



Technology Marketing Toolkit, Inc.

FREE Executive Report

How To Beat The COVID-Induced
Recession And Get Clients Spending
Money On IT Services NOW





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“The winds of grace are always blowing, but it is you that must raise set your sails.”

– Tagore, 1913 Nobel Prize Winner

When I was a kid, my dad had a small 24-foot sailboat we’d take on seven-day trips down the Chesapeake River. I was one of five kids, but the only one who had any interest in these excursions, so it was just him and I, out on the water, sailing up and down the bay from port to port. Sometimes we’d stay in a fancy marina like St. Michaels. But mostly we’d find a safe cove, throw the anchor overboard and spend the night sleeping right there on the boat.

Sometimes the weather and wind were excellent and we’d have an exciting day, making great progress toward our destination, trawling for fish off the back of the boat or simply *sailing* the thing as it hummed through the water. I’d sit at the bow of the boat with my feet dangling in the water, clinging to the railing and watching stingrays and other fish swim by. Other times there was wind, but also clouds and rain, making for a dreary day. We’d sail anyway. Often the wind was against us, or behind us, or blowing in the “wrong” direction, sometimes shifting, and we’d have to set the sails to accommodate those conditions. Still we’d sail.

But the worst times were when there was no wind at all and we’d bob around like a buoy on the waves, broiling in the sun. During those days I’d beg my dad to turn the engine on so we could at least get to some port for a meal and a swim. I can count on one hand the number of times he gave up, stubborn sailor that he was.

The economy we’re in right now reminds me of those grueling, hot days when there was no wind and nothing to do but sit and wait with the sails up, hoping to catch a breeze so you could actually make some progress, eagerly waiting to get around the next point of land with the anticipation that the wind might pick up once you got around it.

This recession is unlike any others that have preceeded it, for a number of reasons, so it’s truly anyone’s guess as to how long it will last and how bad it will get. The good news for me is that this is not my first run around the recession track.

Back in 2008–2010, I watched thousands of small IT shops shutter their doors – nearly 30% of the MSPs on our massive list (not all clients) ended up closing, getting a job or going into early retirement. The rest just weren’t spending anything: a rough time all around, indeed.

From my experience, there are three key things you can (and may have to) radically change when times get tough.

Of course, there is one more option that eliminates the need for ALL of this. If you’re independently wealthy and don’t mind your business going backwards right now, you could choose to do nothing but hunker down and hibernate for a while. That IS an option, and some who are NOT wealthy will take it. They’re too timid to do otherwise.

But if you cannot withstand a 20% to 50% dip in income, or, like me, the thought of going backwards grinds your gears and does NOT sit well with you, then you’re going to need to heed my advice and get ready for a rather frustrating, annoying ride as you muck through the recession swamp.

Because here’s the maddening truth: for who knows how long, you will have to invest more, create more, do more and be more creative than you’ve ever been AND generate less than you’re



accustomed to. It will take more work, diligence, effort and time to get mediocre, possibly barely acceptable, results.

If you're like me, you can resent this all you like. And I do. We were coming into 2020 ON FIRE with insanely good profitable growth that was hard-earned from a year of intense work and planning that was just starting to pay off. Then POOF. Gone.

I had a client tell me he had \$600,000 in signed projects ready to go when COVID hit, and then had it instantly pulled back. Maddening. I personally had to refund close to \$650,000 in closed business – money collected and honestly earned – when COVID shut down our event in March, just three damn weeks before we were to go live. A WHOLE YEAR of work gone.

But here we are. Hate it, resent it, get mad at it all you like, it's not going to change the economy. All we can do now is adapt and change our approach, knowing that, at some point in the future, the wind will pick back up again and the effort you put in now will pay off even greater than. Now, let's talk about what to do...

3 Major Changes You Might Need To Make BEFORE You Start Marketing

When money dries up in a recession, as it has recently, there are two major decisions you need to make FIRST before you go gung-ho with a smarter, more sophisticated and aggressive marketing approach. This is even MORE important right now, with certain industries being hit harder than others.

