

Talking Green, Saving Green

By Mary Crotty

www.TheWordSlingers.com

Polar ice caps melting. The earth getting hotter. Catastrophic weather events unfolding. These are just some of the frightening things we hear about Global Warming almost every day in the news or on the Internet. Whether you believe Global Warming is real or not, the truth is that your business can benefit from adopting some greener habits by saving you some greenbacks. The icing on the cake just might be cleaner air and less reliance on fuel.

The explosion of the Internet as a source and dispenser of information makes it easier than ever for businesses to produce greener communications which most likely will cost you less than traditional ones. Here are just a few ideas to help you get started.

- **Newsletters:** The traditional two to four page, paper-based newsletter can be replaced with an online version. You will save trees while saving money on paper and postage because you can email the newsletter to your existing customers. As an added benefit, you can post a copy on your website and make it available to anyone who visits. There is no limit to the number of people who can read it; your audience can literally be world-wide. And as long as you have good information to share, you have greater flexibility to produce an online newsletter more frequently than a paper based one.
- **Direct Mail versus Blogs:** While direct mail marketing may be beneficial in certain cases, the truth is most of it gets tossed in the trash by consumers. Instead of budgeting money that gets wasted, consider starting a blog for your business which can help spread the word about your company faster and without the paper and postage. The added benefit is that you can blog everyday if you want rather than waiting another six months for the next direct mail campaign to publicize your business.
- **Social Media:** In the past, business owners often had to travel to out-of-town conferences to meet with industry peers in other regions of the country. With social media sites, you can meet like-minded entrepreneurs, network, share ideas and develop strategic partnerships all online without the cost to your wallet or the environment. Some sites that are geared toward small to medium sized businesses are www.bizsugar.com and www.linkedin.com. Go ahead, take a look.
- **Follow Up Communications:** Email is becoming a more acceptable medium for formal communications that in the past were restricted to letters. For example, you can develop a follow up email for contacts met at trade shows and conferences. You can deliver it faster and to more

people with less cost by creating one follow up email. You still have the ability to customize it with specific details for the most promising contacts. Just be sure to confirm that people are willing to receive email communications when you start networking with them.

You might agree that these are great ideas but argue that they still produce a carbon footprint due to the electricity and energy used to run your computer and of those receiving your communications. While that is true, the fact is few people are going to give up their YouTube, Facebook or Yahoo News anytime soon. Consider that you are latching on to an already working resource while reducing the need for postage, paper, ink, overnight delivery and more, all which require fuel. Becoming a greener entity doesn't have to cost you money, with a tweak here and there you can make the world a little cleaner and save yourself some dollars to boot.

Copyright 2009 – Mary Crotty