Send a newsletter, an email communication, direct them to your website, or call your clients personally. However you choose to do it, stay in touch with your clients.

**Use Your Invoices as a Marketing Tool.** Every month you have the opportunity to communicate with your clients through the invoices you send. Ensure this important tool communicates the value of your work. Don't just send a bill "for services rendered" with a dollar amount due. Take the extra time to sell the value of your work and expertise on behalf of your clients by providing a detailed accounting of your time. At the same time you will be selling the value your firm brings to your clients.

**When in Doubt, Ask Your Clients.** Many of our clients have benefited from a client survey initiative. Before moving forward on a new marketing campaign, expanding into another market, or launching a new service, consult with your clients. One client was able to save \$40,000 per year on an advertising strategy that clients (as discovered in the survey) said had no bearing on their decision to use or refer clients to the organization.

Particularly in a tight economy you need to know your clients perceptions and what is important to them. You may ultimately need to “tweak” your delivery of service to accommodate the findings.

## **Serving Our Clients** **2002 Highlights**

2002 has been a busy and productive year for PSM and its clients. Some of the activities we partnered with clients on include:

- Conducted a client survey for a travel agency in Edina resulting in feedback that led to the creation of a second-generation web site and client update newsletter (print and electronic.) PSM continues to serve as the agency’s outsourced provider of strategic marketing services.
- Helped a legal industry client develop a co-sponsored continuing education seminar series for accountants in the Twin Cities, attracting over 200 accountants to the program. The initiative was cosponsored by one of the largest banks in the Twin Cities and the largest payroll-processing firm in the country. As a result of the seminars, the law firm built relationships with local accountants, which has led to a number of new business opportunities for the firm.
- Worked with numerous partner-track professionals on the development of tailored marketing plans designed to attract new clients and build a profitable book of business.
- Continued to serve as the outsourced marketing function for a community bank in Minnetonka. PSM facilitates all monthly marketing committee meetings and serves on the bank’s strategic planning committee. Our goals are to retain and grow existing customer relationships, while also attracting new customers from the local area to become new bank customers. Ongoing initiatives for the bank include sponsorships, advertising, customer communications, newsletter production, web site development and maintenance.
- Work with a Minnetonka-based accounting and consulting firm on the development and implementation of its overall business growth strategy. Actively worked throughout 2002 to increase sales for the firm. Continue to serve as the firm’s outsourced marketing and business development function.
- Helped an entrepreneur develop the strategy and launch a unique new business focused on product offerings for the condominium rental management industry. This work involved the creation of a strategic business plan that led to logo design, development of company materials including brochures and a web site. The business will officially launch in January 2003 and PSM will continue its work as the company’s marketing arm.
- Worked with the owner of a new business designed to create an online community of alternative health and healing practitioners. Our work involved the creation and implementation of the company’s business and marketing strategy, and ongoing involvement in expanding the company’s presence in the Twin Cities market using cable television, a unique web presence, radio, print advertising, public relations and ongoing communications.
- Developed a strategic business and marketing plan for an architectural design firm in Wisconsin. The plan led to various initiatives including the creation of a new web site, marketing materials, corporate identity, and a strategic public relations campaign that is already generating press coverage and interest in a totally new type of architecture, Shukka. The Shukka philosophy enables the designer to create the home from the inside out, resulting in a home that literally saves time by living in it.
- Created the business and marketing strategy for a technical training firm focusing on electronic and classroom learning for information technology professionals. Work for this firm resulted in a

revamped web site and a targeted strategy to attract IT professionals to the course offerings being featured.

- Developed targeted communications for a Denver, CO-based third party administrator of health care benefits for self-funded employers. This ongoing client has drawn upon the experience PSM has in communications and worked with our resources to have hundreds of pages of information translated into Spanish for its southwestern United States members.
- Developed and implemented a strategic public relations campaign for a Minneapolis-based law firm. The strategy resulted in numerous placements in the Twin Cities business and legal press.
- Continued to serve as the outsourced marketing and communications arm of a 10-member law firm focused on high level, complex in-house counsel work. Initiatives included client communications; web site creation and enhancement; individual attorney development; launching and communicating a new service; client communications and facilitating monthly group meetings and sales meetings.
- Worked with a human resources consulting firm to develop and implement its 2002 marketing strategies. Met with the client on a quarterly basis to ensure the firm was staying on track with its marketing efforts. Continue to serve as the president's business and marketing strategist.
- Spoke to a number of groups on marketing and strategic planning-related topics including the Concordia University Graduate School, Bethel College, Meritas Law Firms Worldwide, and the Collaborative Law Institute.
- Terrie is currently on the advisory boards for two clients – one focused in the arena of collaborative law, [www.divorcechoice.com](http://www.divorcechoice.com), and the other a firm specializing in business intelligence, Heartland Business Intelligence, [www.heartlandinfo.com](http://www.heartlandinfo.com). In addition, Terrie is serving on the strategic long range planning committee for Camp Courage (a program of Courage Center).