They are:

- #1. Change WHO you sell to.**
- #2. Change WHAT you sell.**
- #3. Change HOW you sell it.**

For some of you reading this, the industry you focus on may have been decimated, making it essential to change WHO you sell to to survive.

One client of mine went from a solid million in recurring revenue to ZERO in a few short months because his predominant niche was hotels and event venues. You can't collect money when they've closed their doors, fired everyone and aren't answering their phones. NO marketing campaign is going to fix this. If you're serving a hard-hit industry like this, reread the last sentence again.

Often clients (like the one I just mentioned) call me up looking for a campaign that will get the money flowing again. They want to know what they should be selling that will get their customers buying as they did before. It's the wrong approach. You can't get blood from a stone. A bigger, more sophisticated bucket won't be any better than a broken-down old bucket at getting water from a dry well.

Dozens of businesses outside of the IT industry are facing this as well, and not just due to the shutdowns. Cities like Seattle and Minneapolis are losing businesses that had their buildings looted and burned to the ground; they're changing their "who" by moving to the suburbs or another city altogether. Nashville, the city I live in, has seen an uptick in people moving here from cities in the northeast due to the extensive shutdowns and restrictions put in place by their mayors and governors.



If all or a large percentage of your clients have been shut down by the plague and are not recovering quickly (such as entertainment, travel and hospitality), then the only option – the smart option – is to quickly change your niche and start aggressively selling to another industry IF you cannot wait it out.

The second major change you might need to make is to change WHAT you sell, providing an antidote to NEW problems or what ails them right now. For IT services, you'd be crazy to not rename and repackage your services to appeal to businesses that need to continue to help remote workers stay productive and secure. That might not be a “sea change” of services, but a little tweaking and renaming.

The mouthwash TheraBreath is taking out full-page ads in magazines with the headline “Stop Mask Breath.” Has anything changed in the product? Nope. But it's being positioned as the solution to a new problem. My dermatologist has successfully promoted treatments and bundled products to end acne being caused by wearing a mask all day. She's cleverly named it “maskne” to draw in new patients and get money flowing again.

When the plague shut down our event in March (www.RobinsBigSeminar.com), we didn't cancel it but changed the delivery to 100% virtual. We changed the WHAT, *not* the WHO. That quick thinking allowed us to salvage a couple of million dollars, not to mention the relationship with our sponsors and clients alike. It also allowed us to create a new services offering of a virtual event platform that has taken off in sales not just to this industry, but to multiple industries outside of IT (we're currently flooded with referrals from our clients who belong to various local industries that are looking for such a solution).

I have a client who recently started selling a facial recognition technology that simultaneously 1) checks people into a building, 2) scans their temperature for a fever, and 3) checks to see if their face is covered with a mask. If those things aren't all in check, they are not permitted entry. He's selling it like hotcakes to schools that have a number of kids and people coming into the building who need to be scanned and checked in quickly. Of course, this product is not his long-term goal – but he's using it to generate revenue and get clients he can continue to sell to, with the goal of evolving them into managed services clients. Very smart.

Should you *drastically* change what you sell? *Maybe*. You might just need to change how you are packaging and promoting what you already do, positioning it as the antidote to what ails them the most and most urgently (see the examples above).

Right now, money IS flowing in IT – but it's only flowing for what is considered “essential” or necessary to keep businesses running. If your service is viewed as essential, you just need to get it promoted to MORE prospects.

Overall, you want to also make sure ALL of your services are positioned and promoted to do one or more of these things:

1. **Cut Costs** (outsourcing vs. in-house IT staff, cloud, automation of legacy systems, etc.)
2. **Reduce Risk** (cyber security, compliance, security of remote workers, etc.)
3. **Increase Productivity And Operational Efficiencies** (Microsoft Teams, VoIP, remote workforce, monitoring of employees, etc.)



4. **Increase Revenue, Profits And/Or Provide Competitive Advantages** (CRM, replacement of legacy systems that don't work out of office and/or require manual labor, etc.)

Since the shutdowns, many of my clients are crazy-busy trying to fulfill on VoIP phone systems, Microsoft Teams and remote workforce solutions to clients who have been forced to send employees home. These solutions are continuing to sell, given many businesses fear a second wave of shutdowns in the fall and winter, when flu season comes back around. Another hot seller is cyber security, or more specifically, SECURE remote workforce solutions.

