

Nimble Businesses Will Win in 2009

Review, Rethink, Retool

1. Position your company to be above the clutter.

- **Market, market, market your company.** There are plenty of free or nearly free ways to market your business - be creative and use them ALL.
 - **Work the Project Wonderful ads** for \$0.00 – you can be seen on a variety of blogs and web sites using this tactic. Even if you bid only \$0.01, you are investing minimal monies and can be seen on sites with higher hits.
 - **Utilize CraigsList** and other free classified ad web sites.
 - **Make a 125x125 pixel ad** for your business. Negotiate with other blog owners, whereby they post yours and you post theirs (with links to your site) for an agreed amount of time.
 - **Blog, blog, blog** – this will seriously increase your SEO online so your business will come up in searches.
 - Announce all new posts on all forums you participate in.
 - Cut and paste your posts into all social networking sites you participate in (even though many RSS into your page, they are not shown on the front pages unless you do the internal blog option).
 - Join blog rings and web rings.
 - **Address your SEO (search engine optimization) needs.** Watch for articles on Indie CEO about this, as it is a huge topic in itself. In the meantime, search online for information about what you can do for free to enhance your SEO.
 - **Join networking sites**, such as etsylove.ning.com, weloveartfire.ning.com, plumdrop.com and more. Each has a slightly different audience.
 - **Utilize YouTube** – make short videos or slide shows of you and/or your products and post – do many as this helps with SEO.
 - **Write tutorials and articles to post** on eHow.com and anywhere else you find online. There are many places to publish and it also helps with SEO efforts.
 - **Utilize multiple selling venues.** If you have time to nurture these, set up the free shops - this is good for SEO enhancement and good for you to be seen by a variety of audiences.

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- **Be seen in all forums** you participate in – from forums on selling venues to forums for street teams and guilds – keep your face there.
- **Locally**, you can:
 - Donate a product to charity fundraisers for the advertising opportunities – be sure to place your bio, artist statement, postcards or brochures with your store address.
 - Submit press releases about your business or about you.
 - Band with other crafters and put on your own craft show – advertise it well.
 - Offer to be interviewed on radio to talk about how Indie Businesses may fare better in 2009.

2. Position your products to be needed - take them from an impulse buy to a need buy.

- **Look at your products with a new eye.** How are you positioning them in your marketing, advertising, and in the descriptions? Rethink and retool.
- **Change your product's focus** and talk now about how your products can be used in different or multiple ways, how they can bring delight to those special occasions, how they can be useful in various situations, etc... Be creative. Sit in front of your product and really think out the alternatives of use, emotion, pride in ownership, gifting occasions, etc...
- **Watch TV shopping programming** to hear how they sell a product similar to yours. To be sure, they have invested a lot of money in market research to come up with buzz words that will trigger the customer's interest. Make a list of phrases, uses, and descriptive terms as you watch. Then use them.
- **Craft a new direction in your verbiage** for your product discussions in your marketing and descriptions. Then update everything.
- **Market and position your products to new niches.** If you have a niche product, consider making duplicates to sell in niche venues.
Examples:
 - If you make jewelry, art, photography or other craft related to airplanes, air sports, WWII air planes, etc... seek out air shows, air museums, etc...
 - If you make products with images of fish or animals, find organizations or venues, such as aquariums or zoos. You get the picture!

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3. **Position you, as the Indie CEO**, as helpful, flexible, understanding, and supportive of your customers and their needs.

- **Be policy-friendly** - put yourself in your customer's shoes.
 - Would free shipping make a difference?
 - Is rolling back prices, although you would make less profit, better than no sales?
 - Are there any restrictive policies that you are willing to loosen?
- **Position yourself as a helpful resource** on forums and on your blog. Be a resource – seek out questions on forums you can easily answer. Everyone loves a helpful expert.
- **Organize classes** to teach your expertise in your craft.
- **Offer to be interviewed on local radio** to talk about Indie businesses and how they support customers more than big-box retailers support customers. Make a case for Indie businesses.
- **Offer the customer more than expected in all areas.**
- **Do an email campaign explaining these new practices** and that you are there to help your customer.
- **Before each holiday, start promoting your personal shopping services** to help select the best gift option for customers.