## **The PSM Team of Professionals**

Our clients continue to benefit from our comprehensive approach to marketing and business planning. We work with clients to develop a uniquely targeted approach to the marketplace. Then, our team of specialists helps our clients implement their plans. Our core team at PSM includes:

### **Project Management**

Once the strategic plan is in place, one of PSM's project managers jumps in to ensure the implementation flows smoothly. Our project management team includes:

[Meredith Hinke](#) – Meredith has over eight years of experience in professional services marketing for clients in the legal, education and financial services industries.

[Lorrie Parent](#) – Lorrie has over eight years of experience in non-profit board management and development, and complex event planning.

[Jennifer Frisbie](#) – Jennifer has over ten years of educational services marketing and seven years of professional services work.

### **Copywriting**

[Elise Schadauer](#) – With a Bachelor of Science degree in technical writing, Elise has the gift of making the complex understandable.

[Michelle Koch](#) – Michelle is a talented copywriter who has worked for many PSM clients including a very complex web development client requiring significant understanding of a complex industry.

## **Graphic Design**

[Brenda Johnson](#) – As the former creative director of Minnesota’s largest PR firm, Brenda brings a wealth of print and web-based design expertise to PSM’s clients.

[Michelle Anderson](#) – Michelle is a talented designer with a flare for creating custom and unique identities.

## **Market Research**

[Patrice Meschke](#) – Patrice has a master’s degree in library science and over ten years of experience in professional services industries.

[Robin Neidorf](#) – With a master’s degree in non-fiction writing, Robin has been running her own firm for over five years doing creative and complex market research.

## **Web Site and Web-Driven Database Development**

[Bonnie Weinandt](#) – Talent and creativity enable Bonnie to develop first-class web sites for PSM clients, while also incorporating web-driven database capabilities.

## **Public Relations**

[Elise Schadauer](#) – A roll-up-her sleeves approach to PR enables Elise to achieve success for every client PSM works with on PR campaign development and implementation. Elise is also an exceptional writer.

[Siegfried Dunlay](#) – When national public relations expertise is required, we pull in the PR team at Siegfried Dunlay, led by [Barbara Dunlay](#), the firm’s president and co-founder, and [Janell Siegfried](#), vice president.

## **Sales Training**

[Tom Schaber](#) – Tom has helped many PSM clients and serves as the outsourced sales manager for many. Tom will keep you accountable to your sales efforts!

## **Our Web Site Portfolio**

In 2002 we helped many clients create new or second-generation web sites. Here are some of our results:

[Interlachen Travel](#) – Travel agency in Edina

[Albrightson & Associates](#) – Architectural design firm in New Richmond, WI

[Henson & Efron](#) – Law firm in Minneapolis

[The General Counsel, Ltd.](#) – Outsourced in-house Counsel Firm

[ATC Enterprises, Inc.](#) – IT Training Firm

[First Minnetonka City Bank](#) – Community bank in Minnetonka

## **Q&A**

**Q:** My company wants to develop a web site, but we don't even know where to start. What kinds of things should we consider when developing a site?

**A:** You are very wise to develop a plan on the front end, instead of jumping into the project and realizing along the way that there are major building blocks missing from your foundation. Before you develop your site, discuss the following questions with your team:

- What are the goals for your site?
- Who will develop the content?
- Who will be the final decision-makers regarding design, content, etc.?
- How will you measure success?
- What is your timeline?
- How does the site fit into your business/marketing plan?
- Who is your technology partner? Will you develop the site in-house, or outsource the project?
- Other questions will surely arise along the way, but if you have answers to these, you're off to a great start!

[Ask a Marketing Question](#) you've been thinking about! Visit our web site to [see other questions asked by clients](#) and friends and to submit your own marketing question.

### **What can PSM Do for You?**

We are always interested and willing to meet with you to explore how PSM could add value to your company's strategic marketing initiatives. Many clients have told us how they appreciate the availability of our "services-on-demand" as a cost-effective tool for meeting their business and marketing goals.

Are you ready to take your business to the next level? Contact PSM at 651.633.2711, [twheeler@proservmarketing.com](mailto:twheeler@proservmarketing.com), or at [www.proservmarketing.com](http://www.proservmarketing.com).