I have also had a number of clients tell me they are getting sudden, random inbound leads of clients wanting to buy a managed services contract because their current MSP is failing to support them. This is the silver lining for many – the small, weak shops ARE going out of business.

We've seen a 500% increase in the smaller clients and prospects closing their doors. All have been sub-\$500,000 in revenue and are largely dependent on other micro-businesses delivering break-fix services.

And finally, change HOW you sell it. Another good thing that's come of the plague shutdowns is that many of our clients have discovered they can successfully close sales with NEW prospects and clients alike, using Zoom and remote meetings. They are using webinars like crazy to generate leads, and they are successfully using content marketing to drive traffic and opportunities to their websites.

Many of our vendors struggled a LOT with selling virtually early on. Their entire sales model was dependent on in-person event sales – something they repeatedly told us when we informed them of the event going virtual. As I've said elsewhere, the most dangerous number in any business is "one." One way to get clients, one way to generate leads. One good sales rep. One good tech.

When in-person event sales was no longer an option for the sponsors, they were forced to learn how to sell in a virtual world or go without the new clients. I'm happy to report that many who successfully made the change, like Galactic Advisors, Nerido, ID Agent and Lionguard, actually did BETTER at the virtual sales event than they would have in person, generating more leads, more conversations and more clients. Others simply could not figure it out and suffered. They were stuck in one mode of selling.

Exactly How Much Of The Well Has Run Dry? (News From The Front Lines And Talking To Thousands Of MSPs)

As I said earlier, you are going to have to work harder and with more intensity to get the same results in marketing that you were getting pre-plague shutdowns. Money IS going to be parked for a while, and with the current unemployment rate at about 10% at the time I'm writing this, many businesses are not going to be rehiring or calling back workers or rapidly hiring – and that impacts YOUR managed services contracts, due to the contraction of the workforce.

However, it has definitely not ALL dried up.

It might interest you to know that my clients who actually do marketing and report their KPIs to me – my **Producers Club members** – have seen their lead flow and new client acquisition BOTH go down 24%, and active clients down 3%, **but sales are up 7% this year compared to the same period in 2019.** Given that most of the MSPs in the industry are down or flat, that's no small win.



Further, you should take note that LEADS and new client sales are down by only 24%. It has NOT fallen to ZERO. Annoyingly, many of our clients are so damned busy closing contracts and onboarding they can barely keep up.

Yet one of the dumbest things I keep hearing from MSPs and IT services firms that are struggling is the word “nobody” when describing opportunities in their marketplace:

Nobody is in their office right now.

Nobody is answering their phones.

Nobody is getting direct mail.

Nobody is buying.

BULL. We *initially* and *temporarily* saw a dip in leads and purchases for our flagship program, The Technology Marketing Toolkit, back in March and into April. A *few* of my sales team tried the “Nobody is answering their phones and ALL the calls are going to voice mail” excuse with me.

Since we track everything, and given I don’t come to conclusions based on feelings but on facts, I pulled a report and showed them we had experienced only a 2% increase in the number of times we got voice mail over the shutdown period vs. all of last year. Further, we are using direct mail and it’s working every bit as well as it did before.

Here’s the truth: you see what you EXPECT to see.

Here’s one of dozens of e-mails I’ve received from my clients who, under my direction, are continuing with marketing. YES, WE HAVE CHANGED THE MESSAGE AND OFFERS, but they are still doing direct mail, e-mail, telemarketing, LinkedIn prospecting, etc.

“We’re doing GREAT during the quarantine (using the Closer Look campaign). Numbers are down a little, but we’ve signed six new accounts since the shutdowns and we are as busy as ever. We’re still on track to hit our annual revenue and profit targets for the year.

Also, I had already stopped going to customer sites back around Thanksgiving, because to get through the Windows 7 to 10 conversion meetings, I was doing three to four a day and that wouldn’t work with on-site visits (the average client visit involves one to two hours in the car). So I was already doing video meetings as my norm before the quarantine.

