

BEEF UP YOUR BOTTOM LINE

If the economic forecasts for Orange County play out as the experts predict (Chapman University claims theirs is the most foreboding in 30 years), 2008 will be anything but business as usual. **What are you doing to position your company for success?** OC METRO Business Magazine asked local business leaders to share the single strategy they implemented last year that had the most impact on their bottom line. From a website overhaul to free product trials, these ideas were the juice that pumped up profits for these companies.



[1] BE MORE EFFICIENT

Developers Research is a real estate consulting firm based in Irvine that specializes in identifying the cost and issues involved in developing a piece of land. Staffer Tyler Girimonte invested 18 months writing down exactly how they do this, saving the company time and money when it comes to training new employees on the process. dev-res.com

Brooke Ziccardi, principal of Costa Mesa-based **Ziccardi Designs**, a firm which has become a leader in the international development business for custom residential, model homes, hospitality and commercial projects, is reaping the benefits of a major overhaul of the company's website. According to Ziccardi, the site is more user friendly, can be used to reply to prospective client's initial inquiries, provides a new contact form to facilitate interaction with the firm, and better showcases the company's global design successes. ziccardidesigns.com

[2] Overhaul your website





[3] Add services

Olympic Wire & Equipment is a Newport Beach-based supplier of industry baling wire and baling equipment for environmentally-conscious waste and recycling solutions. Brian Brecheisen boosted the company's already strong sales with Olympic's new Gold Medal Maintenance Program. This has given the supplier a maintenance product to sell, which creates long-term partnerships with clients who then become loyal customers for ongoing wire and equipment sales. olympicequipment.com



[4] Control expenses

Soka University, the Aliso Viejo-based liberal arts college, saved \$500,000 in a single year through extremely tight control of lighting and building automation, along with innovative building operations and energy-retrofit projects. soka.edu

[5] Expand distribution

Marilyn Pratfoot, senior vice president with **Lindora Medical Clinics**, introduced an idea that created a new profit stream for Lindora. Early in 2007, the weight-loss firm inked a deal with Rite Aid to provide in-store access to its services. Pratfoot was behind this move, which signaled a revolution in the health-care arena, as well-known retailers are partnering with health clinics. Lindora currently has 4 clinics inside SoCal Rite Aid stores, with 5 more opening by next spring. Lindora now features its products (diet bars, protein shake mixes, soups, "diet in a box," etc.) in more than 400 SoCal Rite Aids, as well. lindora.com



[6] FOSTER TEAMWORK

Pete Deutschman, CEO of Irvine-based **The Buddy Group**, a digital-creative agency, experienced tremendous growth last year, moving from a 5,000-square-foot facility to a 16,000-square-foot facility with 2 sound stages and more than 50 employees. In the same period, The Buddy Group opened 3 satellite offices. Deutschman has been able to accomplish these objectives based on this theory: "Two buddies working together are always better than 1 acting alone." thebuddygroup.com

Mark Savage/Top Left

[7] Give clients online tools



Ken Moss, a 4-year executive with Irvine-based **MyPrint**, has been at the helm of the development and launch of the company's proprietary software application, eTools. The technology allows customers to manage their own printing and distribution online. Formerly a local, conventional printing company, MyPrint is now a company with innovative technology that has attracted regional, national and international industry-leading clients in healthcare, restaurant and hospitality, financial services and other fields. With exponential growth in business since the development of eTools, MyPrint has seen revenues increase 250% in 4 years. myprint.com



[9] STAY THE COURSE

Chiropractor's Blend Nutrition, the Placentia-based manufacturer of nutritional supplements, saw sales increase in 2007, but also enjoyed an increase in margins on all products, says Rick Mink, sales director. How did they do it? When the competition decided to pull back on quality and quantity per serving to meet the price-point demands of the box stores, the company decided to continue marketing exclusively to doctors. This gave the company a quality line of distribution, and in the process, saved money that the box stores charge for shelf space. Channeling the line through Chiropractor's gives the end users a qualified doctor or nutritionist to monitor their needs and progress, building product loyalty. fitinonline.com

Jack Price/Right

[8] Reduce workers' comp claims



Silverado Senior Living's director of risk management, Frank Russo, has been responsible for lowering the company's workers' compensation costs over 50%. Russo implemented a fun and exciting customized safety program called Silverado Safety Star, which is now a part of the company's culture. Safety Star has saved Silverado Senior Living more than of \$1.5 million dollars annually in direct costs, while at the same time establishing a happier, safer and better trained workforce. Silverado has already received national recognition for the program. silveradosenior.com

[10] Create incentives



[11] BRING IT HOME

After the dot-com crash and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, many of Irvine-based **Decision Toolbox's** clients stopped hiring. To save the company, CEO Kim Shepherd slashed monthly overhead from \$250,000 to \$80,000 and directed staffers to work from home, which she continues to do. Today, the virtual firm employs 30, nearly all of whom work from home and are located from Atlanta to Oregon to New Zealand. This new business model has made the company's bottom line healthier and its employees happier. dtoolbox.com

Lyndon Group, an accounting and financial consulting firm based in Newport Beach, specializes in sophisticated project management. Tony Salerno, managing director of business development, has implemented a referral-based program that is taking the firm to a new level of success. The program empowers its team members – all of whom are experienced professionals – to recruit highly-qualified new talent as well as profitable new clients. This has helped the company meet its business objectives and has significantly increased revenue streams. The company has also increased its client roster with double-digit percentage growth. lydongroup.net

Jack Frize (left)



[12] Give prospects a free trial

Fountain Valley-based **D-Link North America** got its start in Ethernet-wired networking for business 21 years ago. D-Link's more recent success in pioneering the home-networking market has made it a household name among consumers. The challenge: The company's success in the consumer market sometimes makes it hard to reach today's business decision makers. To meet this challenge, early in 2007 D-Link Systems, Inc. Executive Vice President

Keith Karlsen and his team had an idea: "Let's give them a switch to try for free." By November of last year, D-Link's "Switch for Free" promotion had quadrupled phone calls from IT professionals. More than 130 network switches, valued from \$2,000 to \$3,000 each, have been "seeded" with businesses, with a potential revenue of \$10 million, and as a result, sales of the switches have been brisk. According to Karlsen, "Once they try a D-Link switch, they want more. It is turning out to be one of the best revenue-generating promotions we have ever had."

dlink.com



[14] DO THE REDESIGN

A product and packaging redesign knocked the socks off clients and fueled a sell-through at Foothill Ranch-based **Chapman Walters Intercoastal Corp.**, a manufacturer that dominates the recreational snorkeling category in specialty sporting goods with its Body Glove lifestyle brand. To accomplish the overhaul, a new graphics staff was added, but Founder and President Cindi Walters personally worked with factories on all the details of product design. This program is now shipping, and the new brand relationship will propel this company over the next 3 years.

bodylovesnorkeling.com

[13] Get going with Google

Laguna Hills-based sports psychologist and speaker **Dr. Jack Singer** uses Internet-article marketing on Google to increase his business, get more attention, attract new clients and boost profits. It was a success that has landed him on the first page of results from a Google search. funspeaker.com

