

## Cheap, easy recession sales tips

The squeeze is on for small businesses coast to coast, and the economic noose for many seems to be getting tighter. If you are like most business owners right now, you face a dilemma: How do I conserve cash, but expand efforts to attract new customers and grow sales at the same time?



**BIZBEST**  
**Daniel Kehrer**

Fortunately, the two are not mutually exclusive. Just choose from a variety of simple, inexpensive marketing tools and fire away. Here are some tips and low-cost tactics you can try to cast your net for new customers, and keep those you have:

■ **Try do-it-yourself online public relation:** One of the many areas the Internet has changed dramatically for small business is public relations. While PR pros have much to offer, you can also get results yourself online. Whenever you have legitimate news – a new product or service for example – write a press release that includes contact information for your business and links to your Web site.

You can submit through places such

as PRWeb.com. A new site called Low-CostPressReleases.com will help write, edit and distribute your releases for low fees.

■ **Use more e-mail marketing:** E-mail marketing services used by small business are seeing record volume as more business owners seek effective, low-cost ways to market. One good option is VerticalResponse.com, a self-serve, e-mail-marketing firm that helps you create, manage and analyze your own campaign.

■ **Dotster.com**, a domain registrar and Web-services provider, offers several low-cost, e-mail marketing solutions for small business. EmailBrain lets you create, manage, send and track newsletters and e-mail campaigns.

■ **“Yelp” about your business:** At Yelp.com, customers can rant – or rave – about a business they have used ... maybe your business. “Yelp for Business Owners” offers free tools and features that will help businesses participate in this word-of-mouth action. Get e-mail alerts when your business is reviewed; respond to reviewers, update your business info and more. Visit [www.yelp.com/business](http://www.yelp.com/business).

■ **Match up with the big guys:** Business Matchmaking is a public/private partnership that sponsors a series of events nationwide where small-business owners can secure selling opportunities from government agencies and major corporations through face-to-face meetings. The program started a few years ago and has been a big hit; limited spots go quickly. See the schedule of events at [www.businessmatchmaking.com](http://www.businessmatchmaking.com).

*Daniel Kehrer can be reached at [editor@business.com](mailto:editor@business.com).*