I was just about to resume on-site meetings when COVID hit. So we converted business meetings to online and just kept going remotely. More time with the family. It’s never been better to be an introvert!” – *Tim Shea, Alphanet Solutions*

So, if you want to convince yourself that “nobody” in your area is in their office, “nobody” is answering the phone, “nobody” is reading their direct mail, “nobody” is responding to marketing, you’ll be exactly right.

Worse yet, you’ll do no marketing, no selling and make no effort to combat the inevitable shrinking number of opportunities. Shame. I am reminded of Pogo’s comment: “We have met the enemy, and



he is us.” But if you are of the mind that NOW is the time to implement more marketing in an effort to replace clients lost and STAND BOLD WHILE YOUR COMPETITION COWERS, here are five big plays for you to run right now.

5 Money Plays To Run Right Now

I know everyone wants a marketing or sales “hack” that brings them a boatload of high-paying clients and is free or cheap, but that doesn’t exist in the best of times.

Sure you can strike upon something like that every once in a while, but it’s rarely sustainable over a long period of time and/or the well quickly runs dry. So my advice is NOT to cut back, but rather double down and implement more, invest more, do more – but STRATEGICALLY.

Money Play #1: Go BACK To The Well Of Existing Clients And Unconverted Leads

One of the most overlooked and underutilized areas for additional sales across the board for MSPs is within their existing list of clients and unconverted leads. Most MSPs are woefully underselling their current clients. Why? Three reasons:

1. **The MSP has a secular “religion” that all their clients are cheap, all their clients won’t spend money, all their clients already said “no” to _____, whatever that blank is.** Here’s what I’ve witnessed: over 90% of the MSPs that send out a simple e-mail campaign to their clients to sell additional services (managed services, phone systems, upgraded cyber security protections, etc.) get positive responses from clients who ARE INTERESTED and will talk to them.

SIDE NOTE TO MY CLIENTS: The Quick-Shot cross-sell e-mails ARE working brilliantly right now, as are the QBR campaigns. Make sure you are following those processes right now to not only generate additional revenue, but also to simply serve your clients.

2. **Because of the above belief, they don’t send ANY marketing to their clients and make no attempts to puzzle out a new service or a new promotion to send them.** Just because a clients says “No” today does not mean “No” forever. Situations, budgets and attitudes change all the time – and no client is ever going to ring you up on the phone and say, “Hey, Bubba, I got a big pile of money over here and I don’t know what to spend it on. You have anything over there you could sell me?” Not gonna happen. Clients must be SOLD things. Value built. Here’s a little secret: nearly 10% to 20% of all client bases will buy something you present to them, provided it’s not totally ridiculous. Guess what? An upgraded cyber security plan is NOT ridiculous. An improved, more secure remote workforce solution is NOT ridiculous. A phone system or UCaaS solution that allows them to better communicate with clients is NOT ridiculous. But are you talking to your clients right now about these things? Selling a proper managed services plan to a client calling you only when things break is NOT ridiculous. What else could your clients benefit from that you sell? What are they already buying, but from someone else?
3. **The MSP’s marketing is crappy.** If you cannot convey the value you’re offering or don’t know how to communicate the benefits of what you’re selling, of COURSE your clients won’t buy. End of story.



Here's another reason why MSPs may be unsuccessful in selling additional solutions to their current clients: *they neglect them.*

They don't send any relationship-building or engagement campaigns, period. No newsletters, no webinars, no videos, no blogs, no nothing. They never send gifts or notes of appreciation, and the cheap, "one-size-fits-all" obligatory holiday card doesn't cut it. They sit and wait for the customer to have a need and reach out to them. If you're making ZERO effort to stay in communication with your clients and provide value, you don't deserve their business. And don't pat yourself on the back if you send a monthly piece-of-garbage e-mail newsletter you hastily and thoughtlessly slapped together.

In summary, here's what our clients are doing well selling right now:

- Any and all remote workforce solutions. Microsoft Teams, cloud-based solutions, etc.
- Cyber security protections, especially given there are still a number of people working remote on unsecured devices. Further, many are buying remote solutions that are secure in anticipation of a second wave of shutdowns.
- VoIP and UCaaS solutions that allow companies to work remote and continue to service clients. Now more than ever, they need to be able to collaborate and stay productive.
- Compliance solutions, because the laws of data privacy have not changed or gone away due to COVID. They're still in full effect – and with people working remote, there's a greater chance companies are circumventing data protection and privacy protocols.

