



Tom's Message Board



Goodbye 2009...*HELLO 2010!*

I think it's safe to say that a sizable population of Americans will shed FEW tears for the end of 2009. While the headlines have been grim, there has been an upside as well. We're taking some time to reflect on how we live and how we do business...not such a bad thing.

For me, 2009 was a mixed year. The first 5 months were just plain *scary!* Business was down 22% and my general observation about the marketplace could be summed up in one word... *paralyzed*. Like many of you, I was asking myself, "How much do I spend and on what?", "Should I or shouldn't I?" and "What's essential and what's not?" One area that many of us looked closely at was our marketing expenses. Final outcome... they were "non-essential" unless we wanted to survive the recession, and even thrive when it faded away. The smart money was wagered on maintaining if not increasing marketing spending so when the economy turned around, customers and prospects knew who to buy from! I chose to take the wager and saw a nice turnaround during the final 7 months of the year and recovered most of the damage by year's end! All things considered, I'm *thrilled* with how 2009 ended; it could have been better – but it could easily have turned out a lot worse. I'm very grateful for the results and for my clients and staff who made it possible. Hopefully, your year turned out as well too!

So what's my wager for 2010? Continued marketing, innovation, and creativity. Let's face it; business as usual has changed forever in the new [world] marketplace. As I posture my own business to compete and advance, I learn about, train for, and utilize new tools to grow my business, which I can then offer to my clients to help them meet their communication, marketing production, and branding needs. Advances like our convenient customer portals, e-commerce storefronts, web2print service, and cross-media marketing campaign services will *blow the socks off* traditional direct marketing practices. Businesses that stay still... die. That's a fate I'm not willing to accept.

I have no delusions of upstaging icons like Warren Buffet or Peter Drucker, but I do tend to take their advice. Technology is mind-blowing and borders on miraculous at times, but at the end of the day, *people* do business with *people*. I'm so proud of not only the technical advances we've implemented, but more so the outstanding service we provide. Warren, Peter and I all believe it's what the best organizations are all about. If you consider your organization to be a leader as well, and if I haven't contacted you already, call me and we'll explore doing great work together!

I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year and I look forward to seeing you in 2010!

Tom Brassard
President