

The market jungle

Andrew Scott reflects on how crisis shapes decision-making, why adaptability matters more than size and why cutting marketing in tough times does more harm than good

Over the years I've steered businesses through multiple periods of instability. From the aftermath of 9/11, through the credit crunch, Covid-19, the war in Ukraine, recent fiscal pressures and ongoing global instability, one lesson has remained constant: uncertainty really is the norm in business.

Right now, many firms in the glazing sector are feeling the impact of geopolitical tensions and rising costs, from fuel to everyday essentials. Pressure like this leads many leaders to retreat, reduce spending and wait for conditions to improve. That instinct is understandable but often damaging.

Opportunities

Ironically, downturns do not remove opportunity; they simply change its shape. While the overall size of the 'pie' (i.e. the market share) may be shrinking, a larger share of that pie is still available to be had. If competitors are pulling back on activity, reducing sales effort and cutting spend, then the businesses that remain visible and continue to sell are in a far stronger position to capture that share.

The company that successfully navigates its way through economic challenges isn't necessarily the biggest or the strongest on paper – it's the one that can pivot quickly without losing its footing. This business keeps enough flexibility in its costs to have headspace when income drops and it doesn't rely too heavily on any one customer. This business makes decisions when there's still time to influence the outcome.

The skill lies in being able to make sound judgements under pressure. You need to keep a cool head, of course, but you also need to know when to push and when to step back, and when something can be fixed or when it needs to be discarded.

Lessons for all

A good lesson for all business owners is not to bury collective heads in the sand. You must remain visible. In the flurry of emergency measures you may feel you have to take to protect yourself, there is a temptation to cut costs to the bone, and one of the first to go is the marketing budget.

A word to the wise – don't do this. If you aren't visible, customers old and new will suspect trouble and may well shift their loyalties elsewhere. Stepping back from marketing means reducing your presence in the market at exactly the moment your customers are looking for stability and reassurance. Out of sight quickly becomes out of mind and competitors who stay visible will take advantage of that gap.

In uncertain times, marketing is most definitely not a discretionary extra. It is what keeps your business present, credible and active while others withdraw. It supports



Andrew Scott at Purplex business growth webinar

reputation, maintains trust and ensures that when demand returns, your business is still in the conversation.

When the economic storm clouds are gathering, marketing is the biggest and best umbrella you'll ever have. It allows you to reach and communicate with your target audience through their preferred channel, which for example might be reading a trade magazine, scrolling through LinkedIn or searching online. Whatever the tactic, when done the right way, marketing raises brand awareness, builds trust and drives customers to your door.

Partners

This is where the right marketing partner makes a real difference. At Purplex Marketing, we work as an integrated team under one roof, combining strategy, creative, digital, PR and media expertise in a single structure. Clients benefit from dedicated account managers with decades of experience, supported by specialist marketers who understand how to drive performance across different channels and industries. That combination means activity is consistent, joined up, focused and commercially driven.

In a crisis, standing still isn't an option; in fact, it's smart, consistent marketing that will keep your business visible, relevant and stable, even in rough seas. □

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