Without a doubt, there's a high probability that other BIG money plays are available to you right now in your niche and with your clients that don't fit into the above list. Figuring out what will sell right now is largely dependent on YOUR clients and YOUR market area. Some are still shut down while others are fully open and transacting. You need to figure out what ails your clients the most right now and find a solution to it.

How do you do that? Call them. Talk to them. It's not hard.

Of course, CLIENTS are one segment of your list. Another BIG overlooked area of opportunity is in unconverted leads – people you met with in the past but were unsuccessful at closing. Included in this group could be a prospect that you actually quoted, but didn't buy; but it could also be an interested prospect you met at a trade show back in January...or a referral that came in but wasn't ready to move forward yet...or a prospect that was under contract that the time you initially connected, but may be ready to consider an alternative now

ALL of those prospects are potential buyers, but if you neglect them they turn cold at a faster rate than your clients do. This topic is too big to cover here (the capture, nurture and conversion of leads) but is one I will cover at the upcoming Recession Rescue Roadshow:

www.RecessionProofYourITBusiness.com.

Money Play #2: Tighten EVERY screw in your sales and marketing funnel.

The Costco-size buckets of money that routinely leak out of most IT services businesses due to 1) the gross negligence of capturing any and all inbound leads into a marketing system, and 2) nonexistent follow-up is almost criminal. Let me give you a COMMON example...



A while back, a client requested an appointment with me to go over the “failure” of his website to generate leads. He had used a template we gave him for the *copy* (we were NOT designing and hosting it) and was upset he hadn’t seen any increase in qualified appointments because, he said, “I was following your system to the letter.”

While I was on the phone with him discussing his website, I completed the form on his home page to download a free report – a lead generation offer he had put up there, he explained, “as per your advice.” After completing it, I received a landing page that still had “Insert Logo Here” and bracketed copy to [Insert Phone Here] and [Insert Some Verbiage About Your USP Here].

My first question: How long had *this* hot mess been “live”? He sheepishly admitted for at least nine months, possibly *longer*.

Second question: Where’d the lead go (my form fill)? He said it was supposed to be e-mailed to him, but he hadn’t seen it come through yet. We waited. Ten minutes... 15. I filled two other forms, including the “Contact Us” form. Any leads? Nope. I had two employees get on the site and complete them. Any leads? Nada. The call lasted about 45 minutes and he had finally admitted that something was “broken” on his end. Perhaps this is a reason for the zero leads?

Third: What happens when a prospect calls? Without a doubt, leads that call in are the hottest and need to be nabbed FAST...as in the minute they call in. I Slack-messed an employee of mine to “secret shop” him while we were talking by calling the number posted on the site. The phone simply rang out, no live answer. When I told him, he *casually* said, “Yeah, something’s wrong with our phones today. I’ve got to look into that.”

This is such a blatant waste of opportunity that I could spit. If you’ve ever struggled to pay your rent and had to steal food to eat like I had to at one point in my life to survive, you tend to be more diligent about not letting a single dollar escape...and YOU’D be as incredulous as I was about the complete lack of concern over all of this. It’s the epitome of entrepreneurial laziness and sloth. Of *entitlement*.

You don’t deserve any success with such apathy toward your grossly dysfunctional marketing, and I have complete disdain for any business owner who chooses to be CASUAL about it going on in their business, under their watch. You deserve to get eaten by a competitor. And you *will*.

But I see it all the time: HUGE piles of money neglected, ignored and dismissed in MSPs. Complete and utter failure to fully monetize the leads, opportunities and clients they have.

Failure to capture every inbound lead from their website, phone calls, referrals, networking events, etc., into a CRM/marketing automation SYSTEM, which means there’s ZERO tracking and ZERO follow-up. And for the record, one phone call and a couple e-mails is the same as ZERO.



