

## S.C.O.R.E.



### Hey! Who Turned Out the Lights?

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Where the heck did all the business go? What happened to my market?

We might even say what has changed about marketing today from marketing three years ago?

Marketing planning hasn't changed.... The marketing process hasn't changed... not even the marketing mix has changed... so what is it?

Why does it seem so dark in here?

Some will say, well the economy has changed....and that's true, but we've been through these economic rifts before, so why is this one different? It's different because the consumer has changed, your customers changed, and changed dramatically.

Many are in fear and static, others in a panic and frozen to the world. Even the well to do, which used to smirk at these rifts, are now cautious in their spending habits because the economy has affected and infected their investments.

The true entrepreneur is hanging in there, finding ways to survive: looking at costs that can be shaved or eliminated, salary costs that can be trimmed, marketing dollars that are being used effectively and those that are not, checks cash flow consistently, and has established a good working relationship with his bank and lenders.

Those that have been "playing" entrepreneur either have closed up shop or are about to. They have little clue as to how to move on, hence the panic and immobilization.

So here's what the true entrepreneurs are doing today to survive:

1. Cements customer relations...not only gathering customer data (names and e-mail addresses especially), but actually contacting customers and talking, getting to know what's going on, where their needs are today, what they're truly looking for (not always the cheapest price).

2. Plans Ahead....not just tomorrow, but for the next 12 to 18 months with a solid sales and promotional plan to reach and "delight" customers with wanted products and services. E-mail marketing to a targeted customer base is part of that plan.

3. Competitive advantage compulsion....everything said and written expresses the businesses competitive-edge, and in a well establish communication plan.

4. Builds a "networking" powerhouse... starts with the Chamber of Commerce. This entrepreneur believes "ask not what can the Chamber do for me, but what I can do for the Chamber"...The true entrepreneur knows how to take full advantage of the opportunities available. When asked "what do you do?", it can be explained in less than 20 seconds. The "TE" goes beyond the Chamber to local trade associations; embarks on a campaign in the "social" medium on the internet (Facebook; blogs; Twitter; and others).

5. Manages Cash Flow aggressively.....The TE knows, no cash, no business ... prepares a monthly cash flow statement 12 to 18 months out and determines what needs to be done to create a "positive cash flow situation", one that provides enough cash to make the business worthwhile.

Let's stop at these five, although we could list another five easily, but if you just concentrate here, you may just see that light at the end of the tunnel...

And not a light that's about to go out.

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Call Ira Schueller at 805-676-7500 for an appointment. Also visit SCORE's website [www.scoreventura.org](http://www.scoreventura.org) for additional business resources and workshop schedules.