Failure to build a productive, responsive list of prospects as a result of the above, which means they are constantly starting over in marketing, no further ahead than a brand-new start-up struggling to cobble together a list of people who might be interested in buying.

Failure to answer their phones live, so dozens of qualified, interested prospects hang up without leaving a message and call the next MSP on the Google search results.

Failure to call, e-mail and follow up on an inbound lead UNTIL there's a successful outcome – and “no response” is *not* a successful outcome.

Failure to put all unconverted leads (who are not ready to do anything yet) into some type of drip marketing system to speed up the buying process, and so that when they ARE ready to buy, they think of you first.

Failure to follow up offline (not just e-mail) with qualified prospects that have opted out of their e-mail or have stopped opening and responding to their offers.

Failure to go back and upsell, cross-sell and upgrade existing clients...to sell them additional services they need and/or are already buying (just not from you).

Failure to ask for and incentivize referrals.

I could go on.

Based on very rough math done with hundreds of MSPs, all of these failures are EASILY costing them \$650,000 to well over a cool million when added up. Why aren't they distraught out of their minds, lying awake at night worrying about *this*?

For starters, many don't even realize the losses because they're not tracking ANYTHING. Second, many view their business as a job and a place to go to work, NOT as an income-producing asset where the maximum amount of money (profit) should be extracted. Third, many don't know to do this because they've simply not been taught how. And finally, some truly are *that* lazy, unwilling to put in the work and LEARN how to put marketing systems in place to ensure “no lead left behind.”

When times are good, can you afford such laziness? Perhaps.

When the leads are drying up and clients aren't buying, you cannot afford it. You must make sure every inbound lead is captured and followed up on.

SIDE NOTE: At the upcoming Recession-Proof Your IT Business Roadshow, I'll be discussing this in greater detail and giving out my “Recession Survival Money Map” for MSPs and IT services businesses. This ALONE is worth the time and money invested in being there: www.RecessionProofYourITBusiness.com.

Money Play #3: Cut ANY and ALL underperforming, unprofitable clients, employees and projects, but DON'T CUT PRICE!



The biggest mistake businesses make when the economy tanks is to cut prices – and it’s the WORST thing you can possibly do, given that you may have to survive on fewer sales. What you ought to do is STOP wasting time and money on things that are NOT productive, including unprofitable clients, unprofitable employees and unprofitable initiatives – then pour those resources back into what IS profitable, what IS working.

As a general rule, you want to make sure you’re generating at LEAST 67% to 70% gross margin on your managed services contracts, and ultimately at least 10% net profit – and that net should be AFTER you’ve paid yourself, the owner, a fair market salary (and for the record, that should be at least in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range for a small MSP; more if you’re over \$5 million). If you are not generating those profit margins, you need to raise your prices across the board, or perhaps selectively.

Otherwise, you are painting yourself into a corner you will NOT be able to grow out of. And if you’re already unprofitable (or not making the above margin), cutting your prices even lower is essentially erasing all your profits.

Of course, this is a common business-killing mistake that small start-ups almost always make: pricing their services far too low to win clients. During a recession, many revert back to this when they don’t know how to sell and don’t have a marketing plan that works.

Problem is, price-cutting tactics “work” and saddle you with a load of unprofitable clients. Eventually, these unprofitable MSPs end up stuck in a place where they’re doing ALL the work, too damned busy to take a single day off, yet not making sufficient money to start hiring techs to help them do the work. It’s a miserable place. At some point, they implode or just stay stuck for YEARS in a job they’ve created for themselves, not a business – and a very fragile job at that.

The correct response right now is to pick a different customer to sell to (if your niche or chosen market is truly decimated) or IMPROVE your marketing and sales processes to attract and close a better-quality client. Further, you need to stand strong against clients who come to you crying crocodile tears over “needing” a discount or wanting to cancel/cut back on a contract or to not pay you at all. Don’t fall for it.

Unfortunately, many gave in to such requests out of fear:

1. **Fear of losing the client.** They felt compelled to give in to the demand or risk having the client cancel and go away altogether. Of course, in most of these cases, that would not have happened. Switching an IT provider in the middle of a shutdown when everyone is being sent home on short notice and you desperately need an IT company to help bail you out would have been an epic disaster, yet many did provide discounts.
2. **Fear of looking callous and unforgiving.** Another reason people gave discounts is because they’re genuinely good people who want to help others – and telling a client, “Sorry, no discounts,” felt harsh. Truth is, when a client gets a discount, they are essentially asking YOU for an interest-free, no-strings-attached loan. YOU still have payroll and expenses. YOU still have to provide the service – but now YOU don’t get paid.

Reality is, almost all businesses were playing the “discount lottery,” calling ALL of their vendors to see if they could shave some expenses, whether or not they needed the money. Many took advantage of the situation and used COVID shutdowns as a way to beat up their vendors.



REMEMBER: You get in life what you accept. I have clients who successfully RAISED their prices during the shut down...who successfully SOLD their clients upgraded managed plans...who are closing seven- and eight-figure contracts to new and existing clients. No, this is not the norm – but it’s also NOT rare. But if you BELIEVE “nobody” is spending money and “everyone” is hurting, you’re going to experience only that.

SIDE NOTE: For clients of mine who may still be dealing with this, go onto our Member Dashboard and watch the special session I did with my good friend Chris Voss, best-selling author of the book *Never Split The Difference* and former head of the FBI’s International Hostage Negotiations team. He’s BRILLIANT and provided a script and process for handling such situations that will benefit you LONG after the shutdowns are ancient history. Here’s the short link for clients: <https://tmt-link.me/eNxr3HDG8HNZ>.

Money Play #4: Buy Something, Hire Someone

If you have cash and financial strength, it’s a really good idea to find an asset – a competitive or complementary business – that is NOT doing so well, and offer to buy it. A lot of companies can be acquired now much cheaper and on far better terms than just 10 months ago.

You might just buy up a few smaller competitors to not only gain their clients but also their techs and even THEM (the owner). I’m seeing a lot of the small shops go belly-up, rolling over and joining a competitor because they’ve run out of rope.

You might also consider buying a business that offers a product or service you currently don’t, such as an office machine reseller, phone systems vendor, small ISP, etc. They too have a client base you can get access to that way, as well as getting something additional to sell to your existing clients. Another option to consider is buying a vendor you use locally for the same purpose.

Further, sales and marketing people who were doing great pre-plague might now be wandering loose or in trouble financially, unable to make the same money they were making before and open to considering a new and even lower-paying position.

A LOT of companies are cutting commissions and changing comp plans right now to stay afloat. Some are preventing their salespeople from selling – from visiting in person, traveling to events, meeting prospects and clients face-to-face. This is seriously suppressing many top performers’ ability to earn and creating angst.

While technical talent is still hard to come by, GREAT sales and marketing talent has been freed up OR is actively looking. You’re crazy to not put an ad up and start looking for your next great salesperson. This is yet another bargain that exists right now.

Money Play #5: Double Down On Marketing

Self-serving? *Perhaps...*

But the reality is, competition is THIN right now. Most people are doing nothing, promoting nothing, selling nothing, their marketing budgets slashed, salespeople laid off, furloughed or fired, holed up in their closet with a mask on and clutching a bottle of Lysol. They’re afraid to go *outside*, much less actually run a marketing campaign. (By the way, save the hate mail. I’m not saying there’s NO legitimate reason to stay home. It’s a metaphor. Jog on.)



Further, I would *not* show up timid. **Show up BIG and BOLD, with a message of strength and encouragement.** Competition is so pathetic right now that simply making sure people know you're *open* is a big deal. The other day a friend and I were talking about what to do with the kids on the weekend when she mentioned going to a family fun park I've visited in the past with my kiddos. I was surprised they were open because I hadn't gotten any promotions or communication from them. I *assumed* they were still closed. Shame on them! If they ARE open, they ought to be going overboard to their clients to get them back in.

It's not any different in business-to-business services.

I can't remember the last vendor who sent me a promotion in the last six months to try and get me to spend more with them, or even to come back and buy again. Not one. Not ONE! Have I been prospected? Some. But the people who ought to be ringing our phones off the hook are the vendors we've stopped buying from.

For example, we always send out corporate gifts. Nice ones. Have any of the half-dozen vendors I deal with reached out to attempt to win my regular November order? It's nearly October – not that far away. Yet not a single one has attempted to incentivize me to buy from them. The two banks I deal with who could offer loans, lines of credit and other financial services have not bothered to do a single promotion to me. Nor have our insurance brokers, payroll company, events vendors, etc., etc., etc. Such neglect! And there CERTAINLY is opportunity to be had in IT, particularly with the recent turn of events and shutdowns.

Many of my private clients have seen a not-so-surprising uptick in “on fire” inbound leads coming in desperate for help because their current MSP is unable to get things to work, is unresponsive, etc. That may be “forgivable” to a certain degree when things are normal, but when your business is already struggling to operate and you're desperately trying to keep your employees working but can't because of a technical problem, NO ONE IS GOING TO TOLERATE THAT.

There IS a lot of dissatisfaction out there that, if poked, could get a prospect to consider a competitive bid where they might not have in the past.

Our clients are having HUGE success with a campaign we've titled the “Closer Look” campaign. When implemented, it's generating qualified appointments from even the most stubborn “We're fine” prospects who wouldn't give you the time of day before the plague. The premise of the promotion is “Maybe it's time you took a closer look at what you're getting for your money from your current IT company.” This message is resonating right now because prospects become far less tolerant of substandard services when money is tight.

Another prospecting strategy that is working extremely well for getting new clients at zero cost is the strategic partnership or joint venture (JV) approach. One MSP client of mine got a software company to introduce his managed services to their clients, offering a percentage of sales. **So far he's generated over \$11,000 in new MRR and multiple projects.** His marketing costs? Nothing – he's only paying a percentage when they become a client.

A handful of clients are using this same approach and successfully getting associations and companies to actively promote them to their client and member base. **One client generated over \$2.5 million in new managed services and projects, thanks to ONE JV promotional partnership.** Another secured 20 new clients using the same JV approach; one client is a HUGE transportation company that



represents a sizable co-managed IT contract. Another has done several webinars for a variety of JV partners, generating roughly 50-60 leads per webinar; again, this is all FREE.

SIDE NOTE: If you want these above-mentioned campaigns, along with half a dozen other campaigns I've specifically designed and tested to work right now to generate sales, upsell clients and double your inbound leads for free or on the cheap, you **MUST** get to the Recession-Proof Your Business Roadshow: www.RecessionProofYourITBusiness.com.

And Now, The BIG Question...

What will YOU do?

Not think about...not talk about...not consider. DO. There's no money in *doing*, only DONE.

Now more than ever, it's critical to focus on what you CAN control. Clearly none of us can influence or change the virus, the political agenda woven through all of this, the news, the rioting, the widespread fear, the economy, etc. But what you CAN pour your energy into is controlling your attitude about it all and your response.

I'm as annoyed as anyone over everything that has happened; candidly, I have a lot more to be grumpy about than most businesses, given the direct hit our events have taken. We have been prevented and shut down from delivering what we sell due to no fault of our own. But where's the profit in moping about with a giant sourpuss on?

In this report I've given you a few productive, profitable ways to respond. To ACT. Somewhere in all of this mess there's a big opportunity for you. Not just a band-aid or a quick fix, but a HUGE opportunity. A way for you to start something or do something that will set you up in a big way for future profits, setting you way out ahead of your competition.

Einstein was right when he said that in the midst of every crisis lies great opportunity. But finding it will require ACTION and letting go of the belief that nothing can be done. It might require you to do things you had not planned on doing. Things you might not necessarily like to do or find interesting and exciting to do. Complicated things that are *inconvenient*.

Sorry, Charlie, I can't help you with that. That is the naked, harsh truth about ALL great opportunities in business. It's not found in the *convenience* store.

But if you ARE ready to take action, but need more direction, more help and a SHOT of motivation, then I cannot urge you enough to get to an upcoming Recession-Proof Your IT Business Roadshow event. It's the BEST investment you can make right now:

www.RecessionProofYourITBusiness.com

Fair Warning: Due to the need of physically distancing people in the conference room, seating is EXTREMELY limited. If you have any interest in attending, do NOT hesitate to register.